Mini-dungeon Module E6

Compatible With the game Sworts & With and the game A Ring for the King

by Matthew E Kline

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 6-8



A village blacksmith won a contest to design a fitting ring for the king of the realm and now he has to make it. Unfortunately, he's missing some of the required material, like the teeth of a rock ape...

A Ring for the King is part of a series of mini-dungeons designed to drop into existing adventures or campaigns. Use them as side quests or a way of getting in a quick adventure when you're short on time.



Dungeons of Dazegoneby

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Writing, design, layout: Matthew E Kline J. E. Shields provided the "Ringsmith" for our cover and inside cover.

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Pungeons of Pazegoneby

Mini-Dungeon Module E6 A Ring for the King

A village blacksmith won a contest to design a fitting ring for the king of the realm and now he has to make it. Unfortunately, he's missing some of the required material, like the teeth of a rock ape. And rock apes are notoriously reluctant to part with their teeth. To make matters worse a certain jeweler, with some arcane knowledge, is a little upset at having come in second to a "hammering troglodyte."

About This Product

Although it can be scaled by the Gamemaster for groups of other sizes, A Ring for the King is designed for 4-6 adventurers of level 6-8. This product is part of a line of mini-dungeons designed as quick, drop-in adventures. They're ideal for use as short side quests, or for gaming sessions where you're pressed for time. You could even string them all together as a mini dungeon campaign.

Gamemasters should feel free to adjust this adventure to suit their group's style of game-play or level of difficulty.

It's recommended that the Gamemaster read through this product at least twice inorder to familiarize themselves with the adventure prior to playing. They should also take note of any new monsters or magic listed at the end of the document.

This product requires the use of the *Swords & Wizardry* rules. More information can be found online at www.swordsandwizadry.com

On the pages that follow you'll find boxes like the one surrounding this text. These boxes hold suggested descriptions of the rooms that can be read out loud to the players.

After most of the room descriptions you'll find one or more of the following symbols:



This symbol indicates that there's a monster or monsters in the room.



This symbol indicates there's treasure in the room.



This symbol indicates that there's a dangerous obstacle in the room.

A description of the monsters, treasures, or obstacles encountered follows after each symbol.

About Dungeons of Dazegoneby

I can remember a time in my distant past when I could head to the local mall walk into one of the two bookstores they had at the time, plunk down around five dollars, and walk out with a brand-new Dungeons & Dragons module. Our *Dungeons of Dazegoneby* line is a tribute to old school gaming, paying homage to a time filled with graph paper maps, wandering monster tables, hand-drawn character sheets, and lazy afternoons filled with adventure and wonder. We hope you enjoy playing these products as much as we enjoyed making them.

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Gamemaster's Eyes Only:

Growing bored with his current collection of royal accoutrements, King Arklund held a contest open to all citizens of the realm to craft him a new ring. Out of all the designs submitted, the king picked one created by Connor Cromly, a local blacksmith as the winner. Cromly's win had annoyed several seasoned jewel crafters who argued that, while Cromly's design was good, the burly blacksmith lacked the finesse to work in such a meticulous form of art.

The king quickly squelched all protests to his decision, reminding the more vocal among them that Cromly never would have entered the contest if he didn't feel as though he had the ability to deliver on his design. King Arklund had a reputation of dealing harshly with craftspeople who failed him in the past. Which put the blacksmith in a bit of a predicament.

Cromly entered the contest as a joke, he never though his design, a large and gaudy piece adorn with an arrangement of diamond-like rock ape teeth, would win. Now he was faced with the prospect of having to craft it and found himself short on a few key components, mainly the rock ape teeth. Fortunately, there happened to be some of the creatures laired in an abandoned copper mine a little over a day's journey away. But finding someone capable of acquiring them could be a problem.

To make matters worse, one of the crafters annoyed by the blacksmith's win happed to have some arcane knowledge. He also has the means to hire some agents to ensure that Cromly's ring is never created.

