

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]

SKY KING'S TOMB

ADVENTURE PATH

HEAVY IS THE CROWN

By Jessica Catalan



PRICE OF THE SKY

The Quest for Sky complete, Taargick should have celebrated, yet he instead questioned if it had all been worth it. “Of course,” his mighty archon companion reassured him. “You carved a new homeland for your people, you scattered your foes, and you laid the foundation for a glorious future—a paragon of Torag’s tenets.” Taargick nodded sadly, responding, “Yet from an orc’s perspective, I have not built something extraordinary but rather shattered societies on our march to the surface.” He repeated his question, and the archon hesitated, not knowing whose interpretation was most just in Torag’s eyes.



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Artifacts, Items, and Spells

Stone Brawler Archetype

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Toilforged Sentinel

NPCs

Narseigus



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Chapter 1: Shadow War 4

The PCs travel to Rolgrimmur to warn the city's leaders of the looming threat Narseigus and the Bloodbane Coalition pose, and to recruit their aid in routing the army. Regardless of their success, the PCs travel long-forgotten tunnels to Droortorca Cavern and perform acts of sabotage and subterfuge to throw the Bloodbane Coalition into disarray.

Chapter 2: Kor Well 26

With the Bloodbane Coalition fractured, the PCs enter the Kor Well. They find and dispel three magical seals amid the well's ancient complexes, enabling the dwarves of Rolgrimmur to descend the Kor Well and ambush the Bloodbane Coalition before they regroup.

Chapter 3: Taargick's Legacy 44

The PCs enter Avernakkus, realm of the legendary worm Zogototaru, to confront Narseigus at the caldera's heart. With Narseigus defeated, they explore Taargick's lost tomb, containing a jarring counternarrative to early dwarven history. The PCs clash with well-intentioned celestials who think they're protecting Taargick's legacy by erasing his dissident records.

TORAGDAN MORALITY

Torag is a lawful good deity dedicated to crafting, honesty, and protection. Yet the more one examines the Quest for Sky, the harder it is to reconcile dwarven honor and Torag's edicts with that period's violence and conquest. The migration displaced and killed countless non-dwarves, making enemies who would despise dwarves for ages. Torag's decree against showing mercy to enemies of his people likely perpetuated this enmity, further clashing with the selfless themes associated with a good-aligned being. What's more, dwarven society chronicles a whitewashed version of events while worshipping a pantheon that espouses honesty.

Was Torag... wrong?

Just as champions' anathemas sometimes contradict each other, forcing a difficult decision, Torag's pragmatism often overrules universal benevolence—with morally complex results. Taargick grappled with these issues late in life, all while maintaining his faith and dwarven pride. His tomb is a constructive critique of what virtuous heights dwarves and their gods might achieve if they acknowledged past wrongs. What might your player characters conclude by walking in Taargick's shoes?

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Heavy is the Crown" is designed for four characters, with each chapter's encounters keyed to a specific character level.

8

The PCs begin this adventure at 8th level.

9

The PCs advance to 9th level at the beginning of Chapter 2 after routing the war camp at Droortorca Cavern.

10

The PCs advance to 10th level at the beginning of Chapter 3, after unsealing the Kor Well.

The PCs will be 11th level at the end of this adventure.

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CHAPTER 1: SHADOW WAR

Rolgrimmdur is home to an ancient Darklands entrance called the Kor Well: a 300-foot-wide, 1,500-foot-deep vertical shaft that once connected the lowest reaches of Nar-Voth to the surface world. During the Quest for Sky, a mechanical lift was constructed in the well so that thousands of dwarves could journey from their underground kingdoms to the dwarven stronghold of Rolgrimmdur and from there to the rest of the Five Kings Mountains. After the completion of the Quest for Sky, the Kor Well was sealed by Rivethun magic and the path to Felgunn was closed—until now.

Determined to reach King Taargick's tomb, Narseigus has led the Bloodbane Coalition to Drootorca Cavern, a cave in Nar-Voth that abuts the Kor Well. At his command, this army of Darklands

denizens has painstakingly drilled through the cave walls and breached the side of the Kor Well partway up the shaft. From this breach, Narseigus flew down the well to Avernakkus and Taargick's tomb, ordering the mainstay of his forces to make their way to the bottom of the well. Meanwhile, the Bloodbane Coalition's vanguard remains stationed in Drootorca Cavern. Above this juncture, the Kor Well is sealed with ancient Rivethun magic. Most of the Bloodbane Coalition's commanders believe Narseigus has gone to unseal the well so that they can utilize the ancient lift to reach Rolgrimmdur and slaughter everyone inside. From Rolgrimmdur, the Bloodbane Coalition plans to launch a devastating surprise attack upon the entire Five Kings Mountains.

Yet hope remains for the PCs, for they possess the key to King Taargick's tomb and a magic map that will show them a secret path to Drootorca Cavern, giving them a chance to sabotage the Bloodbane Coalition, unseal the Kor Well, and stop Narseigus before he can raid King Taargick's tomb and steal the Sky King's legacy.

Getting Started

This adventure begins in Highhelm as the PCs meet with **Bulgra Veldollow** (LN female dwarf aristocrat), aged matriarch of Clan Tolorr, in a formal sitting room. Before this meeting, the PCs have time to rest, resupply, and equip themselves for further adventure.

Allow the PCs to update Bulgra on their latest adventures, then read or paraphrase the following.

"Dark days, these are. Hryngars rattling the gates of King Taargick's tomb and armies sneaking up from the ground beneath us. The people of Rolgrimmur must be warned and the Bloodbane Coalition routed. These tasks are much greater than what I've asked of you before. They are tasks asked of heroes; burdens placed at the feet of those who would become legends. Tell me, do you still intend to see this through?"

Give the PCs a chance to respond and proclaim their dedication to their quest. When they're ready, Bulgra continues.

"I have troops to raise and an army to rally. Highhelm to mobilize and defend. This takes time. Rolgrimmur is in danger, and the Bloodbane Coalition moves even now. I bid you travel to Rolgrimmur and warn General Sagginsdotter of the army's approach. Share what you know of this cursed coalition. You'll need this, of course. The translation was completed yesterday." With a flourish, Bulgra produces the everywhen map. "Hopefully, with your map and her army, you can find a path to Drootorca Cavern and ambush our foes before they even know you're there—cut them down ere they draw close to Rolgrimmur." Bulgra inclines her head, adding, "Though I'll leave the planning of this to you and General Sagginsdotter.

"As ambassadors of Clan Tolorr, you'll need to travel with a retinue. A dozen soldiers, at least. When you're done in Rolgrimmur, these soldiers will return to bring word of your plans back to me. You'll also need a Rivethun practitioner. The Kor Well was created with Rivethun magic. Knowledge of these practices may be a boon in your quest. Luckily, Xomar Glavit is in town and has business in Rolgrimmur. He's respected throughout the Five Kings Mountains. I'll ask him to accompany you as far as Rolgrimmur. Use the time you have with him wisely.

"Be here first thing tomorrow morning; mind the water clocks as there's no dawn to greet you. We'll give you a proper send-off."

Bulgra answers any questions the PCs ask. Some likely questions are noted below.

What do you know of Rolgrimmur? "Rolgrimmur is a dwarven stronghold 50 miles southwest of Highhelm. It was built among the ruins of Grakodan and is one of the most fortified cities in Five Kings Mountains. They have strong military traditions and good relations with some surface nations. They deal primarily in siege weapons and mercenaries. They're managed by General Sagginsdotter."

Who is General Sagginsdotter? "General and elected ruler of Rolgrimmur. She's firm but fair. I've always liked her, but that sentiment

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The PCs travel from Highhelm to the dwarven stronghold of Rolgrimmur. There, they descend the Kor Well to reach Taargick's tomb. Two problems hamper their efforts. First, the Kor Well is sealed by ancient magic that can only be undone from within the Kor Well. Second, the Bloodbane Coalition has gathered within the well, planning to launch a surprise attack against the Five Kings Mountains after the well is unsealed. The PCs must rout the enemy vanguard at the Drootorca Cavern juncture using sabotage and subterfuge. Gaining the aid of Rolgrimmur's forces in this endeavor requires earning the favor of the stubborn leaders of Clan Grakodor.

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isn't universal. She often clashes with Clan Grakodor. Clan Grakodor founded Grakodan and expected to be reinstated as rulers when the war to reclaim the land was over. They weren't. Haven't gotten over it. You'll need the support of both General Sagginsdotter and Clan Grakodor if you're to have a fighting chance."

What do you know of the Kor Well? "Very little. It's a massive shaft through the Darklands crafted with Rivethun magic during the Quest for Sky. There was a lift there once—a thing of gears and stone that could carry thousands of dwarves up and down the shaft. Rivethun dwarves sealed the Kor Well sometime in the past to prevent creatures from the Darklands using it against us. Rolgrimmdur is built atop it."

What is Rivethun? "A dwarven magical tradition that dates to a time before memory. Rivethun practitioners serve as intermediaries between the dwarven people

and spirits of nature, the dead, and the other planes. Xomar Glavit can tell you more."

Who is Xomar Glavit? "A well-respected Rivethun emissary. He's traveled the Darklands extensively and has retraced portions of the Road to Sky, the path our ancestors took to get to the surface. He's even contacted some spirits our ancestors parleyed with during their ascent. If anyone can teach you about the magic that wove the Kor Well, it's Xomar Glavit."

Treasure: Bulgra offers the PCs a parting gift to help ensure their success. She gives each hero a *sigil of the first clan* (page 80) and the gift of one item from her armory. Each PC can select a single common permanent item of up to level 9 to keep. Uncommon items may be available with GM permission.

The Journey

The journey from Highhelm to Rolgrimmdur takes 4 and a half days along well-travelled tunnels. As the procession travels at the pace of the dwarven soldiers, it's unlikely any PCs who choose to walk, rather than ride their mount, extends this travel time. On the journey, the PCs have time to converse with the dwarven soldiers and Xomar. Each morning, they have one hour to prepare themselves for the day. Each evening, they have a few hours of downtime. The soldiers are led by Corporal **Erdale Hrelfan** (LG male dwarf soldier), a stern taskmaster with a dry sense of humor and a fondness for singing humorous tavern songs over dinner.

RIVETHUN

Xomar Glavit is charming and talkative yet easily irritated when he feels disrespected or his advice is ignored. Aware that his task on this journey is to impart his wisdom upon the PCs, he engages them in conversation often, trying his best to teach them about himself, Rivethun traditions, and the Kor Well. He answers any questions the PCs ask. The information he shares over the course of the journey is noted below.

Xomar learned of Rivethun while presenting as a young girl in Rolgrimmdur, and the order's teachings helped him survive many tumultuous years to eventually find a place in a world in which he never quite fit.

- Filled with wanderlust, Xomar spent decades exploring the Darklands to recover lost dwarven lore. Several Rivethun enclaves fund his expeditions in exchange for the knowledge and maps he recovers. He's working to retrace the Road to Sky and contact the various entities the ancient dwarves parleyed with during their ascent.
- Rivethun is an ancient dwarven tradition that fell out of favor when dwarves discovered the



Xomar Glavit

surface, and many of its rituals were forgotten. In the time since, Rivethun practitioners have worked to recover this lost wisdom and reforge forgotten spiritual alliances.

- According to Rivethuns, everything has a spirit and the gods, including Torag, are simply the most powerful spirits in this vast hierarchy. Typically, when a Rivethun uses the term “spirit,” they mean spirits of nature and the world around them, spirits of the outer planes, spirits of the dead, and the spirit inside each living person.
- Rivethuns cultivate empathy and strength through knowledge, self-control, and willpower. Practitioners create a well of spiritual power within themselves. By tapping into their past experiences and hardships, they can temporarily bolster their own spiritual power. While pain and hardship aren’t sought or desired, the effects they have on one’s life experiences are acknowledged.
- Rivethuns form bonds with spirits using their spiritual power as an anchor. They build mutual alliances based on friendship and respect; they don’t swear allegiance. Rivethuns serve as intermediaries between dwarves and the spirit world.
- Rivethuns leverage their bonds alongside their personal spiritual power to perform amazing deeds. This might take the form of magic, but it can be far more subtle: the ability to shrug off harm, to stand firm in the face of horror, to persevere through hardship, to move with grace. Rivethun practitioners whose powers manifest in similar ways are considered to be on the same “path.” Three of the most common paths are the emissary, the invoker, and the involutionist.
- Rivethun emissaries are diplomats. They seek out and forge bonds with spirits by taking on a portion of that spirit’s burden in exchange for a portion of their own burdens. Once this bond is forged, an emissary can call on this bonded spirit, either using them as a temporary familiar or, if they already have a familiar, merging that spirit with their own familiar into a new hybrid being called an animus. In either form, the bond enables the emissary to utilize magic powers thematically tied to the spirit they’ve called on, and the spirit can give the emissary advice.
- Rivethun invokers also bond with spirits but, rather than manifest these spirits externally, an invoker invites the spirit into their own body, gaining magical powers that bolster their physical form. They can ignore pain, defy death, and gain other powers thematically tied to the spirit they’ve invoked within their body.

- Rivethun involutionists bond not with an outside spirit, but with a spirit they create themselves from a portion of their own soul. This outward manifestation of their own inner spirit becomes a loyal and dedicated companion but prevents the involutionist from bonding with other external spirits. Involutionists often gain magical powers and can awaken spirits which are usually dormant, such as the spirits within inanimate objects.
- The Kor Well is a deep, cylindrical shaft that pierces through the Darklands. It was created by Rivethun practitioners and the countless spirits who aided them to shift stone and divert underground streams. A mechanical stone lift travels up and down the shaft when activated, allowing large numbers of dwarven troops to travel rapidly.
- At some point in the past—after King Taargick left his kingdom for the deeper Darklands—the Kor Well was sealed from within by three Rivethuns, one from each primary path. Though their names, abilities, and the spirits they bonded with were lost to time, their sacrifice was not forgotten completely. If all three seals are removed, the Kor Well should safely function once again.
- The Kor Well was sealed when the dwarves vowed never return to the deeper Darklands. The Kor Well was seen as a liability, enabling threats from below to infiltrate the dwarven empire.

EVENT 1: LITTLE RIPPLE

TRIVIAL 8

On the third day of travel, Xomar senses a spirit in pain. He asks the PCs to investigate with him. Corporal Erdale becomes frustrated, noting that their trip to Rolgrimmudr shouldn’t be delayed for Xomar or the spirits he claims to hear. At this, Xomar bristles, remarking that he refuses to abandon any spirit in need, regardless of the whims of the ignorant.

If the PCs side with Erdale, Xomar bids them farewell, sarcastically noting that he’s glad his advice and counsel are valued, then heads into an adjoining tunnel alone. Corporal Erdale and the dwarven soldiers continue to lead the PCs to Rolgrimmudr.

If the PCs side with Xomar, Erdale grumbles angrily and orders the dwarven soldiers to take a break until the PCs rejoin them. While the soldiers wait, Xomar leads the PCs into an adjoining tunnel. After wending through the cramped tunnels, the PCs find a small passage that recently suffered a cave-in. Rocks partially fill what was once a small underground pond. The cracks in the stone that supplied water are blocked by the collapse, and the remainder of the water has drained away. A strange burbling is audible beneath some of the surface rocks in the pool. A PC who succeeds at a DC

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22 Cave Lore or Nature check to Recall Knowledge or a DC 24 Perception check to Seek determines this cavern was once an underground pond that has been ruined by the cave-in.

Removing enough rocks to reach the burbling requires a PC to succeed at a DC 24 Athletics check. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Crafting or Mining Lore check can provide advice on how best to remove the rubble, which reduces the DC of the Athletics check to 20. On a failed Athletics check, the rubble shifts, dealing 3d6 bludgeoning damage to the PC who failed the check.

Once the PCs clear the rocks, they discover the source of the burbling: a tiny water elemental named **Little Ripple** (NG water elemental) who was splattered by the cave-in. When freed, Little Ripple's scattered droplets rejoin into a bulb-shaped glob of water with three tiny feet, four frothy white-capped arms, a wide toothless mouth, and two big eyes.

Once freed, Little Ripple speaks with the PCs in Aquan. If any PCs understand Little Ripple, the elemental squeals in delight. If not, Xomar (who's fluent in all elemental languages) acts as translator. Little Ripple introduces himself, then explains that their home was destroyed by the recent cave-in. They ask that the PCs move the rubble out of the cave so that water may flow again—they're far too small to move the rubble themselves.

It's obvious that moving the rubble is likely to be hours of dangerous and delicate work, as the rocks are likely to cause further cave-ins if the cavern roof isn't stabilized. Give the PCs a chance to consider this and determine if they want to turn back and leave Little Ripple to tend to their own problems. If they do, Xomar remains behind to help Little Ripple himself, telling the PCs that he's disappointed in them. The PCs can rejoin the dwarven soldiers and continue to Rolgrimmdur.

Hazards: If the PCs decide to remove the rubble for Little Ripple, they must first stabilize the cavern. Xomar waits on the outskirts of the cave with Little Ripple, away from the hazard.

CAVE-IN

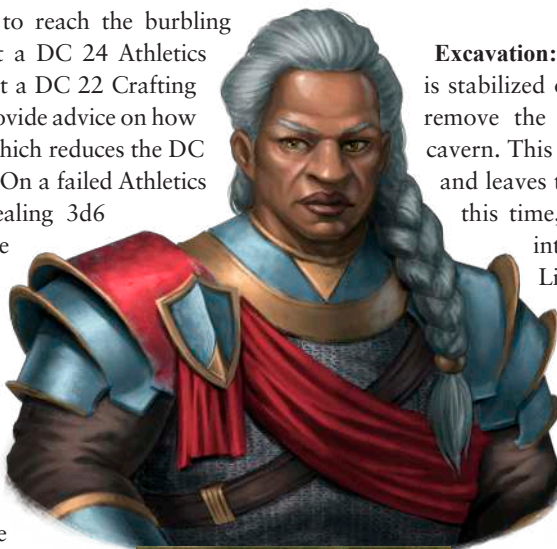
ENVIRONMENTAL

Stealth DC 24 (trained)

Description The rubble shifts and the cavern ceiling collapses.

Disable DC 28 Crafting (expert) or DC 31 Survival (trained) to prop up the cavern ceiling without triggering a collapse.

HAZARD 8



Hayla Sagginsdotter

Collapse ➤ **Trigger** A creature moves the rubble; **Effect** The cavern collapses in a cave-in that deals 4d8+22 bludgeoning damage to the triggering creature and all creatures in the cavern (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

Excavation: Whether the cavern's ceiling is stabilized or collapsed, the PCs can now remove the rest of the rubble from the cavern. This takes five hours of hard labor and leaves the PCs fatigued. At the end of this time, water begins to trickle back into the cavern, which causes Little Ripple to dance with glee.

Development: After the PCs have cleared the rubble, Xomar sings a traditional Rivethun hymn, punctuated with periodic stomps and thumps to his chest. Despite having no discernible words, the song is deeply moving. Little Ripple eventually joins in, linking hands with Xomar. A

vibrantly glowing magical energy flows between the two, a bright, visual manifestation of a spiritual bond being formed. As the song ends, the glowing stops, and Xomar and Little Ripple regard one another in silence, then wave farewell.

Before the PCs leave, Little Ripple beckons over each PC who helped with the excavation, holds their hands, and releases a short burbling trill. Each hero feels a chill settle over them, then a feeling of peace, as Little Ripple bestows a blessing upon them in thanks for their help. Unlike the permanent bond forged with Xomar, this blessing is a temporary bond with Little Ripple that each hero can utilize once. After being used, the bond is expended. This grants them the action Little Ripple's Blessing.

Finally, due to the time it takes to remove the rubble and restore the pond, the procession reaches Rolgrimmdur after 5 days, rather than 4 and a half.

XP Award: If the PCs manage to retrieve Little Ripple from the rubble, they earn 30 XP. If they clear the cave-in and restore the elemental's home, the PCs earn 80 XP instead.

LITTLE RIPPLE'S BLESSING ➤

HEALING MAGICAL POSITIVE PRIMAL WATER

Frequency once

You tap into your bond with Little Ripple to temporarily manifest the water elemental. A sphere of semi-tangible water surrounds you, which magically purifies your spirit and purges toxins from your body. Little Ripple attempts

to counteract a single disease or poison you are affected by with a counteract modifier of +21 and a counteract level of 10. Little Ripple's presence has a soothing effect on your spirit. You gain a +1 status bonus to Will saves for 1 minute.

Rolgrimmur

Built atop the ruins of fallen Grakodan, Rolgrimmur's military encampment became a fortified city. Most of the city's defenses are underground, but the eastern edge of the city features a sturdy gatehouse and a high tower that overlooks the pass between Rolgrimmur and Highhelm—the pass through which the PCs and their procession approach. Dozens of stern dwarves guard the gatehouse, with even more out of sight.

Inside, Rolgrimmur is an ordered, militaristic place. It's purposeful, with even and well-tended thoroughfares, and districts planned and organized with care. Structures are built to withstand battle, with most capable of becoming a redoubt in case of an emergency. It's obvious that Rolgrimmur is a city whose primary business is war. Armor and weapon smiths are plentiful, combat academies and mercenary companies are ubiquitous, and military squads perform drills in public spaces.

Despite Rolgrimmur's rigidity, the city's mood is far from dour. The place has an easy confidence about it borne from a populace certain in their ability to weather any storm, from communities strengthened by service, and from a history of indomitability. Rolgrimmur's citizens value efficiency and practicality. Most are armored and armed. They greet visitors without fear.

Having been born and raised in Rolgrimmur, Xomar leads the way through the city to Shielding Hall—a formidable fortress that serves as Rolgrimmur's seat of power and meeting hall for the city's elected councilors and military leaders. After being questioned, the PCs are ushered into a meeting room to await General Hayla Sagginsdotter, elected leader of Rolgrimmur.

At this point the procession splits. The soldiers from Clan Tolorr await the return of the PCs in a courtyard within Shielding Hall. After the meeting is over, when they learn of the PCs' plans, these soldiers leave Rolgrimmur and return to Highhelm to report to Bulgra Veldollow.

Xomar bids the PCs farewell at the gates of Shielding Hall, noting that he has business to tend to in Rolgrimmur, which should take a few days. While he's in the city, he stays at Gremley's, a local inn near the surface with a cosmopolitan aesthetic, favored by foreign visitors. He invites the PCs to join him there if they have the time, but otherwise, Xomar doesn't expect they'll meet again.

COUNTING TIME

The PCs have a limited time to spend in Rolgrimmur. From the moment they leave Shielding Hall, they have 1 and a half days to spare (or 1 day if they helped Little Ripple). While they can spend this time as they wish, it's likely they use it to meet with Clan Grakodor or help Xomar. Keep track of the hours the PCs spend on various tasks. Assuming the PCs stop to eat, rest, and care for themselves, they each have 10 hours available in a day. Each hero can push themselves to accomplish more tasks, but for each additional hour they spend attempting tasks, they become fatigued unless they succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save. The DC increases by 1 after each time this check has been attempted. It's likely the PCs split up (but not required) so they can attempt more tasks. A few notes on time are listed below.

Errands: Shopping or running simple errands takes 1 hour.

Audience with Clan Grakodor: This event takes 3 hours, including standing in line.

Grakodor's Favor: Each full attempt to gain the favor of a clan leader after the formal audience takes 4 hours.

GENERAL SAGGINSDOTTER

General **Hayla Sagginsdotter** (LG female dwarf general) meets with the PCs in a practical planning room with a large table, sturdy chairs, and shelves stocked with maps, reference books, writing supplies, and military figurines for planning tactical strikes. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

"Representatives from Highhelm sent by Clan Tolorr itself... Well, you've certainly made an entrance. I'm General Sagginsdotter, highest authority in Rolgrimmur. What business do you have in my city?"

General Sagginsdotter listens attentively but sees a few problems with their quest. First, the Kor Well is sealed from the inside, and the seals prevent anyone from surviving the lift ride down past the magical barriers. Second, there's no way into the Kor Well from Rolgrimmur. At this, General Sagginsdotter spreads a map of the mountain on the table, pointing out the Kor Well, Rolgrimmur, and Drootorca Cavern. She explains that there used to be a secret passage from Rolgrimmur down to Drootorca Cavern, but the way is forgotten, and the passages aren't shown on any maps she's ever seen.

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Fortunately for the PCs, using their map in conjunction with General Sagginsdotter's enables them to locate the secret tunnel that connects Rolgrimmur to Droortorca Cavern. With this knowledge, General Sagginsdotter proposes a plan. While she musters Rolgrimmur's army and orders her engineers to ensure the Kor Well lift is operable, the PCs take the secret passage into Droortorca Cavern. They should utilize subtlety to sabotage the Bloodbane camp and throw them into disarray. When these invaders are scattered, the PCs can sneak into the Kor Well's breach, find and disable the three ancient Rivethun seals, then signal General Sagginsdotter. The PCs will have very little time to accomplish this task before the Bloodbane Coalition regroups—a matter of days. General Sagginsdotter can lead Rolgrimmur's troops down the Kor Well once the way is clear and attack the Bloodbane Coalition's main forces. Once they're defeated, the PCs can continue with their quest to stop Narseigus and find King Taargick's tomb.

For this plan to succeed, the PCs require two things: a way to signal General Sagginsdotter when the Kor Well is unsealed and additional troops to help them sabotage the Bloodbane Coalition. The first is easy; General Sagginsdotter gives the PCs a *sentinel horn* attuned to Khadon's Call, a tower-sized horn built to warn the city of impending attacks. While there are many other ways this could be accomplished, Khadon's Call is Rolgrimmur's traditional call to arms, and General Sagginsdotter insists the PCs use it.

The second is a challenge. An ancient edict gives General Sagginsdotter the authority to rally and send troops down into the Darklands through the Kor Well, but she has no authority to send troops down a secret passage not shown on any *official* map—she notes the word “official” is key; the PCs' map won't suffice. This means she'll have to prepare an official proposition to Rolgrimmur's council. While she's certain the request would be approved eventually, it would likely come too late. Rolgrimmur's political scene is full of infighting and General Sagginsdotter's staunchest political opponents, Clan Grakodor, are sure to oppose her out of spite. The only chance she has of getting approval swiftly is if the PCs also have the clan's support.

To this end, General Sagginsdotter requests the PCs tarry in Rolgrimmur for a day. While she prepares

the proposition for Rolgrimmur's council, the PCs can visit Clan Grakodor and attempt to gain their support. At the end of this time, the PCs should leave for Droortorca Cavern, with or without the aid of Rolgrimmur's troops.

When the PCs are ready to leave, General Sagginsdotter ushers them out of Shielding Hall, gives them directions to Clan Grakodor's administrative building, and wishes them luck.

AUDIENCE WITH CLAN GRAKODOR

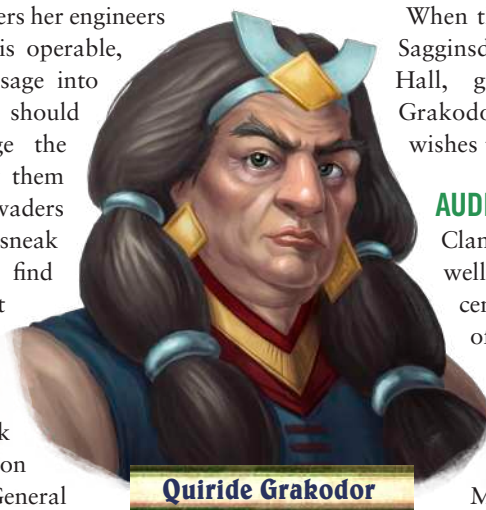
Clan Grakodor maintains a large, well-fortified complex near the city center. While the complex interior is off-limits to outsiders, the “surface” levels of their holding allow visitors during daytime hours. Upon their arrival, the PCs are questioned by guards and brought to Founder's Moot for an audience with the clan leaders. Founder's Moot is an extravagant

throne room with four thrones, space to hold court, and walls decorated to celebrate the founding of the kingdom of Grakodan (upon which Rolgrimmur was built) and the heroics of various members of Clan Grakodor. The clan's four leaders preside over citizen requests from their thrones most afternoons. When the PCs enter the hall, their names are added to the queue. They should wait in Founder's Moot until they're called to speak.

This encounter uses the Influence subsystem (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 151) to determine how successful the PCs are in convincing Clan Grakodor to support them and their plan to ambush the Bloodbane Coalition. The PCs have 2 rounds while waiting for their opportunity to speak with Clan Grakodor's leadership where they can do nothing but Discover information about the clan and its prominent figures. Once in front of the clan leaders, they have only 3 rounds to make their case.

Reputation: Having a good reputation (*Gamemastery Guide* 164) with Highhelm gives the PCs cumulative advantages when dealing with Clan Grakodor. At liked, they gain 1 free Influence Point with Mordel and Quiride. At admired, they also gain 1 free Influence Point with Sigdriss and Uld. If the PCs are revered within Highhelm, they get a bonus round to state their case before Clan Grakodor.

Clan Leaders: While the PCs await their turn to speak in Founder's Moot, they learn that Clan Grakodor has four clan leaders: Mordel, Quiride, Sigdriss, and Uld Grakodor.



