

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



SKY KING'S TOMB

ADVENTURE PATH

MANTLE OF GOLD

By John Compton

TO THE SKY?

If enemies at the border of their Darklands home of Nar-Voth wasn't enough, tension and uncertainty had led the dwarven clans to infighting rather than unity. In this time of trouble for the dwarves, the priests delivered a prophecy from Torag, god of dwarves and Father of Creation: When the earth trembles around you and your people, you must lead them upward. Find the surface and salvation will come.

Above, a destructive bombardment from the depths of space came crashing down upon Golarion. The dwarves felt the rumble of this impact deep within the earth, and the clans came together. They would follow the command of their god and embark on a Quest for Sky.

It was a long and difficult endeavor filled with danger and relentless conflict, but a strong and fair general among them united the clans, and the dwarves crowned General Taargick their king.



PATHFINDER

AUTHOR

John Compton

ADDITIONAL WRITING

Caryn DiMarco and Vanessa Hoskins

DEVELOPERS

John Compton, Adam Daigle, and Vanessa Hoskins

DESIGN LEAD

Michael Sayre

EDITING LEADS

Patrick Hurley and Avi Kool

EDITORS

Patrick Hurley, Avi Kool, Ianara Natividad,
Solomon St. John, and Simone D. Sallé

COVER ARTIST

Mirco Paganessi

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Mylene Bertrand, Rael Dionisio, Fabio Gorla,
Mirco Paganessi, Robert Lazzaretti,
Luis Salas Lastra, and Darko Stojanovic

ART DIRECTION

Sonja Morris

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Adriana Gasperi

PUBLISHER

Erik Mona



ADVENTURE PATH 1 OF 3

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background: Sky King's Tomb

2

by Caryn DiMarco and Vanessa Hoskins

Mantle of Gold

6

by John Compton

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

8

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

44

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

58

Lost Dwarven Treasures

76

by Caryn DiMarco

Adventure Toolbox

82

by John Compton and Vanessa Hoskins

Campaign Relics

Adamantine Echo

83

Skysunder

83

Sparkwarden

84

Uniter of Clans

84

New Items

Mycoweave Shield

85

Setup Snare

85

Spore Shepherd's Staff

85

Steadyfoot Tassel

85

Creatures

Hyphae Tyrant

86

Soulbound Mauler

87

Sporeborn

88

Unfeeling Empath

90

Xulgath Ravening

91

NPCs

Krohan Veldollow

92



Paizo Inc.
7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

paizo.com



CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

Millennia ago, dwarves completed their Quest for Sky, a legendary migration from their subterranean homeland to the surface. Their exodus nearly failed more than a dozen times thanks to infighting and despair, but during the journey a hero arose to lead them—a young dwarf named Taargick. Time and again Taargick proved his bravery, resourcefulness, and political skill, inspiring his people to endure when all seemed lost. In honor of his great leadership, his followers named him ruler of the new kingdom they would found in his name: Tar Taargadth.

Yet after the dwarves reached the surface and raised citadels and toasts to his legacy, Taargick felt as much remorse in his heart as he felt pride. His people had reached the surface as Torag commanded, but at what cost? Their road had been paved with the corpses of orcs, xulgaths, and more, slain by dwarven blades. Their unjustly shed blood had festered into a thousand vendettas, justifiably earning dwarves the hatred of many. Was Torag's will worth so much death?

Taargick didn't think so. As he felt the end of his life approaching, he politely declined the magnificent tomb his people had built for him. He departed alone to carve his own tomb, hidden in the depths, where the steady strikes of his tools drew the attention of one of the Darklands' mightiest predators: a crimson worm. The two clashed for days before Taargick narrowly prevailed. To his surprise, the beast spoke, praising the king's strength and skill. Taargick, realizing he had subdued an intelligent creature and not a mindless worm, remembered the countless orcs, xulgaths, and other creatures devastated by the Quest for Sky, and threw aside his weapons and took off his shattered armor, refusing to end another Darklands resident's life. Taargick and the cave worm spoke at length as he finished his tomb, developing a deep respect for each other.

At last, with the tomb ready, Taargick knew death was near. The crimson worm Zogototaru—better known in the region as the Avern Worm—granted Taargick's last wish: that she deliver his clan dagger to Highhelm, so it might rest among his people.

A Missing Blade

Highhelm's people still tell the tale of a crimson worm bursting into the sky citadel's lower levels, disgorging a slime-encrusted dagger, bowing respectfully, and then politely withdrawing. Though flabbergasted, onlookers recognized the high king's dagger and stored it among Highhelm's most treasured relics. Taargick's legend has inspired dwarves for generations, and Clan Tolorr of Highhelm considers keeping history alive its sacred duty. So perhaps it should come as no surprise that a young Tolorr dwarf named Krohan Veldollow crept into the archives and "borrowed" Taargick's clan dagger, hoping to wield it on new adventures to perpetuate Taargick's legacy.

In his hand, the dagger shimmered with previously invisible runes and exuded warmth, as if signaling approval. Emboldened, Krohan absconded into the Darklands. Though the young dwarf knew countless epics, he was ill-equipped for adventuring in real life. With almost embarrassing efficiency, he stumbled and lost the dagger, which clattered down a deep, narrow crevice and was lost. Try as he might, Krohan couldn't locate it. He returned in shame to Highhelm, reported his misdeeds, and mournfully accepted his stern grandmother's decree: exile from their clan.

A relic like Taargick's clan dagger won't stay lost forever. While foraging in the depths, a drathnelar—also known as an umbral gnome—named Jirelga discovered the beautiful blade and brought it to her sister, Thenur, an accomplished artificer who coveted the dagger's pommel jewel. Jirelga kept the dagger, and Thenur kept the gem, believing she could transform it into a soul focus to power one of her magical constructs.

Too soon, she discovered that she was right—but breaking the blade awoke the slumbering Zogototaru with a jolt of sympathetic pain. The enraged Avern Worm tunneled toward the umbral gnome settlement seeking retribution, crushing buildings in her rampage and killing most of the inhabitants. Thenur was among them, her soul becoming trapped in the clan dagger's jewel while the dagger itself was lost again, buried beneath the rubble.

MANTLE
OF
GOLD

Campaign
Background

Chapter 1:
Highhelm
Heroes

Chapter 2:
Path of the
Dagger

Chapter 3:
A Relic
Reunited

Lost
Dwarven
Treasures

Adventure
Toolbox



Jirelga fared better, being swallowed whole before Zogototaru felt her painful rage subside and tunneled back the way she came. Luck was on Jirelga's side; lodged within the cave worm's stomach was a shard of Taargick's ancient armor, swallowed millennia ago. Jirelga tore it free, used the sharp edge to cut her way out of the Avernall Worm, and spilled out into an unfamiliar tunnel. Before she eventually found her way to Highhelm to begin a new life, she sold the adamantine armor shard to a surface-bound merchant, neither aware of its true origin.

Seeking Legacies

More than a decade later, Krohan was wandering Absalom when a psychic sensation overwhelmed him. It felt hauntingly familiar, and he traced it to an unassuming market stall that sold esoteric odds and ends—including an adamantine armor shard. As he handled it, Krohan saw a vision of High King Taargick beckoning him back to Highhelm, pointing the way to the lost clan dagger. Krohan bought the armor fragment, absconded to Highhelm, and has lived there in disguise for several weeks while scouting out trustworthy allies and planning an expedition back into the Darklands.

Yet Krohan wasn't alone in seeking Taargick's legacy. In the grim Darklands city of Hagegraf, the hryngar sorcerer Narseigus heard rumors of the Avernall Worm's recent rampages. Narseigus toiled to rediscover an obscure magical tradition called wormcalling, enabling the practitioner to draw power from—and even control—cave worms. The wild tale of the Avernall Worm delivering Taargick's clan dagger ages ago gave the sorcerer an idea: could Taargick have taken some wormcalling secret to his grave? With treacherous promises, Narseigus has gathered an eclectic set of supporters, including Hagegraf's royal family! For now, his machinations proceed out of sight, becoming apparent only later in this Adventure Path.

Campaign Summary

The campaign's three adventures are summarized here.

MANTLE OF GOLD

By John Compton

Pathfinder Adventure Path #193, Levels 1–4

Having arrived weeks earlier as special guests for a Tolorr Clan festival, the PCs explore the bustling

metropolis of Highhelm. As they help neighbors and make friends, the PCs also uncover clues to ongoing villainy in the sky citadel, including a fungal poisoner, disturbed ancestral spirits, and a smuggling operation. Krohan, the dishonored scion of Clan Tolorr, notices the PCs' efforts in the city and recruits them for a journey into the Darklands to recover Taargick's lost clan dagger. They return in time for the grand festival, presenting the dagger and discovering that the blade isn't just an heirloom—it might be the key to Taargick's lost tomb. Yet to secure the right guide to the Depths, the PCs must unravel the smuggling operation they discovered earlier and exonerate a wrongfully imprisoned drathnelar.

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

By Scott D. Young

Pathfinder Adventure Path #194, Levels 5–7

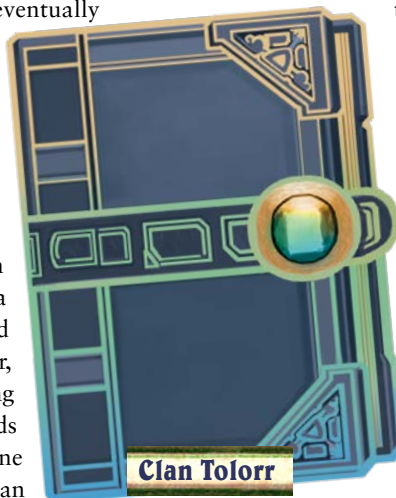
Finding the tomb means finding the Avernall Worm, Zogototaru. The PCs' guide leads them to the Ether Court, an underground fey stronghold where a recently founded cult reveres the legendary cave worm and has devised a means to track her. The PCs must navigate the strange town and infiltrate the cult to abscond with their magical map. However, a cave-in during their heist forces the PCs to take an unfamiliar route back to Highhelm. After braving the Darklands' dangers and finding their first clues about a soon-to-be rival, Narseigus, the PCs must infiltrate the hryngar city Hagegraf to discover the sorcerer's plans.

HEAVY IS THE CROWN

By Jessica Catalan

Pathfinder Adventure Path #195, Levels 8–10

To secure Taargick's lost tomb, Narseigus has enlisted Hagegraf's raiders as well as an eclectic army of disaffected Darklands dwellers to attack a nearby dwarven city, all as a distraction so he can tunnel into a forgotten cavern. The PCs infiltrate the war camp to sow distrust, convince some of Narseigus's allies to defect, and neutralize many of the raiders' weapons. They then reactivate an old dwarven lift to chase after Narseigus. However, the evil sorcerer has already found—and nearly ensorcelled—the Avernall Worm! Only by defeating him and freeing the creature can the PCs at last access Taargick's tomb and the secrets hidden within.



Key Names

There are several important NPCs and locations to keep track of in this Adventure Path. The most important are compiled here for reference.

Avernakkus A foreboding cave system formed partially by magma in recent centuries

Bulgra Veldollow Master puppeteer and matriarch of her family within Clan Tolorr

Clan Tolorr One of Highhelm's most prestigious clans, dedicated to preserving and presenting history

Felgunn A supernatural realm deep underground where most dwarves lived prior to the Quest for Sky

Guldrege A secretive deep gnome village destroyed a decade ago by a cave worm attack

Hryngars Exploitative dwarves who abandoned the Quest for Sky and turned instead to the god Droskar to survive underground

Jirelga Deep gnome explorer believed to be the sole survivor of a cave worm attack years ago

Krohan Veldollow Remorseful dwarf exiled from Clan Tolorr after stealing and losing a priceless relic years ago

Narseigus Evil hryngar sorcerer dedicated to mastering wormcalling, the magic of controlling cave worms

Queen Frilogarma Powerful lampad nymph who rules the Court of Ether with sinister majesty

Ria An earth-blooded gnome, Rivethun, and faithful retainer of Clan Tolorr

Tuom Molgrade Ambitious smith who became a rising leader in the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild

Zogototaru A titanic, ancient crimson worm who befriended King Taargick ages ago

Campaign Timeline

The following events provide a timeline to important elements of this campaign.

Date	Event
-5293 AR	Taargick is born in Felgunn, a dwarven kingdom somewhere in the Darklands.
-5293 AR	The Starstone strikes Golarion in an event commonly called Earthfall. Deep underground, Felgunn experiences earthquakes and cave-ins. After considerable debate, leaders determine that this is a sign from Torag calling dwarvenkind to migrate upward, beginning the Quest for Sky.
-5292 AR	Dwarven authorities evacuate Felgunn and seal it to prevent turning back. Some dwarves balk at abandoning their homeland, electing to stay in the Darklands and repair their cities. These resource-starved dwarves eventually

bargain with the god Droskar for their survival and become hryngars.

-5133 AR Discouraged by decades of warfare, hardship, and aimless leadership, the dwarven exodus has fractured. Yet Taargick has proven himself repeatedly, and he reunites many feuding factions. The refocused dwarves name him ruler over a new kingdom: Tar Taargadth.

-4987 AR Tar Taargadth's dwarves complete the Quest for Sky by reaching the surface in central Avistan. In strategic locations—especially atop major entrances into the Darklands—they begin building Sky Citadels, including Highhelm.

-4694 AR Nearing the end of his exceptionally long life, Taargick abdicates his throne, dons his adamantine armor, and wanders to parts unknown to die in obscurity. He clashes with and soon befriends the titanic cave worm Zogototaru, who helps him excavate and hide his secret tomb. At his request, the cave worm then delivers Taargick's clan dagger to Highhelm.

4710 AR Krohan, a promising youngster from Highhelm's Clan Tolorr, steals the clan dagger, hoping to use it in his own adventures. He promptly loses it in the Darklands, returns home in disgrace, and accepts exile.

4714 AR The drathnelar explorer Jirelga discovers the clan dagger and brings it to her village. She and her sister Thenur separate the blade and the pommel gem for their own uses. Thanks to her strong connection to the clan dagger, the hibernating Zogototaru experiences a sympathetic pain and awakens. She rampages through the Darklands, destroying the village and even swallowing Jirelga whole. Jirelga narrowly survives by cutting her way out of the worm's belly with a shard of Taargick's armor she finds within.

4721 AR The armor shard is bought and sold repeatedly, eventually appearing in Absalom's markets. Driven by occult signals he doesn't understand, Krohan senses the nearby shard and experiences a vision that draws him back to Highhelm to recover the clan dagger.

4723 AR Present day at the start of the Sky King's Tomb Adventure Path.



MANTLE OF GOLD

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes 8

Having arrived weeks ahead of Clan Tolorr's family festival, the PCs' contacts encourage them to enjoy Highhelm's sites and get into a little trouble so that they have stories of their own for the coming holiday. During this open-ended chapter, the PCs become intimately familiar with Highhelm communities and develop reputations as local heroes, uncovering larger threats in the process.

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger 44

Recruited by Krohan Veldollow to retrieve a legendary clan dagger he lost decades ago, the PCs embark on a journey into the Darklands. Retracing Krohan's steps leads through a fungus jungle ruled by an embittered leshy necromancer, followed by a treacherous descent through a tunnel left by Zogototaru. The PCs at last arrive at the ruined drathnelar village Guldrege split between two powers: soulbound gnome constructs empowered by the clan dagger's gem and a xulgath cult wielding the blade as a sacrificial knife.

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited 58

The PCs attend the family festival, navigating family drama while trying to impress their hosts. After returning the clan dagger to Clan Tolorr, the PCs help Krohan ritually restore the relic to its former resting place, inadvertently channeling a venerable spirit who tasks the PCs with rediscovering his lost tomb. But they need a guide, and that means breaking into a thieves' outpost and recovering evidence to exonerate a wrongly imprisoned gnome who knows the way.

UNEARTHING THE PAST

While seeking the Sky King's tomb might resemble a classic treasure hunt, it's just as much about unearthing forgotten dwarven history, challenging a mythologized past, and breaking cycles of subterranean violence. During this campaign, the PCs find up to six relics—using relic rules from pages 94–105 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*—associated with High King Taargick and the crimson worm Zogototaru. In many ways, the PCs are fulfilling Taargick's final wishes, and the more they embody these virtues, the more powerful these relics become!

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Mantle of Gold" is designed for four characters. Characters should level up between chapters.

- 1 The characters begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2 The characters reach 2nd level once they complete at least three of the major quests in Chapter 1.
- 3 The characters start their expedition into the Darklands with Krohan at 3rd level.
- 4 The characters begin the family festival at 4th level.
- 5 The characters advance to 5th level at the end of this adventure.



CHAPTER 1: HIGHHELM HEROES

Tradition shapes dwarven culture, and no family in Highhelm embraces their cultural heritage quite like Clan Tolorr. Considered the historians of the Five Kings Mountains, Clan Tolorr preserves and studies the past with an eye for how it comes alive in the present. Clan performers recreate legends through puppetry shows and immortalize prior ages' artifacts in public museums as well as share resources with non-dwarven societies. Members regularly sponsor scholars, ancient beings, and anyone hoping to uncover their lost heritage.

The PCs are some of these sponsored guests, whether they're studying the clan's museum techniques, presenting their own historical traditions, learning about the Darklands' legends, understanding their own

past to make amends, or pursuing some other cultural insight. The PCs might already be Highhelm residents, and some might even be members of Clan Tolorr who have yet to prove themselves through word and deed—in which case the clan might expect them to help show the other guests around. Whatever the case, each PC has a contact or sponsor who has invited them to the clan's upcoming Family Festival, a celebration for strengthening bonds between one's family—both of blood and of choice. Afterward, the expectation is that each PC's sponsor will have an open schedule to actively assist their guests in their chosen studies.

To the patrons' bemusement, the PCs arrived in Highhelm or became available earlier than expected; the Family Festival is scheduled several weeks from

now, and their sponsors are busy enough with their typical obligations and festival preparations that they can't begin their collaborations ahead of schedule. Clan representatives secure comfortable lodging for any visiting PCs at Zelgin's, a venerable inn in the King's Heart district. To make the most of their downtime, a clan associate gathers the PCs to show them what Highhelm has to offer.

Getting Started

The PCs begin this adventure at Zelgin's, an inn that has operated continuously for two millennia, as evidenced by the shallow ruts worn into the stone floor by countless footsteps. Its founder is long dead, but his distant descendant, **Epna** (NG female dwarf innkeeper), owns and maintains the establishment with pride. The PCs have all checked in here within the past day or two, potentially giving them an opportunity to meet each other beforehand. Players can find specific hooks and backgrounds to tie their characters into this Adventure Path—including information about their sponsor and why they're guests of Clan Tolorr—in the free *Sky King's Tomb Player's Guide* supplement on paizo.com.

As the PCs enjoy their breakfast, Epna calls out to welcome **Ria** (LG female oread gnome curator), a well-known friend of Clan Tolorr. The gnome's crystalline hair shimmers in the common room's light and practically quivers with her excitement as she makes her way to the PCs' table, running her hands over walls and tables appreciatively as she moves.

"It's so old!" pipes the gnome as she pulls a taller chair to the table and takes a seat. "That's what I love about Highhelm: the history isn't just in the books. It's in the stone!" Her eyes shimmer with awe before she remembers to introduce herself. "Oh, I'm Ria—a curator, preservationist, and resident scholar of the occult for Clan Tolorr. It's a delight to see new faces, especially those taking in this sky citadel for the first time."

If any of the PCs have the Conservator campaign background, Ria is the Tolorr contact who invited them here. On recognizing any of her personal guests, she interrupts herself to welcome them by name before continuing.

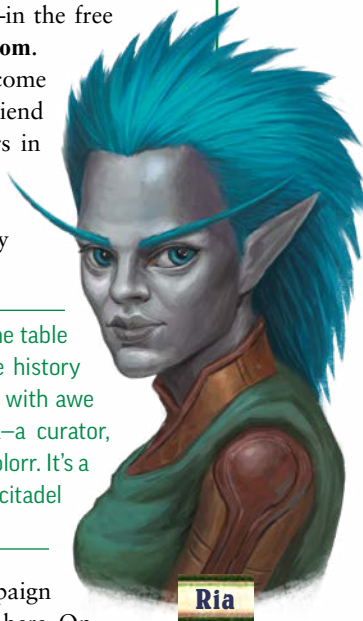
"Well, ah, perhaps you'll have an opportunity to take in Highhelm a second, third, and fourth time. As I understand it, you're all here for important celebration, collaboration, and camaraderie with the fine folks of Clan Tolorr. But that's all scheduled for after the Family Festival, which isn't for a few weeks yet. Might be for the best because..." she takes several curious sniffs before nodding to herself. "As I thought. Clan Tolorr's about history, right? You can't just bring a bottle of wine as a gift for the host; no, you need to bring stories! There's barely a whiff of narrative between you."

Though if one of the PCs has a particularly dramatic backstory, she amends her statement by winking at them and adding, "Except you, of course."

"Not to worry, though," continues Ria. "Highhelm's swimming with stories to be written and rediscovered. Clan Tolorr's got your room and board covered, so

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, the PCs explore Highhelm as an urban sandbox, following rumors and occasional cues from Clan Tolorr to develop a reputation for heroism, reliability, and resourcefulness. Their exploits include delving a devious maze, exploring a haunted ranch, performing combat surgery on a giant crab, creating wondrous crafts in Burntown, and investigating a mass poisoning. As their renown grows, the PCs uncover a historical mystery in one of Clan Tolorr's ancient crypts.



MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



MAKING FRIENDS

Zelgin's provides a base of operations for the PCs. Not only do some of the PCs' friends they acquire during adventures stop by to say hello, but also the current regulars can be good sources of information.

Elbert Glassgrinder (NG male dwarf hunter) tends to relax here for days at a time between forays into the mountains. He respects bravery, and he's always ready to buy an ale for the PCs after their latest victories. In fact, this is the innocuous persona that Krohan Veldollow has adopted. He features in Chapter 2, so it's good for the PCs to become familiar with him beforehand.

Querizzia (CG female human artist) is a traveling painter who grew up in Magnimar and spent the past several years illustrating the greatest wonders Avistan has to offer. She's especially excited about the upcoming basilisk game (page 12), which rekindles her passion for the Fightin' Firepelts.

Shalhadri (N female halfling merchant) wears the pristine white clothing of a kalistocrat, one of Druma's esoteric merchants. Epna caters to her particular diet and other needs, so Shalhadri retires here after each day spent selling luxury textiles. She has ample gossip and respect for anyone who respects her space.

Vulgar (LG male dwarf counselor) has unofficially started and ended the most fights at Zelgin's, because while he sometimes meets argumentative clients here (leading to occasional fisticuffs), he has quashed more scuffles with his disarming charm. Few know Highhelm's rivalries and spats better than he, and he's a highly sought-after conflict mediator.

that leaves you free to get into some trouble." She grins impishly and wiggles in her seat. "Trust me, it's fun."

As if to illustrate her point, Ria grabs a spare fork and occasionally tries to steal a leftover bit of the PCs' breakfasts. She happily chatters and answers questions.

Where do we find trouble in Highhelm? "Oh gosh, where won't you find trouble?" She laughs. "I mean, the sky citadel is safe enough, but everyone has their stories and misfortunes. Share a smile and open your ears, and you'll hear all sorts of opportunities." She gestures with the fork at the half-full common room. "Helps that you're friends of Tolorr, which should open some doors. Far better if you build your own reputations, though, as that'll open even more."

Are you coming with us? "Me? Goodness, no! There's a Forge War-era music box to restore, and those were

flimsy enough before surviving a few centuries in a damp basement." She steals an unclaimed bit of waffle. "I can point you in the right direction, then it's more a self-guided tour from there."

Why did you sniff at us? "I've got a nose for history," boasts Ria before laughing off the claim. "Well, half-true. I've been studying with local Rivethun—a terrifically ancient animism tradition. They can commune with spirits and hear a place's past. Well, seems I'm better at smelling than listening. Walking through Highhelm's like strolling through a springtime garden. You're more like buds that haven't opened yet."

Overall, Ria encourages the PCs to make friends wherever they go; they can learn about opportunities (like the rumors on page 11) by chatting with residents and visitors in the city or by Gathering Information. If the PCs aren't sure where to start, Ria can point them toward a rumor or two. She ensures they have their bearings, then wishes them well on their explorations and sets off to King's Crown.

Exploring Highhelm

Built within the tallest peak of the Five Kings Mountains, Highhelm is a fortified metropolis that serves as the ancestral home and cultural nexus of dwarven culture in Avistan. While *Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide* supplies an overview of the Five Kings Mountains, *Pathfinder Lost Omens Highhelm* provides a deep dive into the eponymous city that details Highhelm's layout, appearance, and conditions so that you can present this rich location throughout the adventure.

HIGHHELM

SETTLEMENT 14

LN METROPOLIS

Ancient dwarven city embodying the essence of dwarven culture in its architecture, arts, and social organization while gradually becoming more cosmopolitan.

Government Monarchy with a council

Population 41,527 (83% dwarves, 7% humans, 5% elves, 5% other)

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Petran

Religions Torag, Folgrit, Grundinnar, Kols, other deities of the dwarven pantheon, the pantheon as a whole, Abadar, Pharasma

Threats orcs, aberrant horrors and monsters from the Depths and Darklands, infighting, natural disasters

Of Dwarven Make Uncommon dwarf items, including magic items, are common within Highhelm.

Forged with Power Highhelm offers higher level access to weapons and armor thanks to the city's forges; armaments of up to 17th level are available.

HIGHHELM RUMORS

D12	Rumor	Quest
King's Crown		
1	The antics of a bored cloud dragon youth living at the Cloudspire Embassy has frazzled neighbors. Anyone who can discourage her pranks or keep her entertained would be a hero.	—
2	Fans of the sport basilisk are distressed because Highhelm's star player, Relkez Stonefist, departed on parental leave a month earlier than expected. With an imminent match against an old rival, the team is struggling to recruit a replacement.	—
3	From young nobles to ambassadors in training, demand for language tutors and conversation partners has risen dramatically. A fluent speaker could make a good income and win influential friends.	—
King's Heart		
4	Torag's Shield, a massive fortifications project, occupies many craftspeople and has strained workshops' ability to fulfill other orders. Anyone willing to endure the heat could make friends and profit by working in Burntown for a day.	Burntown Temps (page 33)
5	It's stickleberry season, and that means pie! Soon, the Copper Anvil will host its annual pie-eating contest. The entry fee is just 1 silver piece.	—
6	A detachment of Knights of Lastwall recently arrived in King's Heart to recuperate, restock, and recruit. Locals are conflicted, respecting the knights' deeds yet wary of the outsiders' presence.	—
Stonebreach		
7	Miscreants have been sabotaging a local stable, whose proprietor is increasingly convinced that supernatural forces are afoot. He seeks investigators to solve the mystery.	Etcherie Animal Raids (page 28)
8	Violent food poisoning incapacitated dozens at the Silvercap Tavern, which has shut its doors until further notice. Its owner seems desperate for independent investigators to identify what afflicted her customers.	Vengeance at Silvercap (page 24)
9	The Round Market is abuzz following the recent arrival of Dongun Hold merchants. It's a rare chance for most to see (or even purchase) the fabled firearms made in the Mana Wastes.	—
The Depths		
10	A kobold youth recently disappeared, and some believe he entered the Blacknoon Gauntlet. His community is desperate for his return and seeks someone to brave the gauntlet for a rescue.	Blacknoon Gauntlet Rescue (page 18)
11	Domesticated crabs have recently lashed out at passersby in the Depths. Their Pearlcask tenders seem eager for outside help, fearful that guards might just cull the offending crustaceans.	Blood in the Water (page 15)
12	Diomira's Drop, a treacherous waterfall that some try to climb down as a dare, is especially popular of late, which means more injuries incurred by foolhardy climbers as they seek fame.	—

High Priest Arridor Orridus (LG dwarf cleric of Folgrit) Head priest of Folgrit and co-head of the Nine-Eyed Hammer, a powerful religious council

High King Borogrim the Hale (LN male magnate) Ruler of Highhelm and convener of the Gathering Council of leaders from other city-states in the Five Kings Mountains

Geralde Brightfist (LN female dwarf ruffian) Head of the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild, Highhelm's largest gang

Kaltan the Pike (LN male dwarf battlemaster) General of the Highhelm First Army

High Priestess Vanth Orridus (LN dwarf cleric of Torag) Head priest of Torag and co-head of the Nine-Eyed Hammer

TRACKING REPUTATION

Dignity, glory, and honor are powerful forces in Highhelm. This Adventure Path uses the reputation subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 164–165) as a simple way to track the PCs' reputation in dwarven society. The group's Reputation Points (RP) start at 0, though PCs using the campaign backgrounds provided in the *Sky King's Tomb Player's Guide* might adjust the starting total, to a maximum of 4 RP.

In Chapter 1, each of the six main quests (pages 15–43) are treated as a moderate favor, each potentially earning the PCs 2 RP. The PCs might also perform a variety of minor favors, such as the brief side quests on pages 12–15, each of which might earn the PCs 1 RP. Remember that minor favors typically don't impact a group with liked, admired, or revered, so these side quests are most effective for helping an "ignored" group become "liked." By the end of Chapter 1, the PCs should be liked (5–14 RP), possibly even admired (15–29 RP).

Throughout the Adventure Path, the PCs might earn additional Reputation Points. Also, some encounters or interactions note ways that the PCs' reputation might adjust the scene.

HIGHHELM RUMORS

Highhelm always seems to be abuzz with different events and opportunities. The PCs are likely to hear some of the rumors on page 11 as they explore Highhelm. These rumors are divided by district, should you want to prioritize local one as PCs explore particular areas. Five of them correspond to this chapter's main quests; the other seven provide minor leads that the PCs might explore throughout the adventure, detailed below. After the PCs reach 2nd level, they also learn of the Tolorr Crypt Haunting quest (page 39).

Highhelm Quests

Except for one quest available only after the PCs reach 2nd level, Chapter 1 presents Highhelm as a sandbox adventure the PCs can explore in any order and at their own initiative. Six quests are significant undertakings that involve combat, investigation, or both (pages 15–43). Seven others (listed below) are flavorful diversions that let the PCs make friends, accumulate more Reputation Points, earn additional treasure, and experience more of this legendary sky citadel.

2nd-Level Scaling: Because Chapter 1 spans two character levels, all but the Tolorr Crypt Haunting

quest are designed for 1st-level PCs and require minor adjustments after the PCs reach 2nd level. Apply the elite adjustment (*Bestiary* 6) to all creatures and hazards. Increase the DCs of all other checks by 1.

Scaling for Large Groups: "Mantle of Gold" is designed for four PCs. While page 489 of the *Core Rulebook* provides guidance for expanding combat encounters for larger groups, some of this adventure's skill-based encounters rely on the PCs achieving a number of successes in a set amount of time.

BASILISK GAME

Enjoyed across the Inner Sea region, basilisk is a competitive sport played with eight-player teams that try to score points by placing a head-sized ball into a round goal. It has numerous complications that add to the action, of course. Players all wear special helmets, and whoever holds the scoring ball must deploy an opaque visor and rely on teammates' words and nudges to navigate to the goal. Meanwhile, a second, smaller ball that can only be handled using handheld basket scoops gets passed and hurled, with anyone struck by the "basilisk" having to freeze in place. Full rules and player positions appear on pages 61–63 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Travel Guide*.

What's important for this event is that the star player for the Highhelm Hodags, Relkez Stonefist, has departed on parental leave after his wife gave birth a month early. While fans support Relkez's family priorities, they dread what this means for their prospects when the Hodags clash with their visiting rivals, Magnimar's Fightin' Firepelts. The hometown team is holding last-minute tryouts for some replacement players—perhaps including one or more PCs! To earn a spot, a PC needs to succeed at two of the following three checks: a DC 15 check associated with the sport, a DC 12 Fortitude save to keep up energy levels, and a DC 17 check using a different skill associated with the sport. A wide range of checks might be appropriate, like a ranged attack to hurl a basilisk, an Acrobatics check to maneuver, an Athletics check to run, an Intimidation check to spook competitors, or a Performance check to provide loud, concise instructions to someone handling the scoring ball.

Schedule the big game when the PCs have some downtime between other quests. You can make the event as complex as you like, but it should include four rolls from the participating PC. This uses a simple Victory Points mechanic (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) to track progress.

Sports Check (DC 15): The PC attempts a check or attack associated with the game, showing how well they perform early in the competition.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox

Reflex Save (DC 15): An opponent hurls the basilisk at the PC! Can they dodge out of the way? If a PC has a special bonus to AC against ranged attacks, they can apply it to this saving throw.

Fortitude Save (DC 13): The action seems endless. Can the PC keep going without getting tired?

Sports Check (DC 18): The scores are close. The game is almost over. Suddenly an opening appears for the PC to score a goal! Can they be the hero the Hodags need?

Resolving the Game: If the PC earned 3 or more Victory Points, the Hodags win! For their contribution, the PC earns 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor, gets a silver-inlaid version of the Hodags' helmet (worth 2 gp to most, though up to 8 gp to a diehard Hodags fan), and receives so many free drinks and other kickbacks that they enjoy an extravagant cost of living (*Core Rulebook* 294) for one week.

CLOUDSPIRE ANTICS

Consisting of several outbuildings surrounding an amphitheater, the Cloudspire Embassy is a century-old bridge between Avistan's and Garund's dwarven populations. The elderly Ambassador **Jkarissend Softtongue** (LN male kobold diplomat) oversees operations, and **Mharsilekinass the Jewel** (CN female cloud dragon) lives here ostensibly to provide security. Given the limited crime in King's Crown, Mharsilekinass gets bored easily and is insatiably curious about Highhelm, so she regularly runs unusual social experiments, such as ambushing dignitaries to quiz them about their intimate secrets or shouting increasingly iconoclastic hypotheses at priests to test their religious boundaries.

Everyone involved would love it if someone could sate Mharsilekinass's curiosity in a more wholesome way. By spending a day answering the dragon's endless questions and succeeding at a DC 13 Lore check, DC 15 Society check, DC 18 Will save, or DC 20 Deception check, a PC provides Mharsilekinass so much interesting trivia that she needs a week of relative quiet to process it all. A variety of Lore skills associated with local culture would be suitable, such as Dwarf Lore, Highhelm Lore, or a Lore associated with dwarven religion, but others might apply.

Alternatively, a PC might play into the dragon's puckish intrigues. Mharsilekinass has no shortage

of schemes and dares that she's happy to foist on an accomplice. These objectives involve verbally prodding a dignitary, acting with exceptional daring during Chapter 1's other quests, or even facilitating the dragon's pranks and recording the consequences.

Whatever methods the PCs might favor, salving Mharsilekinass's boredom makes the neighborhood a little quieter and earns the PCs 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor. The dragon might also show off a small slate slab containing a fossilized snake that she found in Garund (worth 4 gp), even gifting it to a friend who consistently impresses her. She's an incorrigible gossip as well, providing another medium for the PCs to hear local rumors.



DIOMIRA'S DROP

According to legend, a dwarf named Diomira climbed down this waterfall millennia ago to win a blacksmith's hand in marriage. Nobody has replicated the climb since, though reckless athletes try—and often fall, suffering considerable injury or death. If a PC wants to make the climb, you can approximate the challenge by having them attempt the following Athletics checks to Climb: DC 16, DC 20, DC 24, DC 30, DC 35. Succeeding at all five is virtually impossible at 1st level, but it's less about making the whole trip and more about seeing how far someone can go before slipping. If a PC falls, they tumble into the water below, taking 5 damage for each of the checks they haven't successfully completed (maximum 25 damage). There are bystanders on hand to stabilize a PC and restore them to 1 Hit Point if the fall incapacitates them, and only the most fragile PC risks death from this fall.

If a PC succeeds at three or more of the checks, they earn 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor for impressing the crowd.

KNIGHTS OF LASTWALL

Even though Lastwall fell a few years ago, its defenders don't rest. One branch, the knights vigilant, travel the world as living examples of their order's courage and honor, and a cohort of 14 knights vigilant are recuperating in King's Heart, their housing provided by Clan Stonefist. Even so, Highhelm seems to hold Sir **Auskur** (LG male half-orc knight) and his comrades at arm's length. His suspicion of prejudice is accurate; even as Highhelm becomes more open-minded, a millennia of battles instills a caution of other military forces that's hard to shake.

The knights are happy for friendly company, and they might provide a natural avenue for any PC to access Knights of Lastwall character options. By spending a day with the knights, a PC can attempt a DC 15 skill check to assist them: a Medicine check to ease old wounds, a Diplomacy check to combat dwarven prejudices, a Performance check to spread word of the knights' deeds, or similar efforts. Successfully assisting the knights at least twice earns the PCs 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor for their generosity as well as a *scroll of disrupting weapons* from Sir Auskur. If a PC

critically succeeds at one of these checks, Sir Auskur attends the Tolorr Family Festival in Chapter 3 as a guest, where he personally vouches for that PC during one interaction of the player's choice; treat this as his critically succeeding to Aid the PC.

LANGUAGE TUTORS

The fall of Lastwall, the rise of the Whispering Tyrant, military collaboration with Kyonin, and early hints of diplomatic dialogue with Belkzen have increased demand for language teachers and conversation partners. Most of these schools are in King's Crown and cater to powerful clans, so serving as a tutor could help a PC build powerful friendships. Languages like Chthonian, Elven, Hallit, Jotun, Necril, and Orcish are in high demand, with a lower demand for Empyrean, Gnomish,

Goblin, Petran, Sakvroth, and Varisian.

For any PC who can speak at least one of these languages, this introduces an opportunity to Earn Income using Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Society, ranging from task levels 1–4. A PC who speaks a high-demand language treats a success as a critical success. If a PC successfully tutors for at least 3 days, they develop useful connections that earn them 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor.

ROUND MARKET FIREARMS

For the next several weeks, local merchants have a small array of firearms for sale. There's no event tied to these merchants, but it's a way to support gunslinger PCs or potentially let other PCs acquire a firearm (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 150–153) at the GM's discretion. Alternatively, these merchants could be inventors from Absalom selling an assortment of gadgets (*Guns & Gears* 66–71).

STICKLEBERRY FESTIVAL

Hold this day-long celebration and competitive eating contest whenever it's convenient. It features a small parade, a crowning of Lord, Lady, or Sovereign Stickleberry, and a pie-eating contest to celebrate the eponymous fruit, which resembles a fuchsia blackberry. If a PC wants to compete to become Sovereign Stickleberry, have them attempt two different DC 17 skill checks to demonstrate elegance, make a costume, or answer questions eloquently. If they succeed at both, they win, earning 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor,



Tregellon Pearlcase

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1:
Highhelm
Heroes

Chapter 2:
Path of the
Dagger

Chapter 3:
A Relic
Reunited

Lost
Dwarven
Treasures

Adventure
Toolbox

a fuchsia sash, and large basket containing 20 jars of stickleberry jam made that season (worth 1 sp each).

If a PC wants to compete in the pie-eating contest (1 sp per entrant), have them make up to five Fortitude saving throws, starting at DC 13.

Critical Success You practically inhale pie without feeling full. You don't increase the DC of subsequent Fortitude save DCs this round.

Success You maintain momentum. Increase the DC of your subsequent Fortitude saves during the contest by 1.

Failure Your body protests as you gorge. Increase the DC of your subsequent Fortitude saves during the contest by 1d3.

Critical Failure You drop out of the contest. You become sickened 1 and can't reduce this sickened condition for 8 hours.

If the PC succeeds at the fifth saving throw, they win the contest (if multiple PCs succeed, the PC with the highest Fortitude save result wins). This earns them 1 Reputation Point as well as the ownership of the trophy for a year: a +1 *spear* called the Stickleberry Sticker.

Blood in the Water

Summary: A farm for raising giant mollusks is under threat from giant parasites whose origins might uncover nearby illegal tunneling.

Objective: Dispatch giant leeches with minimal damage to a prize crab

Contact: Tregellon Pearlcase (LG male dwarf rancher)

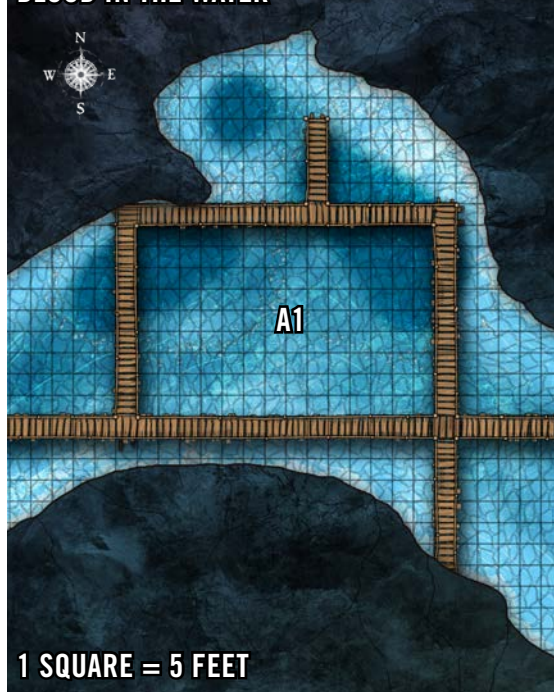
District: The Depths

Though elevated and landlocked, Highhelm produces ample seafood, with much of it farmed thanks to the aquaculture expertise of Clan Pearlcase. Tregellon Pearlcase is a proud, 77th-generation mollusk wrangler who owns several shellfish caves in the Depths. By filtering water from the Rapid River, carefully selecting feed, and using a selection of mussels and snails to keep things clean, the Pearlcases keep these artificial ponds healthy. However, several giant leeches recently bypassed the farms' defenses and burrowed into Tregellon's largest crab. These leeches might have killed a smaller specimen, but so far, they've only weakened and enraged the animal. Tregellon has haphazardly quarantined her and quietly sought help; he's concerned city guards would kill the crab rather than save her, and even fellow clan members consider culling the crab the best solution.

PEARLCASE AQUACULTURE

When the PCs arrive, Tregellon is busily clearing one of his ponds' walkways by scouring the rogue mussels starting to grow there. He tosses the bivalves into a

BLOOD IN THE WATER



basket and carries them over once he realizes he has company, shucking and sharing the mussels amicably while speaking. Tregellon is dressed for working on the water, wearing little beyond sturdy trousers, a teal sash around his waist, and several pearl studs in his ears. He's muscular, with a horizontal scar under each pectoral ("Molting scars," he acknowledges with a knowing wink, if asked).

Once conversation turns to recent crab attacks, the jovial Tregellon visibly deflates with worry, and he shares what he knows.

"My shell-beasts are my pride and my livelihood, but there's one who's a living legend and the jewel of her papa's eye: Lady Shimmersnip's her name, and she may as well be high queen of Highhelm. She's half again the size of any I've raised before, ancient as the stone, a shell that sings with all seven of Shelyn's lovely colors, and... well, I digress.

"Fact is, she's sick—sick with leeches! Now, I keep good, clean ponds, and there shouldn't be any way leeches that big would get into the water. And leeches of that type would have killed a lesser crab, but Lady Shimmersnip?" He scoffs proudly. "They've just made her angry. Leeches like that are slick and they burrow partway in, but they don't latch. I've been trying to extract them, but Her Ladyship isn't her gentle self these days; won't let me near. That's why I called in some help. I need some folks with tough hides and tough grips to wrangle some leeches free and kill them off without harming my beautiful Shimmersnip."

Tregellon's ready to begin any time and answers questions, with the most likely below.

How should we behave around Lady Shimmersnip?

"She's not excited about any visitors, so expect her to get especially snippy. Crabs scuttle sideways, so if you move sideways, too, you're saying 'I'm a fast thing, like a threat... or a suitor.' She likes to wave, though, and she's a dancer at heart. You might be able to calm her down enough to get close."

What are these leeches? "I'm pretty sure these are giant speckle-bellies. They're maybe three feet long and as thick as your arm when hungry, but they bloat to dwarf proportions when feeding. They wriggle, they bite, and they'll bleed you dry if given half a chance. Salt shrivels them, but these ponds are fresh water." Tregellon doesn't keep salt around but doesn't mind if the PCs bring a few handfuls of their own salt to use during the upcoming encounter. Much more than that would potentially foul the water.

Can we injure Lady Shimmersnip? Tregellon winces but nods. "Top priority is ending Her Ladyship's suffering. Ideally, that means we're saving her. If you have to apply some force, I'll understand. If there's no saving her... I admit that giving her a quick end would be better than this misery. But she's already hurt, yeah? Every extra crack in her shell will make recovery that much harder."