Set Up

The next time the party heads back into civilization to rest and resupply they encounter the most depressed blacksmith they've ever run into. Cromly explains his current angry king/rock ape teeth related troubles. He then realizes the players may be the answer to his current dilemma. He offers them 6,000gp in exchange for six diamond rock ape teeth. He adds that he believes the local innkeeper knows where they can find some...

A Note to the Gamemaster

The set up described here is only a suggestion. Feel free to introduce this scenario to your group in any way you see fit.

Perhaps an alchemist requires rock ape teeth as an ingredient to a potion he's creating.

Or a prominent wizard requires them as a spell component.

In either of these cases there could still be a rival that would enjoy seeing the party fail at their endeavor...



The Smith, the Keeper & the Rival

Cromly

A visit to Cromly's Metalworks brings the party face to frown with the most depressed blacksmith they've ever seen. Connor Cromly works his forge, shoulder's slumped and constantly sighing.

If the party inquiries about his apparent depression he'll relate the following:

"Well, I won a contest, didn't I? Design a new ring for the king. Entered it onna whim. Never thought my design would win. But it did. And now I have to make it. Or else suffer the consequences. But I'm missing a key item, aren't I? So, I may soon find myself missing another key item. Like my head fer instance..."

If asked, he doesn't really think the king will take his head, but he does know the king has a low tolerance for craftspeople who displease him, and fears the royal repercussions of letting him down.

Cromly will offer the party 6,000gp if they can bring him what he requires, which are six diamond-like rock ape teeth. If the party agrees he'll state that he believes the innkeeper knows where to find some rock apes, then hands a pair of tongs to a capable looking party member.

Wetwhistle

Heading to the local inn the players will encounter Wexley Wetwhistle, the inn's halfling innkeeper. If asked, Wexley will inform the players of an abandoned halfling copper mine, which lies a day and a half's journey to the northeast of town. The mine was abandoned due to the fact that it became home to a trio of rock apes. Realizing it could be a win-win situation Wetwhistle offers to provide a map to the mine in exchange for the player's promise to rid it of its hazards. Once cleared the halfling plans to send word to his kin that the mine is once again safe to work, a fact he may or may not chose to share with the players. Armed with this knowledge the players could attempt to negotiate a deal where they receive a portion of the profits, or they could decide to try to work or run the mine themselves.

Evandusk

Unknown to Cromly his actions are being monitored by spies working for Taivan Evandusk, a disgruntled craftsperson, annoyed at coming in second place in the design contest to a "hammering troglodyte." Evandusk wants to make sure that any attempts to make the ring are thwarted. To this end he's employed a pair of townspeople to keep an eye on the blacksmith. Once he's been notified that Cromly's employed an adventuring group to acquire rock ape teeth he'll dispatch an adventuring group of his own, the Hand of Manos, to prevent this from happening.





Key to the Halfling Copper Mine

After a day and a half's journey, following Wetwhistle's map, the group arrives at the copper mine. If there's a dwarf in the party, they'll have a low opinion of the mine. Halflings aren't known for mining, and it shows in the structural integrity found here, or rather the lack thereof. Clearance throughout the mine is around 10' (unless noted) to allow for members of taller races to help work the mine.

1. West Cave-In

This section of the mine has been dug out to create a 20' x 25' chamber. A collection of wooden buckets and halfling sized pickaxes sit in the southwest corner next to a fallen section of the mine's wall. A rock ape has made it's home here (see New Monsters.) It can usualy be found picking through the rocks in the caved in section or curled up fast alseep against the wall in the northeast corner. There's a chance of taking it by surprise, however once it spots the party it will become enraged.

There are four pickaxes and eight wooden buckets sitting near the room's entrance.



Rock Ape: HD 6; HP 32; AC 6[13] / 3[16]; Atk 2 hands (1d4), 1 bite (1d8), or 3 stones (1d4); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Hug, Rage (range attack and +3 to AC.)

2. Dead Adventurer

The corpse of a halfling lies near the center of this large chamber.

If the party moves to investigate, they'll discover that the corpse is dressed more like an adventurer than a miner. There's a wound in his right shoulder, as though a large spike had been driven into it. It also looks as though some animal has taken several bites out of him. A short sword lies nearby, along with the remains of a shattered lantern. He still wears his leather backpack.