Quiride Grakodor

MORDEL GRAKODOR

LG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Nonbinary dwarf engineer and priest of Torag

Perception +18

Will +21

Discovery DC 22 Architecture Lore, DC 26 Perception, DC 24 Society, DC 20 Torag Lore

Influence Skills DC 22 Architecture Lore or Crafting (showing knowledge of dwarven structures), DC 23 Religion (supporting the dwarven pantheon), DC 24 Diplomacy, DC 25 Performance, DC 27 Deception, DC 27 Intimidation

Influence 2 They believe the threat to Rolgrimmdur is real and important enough to stop before the Bloodbane Coalition gains a foothold it could use to crush dwarven society. They vote in favor of the PCs.

Influence 4 Impressed by the PCs' determination, they gift the group a *wand of shape stone* if they win the council's support.

Resistances Any blasphemy or insulting of the dwarven pantheon increases all Influence DCs by 2 for the rest of the encounter.

Weaknesses Mordel loves animals and respects PCs with animal companions; they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Influence checks.

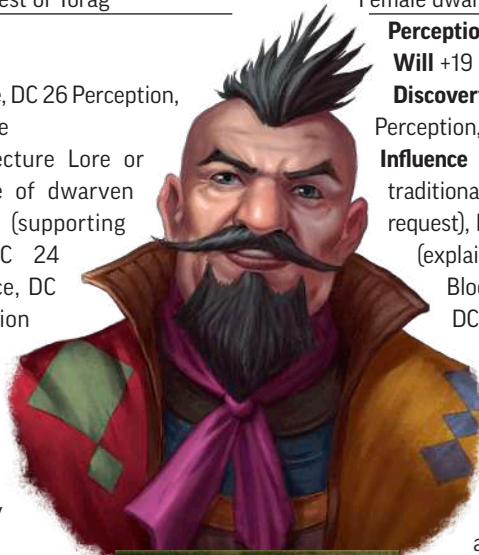
Background Mordel is a high-ranking member of Torag's church and a prominent religious figure in Rolgrimmdur. They're devoted and pious, leading regular sermons within Clan Grakodor's grand temple to Torag as well as in Rolgrimmdur's public cathedral. Mordel is also a skilled engineer and crafter, with a specialty in civic buildings, city infrastructure, and toys. They especially enjoy creating tiny stone animals, which they give out to children who behave particularly well during sermons. Mordel loves animals, especially those from foreign and unfamiliar lands.

Appearance Mordel wears their brown hair in long braids and their beard closely trimmed. They wear eyeliner that enhances their bright green eyes, and robes that display the Hammer of Torag.

Personality eloquent, kind, patient

Penalty Mordel is offended by PCs who disrespect Torag, the dwarven pantheon, or organized religion. Those who do so take a -2 circumstance penalty to all Influence checks.

Questions Mordel voices their curiosity about the Kor Well and their apprehension for dwarves going deep into Nar-Voth too readily. They ask the PCs what their intentions are if they win this fight.



Uld Grakodor

QUIRIDE GRAKODOR

LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Female dwarf tactician

Perception +19

Will +19

Discovery DC 22 Dwarven Lore, DC 26 Perception, DC 22 Society, DC 24 Warfare Lore

Influence Skills DC 22 Dwarven Lore (using traditional phrases and actions to make a request), DC 24 Diplomacy, DC 24 Warfare Lore (explaining their strategy for defeating the Bloodbane Coalition), DC 28 Intimidation, DC 28 Performance, DC 28 Deception

Influence 3 Quiride is convinced that backing the PCs in this endeavor, rather than taking another approach to defend the city, is wise. She votes in favor of their request.

Influence 4 Quiride stands and addresses all in attendance. She espouses the importance of the PCs' request and implores all in attendance

to support them. The PCs gain 1 Influence point with Mordel and Sigdriss, but lose 1 Influence point with Uld.

Resistances Quiride is offended by any PCs who display poor manners or treat her as frail or weak. She dislikes anyone who bucks tradition or behaves frivolously. Any of these activities earns a cumulative -1 circumstance penalty to Influence checks from that PC (maximum -4).

Weaknesses PCs who go out of their way to respect formal dwarven traditions, whether in their speech, actions, or dress, earn a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to Influence her. PCs who mention the importance of family and protecting dwarven legacies gain a +4 circumstance bonus to that Influence check.

Background Quiride is a stubborn traditionalist who values respect, loyalty, and perfection. She's a shrewd military tactician and a cunning politician. Quiride is the highest ranking and most respected member of Clan Grakodor, and tends to the clan's finances, ongoing projects, and many other managerial tasks. Quiride is a widow with numerous children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Despite her stern demeanor and high standards of behavior, Quiride dotes on her younger descendants.

Appearance Quiride is an older dwarf with a keen mind who is often judgmental of others. She wears somewhat fancy clothing and some jewelry, suitable for a woman of her high station.

Personality cautious, judgmental, traditionalist

Questions Quiride remarks that the Kor Well is impregnable and asks how this new threat to Rolgrimmdur has any chance of success.

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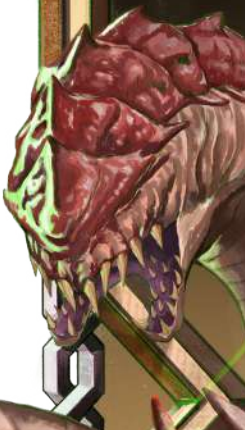
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SCOUTS

The scouts are led by **Kiersha** (N female dwarf reformed thief), a sly, observant woman who moves so quietly she appears and disappears without warning. The scouts are loyal to General Sagginsdotter and follow the PCs' commands. Scouts can provide the following aid, if asked. See the noted events for more information.

Drootorca Cavern: Perform surveillance.

A10: Cause a gondran stampede.

A18: Cause a stag beetle stampede.

SIGDRISS GRAKODOR

N MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Female dwarf warrior

Perception +16

Will +16

Discovery DC 22 Games Lore, DC 23 Perception, DC 25 Society, DC 20 Warfare Lore

Influence Skills DC 20 Warfare Lore (describing great battles past or yet to come), DC 23 Intimidation, DC 23 Performance, DC 24 Diplomacy, DC 26 Deception

Influence 2 Sigdriss is eager to join the fight to defend Rolgrimmdur. She votes in favor of the PCs.

Influence 3 Sigdriss gives her own short but rousing speech in favor of Clan Grakodor being the "Saviors of Dwarvenkind." The PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their next Influence check.

Influence 4 Sigdriss is eager to become part of the PCs' inevitable legend. She gifts them *Stonesmasher*, her +1 striking thundering warhammer.

Resistances Sigdriss cannot stand those who drone on and on. Each time a PC rolls Diplomacy on an Influence check to influence any clan leader, her Influence DC for Diplomacy increases by 1 (to a maximum of DC 28).

Weaknesses Sigdriss enjoys a rousing game of basilisk (see Background below). Any mention of this game earns the PC a +2 circumstance bonus to their Influence check.

Background Sigdriss is regarded as one of the greatest warriors in Clan Grakodor and commands the clan's armies and their mercenary squads. Beyond combat, Sigdriss has a passion for competition and sport, particularly basilisk (*Lost Omens Travel Guide* 61).

Appearance Sigdriss is a bold, bombastic dwarf, notably muscular of build, with short hair.

Personality honorable, loud, tenacious

Penalty Sigdriss is a woman of action, honor, and honesty. If a PC fails a Deception check against her or she succeeds at a Will save against one of the PCs' effects,

all of her Influence DCs increase by 4, and the PCs lose 1 Influence Point with her.

Questions Sigdriss asks which of the PCs will lead this attack on the Bloodbane Coalition and how they plan to proceed.

ULD GRAKODOR

N MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Male dwarf upstart

Perception +15

Will +12

Discovery DC 23 Art Lore, DC 22 Mercantile Lore, DC 22 Perception, DC 24 Society

Influence Skills DC 22 Intimidation, DC 22 Mercantile Lore (discussing increasing trade in Rolgrimmdur), DC 22 Performance, DC 24 Deception, DC 26 Diplomacy

Influence 4 Uld thinks the city will be safe no matter what, but he votes in favor of the PCs' request.

Resistances He dislikes anyone who values tradition over progress or who compliments Quiride. These PCs take a cumulative -1 circumstance penalty to Influence checks against him (maximum -4).

Weaknesses Complimenting Uld gains his favor, earning that PC a +1 circumstance bonus to their Influence check; if the compliment is about fashion, the bonus increases to +2. Non-dwarven PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Influence checks against him.

Background Uld is young for a dwarven clan leader but no less qualified. He's cunning, adaptive, determined, and ambitious. Uld believes his clan is stuck in the past and wants to lead them in a new direction, outside the shadow of traditionalists like Quiride. He's educated in foreign politics, cultures, and methods of commerce, believing there are many lessons to be learned from other societies. Many younger residents of Rolgrimmdur consider him a visionary. Aside from his political ambitions, Uld has a passion for fashion.

Appearance Uld is a young adult dwarf who wears high-quality, asymmetrical clothing with lots of color. His beard is closely trimmed. He often acts like the requests being discussed at Founder's Moot are beneath him.

Personality ambitious, frivolous, rebellious

Penalty Any time a PC rolls Dwarven Lore for an Influence check, Uld's Influence DCs increase by 1 (to a maximum of DC 28).

Questions Uld asks about the possibility of making peace with Narseigus and the Bloodbane Coalition and suggests trying to work on a diplomatic solution.

Special This decision doesn't matter much to Uld, but he does need to fund various side projects and is open to being bribed. If a PC pays him at least 300 gp, they automatically gain his favor and his vote.

Round 1 (End of the Line): The PCs are asked to wait their turn to bring their matter before Clan Grakodor's leadership. The line is out the door, and spills into the street along the side of the building. From here, there are street vendors, merchants, couriers, and others passing by in large numbers, providing plenty of people interact with. PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus to all Discover checks during this round.

Round 2 (Inside the Founder's Moot): The PCs are nearing the front of the line. Bureaucrats and pages walk the hallways carrying stacks of paperwork or reports. PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Dwarven Lore and Society checks to Discover.

Round 3 (Opening Gambit): The PCs are brought into the Founder's Moot to stand before the Four Thrones of Grakodan and state their case. Each PC is expected to make a statement and attempt an Influence check, specifically targeting one of the clan leaders. PCs who do not make a public statement automatically critically fail at their Influence check, targeting a leader who has yet to be addressed. Once the PCs have stated their case, the clan leaders begin to question the PCs.

Round 4 (Questions): Each clan leader asks the PCs a question, interrogating their request based on their own area of concern. When they ask, one of the PCs must answer as best they can and attempt an Influence check against that clan leader. If a PC attempts to answer more than twice, one of the leaders interrupts and says, "We've heard from you; let one of your companions speak."

Round 5 (Formal Request): The PCs each get to speak on their behalf, formally requesting Clan Grakodor's support for sending troops through the secret passages to Drootorca Cavern. Each PC may make a final Influence check before each clan leader decides how they will vote.

The Vote: After the formal request, the clan leaders of Rolgrimmdur vote on whether to support the supplicants. As long as three of the four Clan Grakodor leaders vote in favor of the PCs, the motion passes and the PCs gain the aid of support squads.

XP Award: The PCs earn 80 XP for securing Clan Grakodor's aid.

GRAKODOR'S FAVOR

If that the PCs lose the vote for Clan Grakodor's aid, they can attempt to meet with individual clan leaders in person. This is an opportunity to bribe Uld or offer council members a favor in exchange for their support. Meeting with a council member consumes 4 hours of a PC's time or 1 hour to bribe Uld. While in this meeting, they have one opportunity to sway the clan leader with a single Influence check. If that

SOLDIERS

The soldiers are led by **Gurzig Grakodor** (LG pangender dwarf knight), an unfailingly optimistic dwarf utterly devoted to the wellbeing of their fellow soldiers and Rolgrimmdur. The soldiers are loyal to Clan Grakodor and follow the PCs' commands. Soldiers can provide the following aid, if asked.

Drootorca Cavern: Ambush hryngar patrols.

A2: Destroy the dam.

A6: Destroy the crystal bridge.

A18: Cause a stag beetle stampede.

doesn't convince the clan leader, they can owe them a favor to be collected at a later time. What this favor entails is up to the GM.

The Descent

When their time in Rolgrimmdur is up, the PCs must leave for Drootorca Cavern via the secret pass. If the PCs convinced three of the four leaders of Clan Grakodor to aid them, General Sagginsdotter's motion passes, and the PCs gain support from Rolgrimmdur. They're accompanied by one squad of scouts and one squad of soldiers. These squads can aid the PCs during the descent and in Drootorca Cavern in different ways, as noted throughout and in the Scouts and Soldiers sidebars. If the PCs convinced only two leaders of Clan Grakodor for aid, General Sagginsdotter's motion passes with limited support; the PCs are instead accompanied by one squad of soldiers. If the PCs convinced fewer than two leaders of Clan Grakodor, they're unaccompanied and have no additional forces to help them.

Navigating the secret route from Rolgrimmdur to Drootorca Cavern takes 3 days, ending on the hidden ledge in the northeast corner of the vast cavern (area A1). Thanks to their map, the PCs don't risk becoming lost and need not attempt skill checks to navigate. **Event 2** occurs during the journey.

EVENT 2: WANDERERS

The PCs cross paths with a flock of six nykteras, dirty and malnourished, with tattered and bloodstained clothes. The fey are led by **Botabi** (CN male nyktera pessimist) and **Binx** (CG female nyktera optimist), siblings who constantly bicker over the fate of their group. The nykteras fled Drootorca Cavern when the Bloodbane Coalition took over the cave. Now homeless, they're searching for a suitable habitat while mourning those they lost. The nykteras are in dire need of food and a safe spot to rest.

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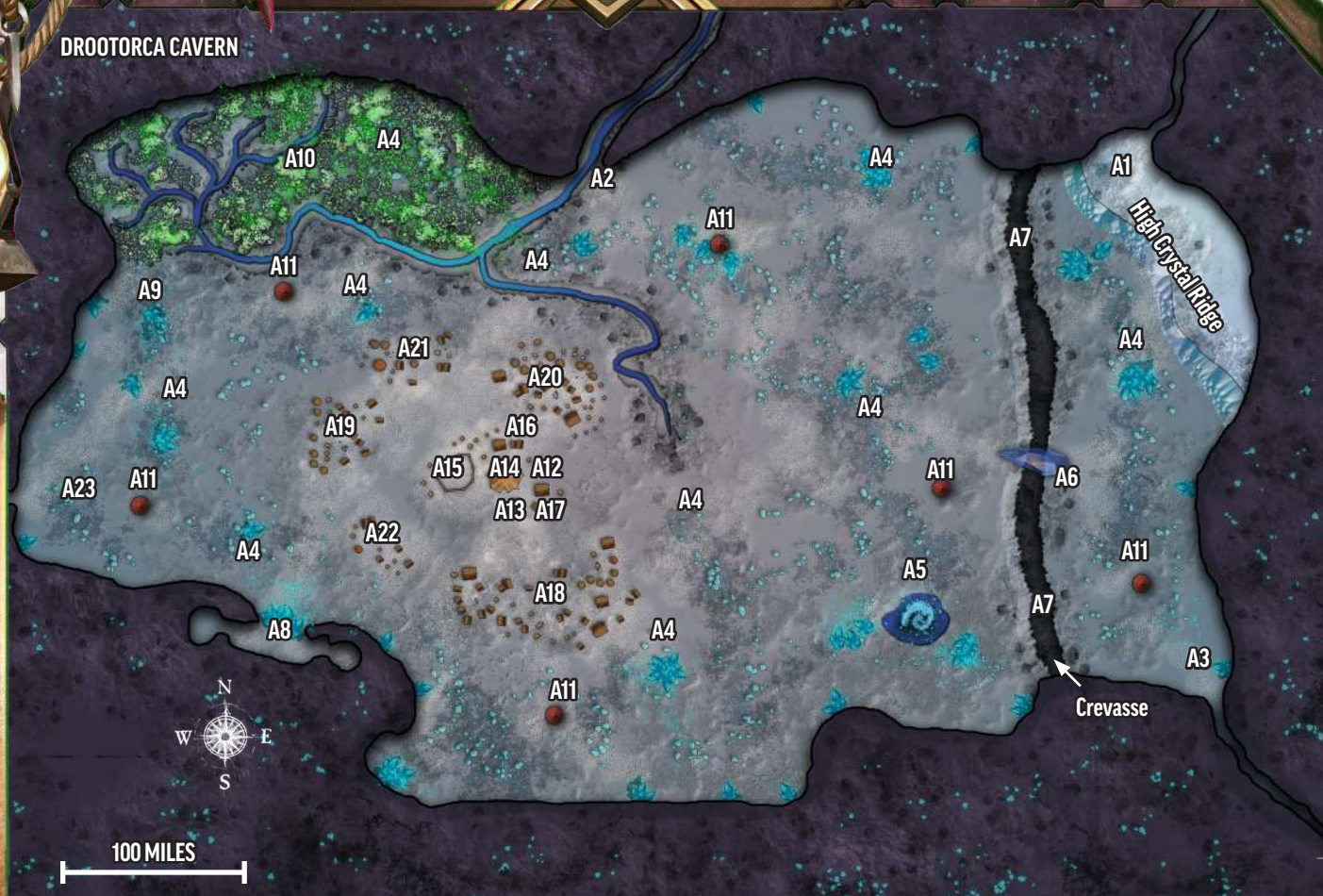
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When the nykteras notice the PCs, they panic and hide (+5 Stealth check to Hide). A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Medicine or Sense Motive check notices the nykteras are malnourished and recent victims of violence.

The nykteras value hospitality; a PC who offers the nykteras food and a place to rest, or introduces themselves politely, causes Botabi and Binx to introduce themselves. If the PCs succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check, Botabi and Binx give their kin the all-clear, and the remainder of the nykteras emerge. They ask the PCs where they come from, what their home is like, and what they're doing in the tunnels. The duo are interested in finding a new home, and if they learn the PCs are enemies of the Bloodbane Coalition, they frantically explain their predicament.

Botabi and Binx can share the following information about Drootorca Cavern, the Bloodbane Coalition, and information about the area's natural features and locations, as noted on page 15.

- The Bloodbane Coalition's members are mostly hryngars, but there are also caligni, orcs, xulgaths, and some cavern trolls. They set up camp in the cavern's center, but the soldiers mostly stick to their own camps and don't seem to trust each other.

- The cavern trolls captured Estrivalis, a crystal dragon who kept a lair near the Crystal Throne. Estrivalis was a friend to the nykteras.
- The xulgaths killed four nykteras and captured one more: Baza, the level-headed sibling of Binx and Botabi. The nykteras failed to rescue Baza.
- At the time of the invasion, the nykteras had extended their hospitality to a wandering deep gnome named Jalell. Jalell seemed nice, but they became separated during the attack, and the nykteras don't know if Jalell still lives.

Development: The nykteras could be a valuable ally in Drootorca Cavern. If the PCs learn of their predicament, promise to oust the Bloodbane Coalition from Drootorca Cavern, and succeed at a DC 24 Diplomacy check, the nykteras agree to join them in their quest. If the PCs promise to save Baza, the DC is reduced to 20. If the nykteras don't join the PCs, they continue their pilgrimage, eventually settling in Rolgrimmdur. If they ally with the PCs, they can perform the same functions of a dwarven scouting unit.

XP Award: If the nykteras ally with the PCs, the PCs earn 30 XP.

Drootorca Cavern

Drootorca Cavern is a large, ovoid cavern, 2 miles wide and 4 miles long. It's chilly and damp, with temperatures hovering around freezing. The cavern is filled with crystals of varying sizes, from tiny crystals clustered in elaborate formations to crystals large enough to walk across. The damp, uneven walls have plenty of handholds but don't provide good purchase. Unless otherwise noted, the DC of Athletics checks to Climb is 20 and the DC of Acrobatics checks to Balance is 22. Whenever a creature fails a check to Climb or is knocked prone on a natural surface, they're dealt 2d6 piercing damage from the crystal formations, in addition to the usual effects of failure. Light levels vary; assume dim light unless otherwise noted.

Each day the PCs are in Drootorca Cavern, they can give accompanying scouts and soldiers a single task per group. Scouts can perform surveillance on a single location, describing the area to the PCs and granting them a +1 circumstance bonus to all skill checks and Perception checks attempted in that location. Soldiers can ambush hryngar patrols (see Bloodbane Presence below). Additional tasks for scouts and soldiers are noted in applicable areas. At your discretion, scouts and soldiers can perform additional unlisted tasks. These tasks shouldn't award Sabotage Points.

LOCATIONS

Drootorca Cavern contains many areas of interest. The order the PCs visit these locations and how the PCs use the areas to their advantage is up to them. There are four types of locations.

Areas 1–3 are entry tunnels that provide access to the cavern.

Areas 4–10 are natural features or locations not controlled by the Bloodbane Coalition.

Areas 11–17 are part of the Bloodbane Coalition's camp that can be approached by members from any of the squads.

Areas 18–22 are part of the Bloodbane Coalition's camp that have limited access. Each area is controlled by a different squad. Soldiers from outside these squads are not welcome in these areas (hryngars are an exception and are begrudgingly permitted anywhere).

BLOODBANE PRESENCE

The Bloodbane Coalition occupies Drootorca Cavern and maintains a camp at the cavern's center. The core of this camp is overseen by Narseigus (who's not present), and representatives from all squads can approach these locations. Around this core is a semicircle of smaller camps, each occupied and defended by a different squad and under the command of that squad's leader.

SABOTAGE POINTS

In Drootorca Cavern, the PCs perform acts of sabotage to sow discord and cause problems for the Bloodbane Coalition, with the aim of temporarily routing the army. Each act the PCs take that contributes to this goal earns the PCs Sabotage Points. If the PCs perform acts helpful to their goal not described in this adventure, award them 1–3 Sabotage Points for the act, determined by how disruptive the act was. Minor acts of sabotage, such as defeating a troop of soldiers, stealing something, or spreading a rumor, earns 1 Sabotage Point. Most acts of sabotage earn 2 Sabotage Points. Extremely disruptive acts, such as setting an entire camp on fire or successfully turning one camp against another, earns 3 Sabotage Points.

When the PCs have earned at least 20 Sabotage Points, they've temporarily routed the Bloodbane Coalition and can proceed to **Chapter 2**. The Bloodbane Coalition falls to infighting and remains in disarray for 2 days.

If the PCs' antics earn between 30–39 Sabotage Points, the Bloodbane Coalition remains in disarray for 3 days.

If the PCs have 40 Sabotage Points or more, the Bloodbane Coalition remains in disarray for 4 days.

Beyond their camp, the Bloodbane Coalition maintains a presence at various checkpoints (the ten pillars of area **A11**), one entry tunnel (area **A3**), and the Kor Well breach (area **A23**). Additionally, a small team of hryngars forage for food (area **A10**) a few hours each day, and two hryngar breccia squads patrol the cavern for danger and intruders.

Each day the PCs explore Drootorca Cavern, they must attempt a DC 24 Stealth check to avoid the notice of these patrols. As long as at least half the PCs succeed, they are not detected. If detected, the PCs encounter one patrol (**Event 3**). Soldiers can ambush and defeat these patrols, if asked. This prevents the PCs from attempting the daily skill check to avoid hryngar patrols.

EVENT 3: HRYNGAR PATROL

VARIES 8

This event only happens if the PCs fail to succeed at a daily Stealth check to avoid the patrols or go actively search for them.

Creatures: A hryngar patrol is either a team of hryngar veterans composed of two hryngar ragers

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GAMEMASTERY GUIDE NPC ADJUSTMENTS

When using one of the NPCs from the *Gamemastery Guide*, make the following adjustments to represent the NPC as a hryngar.

- Change the NPC's alignment to LE.
- Change the human trait to hryngar.
- Add Dwarven and Undercommon to the NPC's languages.
- Add darkvision and Light Blindness.
- Decrease the NPC's Speed by 5 feet.
- Add *blood vendetta*^{APG} and *paranoia* as 2nd-level occult innate spells and *sigil* as an occult innate cantrip.

and one hryngar skull collector, **or** one hryngar breccia squad (page 87) and is a Low encounter. If any hryngar patrols fail to return to their camp, the next day's patrols are additionally accompanied by a hryngar officer who commands the patrol. Additionally, the DC of Stealth checks to avoid the next day's patrols increases by 2, and the DC of all skill checks related to entering the hryngar camp or tricking hryngars increases by 2. This increases the difficulty of a hryngar patrol to a Moderate encounter. You can vary the composition of these forces using the hryngar stat blocks in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #194: *Cult of the Cave Worm*, as desired.

HRYNGAR BRECCIA SQUAD

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +18

HRYNGAR OFFICER

CREATURE 6

Captain of the guard (*Gamemastery Guide* 234)

Initiative Perception +15

HRYNGAR RAGERS (2)

CREATURE 6

Monster hunters (*Gamemastery Guide* 227)

Initiative Perception +13

HRYNGAR SKULL COLLECTOR

CREATURE 6

Executioner (*Gamemastery Guide* 235)

Initiative Perception +12

A1. RIDGE ENTRY TUNNEL

This entry tunnel is located atop a crystalline ridge that nearly reaches the cavern ceiling. If the PCs enter Drootorca Cavern using their map, this is the tunnel they enter through. It's likely the PCs use this ridge as a vantage point, meeting point, and camp while in Drootorca Cavern.

A2. RIVER ENTRY TUNNEL

A sloped path, worn through the rock wall by centuries of river water, connects Drootorca Cavern to this entry tunnel. To the north, the small tunnel opens into a spacious cave lush with fungi and small animal life. Much of the riverbed is dry, with only a small trickle of water flowing down the slope past several dead fish.

If the PCs explore upstream, they enter a long tunnel, 15 feet high, flooded to a depth of 6 feet. The tunnel dead-ends at a well-built dam, which is clearly blocking the river's course. A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Crafting check identifies the dam as hryngar craftsmanship. The water beyond the dam varies between 5 and 10 feet deep, and is thick with fungi, molds, and recently dead insects and small creatures who drowned in the floodwaters. The dam has Hardness 14, HP 56 (BT 28), and a Force Open DC of 30.

Sabotage: If the PCs destroy the dam, the river rushes into Drootorca Cavern and empties from the flooded cave. Areas **A10**, **A20**, and **A21** are flooded with 2–3 feet of water. The PCs gain 2 Sabotage Points.

Allies: The soldiers can destroy the dam with one day of work.

XP Award: Breaking the dam and flooding Drootorca Cavern earns the PCs 30 XP.

A3. PATROLLED ENTRY TUNNEL

MODERATE 8

Hryngars originally entered Drootorca Cavern through this tunnel and still maintain a permanent presence here. They've built a few short stone walls to better control the entrance and to serve as sources of cover in case of attack. Each shoddily built wall is 3 feet high. Each 5-foot stretch of wall has Hardness 10 and 40 Hit Points (BT 20).

Creatures: At any time, this entry tunnel is staffed by a single hryngar breccia squad and two giant stag beetles trained for combat and hard labor. If the soldiers spot the PCs, they order their stag beetles into the fray, then attack from afar, using the walls as cover.

HRYNGAR BRECCIA SQUAD

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +18

GIANT STAG BEETLES (2)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 41

Initiative Perception +10

Development: The hryngar fighters stationed here are a fraction of the Bloodbane Coalition's forces. Defeating these soldiers doesn't impact the Bloodbane Coalition significantly and doesn't grant Sabotage Points. If the strike force is defeated, they're replaced

by two hryngar breccia squads the next day. If the walls are destroyed, they're rebuilt within 2 days. Defeating them has the same effect as defeating a hryngar patrol.

Sabotage: To gain Sabotage Points at this location, the PCs must defeat the squad posted here and leave behind evidence indicating someone or something else is to blame. If the PCs fabricate evidence that the attack was perpetrated by dangerous creatures from the Darklands, they gain 1 Sabotage Point. If the PCs fabricate evidence that the attack was perpetrated by non-hryngars from the Bloodbane Coalition, they gain 2 Sabotage Points. To successfully fabricate evidence, a hero must succeed at a DC 24 Nature or Survival check (to frame a creature) or a DC 25 Deception, Society, or Survival check (to frame a squad). They must determine who they're trying to frame in advance (a specific creature or a specific squad). If they don't, they automatically fail this check. If the PCs succeed in their ruse, the hryngars move a platoon of several soldiers to this location, many equipped with signal horns, and remain extremely vigilant for further attacks. It should be clear to the PCs that further attacks here after this point would be incredibly dangerous and undermine the PCs' mission.

A4. LUMINOUS PILLARS (10)

Ten massive crystal pillars stretch from the cavern's floor to its ceiling, each 30 feet in diameter. The pillars shed bright light for 100 feet and dim light for an additional 100 feet.

A *luminous pillar* is a 10th-level magic object with the evocation and light traits. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 check to Identify Magic recognizes that the pillar's magic can be drained or condensed by a PC with a strong magical aptitude, requiring 10 minutes of concentration and a DC 22 Arcana, Nature, Occult, or Religion check. On a success, a PC can drain the pillar's magic to recharge a prepared spell with the light trait, allowing it to be cast again, or replenish a single spell slot in a spell repertoire as long as they have a spell with the light trait for that level. The pillar's magic can only restore a spell or spell slot of 4th level or lower. Alternatively, the PC can choose to gain a +4 circumstance bonus to future checks to drain or condense this pillar. On a critical success, the PC can condense the pillar's magic into a single shard of crystal that functions as either a 4th-level *wand of inner radiance torrent*^{SOM} or 4th-level *wand of searing light* (PC's choice). This wand matches the tradition of the spellcaster who succeeded at the skill check. Draining the pillar's magic to restore a spell or condensing it into a wand extinguishes the pillar's light.