Are there any other threats? "I don't mind if you crush a few mussels underfoot or dislodge a conch, but none of those are pleasant to step on. The ponds have a few clear paths for maintenance, and there are some deeper spots. Mind your feet!"

Are you paying us? "Oh! Did I not mention that?" Tregellon nods vigorously. "I have plenty set aside—I'd pay a hundred and fifty in Highhelm's silver to save Her Ladyship!"

A1. SHIMMERSNIP'S POOL

MODERATE 1

The typical aquaculture pool forms a broad loop around a broad, natural rock pillar, enabling pumped water to flow one direction to better disperse nutrients and flush out waste. Lady Shimmersnip has been quarantined in a wide niche near the pool's exit, penned in by 4-foot-tall wicker weirs that Tregellon shifted here. The pool is designed for raising several mollusk species, with swaths of mussels anchored to the floor, foot-long freshwater conchs slowly patrolling the area, and immense cave crabs whose pointy legs easily step among the mussels.

Depth: In most places, the water is about 1–2 feet deep, which doesn't impede most Medium creatures but is difficult terrain for Small creatures. The cave floor dips to nearly double this depth in some places, which is difficult terrain for Medium creatures and requires Small creatures to swim.

Hazards: Except for a few maintenance paths, this part of the pool is covered with mussels and spiny conchs, creating a field of living spikes. Whenever a creature uses a move action to travel through the mussels, they take 1d4 piercing damage unless they succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save. A creature can avoid this damage by instead using Acrobatics to Balance (DC 12) as they tread carefully. Lady Shimmersnip ignores this hazard while moving.

Creatures: Though a nacreous cave crab grows quickly to its adult size (about 5 feet wide), a mature crab gradually continues molting and expanding if given enough resources and oxygen. Without a doubt, the venerable Lady Shimmersnip is a rarity; her shell spans 9 feet in width, and with every molt, the luster of her carapace only grows. It's clear why she's Tregellon's prize crustacean.

She's also irresistible to the two giant leeches that infiltrated the pool. Each of the parasites dodged her claws, bit into the gaps in her shell, and partly wriggled inside. They've been slowly feeding on her vital fluids ever since. To add insult to injury, whenever Lady Shimmersnip moves, her body pinches the bloated leeches, causing them to gnash and wriggle painfully inside her. Resigned and weak, the massive crab has sunk to a crouch.

The crab ignores anyone until she spots them approaching within 60 feet, at which point she stands and weakly waves her claws as a threat. If this doesn't scare off intruders, she waves more vigorously, jostling the leeches and causing them to wriggle painfully, enraging her. This instigates combat; the giant leeches Gnash until they've been extracted, at which point they focus their attacks on the PCs. Lady Shimmersnip primarily attacks the PCs, though if the PCs have treated her courteously and removed the leeches, she might help them fight the parasites. If a giant leech is reduced to 5 or fewer Hit Points, it flees by wriggling toward the crack through which it entered the pool in the first place (see Aftermath on page 17); unfortunately, the well-fed leeches are too large to squeeze through and escape, so they fight to the death.

The PCs might want to approach the giant crab surreptitiously, Sneaking in or using the wild empathy



Stickleberry Jam

ability to reassure Lady Shimmersnip. Good skill use might enable some PCs to get within 30 feet or even next to the crab before the leeches wriggle and make her lash out. In addition, the Captivate Crab action (see sidebar) provides the PCs another way to limit Lady Shimmersnip's lethality as they perform mid-combat surgery. During the encounter, Tregellon provides encouragement and might pull an unconscious PC to safety, but he's a noncombatant.

This is potentially a severe combat encounter, assuming the PCs fight all three animals at once. Fortunately, Lady Shimmersnip is weak, easily distracted, and willing to shift her ire toward leeches, and the PCs might not fight both leeches at once. Even so, be mindful of the encounter's potential difficulty for new adventurers.

LADY SHIMMERSNIP

CREATURE 2

Variant giant crab (*Bestiary* 2 55)

Initiative Perception +8

HP 24 (current 21)

Parasitized Lady Shimmersnip has two giant leeches partly burrowed into her body, making her enfeebled 1 and clumsy 2. These conditions' modifiers can change and aren't reflected in her stat block.

Melee ♦ claw +10 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d10+4 slashing plus Grab

GIANT LEECHES (2)

CREATURE 2

Giant leeches (*Bestiary* 2 156)

Initiative Perception +5

Parasitizing While burrowed into Lady Shimmersnip, a giant leech has cover, can't make attacks, and can Squirm. If a giant leech is grappled, restrained, or stunned, a creature can attempt to remove the leech by spending a single action, which has the attack and manipulate traits, attempting an Athletics or Medicine check against the giant leech's Fortitude DC. On a success, the creature extracts the leech, reduces Lady Shimmersnip's clumsy condition by 1, and places the leech in a space adjacent to the creature and Lady Shimmersnip.

Gnash ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** The giant leech is parasitizing Lady Shimmersnip; **Effect** Lady Shimmersnip takes 1 slashing damage that bypasses her resistances.

AFTERMATH

Once the leeches are dead and the PCs have given Lady Shimmersnip some space, Tregellon rushes in to calm his favorite crab and treat her wounds. As he does, he muses aloud about how odd it is to get leeches here and asks the PCs to check around for clues once they're ready.

PATH OF LEAST VIOLENCE

Lady Shimmersnip is hostile but well trained. To minimize the threat she poses, PCs can try to calm her.

CAPTIVATE CRAB ♦

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE VISUAL

Using exaggerated movements while within 30 feet of her, you try to distract or placate Lady Shimmersnip. Attempt a Nature or Performance check against her Will DC (typically DC 18). If Lady Shimmersnip has 15 or fewer Hit Points, use the outcome for one degree worse.

Critical Success Lady Shimmersnip is captivated, becoming slowed 2 for 1 round or until she takes damage.

Success Lady Shimmersnip is intrigued, becoming slowed 1 for 1 round or until she takes damage.

Failure Lady Shimmersnip is unaffected.

Critical Failure Lady Shimmersnip misinterprets the signals and responds aggressively, gaining a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and becoming temporarily immune to the Captivate Crab action for 1 round.

Each PC investigating the pools can attempt a DC 14 Cave Lore check, a DC 14 Survival check, or a DC 16 Perception check. By succeeding, a PC notices slight ripples in the water that seem to originate not from the pool's input sluices but from one of the walls. This leads PCs to a crack in the wall about 10 feet above the pond's surface, from which water steadily trickles down the rock, its path traced by a faint trail of algae.

The PCs can attempt additional DC 15 checks to Climb up to inspect this fissure, speculate about what made it, judge its age, or even (for a Small creature) Squeeze through to see what lies beyond. They might discover that the crack seems to have formed within the past month, based on the limited weathering and minimal algae. Something was burrowing through the stone here, parallel to the cave, creating a tunnel about 3 feet in diameter with the use of hand-sized drills. It appears to have stopped burrowing a short distance after getting too close to the cave, after which it crudely backfilled part of the tunnel with rubble. Water dribbles through the rubble from an unseen source. With considerable labor, someone might clear this tunnel and trace where it began, but that's beyond the scope of this quest. Tregellon even observes that unsanctioned tunneling in Highhelm is highly illegal, equivalent to arson, so this is a crime that local guards should handle from here.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



These clues help foreshadow a later encounter in Chapter 3 with the dig-widget that made the tunnel. What the PCs don't know yet is that a branch of the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild was trying to carve out a new smuggling tunnel, but the dig-widget accidentally breached the aquaculture cave before being recalled.

Treasure: The PCs' rewards depend on how well they protected Lady Shimmersnip. So long as the PCs kill the leeches, Tregellon pays them 150 sp as promised. If Lady Shimmersnip survives the encounter, Tregellon showers the PCs with praise, tries to think up an additional reward, and at last exclaims happily upon deciding to call in a favor from a tailor to outfit one PC with Highhelm's latest high fashion. The players are welcome to choose who gets this reward, which takes about 3 days to make. The result is a high-fashion fine outfit that makes the wearer look like the heir to some underwater kingdom: flowing green and blue fabric, a decorative breastplate made from shaped nacreous crab shell, and numerous freshwater pearl accents. In addition, a few of the semiprecious jewels are magic talismans, specifically a *dragon turtle scale* and a *mesmerizing opal* that the PC can freely detach without diminishing the outfit's effect.

Upon delivering the outfit, Tregellon promises the PCs that if they give him a day's warning, he'll happily also send them a party-sized platter of freshwater seafood. They're welcome to enjoy this on their own, but calling in this favor for the Tolorr Family Festival in Chapter 3 can provide the PCs a small benefit.

Reputation: The PCs earn 1 Reputation Point for killing the leeches and an additional 1 Reputation Point if Lady Shimmersnip survives.

Blacknoon Gauntlet Rescue

Summary: A young kobold disappears in an attempt to survive a deadly maze and join an elite thieves' guild, and his community desperately wants him rescued.

Objective: Track the kobold into the Blacknoon Gauntlet, performing a rescue while dodging traps and territorial xulgaths

Contact: Ussa (CG female ratfolk fixer)

District: The Depths

The Blacknoon Thieves' Guild wields considerable power in the Depths, surviving in part due to its reliance on subtle crimes like espionage, smuggling, and sabotage rather than blatant robbery. The other leading factor in their success is expertise; the guild doesn't suffer fools. As way of recruiting competent thieves, the guild constructed a deadly labyrinth in the abandoned mining tunnels. A host of traps, confusing passages, locked doors, and the occasional xulgaths threaten any who enter. However, if a candidate reaches the maze's center and escapes with one of the specially marked Blacknoon coins, that coin earns them a place in the guild.

Young **Fazil** (N male kobold rogue) grew up in the Burrows, an eclectic neighborhood of cramped tunnels and hardscrabble inhabitants. As a capable trapsmith and tinkerer, he believed that the only thing keeping him from membership, nonviolent crime, and a comfortable life was snagging one of the Blacknoon coins. However, his family and neighbors distrust the guild, so Fazil only confided his dreams in his best friend, Ussa, who likewise tried to discourage his criminal aspirations. Fazil appeared to relent but secretly headed into the Blacknoon Gauntlet days ago. As his family panics over his disappearance, Ussa seeks a rescue team to enter the gauntlet and bring back Fazil—who she hopes is safe but scared into more honest work.

MEETING USSA

Once the PCs travel to the Depths and inquire about the missing kobold youth, Ussa quickly finds them. She's a young ratfolk with tan fur and a figurative finger on the Burrows' pulse, which makes her an invaluable contact for nearly anyone getting business done in the neighborhood. She guides the PCs to a less busy tunnel, gives them a discerning look, and asks a few questions to confirm they're here to help, not make more trouble. Once certain, Ussa shares what she knows.

"My friend Fazil fancies himself a thief. He's got a good noggin and a good heart, but he thought joining the

Lady Shimmersnip

Blacknoon would be his path to a good life. We all pitched alternatives, but he ran away recently. Almost certainly entered the gauntlet—bad choice, bad choice—and hasn't been seen since." Ussa gently tugs at her whiskers with worry. "Blacknoon lets anyone enter to get one of their coins, and it doesn't lift a finger to help anyone who doesn't make it out.

"Fazil's been gone a few days already. I don't think he's getting out without help. Maybe you can be that help? Give him a little life coaching while you're at it? The Burrows don't have much coin to spare, but I can get a collection going."

Ussa can answer questions to help get the PCs started, with likely queries below.

What is the Blacknoon? Ussa hesitates, uncertain if this is a joke. "They're the top thieves' guild around here. Smuggling, extortion, theft, and a little dabbling in violent crime. They're at odds with Sigunde's Swifthands, but they both keep the fighting out of sight, so the community ignores them."

Why does Fazil want a coin? "It's a recruiting test. Get into the gauntlet, make it to the middle, get a coin, get out alive, and that's proof enough that someone's got the skills to join the guild."

What is Fazil like? "He's a dear friend. Kobold, green and silver scales, bit of a nose horn, about this tall, answers to 'Fazil.' Can't miss him!" She gestures with her hand to indicate he's about 3 feet tall.

What is the gauntlet? "Used to be mining tunnels, but the Blacknoon claimed them and converted them into a nasty maze. I've heard it's got traps and secrets—maybe some monsters you're better off avoiding—but I've never been in there. Best you pack plenty of lights and snacks."

NAVIGATING THE GAUNTLET

If the PCs are to find Fazil, they must enter and survive the Blacknoon Gauntlet themselves. The site is a confounding maze of traps and other challenges. Mapping every twist and turn makes for tedious gameplay, so charting the PCs' process functions as an infiltration (*Gamemastery Guide* 160–163). This breaks the quest into three phases (finding Fazil, reaching the center, and getting out), each with several obstacles, opportunities, and occasional complications along the way. Each phase includes several events, most of which you can present in any order.

To maintain a sense of continuity between events, it's helpful to add some descriptive transitions, especially of negligible obstacles the PCs traverse. The gauntlet is dark and damp, with walls scarred by millennia of chisels and picks. Patches of fungi litter the ground, occasionally disrupted by a past applicant's footprint.

Some of the tunnels are so old that stalactites extend from the ceiling, forcing all but the shortest PCs to duck under them.

Awareness Points: The gauntlet is part of a xulgath community's hunting grounds, and while the PCs might prevail against a couple scouts, causing too much ruckus could draw the attention of a larger group of xulgath warriors to the PCs and to Fazil. The infiltration's Awareness Point mechanic measures the xulgaths' wariness and provides a very loose timer for this quest; at too high a total, the gauntlet becomes overrun, forcing the PCs' escape.

5 AP: The DCs to overcome obstacles are increased by 1.

10 AP: A pair of xulgath warriors comes to investigate.

20 AP: The DCs to overcome obstacles are increased by 2, and four xulgath warriors come to attack the PCs.

BLACKNOON GAUNTLET THREATS

Navigating the gauntlet is primarily a skill challenge, but there are several creatures and hazards that might harm the PCs directly. Specific events reference these stat blocks.

FAZIL

CREATURE 1

Variant kobold scout (*Bestiary* 213)

Perception +8; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +7, Crafting +3 (+5 traps), Stealth +7, Survival +6, Thievery +7

RAT SWARM (2)

CREATURE 1

Bestiary 276

Perception +5; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

XULGATH WARRIOR (2)

CREATURE 1

Bestiary 336

Perception +6; darkvision

DART LAUNCHER

HAZARD 1

MECHANICAL **TRAP**


Stealth DC 20

Description A series of hidden launch tubes fire toxic darts at a 5-foot square.

Disable Thievery DC 16 (trained)

AC 16; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +4

Hardness 5; **HP** 24 (BT 12); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Dart Volley  (attack); **Trigger** Pressure is applied to the floor tile; **Effect** The trap shoots 4 darts as a single attack.

Ranged darts +12, **Damage** 3d4 piercing damage plus 1d10 poison damage (DC 16 Fortitude negates the poison damage)

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



PHASE 1: FINDING FAZIL

Blacknoon associates periodically survey the gauntlet to clear out bodies, reset traps, and perform other maintenance. Nobody has been through since Fazil entered, so the PCs occasionally find signs of his passage and must contend with the hazards he didn't disarm. Reaching Fazil involves overcoming the three obstacles, during which the PCs encounter the two opportunities. Afterward, move to Fazil's Ambush (page 21).

CONFOUNDING PASSAGES

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 14 Cave Lore, DC 15 Survival, DC 17 Perception

The Blacknoon Gauntlet is a tangle of passageways, and it's easy to become hopelessly lost.

PAINFULLY OBVIOUS TRAP

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Primary Overcome** DC 16 Perception; **Secondary Overcome** DC 17 Acrobatics, DC 17 Thievery, or DC 18 Athletics

There's a visible tripwire, obvious seams in the floor, and projectile launcher ports, suggesting that this trap was

made by an amateur or that the real trap is hidden nearby. Fortunately, spotting the second trap enables the PCs to vault over or squeeze past its trigger plate, helping each other across.

When overcoming this obstacle, the PCs must first earn at least 1 Infiltration Point with the Primary Overcome skill, which lets the PCs identify the real trap. Any subsequent checks can be attempted using the Primary or Secondary Overcome skills. This obstacle follows the normal degrees of success for an obstacle, with the following modification for critical failure.

Critical Failure The PCs accrue 2 AP as normal, and the PC who critically failed the check triggers the dart launcher trap (page 19).

Treasure: If the PCs earn at least 1 Infiltration Point using Thievery, they recover the trap's four darts. Each bears a special maker's mark, which a PC can identify with a successful DC 12 Highhelm Lore check, DC 14 Dwarf Lore check, DC 15 Society check, or DC 16 Crafting check: it's a variant of Clan Molgrade's seal, a major Highhelm clan best known for smithing expertise. Once removed from the launcher, the darts' poison remains potent for 24 hours; treat each as being coated with giant centipede venom (*Core Rulebook* 551). The PCs can recover the darts if they trigger the trap, but in that case, the poison is no longer applied.

In addition, one of the darts is magical. This is one of the many weapons made by Tuom Molgrade (page 75) and later cursed by mischievous gremlins. It appears to be a +1 *dart*, identifiable by a PC who succeeds at a DC 16 check. However, only by critically succeeding at the check does a PC recognize the dart's *backbiting* curse (*Gamemastery Guide* 92). If a PC transfers the potency rune, the *backbiting* curse is also transferred.

SPIKED CHASM

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 1 (individual); **Overcome** DC 14 Acrobatics or DC 17 Athletics

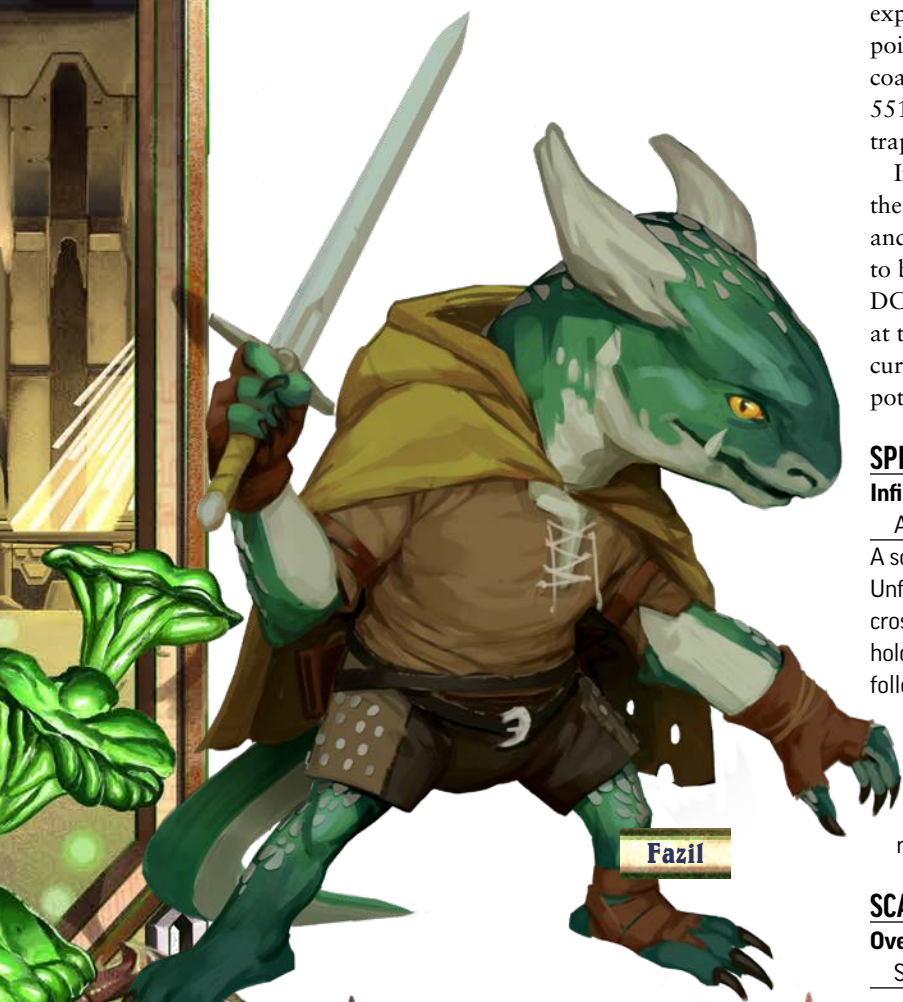
A solid beam stretches over a wide pit full of jagged spikes. Unfortunately, the bridge is only a few inches wide, so crossing requires either good balance or the ability to hold onto the beam while shimmying along. This obstacle follows the normal degrees of success for an obstacle, with the following modification for critical failure.

Critical Failure The PCs accrue only 1 AP, but the PC who critically failed falls into the pit and takes 1d8 piercing damage. That PC successfully crosses after recovering from the fall.

SCALE SIGNS

OPPORTUNITY

Overcome DC 11 Kobold Lore, DC 14 Cave Lore, DC 15 Survival, DC 16 Society



At a crucial juncture, a combination of scratches and chalk markings about 2 feet up a wall provide cryptic guidance from whoever passed through here. Unfortunately, deciphering them is a challenge. A PC who understands Draconic gains a +1 circumstance bonus to overcome this challenge.

Success The PC recognizes these markings as kobold trail signs left by someone who scouted both paths. Present the players with a brief summary of two possible obstacles; they choose which one to encounter, and the check DCs to overcome that obstacle are reduced by 1.

Failure The PC gains no insight from the trail signs.

DEAD THIEF

OPPORTUNITY

Overcome DC 15 Acrobatics, DC 16 Athletics, DC 18 Reflex save

Weeks ago, a bludgeoning trap grievously wounded a dwarven Blacknoon candidate who stumbled in a daze before falling to his death into one of the ravines that xulgaths sometimes use to clamber into the gauntlet. The PCs discover the body crumpled precariously on a ledge partway down the ravine. Can the PCs recover the well-equipped thief's body?

Success The PC retrieves the dead thief and can claim his gear. He wears studded leather armor etched with a *shadow rune* and a pair of moonstone earrings (worth 4 gp total) in his left ear. His backpack contains an infiltrator's elixir, a soapstone carving of a goat (worth 8 sp), and 37 sp.

Failure The PC only manages to snag their choice of either the thief's body or his backpack before the other tumbles into the ravine's inaccessible depths, clattering all the way. The PCs earn 1 AP.

Critical Failure The PC is unable to retrieve anything from the dead thief before his body tumbles away, earning the PCs 1 AP.

FAZIL'S AMBUSH

After finishing Phase 1, the PCs encounter a special obstacle. Now completely lost and at increasing risk of encountering the xulgaths he'd evaded earlier, Fazil set up a series of snares to incapacitate any xulgath who came his way and scare off the others with his self-important trap mastery. The PC at the front of the group attempts the check to overcome this complication. The second PC can also attempt to overcome it, though the check DCs are increased by 2. If both fail, the first PC triggers Fazil's traps.

FAZIL'S DEATH TRAP

COMPLICATION

Trigger The PCs conclude Phase 1.

Successes 1; Overcome DC 14 Cave Lore or DC 18 Perception
Whoever triggers this trap experiences a series of compounding misfortunes. A spring-loaded hammer

swings down at the creature, knocking them off balance and forward into two other snares: a spigot that spews acid, plus a barbed wire whirligig that rends the legs. This deals 1d8 acid damage, 1d8 slashing damage, knocks the creature prone, and blinds them for 1 round. The creature attempts a DC 17 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature dodges the hammer and doesn't trigger the other snares.

Success The creature is knocked forward and triggers the other snares, taking half damage and negating the additional effects.

Failure The creature takes full damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage, takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage from falling prone, and is blinded for 1d4 rounds.

Creatures: When he hears others approaching, Fazil hides beyond his trap and waits for his masterpiece to eviscerate a xulgath. If the PCs evade the snares, Fazil cautiously peeks out and hesitantly demands to know who they are. If he hears the snares trigger, he eagerly rushes out, sword in hand, to survey his destructive genius; he has never tested the snares together. Upon seeing one or more creatures who aren't dead, he freezes in fear, eventually realizing (if not prompted earlier) that the PCs aren't xulgaths trying to eat him.

Either way, Fazil is so eager for friends and assistance that he's easy to talk down. Although he wasn't prepared to handle the gauntlet on his own, his successes so far have only encouraged him. It doesn't cross his mind that the PCs are here to rescue him. Hardly! By combining their talents and using the map he made (which suggests they're close to the gauntlet's center), he's eager to team up and claim a Blacknoon coin for his own, though news of his worried family and friend Ussa dampen his spirits somewhat. Even so, he chatters about how far he has come and how many riches the PCs could also recover, making it hard to get in a word edgewise to convince him to accompany the PCs out of the gauntlet; to convince him, a PC must succeed at a DC 21 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check. Together, they escape from the gauntlet with few additional incidents, though you might introduce another obstacle or complication on the way out.

Of course, the PCs are adventurers, so it's very likely they'll team up with him to finish the challenge! Fazil is a kobold scout (*Bestiary* 213) with a few adjustments that appear on page 19. During the subsequent encounters, Fazil measures his own abilities and insights against those of the PCs. If at least one PC impresses him, he might shadow them, hoping to pick up some tricks and earn their approval.

PHASE 2: COMPLETING THE GAUNTLET

If the PCs join Fazil in completing the gauntlet, their progress toward the center involves overcoming an additional two obstacles and encountering the rare fungi opportunity.

ECHOING HALL

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 1 (individual); **Overcome** DC 14 Stealth, DC 17 Performance, DC 18 Perception

This small cavern's shape and smooth walls provide shattering acoustics, painfully amplifying all but the faintest sounds. Those moving silently should avoid harm. Someone with a keen ear might identify a few "quiet spots" where imperfect acoustics would muffle any sounds originating from those points. This obstacle follows the normal degrees of success for an obstacle, but each time the PCs earn AP here, each PC takes an equal amount of sonic damage.

LOCKED GATE

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 1 (group); **Overcome** DC 15 Thievery, DC 18 Athletics

An iron portcullis blocks the way, its base anchored into the ground by a single padlock.

RARE FUNGI

OPPORTUNITY

Overcome DC 13 Fungus Lore, DC 13 Herbalism Lore, DC 15 Cave Lore, DC 16 Nature, DC 17 Survival, DC 18 Religion

The PCs discover a broad swath of fungi carpeting a tunnel. None of it is hazardous, though one species is especially valuable: a gilled fungus known as Urgathoa's eyebrows, said to grow only where someone died a tragic death. A roughly 4-foot patch of the fungus grows amid the other species.

Critical Success The PC properly identifies and harvests the fungus, which is worth 8 gp.

Success As critical success, though the harvest amount is worth only 4 gp.

Failure The PC inexpertly picks an assortment of fungi worth 1 gp before exhausting the patch's growths.

Critical Failure The PC fails to pick anything of value, damaging the other fungi in the process.

GAUNTLET'S HEART

Once the PCs have met Fazil and overcome Phase 2's obstacles, they at last reach the gauntlet's center. The tunnel descends gently toward 5-foot-high iron double doors. Although heavy, the doors slide open easily, recessing into the walls. Beyond stretches a vault about 15 feet wide and 60 feet long. Several shallow troughs are carved into each of the long walls like inset shelves and a single standing trough runs down the center of the room. Each trough is filled with coins.

Most of these coins have minimal worth, with a mix of copper, tin, brass, and even painted wood. Interspersed among them are more valuable treasures, including precious currency from a variety of countries, semiprecious gems, and (most importantly) a few Blacknoon coins. A Blacknoon coin resembles a typical copper coin whose faces both show a sun mostly eclipsed by a jagged mountain, and the coin bears a faint transmutation aura that causes it to temporarily tarnish when scrutinized by a Blacknoon official. Finding one or more of these coins involves considerable searching, yet thanks to several hazards, the PCs quickly realize they don't have much time.

Hazard: As if the gauntlet weren't dangerous enough, the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild designed this room to test a candidate's perception and daring. Each of the troughs has a set of narrow, open drains along its bottom, such that rummaging through the coins causes a few to slip down a drain, rattle down a hidden pipe, and trigger a two-part trap. The first component begins inching the iron doors closed. The second component vents poisonous gas into the vault, beginning once the doors are approximately half-closed. The combination forces would-be thieves to quickly search for the Blacknoon coin they need and escape within a few minutes, leaving the greedy and the unperceptive trapped in the vault to die.

Of course, the PCs aren't destined to perish here! Instead, managing these hazards, finding a Blacknoon coin, and recovering some additional treasures functions as a special opportunity detailed below. The opportunity takes place over two phases, during each of which each PC can perform one task; Fazil busily assists, but his contributions aren't tracked for this opportunity. Some PCs might try to slow the doors as they close, some might search for valuables, and others might try to jam the traps (though fully disabling them isn't possible by this point). During the second phase, poisonous gas begins entering the room, at which point a PC might rely on their fortitude as much as their senses, withstanding the vault's toxins until the last second.

LOAD-BEARING TREASURE

OPPORTUNITY

Overcome (All Phases) DC 13 Merchant Lore, DC 13 Underworld Lore, DC 15 Athletics, DC 15 Thievery, DC 16 Society, DC 17 Perception

Overcome (Phase 2 Only) DC 15 Fortitude

Special A PC who can cast *detect magic*, *read aura*, or similar spells can attempt a DC 16 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check as one of their checks to overcome this opportunity.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox

A few coins rattle through tubes and activate the vault's defenses, with unseen clockwork gears ticking away ominously as the doors slowly close. The PCs search for treasure before the doors seal them inside as poisonous gas sprays into the vault. Track the Infiltration Points the PCs earn over two phases, with the total determining what the PCs find and how affected they're by the poison before escaping.

Less than 2 Points: The PCs recover assorted coinage worth 1d10+5 gp. Each PC takes 1d10 poison damage (DC 16 basic Fortitude save).

2–4 Points: The PCs recover coins worth 15 gp. Each PC takes 1d8 poison damage (DC 16 basic Fortitude save).

5 Points: The PCs recover assorted coinage worth 25 gp, plus they recover a Blacknoon coin. Each PC takes 1d6 poison damage (DC 16 basic Fortitude save).

8 Points: The PCs recover assorted coinage worth 35 gp, a Blacknoon coin, and a brass flask containing one dose of black adder venom. Each PC takes 1d6 poison damage (DC 16 basic Fortitude save).

Disabling the poison vents far exceeds the abilities of a new adventurer. However, it's possible (albeit difficult) for a PC to detect and preemptively disable the mechanism that closes the doors. Because of its expert proficiency requirement, though, it's likely accessible only to a PC with the Trap Finder feat or similar ability. Successfully disabling the doors buys the PCs additional time to search, earning them 3 Infiltration Points. Critically failing to disable the doors begins the load-bearing treasure opportunity.

INEXORABLE DOOR

HAZARD 5

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 20

Description A recessed mechanism slowly pushes two iron doors closed, holding them in place for 24 hours.

Disable Thievery DC 21 (expert)

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +9

Hardness 10; **HP** 54 (BT 27); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

COMPLICATIONS

Usually a candidate navigating the Blacknoon Gauntlet can explore at a leisurely pace, but a band of xulgaths recently found a way into the maze and occasionally returns here to forage. They know a few traps to avoid, and the other dangers are worth the chance of snagging large prey.

FORAGING XULGATHS

COMPLICATION

Trigger The PCs reach 10 Awareness Points

Overcome DC 16 Stealth

Several xulgaths prowl the area, having noticed that potential prey has entered the gauntlet. It's hard to know how many xulgaths might be nearby, and a fight might attract even more combatants. Each PC attempts a check to overcome this complication, and the total Infiltration Points earned determines the outcome.

Less than 2 Points: Rather than evade the xulgaths, the PCs are ambushed! Begin a combat with two xulgath warriors (*Bestiary* 336) in a 15-foot-wide tunnel.

2–3 Points: The PCs evade the xulgaths but leave additional signs of their passage in the process. The PCs earn 1 AP.

4–5 Points: The PCs completely evade these xulgaths.

OH RATS...

COMPLICATION

Trigger The PCs overcome an obstacle.

Successes 1 (group); **Overcome** DC 16 Nature or DC 18 Intimidation. A PC who throws at least 1 bulk of food to the rats gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the Nature check. If a PC expends a spell or effect that deals area or splash damage, they (or one PC of their choice) gain a circumstance bonus equal to half the damage dealt (minimum +1) to this Intimidation check; non-damaging area effects like *color spray* grant a +2 circumstance bonus instead.

Just as they overcome an obstacle, the PCs disturb a large nest of rats. Spooked, hungry, and emboldened by their overwhelming numbers, they scurry toward their disturbers, chasing the PCs forward. Combat is needlessly risky; calming or scaring off the rats would provide a clean escape.

Success The PCs redirect the rats without further incident.

Failure The PCs only partly redirect the rats, and each PC takes 1d6 piercing damage (DC 14 basic Reflex save) before they escape the swarm.

Critical Failure Begin combat with two rat swarms (*Bestiary* 276). If the PCs dealt area or splash damage to the rats already, apply that damage to one of the swarms. This encounter takes place in a 10-foot-wide tunnel.

GETTING OUT

Ideally, the PCs retrieve a Blacknoon coin and escape with Fazil. By retracing their steps, the group can exit the gauntlet with minimal fuss. Fazil ponders aloud what excitement lies ahead when he joins the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild, even if the PCs haven't given him the coin yet. This gives PCs an opportunity to encourage or discourage him from a criminal life, potentially even keeping the coin for themselves.

Whatever path the PCs nudge him toward, Ussa is overjoyed to see her friend again, and she spreads word through the Burrows about the PCs' reliability. In the event they give him the coin and he joins the guild, Fazil is a useful contact in Chapter 3 when the PCs raid a Blacknoon outpost.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

As they explore the Silvercap Tavern, the PCs gradually uncover clues as to what caused the restaurant's and diners' misfortune.

For years, the fungus leshy Skibrellon grew delightful cave gardens, only to watch in dismay as mushroom hunters repeatedly raided his domain and carried off his children. Skibrellon tried developing various defenses—obstacles, camouflage, toxicity—yet his greatest revelation involved unlocking necromantic magic as an extension of his destiny of decomposition. Having developed a host of undead and fungus minions, Skibrellon has begun “liberating” mundane mushrooms and taking revenge against their executioners, starting with Dierdrali!

Skibrellon sneaked into the Silvercap twice. The first time, he sowed toxic spores throughout the kitchen and larder, which sickened clients and began reanimating the sheep carcasses. He entered again after the pub was shuttered to decompose parts of the doorframes to access secured areas, paint a Druidic screed on the wall, and abscond with as many fungi as he could carry.

The PCs might not conclude this quest with a perfect sense of who was responsible and why, but they should learn the basics of how a saboteur broke into Silvercap, escaped with many mushrooms, and contaminated the food.

Treasure: Ussa collects 8 gp and 5 sp that she gives the PCs in thanks for retrieving Fazil. In addition, Fazil shows off his setup snare (page 85) design, giving the PCs the formula and a snare that's ready to deploy. If the PCs encourage Fazil not to join the guild, he seeks other opportunities and gives the PCs his “lucky picks” (a pair of infiltrator replacement picks, though he doesn't have the kit for them) because he doesn't need them anymore.

Reputation: The PCs earn 1 Reputation Point for rescuing Fazil and an additional 1 Reputation Point if they successfully reach the Blacknoon Gauntlet's center (whether or not they retrieve a coin).

Vengeance at Silvercap

Summary: A dramatic food poisoning incident has shuttered a restaurant, and the elf proprietor craves answers about what went wrong.

Objective: Explore the overgrown tavern, defeat fungal zombies, and uncover what occurred

Contact: Dierdrali (CG female elf food scientist)

District: Stonebreach

Over a week has passed since diners at the Silvercap Tavern contracted what has been deemed “Silvercap's Revenge,” a nonlethal yet thoroughly unpleasant bout of foodborne illness. Authorities swiftly closed the restaurant, though in true Highhelm fashion, they've been slow to schedule an official investigation and fumigation; some business just happens “at the pace of a beard's growth,” as locals say. The owner and chef, Dierdrali, has lived in Highhelm for over 60 years and operated the Silvercap for over a decade. Her features increasingly resemble the silver-and-purple mushroom on the restaurant's sign; her hair has developed amethyst and silver highlights after her decades spent underground. The evolving menu exclusively features items that incorporate fungus in some way, from beer to stews and stir-fry.

To Dierdrali, this incident might be for the best. She began the restaurant on a lark, feels she has attained suitable mastery of culinary mycology, and is ready for her next undertaking—at least once she sates her curiosity about what ruined her current business. Of late, she lingers within sight of the Silvercap while daydreaming about new adventures, chatting with longtime neighbors, or idly playing a dwarven zither.

She's quite open about hiring investigators to inspect the Silvercap. Although the PCs likely track her down after hearing rumors about the restaurant, she might spot PCs in Stonebreach and approach them first. Her deal is simple enough: enter the Silvercap, identify any spoilage (or sabotage), and document their findings. She cheerfully and matter-of-factly answers questions about the job.

Have your patrons ever had food poisoning before? Dierdrali laughs politely. “Only a few times at first, but never in a decade's operation since. Cleanliness and careful curation ensured all my ingredients were safe, even given the eclectic varieties I often used.”

Did you acquire strange mushrooms before the outbreak? “A few, but I quarantine and test any newer varieties for a while before serving them. My import log should be in the office. Top drawer.”

Where do you get the mushrooms? “I grow some myself in the conservatory. I forage for a few outside Highhelm. The majority come in through the markets.” If PCs track down these suppliers, they learn that Dierdrali often buys from a trio of halflings who are overdue to return from their latest foraging trip; in fact, the fungus leshy Skibrellon recently ambushed them, as the PCs might discover in Chapter 2.

What was the illness like? “My case was mild after having a bowl of soup that night. Queasiness, cramps, and a painful morning on the toilet. I understand some patrons were exhausted, itchy, and vomiting frequently.”

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox

To a medically astute PC, these symptoms align with food poisoning and aren't remarkable on their own.

Will we be compensated? With a wistful smile, Dierdrali admits, "I'm overdue to uproot, wander, and find inspiration elsewhere, so you're welcome to whatever you find within. The cashbox is under the chanterelle bin, and a few trinkets are on the kitchen's top shelf. Highhelm will no doubt reclaim the building itself, so please avoid causing serious damage."

If they agree, she hands them the key and points out the restaurant. She's staying out of the Silvercap on law enforcement's orders, but she lingers nearby and can offer a PC a lesser antiplague or lesser antidote if they need serious help.

SILVERCAP TAVERN

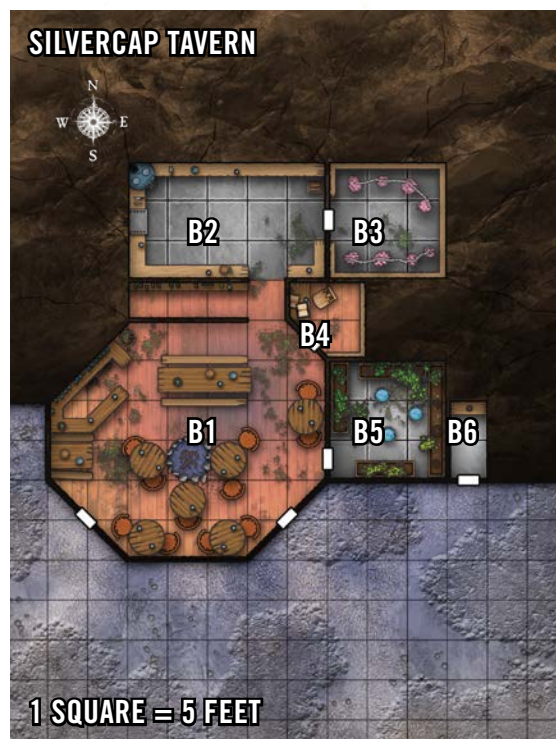
The Silvercap Tavern juts from a cavern corner in Stonebreach's Breachborn neighborhood; most of its west, north, and east walls are carved from the rock, whereas sturdy wooden walls comprise the southern facade. Above the main door hangs a wooden sign depicting a smiling mushroom mascot with a silver cap dotted with bright purple spots. Several pipes emerge from the cavern wall about 20 feet above street level: one is a chimney that connects to a neighborhood exhaust pipe, and the others are ventilation pipes about 10 feet long. Broad canvas sheets adhered with alchemical glue cover the restaurant's two windows and three exterior doors, and a formal note in Dwarven and Common proclaims this establishment is condemned until further notice. A PC can cut or tear away the canvas seals with negligible trouble.

Exploring the Silvercap primarily functions as an investigation, with the PCs traveling between rooms and finding clues that help them unravel a fungus leshy's recent mischief (see sidebar on page 24). These checks strongly favor Wisdom-based skills, so consider creative uses of alternate skills to let all of the PCs participate in the investigation.

The following sections prioritize room descriptions and their clues. Partway through the investigation, a pair of zombie sheep (area B3) animates and rampages, beginning a combat. Ideally, begin the encounter after the PCs have explored a bit, obtained some clues, and posed theories of what might have happened here, even if they haven't reached the larder. This lends the zombies greater narrative impact, plus it nicely breaks up the investigation with some combat.

B1. DINING HALL

The dining room features worn hardwood floors, save for a ring of stone surrounding the fire pit in the center. Seating includes an eclectic mix of partitioned booths



to the west, round tables to the south, a long table with benches near the center, and several stools against a partially stocked bar to the north. Splotches of fungi have grown upon various surfaces, as if Dierdrali's ingredients are already trying to decompose her restaurant. The largest fungus by far is a shield hanging above the office door (area B4), which resembles a mushroom cap 2 feet in diameter covered in dozens of remarkably tough, feathery scales.

Footprints: While the patches of fungus appear to grow haphazardly, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Survival check or Perception check notices that some of the smaller splotches aren't random; they're footprints, as if there were so many spores on a Small biped's feet that they accidentally seeded the hardwood floor. Only with the successful Survival check can a PC decipher some of this trespasser's path: they came through the southeast door, wandered around this room, walked to the east door (area B5), walked to the northeast door (area B4), went into the kitchen (area B2), visited the northwest booth, returned to area B5, and then left through the southwest door.

Ominous Writing: Faintly luminescent slime mold has grown to form blocky lettering adorning the western wall above the larger booth. Skibrellon scrawled this message into the stone, seeding the mold as he wrote, and the slime mold now boasts his pronouncement in Druidic: "Be free, cousins!" If none of the PCs understand Druidic, they can Decipher the

Writing and guess the language with a successful DC 19 Nature or Society check. If a PC understands Aklo, Gnomish, or Fey, they can guess that the writing is Druidic even on a failure.

Locked Doors: The office door (area B4) is locked (Thievery DC 22), though Dierdrali's keys open it. The lock on the conservatory door (area B5) is engaged, but the door opens easily because the wooden doorjamb where the dead bolt deploys has decayed. A PC can assess the damage with a successful DC 15 Nature check, DC 15 Thievery check, or DC 17 Perception check. The damage resembles the natural decomposition that might break down a fallen tree, but the damage is localized, the decomposition seems to have occurred within minutes, and there are hundreds of tiny holes left by fungal hyphae that are nowhere to be seen, as if they retracted after doing their damage. It looks like someone attempted similar "lockpicking" at the office door, but that door's metal frame stymied the intruder.

Sundry Fungi: By studying the assorted fungi growing here and succeeding at a DC 14 Cave Lore check, DC 15 Nature check, or DC 16 Highhelm check, a PC can identify about a dozen species that are all native to the Five Kings Mountains region, including a few that aren't edible. This doesn't fit Dierdrali's usual assortment, which include numerous imported varieties and none that are inedible.

Treasure: As Dierdrali promised, the PCs are welcome to whatever they find here. The shield above the office door is a mycoweave shield (page 85). The bar has several dozen bottles and small kegs of alcohol, many fermented with unusual fungi other than conventional yeasts. The PCs could sell the lot for about 4 gp, though with a successful DC 12 Alcohol Lore or DC 16 Crafting check, they can pick out four bottles of premium spirits each worth 1 gp each. By identifying the true value of the rarer items, the PCs can sell the lot for 8 gp instead.

B2. KITCHEN

This kitchen holds professional-grade cookware, an oven and griddle, shelves full of ingredients, a wide cabinet, and ample counters for food preparation.

Menu: The menus and recipes for the last several nights of operation are stacked neatly here. With a successful DC 14 Nature check, DC 15 Crafting check, DC 16 Highhelm Lore check, or DC 13 check for a culinary-related Lore, a PC can review the menu and confirm that none of the ingredients should be dangerous. Checking the ingredient bins here confirms this, although some of the ingredients are starting to wilt or rot with time.