The adventurer here was mortally wounded by a piercer he encountered in **Area 4.** He managed to crawl here before succumbing to his wound. An observant party member may be able to discern a faint trail of dried blood leading back the way he came.

The piercer that struck the halfling was brought along for the ride when he crawled away. After feeding for a bit it climbed to the roof of the mine, moving to the small alcove in the northeast corner. It's easy to spot, since there are no other stalactites in this section of the mine and the 10' high ceilings make it a bit conspicuous.

The alcove to the northeast contains a dozen wooden buckets, 8 halfling-sized pickaxes, and 6 halfling-sized wooden yokes, used to transport the buckets after they're filled with ore or debris.



Piercer (3HD): HD 3; HP 13; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 drop and pierce (3d6); Move 1; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.



The halfling's pack contains the following items: a halfling-sized

blanket, chalk x3, flint & steel, lamp oil x2, dried rations x6, and a small sack containing a chunk of copper ore (worth 20gp). A coin pouch on his belt holds 23gp, 27sp, and a gem (worth 50gp)

3. East Cave-In

An ape-like creature sifts through some rubble near the east wall of this chamber. It pauses occasionally to munch upon choice pieces of rock.

There's a good chance the rock ape here will notice the party immediately after they enter this area. It will angrily move to attack them on sight.



Rock Ape: HD 6; HP 36; AC 6[13] / 3[16]; Atk 2 hands (1d4), 1 bite (1d8), or 3 stones (1d4); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Hug, Rage (range attack and +3 to AC.)

4. Large Cavern

The mine here opens up into a large natural cavern. Stalagmites litter the floor and stalactites dot the ceiling roughly 25' above your head.

The halflings who were mining here discovered this cavern by accident, digging through one of its walls. They explored the area, briefly considering making it into living quarters before deciding to keep to the camp they had established outside at the time.

Lucky for them they did, since this cavern was home to a colony of piercers.

The halfling adventurer in **Area 2** found that out the hard way.

The piercers are scattered throughout the cavern. A party that attempts to explore this cavern will find themselves under attack from above.



Piercers (3HD) (36): HD 3; HP (roll as needed); AC 3[16]; Atk 1 drop and pierce (3d6); Move 1; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

5. 'X' Marks the Spot

The mine widens here, forming a $20' \times 30'$ chamber.

There's a chalk 'X' drawn on the south wall of the chamber. Directly below this mark there's signs of recent digging. A halfling-sized pickaxe stands against the wall nearby. This is where the halfling adventurer found his copper ore chunk. He planned on sneaking back out past the rock apes, then convince an adventuring party to help clear the mine, using the copper chunk as incentive. He marked the spot just incase he needed to return to get some more "incentive".



For each half hour spent digging near the 'X' there's a 50% chance of unearthing another chunk of copper ore worth 1d10x10gp. Once five chunks have been recovered the vein's been depleted. A dwarf will be able to tell that this is the case. Any additional digging after the vein's been depleted has a 50% chance of causing a cave-in each half hour spent digging, dealing 2d6 points damage to everyone within 10' of the digging site.

6. North Cave-In

It appears that there's been a cave-in at the rear of this large chamber. An ape-like creature has it's back towards you, picking through the rubble.

There's a good chance that the group may be able to get an attack in against the rock ape here before it realized there's trespassers present. If that's the case the gamemaster should use the creature's weaker AC rating to defend against the initial attack prior to it become enraged and getting it's 'stone skin' bonus.



Rock Ape: HD 6; HP 39; AC 6[13] / 3[16]; Atk 2 hands (1d4), 1 bite (1d8), or 3 stones (1d4); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Hug, Rage (range attack and +3 to AC.)



Rock Ape Tooth Extraction 101

Once a rock ape's been properly 'sedated' a character can try to remove its diamond-like canine teeth. Each ape has four, so with three apes present there's some room for failure. A character, armed with the tongs, need only make two successful 'open doors' rolls in a row to pull a tooth free. Failing to pull a tooth free either means that it's been damaged by the attempt or is too firmly rooted to pry loose.