Some members of the Bloodbane Coalition strongly dislike bright light. Hryngars avoid the pillar's light but

will enter to pursue enemies or investigate suspicious activity. Cavern trolls and caligni don't enter areas of bright light for any reason. Extinguishing a pillar's light is helpful to the Coalition and reduces the PC's Sabotage Points by 1.

A5. THE PLUNGE

This waterfall plunges into Drootorca Cavern through a shaft in the ceiling and crashes into a pool at the cavern's floor, spiraling around in a whirlpool before draining into lower caverns. The pool's basin is a glittering crystal bowl, worn smooth by the constantly churning waters. Twice each day, hryngar laborers draw water from the pool for the Bloodbane Coalition. Because the water drains from this pool so quickly, attempts to poison this water source fail.

PCs can use this location as a water source, a place to dispose of objects or corpses, and for the loud noise it produces, which can help obscure the PCs' presence.



Luminous Pillar

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A6. CRYSTAL BRIDGE

This massive oblong crystal, fused to the ground by other crystal growths, is the only bridge spanning the crevasse running across Drootorca Cavern (area A7).

A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check notices dried blood on the edges of the crystal bridge. A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Medicine or Survival check determines someone struck their head on the bridge and slid off the edge into the crevasse.

At the base of the crevasse near the crystal bridge, 150 feet down, are three bodies: two hryngar corpses and one unconscious deep gnome. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Medicine check to Recall Knowledge determines the hryngars were wounded by a thin-bladed dagger and fell from a great height, dying on impact with the ground. The dagger is nearby, a foot from the hand of the deep gnome.

Creatures: The deep gnome is **Jalell** (N female deep gnome spy; *Gamemastery Guide* 207), friend to the nykteras. She is a survivor from Guldrege who entered Drootorca Cavern a month ago and stayed with the nykteras while she regained her strength. When the Bloodbane Coalition attacked, Jalell got separated from the nykteras and fled. Two hryngar soldiers cornered her on the crystal bridge; in the course of their struggle, they all fell off the edge of the bridge. The hryngars died, but Jalell survived, and remains unconscious and heavily injured, with numerous broken bones. Jalell awakens if restored to 1 Hit Point or higher, though she's delirious with pain until restored to at least 30 Hit Points.

Jalell is a reliable source of information. She begins indifferent toward the PCs, or friendly if they can convince her they're allies of the nykteras. If friendly, Jalell can describe areas A2 through A10, though she doesn't know anything about the Bloodbane Coalition's camp or holdings. If Jalell is helpful, she joins the PCs. Jalell can perform the same tasks as a team of scouts. Additionally, Jalell is a skilled engineer and can sabotage the war machines in a squad's camp, as noted in the appropriate areas.

Sabotage: This bridge connects the Bloodbane Coalition's camp to the entry tunnel they used to reach Drootorca Cavern. If the PCs destroy this bridge, they gain 3 Sabotage Points. This bridge is massive and incredibly sturdy, requiring all of the PCs to spend one full day of effort to cause it to collapse into the crevasse. A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Crafting check determines this crystal is susceptible to sonic damage. If the bridge is dealt at least 30 points of sonic damage in one round, the sound reverberates inside the crystal. It shatters, dropping everyone on the bridge into the crevasse.

Allies: The soldiers can destroy the bridge with one day of work.

Treasure: Long ago, a thief hid their ill-gotten gains in a stone hollow at the bottom of the crevasse, wrapped in waterproof cloth. A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check discovers this hidden cache. Inside is *dust of disappearance*, a *basilisk eye*^{APG}, a *young dragon's breath potion* (brass dragon), a *potion of flying*, two *explosive ammunition* crossbow bolts, and 200 gp.

XP Award: If the PCs or their allies destroy the bridge to prevent the Coalition from retreating or gaining reinforcements, they gain 30 XP.

A7. CREVASSE

Most of the crevasse is between 140 and 200 feet deep; it runs the width of Drootorca Cavern, with jagged crystal walls. Save for the portion under the crystal bridge (area A6), only scree and dust fill the chasm.

A8. CRYSTAL THRONE

LOW 8

This intricately carved crystal platform is the throne of Estrivalis, the crystal dragon who once ruled Drootorca Cavern. An archway leads into a side cavern that once served as Estrivalis's lair. Estrivalis is a prisoner of the cavern trolls (area A22) and their lair has been thoroughly looted by the Bloodbane Coalition.

Creatures: Three cavern trolls remain in this chamber, chewing on crystals and avoiding the hryngars' military drills in the central encampment. They fiercely defend their hiding spot.

CAVERN TROLLS (3)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 265

Initiative Perception +14

Development: A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check notices a disguised passage in the back of the cave that leads to a simple den, its crystalline walls worn smooth, and its floor lined with mosses, fabric, and furs. This is the den of **Malikress** (NG male juvenile crystal dragon), Estrivalis's son. Malikress hides under the furs, believing the PCs to be members of the Bloodbane Coalition. PCs who Search the room notice his tail sticking out from the furs. If discovered, Malikress shrieks and runs around in a panic.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Diplomacy check calms Malikress and convinces him the PCs are enemies of the Bloodbane Coalition. The nykteras succeed at this check automatically. Once Malikress believes the PCs aren't his enemy, the curious and vain little dragon perks up and asks the PCs if they're here to free his parent, Estrivalis, from the mean old cavern trolls.

Malikress is too young to aid the PCs against the Bloodbane Coalition. However, if befriended, he allows the PCs and their allies to use the crystal throne and its interior chambers as a shelter.

Treasure: If the PCs agree to free Estrivalis, Malikress digs through his den and gives the PCs his “most glorious treasure,” a *jade bauble*.

A9. THE DRIP

MODERATE 8

In this area, toxic effluence (page 80) drips from the ceiling and collects in a small pool. The crystals here are dull gray and don’t reflect light. The pool is 2 feet deep, 5 feet in diameter, and is located at the bottom of an irregular shaft 20 feet deep, crisscrossed by slippery, sludge-covered crystals. In the Drip, Athletics checks to Climb are DC 27, and Acrobatics checks to Balance are DC 25. The ceiling here is low, rising only 30 feet above the top of the shaft.

Creatures: The first time the PCs enter this area, a group of caligni are here collecting samples of the toxic effluence. They attack when they notice the PCs. When the caligni callers are defeated, the remaining caligni flee back to their camp (area A19).

CALIGNI STALKERS (4)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 51

Initiative Perception +10 or Stealth +13

CALIGNI CALLERS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 40

Initiative Perception +11 or Stealth +15

Treasure: It takes a PC 10 minutes and a successful DC 27 Crafting check to collect a single dose of toxic effluence; on a critical failure the PC is exposed to the poison. After collecting 6 doses, the rest is too contaminated to be of use.

A10. FUNGAL JUNGLE

LOW 8

Molds, mosses, fungi, bioluminescent flowers called glimmer-pips, and other plants coat the crystals in this portion of the cavern, carpeting the region in greenery. Spongy moss grows in long, vine-like coils and fan-like canopies, forming a multi-tiered maze of flora. This region is a diverse ecosystem that supports numerous animal and insect species, including lizards, frogs, giant rats, and shriekers (*Gamemastery Guide* 77). It’s likely the PCs can use the jungle as a food source, as shelter, and as a site to ambush hryngar patrols.

Creatures: The most common animals in this jungle are gondrans, large ungulates with narrow frames, thick hides, forward-curving horns, and bad attitudes. Gondrans are territorial and attack any approaching

creatures. When injured, gondrans bellow for aid, drawing more to the area. Gondrans are spooked by bright light; if exposed to a sudden source of bright light, gondrans flee.

Each day, a hryngar breccia squad (page 87) comes and hunts gondrans. A pair of drainberry bushes has positioned themselves to ambush the hryngars. They’ll need to be dealt with before anyone, including the PCs, can get to the gondran herd.

DRAINBERRY BUSHES (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 99

Initiative Perception +16

Development: This site is fed by water from the dammed river. The remaining water is drying up, and if the dam isn’t destroyed, this jungle will wither and die by year’s end. If the PCs destroy the dam (area A2), portions of this region are flooded with 2–3 feet of water and the ecosystem here is no longer under threat of destruction.



Gondran

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THE BREACH



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

THE DRIP

COMMAND TENT

Sabotage: If the PCs succeed at a DC 24 Nature check while creating a sudden burst of bright light, they can urge the gondrans to stampede toward the Bloodbane Coalition, driving them through the xulgath camp (area A21), earning 2 Sabotage Points.

Allies: Scouts can cause the gondrans to stampede as a day-long task. The nykteras can convince the drainberry bushes to move, but that takes one day.

A11. CHECKPOINTS (6)

VARIES 8

Numerous watchtowers and other small defensive sites dot Droortorca Cavern, each consisting of a small hryngar-built structure utilized as a security checkpoint. Each checkpoint contains an oil-soaked brazier, which the hryngars light if they encounter trouble they're incapable of handling on their own, signaling to the Bloodbane Coalition that reinforcements are needed at the associated checkpoint. Fortunately for the PCs, the Bloodbane Coalition is an alliance built on mutual hate, not mutual cooperation. Only hryngars respond to these signal fires.

Creatures: A hryngar patrol (**Event 3**) is stationed at each checkpoint. If the hryngars believe they're going to lose, they light the brazier. Reinforcements are dispatched from the hryngar camp (area A18), arrive

in 20–40 minutes (depending on distance), and consist of an officer accompanied hryngar patrol (**Event 3**).

Sabotage: Each of these checkpoints is self-sufficient. If the PCs defeat a checkpoint's forces without the brazier being lit, or if the PCs defeat the reinforcements sent to a checkpoint and then douse the brazier, the Bloodbane Coalition loses control of this site. For every checkpoint the PCs claim, they gain 1 Sabotage Point.

If the PCs defeat a checkpoint's defenders, light the brazier, and successfully plant evidence to frame a dangerous creature or a non-hryngar squad of the Bloodbane Coalition (following the methods noted in area A3) before reinforcements arrive, the Bloodbane Coalition maintains control of the site and dispatches a messenger to notify their superiors of the betrayal. The PCs gain 2 Sabotage Points; they can gain Sabotage Points in this way once per checkpoint.

A12. SMITHY

This well-stocked smithy is constructed at the center of the Bloodbane Coalition's camp. Technically under the command of the absent Narseigus, the smithy is visited once every few days by hryngar laborers who collect the newly forged arms and armor and bring them to the hryngar camp for dispersal.

Creatures: This smithy is worked and maintained by a fire geniekin named **Halzibrecht** (LN male naari master smith), a highly skilled blacksmith Narseigus hired to outfit the Bloodbane Coalition. Halzibrecht isn't fond of his bosses—Narseigus hasn't given Halzibrecht a task worthy of his skill, and the hryngar soldiers expect him to work constantly. If the PCs are disguised as hryngars, he treats them poorly. Hryngars are only entitled to specific mundane items in the smithy, so if the PCs take any other items while in disguise, Halzibrecht scolds them, but doesn't report them to the Bloodbane Coalition.

Halzibrecht is bored and grumpy, and welcomes the distraction the PCs provide. He's even willing to sell goods to the PCs or buy from them in turn. Halzibrecht has a variety of weapons, armor, ammunition, and runes for purchase (at the GM's discretion).

Development: If the PCs ask Halzibrecht for information on the Bloodbane Coalition, he agrees to trade information for gold. Halzibrecht charges 20 gp for every piece of information he gives the PCs (he accepts items of similar value in trade). Halzibrecht can provide information on the locations in central command, how the camp functions, Narseigus, and basic information on each squad. He knows Narseigus treats his troops poorly (citing areas **A15** and **A16**, specifically) and that Narseigus moved an orc into central command so he could get a tattoo (citing area **A13**), which the orc isn't happy with.

Sabotage: If the PCs earn Halzibrecht's aid, they gain 1 Sabotage Point.

A13. RYKO'S INK DEN

This large, spartan tent is the living space of **Ryko the Inked** (CE nonbinary orc tattoo artist), a member of the orc squad of the Bloodbane Coalition who is covered head-to-toe in tattoos. Ryko is well respected for their skill in tattooing and cosmetic body modifications. Upon arriving in Drootorca Cavern, Narseigus ordered Ryko to move from their squad into central command—which insulted both Ryko and their squad leader, Sugha Sunfist.

Since arriving, Ryko was given two tasks: First, create a tattoo for Narseigus that would render him immune to intense heat—this they did with ease. Second, place a brand on every member of the Bloodbane Coalition, marking them as Narseigus's soldiers. It was this second task that rankled Ryko most, for they consider body art a sign of victories and triumphs—not of their service to the unworthy. Ryko seethes over this insult.

Creatures: Ryko treats hryngars (or PCs disguised as hryngars) with verbal hostility, upset about their continued separation from their squad and over

Narseigus's absence (by his order, no one but Narseigus can give Ryko leave of central command).

If Ryko learns the PCs seek to break apart the Bloodbane Coalition or defeat Narseigus, Ryko offers their aid. First, Ryko tells the PCs of their plight—that they're part of a squad of Gutspear orcs from the Kodar Mountains led by Sugha Sunfist. The group expected to find glorious combat against the dwarves of Rolgrimmudur, but Ryko has been forced to separate from their kin. They further explain their predicament, then note that both they and their leader, Sugha, believe Narseigus is a liar and seeks something else at the bottom of the Kor Well. Furthermore, Ryko has spent time alone with Narseigus, and has judged him selfish, pompous, and an unproven leader. They suspect only death awaits the orcs under Narseigus' command. Unfortunately, the rest of their squad remains too eager for battle to give thought to Narseigus' motives.



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FORWARD COMMAND

Areas **A12** through **A17** are in the center of the Bloodbane Coalition's camp. These areas are under the command of Narseigus and compose the Bloodbane Coalition's "Forward Command." No squad has control over this area, though high-ranking members of any squad may approach with good reason. Two hryngar breccia squads are stationed at area **A15**. If the hryngars notice anything suspicious, one strike force investigates while the other remains at their post. If the PCs engage in battle in the open in central command, it's visible from other camps that have line of sight, and quickly draws reinforcements. The PCs should aim to avoid this and flee before reinforcements arrive, lest they become overwhelmed.

Ryko suggests the PCs ally with themselves and Sugha. As Sugha remains with her squad and can't be seen with the PCs, Ryko offers to serve as go-between, passing messages between Sugha and the PCs. If the PCs agree, Ryko suggests the PCs do what they can to shatter the Bloodbane Coalition without causing harm to the orcs in their squad. When the opportunity arises, Sugha will see to it that the orcs leave with her, back to the Kodar Mountains. In exchange, Ryko will provide the PCs information useful in their sabotage.

Ryko knows all about the squads in the Bloodbane Coalition, including that the soldiers are split along squad lines and don't trust one another. They suggest the PCs use this to their advantage, leaving behind evidence that the other squads are betraying one another.

Sabotage: If the PCs gain the aid of Ryko and Sugha Sunfist, they earn 2 Sabotage Points.

Rewards: If the PCs ask Ryko about the tattoo they gave Narseigus, Ryko explains that Narseigus wanted a magic tattoo capable of rendering him immune to the heat of a volcano. Ryko obliged. Ryko is willing to give the PCs each the same tattoo, so long as they agree to kill Narseigus. This is a *volcanic vigor* tattoo (page 80). It takes 2 hours to tattoo each PC.

A14. COMMAND TENT

SEVERE 8

This large tent belongs to Narseigus, though he's not present. The entry room contains a long table and numerous chairs, serving as a meeting place for Narseigus and his squad leaders. The remainder of the tent is Narseigus's living space.

Creatures: There are four guards in the tent. The guards order any intruders who look like they belong in the Bloodbane Coalition to leave immediately,

attacking any who don't comply or don't belong. These guards fight to the death. Defeated hryngar soldiers are replaced the following day.

HRYNGAR OFFICERS (2)

CREATURE 6

Captain of the guard (*Gamemastery Guide* 234)

Initiative Perception +15

HRYNGAR VETERANS (2)

CREATURE 8

Elite gang leader (*Bestiary* 6, *Gamemastery Guide* 249)

Initiative Perception +16

Sabotage: If the PCs defeat the hryngar soldiers and successfully frame a non-hryngar squad in the Bloodbane Coalition (following the methods noted in area **A3**), they gain 2 Sabotage Points.

Treasure: A *scroll of gaseous form* and an *oil of object animation* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 258) lay forgotten at the bottom of a trunk of clothes, along with the keys to the cages in area **A16**. PCs who Search the stacked crates in the back of the room find most of them are empty. One contains a rugged canvas pouch with an iron ingot painted on the side; this is a *bag of holding type II* that holds 538 gp in assorted coins, the remainder of the army's treasury.

A15. THE WORMTOUCHED

SEVERE 8

This large cattle pen corrals two dozen wormtouched—soldiers selected from among the Bloodbane Coalition's squads and transformed into mutated, worm-like monsters by Narseigus. Each of the wormtouched are near-mindless brutes; they feel neither pain nor fear and take orders solely from Narseigus (or someone disguised as Narseigus). The wormtouched remain perfectly still unless ordered to do otherwise. Each remains identifiable as their original ancestry, despite their mutations. Their transformations are permanent barring divine intervention or high-level magic, like *wish*.

Creatures: Two hryngar breccia squads maintain a wary vigil over the wormtouched. After issuing a warning, they attack anyone they believe doesn't belong. If the PCs cause a commotion elsewhere in central command, one squad investigates, reducing the difficulty of this encounter to Low.

HRYNGAR BRECCIA SQUADS (2)

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +18

Sabotage: A hero disguised as Narseigus can open the corral and order these wormtouched to attack one squad in the Bloodbane Coalition. If they do, the PCs gain 3 Sabotage Points.

A16. THE SHAMEFUL ONES

Four locked cages sit at the center of this area, surrounded by a ring of skull-topped spikes. Each cage contains one prisoner deemed “disloyal” or “lazy” by Narseigus—a hryngar, a caligni, a xulgath, and an orc. The skulls belong to those executed by Narseigus to “enforce loyalty” among the Bloodbane Coalition. The cages have good locks; the keys are in Narseigus’s tent. No one feeds these prisoners, and they’re starving to death.

The prisoners beg for freedom when the PCs approach. If the PCs free them, they give the PCs a piece of information about central command or their associated squad in thanks, then flee Drootorca Cavern.

Sabotage: If the PCs free the prisoners, they gain 1 Sabotage Point.

A17. SUPPLY TENT

The Bloodbane Coalition’s food and water stores are kept in this simple tent. Each day, hunters bring in more food and water from outside the camp and laborers hand out food to each squad. The rest of the time, this supply tent is unoccupied and unattended.

Sabotage: If the PCs destroy the supplies, such as by setting the tent on fire or poisoning the stores, they gain 3 Sabotage Points.

A18. HRYNGAR CAMP

The hryngar camp is the largest and most orderly camp, more than double the size of the others. The camp has several major features and is under the command of the cruel **Venshaw** (LE female hryngar cult leader; *Gamemastery Guide* 230), a forgepriest of Droskar.

Beetle corral: Giant stag beetles are kept in this corral, each trained for combat and hard labor. If the PCs succeed at a DC 24 Nature check, they can spook the beetles enough to cause a distraction or, if the PCs open the corral, cause a beetle stampede through or away from the hryngar camp.

Droskar’s shrine: This stone shrine is surrounded by worktables and is currently under construction—it’s being expanded into a full temple. Hryngars toil ceaselessly at the worktables or on the construction crews in order to meet the quotas determined by their supervisors.

Tents: The hryngars sleep in large tents, each holding a dozen soldiers. If the PCs snoop through these tents, they can acquire equipment and clothing suitable for the hryngar soldiers.

Sabotage: The PCs gain 1 Sabotage Point each for the following: causing a beetle stampede or freeing the beetles, vandalizing Droskar’s shrine, and lighting one or more tents on fire.

BLOODBANE CAMPS

The Bloodbane Coalition contains five distinct, self-sufficient camps segregated by ancestry. Getting into a fight within a camp quickly draws the aid of the accompanying squad. The PCs should strive to avoid this and flee if spotted as they’ll be come quickly overwhelmed and captured.

The squads begin this adventure complacent—they aren’t expecting an attack and are indifferent toward the other squads. As the PCs gain Sabotage Points, they fall into suspicion. The squads don’t trust one another, they become harder to fool, and arguments between members of other squads are common.

Impersonating a member of a squad requires a successful DC 20 Disguise check, or DC 22 when among members of that squad. To Hide and Sneak within a camp requires a successful DC 22 Stealth check. For every 15 Sabotage Points the PCs acquire, these DCs increase by 2. If the PCs utilize a distraction in conjunction with their infiltration of a camp, such as a stampede, flood, or fire, these DCs are reduced by 4.

It’s likely the PCs attempt to pit squads against one another, perhaps by framing them for crimes, stealing objects from one camp and placing them in another, or leaving behind evidence of a squad’s presence within another camp—using black smear poison to implicate the caligni or a strong stench to implicate xulgaths, for example. Additional instances of these subterfuges that aren’t noted in the adventure should award 1 Sabotage Point.

Allies: The scouts or nykteras can spook the stag beetles, causing a stampede at one location.

A19. CALIGNI CAMP

The caligni camp is incredibly quiet. The calignis speak rarely above a whisper and move with silent grace. The camp has four major features and is under the command of the cunning engineer and alchemist **Hiseth** (NE nonbinary caligni guildmaster; *Gamemastery Guide* 245).

Barracks: Lines of cots form rows in this open space, some tidier than others.

Poison vat: A large vat contains black smear poison (*Bestiary* 51), tended periodically by a caligni alchemist. Other caligni regularly visit this site, refilling their personal stores of the injury poison. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Crafting check while adjacent to one of these vats can neutralize or sabotage the poison in the vat, causing it to either be rendered useless or

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to sublimate it on a critical success, spewing a dense cloud of caustic smoke throughout the area—the black smear poison becomes an inhaled poison with a duration measured in minutes rather than rounds.

Workshop: This large workshop is the only enclosed space in the caligni camp. The workshop has space for alchemists to craft poisons, engineers to craft traps, and teams of caligni to craft alchemical golems. At present, there is one complete alchemical golem inside the workshop. A PC who studies the golem and succeeds at a DC 24 Crafting check understands how to give the golem a simple command.

Sabotage: The PCs gain 1 Sabotage Point each for the following: sabotaging the poison vat, turning the black smear poison into toxic gas (worth 2 Sabotage Points), ordering the alchemical golem to attack the caligni or destroy objects in the workshop, and ordering the alchemical golem to attack another squad (worth 2 Sabotage Points).



Sugha Sunfist

A20. ORC CAMP

The orc camp is loud and raucous. The orcs keep irregular hours, and there's never a time where the camp settles. At all hours, orcs sleep, socialize, drink, train, and play music. The camp appears disorganized, with no clear delineation between spaces and their uses. The camp has four major features and is under the command of **Sugha Sunfist** (CN female orc executioner; *Gamemastery Guide* 235).

Kennels: 15 ramshackle steel cages contain feral bears and wolves in the process of being tamed. These cages are latched shut but not locked. If a PC opens any of these cages, the animals inside flee, attacking anyone who attempts to prevent their escape.

Sugha Sunfist's tent: Sugha is a Gutspear commander who's proven her mettle in countless battles. She and her squad joined the Bloodbane Coalition to spill the blood of their hated enemies—the dwarves. However, Sugha has come to believe Narseigus is a liar, who seeks not victory in battle but something else at the base of the Kor Well. This, coupled with her lack of faith in Narseigus's experience commanding armies, has left Sugha with ill feelings—she believes her squad will find their death in Rolgrimmur. Unfortunately, her squad is too small to turn against the hryngars and too riled up to consider retreat; if she gave such an order, her squad would overthrow her, and someone else would seize command.

If Sugha becomes aware of the PCs, likely through Ryko (area A13), she aims to ally with them. If the PCs rout the Bloodbane Coalition, Sugha has a convenient excuse to march her army away, rather than staying to await Narseigus's orders. She communicates with the PCs through Ryko. If the PCs attempt to contact her in person, she's furious—she calls them fools and tells them to leave before they get caught and she's forced to order them quartered.

If the PCs reach 15 Sabotage Points or more, haven't yet met Ryko, and Sugha could conceivably know of them or their goals, Sugha leaves camp on a hunting expedition to “blow off some steam” and attempts to track down the PCs. If she finds them, she offers them an alliance in person, telling them to send all future messages to her through Ryko.

Tents: Dozens of tents fill the rest of the camp, with campfires spaced haphazardly throughout. Orcs and their war-trained pets mill throughout the area.

Development: If the PCs destroyed the dam in area A2, the orc camp is flooded with a foot of water and the orcs are in the process of packing up and moving camp. This reduces the DC of all Deception and Stealth checks attempted in the orc camp by 4.

Sabotage: The PCs gain 1 Sabotage Point for opening the animal cages and 3 Sabotage Points if they ally with Sugha Sunfist.

A21. XULGATH CAMP

The xulgath camp is the noisiest, filled at all hours with hissing songs and howls of pain. Most notable is the stench; a creature who enters the xulgath camp must attempt a DC 24 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 1 while within the camp, or sickened 2 on a critical failure. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgath stench until they roll for initiative against a xulgath. The xulgaths sleep in shifts, often sharing the same tent while gathered around heated rocks placed in braziers to radiate warmth. The camp has five major features and is under the command of the sadistic **Soulshredder** (CE male xulgath demonologist; *Gamemastery Guide* 231).

Altar: A gore-encrusted altar to Zevgavizeb serves as the focal point of this camp. Ceremonies, chants, and sacrifices occur here under Soulshredder's watchful gaze.

Captives: Bound animals, each tethered to a large stake, are imprisoned here to be used as food or sacrifices at Soulshredder's whim. These animals were collected from the fungal jungle (area A10) and are primarily gondrans, but among them is **Baza** (CG bigender nyktera mediator), the sibling of Botabi and Binx in need of rescue. Before the PCs can approach Baza, they need a distraction.

Mutants: Sometimes Soulshredder leads the xulgaths in a ceremony not to sacrifice a creature, but to mutate them into violent monsters. Five mutated gondrans are kept in individual pens in this area. If freed, they attack the xulgaths unless otherwise led to another camp.

Development: If the PCs destroyed the dam in area A2, the xulgath camp is flooded with 2 feet of water. This makes the xulgaths more relaxed, reducing the DC of all Deception and Stealth checks attempted in the xulgath camp by 2.

Sabotage: The PCs gain 1 Sabotage Point each for the following: vandalizing or destroying the altar, free the captive animals, free Baza, freeing the mutated gondrans, and freeing the mutated gondrans in another squad's camp (worth 2 Sabotage Points).

A22. CAVERN TROLL CAMP

The troll camp is the smallest, containing only nine cavern trolls (*Bestiary* 2 265). Due to the camp's minimal numbers, the PCs may be able to defeat the entire squad, though they'll first need to lure some away to do so, as fighting all of the cavern trolls at once will likely prove fatal. The crystals in this area are damaged, as cavern trolls consume crystals as food. The camp has one major feature and is under the command of **Urgu** (CE female elite cavern troll; *Bestiary* 2 6, 265). The trolls avoid (and flee from) bright light. They're superstitious and easily fooled.

Captive dragon: Estrivalis (NG nonbinary adult crystal dragon; *Bestiary* 2 92) is muzzled and tightly bound. Approaching the dragon in this small, spartan camp requires a distraction elsewhere. If the PCs free Estrivalis, the dragon attacks the cavern trolls, killing two, then retreats to their lair in area A8 to reunite with Malikress. If the PCs later speak with Estrivalis in their lair, the dragon is grateful for the rescue and agrees to aid the dwarven armies in counterattacking the Bloodbane Coalition.

If the PCs take a direct approach, they can ambush Urgu and her two cavern troll companions (a moderate

encounter) before freeing Estrivalis but will then have to then face the remaining cavern trolls in the camp.

Sabotage: The PCs gain 2 Sabotage Points each for freeing Estrivalis and defeating or scaring away all the cavern trolls.

Allies: Once Estrivalis is freed, they go on daily hunts for hryngar patrols, negating the need to sneak around them or send the dwarven soldiers to intercept them.



Estrivalis

A23. BREACH MODERATE 8

The breach is heavily fortified, patrolled by several hryngars and a toilforged sentinel. When the PCs rout the Bloodbane Coalition, these soldiers return to their camp or flee, leaving few soldiers behind. At this point, the PCs can

attempt to approach and sneak through the breach—a drilled tunnel through the cavern wall that leads to the Kor Well.

Creatures: A toilforged sentinel and its two handlers remain; they fight to the death to prevent trespassers from entering the breach.

TOILFORGED SENTINEL

CREATURE 8

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Initiative Perception +14

HRYNAR OFFICER

CREATURE 6

Captain of the guard (*Gamemastery Guide* 234)

Initiative Perception +15

HRYNAR SKULL COLLECTOR

CREATURE 6

Executioner (*Gamemastery Guide* 235)

Initiative Perception +12

Development: When the PCs defeat the hryngars and their toilforged sentinel, they can pass through the breach and enter the Kor Well.