Treasure: By picking through the cookware, a PC can assemble two sets of chef's tools. There are a few high-quality tools here—not enough to grant skill bonuses, but enough that a PC could purchase a set of sterling chef's tools for only 40 gp (rather than 50 gp) by including the tools found here. In addition, the cabinet contains a beautiful set of hardwood plates, bowls, and tableware for six worth 2 gp.

With a successful DC 17 Perception check while searching the kitchen, a PC also recovers several magical consumables: a vial containing *nectar of purification* and a tiny fungus frond that functions as a *holly bush feather token* that sprouts into a cluster of delicious mushrooms rather than creating a holly bush.

B3. LARDER

MODERATE 1

This large larder has shelves along most walls, and several large cuts of meat or whole carcasses hang from ceiling-mounted hooks to dry-age in the middle of the room. Compared to the rest of the pub, the larder is especially overgrown with local fungi, and the normally safe mold forming a crust on the dry-aged meat has turned vile colors and sprouted into hundreds of fruiting bodies. So many spores waft about the room that the larder is visibly hazy.

Creatures: Skibrellon seeded the two sheep carcasses with his necromantic spores, creating zombies that have almost decomposed off the meat hooks suspending them off the floor. If the PCs attack the carcasses, the zombies animate and attack, easily wriggling free of the hooks. If the PCs are investigating elsewhere, the zombies sense nearby creatures, slowly twitch to life, and begin shaking themselves free of the hooks, potentially being overheard by the PCs before the sheep break down the door and attack.

SPOREBORN SHEEP (2)

CREATURE 1

NE MEDIUM PLANT ELEMENTAL UNDEAD

Variant plague zombies (*Bestiary* 340)

Initiative Perception +3

Headless A headless spore sheep can't make Jaws attacks.

Wasting Wheeze ☞ (poison) **Frequency** once per 1d4 rounds; **Trigger** The headless spore sheep takes a critical hit or is reduced to 0 Hit Points; **Effect** The headless spore sheep exhales a cloud of spores through its neck. Adjacent living creatures take 1d6 poison damage and are sickened 1 unless they succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save.

Inspecting Fungi: The fungi here are different than the varieties found in the dining hall. With a successful DC 13 check with a culinary-related Lore skill or a DC 14 Nature check, a PC recognizes that most of the

fungi here stem from the dry-aging process, though it has grown out of control.

Inspecting Meat: A wholly different type of fungus has proliferated in the body cavities of the two sheep carcasses. With a successful DC 14 Medicine check, DC 17 Nature check, or DC 18 Perception check, a PC doesn't identify the fungus, but they do realize that its hyphae are arranged and anchored more like muscle tendons than like nutrient-devouring roots. This successful check also notes that whereas these sheep appear to have been slaughtered and cleaned professionally, their heads were removed recently and haphazardly. The heads aren't present, though the PCs encounter them later in Chapter 2.

B4. OFFICE

Dierdrali's office contains a bookshelf, desk, chair, and numerous shelves filled with wood carvings. An unstrung bow hangs behind the desk, framed by 10 arrows arrayed in a decorative semicircle behind it.

Inspecting Documents: As Dierdrali mentioned, a log of her purchases is in the desk's top drawer. By reviewing its recent contents and succeeding at a DC 12 Accounting Lore check, DC 15 Nature check, DC 15 Society check, or DC 18 Perception check, a PC can confirm that her purchases and math all seem reasonable, suggesting neither criminal activity nor suspicious fungi purchased. Most of the other documents are a decade of business paperwork, mycological notes of specimens she grew, and experimental recipes haphazardly filed together. Dierdrali also has a remarkable collection of Elysian romance novels published by azatas of dubious taste.

Treasure: The bookshelf's most valuable work is a scholarly journal (*Core Rulebook* page 291) about Darklands fungi. A writing set rests atop the desk. The composite shortbow on the wall is in good condition, and while 5 of the arrows are normal, the other 5 have cold iron points. Most of the wood carvings have only sentimental value, though a driftwood relief carving depicting a tasteful revelry of satyrs is worth 3 gp.

B5. CONSERVATORY

Several rows of wooden troughs are mounted on steel rods set into the west, north, and south walls of this lightless greenhouse. An assortment of fungi grows from the woodchips and compost in these troughs; some sections are densely populated, whereas others seem recently picked. Glass terrariums and cabinets stand along the east wall; several panes have been shattered and shards of glass litter the floor. Three wide bowls in the middle of the room contain water, making this room oppressively humid.

Inspecting Fungi: Dierdrali grew mushrooms here that she couldn't consistently buy at the market. Some of the trough vacancies seem to be recently harvested clusters. A PC can learn more with a successful DC 14 Cave Lore check, DC 15 Nature check, or DC 17 Perception check, with which that PC realizes some of the troughs' bare patches are riddled with tiny holes created by hyphae that are now completely absent, as if the fungi there had either vanished or uprooted completely. The mushrooms here are edible, though many aren't native to the Five Kings Mountains.

Surveying the Damage: With a successful DC 13 Thievery check, DC 14 Survival check, or DC 16 Perception check, a PC studying the broken cases determines that all but one were broken from the inside—all the more concerning given they're now empty. Glass scattered across the inside of the other case shows that it was broken from the outside, and its other contents are ashy and fragile as if having been scorched. From that case's label, a PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Cave Lore check or DC 16 Nature check recognizes that the specimen that might have been inside isn't native to the area and would be highly invasive if released into the Darklands.

Treasure: Dierdrali keeps enough coinage to cover several days' expenses, keeping it in a lockbox hidden in a recess beneath a trough of healthy chanterelle mushrooms. A PC can discover the iron lockbox with a successful DC 18 Perception check, assuming they didn't already learn of it from Dierdrali. Her key doesn't open the lockbox, though a PC can open it with a successful DC 20 Athletics or Thievery check. It contains 12 gp, 127 sp, and 70 cp as well as a notarized promissory note.

The official note establishes that Hrelgen Sunderoak, priest of Kols in King's Crown, owes Dierdrali 6 gp for catering services earlier this year. A PC can track down the priest, though she tries to deflect the responsibility; she was saving up to commission an elaborate commitment necklace to present when she proposes to her sweetheart, Urmdu. With a successful DC 12 Diplomacy check or DC 10 Religion check, a PC can cajole her to pay up, such as by reminding Hrelgen that fulfilling oaths is sacred to the god Kols. If the PCs forgive Hrelgen's debt, she is delighted, invites the PCs to the prospective wedding, and tells her friends, earning the PCs 1 Reputation Point as a minor favor.

B6. PRIVY

Accessible from outside the pub, the privy holds little of interest. If a PC so desires, they can survey the cesspit's waste (not emptied since the incident) to confirm that numerous people were sick here at about the same time.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



AFTERMATH

Once the PCs have investigated the Silvercap, taken what they want, and fought the zombies, they should report back to Dierdrali. She listens appreciatively, asking questions the PCs might not be able to answer confidently, such as the criminal's motive. Even with imperfect details, she's pleased to have reassurance that her customers' misfortune stemmed from foul play rather than from some culinary mistake. Their business concluded, she starts composing plans to tie up her remaining obligations in Highhelm so that she might wander and revel in some new part of the world come the end of the month. Her conversations in the coming days highlight the PCs' work, praising their investigation and spreading their good name.

Reputation: The PCs earn 2 Reputation Points for investigating the Silvercap and reporting back to Dierdrali.

Etcherie Animal Raids

Summary: A Clan Gelderon rancher insists his recently inherited stable is haunted, but in fact, he has offended the facility's house spirit.

Objective: Learn about the house spirit, then either chase it away or help the rancher make amends

Contact: Ektar Beetsmith (LN male dwarf rancher)

District: Stonebreach

Selectively bred for their strength, endurance, and what dwarves often call loyalty (with some critics calling it "mind-boggling stubbornness"), augdunars are a specialized mule breed unique to the Five Kings Mountains. They're difficult to raise and rarely sold to outsiders, so demand remains high. The headstrong and ambitious rancher Ektar Beetsmith jumped at the chance to raise the animals, buying Karya Tolphaga's old stable (called the House of Six Nails, for the number of nails used to affix a horseshoe) when she decided to retire from horse breeding a few months ago. Karya's success was partly thanks to **Algerschmick** (CN female dvorovoi), a house spirit who has quietly inhabited the stable for decades. Karya and Algerschmick coexisted and parted on good terms.

The same can't be said for the house spirit and Ektar. Unaware of the house spirit, the new resident hasn't taken any steps to appease her, and she has retaliated by hiding his tools, breaking fences, and tormenting

the animals. Ektar is convinced that the stable is haunted or being vandalized by adolescents, inciting him to storm about, splashing holy water around the building. The stable has become a tangle of passive-aggressive outrage that needs outside intervention. However, others in the Beetsmith family (and the extended Gelderon clan) have deflected Ektar's requests for assistance; most know of the dvorovoi, and they're expecting Ektar to make amends on his own. Desperate for help, Ektar has decided to recruit freelance investigators: the PCs.

THE HOUSE OF SIX NAILS

Upon learning of Ektar's need for freelance help, the PCs likely visit him at the House of Six Nails. Raising augdunars befits Ektar; he shares their relentless, pugnacious, and opinionated nature. As the PCs arrive, he's busily repairing a stone fence using equal parts rock and profanity. His mood brightens once he realizes that his potential saviors are here. Although frazzled and sleep-deprived, he's a good host, pulling out a few chairs and sharing some coarse (yet tasty) flatbread baked that morning.

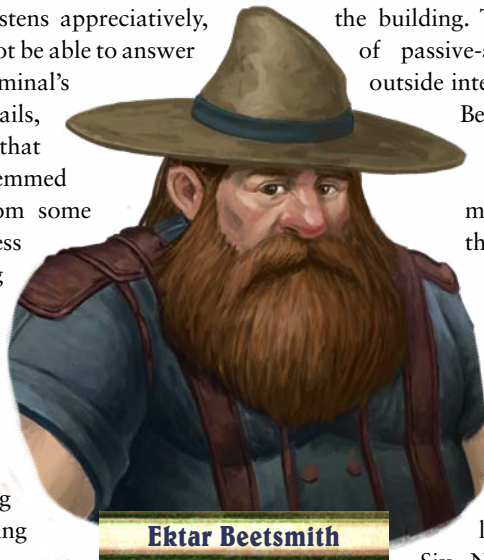
Once the PCs are settled, he explains the situation.

"Bought this place from Karya Tolphaga—a legend among horse breeders, though she recently retired. Figured it was time for me to strike it rich with ranching augdunars. We Gelderon folks, we keep properties in the clan when we can, so she sold it to me at a fair price just a few months back. Good deal, right?"

He half-heartedly kicks the stone fence as he answers his own question. "Phah! Been hell, it has! Someone's been breaking fences, hiding tools, bleeding the mules, and making a right mess of things!" He looks about with a scowl and sniffs derisively. "Much as I've kept watch, I haven't been able to catch the vandals in action. Tried calling in family to help, but they've all politely declined, like I'm some pariah. This needs proper investigation, and I have some funds set aside to make it worth your while."

Ektar can answer questions to help get the PCs started, with likely queries below.

Who might be responsible? "Thought it might be local kids causing trouble. Then I thought it might be thieves. Stayed up a few nights on watch just to see for myself, but never spotted a soul, even though someone



Ektar Beetsmith

got into the shed and messed things up proper. Augdunars got a mean streak and sharp wits, so they can cause some damage when angry. But whatever's responsible shows finesse. Wouldn't have said so a month ago, but..." he leans in and conspiratorially whispers, "I might have a poltergeist."

How long has the vandalism been happening? "There were some mishaps early on. Damage really got bad around three weeks ago, and nearly every day there's some new misfortune. Honestly, it's like the House of Six Nails refers to some Kuthite torment!"

Why isn't your family helping? Ektar throws up his hands. "I don't know! They helped me wrangle the gold for a down payment, but since then, they've shunned me like I've done something wrong. Talk to them if you like," he grumbles, "because they won't talk to me."

Once the PCs are ready to explore, Ektar unlocks the facility for them to inspect. This short investigation divides the stable into three subsections—the workshop, the barn, and the paddock—noting in each some of the clues the PCs might uncover and the recommended skill checks to uncover them. As with any investigation, reduce a DC slightly or consider alternate skills for discovering some clues if the PCs employ creative strategies or leverage specialized skills like Animal Lore, Farming Lore, Stable Lore, or Diplomacy combined with a druid's wild empathy. In addition, the PCs can track down and interview two relevant NPCs: Karya Tolphaga (the former owner) and Rolkun Beetsmith (Ektar's cousin).

Ultimately, the PCs should uncover enough clues to piece together the basic story.

- The stable has a resident house spirit.
- The house spirit feels bitter and neglected, and she blames Ektar for this misfortune.
- The house spirit has inflicted ongoing sabotage to communicate her displeasure.
- There are ways to placate the house spirit, which might involve offerings, informal rituals, and even a show of force.

C1. THE WORKSHOP

Largely unchanged over Ektar's tenure, this large shed houses various tools for grooming, cleaning, and feeding livestock. That includes a small furnace suitable for heating and shaping horseshoes, with a modest stockpile of coal and iron bars. Despite Ektar's best efforts, the workshop is in disarray from the house spirit's latest attack. Noteworthy damage includes several spilled grain bags, a dozen iron bars jammed into the unlit furnace, tools hidden in various places, and damaged furniture.

THE HOUSE OF SIX NAILS



Crafting (DC 16), Perception (DC 18), or Thievery (DC 16): A PC can assess the inflicted damage. Gashes in a stool indicate someone struck it a few times with a small blade, leaving deep gouges that indicate considerable strength but little subtlety. The spilled grain bags show signs of being slashed and then neatly overturned, again showing the culprit has considerable strength. A random assortment of tools are missing, not anything tied to a particular task or trade.

Arcana or Occultism (DC 16): Many of the scattered tools are hidden on high shelves, having been placed atop level surfaces (not under or squeezed between anything). The few exceptions are larger and appear to have been violently driven into surfaces, like a pitchfork that's lodged into a crate. This suggests the lighter items might have been relocated using telekinetic magic like *mage hand*.

C2. THE BARN

Although designed for housing and training horses, the stable itself has been partly renovated. Many of its inner walls are knocked out while the columns remain, creating a more open space for augdunars to shelter in small groups when they're not grazing outside Highhelm. The ground floor has over a foot of compacted soil sitting atop the cavern's stone, scattered with straw and droppings the exhausted Ektar hasn't cleaned up yet. A few small traps for catching pests are set along the periphery. Several

augdunar droppings are smeared near the ceiling at one end of the barn. At the other end, a hay loft creates a partial second floor, though the ladder that should access the loft was among the first casualties of the house spirit's rage.

Athletics (DC 15) or Crafting (DC 18): The PC either builds a makeshift ladder or ascends to the loft unaided. There are several dozen hay bales here, one of which is partly disassembled, its straw having been used to make a makeshift nest about 2 feet across. A few trinkets litter the nest, including several braids of white animal hair and a crude chain made from shoeing nails that have been bent into tiny links.

Perception, Survival, or Thievery (DC 18): The assorted traps are snares and snap-jaw traps designed for catching small prey like rats. A few remain armed. The others are sprung but show signs of having been triggered ineffectively, as if someone had sprung them from a safe distance.

Arcana, Occultism, or Perception (DC 16): The augdunar droppings seem smeared on the wall, not thrown. This suggests either that someone climbed up there or that the droppings were telekinetically manipulated, such as with *mage hand*.

C3. THE PADDOCK

A fenced-in arena originally designed for exercising and training horses covers most of the property, though it now allows the new augdunar residents some room to roam. A thick layer of silty sand covers the entire area and provides a soft surface for running. Part of Ektar's herd is stationed here, amounting to 26 augdunars. Most of them are passing the time clustered together, but a few stand apart or wander over to inspect the PCs.

Nature (DC 15) or Perception (DC 18): These augdunars seem uncharacteristically skittish. The majority have herded together less to socialize and more because they're on alert, their eyes darting about and scanning the seemingly quiet paddock. A few augdunars are brave enough to wander alone. However, an augdunar with a dappled, mostly white coat seems to have been exiled from the herd.

Medicine (DC 15), Nature (DC 17), or Perception (DC 18): Most of the augdunars have minor maladies like small sores, welts, patches of missing hair, and are slightly gaunt from being too stressed to eat properly. The wounds are randomly distributed around the animals' bodies, though few wounds appear above their shoulders (due to the house spirit not being able to reach that part easily). These injuries don't resemble any conventional patterns of animal abuse, which

should alleviate concerns that Ektar might be a cruel or negligent caretaker.

If the PCs identified the dappled white augdunar, they notice that it's particularly haggard, having several tufts of hair missing, small half-healed lacerations, and bruising from where the augdunar has collided with the stone fencing during attempts to escape the paddock. By identifying that this augdunar has suffered particular torment, a PC might attempt a secret DC 20 Nature check to Recall that some house spirits despise white-haired animals, and such a fey might reside nearby.

Survival (DC 17): The soft sand would be ideal for preserving tracks were it not for the two dozen augdunars here; hoofprints abound. Even so, the PCs can identify some small humanoid tracks left by a creature likely about 3 feet tall. The steps are cautious, as if the person were moving slowly, and the tracks sometimes shuffle around a set of augdunar prints. The mysterious figure's prints are erased by other traffic, but a few of them seem to head toward the barn.

Hazard: If the PCs encounter Algerschmick in the paddock (which is where she's most likely to make an appearance), the house spirit can rouse and agitate the livestock to create a dangerous distraction.

ORNERY AUGDUNARS

HAZARD 1

ANIMAL COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL


Stealth +8 (trained)

Description Spooked augdunars gallop wildly about the paddock, biting and kicking as they run.

Disable Succeed at four of the following checks in any combination: Nature DC 14 (trained) to calm the animals, Intimidation DC 16 (untrained) to scare the augdunars away, Will DC 18 (trained) to avoid flinching and project confidence, causing the augdunars to veer away. For each success, the hazard takes a cumulative -1 penalty to attack rolls.

AC 16; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5


HP 30

Rile  **Trigger** Algerschmick rolls initiative; **Effect** The augdunars roll initiative.

Routine (2 actions) The augdunars use an action to Strike one target with their jaws, and they use another action to Trip a different target (Athletics +9). If the augdunars have taken damage since their last turn, they instead use Lashing Hooves with their first action and then make either a jaws Strike or Trip attempt with their second action.

Melee  hoof +11, **Damage** 1d6+3 bludgeoning

Melee  jaws +11, **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing

Lashing Hooves  An augdunar makes a hoof Strike and compares the attack roll result to the AC of up to two foes who are adjacent to each other.

ASKING AROUND

Two NPCs in Highhelm can provide additional context in the PCs' investigation, though they're both slightly reticent to share what they know with the PCs, and the skill check DCs to influence them are initially high. The more the PCs seem to have discovered on their own, the easier it is to earn these NPCs' confidence. Demonstrating a basic understanding of what's causing trouble at the House of Six Nails, such as having discovered clues even if they've not quite identified the culprit, reduces the DCs by 5. As a result, it's best if the PCs investigate the stable first, and Ektar might coax them to do just that.

Interacting with these NPCs borrows the format of the influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151–153), though rather than earning Influence Points, the degree of success for the PC's check determines what information the NPC shares.

Karya Tolphaga (CG female dwarf stablemaster) lives in one of the district's nicer homes, where she has agreed to help raise eight of her great-grandchildren while their parents work. To her chagrin, handling so many youngsters is more exhausting than keeping horses, and she's amenable to any opportunity to step away from their youthful antics. However, she has heard some rumors of Ektar's misfortunes and assumes that she misjudged his competence, not realizing that her old house spirit friend is causing trouble.

Rolkun Beetsmith (LN nonbinary dwarf farrier) works in a large stable that's presently short-staffed and overbooked with draft animals needing maintenance, so they can't spare much time to talk. As with others in the Beetsmith family, Rolkun is vaguely aware of the dvorovoi and that Ektar has angered the spirit somehow. The Beetsmiths advised Ektar of the house spirit months ago, but he ignored the warning. Thus, the family believes that this is an opportunity for Ektar to learn some humility and self-reliance as he puzzles out the issue on his own and repairs the damage he has caused. After all, an angry house spirit is more an inconvenience than a fatal threat.

That said, Rolkun thinks this conflict has lasted too long and worries about the animals' welfare. They've almost convinced themselves to break with the family's bargain and help Ektar directly. However, they're only partly aware of just how bad the situation has become, and the PCs' news might be decisive.

KARYA TOLPHAGA

UNIQUE CG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Retired stablemaster

Perception +12

Will +14

Influence Skills DC 19 Deception (to trick her into oversharing), DC 21 Nature (to bond over animal husbandry), DC 22 Diplomacy or Performance (to distract her great-grandchildren), DC 24 Intimidation

Success Karya blurts out "Algerschmick?!" before explaining that the stable has a longtime dvorovoi resident who's likely causing the trouble because she's offended. Karya shares some tips for appeasing Algerschmick, like offering dairy treats and making sincere apologies. Karya bitterly hypothesizes that dvorovoi adapt to local livestock, so while being around horses made the spirit skittish but sincere, the company of augdunars has probably made the spirit especially stubborn and belligerent.

Failure Karya politely notes that Ektar's troubles are probably caused by his own mismanagement. She has little else to share, though she's amenable to the PCs visiting again if they learn something new.

Critical Failure Karya becomes frustrated and tells the PCs to leave. They can try to speak with her again, but each critical failure increases the check DCs by 2.

Resistances Karya has enough childish screaming in her life already. Being overbearing and loud wears at her nerves and increases the checks' DCs by 2.

Background Considered one of Clan Gelderon's finest trainers, Karya recently retired and sold the House of Six Nails to spend more time with her great-grandchildren. She swiftly discovered that she's better at handling horses than keeping rambunctious youths in line.

Appearance Karya is an elderly woman who still wears heavy boots and tough work clothes despite her comfortable retirement. Her body bears signs of equestrian mishaps, including a limp from a bad fall and an improperly healed cheekbone from a horse's kick decades ago.

Personality Practical, patient, and handles most people with the firm confidence of a horse wrangler

ROLKUN BEETSMITH

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Longwinded farrier

Perception +6

Will +6

Influence Skills Medicine DC 20 (aiding in animal care), Crafting DC 21 (helping around the shop), DC 21 Intimidation, DC 23 Diplomacy, DC 24 Deception

Success Rolkun sighs and admits that they know about a dvorovoi at the stable and that they believe Ektar almost certainly offended it by not leaving the customary offerings. They explain why the Beetsmiths haven't helped Ektar directly but admit that the "lesson" has escalated to the point of cruelty and needs to end. Rolkun joins the PCs at the House of Six Nails and can successfully Aid one check per round to disable the ornery augdunars hazard.

Failure Rolkun struggles to decide whether to help. Needing time to think, they ask for space and send the PCs away for a while.

Critical Failure The PC offends Rolkun, accidentally affirming that Ektar hasn't learned his lesson. A PC can try to speak with them again, but each critical failure increases check DCs by 2.

Weaknesses Though they want Ektar to learn his own lessons, Rolkun ultimately cares for their cousin's happiness. Playing up Ektar's suffering reduces the check's DC by 2.

Background Trained to care for hooved animals from a young age, Rolkun is a successful farrier and blacksmith who works in one of the busiest stables near Stonebreach's main entrance. They're thoroughly content with their career, family, and lack of unwanted excitement.

Appearance Rolkun keeps their hair tightly braided and wears sturdy canvas overalls.

Personality Friendly and prone to using folksy idioms

SPIRIT WRANGLING

MODERATE 1

Once the PCs understand that an offended house spirit is sabotaging the House of Six Nails, Ektar asks them to help him resolve the problem. His assumption is that the PCs will chase off the fey nuisance, though he's easily talked into making amends instead. Admitting fault isn't Ektar's strong suit; he'll need the PCs' help.

This encounter involves two phases at the stable. The first is optional and involves ritually trying to appease Algerschmick over the course of two social rounds (about 30 minutes each). This short challenge uses the influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151–153). If the PCs excel, the encounter might end there.

Most likely, appeasing Algerschmick makes her more sympathetic (and reduces her combat abilities) before she launches a last-ditch effort to chase away the PCs by force, beginning a combat encounter. Although the PCs can kill the dvorovoi, the combat encounter likely ends before then, with Algerschmick admitting defeat and accepting the apologies once reduced to a certain number of Hit Points.

Placating the House Spirit: Ektar has little education in fey, relying on the PCs to direct the appeasement process. That said, Ektar can cite children's tales and suggest some possibilities if the players seem stumped. During the process, he helps the PCs, which is reflected in the skill checks' DCs below.

ALGERSCHMICK

UNIQUE CN SMALL FEY

Bullheaded house spirit

Perception +12

Will +7

Influence Skills DC 14 Cooking Lore (making and offering sweets), DC 15 Crafting (making food or repairing the stable), DC 15 Nature (performing classic fey-appeasing rituals), DC 16 Medicine (treating the tormented animals kindly), DC 16 Performance (singing a song of apology), DC 16 Diplomacy, DC 17 Deception, DC 20 Intimidation

Influence 2 Algerschmick gains the weak adjustment (*Bestiary* 3 6) during the next encounter, representing her half-hearted attack. She fights until reduced to 6 HP.

Influence 4 As above, but Algerschmick surrenders once reduced to 12 HP or once the ornery augdunars hazard is fully disabled.

Influence 6 Moved by the apologies, Algerschmick becomes visible and parleys. Skip the combat encounter unless the PCs dramatically betray her trust.

Resistances Algerschmick detests cold iron but can't discern it from normal iron, so anyone visibly wearing medium or heavy metal armor while trying to appease the spirit increases the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Like most dvorovoi, Algerschmick reflexively hates white-haired beasts. Relocating or promising to relocate the white augdunar decreases a check's DC by 2.

Background Algerschmick is centuries old and moved into this stable about 100 years ago. She had a good arrangement with Karya and hates the recent changes, but this is her home.

Appearance Usually Algerschmick is invisible. When visible, she resembles a young gnome woman with donkey-like ears, and she wears an expertly tailored tunic made from an old grain sack.

Personality Stubborn, sly, and picky

Combat: Unless fully placated after 2 rounds, Algerschmick appears in the paddock as if to talk. Once the PCs approach, she roars that the stable belongs to her alone. Distressed by her outburst, the augdunars bray fearsomely, run about, and attack anything that offends them; this functions as a complex hazard (page 30). Algerschmick turns invisible and goads the augdunars with the goal of chasing off anyone else and claiming the stable for herself. She mostly relies on augdunars to batter the PCs, though she occasionally slashes a PC with a stolen hoof knife.

ALGERSCHMICK

CREATURE 3

Dvorovoi (*Bestiary* 3 137)

Initiative Perception +12

Melee ♦ hoof knife +12 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d4+6 slashing

Rile Augdunars ♦ or ♦♦ (auditory, emotion, fear)

Frequency once per round; **Effect** Algerschmick goads the animals and incites their anger. She attempts a DC 11 flat check (DC 6 if she used two actions). If she succeeds,

she negates one successful check the PCs have made to disable the hazard. This action makes enough noise that attempts to Seek Algerschmick can detect her, even if she isn't in the area that a PC is searching.

AFTERMATH

If the PCs successfully negotiate with or subdue Algerschmick, she agrees to discuss her demands with Ektar. He balks at a few of these demands, yet they're overall inexpensive offerings and minor rituals like setting out a bowl of milk every third day, announcing himself before climbing to the loft, and stabling no white-haired animals here. With a little cajoling, Ektar agrees. Over the next few days, Ektar's herd rapidly recovers, he reconnects with his family, and his mood improves considerably. If the PCs killed or chased away the house spirit, the House of Six Nails recovers more slowly in the dvorovoi's absence, yet Ektar's hard work pays off.

Treasure: So long as the PCs resolve Ektar's mystery by killing, evicting, or befriending the dvorovoi, he pays them the promised 20 gp.

If the PCs resolved the conflict so that those two reconcile, one of their deal's conditions involves no white-haired animals, and that means the dappled augdunar must go. Ektar hopes the PCs might adopt and name the creature; augdunar statistics appear on page 126 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Highhelm*, though you can approximate an augdunar by using an elite war pony's statistics. In addition, Ektar pulls in favors with Clan Gelderon to secure either light barding or heavy barding for a creature of the PCs' choice, plus a *steadyfoot tassel* (page 85). If the PCs aren't interested in companion creature gear, he can instead secure a future discount on buying an *animal staff* or *greater animal staff*, reducing the price by 50 gp.

Reputation: The PCs earn 1 Reputation Point for resolving Ektar's problem and an additional 1 Reputation Point if they successfully convince Algerschmick and Ektar to reconcile.

Burntown Temps

Summary: A hard day's work earns the PCs both respect and coin—potentially far more if they can round up escaped pyre ferrets at the end of their shift.

Objective: Help create quality equipment while surviving sweltering conditions, then capture pyre ferrets before the mustelids cause too much damage

Contact: Elga Sfarhaggn (LN female ifrit dwarf smith)

District: King's Heart

For several years, Highhelm has poured resources into its Torag's Shield project, a massive upgrade to

TRICKY HOUSE SPIRITS

Counteracting invisibility is extremely difficult for low-level PCs. Fortunately, this encounter takes place in a dusty arena, and PCs can use the Kick Dust action below to better track the dvorovoi.

KICK DUST

MANIPULATE

Requirements You're standing in an area with ample loose soil.

By scooping and kicking with your foot, you launch a cloud of dust into an adjacent space. Attempt a DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check. The size of the cloud depends on your check result.

Critical Success The cloud fills a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the cone are covered in dust for 2 rounds, and dust-covered creatures are concealed rather than invisible. As an action, a creature can attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to shake off the dust.

Success As critical success, but the cloud fills a 10-foot cone.

Failure You kick an insignificant amount of dust.

Critical Failure You misjudge your kick, causing you to stumble and become flat-footed until the beginning of your next turn.

the city's fortifications. The initiative keeps local artisans busy—too busy. Perpetually understaffed as a result, local businesses struggle to fulfill their other obligations and rely on short-term contractors to catch up. Clan Tolorr, aware that many of its guests are capable craftspeople, has informed the community that adventurers like the PCs are trustworthy folk who might lend a hand.

The PCs can follow local chatter to connect with Elga Sfarhaggn, an accomplished smith who operates out of the Burntown neighborhood in King's Heart. As the name implies, Burntown swelters from its proximity to a Plane of Fire rift established millennia ago to heat Highhelm and power its forges. Burntown primarily houses heat-resistant folk, ranging from salamanders, elementals, and the occasional efreeti to a sizable population of dwarven ifrits.

THE BRIEFING

In Highhelm, mornings are traditionally for getting work done, afternoons are for more social labor, and evenings are for fun. Elga cleaves to this schedule, too, so she insists on meeting interested assistants the afternoon before they begin work, not the morning

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



of the job. This lets her give a tour of the facility, answer questions, and get to know the strangers Clan Tolorr recommended. The PCs most likely catch her as she takes a break to grab a snack—in this case, a particularly spicy cup of roasted grindlegrubs that she doesn't mind sharing just to see the tortured expression on a tourist's face.

Elga dresses practically, wearing a heavy leather apron and always keeping elbow-length gloves tucked in her belt for handling her hottest projects. She keeps her faintly incandescent hair braided out of practicality, and her eyes occasionally flare with light when she's excited.

As she meets the PCs, Elga gives each a critical look as she assesses their abilities, periodically asking each PC a few questions about their training in blacksmithing, heavy labor, math, and enchanting, nodding and grunting thoughtfully with each answer. Once she has taken their measure, she explains what she needs.

"You're new in the craft," admits Elga, "but we all start with imperfections, and you don't know a bar's mettle till you've stuck it in the fire. What's important is that you'll be ready to work early tomorrow. Very early," she stresses. "Mornings are for labor, afternoons are for chatter, so you'll be coming in before dawn and not bothering me with a word more than you need to get our jobs done. Things get livelier after lunch, and we'll use that to see how you're doing. Right, the tasks!" Elga starts counting objectives with her fingers.

"First one is building fences. Got a wrought iron job that's overdue, and shaping pickets is simple work. Second one is repairing a crossbow. The weapon's arm got busted, so I'll need to make a new one—or I will if you can get my hot-forge's elemental to wake up and cooperate. You'll be assembling and testing things once I've made the new piece. Third task is an abandoned shield project that needs some finishing touches on its magic and design. Come the afternoon, there will be some administrative jobs you can help with, too, but I'm contracting you primarily for these three projects. Should take a day. Might take you longer. If it takes less, I've plenty more you can do! So ask any questions now, 'cause I'll not want to hear it tomorrow."

Elga's answers to likely questions follow.

What's a hot-forge? Elga quirks an eyebrow. "It's the forge used for especially hot jobs, and that

usually needs an elemental's fire. Charcoal is for the warm-forge, for conventional work."

Will there be blueprints? "Yep, I'll have the task list on the chalkboard, and the diagrams will be in the cabinet over there."

Could we do this work somewhere cooler? "Can't take the heat?" Elga laughs. "You get used to it. But no, my shop's work gets done in my shop. Stay hydrated."

What's our compensation? "Usually a capable apprentice might earn a few silver a day. But I just need these projects done, and I'll pay five pieces of gold for what should be a day's work for your group. Might even be a bonus if I like the work."



Elga Sfarhaggn

A HARD DAY'S WORK

The next morning, the ventilation shafts draw in just enough of the predawn chill to bring Burntown's temperature down to "balmy" instead of "sweltering." As the PCs arrive for work, Elga merely glances at them, acknowledging them with a nod and grunt before shoving a half-made shovel blade back into the coals. Elga has already laid out the various items needed for the PCs' projects; all the necessary gear for the jobs is neatly organized and accessible as well, including some aprons of uncommon shapes and sizes she borrowed for any PCs who might need them.

Tracking Progress: This quest breaks the workday into five phases, with three morning phases and two afternoon phases. During each phase, a PC can attempt a skill check to contribute to one of the projects, and a project is completed once PCs have fulfilled each step. Steps must be performed in the listed order, though a few projects have steps that can be performed interchangeably or even simultaneously, like the second and third steps for building fences.

Skill checks use the basic Victory Point mechanic (*Gamemastery Guide* 148), and each step requires 1 or 2 Victory Points to complete. If a PC earns more points than are necessary to complete a step, they can either attempt a second skill check to perform the project's next step during that phase, or they can Rehydrate (page 35).

As with most skill-based challenges, consider allowing creative uses of alternate skills or even saving throws to complete a project, especially if the PCs aren't trained in any of the required skills.

Beating the Heat: Burntown's daytime temperature fluctuates between mild heat and severe heat, providing

exhausting conditions for the PCs' labor. After the second phase and each subsequent phase, each PC is exposed to the Burntown burnout affliction. In place of attempting a skill check during a phase, a PC can choose to Rehydrate.

BURNTOWN BURNOUT

FIRE

Physical exertion and sweltering heat sap your strength. If you have fire resistance or treat environmental heat effects as if they were one step less severe, use the outcome for one degree of success better than the result of your save. The fatigued condition ends immediately once you recover from the affliction, rather than requiring a full night's rest.

Saving Throw DC 13 Fortitude; **Stage 1** fatigued (1 phase); **Stage 2** fatigued and -1 to all skill checks (1 phase); **Stage 3** 1d6 fire damage, fatigued, and -1 to all skill checks (1 phase).

REHYDRATE

HEALING WATER

You take a lengthy break to drink fluids, cool down, and rest. Attempt a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw, Medicine check, or Survival check.

Critical Success You reduce your stage of Burntown burnout by 1 and gain a +5 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude save against the affliction at the end of this phase.

Success You gain a +5 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude save against Burntown burnout at the end of this phase.

Failure You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude save against Burntown burnout at the end of this phase.

Critical Failure No effect.

Morning Tasks

The PCs begin with the three previously mentioned projects. Multiple PCs can work on the same projects simultaneously, yet it's likely most efficient if they split their attention somewhat.

BUILDING FENCES

Step 1: Stoking Fires DC 14 Survival, DC 15 Athletics, or DC 16 Fortitude; **Threshold 1**

Step 2a: Hammering Iron DC 14 Crafting or DC 17 Athletics; **Threshold 2**

Step 2b: Quality Control DC 14 Crafting or DC 16 Perception; **Threshold 1**

A new home finished and inhabited months ago still hasn't received the decorative wrought iron fence around its tiny yard. The PCs aren't assembling the fence or creating the scrollwork; they're just needed to create the pickets, posts, and crossbars that comprise the fence. This requires consistent heat, steady labor, and careful measurement so that each piece is uniform.

CROSSBOW REPAIR

Step 1: Elemental Encouragement DC 14 Intimidation, DC 15 Deception, DC 16 Diplomacy, DC 16 Nature, DC 17 Stealth, or DC 17 Thievery; **Threshold 1**

Step 2: Reassembly DC 14 Crafting, DC 15 Thievery, DC 16 Perception, or DC 17 Reflex save; **Threshold 1**

Step 3: Fine-Tuning ranged attack against AC 14; **Threshold 1** Although the stock of this heavy crossbow survived being hit by a giant's boulder, the steel bow arm didn't. Forging a replacement requires considerable skill, which Elga will handle. Unfortunately, the elemental spirits that fuel the forge she needs for the task are being stubborn, so she needs someone to encourage their cooperation. Once she forges the replacement piece, she needs someone to reassemble the crossbow and ensure that it's calibrated for maximum accuracy.

The elementals resemble a pair of fiery house cats. They understand pantomiming and some Dwarven phrases. Addressing them in Pyric grants a PC a +1 circumstance bonus to perform Step 1. The elementals insist they can't burn properly without a breakfast of rare oils (a lie—they've already been fed), though a PC can try to steal those from Elga's storeroom with the Stealth or Thievery check above.

SHIELD'S FINISHING TOUCHES

Step 1a: Creating Designs DC 13 Art Lore, DC 13 Dwarf Lore, DC 13 Genealogy Lore, DC 14 Crafting, DC 15 Religion, DC 16 Society; **Threshold 1**

Step 1b: Stabilizing Enchantments DC 15 Arcana, DC 15 Occultism, DC 15 Religion; **Threshold 2**

Elga's apprentice left to work on Torag's Shield before finishing work on this commissioned item. Unfortunately, the original artisan never finished the protective enchantment, and the magic has unraveled slightly. In addition, the contract requires "a decorative element celebrating dwarven achievement," with no notes about what this should be. The PCs have considerable latitude in inventing and painting a suitable design.

Afternoon Business

After the morning's work phases, Elga wraps up her own project and reviews the PCs' work so far. Ideally, the PCs have finished at least 6 steps by now, and Elga serves as a mouthpiece for you to communicate to the players how they're doing. Elga is particularly keen to point out exceptional work, as well as quip about any unconventional strategies the PCs might have used. Afterward, she takes the PCs out to lunch for local-style curry, allowing each PC to attempt a new saving throw to overcome Burntown burnout. Lunch is also a great time to chat with Elga, who might provide the PCs additional rumors and leads they haven't already discovered.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes


Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





After lunch, the work schedule loosens somewhat. The PCs can continue working on any of the morning projects they haven't finished yet. In addition, three additional projects become available. Completing these projects isn't required for the PCs' contract, but each time the PCs complete one of these projects, Elga can reclaim some of her workday to help the PCs finish their work; she automatically succeeds at one skill check to perform any task involved in the PCs' morning projects, earning them a Victory Point. Each of these new projects provides less crafty PCs a way to participate and roleplay meaningfully.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

Step 1: Bookkeeping DC 12 Accounting Lore, DC 13 Guild Lore, DC 13 Highhelm Lore, DC 13 Merchant Lore, DC 13 Scribing Lore, DC 15 Society, DC 16 Arcana, DC 16 Perception; **Threshold 1**

Updating logs, sorting receipts, writing up material requests, and more require some of Elga's attention each week, and she'd love to have an attentive, math-savvy assistant handle her bookkeeping backlog. A wide range of additional Lore skills are suitable for this task, including any that might be used for running a medium-sized business.

In addition to potentially earning a Victory Point toward one of the three projects, the PC who completes this task discovers worrisome inconsistencies: it appears that Elga's total earnings are significantly lower than her income and costs would suggest. She's confused as to why this might be but is intent on investigating it later that week. In fact, the Blacknoon Thieves Guild has been skimming gold and adjusting numbers on Elga's shipments, quietly siphoning some of her wealth. By Chapter 3, she identifies the culprits and can provide the PCs a helpful boon when they later confront the Blacknoon Guild.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Step 1: Customer Tantrums DC 12 Merchant Lore, DC 14 Intimidation, DC 15 Deception, DC 16 Diplomacy; **Threshold 1**

Clients periodically visit to complain about a broken tool, inquire about commissioning items, or ask other questions that Elga would rather not suffer as distractions. What's more, her production backlog inspires impatient clients to stop by and demand progress updates that only set her further behind. If a PC can handle these customer issues, Elga can focus on creating goods.

RESTOCKING

Step 1: Hauling Supplies DC 12 Labor Lore, DC 14 Athletics, DC 15 Fortitude; **Threshold 1**

Forges need fuel, smithing needs iron, and moving those resources from local warehouses to Elga's storerooms

takes time she doesn't have. Somebody with a strong back could save her a few hours by restocking her supplies.

MUSTELIDS AMOK

The workday is almost over when a tremendous crash echoes from several blocks away, near the Iron Lagoon. Within minutes, a local crier jogs by, ringing a bell, warning of escaped animals, and announcing a bounty. Elga flags down the crier for details.

"Pyre ferrets!" exclaims the messenger, taking a moment to catch her breath. "Convoy was coming through from the Plane of Fire, but traffic got muddled at customs, causing a collision. That broke a crate of pyre ferrets, which all scattered."

Elga spits. "What's the worst thing a gaggle of phoenix-weasels is going to do?"

The messenger responds flatly, "Wild-caught." A stream of Pyric curses spill out of Elga's mouth before the messenger adds, "Authorities posted an immediate bounty: two gold a head alive, one each for dead. You can imagine they want this done fast."

After offering a dipper of water to the messenger, Elga urges "Off with you, then," before turning to her assistants. "Well, if you're up for wrangling weasels and being local heroes, I can clean up around here. How about it?"

Elga fields the PCs' questions, interchangeably using a variety of names for the escaped fauna.

What are pyre ferrets? "Fire runs in the blood of some creatures, yeah?" She taps her glowing braid for emphasis. "Think weasels that explode when they're excited. Some folk around Highhelm think they're great pets." She snorts, shaking her head before adding, "Utter fools."

Why are wild-caught pyre ferrets a problem? "The variety around Highhelm are domesticated. After a couple thousand years, they've been bred to glow and spark, not explode, so they're safe enough. Wild ones are wiggly time bombs and tightly controlled. Burntown's hot enough without some spark-stoat starting fires."

How do we capture pyre ferrets? Elga thinks a moment. "You'll need to track them down—start near the Iron Lagoon. They're squirrely, but they tend to leave ashen prints you might follow. Wild ones are loners, and they're skittish, so they've likely scattered and are looking for burrows. Beyond that? Be ready to snag, trap, or lure them into something that won't burn." She digs out a slightly dented birdcage, twenty feet of chain, and what looks like a butterfly net made with metallic mesh designed for snagging crabs, though it has a small hole that needs patching. "You'll figure it out. Best you work in small groups."

If the PCs want to participate, they have only a few minutes to prepare before setting off. As a result, they don't have additional time to recover from ongoing effects of Burntown burnout.

FERRETS THREE

Capturing the escaped pyre ferrets involves a few steps. First, PCs must track the animals using the following Ashen Tracks challenge. Once they do, the PCs can access any of the three other challenges, and they might even split up to capture multiple pyre ferrets at once.

Timing: This encounter takes place over multiple phases, much as the earlier crafting work did. During each phase, a PC can freely move to an available objective, make a quick plan with other PCs, and attempt one action to resolve that objective. The number of phases the party requires to locate and capture the first three ferrets helps determine their overall success.

Once a PC fails a check to resolve a ferret obstacle, that encounter is on a timer. At the end of the phase, the ferret panics and ignites part of the surrounding area. During the following phase, not only do the PCs get a secondary objective of extinguishing the small fire (requiring one successful DC 15 check), but if they don't capture the ferret by the end of that phase, the ferret escapes and is ultimately captured by a different hunter. Also, if the small fire isn't extinguished during that second phase, the fire expands, causing significant property damage before bystanders rally to put it out. This ends that obstacle.