As noted in the creature's description the diamond-like canines of a rock ape can be worth anywhere from 1,000gp to 3,000gp. Cromly will prefer six as close to the same value as possible, and of course the party is free to keep any that remain.

If for some reason the party returns with less than the required six, Cromly will reluctantly change his design and hope it still meets with the king's approval. A determined party may decide to return to the blacksmith with a firmly rooted tooth still in place within the mouth of a rock ape corpse, hoping Cromly has the means to free it within his workshop...

The Hand Strikes!

Disgruntled jeweler and arcane crafter Evandusk hires the Hand of Manos, an evil party of adventurers, to prevent the group from acquiring Cromly's rock ape teeth. Evendusk wants the party dealt with before they even reach the halfling mine, however the Hand has other ideas. They plan to wait until after the party has the teeth, then either approach them and offer to spare their lives in exchange for the teeth, or ambush the party and take the teeth by force. Either way they hope to add the teeth to their take for this mission.

The Hand will trail the party to and from the mine, waiting until some point along the day and a half trip back to Cromly to make their move. The Hand will probably wait until the group makes camp or stops at a convenient roadside inn before attempting to rid the group of the teeth.

If the group makes camp the Hand will wait until they're asleep then send Nightwind in to attempt to steal the teeth, moving in to attack if she's discovered.

At an inn, the Hand will pose as just another group of weary adventurers looking to spend the night. They'll make up stories describing the spoils of their latest adventures hoping to goad the group into showing them the teeth, so they can note who has them and where they're carrying them. Once again, Nightwind will attempt to steal the teeth without the group noticing, the Hand moving to support her if she's found. If they fail to entice the party into bragging about the teeth they may just wait until the group turns in for the night, then attack them in their rooms and take the teeth by force.



To aid them in their mission Evandusk provided the members of the Hand with magic rings. He gave Xang a *ring of striking* (see New Magic), Blood Dragon received a *ring of fireblade* (see New Magic), Ada got a *ring of good intentions* (see New Magic), and Nightwind bears a *ring of thieving excellence* (see New Magic.)

In addition to the rings, Blood Dragon wears a suit of *fiery plate armor* and Ada carries a second hammer that's been blessed by Manos. In her hand it functions as a holy symbol and allows her to get in an extra melee attack each round.

Along with a collection of standard adventuring gear (packs, lanterns, rope, rations, etc.), and a total of 800gp 'traveling funds' they also carry among their possessions a contract signed by Evandusk agreeing to pay them 5,000gp in exchange for preventing Cromly from getting his rock ape teeth.



The Hand of Manos

The Hand of Manos are an adventuring group of mercenaries, dedicated to the worship of Manos, a chaotic evil god of diverted fate and disrupted plans. They prefer taking assignments that involve upsetting assured victories or fouling up quests undertaken by agents of good alignment.



Xang (6th level human monk): HD 6(d4); HP 21; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 weaponless (1d10); Move 12; Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; Special: class abilities.

Blood Dragon (6th level human fighter): HD 6; HP 40; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (1d10); Move 12; Save 10; CL/XP 6/400; Special: class abilities.

Ada the Hammerer (6th level human cleric): HD 6(d6); HP 28; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 weapon (1d4); Move 11; Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; Special: class abilities. Nightwind (6th level human thief) HD 6(d4); HP 24; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 weapon (1d6); Move 12; Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; Special: class abilities.

There was once a fifth member of the group, a magic user named Darkstrike, however his soul became trapped in a magic item while he was trying to enchant it; a +3 quarterstaff of dancing. Xang usually carries the quarterstaff along with him, setting it loose at the first sign of battle.

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"Darkstrike" +3 quarterstaff of dancing. The weapon is intelligent and has the ability to cast darkness 15' radius once per day. It also has the ability to communicate with its wielder telepathically. It's got nothing nice to say to non-evilly aligned wielders and will attempt to dance away from them the first chance it gets (possibly even landing a few hits upon them before leaving.)