Concluding the Chapter

Once the PCs have decided to enter the Kor Well, proceed to Chapter 2. The Bloodbane Coalition won't stay disorganized for long, and reorganizes under the Coalition leadership. As the PCs enter the drilled breach into the well, a group of hryngar assassins tasked with finding a way to destroy the well's magical seal notice the PCs and follow them into the breach. See Chapter 2 for details.

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CHAPTER 2: KOR WELL

The Kor Well is a 300-foot-wide, 1,500-foot-vertical shaft that connects Avernakkus and the realm of Felgunn beyond to Rolgrimmur. The breach punctures the Well's northeast wall approximately 900 feet below Rolgrimmur and 600 feet above its base. If a PC falls from this height, the landing will likely prove fatal, barring any precautions they take. From this entry point, a skilled climber can climb up to the top of the shaft in about 80 minutes, or climb down the shaft to the bottom in approximately 30 minutes. Unless otherwise noted, the Kor Well is dark, and a character must succeed at a DC 22 Athletics check to Climb.

Yet those are only the Kor Well's physical parameters. This shaft existed long before the dwarves set out

on their Quest for Sky and served an important metaphysical function for spirits traveling from the depths of the Darklands to the surface. While some spirits are stationary, embodying the physical essence of a forest or boulder or lake, others are transient. These spirits travel through streams, wind patterns, continents, planets, solar systems, or even galaxies (all of which are also spirits). They passed through this area often, thereby connecting earth to sky, and they were content.

Before the dwarves arrived, the Kor Well was a winding series of tunnels, some too cramped for most humanoids to traverse and others too vast in scope. They set about manually chipping away the stone and creating more pleasant routes up through the

passages, but in doing so, they upset some of the spirits who lived there, giving the route a reputation for being haunted. Rivethuns were called in to act as emissaries to the spirits and tasked with negotiating a passage to the surface. Conversely, the spirits were frustrated that dwarves had carved their stone and disrupted the natural flow of energy from deep in the earth to the open sky.

Rivethuns arranged a compromise: rather than build in steps and highways, unnatural formations of stone that were repellent to the spirits, dwarves and spirits could work together to carve out a vast well, a circular chasm that allowed the spirits to travel unimpeded. The dwarves would build a mechanical lift out of a massive stone chunk already found at the bottom of the Well. This way, dwarves could traverse the distance freely but would only minimally impact the natural flow of spirit energy. Both sides agreed and got to work. Rivethuns set about molding and shaping the stone with the help of the spirits who lived there; they widened the shaft and made room for the lift. Meanwhile, dwarven engineers carved out the selected slab of stone and started to create the gears and tracks they would need to move the several tons of rock.

By the time they finished constructing the Kor Well, other avenues to the surface had been found. However, this new passage allowed faster and easier travel between the surface and the various fortresses built by dwarves on their Road to Sky. For decades, dwarves and spirits alike traveled freely through the Kor Well.

Eventually, those dwarves evacuated the last of their Nar-Voth strongholds. Dwarven leadership ordered the Kor Well to be sealed so that none of the enemies they still had in the Darklands could follow them. Though Rivethuns protested, the other dwarven leaders proved adamant. Once again, Rivethuns compromised to try and satisfy the needs of both dwarves and spirits: they would seal the Well with magic to prevent any living creatures from ascending it while still allowing spirits to find ways around the magical barriers. Three Rivethuns, one from each major path of Rivethun practice, would be assigned to keep watch over the Well and ensure the spirits there weren't further disturbed.

The Seal: The uppermost portion of the Kor Well is sealed by three interwoven magical effects just below the Kor Well lift, preventing access to Rolgrimmur. These seals are composed of three luminous effects, one blue, one red, and one yellow. Each seal is an intricate dwarven pattern that, when combined, forms complex knotwork. This design is an ancient Rivethun image that represents the interconnectivity of life, spirits, and Rivethuns. Currently, all three seals are active and glow brightly. All three can be deactivated in different wings of the Kor Well dungeons, and as the PCs disrupt their enchantments, these seals dissipate. When all three seals are deactivated, the PCs can signal General Sagginsdotter. As the general activates the Kor Well lift and brings her soldiers down to Drootorca Cavern to counterattack the Bloodbane Coalition, the PCs should turn their attention to descending the Kor Well to chase down Narseigus.

Each of the three seals was created by a Rivethun specializing in a different path using different methods, and each has different requirements for deactivation. After sealing the Kor Well, these Rivethuns created a fourth wing in the shaft, where they lived the remainder of their lives, entombing one another upon their deaths and ensuring that their spirits would continue to protect the Well.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

With the Bloodbane Coalition in disarray, the PCs enter the Kor Well. Amid the well's ancient complexes, they find and dispel three magical seals, each placed by a powerful Rivethun practitioner. To remove the Emissary Seal, the PCs must earn the trust of a lampad and purge the growing corruption in another region of the Well. To remove the Involutionist Seal, the PCs must barter with a spirit and sacrifice something dear to them. To remove the Invoker Seal, the PCs must reunite the fragmentary essences of the animalistic spirits invoked to create the seal. Throughout their exploration, the PCs contend with ancient dwarven traps and guardians, hauntings, and other residents of the Kor Well. With luck, the PCs remove these seals with enough spare time for Rolgrimmur's forces to descend the unsealed Kor Well and launch a counteroffensive against the Bloodbane Coalition.

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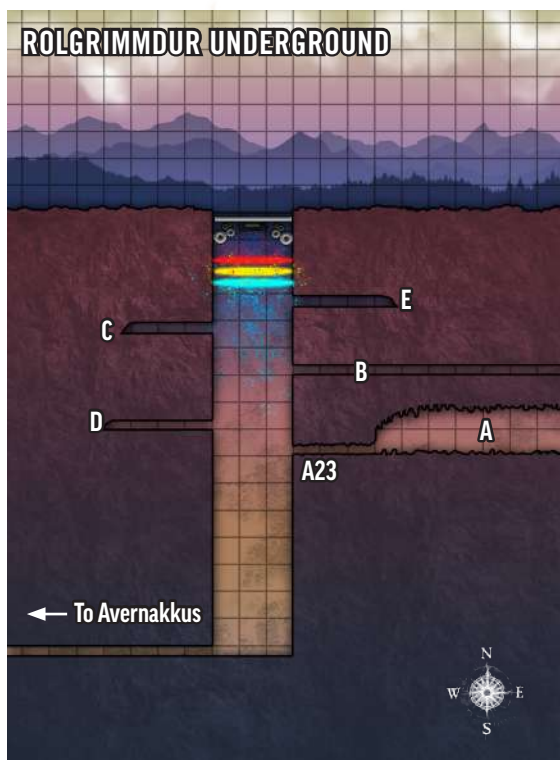
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Each of the seals—a blue seal at the bottom, a yellow seal in the middle, and a red seal at the top—performs a different function in an attempt to ward off invaders. If the PCs decide to ascend the Well to investigate them, they first cross through the blue Emissary Seal and must attempt a DC 28 Fortitude save against *earthbind*. If they pass beyond this seal, they are then affected by the yellow Invoker Seal and must attempt a DC 28 Fortitude save against *baleful polymorph*, which attempts to transform them into a bat; on a critical failure, the effect lasts for 10 minutes. If they insist on continuing, they finally reach the red Involutionist Seal and must attempt a DC 28 Fortitude save against *spirit blast*. For each save against a seal's effect, that creature takes a cumulative -2 status penalty (maximum -4) to further saving throws against any subsequent effects for 1 hour.

The Dungeons: There are four dungeon wings in the Kor Well: three wings contain seals, and the final wing contains a living space turned tomb. These wings aren't connected to each other except by the Kor Well, meaning that the PCs must climb or fly between these wings under their own power. The breach from Drootorca Caverns is in the east wall, 600 feet above the Well's base. The tomb wing is closest: it is located in the southeast wall and is 300 feet higher than the breach (900 feet above the Well's base). The Involutionist Wing, on the other hand, is across from the breach: it's in the southwest wall, 800 feet above

the Well's base. The Emissary Wing is in the northwest wall, 400 feet higher than the breach (1,000 feet above the Well's base), and glows faintly. Lastly, the Invoker Wing is in the northeast wall, 600 feet higher than the breach (1,200 feet above the Well's base). The order in which the PCs visit these wings is up to them. The PCs can come and go from the wings as often as they please and need not complete a wing on their first visit.

Time: The PCs have a variable amount of time to spend in the Kor Well before the Bloodbane Coalition regroups. At this point, whether or not the PCs have removed all three seals, the PCs must contact General Sagginsdotter. If the PCs wait too long, the Bloodbane Coalition will be prepared for the dwarven troops from Rolgrimmur, leading to many additional lives lost. The amount of time the PCs have varies between 3 to 5 days, as determined by their total Sabotage Points (see the sidebar on page 15 for more information).

At the end of this time, the PCs hear war drums beating from within Drootorca Cavern that echo out into the Kor Well. This is **Event 7: Drums of War**, and it signals that the PCs' time in the Kor Well is coming to an end. The following day, a Bloodbane Coalition attack force exits the breach and hunts down the PCs; this is **Event 8: Rolgrimmur's Arrival** and serves as a final warning to the PCs. If, by this point, the PCs have alerted General Sagginsdotter, the dwarves will soon arrive on the ancient lift and attack the Bloodbane Coalition, ending the threat they pose to Rolgrimmur and allowing the PCs to continue past the army into Avernakus. If the PCs still delay in alerting General Sagginsdotter, they should face further attack from forces that are increasingly more challenging and come more often. These further forces are left to you to devise but should clearly show the PCs that the Bloodbane Coalition will overwhelm them in time if they don't call for General Sagginsdotter and her troops.

EVENT 6: THE FIRST ASSAULT

MODERATE 9

This event happens after the PCs have moved on from Drootorca cavern and have decided to enter the Kor Well. It reminds the PCs that the Bloodbane Coalition is still a threat even if they're in disarray and provides them with a source of climbing equipment.

Creatures: As the PCs leave Drootorca Cavern, a group of hryngar assassins spots them entering the Kor Well. The attack force tracks down and ambushes the PCs in whatever area of the Kor Well they're in. This initial attack force consists of four hryngar assassins. If the PCs take their time before entering the Kor Well, the assault team ambushes them while they're lingering in the tunnel (area A23).

HRYNGAR ASSASSINS (4)

CREATURE 7

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Initiative Stealth +19

Rivethun Tomb

The Rivethun tomb is where Rivethun practitioners who stayed behind to look after the Kor Well lived out their daily lives and planned on being interred. The stone here has been lovingly worked and decorated with plentiful artistic flourishes, including detailed carvings and bas-reliefs of subterranean animals and spirit entities.

These living areas have long been emptied, leaving the tomb dark and eerily quiet. Unless otherwise noted, the following areas are dark with a ceiling height of 20 feet. All doors are unlocked, except for the tomb entrance (area B1) and the vaults (areas B3 and B4). They have Hardness 14 and 56 Hit Points (BT 28; DC 35 Athletics check to Force Open).

B1. ENTRY DOORS

TRIVIAL 9

The tomb's entrance is 300 feet above the breach from Drootorca Caverns, on the southeast wall of the Kor Well. The passage cuts through the rock for 100 feet, then takes a hard turn, proceeding another 100 feet before ending at a large stone door carved with geometric interlocking patterns. The dwarves who built this place suspected this door might never be opened again after they closed it; they expected to die here, within the place they helped to build and fought so hard for. They also left a way to open the door in the event that someone might come back to pay their respects. This door's decorations are a simple puzzle lock. Three portions of the interlocking patterns don't line up quite right, and if each of these pieces are rotated and properly aligned, the door unlocks and can be pushed open. The door has Hardness 14 and 56 Hit Points (BT 28; DC 35 Athletics check to Force Open). Each time the door is damaged, the hall's trap triggers.

A hero who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search, a DC 24 Architecture Lore or Engineering Lore check, or a DC 25 Crafting check identifies the three misaligned pieces of stonework. Properly realigning one of the three pieces of stone requires a PC to succeed at a DC 24 Architecture Lore or Engineering Lore check, a DC 28 Crafting check to Repair, or a DC 26 Thievery check to Disable Device. Each time a hero fails a check to realign one of the stones, they trigger the trap.

Hazards: Whenever the door is damaged, or a hero fails a check to open or Force Open the door, the hallway in front of the door fills with an explosion of magical electricity.



ELECTRIFIED HALL

HAZARD 9

ELECTRICITY **EVOCATION** **MAGICAL** **TRAP**

Stealth DC 33 (expert)

Description Runes hidden in the door's carvings blast lightning down the hall.

Disable DC 30 Thievery (master) to scratch out the runes, or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 28) to counteract the runes

Synaptic Jolt ⚡ (arcane, electricity, evocation, nonlethal)

Trigger A creature damages the door, fails to Force Open the door, or fails a check to realign the stonework keys;

Effect Electricity fills the hallway and affects all creatures inside it, who must attempt a DC 28 Reflex save.

Critical Success No effect.

Success The trap deals 1d12+5 electricity damage.

Failure The trap deals 2d12+10 electricity damage, and the creature becomes clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 for 1 hour.

Critical Failure The trap deals 4d12+20 electricity damage, and the creature becomes clumsy 2 and stupefied 2 for 1 hour.

Reset automatic

B2. CRYPT

SEVERE 9

This wide crypt contains three stone coffins, each in a distinct wing and bearing a plaque naming the interred. Behind each coffin is a painted stone statue of a dwarf mounted on a stone plinth. Each unique carving wears vestments painted with a different color: one blue, one red, and one yellow.

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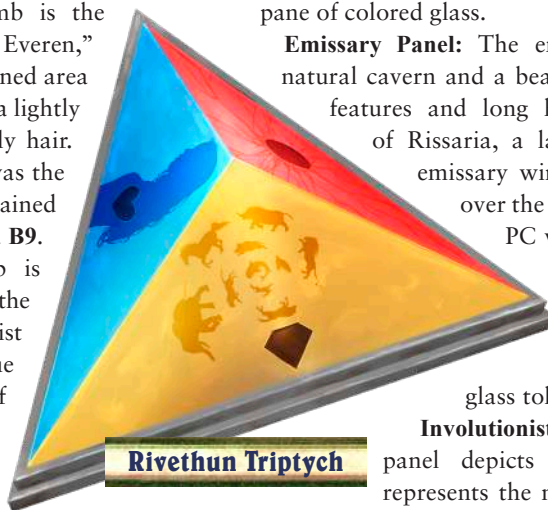
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East Tomb: The east tomb is the resting place of “The Many,” the Rivethun invoker who designed area E. The statue is yellow and depicts an armored, androgynous dwarf with various animalistic features. Inside the coffin is the Many’s skeletal corpse (which lacks animalistic skeletal structures).

South Tomb: The south tomb is the intended resting place of “Talaine Everen,” the Rivethun emissary who designed area C. The statue is blue and depicts a lightly armored female dwarf with curly hair. The coffin is empty, as Talaine was the last to die and no one else remained to inter her. Her corpse is in area B9.

West Tomb: The west tomb is the resting place of “Gaeldred the Warden,” the Rivethun involutionist who designed area D. The statue is red and depicts a male dwarf with a long beard and gaunt frame wearing exquisite robes and carrying a fine staff. Inside the coffin is Gaeldred’s ancient corpse, now nothing but bone, dried hair, and disintegrating fabric.

Creatures: The statues are animated. These constructs attack when a hero attempts to open a stone coffin or any of the interior doors in this room. They fight until destroyed. If the PCs have deactivated any seals in the Kor Well, they likely possess a colored glass token. A monument statue ignores any PC visibly carrying a glass token of the same color as the statue.



Rivethun Triptych

features a different carved image, each representing one of the Rivethun seals. Hidden in each image is a depression perfectly sized to fit one of the glass tokens found throughout the Kor Well dungeons. When the appropriate glass token is placed in this depression, that panel of the triptych changes, becoming a smooth pane of colored glass.

Emissary Panel: The emissary panel depicts a natural cavern and a beautiful woman with elven features and long hair. This image is that of Rissaria, a lampad who lives in the emissary wing (area C) and watches over the emissary seal (area C4). A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the crying woman as a lampad. The blue heart glass token fits in this panel.

Involutionist Panel: The involutionist panel depicts a shattered mirror. It represents the need to willingly sacrifice something dear to you to deactivate the involutionist seal in area D8. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Society check believes the image represents self-reflection and personal sacrifice. The red circle glass token fits in this panel.

Invoker Panel: The invoker panel depicts a whirlwind with stylized animals hidden amid the wind. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search notices six animals hidden in the image: bear, bird, fish, lizard, monkey, and rabbit. The PCs must catch the echoes of these animals in area E to deactivate the invoker seal in area E8. The yellow diamond token fits in this panel.

Hazard: Wards placed by Gaeldred shield this room from the unworthy. The trap considers PCs who have Little Ripple’s Blessing as Rivethun.

MONUMENT STATUES (3)

CREATURE 8

N LARGE CONSTRUCT EARTH MINDLESS

Elite giant animated statue (*Bestiary* 2 131)

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: Gaeldred was buried with his *staff of illumination*. The Many was buried with their *armbands of athleticism*. The brazier of each animated statue stays lit due to a *flaming rune* in the basin of each brazier (3 total).

B3. TRIPTYCH

TRIVIAL 9

The door to this chamber is locked with a good lock (five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock). Talaine’s body in area B9 has the key. If anyone who isn’t a Rivethun practitioner enters this room, they trigger the trap.

A triptych (a large, three-sided pyramidal stone) occupies this chamber. Each side of the triptych

REPELLING SURGE

HAZARD 9

EVOCATION MAGICAL MENTAL TRAP

Stealth DC 30 (master)

Description A shockwave of energy surges out from the room’s center.

Disable DC 29 Arcana (expert) to fool the wards, DC 31 Thievery (master) to disable the wards, or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 28) to counteract the wards

Repel ☞ (arcane, evocation, force) **Trigger** A creature that isn’t a Rivethun practitioner enters the room; **Effect** The trap deals 5d4+12 force damage to the triggering creature (DC 32 basic Fortitude save). On a failed save, they’re additionally knocked back 10 feet.

Reset automatic

Development: When all three glass tokens are placed in the triptych, the spirits of the Rivethun dwarves who created these dungeons appear in the chamber, each clearly matching one of the statues from area **B2**. These spirits regard the PCs for a few moments, then fade away one by one with a nod or other gesture of acceptance. When the last spirit has left, the triptych opens, revealing a *miter of communion* (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 123).

B4. VAULT

TRIVIAL 9

The door to this vault is locked with a good lock (five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock). Talaine in area **B9** has the key. If anyone who isn't a Rivethun practitioner enters this room, they trigger the trap.

This vault was once used to store valuable ingots and materials for crafting. Over the years, these materials ran out, and the Rivethuns who once resided here placed valuable objects they no longer had use for inside it, using it as a storage space.

Hazard: Wards placed by Gaeldred shield this room from the unworthy. The trap considers PCs who have Little Ripple's Blessing as Rivethun.

REPELLING SURGE

HAZARD 9

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Stealth DC 30 (master)

Treasure: This vault contains an *anointed waterskin* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 179), a *forge warden*, a *javelin of lightning*, a *greater shrinking potion*, one adamantine chunk, one mithral chunk, and a pouch of gemstones worth 250 gp.

B5. KITCHEN

MODERATE 9

This large kitchen is well stocked with dishes, cutlery, pots, and cooking utensils. Two large ovens, a deep washbasin, and table complete this area. A pantry along the east wall is magical and is packed with fresh foods, including various meats, vegetables, fruits, eggs, spices, and milk. It replenishes with raw ingredients every 24 hours, and food kept within it never spoils. Food removed from this pantry begins to age as normal. This pantry can't be removed from the kitchen.

While this kitchen was always well-stocked with food, the pantry only produces raw ingredients, necessitating the need for a cook. This task fell to Gaeldred, an involutionist who possessed the ability to animate the spirits within inanimate objects. During his life, the kitchen's components cooked as much as Gaeldred did, dancing to his whims and

creating magnificent feasts. With Gaeldred's passing, the kitchen became a dour place. The cutlery clatters when touched, the dishware shuffles around aimlessly, and the ovens are dangerously territorial.

Creatures: The animated ovens attack any living creatures that open the pantry, approach the south doors, or move adjacent to the west wall where the ovens rest. The ovens fight to their destruction.

ANIMATED OVENS (2)

CREATURE 9

N LARGE CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Variant animated furnace (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 18)

Initiative Perception +15

B6. WORKSHOP

This well-used workshop contains a forge, countless tools, and a worktable. Long abandoned even before the last of the Rivethun practitioners here died, it no longer contains any usable crafting materials that have survived the test of time.

Treasure: On one of the workbenches, still held in an iron vice, is a singular runestone. It holds one of Talaine's inventions, a *cavern's heart* armor property rune (page 81). At your discretion, the PCs can gather any sterling artisan's tools of their choice from this room.

B7. FOUNTAIN

This circular room features a fine stone fountain with three tiered basins, each carved with images of underground flora and fauna. The water from this fountain is fed by an underground spring and is clean, clear, and very cold. This fountain served as the primary water source for the Rivethun dwarves. A lavatory is located off this room to the south.

B8. BEDROOMS

Three small bedrooms line this hall, each once home to one of the Rivethun dwarves and containing a bed, desk, and chair. Two of the rooms (areas **B8a** and **B8b**) were tidied after the death of their occupant. The third, area **B8c**, remains in slight disarray.

B8a: This bedroom belonged to Gaeldred the Warden, a Rivethun famed for his ability to connect with inanimate objects. He used these skills to animate and cleanse objects. Along with his bonded spirit (which was formed from a piece of his own soul), Gaeldred collected and contained cursed objects, destroying them when possible, or sealing them away. At the time of his isolation within the Kor Well, Gaeldred possessed four cursed objects: *boots of dancing*^{GMG}, *demon's knot* (page 79), *gloves of carelessness*^{GMG}, and a *ring of truth*^{GMG}. The desk in

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Gaeldred's room contains a pile of papers chronicling his quest to destroy these objects, with all but one indicated as destroyed within his lifetime. The last cursed object, a gold and ruby necklace Gaeldred referred to as the "demon's knot," remained cursed at the time of his death (when his notes abruptly cease). Gaeldred's notes indicate that the necklace contained a bound demon (named Kaivirris) capable of influencing mortals who drew near the necklace. Gaeldred had suppressed the necklace's powers and hidden it within the dungeon he built (area D6). Gaeldred's final notes worry over what will happen when his suppression wards fade with his life.

B8b: This bedroom belonged to the Many, a Rivethun who bonded with dozens of different animals during their lifetime and could adopt the forms and powers of each. Before agreeing to protect the Kor Well, The Many enjoyed exploring Golarion's surface and took great joy in discovering new environments, observing the creatures that lived within them. When they completed their wing of the dungeon (area E), The Many retired to isolation here, and they spent the better part of their time soaring through the Kor Well or drawing the places they'd visited and animals they'd bonded with. The walls are plastered with these charcoal sketches. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search, or a DC 25 Nature or Survival check, notices that a few animals and sceneries pop up with regularity. The biomes include an icy lakeside surrounded by snow mounds, a golden desert with red rocky outcroppings, a jungle with red-barked trees, a field of wildflowers and tall prairie grasses, and an underground river. Each of these locations has been recreated on a much smaller scale in area E. The animals include an owl, fish, lizard, monkey, polar bear, and rabbit. These animals are the same ones depicted on the triptych in area B3 and the animal echoes the PCs must catch in area E to deactivate the invoker seal in area E8.

B8c: This room belonged to Talaine, a Rivethun emissary who bonded with numerous spirits—most of stone and earth. To Talaine, the most important of these spirits was Rissaria, her lampad beloved. Talaine was a skilled engineer and avid spelunker who never felt comfortable on the surface; thus, her selection as one of the Rivethuns to create the Kor Well's seals was a forgone conclusion. When Talaine relocated to the Kor Well, Rissaria came with her, bonding with the natural cavern within which Talaine placed her seal. Throughout her life, Talaine visited Rissaria often, but by her twilight years, she became unable to make the trek across the Kor Well, and Rissaria never saw her again. Talaine's room is dotted with countless stone

statuettes of Rissaria, which Talaine started crafting in her old age. The room is messy with a half-finished statuette on the desk and a variety of stoneworking tools scattered around.

Treasure: A PC who Searches through Gaeldred's papers discovers a *scroll of spiritual guardian* (5th). When this scroll is activated, the spiritual guardian looks like Gaeldred and wields a staff. This spiritual guardian deals an additional 1d8 good damage against fiends.

A PC who Searches the Many's room finds a variety of mundane feathers, clumps of shed fur, and discarded reptile skins. One of these feathers is a *feather token (whip)*, and one is a *stormfeather*^{SoM}.

A PC who Searches Talaine's room discovers a greater eagle-eye elixir on her desk and an extreme climbing kit under the bed.

B9. LIVING SPACE

This living space has comfortable seating, a small table, and a variety of simple entertainments, among them dice, cards, a few board games, and even musical instruments. A skeletal corpse sits in one of the chairs, hands still clutching a pendant hanging from their neck. These remains were Talaine, who died after her compatriots and was never interred.

Treasure: One of the board games is crafted from semi-precious stones and is worth 150 gp. Two of the instruments are of fine quality: a virtuoso hand drum and a virtuoso lute. The key to areas B3 and B4 is in Talaine's pocket. She also clutches a *moderate wardrobe stone* (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Grand Bazaar* 51), and she still wears her *winged boots*.

Development: Talaine wears a fine silver necklace with an uncut crystal pendant. If the PCs speak with Rissaria in area C6, she asks that this necklace be returned to her. See area C6 for more information.

If the PCs respectfully inter Talaine in her coffin in area B2, the PCs hear an audible sigh of contentment from the lifeless skeleton, then feel a peace settle over them. The next time each PC would attempt a Will saving throw, they gain a +2 status bonus to their save.

Emissary Wing

The Emissary Wing is a natural cave system with portions purposefully hewn to create artificial features and more comfortable environments for this wing's main inhabitant: the lampad **Rissaria** (CN female lampad guardian). Talaine built this wing for the Kor Well's magic seal but expanded it into a living space for her girlfriend. Though she intended to find Rissaria a new place to live before her death, illness struck quickly and prevented her from helping the fey

woman move on. For centuries, Rissaria has lived here alone with her grief. Two wandering spirits eventually took notice of her and lingered as unwanted visitors.

The ground is smooth, and the ceilings average 15 feet in height. Blue crystals embedded regularly within the walls cast dim light throughout this wing. The sound of dripping water echoes throughout the cavern.

C1. OBSERVATORY

MODERATE 9

This wide landing overlooks the Kor Well and serves Rissaria as an observatory. From her stone throne on the balcony, she can view the Well and the entrances to the other wings. While Talaine lived, Rissaria frequented this balcony often, but in the centuries since her passing, Rissaria has grown despondent—she knows in her heart that Talaine is dead and that she missed her chance to say goodbye. After a few decades, Rissaria closed the entry doors between this area and area C2 and hasn't opened them since.

Creatures: When Rissaria closed the door to the Kor Well, her heart broke as she accepted that she would never see her beloved again. Her potent grief and frustrated anger at the situation imprinted itself on two wandering spirits who had become corrupted by Kaivirris. Between these two powerful forces, they manifested as types of animate dreams that reflected Rissaria's anguish. The dreams attacked Rissaria and sent her into a permanent nightmare; they now wander the Emissary Wing, appearing as twisted reflections of Rissaria, either weeping or enraged. The heartbroken dream frequently comes out to the ledge to sit in the chair and weep loudly, pining for her lost love. The enraged dream enjoys following the other dream to taunt her pain. Both dreams look like Rissaria with tears streaking down their faces.

Once the PCs have reached the double-doors leading into the wing, loud crying sounds come from the observation chair, and moments later, the heartbroken dream appears. This dream ignores the PCs and continues crying out for her beloved when the enraged dream appears and starts to admonish the heartbroken dream. After a moment of this routine, the two turn toward the PCs and start blaming them for their beloved's death, attempting to pull them into their nightmares. Both fight until their destruction.

ENRAGED DREAM

CREATURE 9

Variant elite animate dream (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 18)

Initiative Perception +16

Occult Innate Spells DC 28; **4th** *blistering invective*^{APG}, *dimension door* (at will), *nightmare*, *phantom pain*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** *fear*

EMISSARY WING



HEARTBROKEN DREAM

CREATURE 9

Variant elite animate dream (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 18)

Initiative Perception +16

Occult Innate Spells DC 28; **4th** *agonizing despair*^{APG}, *chroma leach*^{APG}, *dimension door* (at will), *dull ambition*^{APG}, *nightmare*; **3rd** *curse of lost time*^{APG}

C2. GROTTO

This cave contains a long, calm pool dotted with aquatic plants and home to a variety of small fish. Stairs hewn into the stone on the pool's northeast and southwest sides lead up: one to an arch leading into area C3 and one that dead-ends at a stone wall that radiates a transmutation aura. A PC who examines the dead end and succeeds at a DC 26 check to Identify Magic determines that the wall is solid stone but can transform into a passageway for a specific individual.

Development: If Rissaria places her hand upon the dead-end and wills it to open, the wall transforms into a short stone passage that leads to area C4.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search notices a blue-green *elemental gem* and a *greater retrieval prism*^{SoM} at the bottom of the pool.