Capturing Pyre Ferrets: Each of these obstacles requires two successful DC 15 checks to complete, and each obstacle presents a scene and recommended skills the PCs might use. Have the players devise their own plan for tricking, chasing, trapping, stalking, or flushing out the ferrets, with them suggesting which skills they'll use. It's okay if they employ an unconventional strategy! If a plan uses especially clever tactics or impractical skills, consider adjusting the check's DC by 2. Likewise, each ferret obstacle recommends skills for extinguishing any fires based on the scene, but let the PCs improvise. If a PC uses a 1st-level spell as an effective part of their plan, consider treating this as an automatically successful check.

Whenever a PC critically fails a check to capture a pyre ferret, they take 1d6 fire damage, courtesy of the animal's angry combustion.

Killing Pyre Ferrets: For whatever reason, a PC might decide to kill a pyre ferret in place of attempting a skill check. For this, use the statistics for a weasel (*Bestiary* 3 291) with fire resistance 3, and a PC gets three actions with which to make attacks (applying

their multiple attack penalty). This is faster than capturing the animal but awards a smaller bounty.

Development: Once the PCs have resolved these first three pyre ferret escapees, begin the Alchemist's Pyre event (page 38).

ASHEN TRACKS

Skills: Arcana, Diplomacy, Highhelm Lore, Nature, Perception, Survival

As elemental-infused animals, pyre ferrets leave slight magical signatures along with their conventional tracks. Bystanders are willing to share what they know if asked, yet only a capable interviewer can question numerous strangers quickly while keeping each informant focused on concise answers.

FERRET 1: BOTANICAL GARDENS

Capture Skills: Athletics, Nature, Stealth, Survival

Firefighting Skills: Reflex save or Survival

The Ferrixion Botanical Garden houses myriad sunless flora that feed on meat, heat, and (most worryingly) charcoal. One set of tracks disappears amid the grassy growths and tree-sized fungi, causing bits of charcoal dust to spark in its wake. Capturing this ferret likely involves stalking it through the foliage before springing an ambush.

If the area ignites, the best strategy likely involves suffocating the fire by kicking loose soil onto the flames.

FERRET 2: LIZARD HATCHERY

Skills: Acrobatics, Nature, Perception, Thievery

Firefighting Skills: Athletics or Intimidation

Abelgard (N male halfling farmer) raises cat-sized lizards called spurtails here, known for their nutritious eggs and love of steam. A pyre ferret wriggles into the main hatchery, triggering a hissing chorus of distressed lizards, some of which scramble out. Abelgard eagerly accepts the PCs' assistance. Finding the pyre ferret likely involves squeezing past humidification troughs, calming livestock, quietly disassembling an incubation box where the ferret's hidden, or judging the lizards' behavior to guess where the ferret's hiding.

If the area ignites, overturning one of the heavy troughs of water could extinguish the flames. Failing that, a PC might evacuate the lizards and seal the hatchery, trusting the steam to suffocate the fire.

FERRET 3: TAPHOUSE

Skills: Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, Performance

Firefighting Skills: Diplomacy or Intimidation

Panicked by street traffic, one ferret bolted into a tavern. Patrons in the establishment are busy raising their mugs rather than watching their feet. With the right mix of assertiveness, leadership, or distraction, a PC might win the

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



crowd's cooperation without causing a panicked stampede for the exits.

If the area ignites, the PCs' best resource is the crowd. Coordinating the firefighting takes steady charisma.

ALCHEMIST'S PYRE

One last ferret is on the loose. As the PCs finish the prior obstacles, they hear shattering glass and screams about a block away. A ferret entered a local alchemist's shop, and **Rora Breakiron** (LG female dwarf alchemist), thinking that this was a domesticated ferret, attempted to chase it out with a broom. Spooked, the animal ignited part of the shop, which contains numerous explosive supplies!

The final obstacle is slightly more complex, in part because the entire party can dedicate their attention to the problem. First, the PCs need to capture the pyre ferret, which is scrambling about the shop and causing ongoing damage. Second, the PCs need to stop the flames, evacuate the shop's most explosive materials, or both. Each of these two objectives requires two successful DC 15 skill checks to resolve. As before, encourage creative solutions.

At the end of each phase that the ferret hasn't been captured, it darts about the shop and starts more fires; roll a DC 6 flat check, and if it succeeds, increase the number of successful checks required to stop the flames. If the PCs have already resolved the firefighting objective when this happens, the ferret starts new fires, requiring one success to extinguish. In addition, the following effects occur at the end of specific phases.

Phase 2: If the PCs haven't resolved the firefighting objective, flames reach a few flammable fluids. These explode, hurling heat and glass. Each PC takes 1d4 piercing damage plus 2 fire damage (DC 15 basic Reflex save).

Phase 3: If the PCs haven't resolved the firefighting objective, the flames ignite a major reagent stockpile, causing the shop to erupt beyond the PCs' control. Each PC takes 1d8 fire damage (DC 15 basic Reflex save) as they escape the shop.

FERRET 4: ALCHEMIST'S SHOP

Ferret Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Nature, Stealth, or Reflex save

Firefighting Skills: Athletics, Crafting, Medicine, Nature, or Survival

Chasing down the pyre ferret without knocking over displays ideally involves agility or guile, driving the creature into a corner. PCs might smother or starve the fires by shifting displays. Fortunately, the metal shelves aren't at risk, and just by identifying and evacuating the most flammable materials, the PCs can negate a potential disaster.

AFTERMATH

After a full day's labor and a frantic ferret hunt, the PCs have earned a break! Elga buys them dinner and gives them a spa voucher to unwind at the local mineral springs, saying she'll review their work and have payment ready the next day. The PCs' other rewards depend on how

well they handled the challenges.

Elga's Tasks: Count the total Victory Points the PCs earned while working with Elga, and for each of the three projects the PCs completed, award them an additional Victory Point.

At least 1 VP: Elga pays the PCs the 5 gp promised.

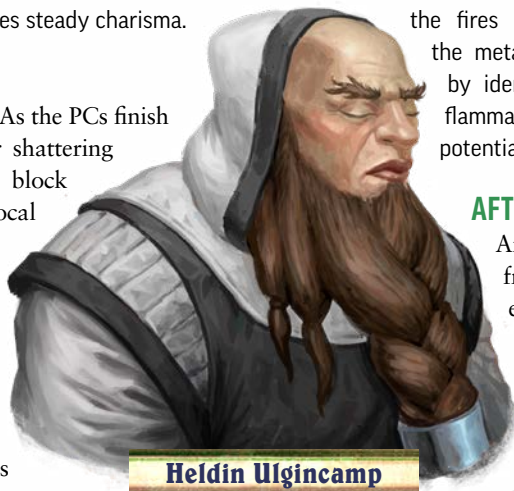
At least 5 VP: Elga also tosses in a *fulu of fire suppression* with a chuckle, encouraging them to "stay warm, but not too warm."

At least 8 VP: When Elga discovers the next day that the client who ordered crossbow repairs can't pay for the work, she takes ownership and gives the *+1 striking crossbow* to the PCs.

At least 11 VP: Elga is truly impressed by the PCs' work. She insists that if they're going to represent Clan Tolorr, they need to dress in Highhelm's best. She takes a PC's measurements (ideally a PC who both uses heavy armor and contributed well to the projects), and in her spare time over the next three days, she adjusts a set of armor to gift to that PC. This can be any common armor whose item level is 2 or lower.

Pyre Ferret Bounty: For each of four pyre ferrets the PCs captured alive, the salamander paymaster who posted the bounty pays them 2 gp. For each dead pyre ferret, they earn 1 gp. Recaptured pyre ferrets are humanely re-wilded.

Alchemist's Shop: If the PCs prevented Rora Breakiron's shop from exploding, she thanks them heartily. To her chagrin, the event weakened her ongoing potion projects to the point she can't sell them, but she does bottle them up to give to the PCs in thanks. These include a faulty *potion of leaping* and a faulty *potion of quickness*. At the end of each of the imbiber's turns, roll a DC 3 flat check. If the



Heldin Ulgincamp

check fails, the potion's effects end prematurely. If the check succeeds, the potion's effects persist (maximum 1 round), and the flat check's DC increases by 1.

Reputation: If the PCs earn at least 5 VP while working for Elga, they earn 1 Reputation Point. If the PCs prevent all of the pyre ferrets' fires from causing major damage, they earn 1 additional Reputation Point.

Tolorr Crypt Haunting

Summary: An invasive protean has scrambled a hallowed crypt's memorials, riling ancestral spirits.

Objective: Assist a Magrimate priest in understanding and placating the spirits before ousting the protean vandal

Contact: Heldin Ulgincamp (N nonbinary dwarf acolyte)

District: King's Crown

Heldin Ulgincamp is a capable priest in their fourth year of training, yet they remain young in the eyes of their elders. As part of their duties, they began tending Clan Tolorr's cemetery in King's Crown, only to come under attack by haunts. Heldin, assuming this is an intentional test of their abilities, has refrained from calling on the senior priests for assistance, but they've reached the point where they need support to resolve the haunting safely. They don't realize that an akizendri protean recently invaded the crypt and vandalized its inscriptions, riling ancestral spirits within.

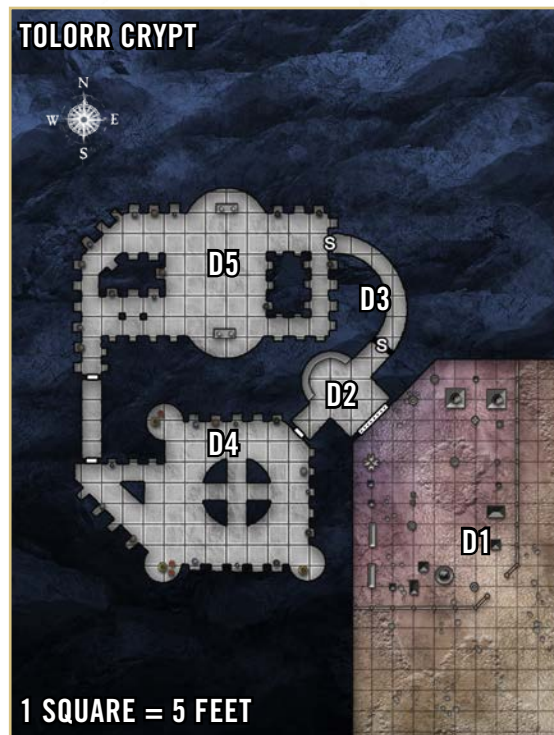
However, Heldin's prowling about has unsettled some passersby who fear they might be a potential grave robber. Word reaches Clan Tolorr, and in turn, the PCs' friends encourage them to investigate.

TOLORR CRYPT

Burial space is at a premium in Highhelm, especially after millennia of occupation. Most clans maintain private crypts scattered throughout Highhelm and its surrounding territories. Magrim's faithful—particularly younger acolytes in need of menial labor and lessons in humility—regularly inspect and clean these sites, ensuring the honored dead stay happily inanimate.

D1. MONUMENT PARK

Built into the surrounding stone, its honored dead sealed within, the crypt has a small, fenced park for casual visits that bears hundreds of inscriptions carved into its flagstones, facade, and numerous small monuments. As the PCs approach, Heldin is on their way back from a brief break. When they spot the PCs entering the park, Heldin almost drops their snack in an effort to flag down the group and warn them away. They're somewhat disheveled after spending several days trying to resolve the local haunting; their customary black-and-white Magrimate vestments are



scuffed and torn from long hours and the occasional dive for cover.

Once it's apparent that the PCs are not casual guests and are investigating rumors of grave robbers, Heldin sheepishly shares their recent troubles.

"I'm supposed to be here, see?" They extract and hold out a sacred symbol resembling a rune-carved cave entrance. "Magrim's faithful help maintain the crypts, and that often falls to priests-in-training, like me. After my recent misbehavior, my superiors assigned me to this crypt. When I first arrived, I thought all the manifestations were illusions—some prank to humble me. Since then, though, it's become clear it's an actual haunting! Get within a few steps of the entrance, and it's like all of Clan Tolorr springs up around you, complaining you never visit or give them great-grandchildren!"

Heldin straightens their vestments as they think a moment. "Well, ah, I don't know whether this is a test from my superiors or a coincidental haunt. Either way, it's time I swallow my pride and accept this is more than one acolyte can handle." They jangle a set of keys. "Perhaps you're amenable to seeing what's riled the ancestors and aid in the Taskmaster's work?"

Heldin's hypothesis is simple: the haunt at the crypt's entrance stems partly from inadequate maintenance and partly from some problem deeper within the crypt. They have a key to get inside as part of their

assignment, used mostly to perform a walk-through and spot cleaning. Before descending into the crypt, though, they want to suppress the haunt here.

If asked about what they did to offend their superiors, Heldin scowls before noting, “Elder Polgen interprets tenets very precisely and doesn’t suffer—” they adjust their voice to imitate an aging dwarf “—some would-be heretic’s attempt to turn my lecture into a discussion!” Heldin respects tradition and Magrim’s teachings, just not Elder Polgen’s dogma.

Creatures: Heldin accompanies the PCs through the crypt, primarily providing support to the group when confronted with danger. This is especially relevant in area **D3**, where their Anchor the Unliving ability helps a party with limited magical weaponry to defeat the ghosts. They’ve only begun harnessing magic, so when Magrim answers a prayer with a supernatural, they sometimes flinch in surprise or gasp at the sudden rush of power. If a PC displays confidence and divine magic, Heldin might shadow and learn from them.

HELDIN ULGINCAMP

CREATURE 1

UNIQUE N MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +7; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Petran, Sakvroth

Skills Crafting +7, Diplomacy +5, Religion +8

Str +1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +1

Items candles (10), chain shirt, flint and steel, religious symbol, repair kit, warhammer

AC 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

HP 20

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ warhammer +7 (shove), **Damage** 1d8+1 bludgeoning

Divine Prepared Spells DC 17; **1st** *heal*, *magic weapon*; **Cantrips** (1st) *chill touch*, *shield*, *stabilize*

Anchor the Unliving ♦♦ (divine, necromancy) Heldin displays their religious symbol at an undead creature within 30 feet. The creature must attempt a DC 17 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success Reduce the creature’s resistances by 1 for 1d4 rounds, after which it’s immune to this ability for 1 round.

Failure As success, but the resistances are reduced by 3.

Critical Failure As success, but the resistances are reduced by 5.

Hazard: The akizendri’s chaotic editing of funerary inscriptions has disturbed and confused various ancestral spirits associated with this crypt. The spirits manifest haphazardly when the haunt activates, with each spirit fearsomely chiding anyone they encounter.

The akizendri’s vandalism isn’t immediately apparent; however, when a creature is taking persistent mental damage from the haunt, they can see ghostly writing in Dwarven hovering a few inches in front of several inscriptions scattered throughout the park.

Each of these inscriptions portrays a deceased dwarf in an irreverent way and is carved in an inconsistent font, as if haphazardly scrawled into the bare rock. The ghostly writing displays what was originally written there. By moving within 5 feet of the ghostly writing and reciting the original inscription as part of their check to Disable the haunt, a PC gains a +5 circumstance bonus to their skill check. After using the ghostly inscription successfully, one of the ancestral spirits visibly calms and transforms to reflect the ghostly epitaph, that ghostly writing fades, and a PC must move to another inscription to gain a similar bonus. The ghostly inscriptions are scattered, with at least one partway up the facade, requiring a PC to climb up 5 feet to access it (DC 15 Athletics).

OFFENDED EPITAPHS

HAZARD 2

UNCOMMON COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +8 (trained)

Description Funerary inscriptions flicker and display different messages, causing ghostly ancestors to briefly appear and complain that their descendants have forgotten them.

Disable three DC 20 Diplomacy, Occultism, or Religion checks to rebuke the cantankerous spirits

Growing Grumbles ↻ **Trigger** A creature approaches within 10 feet of area **D2**; **Effect** The haunt rolls initiative as the ancestral spirits begin manifesting.

Routine (2 actions) Ancestral spirits appear throughout areas **D1** and **D2**, each fading after several rounds to be replaced by a different spirit.

Lambast ♦ (mental) A spirit yells at a living creature, which must attempt a DC 18 Will save.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes 2 persistent mental damage. Until the persistent damage ends, the creature can perceive ghostly Dwarven inscriptions floating several inches in front of the various inscriptions throughout the park.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature takes 4 persistent mental damage and is stupefied 1 until the persistent damage ends.

Development: Once the PCs disable the haunt, the ancestral spirits grow calm and gradually fade from view. Relieved, Heldin encourages everyone to use this reprieve to rest a moment and clean up the area before traveling into the crypt.

D2. ENTRY SHRINE

Few visitors travel beyond this vestibule, whose carved walls and small altar commemorate Clan Tolorr and provide a place to leave offerings. Tiny craters of scorched wax are all that remain of dozens of candles that have burned down along the walls. Stone bowls hold a variety of food that ranges from stale to rotten, with a few offerings even having haphazard bites taken out of them. A hidden latch (Perception DC 21) along the northeast alcove opens a secret door into area **D3**.

Thanks to the haunt in area **D1**, Heldin hasn't been able to maintain the shrine properly. By helping clean up the area and show respect to the dwarves buried within, the PCs can both destroy the haunt and calm some of the distressed spirits farther inside. There are three key tasks to perform. So long as the PCs succeed at two of them, they destroy the haunt. If they succeed at all three, they gain an additional benefit in area **D3**. Each task has recommended skills or solutions, though creative alternatives are equally viable. Throughout the process, Heldin performs a simple ritual to reconsecrate the area.

Chase Away Foul Influences: The haunt has infused the shrine with an unpleasant ambience. With proper praise or ritual cleansing, a PC can chase away these negative influences. This might involve a DC 13 Dwarf Lore or DC 15 Performance check to tell stories of dwarven glory, reminding the dead of their noble past. A PC might instead focus on chasing out foul spirits with a DC 15 Occultism or Religion check.

Cleaning Carvings: Dust and candle soot have accumulated on the shrine's wall carvings, many of which span the domed ceiling. Cleaning these might require succeeding at a DC 16 Athletics check to climb up to the elevated carvings, a DC 16 Crafting check to gently clean the carvings, or a DC 17 Perception check to spot every last bit of dirt and debris.

Replacing Offerings: Leaving a collection of treats, drinks, and handmade crafts is traditional when paying respects or asking for ancestral guidance, yet the offerings here are now inedible. A PC might put together an appropriate treat with a DC 15 Crafting check or culinary DC 13 Lore check. They might buy an assortment of nice foods for 8 sp, though with a DC 12 Diplomacy check or DC 10 Highhelm Lore check, they source equally good foods for just 3 sp.

D3. UTILITY RAMP

Sarcophagi, large urns, and other heavy objects periodically have to be moved to and from the lower crypt. This hidden ramp spirals to the lower level, bypassing the narrow stairs in area **D4**. Several sturdy metal loops and pulleys embedded into the floor and

ceiling help in dragging and lowering material down the roughly 45-degree slope. The hidden doors at either end are easily opened from inside this area.

D4. UPPER CRYPT

MODERATE 2

A short passage descends gently from the entry shrine to the upper crypt, its walls covered in relief carvings of dwarven explorers climbing upward toward the entrance to commemorate the Quest for Sky. More carvings decorate the steeper stairs leading to the lower crypt (area **D5**), with the dwarves depicted in increasingly antiquated armor the deeper the crypt goes.

The upper crypt contains a collection of urns and whole-body burials, with some placed in the central column's niches and most sealed beneath the floor (some flagstones rock slightly, indicating the space below). Most of the interred remains rest in partially recessed ossuaries, gently decaying for decades before being reburied outside Highhelm.

Creatures: Like with the haunt above, ancestral spirits have manifested here, sometimes wandering in a daze and other times arguing in frustration about the ineffable wrongness that has awoken them. Unlike most undead, these three are echoes of long-dead dwarves whose souls traveled to the afterlife ages ago. These spirits each have the appearance and personality of their former life, but only a fragmented memory. The more the protean in area **D5** rewrites inscriptions, the more scrambled these spirits' memories become, and their appearances have gradually changed to reflect these forged narratives.

In life, all three worked with King Taargick in various roles and were ancestors of what would become Clan Tolorr. When the PCs arrive, the spirits are agitated. They anxiously engage the PCs in conversation, insistently referring to each PC as "High King" or "Taargick," even when corrected about the PCs' identities or told that the PCs can't all be Taargick. They tend to split up and question the PCs, hoping that their specific "Taargick" might solve their problems. This is an opportunity to convey some of King Taargick's legend, deeds, and misdeeds through roleplay, reinforcing the grim trials of the Quest for Sky nearly 10,000 years ago. Once the PCs have a chance to speak with the spirits and these three grow frustrated, their confusion and desperation turns to fury as they begin combat.

Each spirit's appearance and concerns are described below. Each spirit uses the ancestral echo statistics, adding a few attacks and abilities unique to that spirit.

Alkepsur: This venerable woman wears an eye patch and keeps her hair braided in a series of irregular knots that record old stories. She occasionally runs a hand

along the braids while trying to remember events. Patient and wise, Alkepsur served as King Taargick's personal historian and biographer through much of the Quest for Sky, dying shortly after reaching the surface. Taargick trusted her with his inner thoughts, including his regrets about the blood spilled and bodies left by the dwarves' migration to the surface. The popular dwarven narrative preserves Taargick's deeds, though, not his reservations, partly due to strategic historical tweaking over the millennia. With inscriptions changing in this very tomb, Alkepsur is incensed that Taargick would let his people cover up the past, yet she struggles to recall specific atrocities that she knows happened.

Ferghaz: Bedecked in numerous layers of religious robes, this middle-aged man was an influential priest of Torag. In dwarven tradition, his beard is festooned with glory ribbons that commemorate his great deeds, yet to his vexation, many of the ribbons' designs now suggest he accomplished clownish trivialities, and some even take a lewd shape (reflecting the protean's revised inscriptions). The idea that his descendants would be so disrespectful as to remember him as a joke causes him to rant, looking to Taargick for validation and to retell the real stories of what Ferghaz accomplished.

In fact, he accomplished a lot in life, serving as one of Taargick's main religious advisors. However, Ferghaz prioritized Torag's commands and dwarven well-being above all else, and he encouraged aggression against any Darklands residents who stood in the way of the Quest for Sky. His religious council often dismissed Taargick's moral reservations, not wanting a king's indecision to infect the people or disgrace Torag. Yet Ferghaz's most consistent quirk was reverently referencing Felgunn, the realm where dwarves lived before Torag summoned them to the surface. What the spirit remembers about Felgunn is vague, yet even the name Felgunn is a historical gem, for it's barely preserved in dwarven records.

Ulki: This young, scarred warrior wears plate armor that doesn't cover her right arm, and she carries a greataxe marked with the god Angradd's symbol in her left hand. Born, trained, wounded, and killed during the Quest for Sky, Ulki lived a tragic life shaped not by dwarven artistry, culture, and faith, but rather by rhetoric, desperate violence, and xenophobia. That she's awake and wandering here convinces her that enemies are near, and she insists on getting orders from Taargick and ensuring he's safe from orcs and other Darklands denizens. All the while, she rarely moves her right arm and wields the greataxe effortlessly with her left. In life, she lost her arm in battle, but rather than retiring, she became a hatchet-wielding legend.

The protean's vandalism causes her to appear with the lost arm and original axe, and their reappearance confuses her for reasons she can't articulate.

ANCESTRAL ECHO

CREATURE 1

RARE MEDIUM DWARF GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +9; darkvision

Skills Dwarf Lore +7, Intimidation +6, Stealth +7

Str -5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Riled by Disrespect An ancestral echo gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and saving throw DCs against any creature that has not performed at least one task to beautify the site to which the echo is bound. This applies to any PC who didn't succeed at one or more skill checks to clean area **D2**.

Site Bound The ancestral echo can't leave the upper crypt.

AC 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

HP 15, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, precision, unconscious;

Resistances 5 all damage (except force, ghost touch, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magic)

Rejuvenation (necromancy, occult) Restoring the vandalized inscriptions and reciting their corrected stories ushers these spirits back to the afterlife.

Speed fly 20 feet

ALKEPSUR

Languages Draconic, Dwarven, Gnomish, Hallit, Petran, Sakvroth

Melee ♦ ghostly clan dagger +8 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d6+2 negative

Ancient Anecdote ♦ (auditory, enchantment, linguistic, mental, occult) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Alkepsur banters with a creature within 60 feet while referencing a forgotten anecdote. The creature must attempt either a DC 18 Will saving throw or DC 15 Dwarf Lore check.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is stunned 1 as they try to decipher the reference.

Critical Failure The anecdote makes the target confused and stupefied 2 for 1 round.

FERGHAZ

Languages Emyrean, Common, Dwarven

Melee ♦ ghostly hammer +8 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d4+3 negative

Ranged ♦ chiding rebuke +8 (range increment 30 feet, magical), **Damage** 1d4+3 negative

Oh, If Your Ancestors Could See You! Ferghaz holds other dwarves to an impossible standard, and his attacks carry the weight of a hundred generations' judgment. His Strikes deal an additional 1d4 mental damage to dwarves.

ULKI

Languages Draconic, Dwarven, Orcish

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Melee ♦ ghostly greataxe +8 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d12+3 fire

D5. LOWER CRYPT

SEVERE 2

Niches with several shelves line almost every vertical surface of the lower crypt, which holds hundreds of ossuaries, urns, and several sarcophagi. A wide ceremonial space for funeral services is flanked by stone altars and curved walls painted with fading scenes of Highhelm as it appeared around 4000 AR. However, haphazard splashes of vibrant paint mar some of these images, several urns have shattered on the floor, and unflattering graffiti is carved in jagged script over various funerary inscriptions.

Hazard: The akizendri trapped the north altar with a *glyph of warding* containing *acid splash* (2nd level), giving the glyph a vaguely abyssal appearance to suggest that demons are nearby.

Creatures: The akizendri here is to blame for the vandalism, and they currently dwell inside the inscription of an ossuary along the north wall by using *secret page*. They intently monitor anyone in the area with their entropy sense before becoming mischievous and deciding to ambush whoever wanders too close to their hiding spot. The protean has no particular objective beyond being a nuisance and making dwarves angry, but they try to flee once reduced to 10 Hit Points.

The akizendri's artistic antics have created several living graffiti creatures that are splattered across various walls throughout the area. These creatures attack when provoked or when the protean attacks, preferring to stick to urns (Hardness 2, HP 10, BT 5) or ossuaries (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10) when using their Backdrop ability.

AKIZENDRI

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 204

Initiative Perception +8

ANARCHIC LIVING GRAFFITI (3)

CREATURE 0

RARE **CN** **MEDIUM** **CONSTRUCT**

Perception +6; darkvision

Languages Dwarven, Protean (can't speak)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Crafting +3, Deception +5, Stealth +6

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1

AC 15; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

HP 16; **Immunities** death effects, diseased, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious

Backdrop When a creature attempts to Strike a living graffiti and critically misses, the attacker hits the surface behind the living graffiti.

Surface-Bound A living graffiti can move only along flat surfaces. If the surface it's on is destroyed, the graffiti takes 1d6 damage and is shunted to the nearest flat surface. If there's no flat surface within 5 feet, the graffiti is destroyed.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +8 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+2 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ paint +8 (nonlethal, range increment 20 feet),

Damage 1d4+2 bludgeoning plus splatter

Splatter A living graffiti splatters paint into a creature's face with its paint Strike. On a hit, the target is dazzled for 1 round or until it Interacts to remove the paint from its face.

Development: After chasing off or destroying the protean and living graffiti, the PCs can survey the damage. Most of the vandalism bears the same irregular scrawling that they found in area **D1**, indicating this was all the protean's work. Heldin works quickly to document the damage, fretting especially over anything the PCs broke or destroyed during the combat. Even so, they're relieved to have discovered what was riling the spirits. They thank the PCs, gratefully accepting any help the PCs provide in cleaning up the crypt, and they promise to be in touch soon about anything else they find.

Defeating the protean doesn't immediately appease the ancestral echoes in area **D4**, but it does make them slightly less belligerent. If the PCs explore area **D4** after defeating the protean, the spirits are still present, but each PC speaking to one of the spirits can placate it during the initial conversation with a successful DC 19 Deception or Diplomacy check; a placated spirit doesn't join any combat that follows.

AFTERMATH

The following day, the PCs receive two deliveries. The first is a heartfelt letter from Heldin thanking the PCs for their help. Heldin says they received high praise from their superiors as well as a *thurible of revelation* (enclosed with the package) that they believe the PCs would make far better use of. The second delivery is an appreciative letter from several Tolorr clan members for helping at the crypt. Enclosed are a flask of *holy water* and a moderate ghost charge to "help with any other ghosts." If the PCs didn't destroy any urns or ossuaries, the package also includes an elaborate silver religious symbol (worth 10 gp) of one of the PCs' patron deities.

Reputation: The PCs earn 2 Reputation Points for helping Heldin clean up the Tolorr crypt.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





CHAPTER 2: PATH OF THE DAGGER

The PCs' deeds and growing reputation earns them smiles and salutations throughout Highhelm. Yet one figure has been tracking their exploits with growing interest: the disgraced dwarf Krohan Veldollow seeks upstanding and tight-lipped explorers to help him recover the clan dagger of King Taargick. With countless treasure hunters flocking to the sky citadel and his poor standing with his clan, he's loath to advertise this opportunity, betray his identity, and accidentally point looters toward a priceless artifact. But the PCs are ideal candidates. They're clearly reliable and capable, plus their connections to Clan Tolorr might provide Krohan key allies and testimonials when he presents the clan dagger to his grandmother and begs her forgiveness.

You can start Chapter 2 once the PCs fulfill several conditions: they have a Reputation score of at least 8, they have completed the Silvertop Revenge quest, they have completed the Blacknoon Gauntlet Rescue quest, and they have completed at least two other quests. That said, it's likely best to have them complete all six quests and any minor events they want before Krohan presents his offer, as each event provides valuable treasure that equips the PCs for traveling beyond the city.

Krohan's Offer

As the PCs retire to Zelgin's after finishing their latest adventure, one of the inn's regulars stops by to chat. Ideally, the PCs already met and are familiar with

Elbert Glassgrinder, though the hunter hasn't been entirely honest with them; he is actually Krohan Veldollow, a disgraced ex-member of Clan Tolorr who keeps his identity secret in Highhelm for his own mental health. He offers to buy them dinner and drinks at their leisure to discuss a sensitive matter. Once everyone's gathered and served, he compliments the PCs accomplishments so far, citing a few of their more impressive feats—including a few details that might not be widely known, showing he's studied their activities closely.

"Dwarves: we live for the tales we'll leave behind after we die. Now, of course," he raises his mug as a toast, "we aren't dead yet! No, but disgrace can leave as cruel a wound as any blade. Disgrace dealt me a lethal blow years ago, and while I'm here to make it right, I must apologize for my most recent dishonor: there's no Elbert Glassgrinder. Never was."

He places a clan dagger without a pommel gem on the table. "Born and raised as Krohan Veldollow, from a proud family in Clan Tolorr. About a decade ago, barely a beard to my name, I thought myself some grand adventurer. I didn't just run off to raid tombs—family might have forgiven that. No, I wanted a legendary weapon, too, so I stole into Stonehall, sneaked up to High King Taargick's statue, and nicked his clan dagger. I figured since no traps went off, the dagger had chosen me to perform great deeds!" Krohan shakes his head with chagrin. "Young me was a fool without equal."

"Anyway, young me traipsed about the Darklands for a bit before the dagger slipped from my grasp, fell down a narrow crevice, and disappeared beyond my skills to recover it. I sulked back home, admitted my misdeeds, and was cast from the clan. Well, only a few months ago, I felt something calling to me from across Absalom. What I found was a fragment!" He places a jagged fragment of broken armor on the table. "Doesn't look like much, but it sings with history—certainly did when I picked it up! A vision of Taargick himself appeared, taking me by the shoulder and pointing north to Highhelm before he faded." He raises a hand solemnly. "Swear by Torag's own anvil."

"Since I've been back, I've felt it: Taargick's clan dagger, singing from the depths. I tried retracing my old steps, but fresh danger's moved in. I know I can lead the way, but I can't do it alone. So what say we recover one of Highhelm's greatest relics together?"

Krohan is sincere, humble, and doesn't hold back information to save his pride. The following are likely questions and his answers.

Why Us? "Any mention of a treasure like this would attract the greedy and the glory hounds, and I'd as likely end up with a knife in my back as a clan dagger in my hands. You've shown you care about Highhelm and its people, and you're friends of Clan Tolorr. I know I can trust you."

What will you do with the dagger? "Clan Tolorr's Family Festival comes soon. It's a time for strengthening bonds and rebuilding bridges, and I intend to deliver the clan dagger to my clan elders to repair the damage I did years ago." He shrugs and adds, "I hope they might accept me back into the clan, but even if not, I'll have done what's right."

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

After meeting the shamed scion Krohan Veldollow, the PCs take on his quest to venture into the Darklands to retrieve the lost legendary clan dagger. They venture down to the ruined umbral gnome settlement of Guldrege, but not before facing a sinister leshy necromancer lording over a jungle of fungus and danger. In Guldrege, the PCs discover the damage wrought by Zogototaru, and they face a group of xulgaths who moved into the place and the remaining constructs built by one of the town's original inhabitants.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



How long is this expedition? “It’s about two days’ travel to get where I dropped the clan dagger. Based on what I can sense, it might be another day or two of travel beyond that, but we won’t know until we start exploring. Pack for about 10 days.”

What danger stopped you earlier? “Those caves were pretty bare years ago, but the tunnels were thick with fungi when I scouted the area recently. Darklands fungi will eat you as often as you eat them—wasn’t going to risk it alone.”

Will we be compensated? “Absolutely,” he responds firmly before placing a pouch heavy with coins on the table. “That’s an advance. That much again if we succeed and get back alive.” The pouch contains 11 gold pieces and 79 silver pieces minted from across the Inner Sea, plus a garnet worth 5 gp. The eclectic wealth is indicative of his time abroad and effort to assemble what he can to pay the PCs.

VENTURING OUT

The following day, Krohan is ready to depart. He takes a moment to review the PCs’ gear to ensure they’re properly equipped, urging them to grab additional rations, rope, lamp oil, or the like if they seem unprepared. This might be your players’ first exposure to Darklands exploration, and given the extensive role the Darklands plays throughout Sky King’s Tomb, this is a good opportunity for the players to learn best practices that will serve them once Krohan’s no longer in the group.

The expedition sets out from the Depths, following a well-traveled mining tunnel that links to a series of small, interconnected caves, which take the PCs away from the Darklands’ more popular routes. Krohan seems to remember the route well, though he sometimes double checks by holding out the adamantine armor fragment like an occult compass.

Krohan’s statistics and combat strategies appear on page 92.

The Hyphae Haven

Delighting in the cave’s rich carpet of bat guano and surface runoff from a natural chimney, the leshy Skibrellon moved into this cavern several years ago to create a fungus sanctuary. It’s grown into an underground jungle of fungi with a knee-deep living carpet across the ground and an assortment of frills and growths clinging to the walls and ceiling 40 feet above. A natural chimney over 500 feet long snakes toward the surface at a steep angle, though it’s partly clogged with more mushrooms. At the southern end of the cavern towers an immense mushroom with a funnel-shaped cap—a living keep where Skibrellon dwells.

An abundance of bioluminescent fungi dapples the cavern with faint lights that aren’t bright enough to provide dim light but do grant a sense of the cavern’s size. The trickle of sunlight spilling down the chimney is visibly different but illuminates nothing. What’s more, the spongy biomass covering most surfaces dampens sound, making the cavern eerily quiet. This helps the PCs fight various guards without alerting everyone in the cavern. The map for this area appears on the inside back cover.

Spores: Several hazards and creatures in this cavern can cover PCs in spores. These spores aren’t dangerous, but they do help Skibrellon track the PCs. A PC can thoroughly shake spores from their gear as a 10-minute downtime activity.

E1. OVERLOOK

MODERATE 3

Although the tunnel enters this cavern about 25 feet above floor level, ages of minerals dripped along the cavern’s north face have created a winding ramp connecting the two levels. Mold grows atop the ramp’s smooth stone, making an already precarious surface even more slippery. Non-fungus creatures need to Balance (DC 11 Acrobatics) to traverse the ramp, and Climbing down the slick sides requires a DC 17 Athletics check.

Creatures: A slime mold clings to the side of the ramp about halfway down its length. It heaves itself up to capture any prey it senses within 10 feet, or it wriggles toward any prey that’s in distress. A pair of undead sheep heads (stolen from the Silvercap Tavern and animated by Skibrellon) patrols the cavern’s northern half, lazily floating and blending in among the other fungi. As PCs descend the slope, these heads swoop in to attack, bleating hoarsely. These undead and the slime mold neither cooperate nor attack each other.

SLIME MOLD

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 193

Initiative Perception +6

SPOREBORN SKULLS (2)

CREATURE 2

NE TINY FUNGUS MINDLESS UNDEAD
Variant flaming skull (*Bestiary 3* 30)

Initiative Perception +9

Languages Necril

Immunities acid, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison

Stir the Spores ☞ (poison) **Frequency** once per 1d4 rounds;

Trigger The sporeborn skull takes bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage; **Effect** The impact scatters spores onto all creatures within 5 feet, making them sickened 1 (DC 18 Fortitude negates).

Spore Explosion When destroyed, a sporeborn skull explodes in a blast of bone and toxic spores that deals 1d6 piercing damage plus 1d6 poison damage to each adjacent creature (DC 18 basic Reflex save).

Melee ♦ forehead +10 (finesse), **Damage** 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus 1d6 poison

Ranged ♦ spittle +10 (acid, agile, range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 1d12+2 acid

E2. MUSHROOM MORASS MODERATE 3

Generations of bat guano (as much as 10 feet thick) once covered this cavern's floor, and for several years, Skibrellon's personal jungle has broken down most of the droppings. The result is a quagmire of fungi that's so dense that most Small creatures can walk atop it, whereas most Medium creatures' feet sink knee-deep into the fleshy garden, functioning as difficult terrain.

Hazards: The fungal expanse presents two nonlethal threats that can complicate the PCs' expedition. The first are the harmless spores stored within these countless fruiting bodies, with each footstep kicking up a puff of spores that visibly dust that creature. By moving at half their Speed, a PC can attempt a DC 15 Acrobatics check, Stealth check, Survival check, or Reflex save. If they succeed, that PC steps carefully enough that only a negligible number of spores cling to them. Small and Tiny PCs get a +4 circumstance bonus to this check or save. A PC can cross the area with a single check.

The more dramatic threat are shriekers, a type of fungi that responds to light or movement by creating an ear-piercing screech. No matter the PCs' route, they'll step within range of at least one. Spotting and Disabling that shrieker lets the PCs complete their crossing quietly.

If a shrieker Shrieks, it alerts everyone in the cave and mushroom tower. In area E4, Skibrellon spends 1 round repositioning the spitting pods hazard to the northern windows, after which it activates and performs its routine for 3 rounds before retracting to recharge. Skibrellon barely participates, instead assembling spell components before marching downstairs with his zombies to join the fight. In area E3, the sporeborn myceloid spends 1 round noisily grabbing two rocks and moving to the entrance, where it hurls these at the PCs. It prefers to intercept them at the door rather than trudge into area E2, taking cover or fetching more rocks if needed. The noise also attracts the rust monster there. It hides near the myceloid, and at the first scent of new metal, it dives into the deep fungi (gaining cover) and hunts metallic prey.

The tactics above help stagger what could become an extreme encounter. Even so, with a new combatant entering the fray every round or two, the PCs could be in for a tough combat!

SHRIEKERS

Gamemastery Guide 77

Stealth DC 12

HAZARD -1

E3. MUSHROOM GROUND FLOOR MODERATE 3

The giant mushroom's stalk has been hollowed out, creating coarse, striated walls made of exposed, finger-thick hyphae that interlace 10 feet above to create a ceiling. The strands near the center have been unraveled and woven into a spiraling staircase to area E4. Other ceiling strands are woven into a leshy-sized hammock that hangs about 5 feet off the ground. An assortment of pockmarked boulders and slabs are strewn about the room.

Creatures: Though he once worked amicably with local myceloids, Skibrellon recently ended his alliance because even myceloids' merciless ways didn't measure up to the leshy's vengeful schemes. He has killed several, and his finest undead creation stands guard in this room. The other occupant is Slag Whiskers, a semi-tamed rust monster who is the only non-fungus that Skibrellon cares about. His pet plays with a goblin-sized boulder as if it's a puzzle feeder, desperately trying to access the rest of a cold iron seam that runs through the stone.

Both creatures faithfully guard the tower. If combat begins here, Skibrellon (area E4) spends a few rounds checking his gear and trap. If combat continues, he sends in his zombies and launches spells from the stairs. If combat has nearly ended, he instead lies in wait above.

SLAG WHISKERS CREATURE 3

Rust monster (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 283)

Perception +8; darkvision, metal scent 30 feet

SPOREBORN MYCELOID CREATURE 4

Page 89

Initiative Perception +10

Treasure: One end of the hammock is anchored to the roof with a *climbing bolt*. A *jade cat talisman* hangs from a woven collar around Slag Whiskers' stubby neck. The rust monster's favorite boulder (5 Bulk, Hardness 10, 20 HP) contains the equivalent of two cold iron chunks for anyone who can crack it open; with a successful DC 15 Mining Lore check or DC 22 Athletics check, a PC might break it open without needing to deal damage.

E4. MUSHROOM UPPER FLOOR SEVERE 3

Built into the natural hollow inside the giant mushroom's cap, this room serves as Skibrellon's laboratory and redoubt. Each of the cap's 10 membranes has a tall,

narrow window carved into it, and the ceiling arches 15 feet overhead, where an assortment of glowing fungi fill the room with normal light. The leschy's workbench is clean, yet the rest of the room is littered with discarded fungi from failed experiments.

Creatures: The fungus leschy Skibrellon spends most of his time in this living laboratory, where he blends occult magic with local fungi to create necromantic concoctions. Decades of watching humanoids kidnap and eat innocent fungi has inflicted Skibrellon with vindictive pessimism, to the point that his narrative has taken on occult life and sustains his body; were he ever to abandon his quest to save fungi and punish their predators, he might outright die. While a leschy PC or truly compassionate druid might be able to negotiate with Skibrellon and end his vendetta peacefully, he poses a combat threat to virtually anyone else.

Skibrellon's latest creations failed to live up to his grand aspirations. The two myceloid corpses were supposed to be powerful sporeborn like the one in area E3. They resemble the sporeborn but have only a zombie's coordination.

SKIBRELLON

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NE SMALL FUNGUS LESHY

Hyphae tyrant (page 86)

Perception +11; darkvision, sporesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Items *spore shepherd's staff*

Melee ♦ *spore shepherd's staff* +12 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+3 bludgeoning

PLAGUE ZOMBIES (2)

CREATURE 1

NE MEDIUM FUNGUS MINDLESS UNDEAD

Variant plague zombies (*Bestiary* 340)

Initiative Perception +3

Hazards: Skibrellon adapted a cluster of long-stemmed fungi to spit toxic goo at his command, and the fungi are typically dormant and retracted close to the ceiling. They can be coaxed to stretch up to 15 feet, reaching close to the windows. They replenish their payloads by drawing more colorful poison from a reservoir embedded above Skibrellon's workbench, sucking it through a network of vein-like conduits that have grown along the wall and ceiling. Once activated, the pods attack nearby non-fungi unless Skibrellon directs them as an action.

SPITTER PODS

HAZARD 2

COMPLEX FUNGUS TRAP

Stealth +8 (trained)

Description Specialized spore pods burst open, expel toxic globules, and recharge from alchemical reservoirs.

Disable DC 18 Crafting to add disruptive chemicals to the fungus's reservoir, DC 18 Nature (trained) to recognize how to constrict the chemicals' flow, or DC 20 Deception (trained) to spread spores that befuddle the fungus; three total successes are required to disable the trap.

AC 17; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Hardness 5; **HP** 30

Unfurl ⤵ **Trigger** A non-fungus creature enters area E4; **Effect** The spitter pod rolls initiative.

Routine (3 actions) The spitter pods alternate between making Strikes and Reloading. The pods lose 1 action for each successful check to disable the trap.