Wrapping Up

When the party returns to town a nervous Cromly will be waiting to greet them upon their arrival. If the group managed to get ahold of the rock ape teeth, and kept them from falling into the hands of the Hand of Manos, Cromly happily pays them the 6,000gp. If the party returns with less than six teeth Cromly may attempt to pay them less than what he originally offered, however he'll begrudgingly turn over the full amount if the party protests. He's just happy to have some teeth to work with and will 'cross his fingers' that the king will accept a slightly modified design.

If the Hand of Manos managed to steal the teeth from the party, there's still a few chances for the group to save the day. The party may attempt to track down the thieves if they realize the teeth have been stolen and by whom. An elf, ranger, druid or a party member with some tracking experience might be able to follow the Hand's trail. If so, it may be possible to 'turn the tables' on the Hand, catching up to them as they make camp or stop at an inn for the night on their way to meet with Evandusk.

If the party fails to track the Hand or the identity of the teeth-thieves are unknown, they may return to Cromly empty handed. After explaining what occurred to Cromly, the blacksmith states that he's seen a couple suspicious villagers lurking about and believes they may have something to do with it. If the group questions the villagers they'll discover they were hired by Taivan Evandusk, a jeweler in a nearby city, to spy on Cromly. Cromly knows that Evandusk was one of the most verbal protesters to his win and suspects that he's behind the theft. The city lies a day's journey to the west. There's a chance that the group will cross paths with the Hand along the route there (although they may not know that they're the thieves.) Once at the city the party's free to approach Evandusk over the missing teeth, however they'd be wise to explain the situation to the city guard prior to confronting the

jeweler (or else they may find themselves wrongly accused of theft if they attempt to take back the teeth by force.)

There's also the possibility of involving King Arklund in the recovery of the rock ape teeth. He knows Evandusk wasn't happy with the contest results and will quickly accept accusations of foul play on the jeweler's part. He'll dispatch some royal guards to investigate the matter.

A quick search of Evandusk's properties, carried out by city guards or royal guards, will turn up the teeth. The teeth will then be turned over to the party or Cromly and Evandusk will be arrested for theft or 'meddling with a royal order'.

Once the teeth are in Cromly's possession he'll begin work on the ring almost immediately. He'll ask the party if they wouldn't mind lingering for a bit longer, to help keep an eye out for 'saboteurs' while he works. If for some reason the Hand didn't make a move along the journey back to town they may attempt to steal the teeth during the ring's fabrication, or even the ring after it's completed.

If all goes according to plan, Cromly will complete the ring in two days' time. Upon its completion he's required to send word to the king's royal treasurer, who will be sent to the town with a group of royal guards to retrieve the ring and secure it in the royal vault, royally. Cromly will then be summoned to the palace in a few weeks' time to attend a feast and special ceremony during which he'll present King Arklund with the ring. There's a good chance that the party will be invited to attend as well, especially if they stuck around to safeguard the ring's completion or the king becomes aware of the role they played in helping Cromly's design become a reality.

Failing to acquire, or re-acquire the rock ape teeth for Cromly will have dire consequences. Maybe not for the party but definitely for the blacksmith...

Continuing the Adventure

Here are some suggestions for further adventures:

X They party may decide to attempt to work the copper mine. If so, see **Working the Mine** in the following section.

X If the party defeats the Hand of Manos and discovers the note from Evandusk they may decide to confront the jeweler after delivering the rock ape teeth to Cromly. If they travel to Evandusk's shop in the nearby city, they'll find that the shop's been boarded up. Seems the jeweler ran off in a hurry...

X If Cromly fails to deliver the ring, King Arklund will have him imprisoned and placed in his dungeon until he devises a fitting punishment. The party may feel responsible in some way and try to speak to the King on the blacksmith's behalf, or even attempt a rescue... X The party finds themselves targeted by another group of adventurers, dedicated to the worship of Manos, seeking revenge for their fallen comrades.

Another artisan, hearing of the party's success in acquiring the rock ape teeth for Cromly, wishes to hire the party to collect a few dragon fangs...