C3. MEMORIAL

TRIVIAL 9

This cave is hewn stone and serves as a memorial to Talaine, who Rissaria accurately believes is dead. A simple statue of Talaine that lacks any fine details stands at the south end of the memorial; Rissaria

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made it using *shape stone* spells. The walls in this chamber are completely lined with tiny crystals, which glow in different shades of yellow, green, and blue. These steady lights form a strange mosaic, depicting moments from Talaine and Rissaria's life together that were special to Rissaria—a pair of clasped hands, the exchange of a necklace, Talaine's smiling face.

Hazard: Rissaria has mourned the loss of her beloved here for ages, and that sorrow has seeped into the very stones. When a living creature other than Rissaria approaches the statue, it conjures a manifestation of this deep sadness.

UNBEARABLE SORROW

HAZARD 9

HAUNT MENTAL

Stealth DC 30 (master)

Description The PCs hear the sound of sobbing and feel an overwhelming sense of sorrow, as if they'd lost something more precious to them than their own life.

Disable DC 32 Deception or Performance (master) to laugh away the sadness, DC 31 Occultism (expert) to banish the psychic imprint, DC 33 Thievery (master) to disperse the emotional energy

Mourn ⤿ (enchantment, mental, occult) **Trigger** A living creature approaches the statue; **Effect** The trap deals 4d10+14 mental damage to all creatures in the room (DC 28 basic Will save). On a failed save, a creature additionally falls prone and begins to weep, taking 1d10 persistent mental damage.

Reset The trap resets automatically after 24 hours.

Treasure: Several of the crystals in the memorial appear to have burned out and no longer glow; they appear as if smoke writhes within. In fact, they've captured the ambient fear caused by Rissaria's eternal nightmares and have become *fear gems*, seven in total.

C4. EMISSARY SEAL

This circular room has a perfectly smooth dome ceiling. Lines of glowing blue light twisted into a complex interlocking pattern decorate the floor. Similar lights flow across the ceiling and walls, shifting continually into different shapes and forms. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search notices vague images created by the flowing lights: images of Rissaria. These images are clues that show how to deactivate the seal. While these clues weren't left intentionally by the Rivethuns, the nature of the seal's creation became an integral part of the seal—impossible to erase without erasing the seal itself.

To remove this seal, Rissaria must enter the seal and will it to deactivate. She must do this task from the heart, meaning that coercion or violence aren't suitable methods for deactivating this seal. Rissaria agrees to deactivate this seal for the PCs if they perform as few tasks for her, as noted in area C6.

Development: When Rissaria deactivates the emissary seal, there's a burst of blue light. The lights all around this chamber then go out, and in the center of the room hovers a glowing glass token shaped like a heart that fits in the palm of a PC's hand. This blue glass token can be used to open the triptych in area B3.

XP Award: The PCs earn 80 XP for releasing the emissary seal.

C5. GLYPTODONT DEN

LOW 9

This V-shaped cave is strewn with rubble and serves as the den of Rissaria's pets: two animalistic earth elementals named Fissure and Quake. The ground in the area is difficult terrain.

Creatures: The glyptodons are particularly protective of Rissaria and don't understand why she won't wake up. They attack anyone who enters their den. They flee—either to the corners of their den or to Rissaria in area C6—when reduced to 25 Hit Points or fewer.

FISSURE AND QUAKE

CREATURE 8

Granite glyptodons (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 109)

Initiative Perception +17

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +6, **Int** -4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +0

C6. RISSARIA'S DEMESNE

This humid cave is incredibly beautiful with a natural hot spring, glittering crystal formations, and a few pillars formed from the merger of stalactites and stalagmites. Rissaria, the lampad life partner of Talaine and protector of the emissary seal, lays on her bed atop a series of raised ledges, weeping in her cursed sleep. Anyone who comes within 30 feet of Rissaria can feel her sadness weigh upon their own heart and must attempt a DC 20 Will save. On a failure, they begin to cry.

Rissaria: Rissaria is cursed to sleep forever from the animate dream's endless nightmare curse (area C1). In order to speak with her, the PCs must find a way to remove the curse (which requires a successful DC 28 counteract check). If they don't have a way to remove it themselves, they can find curse removal supplies from Gaeldred's library (area D2).

Once Rissaria's curse is lifted, she awakens, and when the PCs make their presence known, she startles

and asks what the PCs are doing in her domain. When she learns they roused her from her cursed sleep, she thanks them profusely. Once she hears of the PCs' purpose, read or paraphrase the following.

"Long has it been since mortals walked within my home. My name is Rissaria. On behalf of my beloved, I agreed to safeguard the emissary seal. The Rivethuns sealed the Kor Well to protect the dwarven people. Why would I help you unseal it?"

After the PCs state their case, Rissaria wipes her eyes and stands, though her tears don't cease.

"If what you say is true, my vigil is at an end. You seem like trustworthy mortals, and yet there are many evils in this world—many liars and betrayers. Not all wear their vileness openly." Rissaria ponders for a moment, tapping her lip in thought, then nods. "If you speak truth, I have a request for you. Two, to be precise.

"Talaine and the other Rivethuns who built these halls lived in another wing of the Kor Well, directly across the Well from here, and a little further down. Go there. Find Talaine. I feel in my heart her spirit left this world long ago, and yet, I find myself unable to accept her loss. I never saw her die, and never had the chance to say goodbye. My heart remains in shambles, despite the widening gulf of time. If Talaine lives, bring her here. If she is dead... please, ensure that she is laid to rest properly, then bring me back a token—a necklace she always wore around her neck. I gave it to her long ago, as a sign of my love. Bring it to me, and I will be at peace.

"When that is done, I have a more perilous task for you... There is a darkness in the Kor Well. A vile corruption seeps through the stones. I can feel it even now, pulsing, at the back of my mind. I believe it the true source of my cursed sleep and nightmares. Find this corruption and remove it.

"If you do this for me, I will deactivate the emissary seal."

While Rissaria doesn't know it, the corruption is the demon Kaivirris, who lairs in area D. The PCs are likely to want to question Rissaria. Below are some of the PCs' likely inquiries and her responses. Once the PCs have asked any questions they have, Rissaria urges them to find and remove the source of corruption, then return her beloved's necklace.

Why did you agree to stay here after Talaine passed away? "Because I love her, and this was important to her. We met while she was negotiating a compromise

between myself and the other spirits who lived here and the dwarves who wanted to build that frightful lift. I couldn't get enough of her."

When the seals are released, where will you go?

"I'm not sure; I might need some help finding a new home. Leaving this place will be difficult for me, but I'd rather not linger if it is unsafe."

Have you considered Drootorca

Cavern? "What is this place? Pray, tell me about it." She waits for the PCs to describe it, then wistfully says, "That sounds lovely."

What does Talaine's necklace look like? "The chain is a finely braided silver. It holds one of the most pure and beautiful crystals I've ever seen, one worthy of my beloved Talaine."

Where do you think the corruption is coming from? "I don't know, but it can't be far. Its shrieking call echoes in the back of my mind!"

Is there anything else we could do to prove ourselves?

"I gave you two tasks and you wish to have a third? Just do what I've asked of you. Please."

Development: If the PCs bring Talaine's necklace (from area B9) to Rissaria, defeat Kaivirris's minions and inter Talaine (or succeed at a DC 22 Deception check to Lie about doing so), Rissaria gives the PCs a gift: her *clear spindle aeon stone*. She then escorts the PCs to area C4 and deactivates the emissary seal. Once she has deactivated the seal, Rissaria tells the PCs of her intentions to leave the Kor Well behind and find a new home.

Involutionist Wing

Gaeldred the Warden designed this wing of the Kor Well dungeons to serve three purposes: to hold the sacrificial seal, to safely store cursed items he'd yet to destroy, and to store a large collection of written works and treatises he'd collected or written over his lifetime. At the time of his death, Gaeldred had destroyed all but one of the cursed objects stored within this wing. The final cursed object, the *demon's knot*, is a necklace that contains the demon Kaivirris bound within the necklace's gemstone. Despite being imprisoned in a necklace, Kaivirris was far from powerless, for he could tempt nearby creatures into donning the necklace and influence the minds of those who did. Gaeldred placed powerful wards over the *demon's knot* that suppressed this power, yet he perished before finding a way to destroy it.



Rissaria

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After he died, the wards deteriorated, and Kaivirris's corrupting influence began to seep out. Any who wear the *demon's knot* are compelled to search for a method to free Kaivirris. In time, these wards will weaken further, allowing Kaivirris to regain awareness and the *demon's knot* to become an intelligent item.

Today, the involutionist's wing is a dark and ominous place, haunted both by corrupted animals and the unquiet dead who died in possession of the *demon's knot*. Ashrin (CN male munavri magical researcher) is a munavri from the Silent Sea in Orv, deep under the Arcadian Ocean. He wears the *demon's knot* and is now a pawn of Kaivirris who spends his days and nights sifting through the ruined library (area D2) for a method to free the demon.

Ashrin found the *demon's knot* while trying to travel to Rolgrimmur in search of magical advancements from the surface world. His *scroll of teleport* sent him into Gaeldred's library, rather than the Library for Magical Wards and Warfare in the lower city. He decided to explore this library and the surrounding rooms before continuing his journey to the surface, but he was sidetracked by the *demon's knot* and Kaivirris's influence.

The involutionist wing is crafted with a strong dwarven aesthetic that features detailed stonework, harsh lines, and hard corners. Unless otherwise noted, the doors throughout this wing are unlocked.

D1. RUBBLE TUNNEL

TRIVIAL 9

Over the years, numerous creatures and people have fought their way into this dungeon wing after their minds felt the call of Kaivirris. They battered down doors and fought their way past defenses erected by those previously in possession of the *demon's knot*. Now, this entry tunnel is mounded with rubble and debris. From here, a short hall leads to the library mezzanine in area D2, and two stairwells descend to areas D3 and D5.

Hazard: The entire wing is dark and corrupted by Kaivirris's presence. A PC who enters this wing must attempt a DC 26 Will save. On a failure, they become frightened 1. For as long as they remain in this wing, they can't reduce the value of their frightened condition below 1.

Trap: Ashrin used alchemical components to create an explosive bomb hidden amid the tunnel's rubble.

EXPLOSIVE ENTRANCE

HAZARD 9

FIRE MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 33 (master)

Description An alchemical bomb explodes when the rubble is shifted, filling the hall with flame.

Disable DC 30 Crafting (master) to nullify the bomb's alchemical components or DC 28 Thievery (master) to disable the bomb

Collapse **Trigger** A creature in contact with the ground travels down this hall; **Effect** The bomb explodes, dealing 6d8+12 fire damage to the triggering creature and all creatures within 20 feet (DC 32 basic Reflex save). Additionally, if the triggering creature fails their saving throw, they take 1d8 persistent fire damage.

D2. LIBRARY

LOW 9

Once a fine library filled with arcane treatises, occult texts, and Gaeldred's own musings, this library is currently a spider den. The library is crafted from stone and is sturdy, but its contents are a tattered mess, and the room is blanketed in filth.

The library has two floors. The lower level is a sunken square with stone bookshelves built into its walls. Two ladders lead up to the mezzanine and second floor, both of which are 15 feet above the lower level. A mound of broken furniture, tattered paper, and bones is piled up along the east wall on the library's lower level, making an unstable ramp up to the second floor (DC 20 Athletics check to Climb the mound). On a failed check to Climb this mound, a creature takes an additional 1d6 piercing damage from the debris.

Creatures: Three giant tarantulas live in this library, each corrupted by their proximity to Kaivirris. These tarantulas fight intruders to the death.

ELITE GIANT TARANTULAS (3)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 307

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search through the paper debris discovers a *greater spirit-sealing fulu* (*Secrets of Magic* 160), a *scroll of binding muzzle* (page 81), a *scroll of blast of the bellows* (page 82), two *scrolls of remove curse*, and a *wand of remove curse*; they also find a *tome of dripping shadow* (page 80) sealed in a lead box with a burning handkerchief wrapped around it. The handkerchief's fire gives off no heat, as it's the target of a 5th-level *continual flame* spell.

D3. HALL OF THE DEAD

MODERATE 9

This chamber is barren with scorch-marked walls and cracks spider-webbing their way across the floor. It stinks of sulfur and rot. While this room's original purpose is lost to time, it currently serves as a storehouse for all those who died under Kaivirris's influence. Upon their deaths, each rose as a sulfur zombie that follows the commands of Kaivirris's current host.

Creatures: Five sulfur zombies stand eerily immobile in this room. Each appears to be a denizen of the Darklands and wears wildly different styles of clothing that have since become rags. When they notice the PCs, the zombies turn their heads toward the PCs in unison and attack. The zombies fight to their destruction.

SULFUR ZOMBIES (5)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 303

Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: One of the zombies has a *gallows tooth*.

D4. ASHRIN'S LAB

Ashrin uses this room as both a bedchamber and an alchemy lab, leaving questionable stains in areas that should be kept clean.

Treasure: The following items are in this lab: four moderate sulfur bombs (*Grand Bazaar* 15), four moderate alchemist's fire, and a greater antidote. Together, the tools in this room comprise an expanded alchemist's lab.

One of Ashrin's experiments involved using crystals from the surrounding caves and creating a special bomb, but he didn't complete this work. Four greater crystal shards bombs are nearly finished; a PC with the Alchemical Crafting feat who spends an hour and succeeds at a DC 30 Crafting check can finish the bombs. On a critical failure, one of the bombs explodes.

D5. TRAPPED HALL

TRIVIAL 9

The walls in this hall are pockmarked and damaged. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Crafting check to Recall Knowledge identifies that highly caustic acid caused this damage, granting the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to all skill checks to Search and Interact with the caustic gas trap.

Hazard: Ashrin set this trap in the hall leading into Kaivirris's chapel. He can activate and deactivate this trap from area D6 and keeps it set while he's inside.

CAUSTIC GAS TRAP


HAZARD 9

ACID MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 30 (master)

Description Pressure plates in the hall trigger the release of caustic gas.

Disable DC 28 Crafting (master) to neutralize the acid or DC 30 Thievery (master) to disable the pressure plates

Collapse  **Trigger** A creature in contact with the ground travels down this hall; **Effect** Caustic gas fills the hall, dealing 4d10+26 acid damage to all creatures in area D5 (DC 32 basic Reflex save).

Reset A 10-minute Interact activity and a new supply of caustic gas.

D6. CHAPEL OF THE DAMNED

MODERATE 9

Gaeldred intended this chamber to serve as a secure vault for the cursed objects in his possession. Each was kept separated in an array of locked compartments within the west wall and locked with a different key. When the first mortal was drawn to Kaivirris, they bashed and sundered the wall of locked compartments, opening each one and acquiring the *demon's knot*. Fortunately, the other compartments were empty, for Gaeldred had already destroyed or cleansed the cursed objects they once contained.

Today, this chamber is a chapel dedicated to the veneration of Kaivirris and the conjuration of minor demons who assist Kaivirris's vessels.

Creatures: Ashrin and two invidiak demons are in this chamber. If the PCs fought any creatures or triggered any traps in the involutionist wing, Ashrin is aware of their presence. Hopelessly devoted to Kaivirris, Ashrin and the demons fight to the death. During the battle, Ashrin rails at the PCs in Undercommon, yelling contextless claims like "I will free him," "you can't have it," and "Kaivirris chose me." The invidiaks prefer dwarves as their favored host and attempt to preserve any they can to use as hosts once Ashrin expires.

INVIDIAKS (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 65

Initiative Perception +15

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ASHRIN

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID MUNAVRI

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Algholthtu, Dwarven, Munavri, Undercommon; telepathy 30 feet (munavris only)

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +19, Crafting +21, Religion +15, Survival +17, Thievery +19

Str +2, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +6, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0

Infused Items Ashrin carries the following infused items, which last for 24 hours or until the next time he makes his daily preparations: moderate alchemist's fire (6), moderate elixir of life (2), moderate sulfur bomb (6)

Items expanded alchemist's tools, +1 striking dagger, *demon's knot*, formula book

Light Blindness

AC 27; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +19, **Will** +15

HP 155; **Immunities** confused, controlled; **Weaknesses**

cold iron 10, good 10, demon touched; **Resistances** fire 5, mental 9, poison 5

Demon Touched Ashrin is a puppet of the demon Kaivirris. He's harmed by good damage as if he were a fiend.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *dagger* +20 (agile, finesse, versatile B), **Damage** 2d4+4 piercing

Ranged ♦ *dagger* +20 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile B), **Damage** 2d4+4 piercing

Ranged ♦ *bomb* +20 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** varies

Fiendish Infusion ♦ (concentrate, manipulate)

Requirements Ashrin has a free hand; **Effect** Ashrin Interacts to draw a bomb, then funnels abyssal energy from Kaivirris into that bomb. Until the end of Ashrin's turn, the bomb deals an extra 3d8 negative damage.

Intuit Object ♦♦ (concentrate, divination, occult)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** By concentrating their psychic energy on a held object, the munavri intuit its use and understands how to effectively wield it. The munavri chooses one item they're holding. They gain the trained proficiency rank in one statistic required to use that item, but only for the purpose of using that specific item. For example, they could become trained in greatswords (to use a specific greatsword) or Acrobatics (to use a *jade cat talisman*). This benefit lasts for 1 hour.

Development: The *demon's knot* (page 79) is a powerful cursed object. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check on the *demon's knot* determines that it's seeping an intangible but foul energy. To appease Rissaria, the *demon's knot* must either be removed from the Kor Well (or the PCs must promise to carry it out) or Gaeldred's wards on the *demon's knot* must be renewed.

A PC who successfully recognizes the foul energy pouring from the *demon's knot* can also tell that someone has attempted to suppress the powers of the demon bound inside it with powerful spiritual wards. Furthermore, they believe that they can bolster these wards, which would prevent the *demon's knot* from corrupting its bearer for a time. This takes 1 hour and requires a PC to succeed at a series of two consecutive DC 26 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion checks. A PC who has read Gaeldren's notes in area **B8a** gains a +2 circumstance bonus to these skill checks. On a failure, the PC takes 4d8+12 mental damage. If the wards are bolstered, the *demon's knot* doesn't corrupt anyone carrying it for the duration of this adventure—they don't gain weakness to cold iron or good and don't become frightened in the

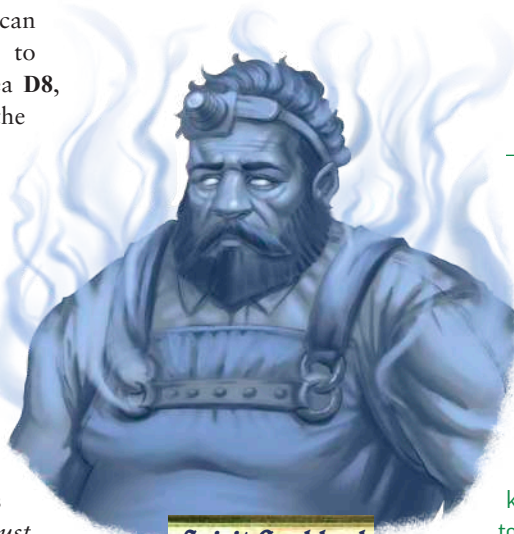


Ashrin

presence of celestials. The PCs can't bolster the wards a second time.

Alternatively, the PCs can present the *demon's knot* to Gaeldred's spirit shard in area **D8**, who automatically passes the checks to bolster the wards.

Treasure: Among the tools Ashrin has collected from this wing and used in his attempt to free Kaivirris are a standard-grade adamantine warhammer, a *wand of dispel magic*, and *caustic deteriorating dust* (*Gods & Magic* 122). These items are spread around the room; there are two applications of *caustic deteriorating dust* remaining.



Spirit Gaeldred

D7. THE WAY BEYOND

TRIVIAL 9

The door to this chamber is locked with a good lock (five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock; Gaeldred destroyed the key upon his death) and warded with a magical trap placed by Gaeldred. This trap is the same as the ones used in areas **B3** and **B4**.

Inside this otherwise empty room is a teleportation circle. A PC who steps on this glowing circle is teleported to area **D8**.

Hazard: Wards placed by Gaeldred shield this room from the unworthy.

REPELLING SURGE

HAZARD 9

Page 30

Stealth DC 30 (master)

D8. INVOLUTIONIST SEAL

This circular room has a perfectly smooth dome ceiling. Lines of glowing red light twisted into a complex interlocking pattern decorate the floor. Similar lights flow across the ceiling and walls, shifting continually into different shapes and forms. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search notices vague images created by the flowing lights: images of Gaeldred losing vigor—transforming from strong and healthy to weak and frail with a grimace of pain. These images present clues showing how to deactivate the seal.

Gaeldred was an involutionist who created a spirit companion from a piece of his own soul. This spirit shard, who looks like a strong, healthy version of

Gaeldred, remained with the involutionist seal. He stands in the center of the seal, looking incredibly serious. He stares at the PCs silently, evaluating them before speaking. Read or paraphrase the following.

"I knew another would come in time to undo what we wrought, Gaeldred and I. I am he and he is me, and yet neither are we. I am all that remains of Gaeldred now. A spirit born of his soul, left behind, waiting for my vigil to end. I would wait for eternity. Yet Gaeldred knew the Kor Well would be reopened one day. He knew other Rivethuns would return to unmake that which we made. And so, we come to the Unmaking.

"Gaeldred created this seal and strengthened it with his own sacrifice. Not of life, no, but with something that was precious to him. For Gaeldred, it was his vitality—his strength and his vigor. He gave it up, becoming a frail shadow of himself. To unmake this seal, one of you must do the same: you must sacrifice.

"Look inside your own hearts. Look inside your souls. Tell me, what do you cherish? Possessions? Knowledge? Perhaps your very memories? Find that which matters to you, then give it up. Choose wisely, for only a truly dear sacrifice will resonate with power. Unworthy sacrifices will be wasted. Unmake the seal, or begone."

To remove this seal, one PC must step onto the center of the pattern and sacrifice something dear to them. This offering must be something they truly value but that won't impair their ability to continue adventuring. It's recommended that one PC selects one of the following: an object of importance that they value and use regularly, a personal memento that has emotional value to them (though it need not have a high monetary value), all knowledge of a specific topic they pride themselves on, or all memories of a specific individual, place, or event that they cherish. Alternatively, you can work with a PC to determine something tied to their character that suffices.

Development: When the PC has made their sacrifice, they successfully deactivate the involutionist seal. There's a burst of red light, the lights all around this chamber go out, and in the center of the room hovers a glowing glass token shaped like a circle that fits in the palm of a hand. This red glass token can be used to open the triptych in area **B3**. At this point, the

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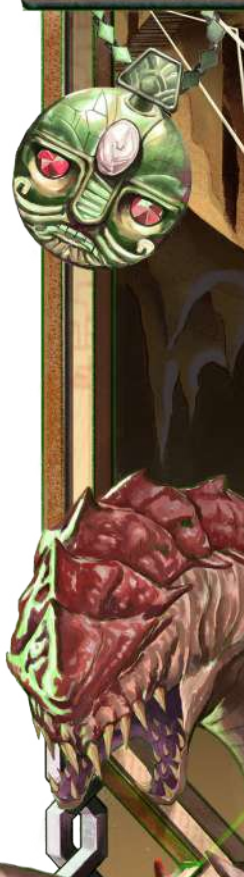
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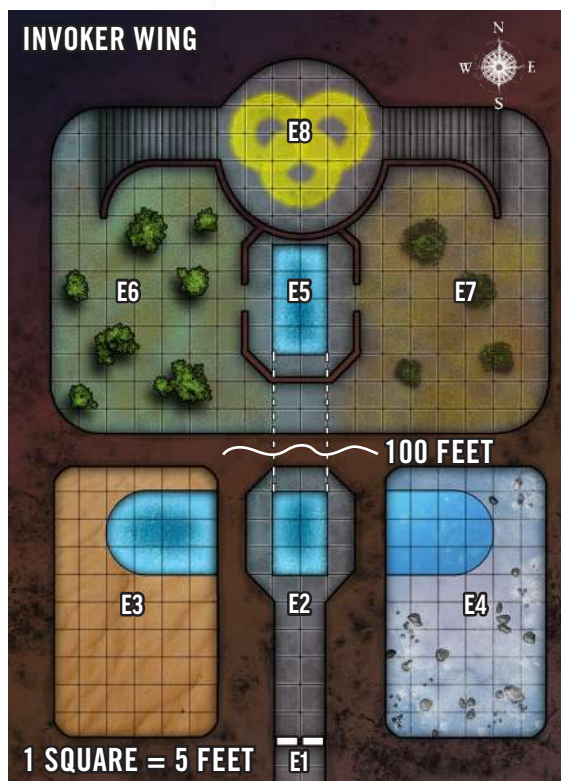
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spirit asks the PCs if they have anything else to ask of him before he rejoins Gaeldred. The spirit is willing to answer one question from each PC to the best of his ability. It's likely the PCs will ask about one of the other dungeon wings, seals, or Rivethuns.

If a PC presents the *demon's knot* to the spirit, the spirit shares information on the *demon's knot* and its relation to Gaeldred. The spirit then offers to bolster the wards Gaeldred placed upon the *demon's knot*, which are failing. Finally, the spirit asks that the PCs find a way to destroy the *demon's knot* without freeing the demon inside. Failing to complete this task was Gaeldred's only true regret in life, and it would mean much to the spirit if the PCs would see it through.

After the PCs ask their questions, the spirit dissipates.

XP Award: The PCs earn 80 XP for releasing the involutionist seal.

Invoker Wing

The invoker wing was created by the Many, a Rivethun who loved the natural world and the animals in it. It's a completely unnatural place filled with the memory of natural beauty—a series of rooms with illusions that mimic places the Many had explored in life. Each room's illusion is magically sustained by a spiritual echo of one of the animals that the Many bonded with in that biome (a polar bear in the tundra, for example). The Many tapped into these same spirits

to create the invoker seal. Each animal echo looks like a real animal of its kind, but with glowing eyes and some unnatural, brightly colored markings. The illusions in each room also create several illusory animals that feel, sound, and smell like the originals. To deactivate the invoker seal, the PCs must prove themselves to each of these animal echoes and bring the echo to the seal. It's likely the PCs don't understand the significance of these animals until they visit the invoker seal in area E8.

Capturing an animal echo requires three stages. First, the PCs must succeed at a DC 26 Perception check to identify the animal echo within that illusory biome. Second, the PCs must approach that animal echo without startling it. To do so, a PC must succeed at a DC 27 Stealth check or a DC 25 Nature check. Finally, a PC must prove themselves to the animal echo. The methods for doing this vary by echo, as noted in the appropriate area. Once a PC has proven themselves to an animal echo, that echo merges with that PC, disappearing into their chest. The animal echo reemerges when brought to the invoker seal (see area E8 for more information).

If a PC actively disbelieves an area's illusion by succeeding at a DC 30 Will save, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to identify the animal echo and might also avoid the inherent danger of that area. Each area requires a new Will save to disbelieve that area's illusions. Only one successful save is required for all of the illusions in each area, but this save can only be attempted once per hour for each area.

E1. GATES TO PARADISE

TRIVIAL 9

The stone doors to the invoker wing are carved with animal imagery. The doors are sealed—they have no visible locking mechanism and can't be moved. The doors swing open effortlessly if touched by a living animal or if touched by a PC who's an expert in Nature, Survival, or a lore focused on a specific animal or biome. The door has Hardness 14 and 56 Hit Points (BT 28; DC 35 to Force Open).

Hazard: Each time a PC damages the door, they run the risk of becoming an animal for a short time.

BESTIAL TRANSFORMATION

HAZARD 9

MAGICAL POLYMORPH TRANSMUTATION TRAP

Stealth DC 30 (master)

Description Enchanted carvings of animals transform any creatures who damage the door into the animal they harmed.

Disable DC 26 Nature (expert) to handle the animal carvings or DC 33 Thievery (master) to scratch out the

animal carvings or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 28) to counteract the spell

Animal Form ➤ **Trigger** A creature damages the door;
Effect The trap casts *bestial curse* on the triggering creature (*Advanced Player's Guide* 215; DC 32 Fortitude save); on a critical failure, the duration is 2 hours.

Reset automatic

Treasure: Once opened or disabled, a PC can remove a single magical strip of wood embedded in the door with a successful DC 32 Crafting or Thievery check. This strip of wood can be used as a *wand of bestial curse*.

Animal Echo: When this door is opened, an owl with black and pink feathers flies out and circles the Kor Well, swooping and soaring in complete silence. This owl is the aerial biome's animal echo (though it's unlikely the PCs understand its significance until they visit area E8).

To prove themselves to the owl, a PC must outfly it by having a fly Speed and succeed at a DC 26 Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight, or a PC must outhunt the owl by striking it with a ranged attack that requires an attack roll and deals physical damage. The owl's AC is 28.

XP Award: The PCs earn 30 XP for proving themselves to the spirit animal.

E2. FIRST POOL

This octagonal room is brightly lit, but no light source is discernible. A variety of natural environments are carved into the walls. In the center is a tiled rectangular pool, its surface two feet below the surrounding pool's edge. Colorful fish swim in this pool (though, curiously, there are no plants). The pool is a comfortable temperature and 20 feet deep. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search notices three underwater channels near the base of the pool lead to different areas. A PC submerged in the pool who opens their eyes underwater notices these channels automatically.