Ranged ♦ globule +11 (poison, range increment 30 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d12+2 poison

Treasure: A tiny hourglass (a *grim sandglass*^{SoM}) sits atop Skibrellon's workbench amid various brushes he's been using to restore it. Nearby lies a knot of brittle hair held together by a metal clasp that resembles two hands clasped in friendship. This clasp functions as a *diplomat's badge*, though Krohan is puzzled because it seems to pull at him in the same way that the distant clan dagger does, suggesting it might have untold historical value. With a successful DC 12 Dwarf Lore check or DC 15 Society check, a PC can Recall that dwarves sometimes acknowledge wrongdoing by severing a beard or braid. In Chapter 3, the PCs can awaken this clasp's power as a relic, and although designed to be woven into a beard, the clasp works equally well in any hair or when woven into a necklace.

Skibrellon's notes consist of nearly a hundred sheets of mismatched parchment held together by a bone pin. Most pages contain field illustrations of various fungi, Sylvan rants about surface predators eating his "children," and maps of other restaurants in Highhelm that Skibrellon planned to attack, but there are also two rituals recorded here. The first is *create mycoguardian* (see sidebar on page 89). The other is a variant of *reincarnate*^{APG} whose randomly determined bodies depart from the typical odds for a d20 roll. On a result of 1 through 8, the new body is one of a common ancestry. On a 9 through 13, the body is of an uncommon or rare ancestry. On a 14 through 20, the target's new body is that of a leschy.

The toxins stored in the spitter pods reservoir are volatile, but with 10 minutes' work and a successful DC 17 Crafting or Nature check, a PC can distill one dose of the poison (or two doses with a critical success), which functions as cytillesh poison. A critical failure spoils the supply.

E5. THE CAVE WORM DESCENT

The fungus carpet here sags, covering a tunnel over 20 feet wide that descends steeply. The biomass

supports creatures' weight, requiring considerable slashing or burning to make a hole to the tunnel below. Krohan remembers that he dropped the clan dagger around here, yet the massive tunnel wasn't here at the time; it was just a narrow crack then. Even so, he can sense the clan dagger is deep below yet not too far away.

The thick hyphae have extended hundreds of feet down the tunnel, covering about half the distance the PCs need to descend, and by tying ropes where the fungi end, the PCs might descend the remaining 300 feet with relative ease. While this descent might involve Athletics checks, a long series of checks can slow gameplay. Consider narrating the descent if the PCs have plenty of rope, and require a single DC 20 Athletics check to descend the slippery final 50 feet safely (with the PC falling and taking 25 damage on a critical failure).

The shaft deposits the PCs in a horizontal tunnel with a dry pool where rainwater once trickled down from above. A PC studying the area with a successful DC 20 Survival check can find faint scratches left by clawed feet traveling this tunnel, while the tunnel's upper half is evenly pitted, as if scarred by massive scales. The whole area has an unpleasant odor from the passage of xulgaths days ago.

Following Krohan's dagger sense, the group can set down this new tunnel, arriving at Guldrege about a half-mile away.

Guldrege

Hollowed out naturally over the ages, this cavern arches high overhead and stretches nearly a quarter mile across, making it prime real estate for dozens of societies since Earthfall. In recent memory, it housed Guldrege, a predominantly drathnelar community that contacted neighbors only occasionally to trade. Seeping water filled a large fishpond, diviners tracked down lucrative minerals nearby, hunting parties supplemented magically conjured food, and overall life was good.

But then Krohan dropped Taargick's clan dagger, sending it clattering down into one of Guldrege's perimeter tunnels. The drathnelar Jirelga recovered the relic and shared it with her sister, Thenur, and together they extracted the pommel gem from the blade, unknowingly riling the crimson worm Zogototaru. A few days later, the fishpond exploded as the Avernus Worm burst through the stone, and within minutes, vast stretches of Guldrege were shattered and nearly all its inhabitants had perished. Largely sated, Zogototaru burrowed to where the Krohan had dropped the dagger, found no more

villains to destroy, and descended grouchy into Nar-Voth.

As the few survivors fled, new creatures moved into Guldrege: mostly cave insects and a bored mimic, but for several years, a xulgath community has ruled the cavern. The seemingly bottomless pit left by Zogototaru's ascent captivated the xulgaths, who periodically hurled in sacrifices to honor Zevgavizeb, their demon lord patron of hunger. Their rituals and religion have evolved thanks to the mimic's tricks, but otherwise these xulgaths scavenge the wreckage and subsist on the gradually depleted resources.

What remains of Guldrege can be divided into two sections. Upper Guldrege (area **F**) is semi-intact, having been farthest from Zogototaru's attack, but xulgaths steer clear thanks to paranormal threats. Lower Guldrege (area **G**) is a mess of rubble, stalagmites, and the occasional ruin, and the local xulgaths have established their camp at one end. The sacrificial pit plunges down the old fishpond in lower Guldrege. Contrary to xulgath legend, it's not bottomless; it zigzags down about 1,000 feet before leveling off at a dead end choked by debris and rocky cave worm droppings, and plumbing the pit is beyond this adventure's intended scope.

Upon entering the region, the PCs can view the approximate layout with darkvision, relying on the few lights to pick out points of interest otherwise. The lights flickering around the stalagmite in area **G1** stand out, as do the mostly intact buildings around area **F**. Even from here, the PCs can spot a dull fire burning in the xulgath camp (area **G4**) and the limited cover surrounding it. Krohan concentrates on his armor shard for a moment before becoming worried, declaring that the clan dagger seems to exist in two places—or two pieces. He identifies the xulgath camp and intact buildings as objectives, and he urges caution in dealing with xulgaths.

Workshop Heights

Mineral-rich water dripping upon the cavern's eastern side slowly built up limestone pads, creating a series of pock-marked terraces. Guldrege's drathnelar inhabitants constructed several structures here. Their elevation and distance from the settlement's center helped vent toxic fumes, and that also meant they escaped utter destruction by Zogototaru, though the cave worm's tremors and hurled debris caused modest damage.

Among the surviving buildings are several homes (since looted), two cylindrical silos (areas **F2–F3**), and a larger home and workshop (areas **F4–F6**). Another home (area **F7**) near the workshop is mostly

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



buried from the outside, though it's accessible through area **F6**.

F1. CRUMBLE YARD

MODERATE 3

Drathnelars preserved this stretch of shallow limestone pools and puddles, using it as a decorative water feature and plaza. Since the cave worm attack, the pools are choked with dust and gravel that's slightly moist from the dripping stalactites above.

Creatures: The limited moisture here has attracted two mudwretches, elementals that crave fluids. Rarely, they've caught a wandering xulgath or other cave denizen to drain, discarding the desiccated corpses afterward. Drawn to this carrion, an opportunistic cobbleswarm now lives amid the rubble. They all lie in wait, hoping to ambush prey.

PCs might spot the lurking mudwretches with a successful DC 20 Perception check upon entering the area. The two are desperately thirsty, and by providing at least two full waterskins of fluid (one for each elemental), PCs can placate the mudwretches long enough to Make an Impression, solicit information about the area, and even Request safe passage through the area. The cobbleswarm lacks language, yet it understands the elementals' body language enough not to attack unless they want to fight.

COBBLESWARM

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 52

Initiative Perception +9

MUDWRETCHES (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 176

Initiative Perception +9

F2. ORE SILO

LOW 3

Zogototaru's attack caused an immense stalactite to snap from the ceiling and crush a nearby smithy, but that workshop's nearby silos of magically shaped stone survived. The shorter silo, designed to hold iron ore, stands about 20 feet tall. The small sliding door at ground level is closed, and when opened, an operator can hit the chunks of ore inside to cause the silo's contents to tumble out in a controlled stream. A small platform juts from the silo's side 15 feet off the ground, providing access to a larger door used for loading material into the silo. The platform's ladder has snapped off, and its cargo crane has collapsed, both having rusted to the point of uselessness. Climbing the silo exterior requires a DC 17 Athletics check.

Chunks of low-grade iron ore fill about half the silo, representing over a thousand tons of ore. While this

could be worth a modest sum, transporting the ore would cost prohibitive.

Creatures: Two chokers have claimed the silo's upper half as their lair, easily scaling the building to reach the upper door. The chokers spend most of their time hunting, and the PCs are most likely to encounter the chokers in area **G1**. If defeated there but not killed, the chokers retreat here to hide and recover. If cornered here while seriously injured, they try to barter for their lives, offering their treasures in exchange.

CHOKERS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 51

Perception +7

Treasure: Urban souvenirs fascinate chokers, and this pair have assembled an eclectic collection of real treasures and worthless baubles. The more valuable items include a hammered silver plaque depicting the goddess Nivi Rhombodazzle's apotheosis (worth 15 gp), a wound-down clockwork spy (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3 48*) without a memory gemstone, a fist-sized copper six-sided die with garnet pips (worth 8 gp), and a *wand of fear* (1st level). The baubles include a tin ring, crumpled brass teakettle, a tin tavern sign depicting gemstones pouring out of a pitcher, a headless doll half-eaten by fungi, an assortment of fragile bone dice, and a handheld chalkboard still bearing a child's Undercommon grammar homework.

F3. COAL SILO

TRIVIAL 3

This silo is identical to the nearby ore silo (area **F2**) with a few exceptions. First, it's 30 feet tall with a loading platform 25 feet off the ground. Second, it's about half full of bituminous coal rather than ore. Finally, this silo received some damage in the cave worm attack, creating a few cracks and spilling substantial coal dust nearby.

Hazard: While a few sparks won't ignite the coal residue caking the area, electricity or fire effects (like the glyph in area **F4**) can set it alight. Even though this poses limited risk to the PCs, xulgath patrols likely notice and investigate.

COAL RESIDUE

HAZARD 2

ENVIRONMENTAL

Stealth DC 19

Description Combustible material can ignite and burn ferociously.

Disable DC 15 Mining Lore (trained) to spread inert material over the area or DC 18 Survival to pry up enough of the material to prevent a chain reaction.

Ignite ☞ (fire) **Trigger** An effect in the area deals at least

8 electricity damage or 4 fire damage; **Effect** The coal residue rapidly ignites, dealing 4d6 fire damage to all creatures in the area (DC 18 basic Reflex save). The area burns for 1 minute, during which creatures in the area are concealed, other creatures are concealed to them, and creatures who end their turn in the area take 1d6 fire damage.

F4. TOPPLED ENTRANCE

MODERATE 3

Although Thenur's home survived the cave worm attack, hurled debris damaged the facade and partly buried the entrance. Rubble blocks much of the gnome-sized doorway, which Small creatures can traverse as if it's difficult terrain and Medium creatures must Squeeze through (DC 20 Acrobatics). Spending several minutes clearing away the rubble allows Small creatures to use the door without trouble, whereas Medium creatures treat the door as difficult terrain.

However, this comes with risks. Excavating the entrance alerts the creatures in area **F5**, and anyone digging might accidentally uncover the dislodged trap below.

Hazard: A magical glyph inscribed above the door protected Thenur's home from intruders, and she could deactivate it when expecting company. The cave worm assault calved off the part that bore the glyph, and it's retained its deadly power despite being facedown and partially buried. PCs excavating the door might notice the glyph's soft glow with a successful Perception check before fully exposing and activating the trap.

Given the various ways to dispose of the glyph, a resourceful PC might want to salvage the slab of rock bearing the glyph and use it as a weapon. It's an awkward weapon; treat it as a moderate bottled lightning with 2 Bulk and a range increment of 10 feet.

BURIED SHOCK GLYPH

HAZARD 3

ELECTRICITY EVOCATION MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 20

Description A magical glyph unleashes a blast of electricity when handled.

Disable DC 20 Athletics (trained) to hurl the stone a safe distance before it activates, or DC 21 Thievery to delicately move the stone without triggering the glyph

AC 17; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +3

Hardness 8; **HP** 32 (BT 16); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Electrocution ⤵ (arcane, electricity, fire) **Trigger** A creature jostles or views the glyph; **Effect** An electric discharge shocks the triggering creature and all creatures within 10 feet, dealing 3d8 electricity damage to anyone in the area (DC 20 basic Reflex save).

F5. LIVING QUARTERS

MODERATE 3

The front of Thenur's home consists of a bedroom, storage, and living room with a complete set of hand weights, all sized for Small creatures and partitioned by aging curtains. Due to Guldrege's culture of communal cooking and dining, there's only a minimal cooking setup here.

The withered corpse of a drathnelar woman sits propped on the sofa like a macabre mannequin, her head visibly dented from some impact and her lower legs missing. She wears sturdy clothing and a leather apron with crushed drafting tools in its pockets. The walls and floors are covered in disjointed Gnomish and Undercommon phrases scratched in over time. The corpse is Thenur's body, which the soulbound dolls here extracted from area **F7** after she died from falling debris during Zogototaru's attack.

Creatures: Thenur experimented with construct design and intelligence, and before her sister Jirelga recovered the clan dagger, her most sophisticated constructs were two soulbound dolls fitted with drathnelar soul fragments. Both dolls survived the cave worm attack, and they only occasionally venture out to seek treasures or stimulation. Their moody housemate is an unfeeling empath, one of the Guldrege residents killed by Zogototaru but who couldn't emotionally process his own death. Seeking companionship, he gravitated here, where he vacillates between emotional clinginess and sulking seclusion. After years of this behavior, the dolls have become high-strung and internalized the empath's trauma.

Typically, the dolls laze in a bored stupor, scratch forgotten memories into the walls, or rearrange Thenur's body and furniture in a morbid display of domesticity. The unfeeling empath spends most days crying softly in the bedroom. Intruders set the dolls on high alert, and all but the gentlest coaxing provokes them to fight. Even then, the unfeeling empath's arrival might sabotage negotiations when he arrives after a few minutes' conversation, especially since the undead lacks any emotional boundaries and makes the dolls paranoid.

If alerted by loud sounds like the PCs' digging in area **F4**, the three inhabitants hide and prepare an ambush, assuming the worst.

UNFEELING EMPATH

CREATURE 2

Page 90

Initiative Perception +9

SOULBOUND DOLLS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 304

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



RECORDINGS

If the PCs can Disable one or more of the clockwork spies before they self-destruct, they can replay the stored audio recordings either by Repairing the construct or placing the recording gem into the intact clockwork spy from area **F2**. Thenur dictated these hour-long recordings, summarized below.

Recording 1: Thenur reports on her promising innovations in clockwork design. She seems frustrated by their limited problem-solving abilities and speculates about how to imbue them with intelligence.

Recording 2: In a departure from clockwork creation, Thenur talks about her success in creating a soulbound doll imbued with a sliver of soul from a volunteer named Ulkin. She is preparing a second doll for someone named Ikintari. Despite her progress, Thenur seems frustrated that the soul receptacles can capture only a fragment of the donors' personalities.

Recording 3: Thenur is jubilant about a priceless pommel gem she received from her sister Jirelga. Thenur has installed it in an improved construct to preserve even more of a creature's personality, but she doesn't have a donor yet.

Initiative Perception +8

Occult Innate Spells DC 18; **3rd** *levitate*, *phantom pain*;

Cantrips (1st) *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

F6. WORKSHOP

MODERATE 3

Thenur's workshop facilitated her fusion of alchemical, clockwork, and occult invention. Tremors from the cave worm attack knocked over many delicate instruments and neglect has ruined others, leaving the workshop a mess of broken shelving and glassware. Magical light shines from three copper spheres mounted around the workshop, including one on an extendable metal arm, providing normal light. An exhaust hood hangs over an iron-capped workbench, though tangled vines clog it.

Creatures: Among the shattered glassware was a rare vine cutting stored in a jar. The vine took root, drawing much of its mineral nourishment from the alchemical sludge. That diet mutated the plant and instilled a dependency on alchemical nutrients. Although it occasionally clambers through the hood to forage for water, the vine spends most of its time here, seeking new elixirs to drink and hiding amid the patchy fungi growing in the area. It attacks when living prey is within reach.

The vine cares little for constructs, so four partly wound clockwork spies stored on a higher shelf have survived in good condition. Three of these have intact recording gems (see Recordings sidebar), and the fourth's gem is empty. The clockwork spies rile easily, and they bludgeon anyone not approved by Thenur (or her soulbound facsimile in area **F7**).

ALCHEMIST IVY

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON N LARGE ALCHEMICAL MINDLESS PLANT

Variant assassin vine (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 26)

Initiative Perception +10

Alchemical Resistance An alchemist ivy takes 5 less damage from attacks with the alchemical trait.

Chemical Fertilizer ♦ (alchemical, healing) **Trigger** A creature within 10 feet of the alchemist ivy **Activates** or is hit by an item with the alchemical trait; **Effect** The alchemist ivy briefly extends tendrils toward the creature and absorbs some of the alchemical residue, regaining 2d8 Hit Points and gaining a +15-foot status bonus to its Speed until the end of its next turn.

Ranged ♦ sap +12 (range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6 cold

CLOCKWORK SPIES (4)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 48

Initiative Perception +8

Treasure: The alchemist ivy has consumed or ruined the elixirs and reagents stored here, save those in a locked steel locker (DC 20 Athletics or Thievery) stowed in one corner. The locker contains an *oil of weightlessness* and a lesser mistform elixir. Thenur's formula book lies on the floor, partly burned; if your campaign includes inventors and gadgets from *Pathfinder Guns & Gears*, the surviving formulas include moderate ablative armor plating and chameleon suit; otherwise, the formulas are moderate juggernaut mutagen and lesser mistform elixir. On the top shelf where the clockwork spies had perched is a small metal case containing 12 blank recording gems, worth 1 gp each.

F7. ANNEX

SEVERE 3

As Thenur's ambitions outgrew her workspace, she commissioned laborers to construct this reinforced annex that's mostly tunneled directly from the cavern's wall. The space serves mostly as an assembly and storage area, with most manufacturing performed in the workshop. Zogototaru's attack partially caved in this room, crushing Thenur and some of her inventions. Her shattered legs barely peek from the rubble; her constructs tore the rest of her free to preserve in area **F5**.

Thenur's inventions consist mostly of clockwork devices, ranging from clocks and complex latches to unfinished gear creatures.

Creatures: The largest invention was Thenur's greatest and final feat, an advanced variant of a soulbound doll called a soulbound mauler. When Thenur died, the pommel gem she used as the sentinel's soul focus was so powerful that it absorbed her soul, trapping her here for years. After sensing nearby souls for a few rounds, the construct's gem begins gleaming eagerly and the construct lurches to life.

Years of isolation haven't been kind to Thenur. While she entertains a few questions and asks a few of her own to get her bearings, her greatest priority is ending her soul's imprisonment. She doesn't know any scientific way to make that happen (breaking the gem would just shatter her spirit). Fortunately, she has an intuitive sense of how to tear free someone else's soul and trap it in the gem to displace herself, granting her a path to the afterlife. She wouldn't normally inflict this on other creatures, yet desperation drives her to violence. If the PCs don't have a decisive, plausible means of freeing her peacefully, she attacks.

Krohan recognizes the pommel gem, and he cautions the PCs against damaging it. However, he lacks the supernatural abilities to aid Thenur.

THENUR

CREATURE 4

Soulbound mauler (page 87)

Initiative Perception +10

Languages Aklo, Gnomish, Petran, Undercommon

Hazard: As Thenur's patience wanes, the ground begins rumbling ominously. Once she attacks, this building energy manifests as a haunt that relives the terrifying attack by Zogototaru, giving the PCs their first look at the Avernal Worm as it bursts through the old fishpond, thrashes about, and breathes fire. While doing so, Zogototaru's fiery roars almost sound like Dwarven words, at one point seeming to shout "Where? Taargick! My friend! You beasts!" Though the sensory effect seems to cover Guldrege, it is a phantasm that only appears to and affects creatures in the haunt's area. Having relived this memory countless times, Thenur is inured to the haunt; she uses the result for one degree of success better than the result of her saving throws against it.

The haunt ends 1d4 rounds after Thenur is defeated, if not disabled or destroyed earlier.

AVERNAL FLASHBACK

HAZARD 4

COMPLEX **HAUNT**

Stealth +12 (trained)

KICKING DOWN THE DOOR

Attacking the whole xulgath community can become deadly quickly, potentially combining threats from areas **G2–G4**. If the PCs charge in without neutralizing one or more encounters individually, they alert all the creatures in area **G**. Xulgaths are quickest to counterattack, and once they realize the PCs are warriors, the xulgaths release the basilisk in area **G3**. The mimic and chokers are opportunists who might snag isolated targets, though these creatures take more time to arrive.

Krohan cautions against a reckless assault and urges a tactical retreat, as needed. Even though enemies converge on the PCs in a staggered fashion, this could become overwhelming quickly, and it's best to provide the PCs an opportunity to retreat and regroup.

Description A phantasmal crimson worm appears to rampage outside the workshop, afflicting the area with phantom tremors, blistering heat, and cave-ins.

Disable DC 22 Athletics, Occultism, or Religion; it takes three successful checks to weaken the haunt or erect supports that brace the ceiling. A PC who speaks Dwarven can attempt DC 22 Diplomacy (trained) checks to calm the phantasmal cave worm.

AC 18; **Fort** +8, **Will** +14

HP 45; **Immunities** bludgeoning, critical hits, fire, object immunities, piercing, precision damage, slashing; **Weaknesses** cold 5, positive 5

Routine (2 actions) Zogototaru uses 1 action to create a Tremor. With her other action, she either Exudes Heat or makes Rocks Fall, alternating between the two each round.

Exude Heat ♦ Zogototaru breathes fire across Guldrege. Even from a distance, this makes the area blisteringly hot, dealing 3d6 fire damage to all creatures (DC 22 basic Fortitude save).

Rocks Fall ♦ Zogototaru's thrashing appears to crack the roof, dropping debris on a random creature in the area. This deals 4d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save).

Tremor ♦ Zogototaru's thrashing shakes the ground, knocking creatures prone in the area unless they succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save.

Treasure: Once Thenur's construct body is destroyed, the PCs can extract the pommel gem from the wreckage without difficulty. The gem glitters faintly, occasionally even displaying Thenur's face as if she's straining to break out. Without breaking the gem (Hardness 15, 10 HP), which Krohan vehemently opposes, the PCs lack the means to free Thenur until

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



Chapter 3. Yet so long as she inhabits the gem, Krohan worries that her soul could disrupt or even curse the clan dagger.

The annex's broken treasures have little value. However, Thenur's *alchemist goggles* fell from her head when her constructs dragged her corpse free, and the goggles now lie in the open.

Lower Guldrege

Lower Guldrege once boasted more than 100 homes, workshops, and other buildings, nearly all of which were flattened outright or even partly melted during Zogototaru's attack.

Sneaking Around: Xulgaths periodically patrol lower Guldrege, but they mostly hunt in distant tunnels or relax in area **G4**, with occasional ventures to areas **G2** or **G3**. So long as the PCs don't cause disturbances, the Stealth DC to Avoid Notice is 11 except in area **G4** (where it is DC 21). An occasional failure doesn't draw attention from the camp, but numerous failures, a critical failure, or the din of combat attracts a patrol of several xulgath warriors (*Bestiary* 336) to investigate—usually affording the PCs a chance to sneak away before they arrive. For this adventure, these patrols are less a combat threat and more a complicating factor if the PCs choose to sabotage or investigate locations here before confronting the whole camp.

G1. THE HUNGER STONE

MODERATE 3

A tall stalagmite (its upper third snapped off by the cave worm's thrashing) stands in a 30-foot-radius circle cleared of rubble, creating a small plaza. Several crumpled copper spheres about a foot in diameter are scattered around the perimeter; once magical streetlights, they now flicker fitfully as their enchantments fade, filling a 60-foot-radius area around the stalagmite with dim light.

Xulgaths are able stoneshapers, using magic or alchemy to mold like clay before restoring its hardness. This talent serves a grisly purpose here: two stone loops act like shackles, pinning a xulgath prisoner to the stalagmite here, and several dozen empty and stained loops indicate that this isn't the first prisoner condemned here.

The prisoner is **Tsaal** (CN male xulgath hunter), an overly curious xulgath who spied on Hhrulkaz, the community's spiritual leader, discovered the mimic's identity, and tried to warn his neighbors that their leader was a charlatan. His warnings were unheeded.

The other xulgaths subdued him for his blasphemy, and Hhrulkaz condemned him the Hunger Stone. If he survives 3 days without getting eaten, then the demon lord Zevgavizeb clearly considers him worthy to live and eat others. No captive has ever survived the ordeal, thanks to local chokers. The sputtering lamps set around the perimeter help alert the scavengers that a new meal is available.

If Tsaal notices the PCs, he quietly calls to them for help.

He fluently speaks Draconic and Undercommon, but if those don't work, he knows a few hundred words in Dwarven. His priorities are simple: survive, overthrow

Hhrulkaz, and lead any surviving xulgaths away to fresh hunting grounds. He tries to bargain with the PCs for his freedom, offering his knowledge of the area or whatever else they need. Once he knows that they're searching for—especially the clan dagger, which he knows Hhrulkaz uses as a sacrificial knife—he refines his offer: he knows a secret that could scatter the xulgaths and isolate Hhrulkaz, letting the PCs eliminate her safely. However, in addition to freeing him, he wants the PCs to agree that they won't hurt more xulgaths than they must.

To free Tsaal, a PC must break (Hardness 9, 3 HP) or Force Open (DC 20 Athletics) each of his restraints.

Creatures: Local scavengers have been waiting for Tsaal to weaken before approaching. However, the PCs represent competition, which attracts a pair of chokers and several giant cockroaches. These creatures all Sneak as close as they can while the PCs talk with Tsaal, and PCs might be able to Coerce some of them to flee if spotted early. Otherwise, the cockroaches rush in to bite potential prey. The chokers work as a team, with one clambering up the stalagmite to kill Tsaal while the second choker waits to kill any creature left isolated when the PCs rush toward Tsaal to help. The chokers fight until reduced to 8 HP or clearly outmatched, at which point they flee to their lair (area **F2**).

If freed, Tsaal fights alongside the PCs. If many foes remain, he initially sneaks away to hide, potentially offending the PCs with his apparent cowardice until he ambushes a foe the following round.



CHOKERS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 51

Perception +7

GIANT COCKROACHES (2)

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 53

Perception +6

CREATURE 1

TSAAL

CN HUMANOID XULGATH

Male xulgath skulker (Pathfinder Bestiary 337)

Perception +7

CREATURE

Development: So long as the PCs free him and treat him respectfully, Tsaal shares what he knows: the sacrificial altar in area **G2** is a shape changer who can talk, responds to the name “Zivzeb,” and seemed annoyed by Hhrulkaz recently. Hhrulkaz has fed numerous sacrifices to the altar, which writhes and roars fearsomely as it absorbs the helpless prey. It’s a performance that Hhrulkaz ascribes to Zevgavizeb himself possessing the altar and consuming the sacrifice, and she has convinced the community that only she can appease the demon lord. Tsaal was hoping to unmask her lie, but he’s concluded that the community needs stronger proof. He suggests trying to talk the shapeshifter into joining them, or else kill it to weaken Hhrulkaz. Once he’s familiar with the PCs’ plans, Tsaal thanks them and sneaks away to start recruiting xulgath defectors.

Tsaal knows that upper Guldrege is haunted, having seen gnome dolls lurking in shattered buildings. He only goes there under duress.

G2. SACRIFICE POINT

MODERATE 3

A precarious stone spar stretches several feet over the seemingly bottomless pit created when Zogototaru tunneled up through Guldrege’s fishpond, and the platform quickly became local xulgaths’ favorite place to honor Zevgavizeb and hurl sacrifices into the ever-hungry pit. However, old bloodstains surrounding a bulky stone altar that stands about 10 feet from the edge show that this feature is xulgath’s new favorite place for sacrifices. Wide friezes carved into its sides depict reptilian humanoids dancing and worshipping a giant carnivorous lizard. In studying the area, a PC might not see through the local mimic’s disguise (DC 29 Perception); however, with a successful DC 19 Perception or Survival check they might notice that the altar seems to have shifted slightly and become slightly smaller, a result of the mimic come and gone at least once since the last sacrifice. With a successful DC 24 Religion check, a PC recognizes that the friezes depict the demon lord Zevgavizeb but do so with numerous stylistic inconsistencies, suggesting a religious novice made them.

Creatures: This altar is a clever mimic who

has exploited local xulgaths’ faith by demanding sacrifices—a scheme perpetuated by Hhrulkaz and reinforced when the mimic uses its *ring of ventriloquism* to pretend that their god, Zevgavizeb, is roaring demands and approval from the cavern’s ceiling. It’s a good, lazy life. Or it was, until Hhrulkaz subdued and placated a basilisk (area **G3**) to serve as a new “god” that she could control more easily. The mimic has an alien sense of identity, having adopted the name Zivzeb as a convenience for communicating with Hhrulkaz. Being dethroned and denied sacrifices has put Zivzeb in a foul mood. It’s settled on relocating to new hunting grounds soon, yet it craves a last laugh against the xulgath charlatan for her betrayal.

Zivzeb patiently watches and waits as the PCs investigate, wondering how best to use them. If they seem timid, it might snag a PC as a hostage and make demands. If they attack, Zivzeb fights back, escaping down the pit or bargaining for its life with its treasure if overwhelmed. But the PCs likely met Tsaal in area **G1**, learned the mimic’s name, and parley, which intrigues the mimic. It listens and questions far more than it speaks, hoping to learn what the PCs want and judge how they might help the mimic.

Zivzeb has no need for the clan dagger Hhrulkaz carries and cares little about most xulgaths, but it is interested in helping overthrow Hhrulkaz. If the PCs improve the indifferent mimic’s attitude to friendly, they can Request its assistance in upcoming conflicts and schemes (DC 19 Diplomacy). Zivzeb hears out any plan the PCs have, recommending its own if the new allies don’t display proper cunning: one of the PCs gets captured, Zivzeb calls for the PC to be brought to the altar, and when Hhrulkaz is about to make the sacrifice, Zivzeb eats her, the xulgaths scatter in fear, and the PCs launch a counterattack. Most variations that appeal to Zivzeb’s ambush instincts meet the mimic’s approval, though it relishes putting on a good performance.

ZIVZEB

CREATURE 4

Mimic (Pathfinder Bestiary 236)

Perception +9; darkvision

Skills Athletics +12, Deception +9, Guldrege Lore +10

Items *ventriloquist’s ring*

Treasure: Zivzeb keeps a few trinkets stored deep within its body, and once killed, these treasures slowly seep out of the mimic’s body. The trinkets include 6 gp, the *ring of ventriloquism*, and a serpent-shaped mithral belt buckle worth 18 gp. If the PCs collaborate with Zivzeb in destroying Hhrulkaz, it gives them these treasures before setting off deeper into the Darklands.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



USING ZIVZEB'S PLAN

Teaming up with the mimic sets up a dangerous and dramatic confrontation. Once supplied a sacrifice and called on by Zivzeb, Hhrulkaz gathers her followers, sends two hooded xulgaths to fetch Stonemaker, and assembles the community at area **G2** for a bloody ritual. This combines the encounters in areas **G2–G4** (likely including Tsaal, too) with several creatures on the PCs' side. At the ritual's climax, Zivzeb seizes Hhrulkaz and roars that Zevgavizeb has forsaken her. The xulgath ravening from area **G4** takes 5d6 mental damage (DC 19 basic Will) from witnessing this divine intervention. If a PC contributes to the ambush's drama, you can use their Deception, Intimidation, or Performance DC for the Will save DC if it is higher. Consider a similar damaging effect if the PCs execute a different plan.

In running the encounter, consider streamlining some of the NPC actions if they don't directly threaten the PCs, rather than spending a long time rolling every attack. Focus on the PCs' threats, with a distracted enemy occasionally breaking free to attack the PCs to keep the encounter exciting.

G3. STONEMAKER'S SHRINE

MODERATE 3

The magically shaped stone dome of Guldrege's community hall now forms a pile of curved rubble. The low stairs leading to the hall's demolished entrance are clear except for a few broken pieces from a xulgath statue.

Creatures: After scouts identified a wild basilisk, Hhrulkaz organized a hunting party to subdue it and bring it back to Guldrege. The dim-witted creature doesn't understand Hhrulkaz, but he's lazy, sometimes responds to her calls, and appreciates that she lets him petrify the occasional xulgath who wanders too close. In turn, she has revised her community's faith to acknowledge the basilisk as the new avatar of Zevgavizeb while maintaining her role as the high priest.

Called Stonemaker, the basilisk lazes about unless goaded to action by xulgaths or intrigued by unfamiliar prey. He has excavated a shallow burrow into the shattered dome of debris where he likes to doze. He is indifferent to most xulgaths and hostile to the PCs.

STONEMAKER

CREATURE 5

Variant basilisk (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 38)

Perception +11; darkvision

AC 22; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11; +2 status to saves vs. xulgath stench

Ferret Fear Stonemaker has an instinctive fear of mustelids like weasels, ferrets, and even pyre ferrets. He responds to such creatures as though they had frightful presence (DC 20 Will).

G4. XULGATH CAMP

MODERATE 3

The xulgath camp is simple thanks to the cave's pleasant conditions. Xulgaths have carefully piled (and in some cases, alchemically welded) the previous buildings' rubble to create low platforms, atop which they've pitched leather tents and pavilions. Hhrulkaz's tent is the largest and stands atop the highest platform (about 10 feet off the ground), which she shares with several mates. When there's prey to cook or deeds to celebrate, xulgaths built a large fire in the wide, shallow pit at the camp's center.

Creatures: Over 40 xulgaths call this camp home, though about 15 are gone on foraging trips at any time. So many xulgaths present a daunting challenge—not just to the PCs, but also to a GM. Against a small group, these xulgaths form a powerful mob called a ravening, which captures the community's terrifying power without bogging down game play. If the PCs' tactics make this formation impractical, you might split the ravening into two groups with their HP divided evenly, or even split off several xulgath warriors (*Bestiary* 336) to chase after the PCs.

Hhrulkaz rules thanks to her cunning and divine influence, not her physical strength. Because xulgath leadership depends on dominance and deposed leaders often perish, she fights to the death to maintain command. She rarely travels without many xulgaths in tow.

XULGATH RAVENING

CREATURE 4

Page 91

Perception +11; darkvision

HHRULKAZ

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +11, Performance +7, Religion +10

Str +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items *Skysunder* (+1 clan dagger), *scroll of create food*

AC 19; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10; +2 status to saves vs. petrifying gaze

HP 50

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. As xulgath ravening.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ +1 *clan dagger* +11 (agile, dwarf, parry, versatile B), **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +10, **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+3 slashing

Ranged ♦ shattering chant +12 (range increment 30 feet, sonic), **Damage** 2d6+4 sonic

Rituals DC 17; *consecrate*

Far-Reaching Fear The range at which Hhrulkaz can Demoralize creatures increases to 60 feet, and she doesn't take a penalty if the creature doesn't understand her language.

Predator's Decree ♦ (divine, emotion, mental)

Requirements Hhrulkaz is within 60 feet of a frightened creature or a creature she successfully hit with a shattering chant this turn; **Effect** Hhrulkaz condemns the creature to be eaten. The creature must make a DC 20 Will save.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target gains weakness 2 to all damage for 3 rounds. At the end of each of its turns, the target can attempt a new Will save to reduce the remaining duration by 1 round, or end it entirely on a critical success.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target gains weakness 4 to all damage.

Sacrificial Takedown ♦♦ Hhrulkaz attempts an Athletics check to Trip a creature. If she succeeds, she then makes a melee Strike against the target, granting her weapon the fatal d10 trait until the end of her turn. Both attacks count toward her multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after she makes both attacks.

Treasure: Over the years, these xulgaths have accumulated many treasures by scavenging Guldrege and periodically raiding Darklands caravans. Several bags in Hhrulkaz's tent hold her valuables: 52 sp minted in the hryngar city Hagegraf, a delicately enameled teapot depicting the many-colored bird of Shelyn (worth 5 gp), a magically shaped marble statuette depicting Zevgavizeb eating a halfling (worth 6 gp), and a sack of copper ingots (4 Bulk and worth 4 gp). The ingots are each stamped with the same mark, which a PC can recognize as a Molthuni smelter's mark with a successful DC 15 Crafting or Society check. The label on a sealed sack declares it contains premium Molthuni wheat, but months of neglect has rotted the contents, adding to the xulgath camp's stench.

The other xulgaths' tents hide an assortment of trinkets, including an

uncut topaz, assorted coins from Highhelm, silver buttons, a gold tooth fitted for a dwarf, and a stoppered bottle wrapped in a barely legible note whose Dwarven script reads "I pray this reaches you in time, dearest." With a successful DC 16 Crafting check, a PC identifies the contents as an expired medicine for ghoul fever (*Bestiary* 168). The assorted treasures are worth 17 gp.

Beyond its missing pommel gem and a desperate need for cleaning, Taargick's clan dagger is intact and undamaged. Presently, it functions as a +1 *striking clan dagger*, even if reunited with its pommel gem from area F7. With Krohan's help in Chapter 3, the PCs can restore some of the dagger's ancient power, awakening it as the relic *Skysunder* (page 84). For now, Krohan insists on carrying the blade.



Hhrulkaz



CHAPTER 3: A RELIC REUNITED

With Taargick's clan dagger and its pommel gem recovered, the PCs and Krohan can retrace their path back to Highhelm. The expedition wasn't a complete success—the dagger needs repair, and the gem is haunted—but Krohan's grateful that Taargick's relic might soon be returned to its rightful place. The group arrives at Highhelm shortly before the Family Festival for Clan Tolorr begins. Narratively, the exact timing isn't crucial, and you might schedule the event several days later to give the PCs some downtime after their long trip and gaining a level.

Krohan means to keep a low profile while attending the festival, staying disguised and using an alias. He believes his years abroad have dulled his family's memories and changed his appearance enough to

avoid notice. Being recognized earlier wouldn't ruin his plans, but he'd prefer to reveal his identity when presenting the clan dagger. He holds onto the weapon but invites the PCs to carry the gem, hoping that as the PCs make connections, they might meet experts who can suggest ways to free the gem's trapped soul. Krohan intends to help the PCs identify influential contacts and slip them information when he can. He hopes that in return, the PCs provide their support (and that of any new friends they make) when he returns the clan dagger.

Tolorr Family Festival

The Family Festival isn't a single holiday; it's an annual event held at different times of the year by various

clans to celebrate their family history. Dedicated as they are to history and reenactment, Clan Tolorr's festival is a pageantry of dwarven legend and Highhelm triumph. The guest list is several thousand entries long and includes powerful Highhelm personages and international figures of renown. Usually, only a few hundred stay for the entire event; most just stop by to sample the food and spectacle before returning to other responsibilities.

Objectives: This event uses the influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151–153) to track and structure the PCs' accomplishments. The PCs have numerous opportunities to make connections with important NPCs, including prestigious clan members and visiting scholars who can provide a variety of boons at the end of the day. Influencing guests also helps Krohan. The impact of his return of the clan dagger partly depends on whether key figures follow the PCs' lead and approve of the gesture.

Timing: The Family Festival is divided into six phases, each lasting roughly 1 hour. During a phase, each PC can choose an activity—usually Influence or Discovery. The festival begins midafternoon and continues late into the night, ending with a formal gift-giving ceremony.

Guests: There are five key guests for the PCs to interact with and influence, though not all are present for the whole event. Each phase notes whether any new guests appear or leave.

Dressing Up: Wearing high-fashion fine clothing (*Core Rulebook* 290), such as the outfit supplied by Tregellon Pearlclask in Chapter 1, grants its +1 item bonus to checks made to Influence Bulgra Veldollow and Ria. While other guests appreciate the clothing, it grants no special benefit. At the GM's discretion, assembling an elaborate modern or historical outfit might provide a similar bonus, typically affecting three of the guests.

Krohan's Contributions: Krohan spends most of his time blending into the crowd, observing, and reminiscing. He sometimes overhears useful information, which he then relays to the PCs, or points out key guests for the PCs to Influence. In addition, he successfully Discovers information about a key NPC at the start of two different phases, surreptitiously passing the information to the PCs. Use this as a way to encourage the PCs to engage with someone they haven't talked to much or are having trouble learning about.



Bulgra Veldollow

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

Back in Highhelm, Krohan asks the PCs to attend a local festival to make an impression on members of Clan Tolorr to help ease his return when he gives back the stolen clan dagger. However, the dagger needs to be ritually restored before it can be returned to its resting place. During this ritual, Taargick's spirit appears with a new quest: find his lost tomb!

The PCs can't do this quest alone, and their best bet for assistance is being held prisoner under false charges. To exonerate them, the PCs must break into a den of thieves to find the evidence that proves the captive's innocence.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox

PHASE 1: GUESTS ARRIVE

Guests begin arriving in earnest, with whole families showing up at once. The lawn, nearby buildings, and even surrounding streets become a bustle of merrymakers who gather in small groups. Finger foods, drinks, and lawn games are abundant, yet almost everyone is more interested in socializing. Occasionally, heralds announce eminent guests' arrivals, though countless conversations muffle even the loudest voices.

Guests: All guests arrive.

PHASE 2: AN UNWELCOME ENTRANCE

After exhausting their supply of small talk, many guests begin enjoying the drinks and appetizers as they seek entertainment or seating. Small crowds form wherever someone is performing a song, challenging other guests to a contest, or otherwise creating a fun distraction.

Guests: All guests are now present as Ygrin Oathcarver arrives. Upon being announced by a herald, nearby guests become skittish and quiet, moving to make space wherever Ygrin prowls.

PHASE 3: DINNER

A triumphant horn fanfare announces that dinner is ready, and guests begin gathering at the numerous tables to secure seats near friends and family. Once most guests are seated, servers announce and carry in numerous courses popular at various points in Highhelm history. Favorites include Blessing of First Light (lightly spiced roast boar supposedly eaten as the first surface meal), Encarthan bass fritters (popular in the -1000s AR), and wakkishibaz (a squash soup whose eclectic spice blend fell out of favor after a local empire's fall in 1551 AR). Nobody is expected to enjoy better-never bread (a coarse biscuit common when a Droskari theocracy ruled the region), but they all partake dutifully in the name of history.

Between and during courses, guests at each table socialize, which limits the PCs to Influencing only a key NPC seated nearby.

Guests: All guests are present.

PHASE 4: DESSERT AND DRAMA

As the last course concludes and servers set up dessert platters throughout the lawn, guests stand to mingle or even head home. Dozens of actors move to the largest stage to perform *Song of Doggadh*, a play about the drama, heroism, and stoic resignation of the titular dwarven city before it fell to invaders in the late 2400s. Many guests watch, but just as many continue their conversations and games on the other end of the lawn.

Guests: All guests are present.

PHASE 5: THE BATTLE OF FALLEN FLAGS

History is about more than commemorative statues and somber poems, and this Family Festival has a raucous tradition: inviting everyone to don period dress, wield thickly padded sticks, and clobber each other while recreating a historical battle! This year's recreation is the Battle of Fallen Flags, a famous battle between the nations of Gardadh and Grakodan during the Era of Five Kings.

Guests: All guests are present.

Special Activity: The PCs cannot attempt standard checks to influence an NPC. Instead, each PC joins

either kingdom's forces as part of the melee and chooses one of the NPCs to either team up with or face in a duel.

HISTORIC CLASH

Choose a key NPC. You either fight alongside that NPC or track them down to engage in a friendly duel, impressing them with your prowess and sporting attitude. Attempt to Influence the NPC by attempting one of the following in place of the typical Influence skills: a melee attack with a light mace against AC 18, a DC 16 Warfare Lore check, a DC 17 Athletics check, or a DC 18 Performance check.

Development: The mock battle delights the crowd, with participants

of all ages giving mid-battle speeches, and bonking each other over the head in good humor. Near the battle's end, a panicked scream cuts through the clamor: Ygrin has found Rosha and is attacking them relentlessly, knocking Rosha to the ground. Nearby combatants are stunned at first, and if any PCs chose to battle with Ygrin or Rosha, they are close enough to attempt a second Historic Clash to fend off Ygrin, Influencing Rosha in the process.

Whether a PC intervenes or not, the crowd rallies to restrain Ygrin and aid Rosha. Tolorr clan leaders make their way over, learn what happened, and loudly reprimand Ygrin, expelling him from the festival. Ygrin sneers and yells, "Torag defends those who defend themselves!" After a final mocking lunge at Rosha, he's forcibly escorted away. The battle resumes half-heartedly for a few minutes before referees call it to a close.

PHASE 6: PROCESSION OF RELICS

The crowd cleans up after the battle, clearing the way for the festival's final events. During this last phase, Ria and others display Highhelm relics, creating a temporary museum of cultural heritage. These experts oversee the treasures and give brief lectures about their history, all while guests circulate and share their own stories with each other.

Guests: Bulgra, Rosha, and Valahask are present.