A player who touches *Darkstrike* becomes possessed by the evil magic user. He'll either secretly work against the party or attack them outright at an opportune moment. Separating the party member from the quarterstaff should free them from the magic user's influence.

X Each of Evandusk's magic rings have a secondary attribute, allowing the jeweler to spy on their wearers. Assuming the party looted the rings, Evandusk can use them to spy on the group. He uses this ability to plot his revenge against the party.



Working the Mine

After the rock apes have been dealt with an enterprising party may decide to attempt to take control of the copper mine, seeking to dig up as much copper ore as they can, or possibly hire someone to do it for them. There are a few problems with this...

If there's a dwarf in the group they'll have a low opinion of the halfling's mine, deeming it to be structurally unsound and unsafe to work. In any dwarf's opinion, the amount of gold necessary to make the mine safe would be greater than any amount of copper ore they may acquire. They'll also be doubtful that the mine will produce much copper to begin with.

Part of the reason why the halflings who originally worked the mine were so quick to give it up when the rock apes moved in, was because the mine never really yielded that much copper in the first place. The rock apes were 'the last straw'.

The Gamemaster should feel free to develop their own system for dealing with players who insist on working the mine, possibly using a method similar to the one stated on **page 6**. In addition to the risk of cave-ins there's a possibility a party working the mine will have to deal with Wexley Wetwhistle. He'll show up at its entrance a few days after hearing the mine's been cleared of rock apes with a group of workers eager to start mining. He'll become annoyed if he discovers the party's already there digging, invoking his right as a halfling to lay claim to the halfling mine. Perhaps some sort of deal could be struck between the two parties to work the mine. However things turn out, it would be difficult for anyone involved to profit from the mine. Of course there may be the possibility of selling it...

NEW MAGIC

Ring of Fireblade

The wearer of this ring can temporarily imbue a weapon they hold with a fiery enchantment. While the enchantment is active the weapon ignites briefly upon striking a target, dealing an additional 1d4 fire damage. The weapon must be a bladed weapon and held in the ring bearing hand. The ring's power can be activated once per day and lasts for 1d4+2 rounds.

Ring of Good Intentions

This ring masks the alignment of the wearer along with those within 15 feet of them, making them appear to be of good alignment when an attempt is made to discern their true alignment by means of spells, magic items, or other abilities. At the Gamemaster's discretion a successful save may be necessary to protect the wearer from detection attempts made by more powerful means, such as spells cast by high level creatures.

Ring of Striking

This ring grants its wearer a +1 bonus to their unarmed attacks. It also makes their unarmed attack count as a magic weapon for the purpose of striking creatures with resistance to non-magic attacks.

Ring of Thieving Excellence

When worn by a thief this ring improves their thieving skills allowing the wearer to perform them at one level higher than their actual level. The wearer must wear the ring for 24 hours before the ring will function for them. If the ring is ever removed, this attunement period must be repeated before the ring's benefits can be regained.

NEW MONSTERS

Rock Apes

These creatures originated from a single tribe of normal apes who unknowingly made their home too close to a rift to the elemental plane of earth. Their proximity to the rift caused them to become infused with elemental energy, making them half flesh-and-blood and half elemental.

In their new form they're solitary creatures, subsisting on a diet of rocks, ore, and gemstones. Rock apes have four diamond-like canines, developed to help them chew their food. These canines can be worth anywhere from 1,000gp to 3,000gp each depending upon their condition.

Rock apes will fiercely defend their territory/food source, launching into a rage when confronted. This rage



channels their elemental powers, causing their skin to become rock hard, which grants them a +3 bonus to their AC. It also causes 3d6 small stones to form on each of their forearms. These stones can be fired off at attackers at a rate of 3 per round. They have a range of 20' and deal 1d4 damage.

If a rock ape hits with both hand attacks it hugs for an additional 1d6 damage.

Rock Ape: HD 6; AC 6[13] / 3[16]; Atk 2 hands (1d4), 1 bite (1d8), or 3 stones (1d4); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Hug, Rage (range attack and +3 to AC.)

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The Rock Ape to the left was provided by Skortched Urf' Studios.

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