At its bottom, the pool is shaped like a capital "T" (presented upside down on the map), with one underwater passage leading west to area E3, one east to area E4, and one north to area E5. Each passage is 100 feet long, denoted by squiggly lines to represent their distance. Despite having no noticeable current, the PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check to Swim.

West Passage: The water in the west passage is dangerously hot. Each round a PC is in this hot water, they take 1d6 fire damage. The heat is part of the illusion from area E3.

East Passage: The water in the east passage is dangerously cold. Each round a PC is in this cold

water, they take 1d6 cold damage. At the end of this passage, where it surfaces in area E4, the water is frozen. A PC must break through this ice before they can enter area E4. The ice has AC 10, Hardness 10, 40 Hit Points (20 BT; DC 25 to Force Open). The cold and the ice are illusions from area E4.

North Passage: The water in the north passage is a comfortable temperature. Twenty feet from the beginning and end of this passage are metal grates hidden in the passage's ceiling. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search while within 10 feet of one of these points notices the compartment hiding the grate. Once discovered, a PC can jam this compartment open by succeeding at a DC 26 Thievery check to Disable Device or by breaking it (Hardness 10, 20 Hit Points, BT 10). Otherwise, when the PCs reach the midway point, they see that a web of fishing lines crisscross the passage. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Athletics check to Swim can pass through these lines without disturbing them. A small PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to this check, while those who are Tiny gain a +4 circumstance bonus. On a failure, the lines trigger the closure of both grates. A metal grate whose compartment is jammed gets stuck and doesn't deploy. Each metal grate has Hardness 15, 60 Hit Points (BT 30; DC 25 to Force Open). The gaps between the bars are 5 inches apart. While the fish are an illusion, characters who disbelieve them and attempt to swim through them incur their wrath; they transform into illusory piranhas and deal 2d8 mental damage to anyone who fails the check to Swim around them.

Animal Echo: A fantastically frilled fish is the aquatic biome's animal echo. To prove themselves to this fish, a PC must outswim it by succeeding at a DC 26 Athletics check to Swim or perform an elaborate underwater dance by succeeding at a DC 26 Performance check.

XP Award: The PCs earn 30 XP for proving themselves to the spirit animal.

E3. DESERT

This large cavern is a sweltering desert with a bright blue illusory sky 50 feet above the ground. It is brightly lit and emanates extreme heat (1d6 fire damage every 10 minutes), and the sand is difficult terrain. It's also quiet, the roar of the wind being the most prominent sound. A PC who disbelieves the illusion no longer hears the sound nor feels the heat of this room, but they find that the sand is entirely real.

Animal Echo: A stout, sunbathing lizard with bright purple spots is the desert biome's animal echo. The spirit creature remains perfectly still, keeping watch

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on the PCs. If a PC attempts to touch the lizard, it scurries into the sand and Hides for 10 minutes, then goes back to sunbathing.

To prove themselves to this lizard, a PC must demonstrate their patience by laying on the hot sand and remaining still for one hour. Doing so requires the PC to succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save. Regardless of the result of their save, they take fire damage from the extreme heat unless they've disbelieved the illusion.

XP Award: The PCs earn 30 XP for proving themselves to the spirit animal.

E4. ARCTIC

This large cavern is the frigid arctic with a black illusory sky 50 feet above the ground. The sky is streaked by swirls of bright color and brilliantly twinkling stars that shed dim light. The cavern emanates extreme cold (1d6 cold damage every 10 minutes), and the snow and ice within it are difficult terrain. A creature that takes damage while on the ice falls prone unless it succeeds at a DC 20 Acrobatics check to Balance. The area is quiet; even the smallest sounds echo loudly. Every breath sounds amplified, and each step through the snow makes a noisy crunch. The difficult terrain and extreme cold are illusions.

Haunt: A Large polar bear is the arctic biome's animal echo, but it has become corrupted by Kaivirris's influence (area D6). It stands up and attempts to attack any PC who approaches it, functioning as a haunt.

ENRAGED POLAR BEAR SPIRIT


HAZARD 9

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +23

Description The ghostly spirit of a polar bear stands on its hind legs and roars.

Disable DC 26 Nature (expert) to calm the spirit, DC 30 Intimidate (master) to cow the spirit, or DC 30 Religion (expert) to contain the spiritual corruption (each successful check reduces its number of actions by 1)

Feral Roar  (auditory, fear, mental) **Trigger** A creature approaches within 10 feet of the polar bear spirit; **Effect** The polar bear spirit roars. Each creature in the room must attempt a DC 28 Will save. The enraged polar bear spirit rolls initiative.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.


Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature takes 6d6 sonic damage and is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The creature takes 12d6 sonic damage and is frightened 3.

TRIVIAL 9

Routine (3 actions) The bear moves around the room at an alarming speed, seemingly teleporting, and Strikes a random creature with its spiritual claws.

Melee  spiritual claws +21 (agile, magical); **Damage** 2d8+5 force plus 2d8 mental

Reset The bear spirit calms after no creatures are in the room for 1 minute but is ready to lash out again after 10 minutes.

Animal Echo: Once the haunt is disabled, the spirit becomes calm and enters the PCs who succeeded at the final disable check.

E5. LAST POOL

This octagonal room is brightly lit, though no light source is discernible. The walls are carved with images of a variety of natural environments. In the center is a tiled rectangular pool, its water surface two feet below the surrounding pool's edge. Colorful illusory fish swim in this pool. The pool is a comfortable temperature and 20 feet deep. A passage at the bottom of this pool leads to area E2. Two archways in the walls lead to completely different environments: a humid jungle to the west and breezy prairies to the east.

E6. JUNGLE

This large room is a riotous forest, hot and humid but dappled with shade from the dense canopy above. It's brightly lit, but the sky isn't visible beyond the treetops. The cacophony of countless tropical birds, screeching monkeys, and buzzing insects fills the air. It smells strongly of wet earth and heavily scented flowers. Everything in this room is illusory, but the illusory trees conceal natural limestone columns.

Animal Echo: A squirrel monkey with a glowing tail is the jungle biome's animal echo. The monkey enjoys swinging from branches and jumping from tree to tree, then balancing on a broad branch with a single foot.

To prove themselves to the monkey, a PC must outclimb the monkey by succeeding at a DC 26 Athletics check to Climb or outbalance the monkey by succeeding at a DC 26 Acrobatics check to Balance.

XP Award: The PCs earn 30 XP for proving themselves to the spirit animal.

E7. PRAIRIE

This large room is a prairie field filled with high grasses and wildflowers, all swaying in the breeze. It's dusk, and the orange illusory sun sets in a colorful sky of pinks and purples. The plants make a rhythmic swishing sound. Birdcalls are audible, though

any animals are well-hidden. This entire room's environment is illusory.

Animal Echo: A rabbit with tiny antlers is the prairie biome's animal echo. It occasionally darts out from a hiding place, meets the gaze of one of the PCs, then dashes off to Hide again.

To prove themselves to the rabbit, a PC must demonstrate their caution by succeeding at a DC 26 Stealth check to Hide from the rabbit or succeed at a DC 28 Perception check to Search for the rabbit's hiding spot.

XP Award: The PCs earn 30 XP for proving themselves to the spirit animal.

E8. INVOKER SEAL

Tiled stairs lead up to the invoker seal, hidden behind a stone outcropping designed to blend in with the surrounding environments. At the top of the stairs is a circular room with a perfectly smooth dome ceiling. Lines of glowing yellow light twisted into a complex interlocking pattern decorate the floor. Similar lights flow across the ceiling and walls, shifting continually into different shapes and forms. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Search notices vague images of six different animals created by the flowing lights: a flying owl, a swimming fish, a motionless lizard, a roaring polar bear, a leaping monkey, and an alert rabbit.

To remove this seal, the PCs must bring each of the six animal echoes the Many used to create the seal back into the seal. One animal is found in each biome. When an animal echo is returned to the seal, it becomes a colorful spectral version of itself that dashes around the seal's ceiling in a vibrant spiral.

Development: When all six animals have been returned to the seal, there's a burst of yellow light, and the lights all around the chamber go out. In the center of the room hovers a glowing glass token shaped like a diamond that fits in the palm of a PC's hand. This yellow glass token can be used to open the triptych in area B3. The invoker seal is deactivated.

XP Award: The PCs earn 80 XP for releasing the invoker seal.

EVENT 7: DRUMS OF WAR

When the Bloodbane Coalition regroup, the sound of war drums rallying them to battle shakes through the earth, echoing into the Kor Well. These sounds clearly

signal that the Bloodbane Coalition is readying for battle and that the PCs' time in the Kor Well is coming to an end. The drums continue for three hours. If the PCs haven't blown the *sentinel horn* and started the battle by the following morning,

the Bloodbane Coalition sends a team of hryngar assassins to track them down; run

Event 6: The First Assault again. Every few hours, the Bloodbane Coalition sends greater and greater forces against the PCs.

EVENT 8: ROLGRIMMDUR'S ARRIVAL

The PCs trigger this event when they blow the *sentinel horn*, signaling the attack of Rolgrimmdur's forces. The PCs must have removed at least one of the Rivethun seals before triggering

this event, as the Rolgrimmdur dwarves won't activate the lift down to the Kor Well if all three seals remain intact. The PCs should plan to meet up with the Rolgrimmdur army as it descends the Kor Well and ready themselves for the coming battle.

A few moments after the PCs use the *sentinel horn*, it responds in kind to let the PCs know that Rolgrimmdur stands ready. One hour after the PCs trigger this event, the stone top of the Kor Well grinds open, sending vibrations throughout the Well and showering dust and debris down the shaft. The lift from Rolgrimmdur then descends the Well. If any seals remain active, the lift passes through them, causing the dwarves onboard to be exposed to their dangerous effects. The results of this descent and the battle between Rolgrimmdur and the Bloodbane Coalition is determined by how many seals the PCs deactivated, which directly affects how difficult it is for the Rolgrimmdur army and the PCs to rout the Bloodbane Coalition forces at the start of Chapter 3.

1 Seal: If the PCs deactivated one seal, the remaining seals severely weaken or wound the dwarven forces, who are **not very effective** against the Bloodbane Coalition.

2 Seals: If the PCs deactivated two seals, many of the dwarven forces are wounded or weakened and have a challenging time fighting. They're only **moderately effective** against the Bloodbane Coalition.

3 Seals: If the PCs deactivated all three seals, the dwarven forces are able to descend the Kor Well at full strength and are **highly effective**.



Polar Bear Spirit

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CHAPTER 3: TAARGICK'S LEGACY

A tunnel at the base of the Kor Well winds through rock and stone to Avernakkus, caverns that earned their hellish name thanks to their growing volcanic activity. Magma has melted away many sections, making them an ideal refuge and nesting site for Zogototaru. Traveling the passageways would take about an hour, during which the growing heat becomes increasingly oppressive. However, the PCs face a more immediate challenge that Narseigus posted here to guard the area.

BATTLE FOR AVERNAKKUS

SEVERE 10

As the Kor Well's lift nears the bottom, bearing a detachment of Rolgrimmdur's warriors, so too does a small hryngar army hear the lift and mobilize for battle. The PCs are able to chase off a few scouts, so

by the time General Sagginsdotter has arrived with her troops, several hundred hryngars have amassed and are preparing to attack. She orders quick deployment commands, asking the PCs to be ready as a reserve force. Within minutes, she identifies one of the hryngars mounted on a giant beetle as the rival commander. As she oversees the main combat, she tasks the PCs with reaching and neutralizing that commander and any bodyguards.

Creatures: As the PCs move in, the enemy commander draws on her reserves to meet them. Just how many troops she has depends heavily on how many troops General Sagginsdotter has, which depends on how effectively the PCs disabled the seals in the Kor Well.

Not Very Effective: Run the encounter as presented.
Moderately Effective: Reduces each breccia squad's HP by 50, reducing them to their first damage threshold.
Highly Effective: Reduce two breccia squads' HP by 50, and reduce the third's HP by 100.

HRYNGAR BRECCIA SQUADS (3)

CREATURE 9

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Perception +18; darkvision

WAR BEETLE MOUNT

LEVEL 5

Elite stag beetle (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 41)

Perception +12; darkvision

HRYNGAR BATTLEPRIEST

CREATURE 9

LE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +16, Intimidation +19, Nature +15, Religion +19


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

Items chain mail, +1 returning striking light hammer


AC 29; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +21


HP 155; **Resistances** poison 8

Light Blindness

Sheltered Command  (auditory, linguistic, mental) **Trigger** The battlepriest is targeted with an attack while adjacent to or sharing a space with a hryngar; **Effect** The battlepriest commands the hryngar to intercept the attack. The hryngar becomes the target of the attack.

Speed 20 feet


Melee  *light hammer* +20 (agile, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

Ranged  *light hammer* +20 (agile, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

Divine Prepared Spells DC 28; **5th** *flame strike*, *harm* (×3), *heal*, *spiritual guardian*; **4th** *dispel magic*, *divine wrath*, *freedom of movement*; **3rd** *blindness*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *heroism*; **2nd** see *invisibility*; **Cantrips (5th)** *daze*, *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *shield*

Occult Innate Spells DC 28; **4th** *blood vendetta*^{APG}; **2nd** *paranoia*; **Cantrips (5th)** *sigil*

Part the Troops The hryngar battlepriest and their mount can share the same space as creatures with both the hryngar and troop traits. Such creatures ignore the Trample ability of any creature the battlepriest is riding.

Toil and Trample  **Requirements** The battlepriest is mounted on a creature with a Trample ability; **Effect** The battlepriest commands their mount. Until the beginning of the battlepriest's next turn, the saving throw DC of the mount's Trample increases to 26, and the Trample deals an additional 3d6 evil damage.

Development: Once the PCs defeat the commander and her guards, General Sagginsdotter and her troops scatter the remaining hryngar

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

Having descended the Kor Well and secured a route for Rolgrimmur's reinforcements, the PCs travel into Avernakkus, a cave network partly flooded by magma from recent centuries' tectonic activity. After fighting through Narseigus's forces, the PCs push on alone to confront Narseigus and survive an ensorcelled Zogototar's might. Only after defeating the sorcerer can the PCs safely enter Taargick's tomb, an autobiography carved in stone and threatened by an ancient archon.

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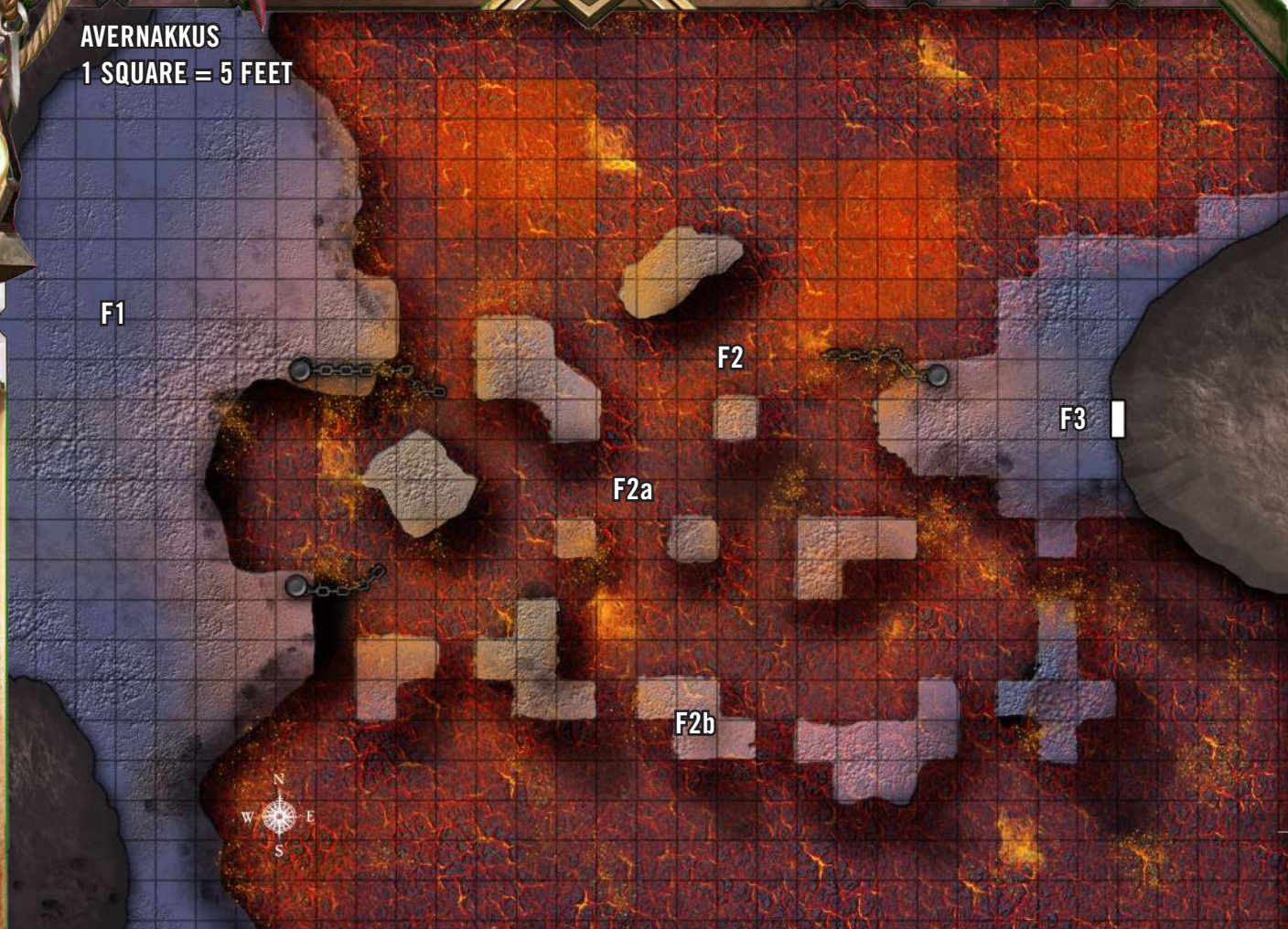
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Mounted Hryngar Priest

AVERNAKKUS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



forces. She directs most of her troops to secure the area and chase down fleeing foes. She initially assigns a detachment to aid the PCs in exploring Avernakkus, but the intense heat further into the cavern, tighter passages, and tremors scouts identify early on make her reconsider. She encourages the PCs to push on ahead, knowing they can fall back here as needed.

Avernakkus

Once a mundane series of caverns, wandering hot spots have gradually pushed magma into the area. The tunnels stink of sulfur, and as the PCs travel, the temperature rises and the earth rumbles. After an hour, the tunnel opens into a large cavern with dark stone, rivers of lava, and dense, acrid smoke.

Avernakkus contains three types of inhabitants. First, crimson worms of varying ages periodically traverse the area, though none challenge Zogototaru, the uncontested ruler of Avernakkus. Second, fire elementals and other Plane of Fire residents sometimes seep into Avernakkus, crossing between planes during intense bursts of volcanic activity.

Finally, though the magma chased away most creatures, a variety of extremophile reptiles scamper about, often hiding amid mats of heat-loving bacteria. As the PCs travel, they catch glimpses of these inhabitants and their passage, particularly signs left by the crimson worms.

The PCs catch up to Narseigus at the pinnacle of Avernakkus, a steeply sloped area of ground at the edge of the volcano's caldera. Smoke and ash clog the air, and creatures beyond 30 feet are concealed. The area is brightly lit by the lava in the caldera. The complex encounter here includes numerous terrain features, summarized below.

Climbing: Heat and spattered magma have pitted the stone here, creating rough surfaces that are relatively easy to climb (DC 18 Athletics).

Magma: The molten rock here scorches the air, dealing 2d6 fire damage per round to creatures in the area (DC 25 basic Fortitude save). The magma is extremely dense, functioning like solid ground for most creatures. In addition to any falling damage taken from landing on the magma, contact with

magma deals 8d6 fire damage once per round spent in contact with it.

F1. West Platform: Molten rock has eaten away most of the cavern floor, leaving this broad ledge about 10 feet above the magma surface. Metal posts once anchored a short bridge crossing the gap, but it has long-since collapsed.

F2. Lower Pillars: Portions of the cavern floor survive, creating tiny, uneven islands in the magma moat. These islands rise about 5 feet above the magma and are difficult terrain. The pillars marked area **F2a** are likely destroyed partway through the encounter due to Zogototaru's actions. The pillar in area **F2b** rises 10 feet above the magma.

F3. Tomb Entrance: Built into the eastern cavern wall, Taargick's tomb has a heavy stone door almost entirely covered by globs of igneous rock accumulated over recent centuries. The door is currently nonfunctional (see Speaking with Fire on page 48). This platform rises 15 feet above the magma.

CONFRONTING NARSEIGUS

EXTREME 10

Like many cave worms, Narseigus can sense tremors in the earth and movement around him, meaning he is aware of the PCs' arrival. Thankfully for him, he already seized control of Zogototaru—or at least seized as much control as he could hope—using his worm-calling secrets. So far, he has guarded his intentions carefully, yet now that he has achieved his goal, he indulges in a display of his newfound power. He launches a pompous tirade, and if the PCs interrupt, Narseigus continues his rant throughout combat.

Narseigus stands at the caldera's edge, blurred by the dense ash falling from the sky and backlit by the searing red glow of magma. "Are you all they sent? Pathetic! I would be insulted if I wasn't already familiar with the stupidity of your masters."

Narseigus snarls, spitting in his fury. "I am Narseigus Wormcaller! You dare face me here, of all places? Already the offspring of Zogototaru bends to my will! In time they'll all be mine! The world will tremble before me, and I will revel in their blood."

"You won't live to see it, of course. You shall have to imagine the screams."

Hazard: Zogototaru's raw strength far outmatches anything the PCs or even Narseigus might overcome. However, due to Narseigus's magic, Zogototaru acts more like a hazard than a typical combatant. Narseigus gives verbal commands, and the crimson worm interprets and acts on those commands on her turn,

favoring three main strategies detailed below. Where possible, she avoids endangering Narseigus with her hazard routine. Zogototaru begins the encounter in the expanse of magma north of the broken bridge.

Narseigus's worm-calling magic is potent yet imperfect. Even now, Zogototaru struggles against his enchantment, and the hazard's Disable entry notes various ways PCs can undermine his magic and help the crimson worm break free. In general, the PCs can earn up to two successes toward disabling the hazard per round, representing the limits to how many arguments Zogototaru can hear in a short span. Some strategies can bypass this limit, like successfully counteracting the effect (treated as a 6th-level effect) with *dispel magic*, which earns two successes toward disabling the hazard.

Five successes are needed to break Narseigus's control. If the PCs destroy the larval cave worm brood, they anger Zogototaru, reducing their earned successes so far by 1. For each success earned, Zogototaru resists some of the sorcerer's influence, reducing the hazard's saving throw DCs by 1. Once the PCs earn five or more successes, Zogototaru shakes off the magic, and on the hazard's following turn, she dislodges Narseigus (if he's currently on her) and spits fire at him, dealing 12d6 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). The round after that, she bites, shakes, and swallows him, scattering his gear before the sorcerer disappears. If the combat has already lasted many rounds, giving each PC a satisfactory experience, consider having Zogototaru skip breathing fire and just swallow the hryngar.

If Narseigus dies beforehand, the number of successes needed to break his control decreases by 2 (minimum 0 successes) at the end of each of Zogototaru's turns. Until then, she continues her routine at her discretion.

ZOGOTOTARU

HAZARD 10

UNIQUE BEAST COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL FIRE

Perception +15

Description Narseigus's worm-calling enchantments have attained imperfect control over Zogototaru, compelling her to aid him. She follows his directions loosely and with little finesse.

Disable Disable DC 28 Arcana or DC 28 Occultism (trained) to identify a loophole in mind-controlling magic, DC 30 Diplomacy to reason with Zogototaru, or DC 31 Deception or Performance to speak as if the PC were Taargick

Routine (1 action) Zogototaru acts on Narseigus's most recent command, either Rescuing, Roaring, or Thrashing.

Rescue ♦ (move) Zogototaru lunges near Narseigus, flips him atop her head, and recoils. This moves Narseigus up to 30 feet horizontally and positions him

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atop Zogototaru, treating her head as a 10-by-10-foot space that's 20 feet above the magma's surface. This movement triggers reactions based on the move trait, targeting Narseigus. Zogototaru continues supporting Narseigus until ordered to perform a different action, after which she deposits him in a safe location within 30 feet as a free action. A PC can Climb (DC 25 Athletics) Zogototaru's coarse hide to reach him.

Roar ♦ (fear, sonic) Zogototaru looms and screeches ferociously. Creatures in a 60-foot cone take 6d6 sonic damage (DC 29 basic Fortitude save) and must attempt a DC 29 Will save.

Critical Success No effect.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The creature is deafened for 1d6 rounds and is frightened 3.

Thrash ♦ (earth, fire) Zogototaru lashes her body, rattling the ground and splashing magma in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 29 Reflex save.

Critical Success No effect.

Success The creature takes 4d6 fire damage.

Failure The creature takes 4d6 fire damage and 4d6 bludgeoning damage, and is clumsy 1 for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature takes 6d6 fire damage and 6d6 bludgeoning damage, and is knocked prone.

Special The first time she Thrashes, Zogototaru destroys the pillars in area **F2a**. Anyone there can leap free as part of their Reflex saving throw, landing on the closest surface. For the remainder of combat, the rear half of the crimson worm's body floats in the magma there, creating an improvised bridge 10 feet wide and 30 feet long. Creatures on Zogototaru take a -2 circumstance penalty to their Reflex saves against her Thrashing.

Creatures: From the eastern platform, Narseigus fights confidently, believing he's undefeatable now that he commands a crimson worm. He begins the encounter already affected by Worm Form, and he prefers casting *tentacular limbs* and *unusual anatomy* early in the fight to augment his physical abilities. He favors disorienting the PCs with his array of mental magic while Zogototaru batters and burns them. He bludgeons anyone who gets too close to him and makes a tactical withdrawal whenever he feels cornered (calling on Zogototaru for rescue if needed).

The magma hides an additional threat: Zogototaru's most recent offspring. A swarm of young cave worms wriggles to the magma's surface at the first signs of conflict, hoping to snag a meal. They instinctively sense Narseigus as a threat to avoid, but they do pursue the PCs.

NARSEIGUS WORMCALLER

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Perception +20

CRIMSON CAVE WORM SWARM

CREATURE 10

Variant larval cave worm brood (page 85)

Initiative Perception +16

HP 220; **Immunities** fire, precision, swarm mind;

Resistances bludgeoning 7, piercing 13, slashing 13;

Weaknesses area damage 13, splash damage 13

SPEAKING WITH FIRE

Narseigus's magic controlled Zogototaru, yet she remembers what she did and perceived while enchanted.

As she shakes off the lingering magic, she studies the PCs and ponders what to do next. She listens to any explanation the PCs volunteer; she understands and can speak some Dwarven, Ignan, and Undercommon, though her vocabulary is simple and practical. Crimson worm anatomy isn't designed for speech, and she vocalizes with the same muscles used for shaping her fiery breath. As a result, a short jet of flame accompanies her words, and she periodically pauses to recharge and catch her breath during longer exchanges.

If the PCs don't talk on their own, she eventually asks who they are, why they're here, and whether they intend to enchant her, too. She's indifferent to the PCs, not particularly grasping the role they might have played in breaking Narseigus's spell. Indications that they're sent by Taargick or bear his relics pique her interest, particularly if the PCs seem to have acquired the relics honestly. Some of the PCs' likely statements and her responses follow.

We seek Taargick's Tomb. "His tomb? His tomb." The crimson worm motions to the buried door to the east. "Buried. Safe. You have found it. What now?"

We are Taargick's friends. "His friends? Friends of a dead dwarf? What proof?" Zogototaru listens for stories of meeting Taargick's ancestral echo, the PCs recovering his relics, or even just showing off his clan dagger. She isn't especially picky about evidence. If appeased, she acknowledges, "Taargick was my friend, too. Many times talking and digging together. You are welcome here."

How do we enter? Until she believe the PCs are friends of Taargick, she deflects the question. Once she trusts them more, she responds, "Dig. It is easy. He sent the blade, and the blade cuts stone. Or I can dig. It is easy." If the PCs request her help, she easily chews away the igneous rock blocking the door and then looks quizzically at the PCs, seeming to not understand what was so difficult about the task.

Did you destroy the deep gnome town? Zogototaru seems to shrug about any questions of what she has or hasn't destroyed or eaten, not even knowing their names. If reminded about the town Guldrege, she eventually remembers the incident and admits, "I felt pain. I felt a pull. I felt Taargick in trouble. I traveled there. I looked for answers. Little creatures there—they attacked, I attacked. There was no Taargick there, so I left." The crimson worm understands the concept of regret, thanks in part to conversing with Taargick. However, guilt isn't a concept that comes naturally to her, and she only expresses remorse if she thinks doing so would placate upset PCs.

What now? "I live here. Time for rest for me. You visit Taargick? Be..." She hesitates to think of the right word. "Taargick said often: show respect. Do that."

Are there dangers inside? The crimson worm leans against the tomb, as if listening to a patient's heartbeat. After a moment, she looks to the PCs and reports, "Some creatures. Some movement. A few are bigger than you. Usually are no creatures inside. Strange."