FINALE: EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

As the festival begins winding down, the several hundred remaining guests begin making toasts to outstanding individuals who impressed them recently, offering gifts that demonstrate their esteem and reinforce the bond



Valahask

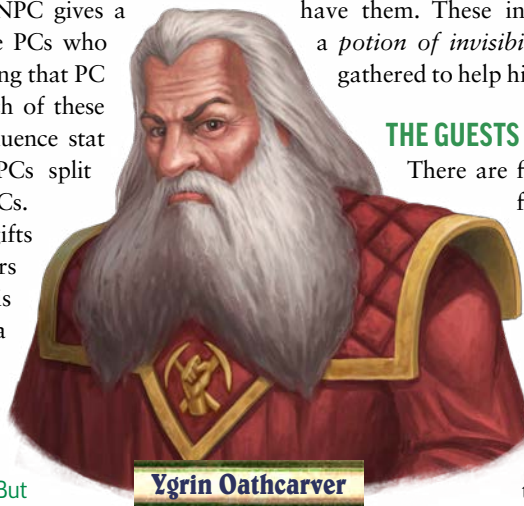
between clanmates. Tally the number of Influence Points that the PCs earned for each of Bulgra, Ria, Rosha, and Valahask. For each NPC who has 4 or more Influence Points, that NPC gives a short speech praising one of the PCs who impressed them, followed by giving that PC a gift to show their esteem. Each of these NPC's gifts appears in their influence stat blocks below. Ideally, these NPCs split their praise evenly between the PCs.

After the PCs receive any gifts they've earned, Krohan gathers the crowd's attention to give his own speech, ensuring that Bulgra and the PCs are present.

"Our city, our clan, our people, and our allies—we tell glorious legends of the heroes who came before. But our history also remembers the foolhardy and their mistakes. Years ago, I thought myself a hero but revealed myself as a fool, losing part of our shared history in the process. Though I lost my clan as punishment, I've gained experience in my travels and friends on my recent return—friends who were instrumental in helping me recover the lost relic. With humility, I return it now, in recognition of past crimes and the Tolorr values that have shaped Krohan Veldollow since."

During his speech, Krohan proudly gestures to the PCs, sharing credit with them. With that, Krohan kneels and offers up the clan dagger and pommel gem to Bulgra, whose expression changes from confusion to surprise as she recognizes her estranged grandson and his gesture. As she processes her thoughts, she looks to the PCs, asking if they have anything to add. Any sincere contribution the PCs make elicits additional support from the NPCs with whom they earned 2 or more Influence Points, inspiring part of the crowd to also join in.

Bulgra personally exiled Krohan years ago, and it's haunted her since. The crowd's reaction helps her decide whether she can finally welcome her grandson back without overstepping dwarven custom. So long as the PCs earned at least 2 Influence Points with at least three of the five NPCs here (including Bulgra), she tentatively welcomes Krohan back to Clan Tolorr. If not, she formally accepts the clan dagger's return, acknowledging his and his friends' efforts and naming them friends of Clan Tolorr. In either case, she notes that earning her forgiveness is only part of Krohan's restitution; he must return the clan dagger to where it was stolen from and earn the ancestors' blessing.



Ygrin Oathcarver

Treasure: If accepted by the clan, Krohan tracks down the PCs shortly afterward to share the gifts he's received from well-wishers, believing the PCs should have them. These include a lesser elixir of life, a *potion of invisibility*, and 14 gp of the funds gathered to help him restart his life in Highhelm.

THE GUESTS

There are five key guests at the festival: four who can aid the PCs and one who is a social menace whom the PCs can rebuff to mitigate his damage.

The Pommel Gem: The PCs have the gem with Thenur's trapped soul, and there are magical experts here who might know how to safely free her. Once per

phase, a PC Influencing either Ria, Rosha, or Valahask can seek their insights about the gem. For Rosha and Valahask, this increases that Influence check's DC by 1 unless the PC is using Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion as an Influence skill; sharing it with Ria plays to her Weakness.

A successfully Influenced NPC shares their best guesses about the process. They believe that incorporating such a gem into another object could create a possessed or cursed item, and removing the soul first is important. They speculate that there must be rituals to draw out the soul and send it to the Boneyard harmlessly, and offer to help formulate a plan after the party.

BULGRA VELDOLLOW

LG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Matriarch and retired puppeteer

Perception +10

Will +10

Discovery Highhelm Lore DC 15, Theater Lore DC 16, Perception DC 18, Society DC 18

Influence Skills Theater Lore DC 16 (to help organize performances), Performance DC 17 (to entertain guests), Acrobatics DC 18 (to entertain guests), Crafting DC 19 (help assemble props and scenery), Diplomacy DC 19, Deception DC 21

Influence 2 Bulgra respects the PCs, lending her approval during the gift-giving ceremony.

Influence 4 Bulgra praises the PCs during the gift-giving ceremony, giving them a *hat of disguise* as well as the opal eye (worth 8 gp) that is the only part that survives from her first fancy puppet. "May these relics of past performances help you begin your own legends!"

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



Resistances Bulgra has tried to bury her regrets about Krohan, and others know not to bring him up around her. Referencing Krohan (especially for emotional leverage), irritates Bulgra, makes her defensive and curt, and increases a check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Bulgra loves to see history and performance bring others joy. Entertaining nearby guests in an effort to impress her decreases a check's DC by 2.

Background Bulgra learned a range of performance styles and became one of the clan's finest puppeteers. Her troupe toured Avistan and adapted their arts to local traditions and stories, and she's become a steady patron of visiting artists ever since she settled down in Highhelm decades ago. Informally, she is matriarch of the Veldollow family, meaning she personally had to exile her grandson, Krohan, years ago. While it was the "proper" decision, she still regrets it. Focusing on art and business helps her avoid dwelling on that loss.

Appearance Bulgra's graying black hair hangs over one shoulder with several embroidered ribbons commemorating her deeds interwoven into the single braid. Though she smiles politely, her expressions are reserved, and she seems to stare off wistfully as if contemplating the past. She stays active, either setting up the next event or scanning the party to be sure everything's operating smoothly.

Personality Caring, seeking distraction though work

RIA

LG MEDIUM GNOME HUMANOID OREAD

Curator and spiritualist

Perception +9

Will +11

Discovery Perception DC 16, Society 18; due to their periodic interactions with Ria, the PCs treat any Discover success to learn about her as a critical success.

Influence Skills Crafting DC 17 (discussing obscure manufacturing techniques), Nature DC 18 (keeping up with her strong opinions about geological survey techniques), Society DC 18 (discussing history in any form), Diplomacy DC 20, Religion DC 20 (discuss comparative religion)

Influence 2 Ria's respect for the PCs grows, and she lends her approval during the gift-giving ceremony.

Influence 4 Ria praises a PC's curiosity, insight, or knowledge during the final ceremony, giving them a moderate cognitive mutagen and a moderate serene mutagen "so you can always find inspiration, even in the most difficult moments."

Resistances Like many gnomes, Ria seeks novelty. Lecturing her about something she already knows—at least without adding insight or value to the topic—increases a check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Ria loves anything with a history, and she's able to perceive bits of an object's past by handling it. Sharing an interesting item with her and exploring its history together decrease's a check's DC by 2.

Background Ria's uncertain why she was born an oread, but she's been one all her life. Combining her love of history with a longing to explore her mineral heritage, she drifted toward Highhelm and has studied with Clan Tolorr ever since. Her studies led her to collaborate with and ultimately train with local Rivethuns, an ancient dwarven animistic tradition. But where most Rivethuns commune with spirits and stories, Ria's far better at sniffing them out, giving her "a nose for history."

Appearance Ria sparkles thanks to her crystalline hair and eyes that resemble cut topazes. She carries a messenger bag wherever she goes, idly extracting an old scroll or dusty relic to examine during all but the most engaging conversations.

Personality Warm, intense, inquisitive

ROSHA COPPERVEIN

NG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Introverted arcanist

Perception +9

Will +11

Discovery Arcana DC 17, Dwarf Lore DC 14, Perception DC 19

Influence Skills Alcohol Lore DC 14 (to savor excellent drinks together), Library Lore DC 15 (talking about great literature), Arcana DC 17 (discussing magical research), Stealth DC 18 (hiding them from Ygrin Oathcarver), Fortitude DC 19 (drinking strong alcohol with grace), ranged attack AC 20 (to compete in lawn games), Intimidation DC 21, Diplomacy DC 23

Influence 2 Rosha is fond of the PCs, and they lend their approval during the gift-giving ceremony.

Influence 4 Rosha quietly vouches for a PC during the ceremony, citing their courage in standing up to bullies. They give the PCs a 3rd-level *scroll of dispel magic*.

Resistances Rosha has mastered countless incantations, but they can't make small talk. And they know it. Unless they have something substantive to contribute to a conversation or some shared activity to defuse social awkwardness (like the lawn games), Rosha becomes anxious and distracted. Influencing Rosha in a way that triggers their anxiety increases the check's DC by 2.

Background Rosha is a Blue Warder, one of the famous tattooed wizards. About a decade ago, they married into Clan Tolorr's Coppervein family, earning respect for preserving and restoring antiquities and texts. Although their partner, Delkik, seemed destined to marry a well-to-do Clan Runebinder scion, most of his family supported him when he met and fell in love with Rosha; Ygrin Oathcarver is a notable exception.

Appearance Geometric tattoos glow with faint blue light and trace Rosha's left jawline, ending at the carefully groomed beard tuft at their chin.

Personality Although shy around crowds, Rosha's professional passions and genuine warmth emerge when they're with one or two friendly people. Every time someone new joins the conversation, Rosha talks less and listens more until they've determined the new arrival is trustworthy.

Penalty Although Rosha can be bullied into supporting the PCs, once a PC uses Intimidation to Influence them, the arcanist avoids that PC for the rest of the party.

VALAHASK

N MEDIUM LIZARDFOLK HUMANOID

Inquisitive bonespeaker

Perception +11

Will +11

Discovery Arcana DC 17, Occultism DC 17, Perception DC 19, Religion DC 21

Influence Skills Occultism DC 16 (discuss occult magical traditions), Thievery DC 18 (pull a prank on dwarves), Arcana DC 19 (discuss non-evil necromancy), Medicine DC 19 (discuss taxidermy or anatomy), Diplomacy DC 21

Influence 2 Valahask rattles his neck frill approvingly and supports the PCs at the gift-giving ceremony.

Influence 4 Valahask praises a PC during the ceremony and gives two *spirit-sealing fulus* as a gift so that "one need never fear ghosts when one could instead learn from them."

Resistances Valahask disdains ornate jargon designed to sound smart and complicate already esoteric topics, and he gets bored with anyone who sermonizes against necromancy. Doing either while interacting with him increases an Influence check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Valahask appreciates those who display emotional vulnerability or are willing to acknowledge what they don't know—refreshing departures from scholars who speak ignorantly to shield their own reputations. Expressing this openness or vulnerability when discussing a topic decreases an Influence check's DC by 2.

Background Valahask learned bonespeaking as one of several apprentices in his community along Rahadom's southern border. However, his teacher chose a different successor, so Valahask departed to study other cultures and unearth lost history. As a bonespeaker, he's equal parts archaeologist, necromancer, and investigative journalist, using rituals similar to *talking corpse* to interview the dead. Clan Tolorr respects his conscientious occultism, indefinitely hosting him as a visiting scholar.

Appearance Valahask has a massive neck frill that usually stays neatly folded at his shoulders. His head and frill are freshly dotted with vibrant pigment that creates

a fairly accurate star map. He tends to spread the frill unexpectedly when excited, surprised, or upset, shocking bystanders. He wears a dark, sleeveless robe belted above his tail. When bored, he handles his fossilized bone jewelry pieces as if they were prayer beads, apparently listening to each fossil's memory.

Personality Direct, observant, unfiltered. Valahask appreciates metaphors and subtlety, but he's baffled by euphemisms, passive aggression, and other polite indirectness. Executing a clever and mostly harmless prank that elicits a "genuine" response from at least one dwarven guest delights Valahask.

YGRIN OATHCARVER

LE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Bigoted priest

Perception +11

Will +11

Discovery Drannngvit Lore DC 15, Perception DC 22, Religion DC 20

Influence Skills Deception DC 19, Intimidation DC 19, Perception DC 24 (to identify and avoid his verbal traps), Religion DC 24 (to best Ygrin in debating dogma)

Influence 2 Ygrin becomes momentarily flustered, granting PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to Deception and Intimidation checks until the end of the next phase.

Influence 4 Ygrin avoids the PCs for the rest of the event. When encountered later in area 16, he's resentful and reckless, making him clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 for the duration of that encounter.

Resistances Ygrin thrives on good-faith arguments, which he exploits through underhanded rhetoric. Attempts to debate Ygrin fairly or appeal to noble ideals increase the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Identifying a new target for Ygrin to harass amuses and distracts him. Doing so decreases a check's DC by 2, though it might upset the new victim, increasing a check to influence them.

Background A Tolorr scholar of ancient debts and grudges, Ygrin might have learned empathy after studying the internecine harm caused by pettiness, bigotry, and war. Unfortunately, he internalized and rationalized the ancient prejudices, which he reinforced by adopting Drannngvit's dour faith. His status as a clan elder and priest shields him from social retaliation, but it's won him few friends. Bitter and feeling isolated, he fell under a skelm's thrall, which fed his insecurities, stoked his rage, and ultimately transformed Ygrin into a shrine skelm. Using Change Shape, Ygrin maintains his old identity, which helps him undermine others' beliefs. His transformation is a closely kept secret.

Ygrin helped arrange his grandnephew Delkik's betrothal to a Clan Runebinder scion years ago. When

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background


Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



Delkik broke off the arrangement to marry Rosha Coppervein, the whole affair seemed to mirror the legend of Torag spurning Dranngvit to instead marry Folgrit. Becoming a skelm has only magnified Ygrin's resentment, and he takes special pleasure in tormenting Rosha.

Appearance Ygrin wears dark red robes with gold trim, with his religious symbol of Dranngvit displayed prominently. His judgmental gaze inspires discomfort in others. His graying blond hair recedes in a widow's peak; these his balding patches are where his horns sprout in his natural form, making him especially sensitive about this feature.

Personality Preachy, prejudiced, and overbearing. Ygrin begins most conversations politely, inquiring about others' beliefs. However, he uses any statements as ammunition in challenging that person's beliefs and condemning their failures, all while deflecting any criticism leveled at him.

Ancestors' Walk

During this extended scene, the PCs visit an ancient archive in the King's Crown district to better understand Taargick's deeds, uncover several nearly forgotten secrets tied to him and his contemporaries, and ritually restore his clan dagger. This uses the research subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 154–155) to track progress. As the PCs uncover the ancient misdeeds performed by dwarven heroes, spiritual echoes of those proud legends lash out by animating statues (Unwelcome Secrets on page 66). After learning what they can, Ria helps the PCs set up and perform the *rite of repatriation* with Krohan, which unleashes several spiritual assailants that haunt the clan dagger (Rebuilding the Blade on page 66). By vanquishing these foes and protecting their allies, the PCs meet a vestige of High King Taargick himself, who calls on them to realize his unfinished legacy.

GETTING STARTED

Though most know Stonehall as Highhelm's royal residence, it's far more than a palace. Its campus also includes archives, tombs, courts, the treasury, and government offices. Visitor access is limited, yet as Ria insists, Krohan can't just return Taargick's clan dagger where he stole it years ago.

Somberly, Ria presents the challenge ahead. "As Bulgra said, Krohan's theft isn't strictly hers to forgive. Artifact theft is a serious crime," she explains. "It doesn't just hurt the society—it also stirs up spiritual energies. Often enough, those spirits hold a grudge. Ah, but there's a path to redemption: a ritual called the rite of redemption that's far less common than it should be. It calls in those spirits to hear an apology, receive the missing artifact, and restore it to what it once was."

"Sounds great, yeah?" She shakes her head vigorously. "Nope! I said apology, and any serious apology requires understanding—understanding the harm, understanding the harmed, and seeking ways to make things right. Do the ritual without the right context, and you're going to make things worse. The way I see it, you have a gemstone to exorcise, history to learn, a dagger to repair, and some spiritual etiquette ahead. That's the bad news."

She leans in, adding, "And the good news?" Positively quivering with excitement that makes her hair chime, she announces "Research! Beautiful library! Yes!"

Exorcising Thenur's soul from the pommel gem, rejoining the dagger pieces, learning about Taargick's legacy, and performing a *rite of repatriation* ritual (page 67) to seek forgiveness from Krohan's ancestors might seem like a tall order. Fortunately, what the PCs need is all in one place: the Ancestors' Walk, an underground memorial and museum adjoining an archive in Stonehall. With Clan Tolorr's support, the PCs, Krohan, and Ria secure a 12-hour window to study and work there.

Ria seems to be a familiar face at the archives. After making a few requests, she introduces the PCs to **Olfri** (LG female dwarf archivist), an assistant librarian who can fetch documents they might need from the archives. Ria has several other projects she'll be researching nearby, so it's up to the PCs and Krohan to do most of the work themselves—which is an important part of the atonement and dagger repair. Even so, she escorts them to the site, checks in on them periodically, and teaches them the *rite of repatriation* after they've made some progress. Olfri dutifully leads the PCs down several sets of stairs below the district's street level, traversing a few tunnels before arriving at the memorial.

Krohan becomes increasingly anxious as the group approaches the area. While he's resolute in repairing the damage he caused years ago, he fearfully anticipates his ancestors' punishment. What's worse, these rooms make him feel as if a hundred generations are already judging him. He shares this with any PC who comments on his discomfort. However, he doesn't realize that part of his distress isn't psychological; he's instinctively sensing the occult magic here with his budding Rivethun abilities.

RESEARCHING TAARGICK'S LEGACY

Olfri gives the group a brief tour, showing them the frieze-filled corridors, the statue hall, the reading room, and how to access a nearby break room and lavatories. Olfri plans to spend her extensive shift reshelving books and copying documents elsewhere in the archive, but she indicates a wall-mounted lever in

the reading room that, when pulled, should signal her in case the group has any questions.

Timing: Performing research here is divided into 1-hour phases, during which the PCs decide where and how they want to investigate. They have only 12 hours to work, with 10 hours to research and at least 2 hours needed to perform the ritual here. While this should be plenty, once the PCs have only 2 hours left, they can convince the archivists to grant them an additional hour at a time with a successful DC 18 Deception or Diplomacy check. Each subsequent check for additional time increases the DC by 2, and on a failed check, the archivists firmly insist the group conclude their business in the next 2 hours.

Krohan: The PCs' companion contributes to each phase by successfully Aiding one PC, granting them a +1 circumstance bonus to their check. Once per phase while Aiding, if a PC fails a research check by 2 or less, Krohan intervenes to help, allowing that PC to reroll the check and use the second result (this is a fortune effect). He can also perform his own research checks rather than Aiding the PCs, yet be mindful that Krohan doesn't overshadow the PCs unless they're seriously struggling.

ANCESTORS' WALK ARCHIVE

LIBRARY 4

DWARF OCCULT

Historical Friezes Each hall recounts countless dwarven legends and deeds through detailed friezes carved from floor to ceiling. With few words, interpretation requires a keen eye for artistic context; **Maximum RP 10**

Research Checks DC 17 Dwarf Lore, DC 19 Society, DC 20 Acrobatics, DC 20 Athletics, DC 20 Perception, DC 21 Crafting

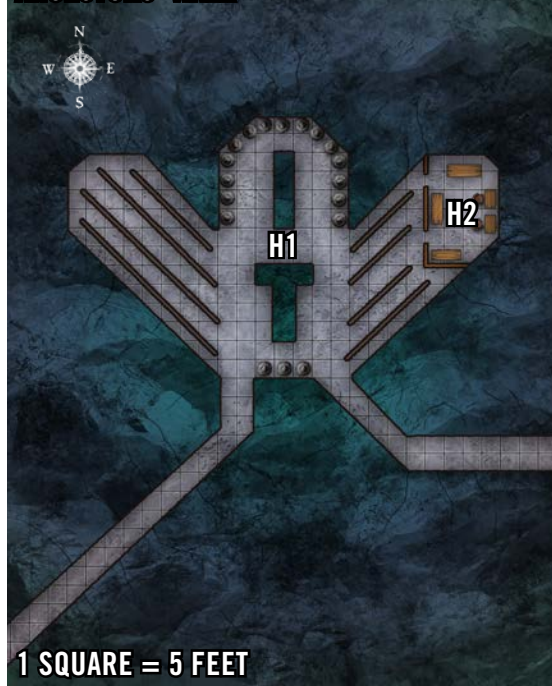
Reading Room Assistants deliver requested documents here for review, though the oldest records tend to express dates, distances, and genealogical relationships through religious references. The archivists seem reticent to retrieve restricted or sensitive documents, but earning their cooperation might uncover new leads; **Maximum RP 10**

Research Checks DC 17 any Lore associated with dwarven gods, DC 18 Genealogy Lore, DC 18 Highhelm Lore, DC 18 Religion, DC 19 Diplomacy, DC 19 Society, DC 20 Deception

Statue Hall The weight of history is so strong here that it generates minor occult magic. Whether listening to whispers in the stone, casting sand as an augury to read answers in spirits' tracks, or seeking discrepancies between a legend's life and how they appear as statues, a researcher can uncover cryptic clues; **Maximum RP 10**

Research Checks DC 16 Dwarf Lore, DC 17 Highhelm Lore, DC 17 Occultism, DC 19 Arcana, DC 19 Survival, DC 20 Perception

ANCESTORS' WALK



2 Research Points The PCs learn and affirm common Quest for Sky knowledge: born just before Earthfall and Torag's call for dwarven migration, Taargick grew up during the Quest for Sky and swiftly established himself as a leader and polymath. His diplomacy mobilized and united countless dwarven clans to travel to the surface, even if many split off in different directions as they ascended.

6 Research Points The PCs learn minor details about Taargick's birthplace, Felgunn, one of several kingdoms deep in the Darklands where dwarves lived before Earthfall. The city seemed prosperous, even idyllic, which helps explain why so many dwarves were reticent to heed Torag's summons upward. Knowledge of Felgunn isn't widespread, and its actual location doesn't survive in modern records. It may as well be a myth.

10 Research Points The PCs learn about some of Taargick's closest companions during the Quest for Sky. Hrungul Ironeye defied Torag's call, but after Taargick bested him in a duel, Hrungul became a fervent supporter and co-leader. The young priest Ferghaz (the same figure the PCs met in Tolorr crypt in Chapter 1) lent Taargick religious legitimacy early on, and his tireless advocacy of Torag's vision kept the dwarven migration energized. Yuli Rholdammen led the dwarven vanguard, becoming a heavily decorated and scarred general from her countless battles.

14 Research Points The PCs learn about schisms and internal conflicts during the centuries-long Quest for Sky. Some dwarves wanted to settle down at the halfway point or turn back altogether. Some abandoned Taargick's

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes


Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





path and ventured in different directions. The PCs begin noticing clues in the art and documents that suggest many dwarves increasingly resented and regretted that Torag's mission caused so much bloodshed and earned them so many enemies. Upon reaching the surface, however, newfound confidence and fervor drown out old concerns, and artwork increasingly depicts dwarven warfare as righteous and warranted.

20 Research Points The PCs learn of Taargick's deeds after reaching the surface and becoming high king. Most information is bland and positive, with him building this or declaring that. The greatest upset of his reign came when the sky citadel Koldukar's artisans built an elaborate tomb for the aging monarch, only for him to politely decline. The venerable king disappears into the Darklands, never to be seen again—at least until a massive cave worm crashed into Highhelm a few years later, regurgitated his clan dagger, announced that the high king was well, then withdrew peacefully.

22 Research Points Taargick's disappearance into the Darklands wasn't unexpected. By reading between the lines, the PCs find signs that Taargick's faith wavered, that he questioned the atrocities committed in Torag's name, and that he attempted several unpopular initiatives to repair past wrongs. The historians of Tar Taargadth, the first dwarven empire in Avistan, seemed especially keen to sugarcoat the Quest for Sky and their founder's legacy.

25 Research Points The PCs piece together some of the misdeeds committed by Taargick, his advisors, and the dwarves they led. Rhetoric by the priest Ferghaz became increasingly xenophobic and zealous, pushing out moderating Rivethun voices. Absolved by this religious mandate, General Rholdammen and her soldiers committed war crimes against orcs, xulgaths, and other Darklands inhabitants. Taargick walked a fine line: he stopped what he could but knew that a major controversy could break morale and end the migration. These discoveries also trigger the Unwelcome Secrets encounter.

30 Research Points The PCs confirm some of their earlier findings. This doesn't reveal additional information, though attaining 30 RP makes their ritual easier to perform.

H1. UNWELCOME SECRETS

MODERATE 4

Occult magic flows through these stories, and the concentration of history and legends enshrined in this library causes that magic to pool here. Concentrating on specific tales or historical figures sometimes stirs this magic, shaping it into a ghostly facsimile of a dead hero that might share some insight before fading. Yet as the PCs uncover additional secrets, these forgotten histories collide with popular history, tangling the occult magic up with paradoxes that snowball into increasingly potent phenomena.

Creatures: Once the PCs obtain 25 Research Points, the occult memories of Ferghaz and General Rholdammen animate the statues built in their honor. The animating energies are shallow facsimiles of those dwarves, knowing little except that they were heroes and the PCs have discovered “lies.” Outraged, the statues attack, denouncing the PCs the whole time.

ANCESTOR STATUES (2)

CREATURE 4

Elite animated statues (*Bestiary* 6, 21)

Initiative Perception +11; darkvision

Construct Armor Once an elite animated statue is reduced to less than half its Hit Points, or immediately upon being damaged by a critical hit, its construct armor breaks and its Armor Class is reduced to 17.

Development: Olfri and Ria arrive after the combat to investigate the clattering. Whereas Olfri frets at the statues' damage, Ria's more interested in what the PCs have learned and if they suspect there's more to find. She teaches them about the ritual, if they're ready (starting the next encounter), and she lingers nearby if they want to earn a few more Research Points first. By prompting the PCs (and players) to summarize their findings, Ria (and the GM) can help everyone develop a cohesive sense of the adventure's unfolding backstory.

H2. REBUILDING THE BLADE

MODERATE 4

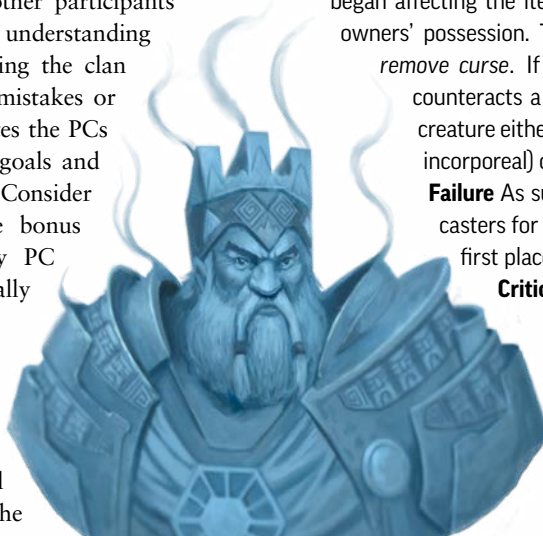
Once the PCs have only 2 hours left or have earned at least 25 RP, Ria helps them set up and understand the ritual. She emphasizes the importance of sincerity and empathy in its performance, encouraging Krohan and the PCs to consider what would be important to Taargick, what the clan dagger represents, and what experiences the PCs might share that would help them sympathize with the aggrieved spirits. She also prompts the PCs to choose a primary caster for the ritual; Krohan is a capable candidate, but he's equally happy to be a secondary caster. Once ready to begin, Krohan places the clan dagger and pommel gem on one of the broad pedestals. Ria stands at a distance to observe.

The ritual's primary skill check DC is 24, and the secondary skill check DC is 19. For every 10 Research Points the PCs earned, reduce these DCs by 1.

As the ritual progresses, faint mist seeps from the dagger and gem. Electricity periodically crackles through the mist like thunderclouds, briefly illuminating ghostly scenes from Taargick's past and Thenur's life. The mist coalesces into several humanoid shapes, at which point Ria whispers, “The council's gathered. Make your case.” Krohan begins by telling how he stole the clan dagger out of youthful ambition, lost it through recklessness, learned from his shame, and recovered it

thanks to newfound friends. He offers a heartfelt apology and pauses to let other participants speak, demonstrating some understanding of the crime or how returning the clan dagger relates to their own mistakes or redemption. Ideally, this invites the PCs to share more of their own goals and backstory with the group. Consider granting a +2 circumstance bonus to the ritual check of any PC whose contribution is especially relevant, inspired, or humble.

Have all participants make their skill checks; anything but the primary caster's critical failure advances the scene. A critical failure requires starting the ritual over with the PCs paying for the components.



Taargick's Manifestation

RITE OF REPATRIATION

RITUAL 2

UNCOMMON CONJURATION

Cast 2 hours; **Cost** rare incense, offerings, or charitable donations to the rightful owners worth a total value of 5 gp × the target's level (minimum 1 gp); **Secondary Casters** up to 5

Primary Check Occultism (trained) or Religion (trained); **Secondary Checks** Occultism or Religion (whichever is used for the primary check); Diplomacy, Performance, Society, or a Lore corresponding to the rightful owners

Range 15 feet; **Target** 1 object of up to 4th level

You call upon and apologize to local spirits as you ritually return a culturally important object to its creators, heirs, or resting place. If the spirits accept, they repair some of any damage the object might have sustained since it was last in their possession.

Learning about the item's significance and its rightful owners' history often makes this ritual easier to perform, as does performing significant deeds to repair past harm. The deeds or depth of knowledge required is subject to the GM's discretion. Typically, this gives the primary check a hard DC (rather than very hard) for a level that's twice the spell's level, and it gives the secondary checks an easy DC (rather than standard).

Success The ritual restores up to 5 Hit Points per spell level to the object, potentially removing the broken condition if this repairs it past the item's Broken Threshold; the ritual does not replace lost pieces, nor does it repair an object that's been destroyed. This restores only Hit Points lost since the item was last in its rightful owners' possession. In addition, the primary caster attempts a counteract check against one curse, spell effect, creature occupying

the item with a possession effect, or similar effect that began affecting the item since it was last in its rightful owners' possession. This functions as *dispel magic* or *remove curse*. If the primary caster successfully counteracts a possession effect, the possessing creature either manifests adjacent to the item (if incorporeal) or returns to its body (if not).

Failure As success, but the spirits lambast the casters for letting the item become lost in the first place, making the casters doomed 1.

Critical Failure The ritual fails, and the casters become doomed 1.

Heightened (+1) Increase the maximum target level by 2, the cast time by 1 hour, and the base cost by 10 gp

Creatures: Completing the ritual with a success or failure has unexpected consequences. As the ghostly figures reach out to the clan dagger, two spirits inhabiting the piece burst out. The first is a last gasp of the weapon's damaged enchantments, a corrupted blade spirit that immediately Manifests near the clan dagger and grabs it. The second is Thenur's traumatized soul, which desperately seeks safety by possessing one of the ritual casters; this is most likely Krohan, but you might have it instead seize control of a primary caster PC and have that player control Krohan during this encounter. While possessed, Krohan makes Strikes with ghostly versions of Thenur's pick and hand crossbow.

If the primary caster critically succeeds at their ritual skill check, they are able to deflect Thenur's escaping soul, preventing her from possessing any of the casters. In this case, two corrupted blade spirits Manifest (though the second lacks a clan dagger Strike and has only 30 HP), providing a more straightforward fight.

Both entities are immediately hostile. While killing Thenur's host body ends the possession, it's far better for the PCs to subdue Krohan and help him fight off his spiritual assailant. The completed ritual's side effects stir up the area's occult magic, threatening an unpredictable chain reaction that Ria spends her actions keeping under control.

CORRUPTED BLADE SPIRIT

CREATURE 4

RARE NE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Variant corrupted relic (*Bestiary* 3 55)

Perception +9; darkvision, lifesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Dwarven

Clan Dagger Relic (curse, divine, necromancy) The corrupted relic is Taargick's clan dagger rather than an amulet.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



When the spirit Manifests, the clan dagger teleports into its hand. The clan dagger can be targeted by Strikes (AC 21, Hardness 8, HP 20, BT 10).

Melee ♦ clan dagger +14 (agile, dwarf, parry, versatile B), **Damage** 2d4+3 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Melee ♦ spectral hand +14 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+3 negative

Ranged ♦ deadly spark +14 (air, electricity, divine, evocation, range 20 feet), **Damage** 2d12 electricity

Blood Accusation ⤵ (fear, linguistic, mental) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet of the corrupted blade spirit takes persistent bleed damage; **Effect** The corrupted blade spirit shapes the spilled blood into words that remind the bleeding creature of their fears, mistakes, and shames. The corrupted blade spirit Demoralizes the creature, additionally dealing 1d6 mental damage on a critical success.

KROHAN

CREATURE 4

Page 93

Initiative Perception +9

Possessed A hostile spirit controls Krohan, which gives him the negative healing ability and otherwise has the same effect as the *possession* spell. Krohan attempts a DC 20 flat check at the end of his turn; this is reduced to DC 15 if the corrupted blade spirit is destroyed. If he succeeds, the possession effect is suppressed and he is slowed 1 until the end of his next turn, allowing him to act normally. If he critically succeeds, the possession effect ends.

Melee ♦ phantom pick +14 (d10 fatal), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing plus 1d12 mental

Melee ♦ phantom hand crossbow +14 (range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing plus 1d12 mental

Occult Innate Spells DC 20; **2nd** sound burst (2)

TAARGICK'S WILL

Once both spirits are banished or destroyed, the pommel gem and clan dagger snap together, causing the gem to glow brilliantly. Dozens of flickering, luminous runes appear along the blade. The chamber's magic adapts to the relic's reassembly, channeling the countless memories tied to the clan dagger and animating Taargick's statue, which gravely studies each of the visitors before announcing, "I believe you have something of mine?" If conscious, Krohan delivers the clan dagger and his apology to the statue; otherwise, a PC likely does so instead.

Taargick's statue studies the blade. "I welcome my clan dagger's return, yet this is not what I meant. You have my story, my unfinished work. The great worm Zogototaru carried this dagger to the surface because it is a key: a key to my legacy. *Skysunder* was by my side as I led my people to the surface, but what use is a blade to a statue?" The statue holds out the clan dagger, handle outward.

"Dwarves have too long buried the past. Far better a mortal champion carry this and seek my tomb and my legacy."

The statue extends the clan dagger, now reassembled and reactivated as the relic *Skysunder* (page 83). Krohan moves to take it, only for the statue to interject, "Your talents reside less in blades than in spirits, young Rivethun." Krohan seems surprised by this pronouncement, and the statue adds, "You could have sensed the dagger no other way, yet you have much to learn." The statue extends the clan dagger to the PCs.

Once someone accepts it, the statue also acknowledges two of the other relics the group might carry: Krohan's armor shard ("Broken in my fight with the Avernall Worm") and the beard clasp ("Cut from my own beard out of shame when I left for the Darklands") recovered from area E4. The statue provides parting clues before reawakening these two additional relics, the Adamantine Echo (page 83) and Uniter of Clans (page 84).

"To find my tomb, the worm knows the way. To find the worm, seek her last victim—a drathnelar survivor here in Highhelm." The statue gazes about as if trying to pinpoint an unfamiliar sound. "Tread carefully. As dwarves sought the surface, we slaughtered and made many enemies. As you seek the depths, perhaps you might heal some of those ancient wounds and find friends in unlikely places."

Reawakening the relics drains the statue's fleeting magic, and Taargick's manifestation ends. Krohan is quietly incredulous, unsure how to process the proclamation and his budding magical abilities, though Ria assures him that she and others can help train him. While both know that the manifestation was an echo of Taargick's personality and memories (not the high king himself), they're both intrigued that the PCs might uncover some lost legacy of the legendary king. Until they know more, they encourage keeping this information limited to a few senior Clan Tolorr members to avoid turning Highhelm into a hotbed of speculation, opportunists, and treasure hunters.

Drathnelar Survivor

With little more than a cryptic directive to track down a drathnelar survivor, the investigation ahead seems insurmountable. Fortunately, the scope and resources available make this a deceptively quick investigation that involves identifying the drathnelar, discovering that she's falsely imprisoned, and learning of key evidence the PCs need to acquire from a criminal gone rogue.

The PCs' Tolorr allies provide initial help. They know that drathnelars are reclusive, with few living in Highhelm; the cryptic survivor likely also refers to

someone from Guldrege, which was destroyed within the past decade. Tolorr messengers check in with other clans, inquiring about drathnelar guests and members. When those inquiries uncover no leads, the PCs can limit their search to the few neighborhoods that lack a major clan hall. The PCs' friends recommend the Burrows in Highhelm's Depths, which the PCs likely visited during the Blacknoon Rescue quest.

This short investigation presents key locations and contacts below, providing enough detail to identify an old bakery in the Depths. At your discretion, you might add additional clues, require more skill checks, or expand these leads with combat encounters.

SCANNING THE BURROWS

The Burrows is a series of caves in the Depths, forming a neighborhood spread throughout a confounding tunnel network. While most of the residents lack prestige by Highhelm standards, a strong community spirit encourages everyone to help their neighbors. Shortly after the PCs start investigating here, the ratfolk fixer Ussa (met in Chapter 1) tracks them down to learn what they need. Even from the limited clues, Ussa deduces they're looking for Jirelga, a shy explorer and guide who moved here a few years ago. Unfortunately, authorities arrested Jirelga a few weeks ago on smuggling charges, taking her to an infamous prison called the Broch in King's Crown. Ussa has a particular distaste for the Broch, which is independently owned and sometimes operates by its own rules.

Jirelga's Possessions: The guards apparently had what evidence they needed already and didn't investigate Jirelga's home. While the residence has since been cleaned out and reoccupied (space is precious here), Ussa stored Jirelga's possessions and can show these to the PCs. Beyond mundane clothing, housewares, dried food, and spelunking gear, Ussa uncovered a hidden cache of tools: the equivalent of a sterling cooking tools set, a sterling mining tool set, and a sterling scribing tools set. Each tool bears the stamp of Clan Molgrade, known for its excellent metalwork. However, with a successful DC 18 Crafting, Perception, or relevant Lore check, a PC determines that despite the stamp and handsome appearance, these tools are of deceptively low quality. The cooking tools have a magical aura, with an enchantment designed to chop ingredients swiftly. However, by critically succeeding at the DC 18 check to identify them, a PC realizes these tools are cursed, causing the knives to veer toward the user's fingers.

The PCs also recover a handwritten business card hidden among the scribing tools. The card displays only the symbol of a two-bit axe driven into a loaf of bread, which Ussa recognizes from an out-of-business

bakery in the Depths. Given the accusations against Jirelga, Ussa suspects the bakery might be serving some sinister purpose now. If the PCs encouraged Fazil to join the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild after rescuing him from the Gauntlet, Ussa recommends giving her time to find and question the kobold.

Fazil's Assistance: If Fazil joined the guild, he becomes a useful contact in exonerating Jirelga. Sharing information risks his membership. He might do so anyway if he likes the PCs or knows they've received his superiors' approval, or the PCs can Request a favor (Will DC 16).

As a recruit, Fazil was assigned to train at and guard the old bakery, which is a secret start-up for some manufacturing scheme he hasn't deciphered. He can draw out the bakery's rough layout, though he mostly knows areas **11**, **12**, **14**, **15**, and **16**. If the PCs critically succeed at their Request or otherwise convince Fazil he's doing the right thing, he's willing to lure away some of the guards and lend the PCs his Blacknoon coin to help them infiltrate the site.

THE BROCH AND OTHER LEADS

Once the PCs know about Jirelga's arrest and hidden tools, they'll likely visit the Broch as well as speak with Blacknoon and Molgrade informants.

The Broch: This collection of shoddy towers built when Droskar's priests ruled Highhelm was bought and converted into a private prison about 50 years ago. Its owner, **Baelim** (LE male dwarf jailor), locks up petty criminals and any overflow from Highhelm's state-run prison, charging a high fee per inmate. Understandably, he doesn't mind imprisoning travelers on flimsy charges so that he can collect more fees. Highhelm's government knows Baelim's reputation; however, until the Torag's Shield project ends or serious scandal condemns Baelim, the city lacks the labor to replace the Broch.

The PCs can arrange to meet with Baelim about Jirelga. With infuriating slowness, he pages through his records before confirming Jirelga's imprisonment and crimes: smuggling and manufacturing fraud against a clan. He opines that she's unlikely to see trial for some time, given the evidence against her and a judicial backlog of more important cases. His act is largely a thinly veiled solicitation for a bribe. By giving him at least 10 gp, politely convincing him (Diplomacy DC 23), Coercing him (Intimidation DC 19), or using a similar ploy, the PCs can secure limited cooperation. He admits that the evidence against Jirelga was flimsy and hearsay—not that he questioned it. If the PCs find something more concrete that exonerates her, then he's willing to let the PCs interview Jirelga, if not release

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



BLACKNOON BAKERY



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

her outright. Baelim secretly assumes the PCs will fail or even get themselves hurt in the process, not fearing what they might find.

Blacknoon Officials: Upon learning of the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild's involvement in Jirelga's disappearance, the PCs might try to negotiate with guild representatives. The guild does operate legitimate businesses; their smuggling, blackmail, and embezzlement are an open secret that's hard to prosecute. Securing a meeting can be as simple as visiting a Blacknoon business and demanding an audience, though politeness is expected. A negotiator such as **Drokmer** (LN male dwarf fixer) eventually arrives and takes the PCs aside to talk.

Drokmer listens politely to the PCs' grievances, deflecting most blame directed toward the guild. However, evidence of illegal tunneling, cursed item smuggling, abduction, and Molgrade forgery piques his interest; these either overstep Tuom Molgrade's directions or violate her contract. If provided a fair

case and plied with a successful DC 19 skill check (such as Deception or Diplomacy), Drokmer requests a second meeting soon, using the intervening time to meet with other Blacknoon officials.

He later brings the PCs good news: the PCs are investigating a Blacknoon operation that's gone rogue, and the guild has withdrawn its support from the rogue agent. The PCs can freely raid the site so long as they minimize casualties and damage to the building. Drokmer does request access to any documents the PCs find, however, as the guild hopes to understand Tuom's operation and potential betrayal.

If the guild's support is withdrawn, the hideout receives reinforcements of only one agent per 24 hours, not 1d4 agents.

Clan Molgrade: The Molgrade name is synonymous with quality manufacturing, so rumors of fraudulent tools stamped with Molgrade's mark have agitated the clan. The PCs can secure a meeting with a mid-ranking associate like **Yiri Molgrade** (LG male dwarf tinsmith).

He feeds the PCs carefully crafted assurances, insisting that all associates are carefully checking shipments and scanning the markets for frauds. His demeanor betrays unspoken possibilities.

By pressing him, the PCs can learn about his second cousin, Tuom, an accomplished arcane smith who clashed often with the extended family, spouted bitter rhetoric about the debt god Drannngvit, and then disappeared to pursue her own projects, taking proprietary tools with her. Yiri privately suspects that Tuom also has one of the clan's tattoo guardians, whose existence aren't public knowledge; if a PC notes he's withholding information (DC 19 Perception) and urges him to share more (DC 21 Diplomacy), he adds only that Molgrade tattoos often bear protective enchantments that shouldn't be underestimated.

Yiri worries that Tuom might still be in Highhelm, abusing her Molgrade stamp and techniques for personal profit. However, unless she acts more brazenly, Clan Molgrade likely won't intervene—especially if the PCs mention possible Blacknoon involvement. Yiri believes that Clan Molgrade won't impede the PCs' investigation, though, even if it involves a former clan member. Should the PCs recover any Molgrade clan property, Yiri promises to pay a fair price for its return.

Calling in Favors: This is an excellent opportunity for the PCs to request aid from the friends they've made during the adventure so far, emphasizing the impact they've already had on Highhelm. In general, these contacts should either provide helpful information, distract the bakery's guards (similar to Fazil's ploy), or smuggle the PCs into the facility. The priest Heldin Ulgincamp might raise a false alarm about ghosts. The smith Elga Sfarhaggn knows the gossip about Tuom defying Clan Molgrade. Ektar Beetsmith can drive a herd of loud livestock through the area, covering up any sounds of the PCs' infiltration. Any contact might contribute, though none take actions that would seriously endanger themselves or their property.