Taargick's Tomb

Initially, when Taargick planned and began excavating his tomb, he had modest ambitions: a chamber or two, a sarcophagus, and a few wall carvings. When Zogototaru investigated sounds of his digging, fought Taargick, and ultimately befriended the dwarf, the tomb's scope changed drastically. Within hours, the crimson worm carved a winding tunnel that would've taken Taargick years. His blueprints quickly evolved to fill the space.

The tomb follows Zogototaru's tunnel, which has a roughly circular profile. For each of the six chambers, Taargick evened out the floors and walls to better resemble dwarven architecture: clean corners, geometric motifs, immaculate stone carvings, and vaulted ceilings that spread the weight of the stone overhead. Most of the tunnel, though, remains curved and has little stonework beyond what's noted in the following sections.

Ceiling: The tunnel's ceiling peaks at 20 feet high, curving down toward the walls. The three tombs have 20-foot-high ceilings that Taargick carefully evened out. The three workshops have 10-foot-high ceilings.

Doors: The tomb's doors are all made of stone (Hardness 14, 56 HP, BT 28) and are unlocked.

Language: Taargick carved friezes and inscriptions throughout the tomb. Text is written in Dwarven unless otherwise noted, and some read-aloud descriptions convey this text in translation. By now, at least one of the PCs should understand Dwarven!

Light: Except where noted, the tomb is dark.

Walls: The tunnel walls are uneven yet quickly curve into an overhang (DC 25 Athletics check to Climb), whereas the chambers' walls are carefully smoothed (DC 28 Athletics check to Climb).

Dwarven Weapons: Weapons with the dwarf trait resonate with power while in the tomb, and a wielder feels an ineffable sense of rightness when wielding such weapons. These weapons gain the deadly d8 trait while in the tomb. The effect is especially pronounced for Taargick's clan dagger, *Skysunder*, which sheds dim light in a 10-foot radius, gains the fatal d12 weapon trait, and deactivates Stoneriver's regeneration in area G9 as if it had dealt cold damage.

Sanctified: Despite his troubled faith, Taargick's artistry and deeds earned the dwarven pantheon's approval, granting the tomb the effects of a permanent 2nd-level *consecrate* ritual affecting worshippers of any of the dwarven gods (except Droskar).

G1. THE FIRST TOMB

This octagonal tomb features a stone sarcophagus atop a low platform. Friezes carved along the walls show dwarven accomplishments: orderly armies crushing orc raiders, architects building magnificent edifices, and proud smiths raising their creations to the sky in triumph. These carvings become more lavish as they wrap along the far wall, where a carved Torag towers as if gazing proudly over his people's work. Carved next to Torag kneels a crowned dwarf, beside which is inscribed: "Every deed in your name was righteous. Every step toward the sky was without regret."

Taargick knew that eventually, dwarves would find his tomb. This first tomb is a showcase designed to placate the casual pilgrim who expects a high king to have a beautiful crypt that praises all things dwarven. Their curiosity sated, the visitor would then leave. The sarcophagus bears a relief carving of Taargick in repose, yet it's empty. Where a body should be is only an inscription: "My tomb lies beyond the lie."

With age, Taargick increasingly questioned the Quest for Sky—not reaching the surface but instead the lives lost along the way at Torag's vague command. Though he honored Torag to the end, he interrogated his faith often and felt utter obedience was folly. Thus, the intended path to Taargick's real tomb requires a pilgrim do what few dwarves would dare: destroy the handiwork of the first high king. A PC examining the area and who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check notices the north wall seems remarkably thin (Hardness 10, 10 HP). Likewise, a PC might infer that the inscription on the wall doesn't align with Taargick's values and that it's a lie blocking their way.

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G2. ZOGOTOTARU'S PATH

MODERATE 10

By breaking down the first tomb's wall, the PCs open up the rest of the tomb and figuratively shatter the overwhelmingly positive Quest for Sky myths. Taargick assumed anyone reaching this would be mentally prepared to examine dwarven past with a critical eye. Taargick illustrated his more personal thoughts along the first hundred feet of this tunnel. Carvings of dwarven victories in war hide vignettes of casualties, atrocities, and provocation. In the shadow of architects' magnificent towers, dwarven builders pry apart the bricks of a prior culture's settlement. Looming over the action, Torag looks on with a neutral mien. Similar scenes continue farther down the tunnel, though they become less detailed and are spaced farther apart deeper in the tomb—a product of Taargick's limited time alive.

The tomb has weathered earthquakes, experiencing only one collapse, and at one stretch of wall, the tunnel loops back toward itself. The rubble creates a 10-foot-high mound partially blocking the gap, functioning as greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: On sensing the consecrated tomb being opened, heavenly authorities dispatched two archons to chase off any tomb robbers. The pair arrive separately and shortly after the PCs break into the tunnel. What they find shocks them: irreverent artwork, a demolished wall, and troublemakers creeping about a legendary king's tomb! Their accusations escalate from trespassing to vandalism to theft, depending on what they find. The furious archons attack, dismissing protestations or even brandished sacred symbols of the dwarven pantheon with "That remains to be seen."

The archons are quick to attack yet aren't merciless or without reason. They begin with nonlethal strikes, taking a –2 penalty to their attack rolls. They respond to lethal force in kind. All the while, they do listen to any ongoing arguments the PCs make, and an archon reduced to 35 Hit Points withdraws from combat to parley. So long as the PCs don't continue fighting, the archons are willing to hear their justification for breaking into the tomb. The archons don't approve of Taargick's artwork or the tomb intrusion, yet they readily apologize for the aggressive response and

caution the PCs to remember that all art is subjective when compared to Torag's divine truth. The archons aren't interested in accompanying the PCs further, instead traveling to the entrance to ensure it's secure.

SHIELD ARCHONS (2)

Pathfinder Bestiary 29

Perception +19

CREATURE 10

G3. TEXTILE WORKSHOP

This workshop is dedicated to producing perishable crafts. Largest among the tools is a huge loom that's ready for a new project. A deep countertop curves along one corner, with drawers of tools and supplies lining every vertical surface. Through runecraft, Taargick anchored a preservative effect on each drawer, so most of the contents are still functional, albeit musty. These supplies include thread, yarn, leather, reeds, blocks of wood for whittling, bolts of woolen fabric, and the like. One of the two shelves likely held finished crafts, but it lacks the same preservative magic; with the exception of an enchanted arrow, its contents are little more than dust, stains, and brittle leather fragments. The other shelf holds extremely fragile drafting supplies and crafting journals documenting some of Taargick's blueprints and potential projects. A stone statue of the dwarven underworld god Magrim gazes over the workshop with silent approval.

Treasure: The tidy workshop's supplies aren't especially valuable, with one exception: a roll of red dragonhide weighing 1 Bulk. In addition, the PCs can assemble the equivalent of three sterling artisan tool sets, and among them is a *greater crafter's eyepiece*. The surviving arrow is a *type IV spellstrike arrow*.

G4. MELTED FORGE

Magma seeping into the tomb has destroyed part of this workshop designed for ceramics, metalworking, and glassblowing. Fortunately, Taargick thoroughly fireproofed the contents, including the shelf to the north that holds crafting blueprints, alloy recipes, and similar documents. The igneous rock that juts into the room has solidified yet remains hot to the touch. Despite the damage, there are still anvils, tools, ingots, glass nodules, and clay aplenty. Two stone statues—one of Torag and one of his mighty son, Trudd—watch over the room.

Treasure: One of Taargick's last projects, a *buzzsaw axe* (*Secrets of Magic* 181), rests atop an anvil. The axe head is loose, and the weapon as a whole needs significant maintenance, functioning as a broken weapon until repaired (currently 10 of 20 HP). In addition, the equipment here includes sterling tool kits for blacksmithing, glassblowing, and ceramics. A niche carved into the wall has two *potions of moderate fire resistance* in easy reach. Roughly 20 Bulk of iron ingots are stored here along with three silver ingots.



Flames of Taargick

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G5. BLOCKED PATH

Taargick filled this section with his favorite crafts and mementos made during his final years, with many placed lovingly atop stone plinths. Encroaching magma had other plans. Only a few of the plinths and their treasures still survive: a marble bust of a dwarven woman, a curled war horn made of silver, an urn painted with scenes of reveling xulgaths, and a heavily charred longsword sheath. The solidified magma has swallowed most of another plinth, with only the golden head of a tiny saber-toothed cat statue poking out.

Treasure: The horn is a *horn of blasting*. The saber-toothed cat is one of a pair of *golden lion wondrous figurines*, and they operate as a pair. Their magic barely preserved them, leaving them fragile, so extracting them is a delicate process: a PC must succeed at one DC 24 Mining Lore check, DC 28 Athletics check, DC 28 Thievery check, or similar check to extract the first lion safely with 10 minutes' work, which also uncovers part of the second lion that's fully buried. Extracting the second lion requires two additional successful checks. The PCs can retry failed checks. However, critically failing a check breaks the weakened statue, scattering its magic. Alternatives like casting *shape stone* can extract the figurines without risk.

G6. MOLTEN WOUND

SEVERE 10

Magma continues to corrode this part of Taargick's tomb. The flow has since ebbed, leaving a large cavity arching over a magma pond. Taargick's wall carvings here have half melted, creating surreal and barely identifiable scenes from dwarven history.

Creatures: Two fire elementals have visited the tomb periodically over the past few decades, each time marveling at (and further corroding) the carvings here. Over time, the normally amorphous elementals have reshaped themselves to appear more dwarven, styling themselves rulers of this tiny domain.

They spend most hours lounging in the magma. Their burbling bath drowns out most noise, and they're loath to leave it. Once intruders barge into the area, the elementals berate the new arrivals, ineptly parodying the behavior of dwarven rulers based on what they've observed in Taargick's art. If the PCs feign obeisance, the elementals delightedly play along for a while. However, the elementals' antics escalate the longer the charade lasts. The pair increasingly make impossible (or lethal) demands, such as having the PCs bathe with them or taste-test the magma to ensure it's fit for a king. Eventually, the elementals tire of the PCs, deciding the only entertainment left involves immolating their newfound minions.

FLAMES OF TAARGICK (2)

LEVEL 10

Variant weak elemental infernos (*Bestiary* 6, 149)

Perception +20

Melee ♦ tendril +24, **Damage** 2d10+12 fire plus 3d8 persistent fire

Inferno Leap ♦♦ (fire) The explosion affects a 20-foot emanation.

G7. ART LAB

Taargick's art studio shows that no matter one's heroic deeds or artisanal mastery, a crafter inevitably collects five times more supplies than they can use in a lifetime. The shelf and desks contain hundreds of metal drawers filled with oil paints, rolls of canvas, jewelry-grade wire, gemstones, thread, and beads of countless colors and materials. Larger bins hold alchemical glassware, hotplates, pans, sundry reagents, and dried food—suitable for smaller alchemical and culinary projects that Taargick hadn't quite mastered in life. A smiling statue of Bolka, the dwarven goddess of beauty and art, stands along one wall.

Treasure: Even though most of the gemstones are sparkly yet not especially valuable (collectively worth 170 gp), there are several exceptional jewels that Taargick had reserved: three rubies worth 75 gp each, a yellow diamond worth 115 gp, and a hefty cut emerald worth 650 gp. The wire made from gold and silver is worth an additional 40 gp, and the oil paints include several made from rare pigments, worth 35 gp for the set. The collected tools here are equivalent to three sterling artisan tools kits.

A few of Taargick's smaller creations are stored throughout the room, including an *iron medallion*, a greater mistform elixir, and a greater cheetah elixir. Finally, a nearly finished project lies atop one desk. It resembles an oversized bandolier or long scarf, but in fact, it's a *greater choker of elocution* for the languages Dwarven, Ignan, and Terran. Among the blueprints here, the PCs can find the project's documentation, labeled only "For Z." With 10 minutes' adjustment, a PC can resize the giant choker for their own use.

G8. THE SECOND TOMB

Much like his first tomb, this chamber features a stone sarcophagus atop a broad stone platform, this time surrounded by statues of Taargick dressed in various outfits. Unlike the first tomb, this one doesn't celebrate dwarven achievements, but rather it illustrates Taargick's aspirations and doubts. The middle statue depicts Taargick as he was in life, whereas the other four present him in the guise of various dwarven deities whose values he hoped to emulate.

Taargick's Visions

In decorating his tomb, Taargick didn't just figuratively pour his memories and soul into the art; with his self-reflection, he imbued the statues here with occult potential. Each of the four statues anchors one of his particularly challenging memories. By offering something of cultural significance to it, a statue's memory awakens, drawing in a nearby PC to experience and navigate that moment from Taargick's perspective. The affected PC falls unconscious, their body gently slumping to the ground. The PC awakens a few minutes later, even if days passed in the memory. As an alternative to providing an offering, a PC can brute force the memory with a successful DC 27 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check; failure makes the PC stupefied 1 for 24 hours.

To lift the sarcophagus lid, a PC must succeed at a DC 40 Athletics check. However, the more memories the PCs experience and overcome, the lighter this chamber's sarcophagus lid becomes, each reducing the Athletics DC needed to lift it by 8. After resolving all four, the sarcophagus lid seems almost weightless, easily being shifted without a check. In addition, how the PCs resolve these memory scenes impacts their encounter with Stoneriver (area G9), who can sense traces of the occult experience.

In general, only one PC experiences each memory. However, consider allowing two PCs to experience certain memories for larger groups, enabling each PC to participate in one of these scenes. A second PC typically appears as one of Taargick's closest allies, working alongside him toward the memory's objective.

Offerings: Each statue presents Taargick with clothing, armor, weapons, and accessories associated with a deity of the dwarven pantheon, as if he were trying to live up to that god's ideals. Each statue's associated deity impacts what types of offerings can activate its memory—objects a PC might craft in the workshops and a few alternatives that don't require the Crafting skill. A PC can identify the deity with a successful DC 15 Dwarven Lore or Religion check, and with a critical success, they also deduce what kinds of offerings would apply.

Providing the offering involves two steps. First, a PC must decide and describe the offering, such as what scene they're weaving into a tapestry, the symbol carved into an amulet, or the style of military drill presented. This opportunity lets PCs express what they know and value from Taargick's life, dwarven culture, or other inspirations—hopefully evoking experiences from earlier in the campaign. Second, a PC attempts a relevant DC 27 skill check as part of creating the offering, such as Crafting, Performance, a suitable

MANIPULATING MEMORIES

Just because Taargick triumphed in these four memories doesn't mean each PC has the same skills the high king did—particularly for the combat challenges. Fortunately, a PC has some power over the memory, potentially letting them bend the narrative or reality for a moment. Once per turn after failing or critically failing an attack roll, Perception check, skill check, or saving throw, a PC can attempt a DC 23 Occultism check or DC 25 Will save to adjust the memory slightly. If they succeed, they apply a +2 circumstance bonus to the triggering roll's result. If they critically fail, they take 1d10 mental damage.

Consider allowing other effects beyond the circumstance bonus. For example, a PC might instead change the damage type of a spell they cast, letting them bypass a foe's resistances.

Lore skill, or even an attack roll as befits the offering. If the PC's offering is especially insightful or observant in expressing Taargick's values, consider reducing this DC by 2 or even by 5.

A PC who succeeds at the check activates the statue. A PC who critically succeeds establishes an especially strong connection that enables heroic feats, granting the PC a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, Perception checks, saving throws, and skill checks while experiencing the memory. If the PC fails the check, they activate the statue but create a dissonant connection that instead imposes a -1 penalty to attack rolls, Perception checks, saving throws, and skill checks in the memory. A PC who critically fails forms no connection and can't offer the same offering again.

ANGRADD

This Taargick hefts a flame-bladed axe and holds one hand to his brow to shield his gaze from the sun. He wears heavy armor and a necklace of boar's teeth.

Crafts Anything associated with fire, warfare, or dwarven tradition, such as a weapon, mundane object crafted in an ancient dwarven style, or metal good forged in intense heat.

Other Offerings Choreographed military drill, feat of strength, or display of fire magic

Vision Upon activating this statue, the PC experiences the Vision of War (page 58).

FOLGRIT

This Taargick wears comfortable clothing and leans on a simple staff. A dozen smaller birds and mammals perch on

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and snuggle about him. He stands in a ring of stones built to shelter a campfire.

Crafts Anything that provides comfort or a sense of community, such as a blanket, clan dagger, furniture, wedding accessory, or food.

Other Offerings Lullabies or tales of family life

Vision Upon activating this statue, the PC experiences the Vision of Travel (page 56).

GRUNDINNAR

This Taargick smiles and stands with arms gently spread as if awaiting an embrace. Weapons lie broken at his feet.

Crafts Anything that symbolizes or commemorates friendship or cooperation, such as a two-person saw, a memento made to honor one of the NPCs the party befriended earlier, or a token that incorporates a gift the PC received.

Other Offerings An artful expression of sincere praise directed toward a friend in the room

Vision Upon activating this statue, the PC experiences the Vision of Triumph (page 57).

KOLS

This Taargick is alert and stern. He's dressed as a judge, holding a warhammer that's loosely bound to his hand with

a set of chains. Two lizards perch on his shoulders, one of them holding a tiny set of scales in its mouth, and the other gripping a scroll.

Crafts Anything representing protection, obligation, and governance, such as a length of chain, a piece of armor, or a badge of office.

Other Offerings Swearing a sincere oath with long-term conditions, such as promising to adopt a faith, proposing marriage, or adopting a lifelong cause

Vision Upon activating this statue, the PC experiences the Vision of Defiance (see below).

Ending a Memory: If a PC dies while experiencing a memory, the memory ends painfully. The PC must attempt a DC 30 Fortitude save, becoming doomed 1 on a failure or doomed 2 on a critical failure. If the PC is already doomed, their doomed value increases by 1 on a failure. The PC can't access that memory again, though they can activate a different statue and experience its memory.

A memory ends automatically once a PC resolves its challenges. The PC awakens moments later, recovering any Hit Points lost during the memory. Any abilities, items, or limited-frequency spells expended in the memory are also expended when the PC awakens.

Vision of Defiance

The objections and ultimate defection of hryngars might be the most famous, for the Quest for Sky involved countless mutinies and disagreements over Torag's will and whether to continue traveling. As a skilled negotiator, Taargick assuaged the massive community's protests, inadvertently establishing his leadership credentials and paving the way to becoming high king. However, several protests defied negotiation. Even today, the tale of Hrungul Ironeye survives, remembering the dwarven commander whose departure would've inspired half the army to defect in solidarity. Taargick's words didn't stop Hrungul, but his axe.

In reliving Taargick's memory, the PC finds themselves encircled by an agitated mob, without aid except for a grizzled dwarven commander donning chainmail and brandishing a sword and shield.



Hrungul Ironeye

"A thousand more forge-days, a thousand more dead!" barks the commander, slowly pacing the area as he addresses the crowd. "Some from sickness, some from old age, indeed. But the greatest share are my warriors, their axes raised high as they carve a path through enemies we'd never even met a generation ago. Enough of it! If Torag truly values his people's safety, then it's my duty to lead us back, not upward to oblivion!" He points to you. "Not to oblivion as he'd demand of you."

The crowd responds with some enthusiasm, clearly interested but not yet convinced of Hrungul's plan. Through Taargick's memory, the PC knows these disputes have happened before, each resolved by hearing and refuting the rabble-rouser's complaints. The PC can feel that the crowd respects Taargick, not only intuitively, but also by how everyone's gaze drifts to him with anticipation.

This scene includes two phases. First, Taargick must debate Hrungul Ironeye, hearing and countering his arguments. Second, the debate devolves into a formal duel, in which Taargick must defeat Hrungul. Even though the duel is inevitable, by debating well, Taargick unnerves and enrages Hrungul, imposing combat penalties in the ensuing fight.

Tracking the debate uses the basic Victory Point system (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) over three exchanges. For each, Hrungul appeals to a particular emotion or grievance, after which the PC can respond and then attempt a skill check. Each exchange notes likely ways the PC can refute Hrungul as well as likely skills and DCs involved. As always, consider applying a circumstance bonus to the PC's check for making an especially compelling point. These lists aren't exhaustive, so consider other options if the PC takes a creative strategy.

APPEAL TO GRIEF

While lauding his soldiers' bravery and victories, Hrungul claims the Quest for Sky is a foolish endeavor that has killed thousands. Why invite more death?

Refuting Hrungul Taargick might share the crowd's grief, empathize with Hrungul, appeal to Torag's divine prophecy, or emphasize the dwarves' victories.

Ideal Skills Diplomacy (DC 26), Performance (DC 28), Religion (DC 28), Warfare Lore (DC 25)

APPEAL TO UNCERTAINTY

Hrungul references an assortment of strange beasts, fearsome cultures, and even old neighbors whom the dwarves antagonized, fought, and died to in their migration upward. To illustrate the point, several comrades bring out various skeletons, claws, weapons,

and other objects recovered from recent foes—many unfamiliar to the crowd. What other terrors dwell above, yet to be discovered and awakened?

Refuting Hrungul Taargick might appeal to dwarven exceptionalism to dismiss these threats, invoke Torag's divine protection, or identify the strange souvenirs to show that the community already knows what these threats are and how to defeat them.

Ideal Skills Cave Lore (DC 27), Dwarven Lore (DC 27), Nature (DC 26), Occultism (DC 26), Religion (DC 29), Society (DC 27), Survival (DC 28)

APPEAL TO POLITICS

Hrungul artfully attacks Taargick's credibility by observing how much power and influence Taargick has gained during the Quest for Sky. Of course Taargick wants to perpetuate this journey! It has enabled him to become a tyrant to Torag's people!

Refuting Hrungul Taargick might express humility, swear an oath to his good intentions, or cite dwarven law that would halt tyrannical acts.

Ideal Skills Diplomacy (DC 27), Dwarven Lore (DC 25), Religion (DC 28), Society (DC 26)

Ending the Debate: Even if he has the upper hand, Hrungul realizes that he's unlikely to win a verbal duel so decisively that he ends the Quest for Sky entirely. He escalates, invoking old dwarven customs by challenging Taargick to a duel. As Taargick, the PC intuitively knows this strategy is outdated yet legal, showing the crowd that Hrungul is willing to sacrifice himself to defend his argument. While the PC can refuse the challenge, they know that Taargick accepted to maintain the community's confidence in him. If the PC does refuse, the memory gradually fades as Hrungul leverages Taargick's apparent cowardice to convince many to join him and leave.

For the duel, tally the PC's Victory Points from the debate. They earn no special benefit for fewer than 2 VP. If they earned 2–3 VP, Hrungul is clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 during the duel, and he surrenders once reduced to 35 HP. If they earned 4 or more VP, Hrungul is clumsy 2 and stupefied 2 during the duel, and he surrenders once reduced to 70 HP. The crowd forms a 30-foot-diameter circle for the duel, with the combatants starting 15 feet from each other.

HRUNGUL IRONEYE

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Skills Athletics +16, Deception +15, Survival +14, Warfare Lore +17

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

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Items +1 striking longsword, +1 chainmail, light hammer, minor sturdy shield (Hardness 8, 64 HP, BT 32) with +1 striking shield boss

AC 26; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

HP 140

Bravery When the Hrugul rolls a success on a Will save against a fear effect, he gets a critical success instead. In addition, any time he gains the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Shield Block ⤵

Speed 20 feet

Melee ⤵ longsword +20 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+10 slashing

Melee ⤵ shield boss +20, **Damage** 2d6+10 bludgeoning

Ranged ⤵ light hammer +18 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+10 bludgeoning

Double Slice Hrugul makes a longsword Strike, followed by a shield boss Strike against the same target at a -2 penalty, each using his current multiple attack penalty. If both attacks hit, he combines their damage and applies resistances and weaknesses only once. This counts as two attacks when calculating his multiple attack penalty.

Grim Efficiency ⤵ (mental, visual) **Frequency** once per round; **Trigger** A foe within 30 feet critically fails a Strike against Hrugul or targets Hrugul with an effect against which he critically succeeds at the saving throw; **Effect** Hrugul's defense displays his effortless military skill, unsettling the triggering foe. He attempts to Demoralize the foe, using his Warfare Lore skill modifier in place of his Intimidation skill.

Quick Block At the start of his turn, Hrugul gains an additional reaction that he can use only to Shield Block.

Ending the Vision: Once defeated, Hrugul acknowledges Taargick's victory aloud and swears to serve the Quest for Sky despite his reservations. If he defeats Taargick, he declares Taargick unfit to lead their people into further danger, rallying many to follow him back to Felgunn.

Vision of Travel

In the modern era, traveling from the surface to Felgunn takes days. During the Quest for Sky, the ascent took generations. In practice, the dwarven exodus established dozens of semi-permanent camps to restock supplies, defend against raids, and even blast through the stone in order to reach caverns they could sense yet not access. Even in the best of times and with conjured food supplementing their rations, the immense community endured famine, illness, and other hardships. As a youth growing up in the Quest for Sky,

Taargick witnessed these roadside deaths firsthand. Though young, he wouldn't stand idle. Aiding the fallen and forgotten at great personal cost earned him his first followers.

In reliving Taargick's memory, the PC experiences a montage of roadside hardships, lingering on three difficult decisions Taargick faced early in the migration. Each highlights a moment when the realities of travel challenged dwarven community values and would've won if not for his intervention. After observing the scene, the PC as Taargick decides how to resolve the situation and attempts a skill check or saving throw. They then take a large amount of damage, mitigated by a basic saving throw; after attempting the save, they can use the degree of success from their earlier check in place of their saving throw's result, representing how capably they resolved the issue and withstood the labor. This damage is cumulative with no time to recover between the three scenes, potentially reducing the PC to 0 Hit Points and ending the vision prematurely. This memory is as much about the PC's resourcefulness as it is about what sacrifices they're willing to make and how well they can endure the consequences.

THE INJURED

Scouts have cleared the way to the Quest for Sky's next camp—none too soon, as xulgath raiders will soon overrun the current camp. Yet as the community packs up and moves, some dwarves are too injured to make the trip. Leadership knows they can't afford to continue guarding this camp but loathe leaving anyone behind. The leaders try to ignore the problem and avoid blame by helping elsewhere. Taargick can't look away so easily.

Resolving the Problem Taargick might assemble litters for moving the injured (DC 26 Crafting), apply medical triage and treatment (DC 25 Medicine or DC 27 Nature), or confront leaders to secure time to rescue everyone (DC 28 Diplomacy or DC 28 Intimidation).

Damage 10d10 mental damage (DC 27 basic Will save)

THE INFIRM

When it's time to move camp, the elderly and infirm sometimes struggle to complete the next leg of the journey, even when not rushed. The community aids where it can, and Taargick had many opportunities to help others travel or offer them hospice when they could go no further. The famously stubborn cobbler Tergin Polgolrom had lost much of his family along the trip and spent the last three years insisting he would die any day. Wheezing from exertion during one migration, he collapsed, bemoaned his imminent death, and swatted at strangers who stopped to offer help. Taargick wouldn't be so easily deterred.

Resolving the Problem It's true that Tergin is venerable and nearing the end of his natural life, but he also feels isolated and bitter. This problem isn't a medical matter; it's a matter of compassion and community. Taargick might personally carry Tergin to the next long-term camp (DC 28 Athletics), patiently converse with and console Tergin to convince him to accept help (DC 27 Diplomacy), or even provide hospice care and burial rites so he passes away at peace (DC 27 Medicine or Religion).
Damage 10d10 mental damage (DC 27 basic Will save)

THE DEJECTED

As the years passed without reaching the surface, the zeal that drove the Quest for Sky waned. Virtually everyone questioned the prophecies and objectives periodically. Some of them became depressed and disillusioned, either wanting to turn back or losing hope entirely. Taargick shared these feelings yet felt a responsibility to bolster spirits. At one campfire, he overheard despair and stepped in to restore hope.

Resolving the Problem Taargick might insightfully sympathize with the travelers as they work through their frustrations (DC 27 Diplomacy or DC 28 Perception), lead them in cheerful tunes (DC 26 Performance or DC 27 Dwarven Lore), or remind them of their divine mission (DC 29 Religion).

Damage 10d10 mental damage (DC 27 basic Will save)

Ending the Vision: After completing the third scene, the PC experiences a brighter series of memories. In each, Taargick's community increasingly looks to him not with sadness but with smiles. As he continues inspiring dwarves over time, the memory fades, and the PC awakens.

Vision of Triumph

Establishing Sky Citadels and guiding the development of a surface culture kept Taargick busy, yet in his last century of life, these prosperous states increasingly ran themselves. The heroics of his youth had long past. His victories lived more in his people than in his day-to-day actions. Even so, Taargick would triumph one last time when he withdrew into the Darklands to build his tomb. When Zogototaru attacked, the high king fought and narrowly prevailed. With the beast at his mercy, he reflected on the many subterranean foes he'd slain unnecessarily in Torag's name and decided to spare the cave worm—the start of a treasured friendship.

In reliving Taargick's memory, the PC finds himself just outside what will one day be his tomb, though lava hasn't flooded the area, and only preliminary has begun. That work can wait, as a more immediate

problem literally rears its head: an immense crimson worm towers over Taargick, its maw wide and ready to swallow him whole. The PC takes control of Taargick's actions just as he drops his chisel and draws his axe.