Blacknoon Bakery

In Highhelm's early years, dwarves harvested native yeasts and channeled heat emanating from deep fissures to power their bakeries, creating a neighborhood called Folgrit's Kitchen. While the geothermal vents have faded since then, a handful of bakeries still operate here. The Blacknoon Thieves' Guild purchased one of the abandoned bakeries some time ago intending to expand their operations. It finally saw use when Tuom Molgrade approached the guild, offering to join and employ her smithing secrets if provided a facility. In the months since, she's partially renovated the bakery, turning the southern half into

a hideout and setting up her smithy among the old ovens. However, her forgeries and other projects are overstepping her contract and drawing unwanted attention, and Blacknoon leadership is getting ready to withdraw support to distance the guild from any retaliation Tuom attracts.

The bakery consists of two rectangular buildings studded with stone buttresses. As part of the renovation, Tuom's team bricked up the alley between the buildings, connecting them with a short passageway. The building presents itself as a hardware distributor and construction contracting business, attracting infrequent foot traffic.

11. FRONT OFFICE

LOW 4

As the facility's only room open to the public, this storefront includes an L-shaped counter, two drafting desks, and a small table. Pinned to the wood-paneled wall opposite the main door are an assortment of sketches and blueprints of various buildings from throughout the Five Kings Mountains. To a casual observer, this is an unremarkable office.

Creatures: The three Blacknoon agents on duty here do what they can to bore or out-price passersby, using the diagrams on the walls and prints in the desks to overwhelm visitors with jargon. If a visitor is architecturally savvy or seems ready to overspend on contractors, the agents here have enough construction training to provide legitimate help. Their goal is to provide possible plans, arrange an on-site visit later, and shoo the customer away. However, they're vulnerable to greed and deception if the PCs attempt to impersonate Blacknoon operatives or string them along with the promise of a lucrative contract.

BLACKNOON APPRENTICES (3)

CREATURE 2

NE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven

Skills Acrobatics +8, Crafting +6, Intimidation +7, Stealth +8, Thievery +8

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

Items shortsword, composite shortbow (10 arrows), leather armor, thieves' tools, giant centipede venom (2), 3 gp

AC 18; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

HP 32; **Resistances** poison 2

Speed 20 feet

Melee ✦ shortsword +11 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

Ranged ✦ composite shortbow +11 (deadly d10, propulsive, range 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing

Toxic Treachery ✨ (manipulate) **Trigger** The Blacknoon apprentice successfully Demoralizes or Tumbles Through

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



a foe; **Effect** The Blacknoon apprentice applies a dose of poison to a weapon they wield.

Sneak Attack The Blacknoon apprentice deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Secret Door: With a successful DC 24 Perception check, a PC detects that one of the wooden wall panels slides up, revealing a recessed handle and keyhole (Thievery DC 26) that operates the hidden door to area **I3**. The door's key is stored in area **I8**. Tuom specifically designed this wood-paneled wall to stymie some dwarves' knack for spotting inconsistencies in stone.



12. DORMITORY

LOW 4

With far more beds and space than Tuom has agents, this dormitory hints at both her and the guild's aspirations for this site's growth. A low blaze crackles in the fireplace, and several tables and shelves nearby hold dry goods and cooking equipment.

Creatures: At most hours, two apprentices rest or cook in here.

BLACKNOON APPRENTICES (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 71

Perception +8; darkvision

13. VAULT

Shelves line much of this narrow vault, and several crates kept nailed shut are piled in one corner.

Treasure: This vault holds much of the wealth that belongs to the Blacknoon Thieves' Guild, as opposed to the personal wealth that Tuom has hidden in area **I7**. A small logbook tracks the inventory kept in the crates and mostly empty shelves: 15 gp, 337 sp, 501 cp, five surrealist landscape paintings, a throneglass necklace, eight pieces of uncut coral, and five antique Rahadoumi vases. Of these, the coins, paintings (worth 3 gp each due to their unknown origins), and coral (22 gp total) are real. The necklace, supposedly made from a rare Azlanti glass that's green and tough as steel, is a convincing fake made of crystal, which a PC can determine with a successful DC 25 Crafting check or DC 28 Perception check; it appears to be worth 100 gp but is only worth 1 gp. The supposedly millennium-old vases are also fake (DC 25 Crafting, DC 25 Society, or DC 28 Perception), having been created in Tuom's workshop. They're worth only a few silver each.

14. LAVATORIES

With wash basins to the southeast, toilets to the northeast, and two bathtubs to the northwest, this is a spacious lavatory connected to a water reservoir kept on the roof.

Treasure: Judging from the toiletries stored here, crime pays well. Among the supplies are six blocks of fragrant soap worth 1 sp each.

15. TRAINING ROOM

MODERATE 4

Several durable, dwarf-sized training mannequins stand in this room, each wearing clothing adorned with many pockets and bells. Blunted arrows stick out of the archery targets arrayed along the north wall. Weapon racks hang from the east wall, holding an array of blunted blades and wooden staves. False doors built into several walls each have an

assortment of keyholes, chains, and other restraints. The tools here are all designed to hone apprentice thieves' legerdemain, aim, and agility.

Creatures: There are usually two apprentices here practicing their skills, hoping to improve before their next lesson. Using training dummies and swinging open the false doors for cover, they snipe at unauthorized intruders, hoping to draw enemies into the room. One of the bell-laden mannequins is a scarecrow, a fearsome construct with just enough intelligence to spar with or prank trainees on occasion. It tries to pounce on and surprise intruders.

SCARECROW

CREATURE 4

Bestiary 2 232

Perception +11; darkvision

BLACKNOON APPRENTICES (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 71

Perception +8; darkvision

Treasure: A small cabinet next to the weapons rack holds a fistful of assorted lockpicks, equivalent to 13 replacement picks for thieves' tools. With *detect magic*, a PC can sense a magical aura near the north end of the room, which emanates from within one of the false doors. If its four locks (Thievery DC 20) are opened or the door is torn free (Athletics DC 24), a PC finds a recess behind the door, containing an incomplete *deck of illusions* with only five cards left: earth scamp, pixie, red dragon, troll, and the deck activator's greatest fear. These are saved for special training sessions.

16. LOUNGE

MODERATE 4

Comfy couches, solid tables, an overstuffed recliner, and an assortment of chairs furnish this lounge. Shelves built into the walls hold an assortment of playing cards, board games, mugs, and trite three-copper novels. A few tapestries and magical lamps give the room a warm ambiance. Two features seem to defy this cheerful atmosphere: the first is a grim shrine with a crossed pickaxe symbol that stands against the west wall, its altar holding several empty offering bowls, a notebook, and a set of scales. The second is the statue of a dog-headed sphinx built into the ceiling and walls of the northwest corner.

Creatures: This is the favorite haunt of Ygrin Oathcarver—or at least the bitter skelm that he became. He lounges here often, goading apprentices about their insecurities and nurturing a sense of entitlement as he scouts others to become skelms, worship his especially bitter version of Dranngvit, or both. Sounds of fighting gradually lure Ygrin out, but he's equally happy to let

intruders come to him and then fall prey to his toxic rhetoric. His typical strategy is to goad others' sense of entitlement, make them question their non-Dranngvit faith, and seize what they deserve by force. The PCs might deceive him by playing along, though he eventually calls their bluff either by having them betray Clan Tolorr or by escorting them to other encounter areas in this hideout, likely triggering an extremely dangerous fight. If flustered or bored, he manifests his antlers and kills whoever has made him feel inadequate.

The canid sphinx is a gargoyle that takes cruel joy in watching Ygrin emotionally abuse others. The cheap adventure fiction here is the gargoyle's guilty pleasure and growing collection. It animates to defend Ygrin or attack anyone who might be stealing its novels.

YGRIN OATHCARVER

CREATURE 5

Shrine skelm (Bestiary 3 239)

Perception +11; darkvision

GARGOYLE

CREATURE 4

Bestiary 161

Perception +10; darkvision

17. TUOM'S ROOM

Tuom's spacious quarters include a wide bed, a fireplace, bookshelves, and a private bathroom. Though the bedroom door is unlocked, the door to area 18 is locked (Hardness 10, HP 60, BT 30), requiring the key Tuom carries or a successful DC 24 Athletics or Thievery check to force open.

Treasure: The bed frame has a concealed cabinet (Perception DC 21) accessible only by lifting the corner of the mattress. Inside is a *type I bag of holding*, in which Tuom stores personal valuables and emergency supplies in case she needs to flee on short notice. This includes three weeks' rations, three full waterskins, two sets of traveling clothes, a pup tent, a set of blacksmithing tools, a bedroll, a writing kit, 45 gp, 150 sp, 71 cp, and a block of high-quality alabaster wrapped in cloth (4 Bulk and worth 30 gp).

The bag also contains her journals, which mostly feature incomplete arcane formulas and sketches of potential blacksmithing projects. However, she writes about two topics with growing frequency over time. The first is her frustration with Clan Molgrade politics and traditionalism, which she feels have impeded her potential as an artisan and leader. The second is recollections of conversations with Ygrin Oathcarver, who seemed to be the only elder who acknowledged her frustration, confirmed that the clan's treatment of her was unfair, and urged her to seize what she deserved on her own.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



18. ARCAN LAB

This locked room holds Tuom's ongoing arcane experiments, including various reagents stored in the work benches and diagrams pinned to the south wall.

In addition to the magical diagrams, one workbench has a sheaf of architectural plans and street maps for Highhelm. Wordless annotations have marked various sections of the city's northeast quarter across various levels, especially thicker sections of untouched stone. The maps indicate the Broch as being somehow important, along with various points in the Depths. With a successful DC 15 Lore check (such as Architecture, Engineering, Highhelm, or Mining Lore) or a DC 19 Perception check, a PC recognizes that someone used these maps to survey future tunneling operations, including a possible route passing near Pearlcase Aquaculture.

Another series of diagrams depicts a geometric tattoo pattern designed to cover most of an arm. With a successful DC 15 Dwarf Lore, Crafting, or Society check, a PC recognizes this as a modified Molgrade tattoo, which advertises the crafter's specializations. This design shows expertise in blacksmithing, though it includes secondary whorls, glyphs, and notes that suggest the tattoo was getting enchanted in some way.

19. WAREHOUSE

MODERATE 4

Rows of iron-and-wood shelving 8 feet tall form aisles through much of this warehouse. Many of the shelves still have tightly spaced racks that once stored freshly baked bread awaiting distribution. Several others have been retrofitted for small crates, though the warehouse seems to be minimally stocked. Even then, only half of the crates contain anything beyond straw, with most holding metal kitchenware, clockwork components, wagon parts, and other utilitarian goods that appear high quality, bear the Molgrade stamp, and are less sturdy than they appear. A functional cart is parked near the room's center, where a few dozen tools are scattered haphazardly.

Creatures: Normally, Tuom would tirelessly hunt any gremlins near her work. However, given the inferior quality of the goods she and her apprentices have made, she's unperturbed by a pack of jinkins that moved into the warehouse—at least if they don't wander near anything she actually cares about. This suits the gremlins, who spend their free time inspecting and laying curses on the inventory. Seven jinkins live here, though most are usually away foraging throughout the city. If they spot intruders, they wait to see if the strangers adopt any of the cursed items, then they begin pelting the intruders with scrap metal from atop the shelves.

Tuom's dig-widget rests atop one of the southwest shelves, awaiting new excavation orders. If it spots anyone unfamiliar rummaging through the warehouse's contents, it sneaks up on intruders and ambushes them.

DIG-WIDGET

CREATURE 5

Bestiary 279

Perception +9; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

JINKINS (3)

CREATURE 1

Bestiary 193

Perception +7; darkvision

Ranged metal scrap +9 (range increment 20 feet, thrown),

Damage 1d6–2 slashing

Treasure: The objects scattered around the cart are the jinkins' latest projects, including a spoon that makes the user's food half as nutritious, a hammer more likely to hit fingers than nails, a lunch pail that attracts weevils, and similar items bearing 1st-level curses. The concentration of minor curses rubs off on the first PC who sorts through the pile, applying the jinkins' Tinker curse to a random item (minimum level 1) in their possession unless they succeed at a DC 20 Will save.

110. STORAGE

This room stores metal ingots, coal, and other smithing supplies, keeping them away from the forge's sparks and warehouse traffic. The exterior doors always remains locked.

Hidden Passage: Scattered crates and straw obscure the floor in the northeast corner, where a stone slab obscures a 5-foot-diameter tunnel that Tuom has been digging with the help of the dig-widget here. Spotting the hidden entrance requires a successful DC 18 Perception check. The tunnels extend through part of the Depths, branch a few times to dead ends where excavations experienced complications, and gradually ascend through parts of Stonebreach and King's Heart. The smuggling tunnel hasn't yet reached the Broch, the surface, or the several other destinations Tuom hoped to access.

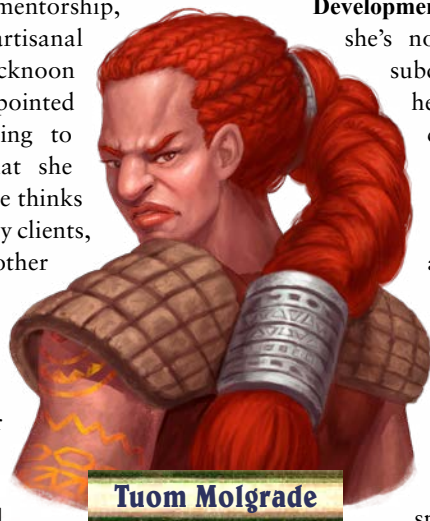
111. WORKSHOP

SEVERE 4

Once an industrial bakery with eleven large ovens, part of this workshop has been transformed into a smithy. The two corner ovens have been replaced by wide forges, with a third oven removed to make space for a giant bellows. Anvils, quenching barrels, and low piles of charcoal are arranged nearby, and rolled up blueprints are stored haphazardly in one of the old ovens. The rest of the facility is dusty and unused.

Creatures: Tuom spends most of her time here, either creating profitable dreck for export, deciphering stolen Molgrade schematics, or teaching her apprentices how to manufacture forgeries. Goaded by Ygrin Oathcarver's mentorship, she's consumed by ambition—artisanal mastery, public prestige, Blacknoon advancement, and more—disappointed by imperfect results, and willing to sacrifice others to achieve what she believes she deserves. Whether she thinks they're Blacknoon enforcers, angry clients, Highhelm investigators, or some other party, the PCs represent a threat.

She's willing to talk as she hammers at her current project, but if that can't convince them to leave, she uses violence. Her tattoo guardian springs to her defense, though Tuom's ongoing modifications of the construct and her abuse of Molgrade property have undermined its loyalty; it disperses into ink and imprints on a nearby diagram if reduced to 10 or fewer Hit Points. A small fire elemental also aids Tuom, emerging from the forge where it provides heat and snacks on coal.



Tuom Molgrade

TUOM MOLGRADE**CREATURE 5**

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +12; darkvision**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Pyric, Undercommon**Skills** Athletics +11, Arcana +12, Crafting +14, Deception +9, Thievery +11**Str** +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1**Items** +1 striking warhammer, hatchet, scale mail, sterling blacksmith tools, thieves' tools, spellbook, key to area 18**AC** 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14**HP** 75; **Resistances** fire 5**Speed** 20 feet**Melee** ♦ warhammer +15 (shove), **Damage** 2d8+7 bludgeoning**Melee** ♦ hatchet +14 (agile, sweep, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing**Ranged** ♦ hatchet +14 (agile, sweep, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing**Arcane Prepared Spells** DC 21, attack +14; **3rd** *fireball*; **2nd** *glitterdust*, *shocking grasp*; **1st** *floating disk*, *jump*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *mage hand*, *light*, *produce flame*, *read aura***TATTOO GUARDIAN****CREATURE 3***Bestiary* 3 262**Perception** +8; darkvision**CINDER RAT****CREATURE 3***Bestiary* 148**Perception** +9; darkvision, smoke vision

Development: Tuom is bitter and entitled, but she's not beyond redemption. If the PCs subdue her, destroy Ygrin, and help her attain validation that doesn't come at others' expense, they might successfully encourage her to make amends and start fresh.

Treasure: The treasures here consist almost entirely of documents. Several dozen Clan Molgrade blueprints detail secret techniques for various crafts. Below those is a steel stamp that designates goods of Molgrade quality, used to imprint metalwork before its final quenching. Loose papers are sandwiched inside Tuom's spellbook, including lists of potential

smugglers, written correspondence from criminal contacts, and even several receipts from Baelim's Broch for posting and redeeming bounties for some of the smugglers—evidence that Tuom and Baelim collaborated to use and then eliminate intermediaries like Jirelga.

As Yiri Molgrade promised, his clan is willing to pay for the returned blueprints (50 gp) and seal (25 gp). If the PCs would rather keep and decipher the blueprints, these are the equivalent of three 4th-level formulas, three 5th-level formulas, and one 6th-level formula of your choice, two of which are uncommon or rare.

The defeated tattoo guardian willingly goes wherever the PCs take it. Whether it becomes intrigued by the PCs' other relics or is gifted to the PCs by Clan Molgrade, the tattoo can potentially bond to a PC as an additional relic—especially for a group of more than four PCs.

Concluding the Adventure

Although Jirelga isn't completely innocent, the evidence the PCs recover demonstrates a far larger plot by Tuom that overshadows the deep gnome's limited role as a smuggler. Between Clan Molgrade's fury at the forgeries, the Blacknoon outrage at Tuom going rogue with unsanctioned tunneling plans, and evidence of the Broch's profiteering through the criminal justice system, the PCs can readily secure Jirelga's freedom. Her guidance (and, if the PCs want, tearing down Baelim's prison-for-profit scheme) continues in the next volume!



LOST DWARVEN TREASURES

Dwarves are a people of rich tradition and view their most valuable treasures as tangible proof of their past achievements. Certainly, many of these artifacts are of the finest make, composed of precious metals and studded with gems. Such valuables would catch the eye of any who saw them, but among the dwarves their true worth is often symbolic. They are memorials to dwarven values and history.

Most dwarves would agree on whether a given artifact is important, but they might disagree on why. For example, residents of the Sky Citadels who are proud of dwarven military prowess might see relics of past battles as a representation of martial might. The return of such treasures would herald a drive to reconquer lands that their forebears once ruled. Others with a more nuanced view might find shame in their ancestors' past aggressions and view these artifacts as reminders of what not to do.

Hunting for dwarven treasures is a political mission. Even for those who care more about recovering history than pushing an agenda, the source of a treasure-hunter's funds or the identity of their buyers may lead to the presumption of certain motives. Outsiders unaware of such politics often end up angering people on all sides. Those who are aware of the political context should decide on their goals before starting their search.

Given these complications, perhaps it's lucky that many of these mythic treasures are hard—if not impossible—to find. The oldest lie far below the surface, buried in tunnels traversed during the Quest for Sky. This seemingly endless pilgrimage prompted many dwarves to store valuables in safeholds to be recovered later, yet many never returned. Most of the routes excavated by dwarves have now been claimed by dangerous creatures that live in the Darklands. Others have faded from cultural memory.

More recent artifacts can be found closer to the surface but are often no easier to recover. Dwarven refugees were displaced in multiple wars, scattered into small, hidden mountain enclaves with their heirlooms.

Treasures crafted during the glorious Gilded Age were stockpiled in lands that later fell into enemy possession. Retracing the steps of one's ancestors to these areas isn't easy; efforts are stymied by outdated maps and geographical changes that rendered past routes impassable.

Still, the cultural significance of these items is too great for such obstacles to deter treasure hunters. Some individuals see in these lost heirlooms the last link to their ancestors and the culture they fostered. Others hope to recover forgotten methods used by artisans of the past. And, of course, who wouldn't want a sturdy war axe or gorgeously rendered suit

of armor for their own use? For these treasures are not just relics to be displayed in a museum. They are enduring testaments to dwarven ingenuity and skill, and to set them aside while they still have use would be worse than giving up the search for them. The great treasures of the dwarves may be valued for their links to the past, but they also have the potential to make history once more.

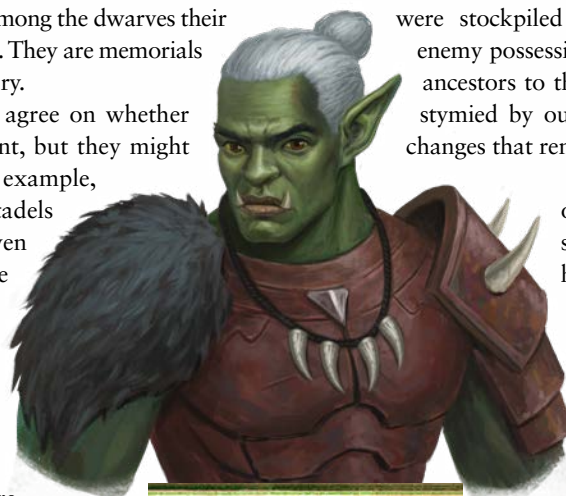
Koldukar (Urgir)

KOLDUKAR

Description Koldukar was the first of the great dwarven Sky Citadels, and its overthrow by Belkzen's orcs was a major blow to dwarven pride.

Last Seen Now known as Urgir, Koldukar lies within the Orc Hold of Belkzen in the Eye of Dread. Its once magnificent architecture has fallen into disrepair, but the city is still a place of dwarven pride and home to many historical artifacts.

Interested Parties It's hard to find a dwarf who doesn't hold some interest in reclaiming Koldukar for their people.



Ardax the White Hair

MANTLE
OF
GOLD

Campaign
Background

Chapter 1:
Highhelm
Heroes

Chapter 2:
Path of the
Dagger

Chapter 3:
A Relic
Reunited

Lost
Dwarven
Treasures

Adventure
Toolbox



Historians who specialize in the Quest for Sky and the Lonesome Era, during which King Dhrotam fled Koldukar with the last of her people, have a specific interest in locating artifacts that might help fill in the gaps of their accounts. Many dwarven architects would also pay significant sums to see the original Sky Citadel or recover blueprints left from its construction.

HISTORY

High King Taargick ruled the ancient kingdom of Tar Taargadth from Koldukar, and the Sky Citadel remained the center of the dwarven government for more than a millennium, allowing the city to become rich in history and culture. The city, founded in -4989 AR, was much more than just a dwarven capital. It served as the model for every other Sky Citadel and, more importantly, as proof that Torag meant for dwarvenkind to reach the surface.

As Koldukar expanded over the years, it became home to a great library, ornate temples, and the largest forge in any of the Sky Citadels. However, the city's golden age could not last forever. In -3708 AR, an army of orcs led by the warlord Belkzen attacked and overthrew Koldukar. Most of its inhabitants died in battle; King Dhrotam was among the few who escaped and fled south to the Five Kings Mountains.

Koldukar was renamed Urgir by Belkzen and has remained in orcish custody since.

RAMIFICATIONS

The loss of Koldukar marked the end of what some still see as the high point of dwarven history. Many old clans fell when the Sky Citadel was overrun, meaning various family records and relics were lost along with the cultural monuments within the city. The defeat was also a major blow to dwarven pride. The Quest for Sky had been a tale of struggle and loss, including many tales of those who perished in battles with orcs. Koldukar had stood strong against its enemies for centuries; when the orcs retook their territory, they also shattered the illusion of unstoppable destiny many dwarves had been living under.

Much of what was lost—the lives, the history, the absolute certainty of dwarven strength—could never be reclaimed, even by a full assault on Koldukar. To

take the city in such a way would also likely spark another war, one that would result in even more loss and come with serious political consequences. Most dwarves still interested in Koldukar merely wish for safe access to Urgir. An assembly of archaeologists, historians, and architects in Highhelm has been urging the king to send an emissary to Urgir's current leadership. They plan to ask for access to Koldukar's cultural and historical treasures in exchange for work to shore up parts of the city that have become unstable due to earthquakes and an infestation of rust monsters beneath the surface.

There are also small groups of treasure hunters looking for ways to sneak into the city without permission. Rumor has it the current residential population has dwindled significantly and have abandoned at least half the city's lowest level, which would allow clever groups to sneak in through the tunnels that lead from the Darklands.

Either type of mission might be able to recover smaller cultural artifacts. To regain all that was lost, a greater effort would be needed to make peace with the orcs of the Hold of Belkzen and, more specifically, with Ardax the White-Hair, who currently holds the reins of power in Urgir. He would likely be receptive to a show of force framed not as a threat, but as an offer of support should Tar-Baphon make another move to take the city.

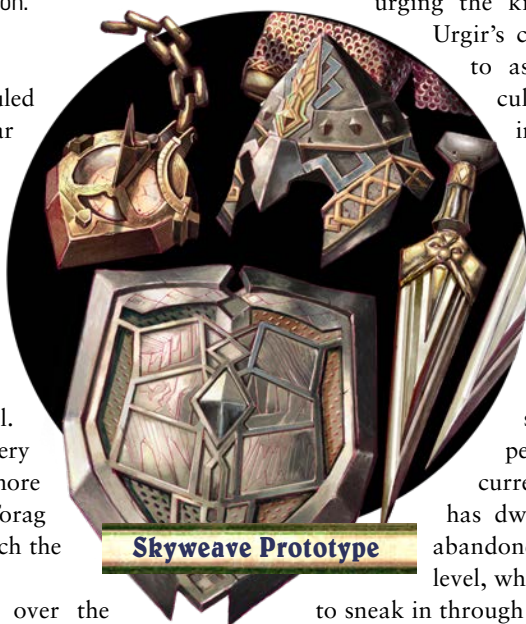
The Skyweave Prototypes

THE SKYWEAVE PROTOTYPES

Description This fabled shield, ring, compass, dagger, and chain mail made of skymetal are all beautifully crafted and one-of-a-kind.

Last Seen Only one item from this collection is known for certain to exist: The *Skyweave Shield*, which is in storage at Highhelm's High King's Forge.

Interested Parties As the stuff of legends, the Skyweave Prototypes tend to attract the gullible and ambitious. Treasure hunters hoping to sneak into Urgir hope to find pieces of the set due to its supposed connection to Koldukar. Furthermore, rumors speculate that when the entire set is brought together, it creates a magical resonance that makes the wielder invincible.



HISTORY

In the same forge where the *Axe of the Dwarven Lords* was crafted, master artisans invented “skyweaving,” a technique that involved imbuing skymetals with magic during the smithing process. They had just perfected the art when Belkzen and his orcs attacked the Koldukar. King Dhrotam, afraid the Skyweave Prototypes would be stolen by the orcs and used against her people, decided to take them herself.

King Dhrotam snuck out of the city through a secret entrance into the Darklands and started toward Highhelm. She hid the Skyweave Prototypes as bread crumbs in the hopes that she—or someone—could sneak back into Koldukar and help retake it. Unfortunately, she failed to rally the people of Highhelm to fight for Koldukar, so she never saw the mission fulfilled.

ITEMS

The Skyweave Prototypes consists of five items, four of which are hidden at geological landmarks near what is now Urgir. Each item was left with a clue that leads to the next.

The Skyweave Shield: This shield is embossed with images of six consequential landmarks near Koldukar: the crystalline Cavern of Stars, the underground cliff travelers scaled using Mahrlrick’s Ladder, a meteor crater with abundant skymetals known as the Sky Mine, a 200-foot-tall waterfall called Dagger Point Falls, a narrow mountain pass along the border of Belkzen called Needle-Eye Gap, and a large underground lake called The Fool’s Ford. The shield was taken to the High King’s Forge in Highhelm so its artisans could learn to the skyweaving process, but when they failed, the shield was locked away in storage. It’s in pristine condition, except for the small inubrix needle piercing the shield strap.

The Skyweave Compass: This compass has two needles, a standard compass needle pointing towards magnetic north (or the closest large vein of magnetic ore) and the other enchanted with *know direction* to always point to true north. The compass is hidden in a stone crevice at the top of Needle-Eye Gap next to a dirt-covered chunk of adamantine.

The Skyweave Helm: This helm is engraved with images of dwarven kings slaying beasts from the Darklands and grants the wearer greater darkvision. The helm is hidden away somewhere within the Sky Mine’s underground storage facilities. It’s stored

among old safety gear, concealed in rotting canvas; a shard of crystal lays within the helm.

The Skyweave Dagger: This dagger is an adamantine blade, but its wielder can reshape the metal into any form they Envision, allowing it to function as a *traveler’s any-tool*. The dagger is in the form of a long hooked harpoon and wedged between two massive crystals in the Cavern of Stars. A steel bucket hangs from the hilt.

The Skyweave Mail: This delicate chain mail seems to swallow light rather than reflecting it. It sits in the bottom of The Fool’s Ford, buried in a stone box. A crude map is carved into the box, showing the route to a secret entrance to Koldukar.

RAMIFICATIONS

The Skyweave Prototypes have been the object of many quests. Some only wish to find the unique items along the hidden path; others hope to retrace King Dhrotam’s steps from the lost city of Koldukar. This knowledge would make for great political leverage, but if given to the wrong person it could ultimately hurt efforts to restore

the treasures of Koldukar to the dwarven peoples as a whole.

Of course, one who locates all the Skyweave Prototypes would also have sole access to lost ruins in Koldukar and its valuable treasures. They might even be able to find the forge used to create skyweave items and recover tools or other information that would allow artisans to replicate the process.

The Axe of the Dwarven Lords

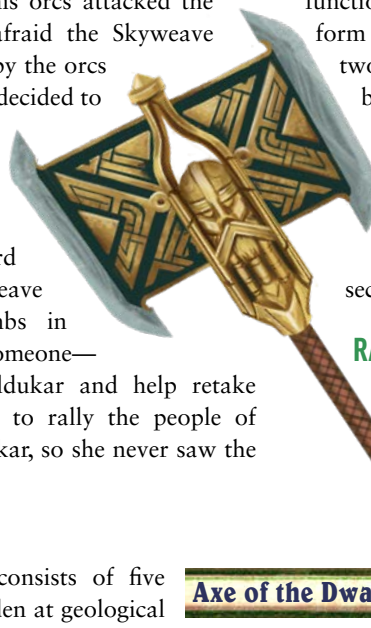
THE AXE OF THE DWARVEN LORDS

Description This war axe has been embossed with images of ancient victories. Its haft is shot through with veins of silver.

Last Seen The *Axe of the Dwarven Lords* was taken by followers of Ordrik Tahlrik when he overthrew Highhelm in 4382 AR. It’s believed they hid it in the caverns under Droskar’s Crag.

Interested Parties King Borogrim the Hale and other would-be rulers wish to recover this ancient axe that symbolizes their commitment to dwarven values and ingenuity. Droskari worshippers believe the axe is antithetical to their teachings and want it to stay hidden away.

The *Axe of the Dwarven Lords* was the first great creation commanded by King Taargick after the completion of the Quest for Sky. Its combination of



Axe of the Dwarven Lords



skymetals found on the surface and iron mined from below were meant to symbolize how the old ways could still be honored as innovation lead dwarves to greatness. It's also one of the few remaining artifacts made with ore mined deep in the earth and thus one of the few direct relics of dwarves' ancestral homeland.

Kings and lords passed the axe down, ruler to ruler, for millennia until it was lost during the Five Kings War. The timing of this loss was auspicious given the concurrent fracturing of the dwarven people. It has only reappeared a few times since. The superstitious see this as confirmation that the unity that helped King Taargick finish the Quest for Sky has been broken, and dwarven culture will not move forward unless it can be regained.

Many missions to find the *Axe of the Dwarven Lords* have failed, but King Borogrim is confident it will be recovered during his reign. As a symbol of his convictions, he has commissioned the Shieldsworn to forge a shield made from an alloy of adamantine and orichalcum. He plans to find the axe before the shield is complete and debut the two as a matched set that represents the successes of the past and the potential of the future.

Shrine of the Weary Traveler

SHRINE OF THE WEARY TRAVELER

Description This ancient Rivethun shrine was founded and maintained during the Quest for Sky. It contains records of the practices once used to petition the itinerant spirits for help and guidance.

Last Seen The *Shrine of the Weary Traveler* is somewhere in the tunnels below Urgir, likely north of the city, but its exact location has been forgotten.

Interested Parties Rivethun members in Highhelm are looking to reconnect with ancient spirits by recovering practices and accords once connected to their worship. Parties who wish to secretly breach Urgir believe the spirit can show them the path to do so safely.

The *Shrine of the Weary Traveler* once offered blessings to those hoping to find a place to rest—after a literal or metaphorical period of travel.

These itinerant spirits were often called upon during the Quest for Sky, as it was the largest journey the dwarven people ever made.

Unfortunately, with the loss of the shrine, the Rivethun no longer know how to call these spirits, and their wisdom has been lost. Skeptics joke that the spirits' advice may have been *too* good, helping everyone who called upon them to move beyond their needs, rendering them useless. But every person goes on a journey of some sort during their lifetime. Some Rivethun petitioners are those who have traveled so far that they've forgotten why they originally set out. Others are adventurers who know what they wish to find, but not where it is.

The Rivethun remember these itinerant spirits, though they have not respond to any petitions for millennia. It's only within the last few years that spirit callers have received some indication the spirits still exist, though they have yet to receive an understandable or useful answer from them. Sadly, the itinerant spirits are unable to help anyone find the lost shrine, but once the shrine has been recovered, any Rivethun spirit caller should be able to commune with the itinerant spirits and help guide those who come to them seeking counsel.



Shrine of the Weary Traveler

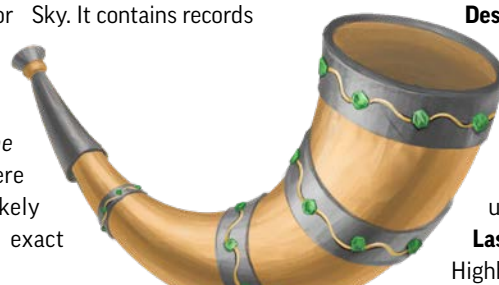
The Sundered Warhorn of Gardadth

THE SUNDERED WARHORN OF GARDADTH

Description The emerald-studded Warhorn of Gardadth was crafted of brass and decorated with nickel filigree. Its call could travel up to 10 miles when correctly aimed to reverberate through the tunnels under Highhelm.

Last Seen Baron-mayor Gadrick of Highhelm took his horn when he rode to declare war against the kingdom of Taggoret. The horn was destroyed in the battle; while half of it was later recovered and returned to Highhelm, the other half has not been found.

Interested Parties Dagobert Gernettick, advisor to King Borogrim the Hale, supports dwarven expansion; he wants to see the horn repaired and used once more to lead the armies of Highhelm into battle. Maiulf Fairgold, who is largely seen as the spokesman for a future dedicated to peace and reconciliation, would mount the two pieces of



Warhorn of Gardadth

the horn in the council hall to remind his colleagues of the folly of war.

King Torheim Gardrick, baron-mayor of Highhelm and founder of the kingdom of Gardadth, received a fine battle horn on the day he was crowned. The horn was a masterpiece, and its bright tone became known throughout Highhelm as a sign of impending victory.

The consequential day of its destruction marked the first battle in which King Torheim did not come out the clear victor. When King Torheim blew the horn to call for an attack against the kingdom of Taggoret, which was ruled by his brother, dwarf clashed against dwarf in a messy stalemate, and King Torheim was forced to retreat. During the battle that created an irreparable gulf between family members, the horn was sundered in two. The war that was launched between the Five Kingdoms that day weakened each to the point where they were eventually overrun by orcs.

Some believe the Warhorn of Gardadth was imbued with magic that helped King Torheim overcome his enemies, and when it broke, so did his might. Others believe it was a gift that foretold his downfall by giving him a false sense of sovereignty and encouraging him to overcome his brothers, rather than work with them.

The Great King's Crown

THE GREAT KING'S CROWN

Description This coronation crown was forged of the purest silver, detailed with gold filigree, and adorned with diamonds and rubies. A golden cap atop each of twelve points of the crown represents the twelve promises King Dhrotam made to her people at her coronation.

Last Seen The *Great King's Crown* was last used to crown King Garbold when he ascended to the throne in Highhelm in 4277 AR. It was brought forth from the vaults on special holidays but vanished before his death.

Interested Parties King Borogrim the Hale wishes to recover the crown for the coronation of his successor. Droskari clergy would like to use the crown to claim King Borogrim's rule illegitimate. Tyslandria of Kyonin believes it was forged from dawnsilver (a regional name for mithral), gifted from elves who remained on Golarion during their exodus to buy an alliance. She hopes to use this former alliance when requesting aid to fight against Treerazer.



The Great King's Crown

This gorgeous crown was crafted for King Dhrotam after she fled Koldukar and named Highhelm the new center of dwarven government. It represented a new era for the dwarves, intended to symbolize unity, cooperation, and duty. The name of the master jeweler who forged the crown has been lost to history.

Some speculate that it wasn't made by a dwarf at all but was a gift from an angel, though this is seen as heretical by most dwarves. One legend suggests Torag himself brought the crown to Highhelm, blessing it and the dwarven people.

The crown is undoubtedly magical, though tales of its power vary widely. Some believe it guides a king with the wisdom of their ancestors.

Others think it allows their sovereign to see into the soul of a dwarf and the blemishes left from their mistakes in life. Whatever the true nature of the crown, the royal line has kept its secret. That doesn't stop tipsy dwarves in taverns from speculating whether the royal line needs the magical crown for the dwarven people to prosper or if this is simply a bad omen.

It has since been used at the coronation of every king to rule Highhelm. Every king, that is, but the most recent: the *Great King's Crown* was taken from Highhelm during the reign of the Droskari priest Ordrik Tahlrik. King Borogrim the Hale was crowned with a beautiful circlet upon retaking the city, but his coronation was a break in tradition because of it.

Many fear the *Great King's Crown* was either destroyed by the Droskari for being ostentatious and wasteful or reforged into a lesser ornament. A recent skirmish with remaining Droskari worshippers near Highhelm recovered five diamonds of a similar size and cut to those on the *Great King's Crown*. However, this would only be a small fraction of the gems set in the original crown, so their source is unclear. The find did suggest that the crown, or what's left of it, may be in the possession of the remaining Droskari faithful who linger near Highhelm and occasionally attack travelers after they've left the protection of the city.

The crown's significance is both in its traditional use during Highhelm's coronations and the masterful skill demonstrated in which it was crafted. No jeweler since has managed to braid metal with equal precision; it is thus irreplaceable. It is also a symbol of Highhelm's ability to endure despite the rise and fall of kingdoms. If it has been destroyed, what does that mean for the future of this Sky Citadel?

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Campaign Relics

During Sky King's Tomb, the PCs recover and potentially bond with up to six relics (*Gamemastery Guide* 94–105). Four of these appear in “Mantle of Gold,” each linked to Taargick, dwarven culture, or both. Two additional relics appear in the following adventure, “Cult of the Cave Worm,” both associated with the Avernol Worm, Zogototaru.

Relic Limit: Each PC should receive a relic, but shouldn't bond with more than one. If you wish, you can allow a PC to bond with a different relic partway through the campaign, ending their bond with the previous relic.

Advancing Relics: Once a PC bonds with a relic, the relic gains one of the minor gifts of the player's choice from the list provided. During the “Cult of the Cave Worm” adventure, a PC's relic can gain a second minor gift from that list. During the “Heavy is the Crown” adventure, a PC's relic can gain a major gift from that list. These gifts should manifest after the PC performs a deed that fulfills the relic's Advancing the Bond entry or otherwise embodies the relic's story and goals. The relic gains its new ability the next time the PCs rest—an excellent opportunity for the bearer to receive a dream, vision, or other acknowledgement from the relic to convey approval.

New Aspects: Several relics use new aspects that appear in *Pathfinder Treasure Vault* and *Lost Omens Highhelm*. If you do not have those books, you can either find these aspects and gifts for free at paizo.com/prd, or you can replace them with other options from the *Gamemastery Guide*.

ADAMANTINE ECHO

When Taargick and Zogototaru clashed millennia ago, the crimson worm landed a bite so powerful that it sheared off a piece of the high king's adamantine armor. The jagged piece snagged in the worm's gullet, becoming trapped there as the wound healed.

When Zogototaru swallowed the deep gnome Jirelga ages later, she escaped digestion only by tearing this fragment loose and using it to cut her way out of the stomach, tumbling from the wound to freedom. Even now, this relic seems powered as much by the tenacity of heroes who can overcome certain death just as Jirelga did as it is by Taargick's legacy.

Special: As an armor rune, the *Adamantine Echo* is useful to any PC, but it's less intuitive to upgrade. Consider allowing the PCs to apply higher-level potency runes to the armor, spend a minor gift, or expend resources while Crafting the relic to upgrade it into a *resilient rune* at higher levels.

ADAMANTINE ECHO

RUNE 5

UNIQUE ABJURATION EARTH INVESTED MAGICAL RELIC

Aspects earth, luck^{TV}

Usage incorporated into armor; Bulk L

Made from glossy, nearly black adamantine, this large fragment of a plate armor vambrace provides little protection on its own. However, when incorporated into an intact suit of armor, it functions as a +1 *armor potency* rune.

Forming the Bond The PCs complete the *rite of repatriation* (page 67).

Advancing the Bond Survive (or even triumph against) seemingly impossible odds.

Minor Gifts beginner's luck^{TV}, ease burden, shattered earth

Major Gifts raise ramparts, steal luck^{TV}

SKYSUNDER

With him from childhood until his final years, Taargick's clan dagger traveled with the legendary high king throughout the Quest for Sky. Like most clan daggers, it was less a weapon than a symbol. Some legends claim Taargick drew it in triumph upon reaching the surface, and the blade traced a wound across the sky that bled lightning! More likely, his salute to Torag coincided with dwarves' first glimpse of mundane lightning. Even so, the clan dagger earned the name *Skysunder*, for in Taargick's hands, dwarvenkind strove ever upward. The blade still flashes with dormant magic, though

MANTLE
OF
GOLD

Campaign
Background

Chapter 1:
Highhelm
Heroes

Chapter 2:
Path of the
Dagger

Chapter 3:
A Relic
Reunited

Lost
Dwarven
Treasures

Adventure
Toolbox



whether that's captured lightning or Torag's blessing is anyone's guess.

SKYSUNDER

ITEM 4

UNIQUE ELECTRICITY EVOCATION MAGICAL RELIC

Aspects air, celestial

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

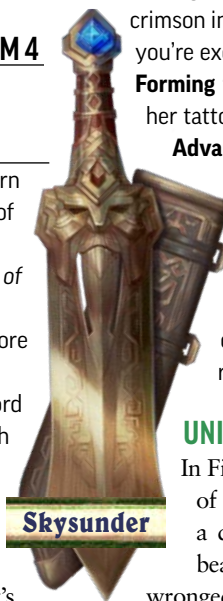
This +1 *striking clan dagger* bears the face of a stern dwarven god, his beard and features forming part of the blade.

Forming the Bond The PCs complete the *rite of repatriation* (page 67).

Advancing the Bond Protect, recover, and restore dwarven culture and people.

Minor Gifts deadly spark, divine retribution, word of faith; divine retribution Strikes made with *Skysunder* gain the deadly d4 trait.

Major Gifts holy light, propelling winds

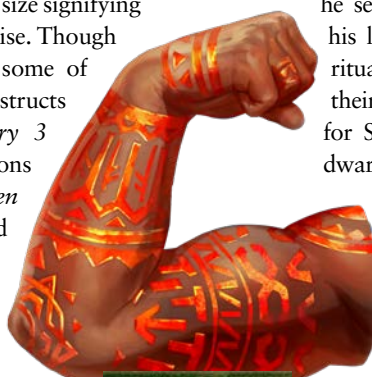


Skysunder

SPARKWARDEN

For Clan Molgrade, a tattoo isn't just body art; it's an advertisement, with the pattern and size signifying the person's specializations and expertise. Though less common and less well known, some of these tattoos are autonomous constructs known as tattoo guardians (*Bestiary* 3 262), often passed down the generations to favorite apprentices. *Sparkwarden* was such an animate tattoo, named for protectively shielding its wearer while they worked the hottest forges. As a relic, it no longer functions as a tattoo guardian.

Tuom Molgrade's smithing master bequeathed *Sparkwarden* to her years ago. Believing she could augment the construct with her experimental shadow-forging techniques, Tuom infused the tattoo with enchantments and material from the Shadow Plane. *Sparkwarden* fought off the enchantments as if they were an infection, leaving the construct offended yet able to tap into umbral powers if needed. The tattoo has only rudimentary intelligence, communicating by changing its temperature to warn of danger or approve of its bearer's crafting exploits.



Sparkwarden

SPARKWARDEN

ITEM 5

UNIQUE CONJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL RELIC SHADOW TATTOO

Aspects forge^{LOH}, shadow

Usage tattoo

The geometric designs of this *warding tattoo*^{SoM} extend the length of your arm, resembling an armored sleeve. The crimson ink sometimes glows softly like warm coals when you're excited or building something new.

Forming the Bond Defeat Tuom Molgrade and befriend her tattoo guardian with Clan Molgrade's blessing.

Advancing the Bond Create extraordinary objects that earn renown. Protect innocents and your companions despite great personal risk.

Minor Gifts create spark^{LOH}, obscure, shadow smith

Major Gifts dancing shadow, elements of creation^{LOH}; dancing shadow Strikes use the relic's spell attack modifier.

UNITER OF CLANS

In Five Kings culture, a well-kept beard is a matter of pride. As part of acknowledging wrongdoing, a dwarf might braid a token into part of their beard or hair, sever that braid, and gift it to the wronged party or place it in a significant spot. When he set out into the Darklands at the end of his life, High King Taargick performed this ritual at the site where dwarves had crushed their xulgath foes, recognizing that the Quest for Sky inflicted untold misery on his non-dwarven neighbors. The *Uniter of Clans* is a metal clasp woven into one's hair, beard, or necklace, commemorating Taargick's charisma and patience in guiding countless clans to the surface. As a discarded token of shame, it also carries the high king's regrets and his hopes that he might one day heal the wounds inflicted by the dwarven people.



Uniter of Clans

UNITER OF CLANS

ITEM 5

UNIQUE ENCHANTMENT INVESTED MAGICAL RELIC

Aspects mind

Usage worn; Bulk –

Resembling two hands clasped in friendship, this *diplomat's badge* is designed to be woven into the wearer's braided beard. When the wearer befriends others, one of the hands briefly transforms to resemble the befriended creature's own.

Forming the Bond The PCs complete the *rite of repatriation* (page 67).

Advancing the Bond Solve problems nonviolently. End ancient grudges and heal old wounds, especially those caused by dwarves.

Minor Gifts ancestors' call (see below), linguistic nexus, repository of knowledge (Dwarf Lore, Genealogy Lore, Warfare Lore)

Major Gifts perception filter, or increase the *diplomat's badge's* item bonus to Diplomacy to +2.

NEW GIFT


ANCESTORS' CALL

MINOR GIFT

DIVINATION **DWARF** **MENTAL**

Aspect mind

Dwarven spirits gravitate toward this relic, and you can call upon them to inhabit you and your allies to impart ancestral secrets. When you gain this gift, choose three common 1st-level dwarf ancestry feats.

Activate  **envision**; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** Select one of the three ancestry feats. You and each ally in a 10-foot-radius burst centered on you gain that feat and the dwarf trait for 1 minute.

New Items

MYCOWEAVE SHIELD


ITEM 2+

UNCOMMON **FUNGUS** **POISON**

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This shield is grown entirely of specially treated fungi, giving it the appearance of a frilly disc.

When left atop at least 1 bulk of organic matter, it gains fast healing 1; after 10 minutes 1 Bulk of the organic matter has been consumed by the shield. This shield doubles its hardness against bludgeoning, electricity, and sonic damage.

Activate  **manipulate**; **Trigger** The shield is broken; **Effect** The shield spews spores into one adjacent square, dealing persistent poison damage to all creatures in within it; a successful Fortitude save negates the damage.

Type lesser; **Level** 2; **Price** 40 gp

The shield has Hardness 2, HP 12, and BT 6. When the shield breaks, the reaction deals 1d6 persistent poison damage with a DC 16 Fortitude saving throw.

Type greater; **Level** 8; **Price** 40 gp

The shield has Hardness 4, HP 64, and BT 32. When the shield breaks, the reaction deals 2d6 persistent poison damage with a DC 24 Fortitude saving throw.

Type major; **Level** 16; **Price** 40 gp

The shield has Hardness 6, HP 110, and BT 55. When the shield breaks, the reaction deals 3d6 persistent poison damage with a DC 35 Fortitude saving throw.

Craft Requirements You are trained in Nature, and can cast a fungus spell or are fungus.

SETUP SNARE

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON **CONSUMABLE** **KOBOLD** **MECHANICAL** **SNARE** **TRAP**

Price 8 gp

This snare is designed to divert a target's movement towards another snare or hazard. You may choose to have the target attempt a Will saving throw instead of a Reflex saving throw; if you do, add the fear and mental traits plus add either the visual or auditory trait.

When a Small or larger creature enters the square, the snare Pushes the creature 5 feet and the target becomes clumsy 1 until the end of their next turn. On a critical failure the snare Pushes the target 10 feet and the target becomes clumsy 2 until the end of their next turn.

SPORE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

ITEM 4+

UNCOMMON **CONJURATION** **MAGICAL** **STAFF**

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This staff is constructed from a magically grown amanita mushroom, with a shaft that spreads into a bright red cap speckled in white. While wielding the staff you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Nature checks to identify fungus.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Effect** You expend a number of charges from the staff to cast a spell from its list.

Type *spore shepherd's staff*; **Level** 4; **Price** 100 gp

Cantrip *puff of poison*^{SOM}

1st *protector tree*^{SOM} (resembles giant mushroom, not a tree), *summon plant or fungus* (fungus only)

Type *greater spore shepherd's staff*; **Level** 8; **Price** 475 gp

2nd *protector tree*^{SOM} (resembles giant mushroom, not a tree), *summon plant or fungus* (fungus only), *tree shape* (giant mushroom only)

3rd *protector tree*^{SOM} (resembles giant mushroom, not a tree), *stinking cloud*, *summon plant or fungus* (fungus only), *wall of thorns* (resembles wall of fungus; deals poison damage)

Type *major spore shepherd's staff*; **Level** 4; **Price** 100 gp

4th *protector tree*^{SOM} (resembles giant mushroom, not a tree), *speak with plants* (fungus only), *summon plant or fungus* (fungus only)

5th *cloudkill*, *plant form* (resemble giant fungus instead of plant, gain fungus trait instead of plant trait; arboreal type only), *protector tree*^{SOM} (resembles giant mushroom, not a tree), *summon plant or fungus* (fungus only)

Craft Requirements Supply one casting of all listed levels of all listed spells.

STEADYFOOT TASSEL

ITEM 2

UNCOMMON **COMPANION** **INVESTED** **PRIMAL** **TRANSMUTATION**

Price 30 gp

Usage tied to collar or bridle; **Bulk** –

This handsome tassel comes in a variety of colors to match your companion's collar or bridle. While attached, the tassel gives the companion a +1 item bonus to Acrobatics checks to Balance, and to their Reflex DC against Trip attacks.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





TROUBLED REINCARNATION

Typically, a leshy's spirit wanders the natural world after death, eventually inhabiting a new leshy body. It's unclear whether a hyphae tyrant's spirit can ever become a new leshy. It's speculated that they eventually become natural haunts, transform into oni, or even fade forever unless found and redeemed.

Hyphae Tyrant

Leshy creations sometimes fall prey to herbivores and foragers. Whereas most take the loss in stride, fungus leshies sometimes grow bitter and explore the grimmer elements of fungi: decomposition and possession. Combining unethical experiments, mind-altering cordyceps spores, and occult magic fueled by their own victim narrative, a fungus leshy can transform into a hyphae tyrant, who in turn transforms corpses into sporeborn puppets to torment local fauna. These leshies' greatest tragedy is perhaps their own impermanence. As their agendas increasingly celebrate decay, a hyphae tyrant's spite and occult narrative slowly drain their life force, ultimately ending in a final burst of destructive energy.

HYPHAE TYRANT

CREATURE 4

RARE NE SMALL FUNGUS LESHY

Perception +11; darkvision, sporesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan, Undercommon; *speaks with plants* (fungi only)

Skills Athletics +8, Nature +10, Occultism +10, Stealth +11

Str +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Sporesense (divination, primal) A hyphae tyrant intuitively senses and tracks all nearby fungi. The sense can distinguish between fungus creatures, features made of fungus, and creatures covered in spores.

AC 20; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

HP 60; **Resistances** negative 5

Spore Burst (healing, negative) When a hyphae tyrant dies, a burst of primal energy explodes from its body in a 30-foot emanation, restoring 3d8 to each fungus creature and dealing 3d8 negative damage (DC 20 basic Fortitude save) to each non-fungus creature in the area. This area is filled with fungus, becoming difficult terrain.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ fist +10 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Ranged ✦ spore pod +12 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 2d6+3 bludgeoning plus spores

Occult Prepared Spells DC 21, attack +13; **2nd** *grim tendrils*; **1st** *lose the path*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips** (2nd) *dancing lights*, *detect magic*

Primal Innate Spells DC 20; **4th** *speaks with plants*; **2nd** *protector tree* (creates fungus)

Primal Rituals DC 20; *create mycoguardian* (see sidebar on page 89)

Change Shape ✦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) The hyphae tyrant transforms into a Small fungus. This ability otherwise uses the effects of *tree shape*.

Spore Cloud ✦ (poison) A hyphae tyrant unleashes a cloud of spores in a 20-foot emanation. Each non-fungi creature in this area must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 2 persistent poison damage. A creature has its vision reduced as long as the persistent damage continues and can see only within 20 feet (or 10 feet on a critical failure).

Spores A creature that takes damage from a hyphae tyrant's spore pod Strike must attempt a saving throw with the same DC and effect as its Spore Cloud ability.



Soulbound Mauler

If a soulbound doll isn't large and strong enough for one's needs, there's the oversized soulbound mauler. An upgrade to the soulbound doll, this mannequin is powered by the entire soul of a sapient creature. Many a necromancer has attempted to use these constructs as a method to live forever, likely as a shortcut around the complicated and ultimately morbid path to lichdom. However, the soul within the mannequin has problems properly expressing itself and displays rudimentary control over the host, often resulting in childlike behavior anywhere from curious to sadistic.

Rather than embedding the soul focus gem in the construct's neck or chest, it's tethered by bands of ectoplasm within an exposed chamber on the mannequin's chest. Until the soulbound mauler is destroyed, the focus gem cannot be removed from the empty cavity in its chest. However, the gem can be displaced which causes the soulbound mauler significant anguish, not only damaging the connection between the gem and artificial body, but also impairing the construct's ability to function.

SOULBOUND MAULER

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON ANY MEDIUM CONSTRUCT SOULBOUND

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages one spoken by its creator (typically Common)

Skills Athletics +11, Occultism +6, Stealth +9

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Personality **Case** A soulbound mauler encapsulates an entire soul within its soul focus gem, with that soul's personality and past shining through along with a confusing mix of fragmented memories and instincts. This causes a soulbound mauler to match the donor soul's alignment and gain the corresponding alignment traits. When the mauler doesn't have a soul bound, it's inanimate.

AC 19; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

HP 72; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +13 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning plus Grab

Occult Innate Spells DC 18, attack +10; **3rd** *grim tendrils*, one additional spell depending on the donor soul's alignment (see sidebar); **1st** *ray of enfeeblement* (at will)

Grab ♦

Eager Rend ♦♦ **Requirements** The soulbound mauler has a living creature grabbed. **Effect** The soulbound mauler holds the creature it has grabbed and attempts to tear it in two. That creature takes 5d6 bludgeoning damage (basic DC 18 Fortitude). On a critical failure, the target also becomes enfeebled 1.

Tethered Soul The soul focus gem that powers a soulbound mauler is tethered with eight ectoplasmic leashes inside an open cavity in the creature's chest. It can be targeted directly with a Disarm, Grapple, or Steal action. Rather than the normal result of these actions, the soulbound mauler takes 4d6 mental damage and is stunned 1 on a success; on a critical success, it takes 8d6 damage and is stunned 2.



INNATE SPELLS

Like a soulbound doll, a soulbound mauler gains an additional 3rd-level innate spell depending on its alignment, as listed below.

Lawful Good: *heal*

Neutral Good: *jump*

Chaotic Good: *haste*

Lawful Neutral: *blindness*

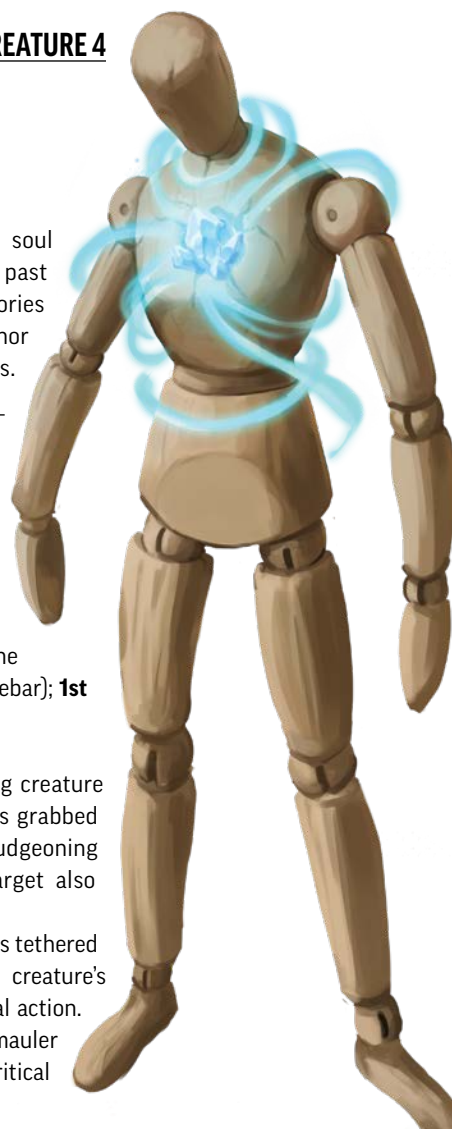
Neutral: *invisibility sphere*

Chaotic Neutral: *shatter*

Lawful Evil: *slow*

Neutral Evil: *stinking cloud*

Chaotic Evil: *harm*



MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





DIFFERENT MYCOGUARDIANS

In addition to the sporeborn presented here, there are many versions of the *create mycoguardian* ritual for making mycoguardians other than sporeborn, such as for aquatic chytridions and so on. Some forms of mycoguardians, such as mycelial mindbores, come to be using their own unique methods and can't be created with a version of *create mycoguardian*.

Sporeborn

When a mindless guardian is needed, but the ethical bounds of creating undead are too uncouth, ritual casters may turn to a more fungal solution by creating a mycoguardian. Using valuable parasitic fungal spores, a ritualist may seed the corpse of a creature and encourage them to grow, sending mycelium tendrils throughout the body. The tendrils bond to mobile tissue such as bones, while replacing tendons with reinforced mycelium. This ritual magically replicates the yellow musk creepers' ability to spread throughout a dead organism then mobilize its body. But rather than a completely mindless fungal carrier, the ritualist has some control over the infested creature's behavior.

The magic of the ritual includes basic instructions and rules that guide the new fungal mycoguardian (in this case, a sporeborn). Simple instructions like "guard this room" or "slay all of the tiny creatures in this basement" should work well enough, but complex commands such as "deliver this letter to the Harbormaster of Caliphas" are doomed to failure.

SPOREBORN ABILITIES

You can modify sporeborn with the following sporeborn abilities. Most sporeborn have one of these abilities, gaining more at higher levels.

Consume Biomatter (manipulate) If the sporeborn is adjacent to a helpless or unconscious creature, or a deceased creature who died in the past hour, the sporeborn can consume its flesh with mycelium tendrils to heal itself. This restores an amount of Hit Points equal to the sporeborn's level. If the creature is alive, the sporeborn deals damage equal to one of its unarmed attacks.

Contagious Spores (disease, fungus) The sporeborn continues to infect creatures with sporeborn infestation, creating more of its own kind.

Sporeborn Infestation (disease, fungus); An infected creature can't heal damage it takes from sporeborn infestation until it has been cured of the disease.

Saving Throw Use a Fortitude save for the creature's level using the DCs by Level table on page 503 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage (1 day); **Stage 3** 2d6 poison damage (1 day); **Stage 4** 3d6 poison damage (1 day); **Stage 5** dead, rising as an uncontrolled sporeborn immediately

Fungal Armor (fungus) The sporeborn grows broad patches of dense fungus on the outside of the corpse. It gains resistance to bludgeoning damage equal to its level.

Potent Poison (fungus, poison) The sporeborn fungus enhances the dead creature's natural toxins rather than diminishing them. Increase the DC of poison and spore abilities of the base creature by 2 rather than

decreasing them.

Rancid Spore Pods (disease, fungus) The sporeborn is covered in spore pods that rupture when it takes any piercing damage or a critical hit. In either case, adjacent creatures are hit with spores, causing them to become sickened 1 unless they succeed at a Fortitude save.

Spore Explosion (fungus, inhaled) When the sporeborn is destroyed, its body explodes, releasing toxic fumes and spores. Adjacent creatures take 1d6 poison damage per 2 levels (minimum 1d6) with a basic Fortitude save.

CREATING SPOREBORN

A sporeborn gains the fungus, mindless, rare, and sporeborn traits, and its alignment is usually adjusted to true neutral.



The DC of any creature abilities it had in life are reduced by 2. Remove any traits that represent its life, such as animal or humanoid, as well as all languages, including telepathy. The sporeborn has an Intelligence and Charisma modifier of -5.

All Creatures: The sporeborn gains darkvision and scent as an imprecise sense up to 30 feet.

1st Level or Higher: The sporeborn gains one sporeborn ability.

4th Level or Higher: The sporeborn gains two sporeborn abilities.

7th Level or Higher: The sporeborn gains three sporeborn abilities.

12th Level or Higher: The sporeborn gains four sporeborn abilities.

17th Level or Higher: The sporeborn gains five sporeborn abilities.

SPOREBORN MYCELOID

While most sporeborn are created from the flesh of vertebrates or creatures with exoskeletons, fungal and plant creatures serve as a fine host for a sporeborn's parasitic spores. In these cases, the sporeborn mycelial network burrows through the corpse, replacing the original hyphae in fungal creatures and the xylem and pith in plants. This allows the sporeborn to puppet the creature, much as it does in mammals by replacing the tendons with its own rugged mycelium. Fungus and plant hosts are more likely to develop the potent poison sporeborn ability to enhance the hosts' natural abilities.

SPOREBORN MYCELOID

CREATURE 4

RARE N MEDIUM FUNGUS MINDLESS SPOREBORN

Perception +10; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Stealth +11, Survival +10

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -5

AC 20; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

HP 70; **Weaknesses** slashing 5

Rancid Spore Pods DC 18 Fortitude save.

Spore Pop If a sporeborn myceloid is reduced to 0 HP by a critical hit, it pops, forcing it to immediately Emit Spores, even if it has already used the ability that day.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ fist +11 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+4 bludgeoning plus purple pox

Emit Spores ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The sporeborn myceloid expels spores in a 10-foot burst centered on a corner of its own space. This cloud lasts until the start of the sporeborn myceloid's next turn. Each creature that is in the cloud or enters it is exposed to purple pox.

Purple Pox (disease) Myceloids are immune; **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 minute; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** 6d6 poison damage, stupefied 3, and the creature is compelled to seek out the nearest myceloid colony—this compulsion is a mental and emotion effect (1 day); **Stage 3** The creature dies. Over 24 hours, its corpse becomes bloated and bursts, releasing a new, fully grown myceloid.

Spore Domination ♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, primal) The sporeborn myceloid targets one creature affected by purple pox within 60 feet. That creature must attempt a DC 24 Will save. It is then temporarily immune to spore domination for 10 minutes.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success Until the end of its next turn, the target is helpful to sporeborn myceloids and can't take hostile actions against them.

Failure As success, but for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As success, but until the purple pox is cured.



FUNGAL RITUALISTS

While mycoguardians are rare, several different types of primal spellcasters might create a mycoguardian. Druids might turn the bodies of a poacher's victim against the poacher, seeking to avenge the wrongful death and rebalance the scales of life. Leshy spellcasters create mycoguardians to protect their hidden communities and sacred groves.

The fey of Northern Fangwood transform fallen or rotted trees into crustoreal mycoguardians, massive arboreal-looking creatures covered in parasitic lichen. These lumbering sentinels patrol their borders, crushing all non-fey who dare approach. There are rumors of crustoreals being imbued with negative energy from the Gravelands and going berserk.

CREATING MYCOGUARDIANS

To create a mycoguardian, such as a sporeborn, a ritualist can perform a ritual similar to *create undead* (Pathfinder Core Rulebook 411) called *create mycoguardian*, but providing valuable parasitic fungal spores instead of black onyx. This ritual uses Fungus Lore (trained) or Nature (expert) for both the Primary Check and Secondary Checks, and lacks the Evil trait.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox





MISERY LOVES COMPANY

Unfeeling empathys appreciate any companions who can endure their outbursts. Lost souls and beings who prey on emotions sometimes adopt an unfeeling empath out of solidarity or because the undead gnomes are easy to torment. Thus, where these creatures appear, a sakhil, will-o'-wisp, or ghost is often nearby.

Unfeeling Empath

The soul of a gnome killed by tragedy sometimes becomes so entangled in conflicting emotions that it becomes trapped and reanimates its own corpse. Known as unfeeling empathys, these undead wander in search of others' emotions. When they find thinking prey, they relentlessly goad that creature to elicit and consume their feelings. Though initially harmless, feeding drives an unfeeling empath into an expressive frenzy as they overload the victim's mind, resuming their senses only after their prey is dead.

UNFEELING EMPATH

CREATURE 2

UNCOMMON NE SMALL UNDEAD

Perception +9; darkvision, empathic sense (precise) 60 feet

Languages Gnomish, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +8, Performance +8, Stealth +5

Str +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +4

Empathic Sense (divination, occult) The unfeeling empath perceives all creatures affected by an emotion effect at the listed range.

AC 18; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

HP 36 (negative healing); **Resistances** negative 5; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep; **Weaknesses** mental 5

Emotional Extremes If a creature rolls a success at a check to affect an unfeeling empath with an emotion effect, the creature gets a critical success instead. If a creature rolls a failure to affect an unfeeling empath with an emotion effect, the creature gets a critical failure instead. Likewise, when an unfeeling empath rolls a success at a Will save against an emotion effect, it gets a critical success instead. When a unfeeling empath rolls a failure at a Will save against an emotion effect, it gets a critical failure instead.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ fist +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+3 bludgeoning

Cathartic Howl ♦♦ (auditory, emotion, mental, sonic) **Requirement** The unfeeling empath is under an emotion effect; **Effect** The unfeeling empath attempts to counteract the emotion effect, with a counteract modifier of +11. It then howls, projecting those emotions in a 15-foot cone (or a 30-foot cone if the unfeeling empath successfully counteracted the emotion effect). Creatures in the area take 2d8 mental damage (DC 18 basic Will save). A creature that critically fails this saving throw also takes 1d4 persistent mental damage.

Drink Emotions ♦ (emotion, healing, mental) **Requirement** An enemy is under an emotion effect within 20 feet of the unfeeling empath; **Effect** The unfeeling empath regains 1d4 Hit Points and becomes emotionally excited for 3 rounds. While excited, the unfeeling empath takes a -1 penalty to AC, gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, and deals an additional 1d4 mental damage with its melee Strikes.

Goad ♦ (emotion, enchantment, mental, occult) The unfeeling empath floods a creature within 30 feet with countless memories and sensations. The target must attempt a DC 18 Will save.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is stupefied 1 until the end of the unfeeling empath's next turn.

Critical Failure The target is stupefied 2 for 1d4 rounds.



Xulgath Ravening

Strength and hunger drive most xulgath societies, reinforced by the tenets of their abyssal patron Zevgavizeb. A powerful leader can seize control of a xulgath community and direct their followers to fight as a unit, but formation fighting isn't something most xulgaths practice. This mob mentality often results in overzealous warriors tripping over or even biting each other. Suitably, these mobs have earned the name "ravenings," a term also used when describing Zevgavizeb's carnivorous rampages and referring to the millennia of xulgath infighting and social decline.

XULGATH RAVENING

CREATURE 4

RARE CE GARGANTUAN HUMANOID TROOP XULGATH

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +11, Intimidation +10, Stealth +7

Str +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

AC 20; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

HP 72; **Thresholds** 48 (12 squares), 24 (8 squares); **Weaknesses** area damage 5, splash damage 2

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 21 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 1, and on a critical failure, the creature also takes a -5 status penalty to its Speeds for 1 round. While within the aura, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgaths stench for 1 minute.

Troop Defenses

Speed 25 feet; troop movement

Form Up ♦♦ (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 304)

Fang and Claw ♦♦ to ♦♦♦♦ **Frequency**

once per round; **Effect** The xulgath ravening lashes out at enemies within 5 feet (DC 21 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦♦ 1d6 slashing damage

♦♦♦ 1d6+5 slashing damage

♦♦♦♦ 2d6+5 slashing damage

Infected Wounds (poison) The xulgaths' Fang and Claw deals an additional 1d6 poison damage to any creature sickened by a xulgath's stench.

Sharpened Advance ♦♦♦ The troop fires a ranged attack in the form of a 5-foot burst within 50 feet that deals 3d6 piercing damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save), then the troop either Steps or Strides up to 15 feet toward the area they attacked.

Troop Movement Whenever a troop Strides, it first Forms Up as a free action to condense into a 20-foot-by-20-foot area (minus any missing squares), then moves up to its Speed. This works just like a Gargantuan creature moving; for instance, if any square of the troop enters difficult terrain, the extra movement cost applies to the whole troop.



THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

Xulgath ravening are most common in clutches controlled by spiritual leaders using some combination of cult behavior, group ritual, and even a little enchantment magic. By convincing participants that they're possessed by Zevgavizeb or a similar force, the leader then identifies a target and hopes for the best. Instilling secular doubt or incapacitating the leader can shatter a ravening's focus, causing its members to scatter or even turn on their leader.

MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure



KROHAN VELDOLLO

Nascent Spiritualist Seeking Redemption

Born into one of Clan Tolorr's more influential families, Krohan enjoyed a safe and prosperous childhood spent learning the fundamentals of dwarven culture: athleticism, crafting, faith, and (most of all) history. He excelled in his studies; everyone expected the young dwarf to become the scion of the Veldollow family, as well as an outstanding contributor to Tolorr projects. These expectations weren't lost on him, as Krohan had been inundated since youth with 10,000 years of ancestral legend featuring bold heroes, daring action, and victory against impossible odds. Didn't Clan Tolorr espouse the importance of living history? If Krohan was to live up to the expectations the clan placed on his future, he needed to be out there making a name for himself, not sequestered in Highhelm revering the past.

He knew he would need a weapon. All heroes carry legendary weapons, after all. Believing he could honor the legendary High King Taargick's legacy by using one of Taargick's relics to perform modern-day heroism, Krohan snuck into the longhall where Taargick's stone statue still wore the high king's actual clan dagger and took it. He believed only this important relic could truly serve his purpose. Once safely sheathed, Krohan gathered his pack and set off for the Darklands to seek an adventure that would earn him a place in history.

Although competent, Krohan wasn't exceptional—particularly as an adventurer. While navigating a steep crevasse, the clan dagger slipped from his grasp, clattering down a fissure and falling untold depths he couldn't follow. After making several attempts to recover the relic, he trudged back to Highhelm to admit his theft. Clan Tolorr kept the dagger's disappearance quiet to avoid scandal, yet behind closed doors, its leaders were furious. Bulgra Veldollow, the family matriarch and Krohan's grandmother, made the difficult decision to administer justice and save face: she expelled Krohan from the family and clan. Though not exiled, Krohan realized how unwelcome Highhelm had become. Within days, he packed his things and left.

Over the years, Krohan traveled throughout the Inner Sea region, working odd jobs, studying local cultures, doing good deeds, and becoming more

mature. Eventually, he gravitated to Absalom, whose cosmopolitan populace sated his historical curiosity. Indeed, the population was so large Krohan could easily lose himself in the place. Yet no matter how he matured emotionally or what positive impact he made, his guilt haunted him. Spotting a dwarven stranger on the streets, handling any kind of dagger, or even fumbling an object could send him into a depressive spiral.

When Krohan felt an emotional tug while wandering Absalom, he assumed his old guilt was stirring once more. Yet the sensation was different, more insistent. He followed his intuition to an unassuming antique merchant's display. As his eyes fell on an ancient armor fragment of dwarven design, Krohan experienced not regret, but kinship. As his fingers made contact, the armor flooded his mind with sensations and images, with two standing out most of all: a pull toward Highhelm and a vision of the clan dagger. Krohan has returned to Highhelm, disguised partly by his own design and partly by the passage of years. He hopes to track down the clan dagger he lost and return it to make amends for his past theft. While his priority is justice, he can't help but hope this will also earn him a path back into his family and clan.

His moments of psychic insight confuse him. These episodes—anything from the armor incident to his ineffable sense of where the clan dagger lies—all feel like wishful delusions as much as they do like magic, making Krohan hesitant to discuss them or even attribute them to supernatural sources. What he doesn't realize is that his exile and emotional suffering have slowly awoken his Rivethun magic, an ancient dwarven tradition of animism and self-transformation. Krohan knows of the Rivethun; it's a minor part of Highhelm's religious culture. His technical knowledge is limited, though, and he hasn't connected this tradition with his moments of occult insight. After all, a Rivethun supposedly draws power from dysphoria, serious injury, or psychological trauma; Krohan hasn't acknowledged that his self-inflicted guilt could fall into one of those categories.

Campaign Role

Krohan's mistakes kicked off several important campaign developments, such as Zogototaru's rampage and the machinations of a hryngar villain the PCs haven't met yet. Krohan provides a strong hook for the PCs to recover and repair Taargick's clan dagger, all while providing greater context for the legends of High King Taargick and Clan Tolorr. During this adventure, Krohan's gradual discovery of his occult abilities also helps illustrate Rivethun lore, giving the players a window into this iconic dwarven tradition. Importantly, Krohan doesn't seek the spotlight. His own attempt at heroics inflicted real harm, and he would much rather resolve past misdeeds and support the PCs' adventuring careers.

Krohan's journey parallels many of the campaign's themes: acknowledging past wrongs and working to repair the damage. In helping him, the players can better internalize these objectives for when they depart Highhelm and have opportunities to start mending misdeeds of the past.

KROHAN VELDOLLOW

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE NG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +9; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +9, Dwarf Lore +8, Medicine +8, Occultism +8, Society +6, Stealth +5

Str +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items leather armor, pick, composite shortbow (20 arrows), buckler, adventurer's pack, *lesser healing potion*, lesser antidote

AC 18 (19 with shield raised); **Fort** +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10

HP 52; **Resistances** poison 2

Occult Catharsis (emotion, healing, occult) Krohan's magic converts his pain into spellpower. After he casts an innate occult spell, he attempts a DC 5 flat check, increasing the DC by twice the spell's level if it was not a cantrip. On a success, Krohan's Spirits Drawn to Suffering effect ends; he can reduce the value of one condition affecting him by 1, and he regains 2d6 Hit Points.

Unwitting Rivethun (emotion, occult) Krohan has very limited access to Rivethun magic, able to cast spells only when experiencing pain or distress.

Spirits Drawn to Suffering ◆ (occult) **Frequency** once per 10 minutes; **Trigger** Krohan critically fails a saving throw, takes mental damage, takes damage from a critical hit, or gains a harmful condition with a numerical value (such as frightened or sickened). This effect does not trigger due to self-harm or similarly engineered circumstances.

Effect Krohan gains the ability to cast his innate occult spells for 1 minute.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ◆ pick +10 (fatal d10), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

Melee ◆ composite shortbow +8 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 19, attack +11; **2nd** (2 slots) *soothe*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** (3 slots) *fear*, *magic weapon*, *spirit link*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *forbidding ward*

Righthand Man Krohan gains a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls and skill checks attempted to Aid others. He can attempt a Dwarf Lore check in place of any other attack roll or skill check to Aid a dwarf.



MANTLE OF GOLD

Campaign Background

Chapter 1: Highhelm Heroes

Chapter 2: Path of the Dagger

Chapter 3: A Relic Reunited

Lost Dwarven Treasures

Adventure Toolbox



Next Month

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

by Scott D. Young

Finding a legendary tomb requires tracking the equally legendary cave worm said to dwell there. The adventurers must brave the Darklands' dangers, and in doing so, they learn of nefarious rivals who also seek the tomb.

CAVE WORMS

Dig into a comprehensive look at the dangerous and enigmatic beasts known as cave worms.

HAGEGRAF

Explore the unforgiving underground metropolis of Hagegraf deep in the bowels of Nar-Voth, land of the sinister gray hryngar dwarves.

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX AND MORE!

The Sky King's Tomb Adventure Path continues! This volume's toolbox contains new rules and dangerous monsters for your party to face. Don't miss out on a single Adventure Path volume—visit paizo.com/pathfinder and subscribe today!

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity; (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts, creatures, characters, stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game Content by the Contributor; (g) "Use," "Used" or "Using" means to use, distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content; (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors: Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition) © 2019, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter.

Pathfinder Adventure Path #193: Mantle of Gold © 2023, Paizo Inc.; Authors: John Compton, with Caryn DiMarco and Vanessa Hoskins.

PAIZO INC.

Creative Directors • James Jacobs and Luis Loza

Director of Game Design • Jason Bulmahn

Director of Visual Design • Sonja Morris

Director of Game Development • Adam Daigle

Development Manager • Linda Zayas-Palmer

Managing Creative Director (Starfinder) • Thurston Hillman

Senior Developers • John Compton, Eleanor Ferron, and Jenny Jarzabski

Developers • Vanessa Hoskins, Dustin Knight, and Landon Winkler

Lead Designer (Games) • Joe Pasi

Organized Play Line Developers • Jessica Catalan, Josh Foster, and Shay Snow

Design Manager • Michael Sayre

Pathfinder Lead Designer • Logan Bonner

Senior Designer • James Case

Managing Editor • Patrick Hurley

Lead Editor • Avi Kool

Senior Editors • Ianara Natividad and Simone D. Sallé

Editor • Solomon St. John

Art Directors • Kent Hamilton, Kyle Hunter, and Adam Vick

Senior Graphic Designer • Emily Crowell

Graphic Designer • Adriana Gasperi

Production Designer • Danika Wirsch

Director of Brand Strategy • Mark Moreland

Paizo CEO • Lisa Stevens

President • Jim Butler

Chief Creative Officer • Erik Mona

Vice President of People & Culture • Maggie Gallagher

Vice President of Sales & Operations • Mike Webb

Vice President of Technology • Rei Ko

Controller • William Jorenby

Bookkeeper • Emma Swan

Sales Manager • Cosmo Eisele

Sales & E-Commerce Assistant • Mika Hawkins

Director of Licensing • John Feil

Marketing and Media Manager • Aaron Shanks

Marketing and Licensing Coordinator • Raychael Allor

Community and Social Media Specialist • Jonathan Morgantini

Organized Play Coordinator • Alex Speidel

Director of Project Management • Glenn Elliott

Project Manager • Lee Aula

Finance Operations Specialist • B. Scott Keim

Front End Engineering Lead • Andrew White

Senior Software Developer • Gary Teter

Software Architect • Brian Bauman

Software Developer • Robert Brandenburg

Software Test Engineer • Erik Keith

System Administrators II • Whitney Chatterjee and Josh Thornton

Web Content Manager • Maryssa Mari

Webstore Coordinator • Katina Davis

Customer Service Lead • Austin Phillips

Customer Service Team • James Oakes and Jackson Wood

Warehouse Manager • Jeff Strand

Logistics Coordinator • Kevin Underwood

Warehouse Distribution Lead • Heather Payne

Warehouse Team • Alexander Crain, Summer Foerch, James Mafi, Zac Moran,

Evan Panek, and Jesus Reynoso Ortiz

This product is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game (Second Edition).

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Game Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper nouns (characters, deities, locations, etc., as well as all adjectives, names, titles, and descriptive terms derived from proper nouns), artworks, characters, dialogue, locations, organizations, plots, storylines, and trade dress. [Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content, or are exclusively derived from previous Open Game Content, or that are in the public domain are not included in this declaration.]

Open Game Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity, the game mechanics of this Paizo game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

Pathfinder Adventure Path #193: Mantle of Gold © 2023, Paizo Inc. All Rights Reserved. Paizo, the Paizo golem logo, Pathfinder, the Pathfinder logo, Pathfinder Society, Starfinder, and the Starfinder logo are registered trademarks of Paizo Inc.; the Pathfinder P logo, Pathfinder Accessories, Pathfinder Adventure, Pathfinder Adventure Card Game, Pathfinder Adventure Card Society, Pathfinder Adventure Path, Pathfinder Battles, Pathfinder Combat Pad, Pathfinder Flip-Mat, Pathfinder Flip-Tiles, Pathfinder Legends, Pathfinder Lost Omens, Pathfinder Pawns, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, Pathfinder Tales, Starfinder Adventure Path, Starfinder Combat Pad, Starfinder Flip-Mat, Starfinder Flip-Tiles, Starfinder Pawns, Starfinder Roleplaying Game, and Starfinder Society are trademarks of Paizo Inc.

Printed in China.

PATHFINDER

DELVE THE MOUNTAIN DEEP!

LOST OMENS

HIGHHELM



While other Sky Citadels have fallen since ancient days, Highhelm holds strong, serving as one of the major centers of dwarven culture. Delve into the Emperor's Peak to experience Highhelm in all its glory. Explore the city's layers and surroundings, each featuring mysterious locations and sites of intrigue suitable for a multitude of adventures. What secrets will you find in the depths of Highhelm?



PAIZO.COM

PATHFINDER

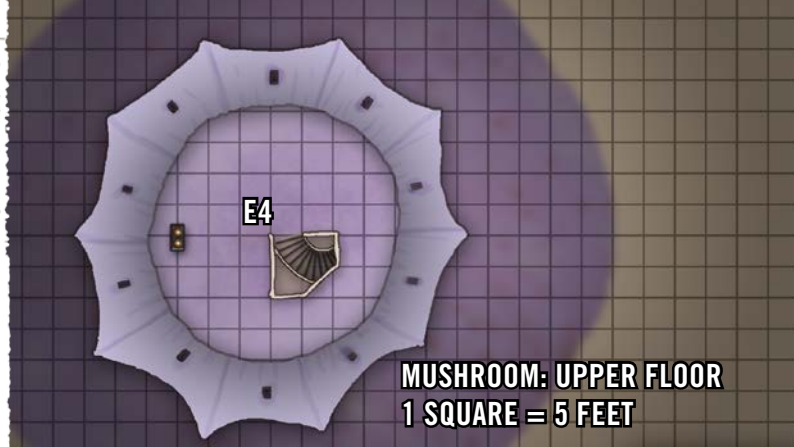
VENTURE
INTO THE
VAULT

Give your
character
the perfect tool for
the job with signature
weapons, customizable
relics, and wondrous
items to fit your every
need while preparing for
any eventuality with potions,
elixirs, wands, and more!

Treasure
Vault

PAIZO.COM

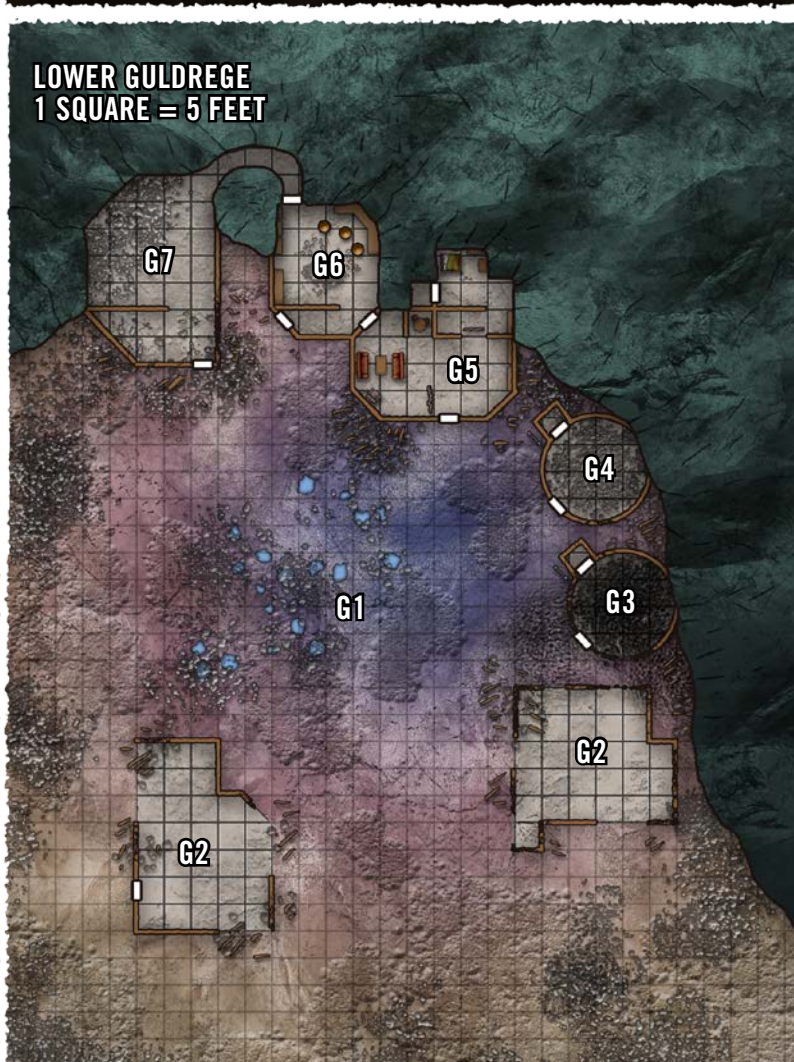
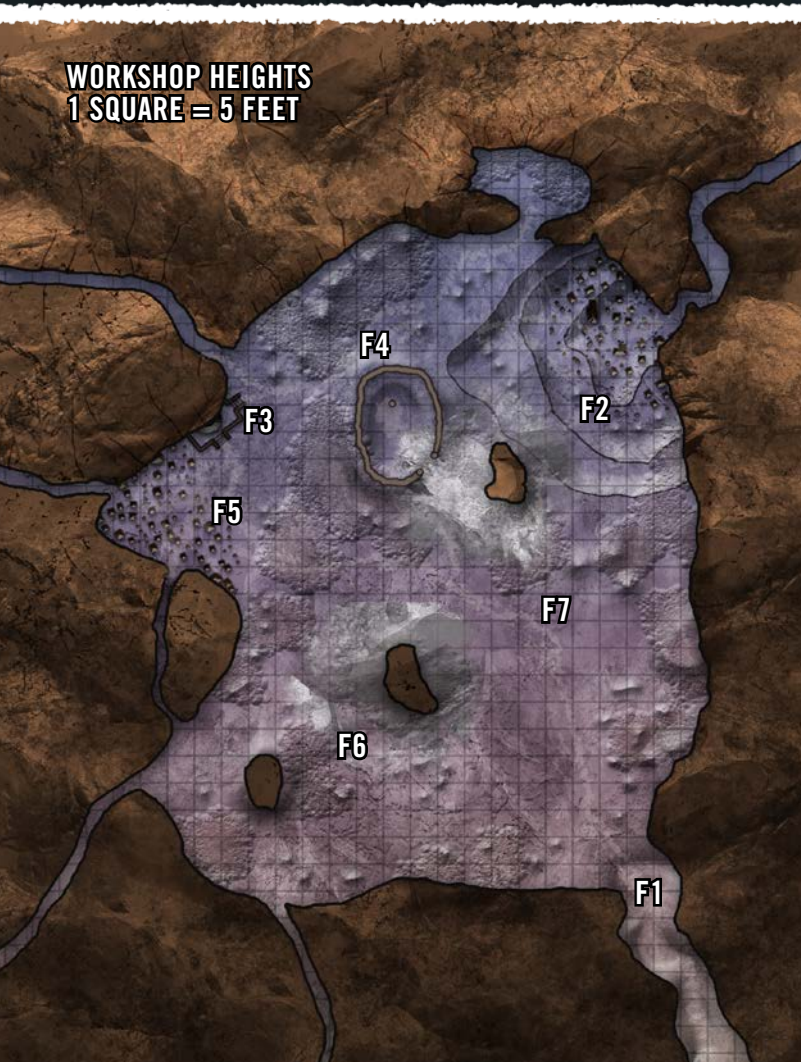
THE HYPHAE HAVEN
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



MUSHROOM: UPPER FLOOR
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



WORKSHOP HEIGHTS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



LOWER GULDREGE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

UNCOVER LOST TREASURES!

Invited to a prestigious storytelling festival in Highhelm, the greatest dwarven city in Golarion, a clan's eclectic guests explore every corner of the metropolis to build their own legends. Yet when these budding celebrities find a relic linked to one of dwarvenkind's greatest heroes, they're drawn into a mysterious and ancient urban intrigue that kicks off a deadly treasure hunt. The Sky King's Tomb Adventure Path begins with "Mantle of Gold," a complete adventure for 1st- to 5th-level characters.



paizo.com/pathfinder

PATHFINDER

US \$26.99
ISBN 978-1-64078-530-4
5 2699 >



Printed in China.