Rather than a typical combat, this encounter plays out as a narrative fight broken into four key moments. The first three are near-death moments as Taargick clashes with the crimson worm Zogototaru, each requiring some combination of attack rolls, skills checks, and saving throws to survive and turn the tide. The final moment instead presents a moral conundrum, requiring no check to resolve. In the past, this battle lasted hours or even days, though in the memory, the action seems to take only minutes. Be sure to play up the excitement, provide sensory details, and encourage the player to contribute their own ideas to the narrative clash.

After observing each of the first three moments the scene, the PC as Taargick decides how to resolve the situation and attempts a skill check or saving throw. They then take a large amount of damage, mitigated by a basic saving throw; after attempting the save, they can use the degree of success from their earlier check in place of their saving throw's result, representing how capably they resolved the issue and withstood the labor. This damage is cumulative with no time to recover between the three scenes, potentially reducing the PC to 0 Hit Points and ending the vision prematurely. This memory is as much about the PC's resourcefulness as it is about how well they can endure a titanic beast's rage.

OUTMANEUVER

The cave worm lunges to bite, forcing Taargick to dodge and seek cover long enough to develop a plan of attack. Nearby stalagmites won't stop a cave worm for long, but they'll grant cover long enough to plan a counterattack. If the cave worm does bite him, hopefully his adamantite armor can deflect the beast's teeth.

Strategies Taargick might weave between stalagmites (DC 26 Acrobatics) or vault over obstacles to reach safety (DC 28 Athletics).

Damage 10d10 piercing damage (DC 27 basic Fortitude save)

OUTSMART

Dwarf and cave worm slowly circle each other, each seeking an opportunity. Armor and axe won't be enough, and Taargick needs a cunning plan to outwit his foe and get within striking distance. The stalagmites shielding them from each other might deter physical attacks, but the crimson worm periodically blasts the area with its fiery breath.

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Strategies This challenge is very flexible, accommodating a wide range of strategies from the PC. Taargick might sneak closer, collapsing rock formations to confuse Zogototaru's tremorsense (DC 27 Stealth). He might leverage his knowledge of cave worms to predict its movements (DC 26 Nature or DC 27 Survival). He might even create several improvised traps that entangle the beast (DC 28 Crafting or Thievery).

Damage 10d10 fire damage (DC 27 basic Reflex save)

OVERCOME

Now's his chance! Taargick's axe strikes true, giving him leverage to start climbing the crimson worm to strike more vulnerable areas. His foe doesn't make it easy, thrashing about and even colliding with walls to dislodge or crush Taargick. Taargick needs to scare off, subdue, or slay the creature quickly.

Strategies Taargick might climb to where he can strike a telling blow (DC 28 Athletics), match the beast's fury with a display of his own ferocity (DC 28 Intimidation), or rely on martial prowess to overwhelm the beast (attack roll against AC 28).

Damage 10d10 bludgeoning damage (DC 27 basic Reflex save)

DEATHBLOW

With an anguished roar, the crimson worm crashes to the ground, where several stalagmites pierce its hide. Taargick scrambles to the beast's head and raises his axe to deal the death blow, pausing a moment to admire the titanic creature he has defeated. What the PCs see isn't Zogototaru; they instead find themselves standing over the battered and helpless hryngar sorcerer, Narseigus. Their foe is at their mercy. What does the PC do?

Strategies Although Narseigus has acted with far greater malice than Zogototaru did toward Taargick, the PC nonetheless faces a similar quandary of whether to slay or spare their foe. Either option concludes the memory, though the decision does impact the PCs' encounter with Stoneriver in area G9.

Damage None

Ending the Vision: Upon the PC slaying or sparing Narseigus, the vision fades.

Vision of War

As dwarves journeyed upward, they encountered countless creatures and cultures, many of which responded with violence. Modern dwarven history recorded many of these battles, while others are remembered only by cryptic names they earned afterward. Few haunted Taargick's memory more than the Battle of Scattered Bone. Though dwarven

soldiers prevailed over a coalition of orc warriors, Taargick realized later that these orcs fought not out of bloodlust but out of desperation. The acts of necromancy displayed that day weren't indicative of orcs' innate evil; the ritual was a last ditch effort to defeat dwarven aggressors.

In reliving Taargick's memory, the PC finds himself in a pitched battle waged across several interconnected caverns. The PC intuitively knows that as Taargick, they're helping lead a dwarven army against an orc horde during the Quest for Sky. At a glance, dwarven forces have the advantage, yet victory isn't guaranteed. Soldiers fighting in formation to either side look to the PC with admiration, clearly inspired by Taargick's presence.

This memory involves two phases. First, the PC commands their soldiers during the mass combat, maneuvering to where the fighting is hardest to break the orcs' counterattack. Second, the PC fights an undead horror animated by orc spellcasters. Although the second encounter is inevitable, the PC's successes while leading the soldiers determines how many soldiers survive and join the PC during the ensuing fight.

Tracking the battle uses the basic Victory Point system (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) over three challenges. For each, describe how the battle evolves and what new opportunity or threat has appeared, after which the PC can decide how to respond and then attempt a skill check; some allow a saving throw or attack roll as an alternative. Each challenge notes likely strategies the PC might use, plus likely skills and DCs involved. These lists aren't exhaustive, so consider other options if the PC employs a creative strategy.

HOLD THE LINE

After the two sides skirmish, orc forces rally and charge, attempting to break dwarven formations with overwhelming force. Taargick's troops need his expertise to stand strong.

Strategies Taargick might physically throw back orc assailants, rally troops with a rousing speech, or issue strategic commands to deflect the offensive.

Ideal Skills Athletics (DC 27), Diplomacy (DC 28), Performance (DC 27), Religion (DC 28), Warfare Lore (DC 24)

Alternate Check Will save (DC 27)

REACH THE BREACH

As Taargick's forces make steady progress, another dwarven unit has nearly broken and desperately needs reinforcements. However, if Taargick is to arrive in time, he and his personal guards need to weave through the ongoing melee.

Strategies Taargick might bulldoze a path to where he's needed, quickly duck through gaps, or spot a path of least resistance.

Ideal Skills Acrobatics (DC 26) or Athletics (DC 27)

Alternate Check Perception (DC 28) or Reflex save (DC 28)

SAVE THE DAY

Though Taargick arrives with reinforcements, the orc warriors have accumulated lethal momentum that might still overwhelm the dwarves. Averting a rout and securing victory will require a truly heroic act to inspire the troops.

Strategies Taargick might coordinate a feint that enables a devastating counterattack, cow the orcs with fearsome defiance, or simply cleave through foes to vanquish the enemy commander.

Ideal Skills Deception (DC 28), Intimidation (DC 26), Warfare Lore (DC 25)

Alternate Check Attack roll (AC 27)

Scoring the Battle: Tally the PC's Victory Points from the battle. For fewer than 2 VP, the PC's few surviving soldiers are too busy to help in the fight below. If they earned 2 or more VP, a dwarven monster hunter (*Gamemastery Guide* 227) fights alongside the PC. If they earned 4 or more VP, nearby soldiers also rain missiles on the undead dragon, dealing 2d8 bludgeoning damage (DC 27 basic Reflex save) at the start of each round.

A Final Foe: After the PC concludes the three challenges, dwarven forces begin routing their orc foes. Taargick leads a small force toward the enemy commanders. With resignation, the orc commanders cast a spell that animates the bones of an evil dragon that dwarves had slain days earlier. The skeleton quickly breaks free of their control, biting one of the orcs in half before turning to fight Taargick. The PC and any allies begin approximately 30 feet from the skeleton.

As the encounter begins, the PC can attempt a DC 25 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check or a DC 27 Perception check. If successful, they note the orcs' desperation and lack of necromantic expertise (though not a lack of magical knowledge); they've used this grim magic only because they fear dwarven wrath.

DRAKE SKELETON

CREATURE 8

Book of the Dead 148

Initiative Perception +14

Ending the Vision: Upon destroying the skeleton, the orcs break and flee. The vision fades as dwarven forces celebrate the victory, praising Taargick for his leadership and strength.

G9. THE FINAL TOMB

MODERATE 10

Where Zogototaru's tunnel began descending, Taargick carved a flight of stairs leading down to his third and final tomb. The stone double doors are unadorned on the outside, and they pivot smoothly on recessed hinges.

An immense hammer design carved into the floor stretches nearly the length of this tomb. Myriad images carved into the curving walls immortalize figures, faces, names, and maps, with over half the figures depicting non-dwarves. A stone sarcophagus sits atop a low plinth, set in a rectangular alcove. A rounded pool of magma bubbles lazily to one side, seeming more like an accidental feature than an intentional part of the tomb's design.

Hazard: The magma radiates warmth and is extremely dense, functioning like solid ground for most creatures. In addition to any falling damage taken from landing on the magma, contact with magma deals 8d6 fire damage once per round.

Creatures: Resembling an immense pangolin made of living metal, the massive archon Stoneriver recently traveled here upon sensing new activity in Taargick's tomb. With his tail harmlessly draped into the lava pool, he studies the carvings with interest.

Stoneriver is a faithful servant of Torag, often summoned to battle alongside dwarves against subterranean threats. When dwarves named Taargick their first high king, Stoneriver visited the young leader as Torag's formal representative, curious to learn about the young ruler who would champion the god's sacred journey. After hours of insightful conversation, Stoneriver deemed Taargick worthy, bestowing Torag's formal blessing. As a personal gift, the archon also extracted one of his metallic scales so that Taargick could fashion it into a clan dagger worthy of founding a dynasty.

The two remained friends. Stoneriver regularly visited to debate philosophy and spar, refining ideas and fighting stances at the same time. With Torag's blessing, Taargick aged as slowly as stone, living for centuries as he established Sky Citadels that would last millennia, yet with age came self-reflection. When Stoneriver visited, Taargick cared less for praising Torag and focused more on questioning the Quest for Sky and the deaths that followed. The archon entertained these topics at first, but he lost patience the more Taargick challenged the Father of Creation and his edicts.

His visits grew less frequent, until at last, he arrived to find Taargick missing. The high king had questioned Torag's will for years. He had spurned the great tomb his people had built for him and had disappeared,

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abandoning his people. Taargick had even vanquished then spared a vicious cave worm, which would doubtless consume dwarves in the centuries to come. The high king's departure didn't just defy Torag's commandments; it betrayed their friendship.

Millennia later, Stoneriver is here, studying Taargick's artwork and unspoken insights with fresh eyes. The archon is a staunch traditionalist, believing Taargick's regrets, mercy, and final acts defied dwarven culture. The PCs, carrying relics of Taargick's life, are living representatives of Stoneriver's old friend and Taargick's iconoclasm. As a result, Stoneriver feels restrained animosity toward them—animosity and a degree of intellectual openness out of respect for their friendship.

"Taargick?" The question resounds with earthshaking bass and a faint shimmer of chimes. The immense creature flicks its tongue, tasting the air before concluding, "No... but very similar. What brings you to his tomb, carrying a blade carved from my very body?"

Stoneriver listens patiently to the PCs' introductions and explanations. Once he has heard enough, he nods and declares.

"You seek what Taargick left behind. You think this tomb his legacy, but his true legacy lives on the surface—the dwarven kingdoms he abandoned. There is nothing here but distractions. Once you leave, I intend to collapse this place and bury it once and for all."

He doesn't bother them further if they leave promptly. However, the tomb's walls hold a wealth of information, and very likely the PCs protest, try to bargain, or even attempt some deception to get a better look. These actions amuse Stoneriver.

"Truly, you have Taargick's spirit. I have not enjoyed a lively debate as we shared for many ages." The creature stands more erect and flexes his claws. "If you would press your point, I offer you the opening argument. After all, you are not one-tenth what Taargick was at his height, even if you are ten times what he was at the end of his life."

If the PCs hesitate to attack, Stoneriver gently goads them, affirming his invitation to fight him simultaneously with weapons and words. If they protest further, he shrugs, declares they've surrendered the right of a first strike, and initiates combat himself.

During combat, he critiques the PCs' abilities, stances, and strategies, aiming both to teach them and take the measure of their philosophies. He fights fairly yet with lethal force. Whenever he's reduced to

50 or fewer Hit Points, he calls a brief truce to pose a moral conundrum that wouldn't challenge a staunch Toragdan yet might shed light on Taargick's deviant perspective. These questions appear below, and each is an opportunity to end the fight early. After hearing a response that doesn't fully satisfy him, a refreshed Stoneriver reinitiates combat, again pausing when heavily wounded.

STONERIVER

CREATURE 12

Page 88

Initiative Perception +23

Stoneriver's Questions

Taargick's regrets and reservations disturb Stoneriver, and clashing with the PCs provides the celestial opportunities to work through these ideas. Each of his questions poses a moral dilemma, and the PCs can Answer Stoneriver as they like. This provides the PCs three opportunities to change his mind with a critical success. If the PCs fail all three checks, Stoneriver fights to the death, intent on subduing the PCs and then scrubbing out Taargick's carvings.

ANSWER STONERIVER

AUDITORY LINGUISTIC

The PC answers Stoneriver's question. If their answer challenges Stoneriver's beliefs, the PC attempts a DC 32 Diplomacy, Dwarven Lore, or Religion check; other skills might be appropriate, depending on the response. An answer that draws heavily on the Taargick's beliefs (such as sparing enemies, repairing damage caused by dwarven aggression, and finding nuance in Torag's teachings) might provide as much as a +2 circumstance bonus to the check.

If the PC's answer doesn't challenge Stoneriver's beliefs, he inquires further, trying to confirm that they don't hold the same deviant beliefs that Taargick did. This opportunity lets the PC change their answer, but doing so increases the check DC by 2. If the PC instead confirms their traditionalist answer, Stoneriver is unmoved, and the PC fails the check automatically.

Critical Success Stoneriver tries to counter the answer but is dumbfounded by insights he hadn't considered before. He asks follow-up questions about the topic, and so long as the PCs answer these queries competently, he acknowledges the PCs (and Taargick) have a point. Stoneriver is willing to end the fight, though he's amenable to sparring further for fun.

Success Stoneriver ponders the response and acknowledges its insight. Though he isn't convinced entirely, reduce the DC of future checks to Answer his questions by 5.

Failure Unimpressed, Stoneriver dismisses the answer with Toragdan philosophy of his own before resuming combat.

Question of Mercy: Taargick's showing mercy to Zogototaru rankles Stoneriver, who believes the beast to be a simple creature that tried to eat one dwarf and would happily eat more. Taargick also voiced regret about his battles with orcs, xulgaths, and other enemies. Stoneriver poses the following.

"You are a victorious commander, watching as your soldiers encircle and rout the enemy. Their cries for mercy reach your ears. Yet, you know that if their forces escape, they could regain strength and threaten you in the future—as other foes have done before. What would you do?"

Torag's faith discourages showing mercy to enemies; a decisive strike of a hammer in the present can spare 100 strikes in the future. Finishing off an enemy only seems natural. However, Taargick not only showed mercy, but also he believed he could've relied more on mercy and diplomacy during the Quest for Sky to avoid making so many enemies that threaten dwarves to this day.

Stoneriver can sense some of the PCs' past actions, using a less intrusive version of his Measure Soul ability. He can discern whether the PCs spared or killed Narseigus, both in reality and in Taargick's memory of triumph. If the PC's answer contradicts their recent actions, Stoneriver can tell. He challenges the PC about the discrepancy, and unless their explanation adequately assuages his doubts, the check's DC increases by 2.

Question of Truth: Torag is a forthright god who encourages honesty in his followers. Taargick's carvings here contradict the common Quest for Sky narrative, which could cause schisms in the community. However, Taargick's perspective might be more historically correct, in which case sharing it and correcting old legends might theoretically please Torag. Stoneriver currently prefers maintaining the status quo. After all, Taargick and his people built something honorable and amazing, so why undermine it and risk chaos?

"You are the eighteenth ruler of a mighty dynasty, and you rule wisely and well, bringing prosperity to all. Yet, you have uncovered documents showing your legendary ancestor was a villain who seized control through atrocities, creating a monarchy founded on lies. If the truth spreads, you could lose your throne and see factions kill each other to seize power. If the truth stays hidden, you continue growing rich on stolen wealth. What is your decree?"

Stoneriver doesn't have a satisfactory answer. He has advocated for the lie, champions truth, and dreads

the chaos that could follow some dire revelation. The best answer is likely a nuanced one.

Question of Necessity: Many dwarves died from violence and hardship during the Quest for Sky. Taargick sometimes challenged Stoneriver about the century of suffering his people endured to fulfill Torag's decree, all while Torag provided little direct aid. To Stoneriver, overcoming adversity is a virtue; the Quest for Sky was a journey that shaped the dwarven people like a blacksmith hammering iron at a forge. Shortcuts would've cheapened the results. He poses the following.

"You have piled the last shovel-full of coal into your community's last forge. Your neighbors fret, knowing that without a forge, their village is likewise doomed. From the shadows, an unknown entity offers to fuel the forge forever in exchange for a future favor. Everyone looks to you for an answer."

Torag champions dwarven prosperity, so Stoneriver's advice to this hypothetical community would be to pack up, seek a new home, and build a new forge to honor the gods. However, this question is also reminiscent of hryngars' origins; those dwarves ignored Torag's call and then accepted Droskar's aid when they stayed behind and began to starve.

Answers that provide nuance (particularly if the PC says they would accept the entity's offer) challenge Stoneriver's view, as does anything showing sympathy toward hryngars (especially the descendants living with the aftermath of their ancestors' decision).

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs defeat Stoneriver or win his approval, they're free to explore the room and study Taargick's final inscriptions. The high king created dozens of carved scenes depicting his friends and family, capturing cherished moments while also mourning having outlived so many thanks to his supernatural longevity. The largest panel displays a set of maps tracing the route taken during the Quest for Sky, pointing back to a homeland dwarves haven't revisited in nearly 10,000 years. Importantly, it marks not only the numerous tunnels that dwarves collapsed to seal Felgunn, but also a hidden path that dwarves have overlooked. Using it, perhaps the PCs could access that lost paradise once more.

Without a doubt, the Five Kings Mountains will be abuzz with news of the PCs' discoveries. And the PCs could possibly mount an expedition to explore and even reclaim Felgunn—an opportunity explored further in the "Continuing the Campaign" article!

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CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

The Sky King's Tomb Adventure Path concludes with Stoneriver's defeat. Yet with the way to Felgunn restored, this is hardly the end of the PCs' adventures! This article explores how the world might change in the aftermath of "Heavy is the Crown," ideas for continuing your players' adventures, and advice for how to keep the game going even if the party didn't survive the campaign.

Campaign Consequences

With its discovery and exploration, the Sky King's Tomb becomes a destination for dwarven pilgrims, though the tomb's molten surroundings repel all but the most dedicated visitors. The tomb remains blessed by the dwarven pantheon, shielding it from catastrophic damage by magma. Even so, Clan Tolorr—because of their sponsorship of the PCs and dedication to preserving history—assumes the honor of guarding, studying, and maintaining the tomb. Clan experts eventually uncover hidden caches where Taargick stored even more historical treasures, which Tolorr archivists relocate to a new museum named for the PCs.

News of the tomb spreads across the Five Kings Mountains like wildfire, igniting widespread fascination with the Quest for Sky and the legendary founder of dwarven surface culture. Retro designs experience a resurgence in the coming years, ranging from ancient fashion styles not seen in millennia to countless epic poems exploring ancestors' exploits. Critics might rightly joke that dwarven fascination with the past is nothing new and, depending on what lore the PCs recovered, this might be true. If the PCs faithfully reported Taargick's soul-searching and final acts, they also inspire a fresh perspective that permeates dwarven art and philosophy.

Doubtless, some refute these revelations or attack the PCs' discoveries. Yet most dwarves listen with humility and curiosity. The news challenges their beliefs, certainly, but also it sparks new ideas in a traditionalist society that might otherwise stagnate. Citizens willingly reexamine their longtime legends, guided by Tolorr historians. This includes a doctrinal review within Torag's faith, with priests particularly

focusing on Torag's edict to show no mercy to enemies and how they might honor this command without perpetuating cycles of violence. Even if the impacts take decades or centuries to take root, dwarven society steadily improves as a result.

If Rolgrimmur suffered heavy losses while helping the PCs, these new ideas might struggle to take root in the city. Leveraging the casualties for political gain, Clan Grakodor blames the PCs along with General Sagginsdotter, who might have even perished in the fighting. They paint Taargick's tomb as a sentimental relic rediscovered only at the cost of Rolgrimmur blood, better to have been left buried. This spurs a wave of isolationism and traditionalism that pushes against the radical new Taargick narrative, potentially proving a stubborn thorn in the PCs' side for any future endeavors.

Elsewhere, though, the PCs are considered heroes. They enjoy festivals and parades in Highhelm, including formal acceptance into Clan Tolorr for any who wish it. Scholars ask to study the relics the PCs recovered, after which they're formally returned to the PCs with Highhelm's blessing to keep indefinitely. Artists hound the PCs, hoping to adapt their exploits into new songs, poems, and statues. Though the excitement wanes over the next year, the PCs remain honored residents of Highhelm as long as they like. The longer they stick around, though, the more likely it is that Highhelm will look to the PCs to help resolve dangerous situations.

The most likely task involves Felgunn itself, which dwarven explorers are eager to study and even resettle. The PCs have the right of first refusal to join (and perhaps lead) an expedition, which Highhelm hopes might grant dwarves a foothold deep in the Darklands. This voyage uncovers not just Felgunn's wonders but its unexpected fey inhabitants. The PCs might play a pivotal role in deciding Felgunn's future: forming an alliance with its fey inhabitants, potentially resettling it after evicting them, or something else entirely. How will Highhelm handle this test, where dwarven stubbornness and Taargick's more peaceful aspirations come into conflict?

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Meanwhile, Zogototaru decides that the tomb is no longer her responsibility. She lingers to ensure its new caretakers are competent, after which she departs to feed, burrow, and hibernate elsewhere. The region continues to attract cave worms. While most are ambivalent to tourists, there's always the risk that a cave worm makes a meal out of subterranean travelers.

Further Adventures

Following the events of the campaign, the characters have a number of new avenues of adventure.

REVENGE OF THE HRYNGAR KING

King **Kuridney Orgukagen** (LE male hryngar king) does not take defeat lightly. While the proud hryngar can (and does) blame the Bloodbane Coalition's defeat on Narseigus and his "inability to control the unreliable

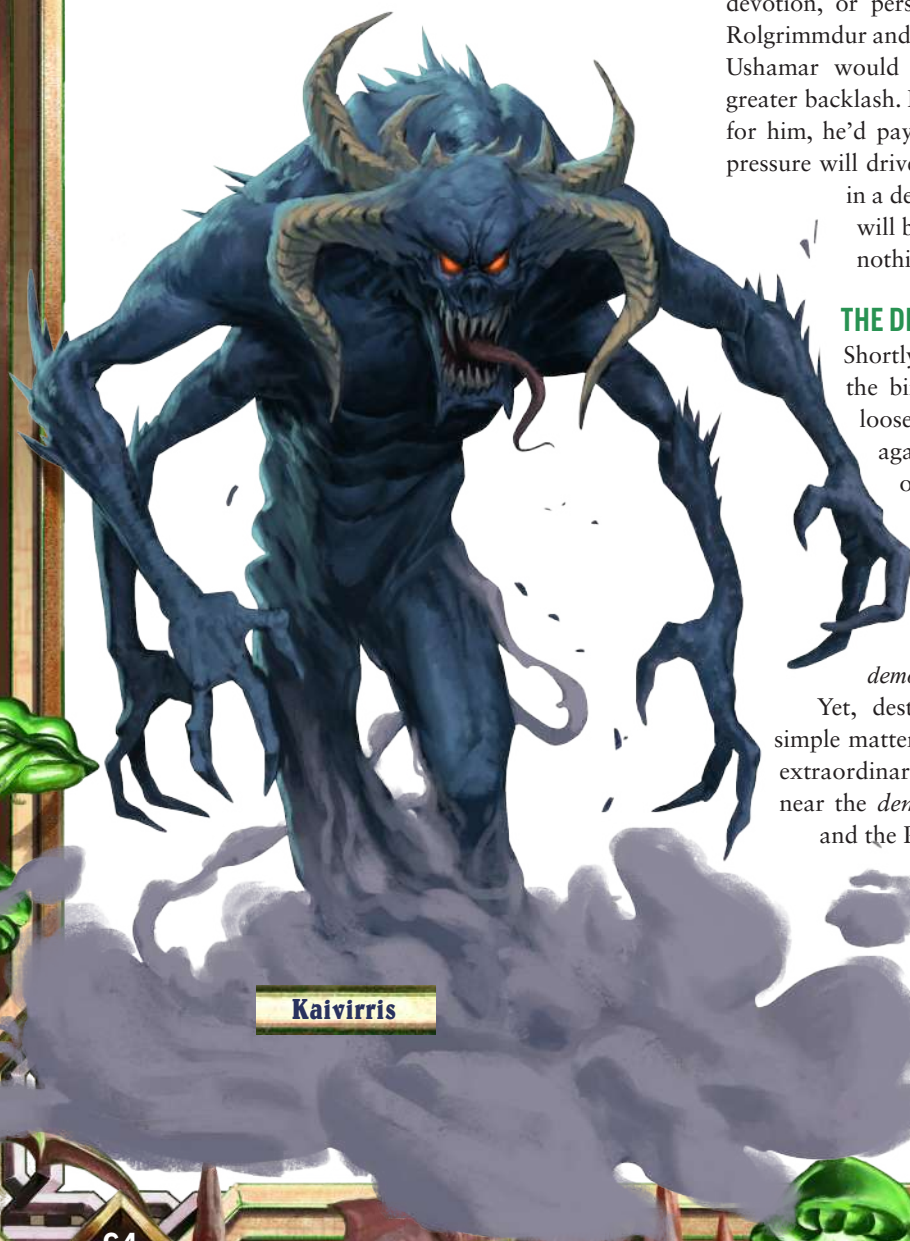
outside forces" that comprised much of the Coalition's troops, the fallout from this resounding defeat still casts dismal shadows upon King Orgukagen's reign. Within Hagegraf, the king's political opponents whisper about his perceived incompetence, spreading rumors and dissent. Many of these originate from **Ushamar Dralnav** (LE female hryngar high priestess), a conniving champion of Droskar aiming to paint King Orgukagen as slothful—a great insult among the faithful, and one which Ushamar wholeheartedly believes. After all, if King Orgukagen contributed the necessary toil, surely Droskar would have granted them victory!

Now, King Orgukagen faces a choice: clamp down on treasonous rumors and internal insurrection through edicts and harsh punishments, prove himself blessed by Droskar through extreme methods of devotion, or personally lead a larger army against Rolgrimmur and crush the dwarves entirely. Silencing Ushamar would be difficult without causing even greater backlash. If he can find agents to eliminate her for him, he'd pay handsomely. Failing that, political pressure will drive him to launch an even riskier war in a desperate ploy to regain support. Who will be the target of a hryngar tyrant with nothing left to lose?

THE DEMON'S KNOT

Shortly after the events of this adventure, the bindings on the *demon's knot* further loosen, and Kaivirris' influence once again extends beyond the boundaries of his ornamental prison. This time, the warding originally placed by Gaeldred the Warden are shattered completely and cannot be repaired. The PCs must embark on a quest to destroy the *demon's knot* without freeing Kaivirris.

Yet, destroying a powerful artifact is no simple matter. It requires research, planning, and extraordinary deeds. Furthermore, simply being near the *demon's knot* is incredibly dangerous, and the PCs risk losing control of themselves and becoming puppets of the very demon they're trying to defeat. If the PCs fail, Kaivirris will soon be free, and his vengeance will be terrible sight behold. Where will the PCs' quest to purify the *demon's knot* lead them and what foul foes will they face along the way?



SUNFIST EXPOSED

Months after the discovery of Felgunn, Ryko the Inked visits the PCs, begging their help in saving Sugha Sunfist. Sugha has been branded a traitor by her ex-lover, **Rahari the Scoured One** (CE female orc flamespitter), who now rules their clan. As repayment for the aid Ryko provided the PCs in Drootorca Cavern, the orc tattoo artist demands the PCs rescue Sugha before she's executed. Unfortunately, Ryko was followed by Rahari's loyal hunters, who bring war on their heels. To stop to an impending clash between dwarves and orcs—which both sides are only too willing to embrace—the PCs must either help Sugha reclaim her right to rule or take down Rahari themselves. How far are the PCs willing to go to avoid war and to repay a debt? Can an alliance with Sugha Sunfist set the course for a long-overdue end to hostilities between dwarfs and orcs?

TAARGICK'S LAMENT

Felgunn is a wondrous realm, but it's not without turmoil. Mere weeks after the PCs visit, sightings of a ghost who looks suspiciously like King Taargick circulate through Felgunn. Some claim that Taargick's spirit is uneasy—perhaps he's against the settling of Felgunn or perhaps the PCs didn't earn King Taargick's legacy, but stole it! Further investigation reveals that the ghost seems to be warning the PCs of something. What ominous event does it foretell? More importantly, can the PCs stop it?

TORAG'S CHOSEN

Corruption has pierced the very core of Torag's realm, Forgeheart, infecting celestial and petitioner alike. Sensing trouble and worrying that fellow archons are compromised, Stoneriver seeks out the PCs. After all, they demonstrated the wisdom and nuance necessary to untangle Taargick's legacy, and he trusts them. Their investigation involves first traveling to Ninshabur, where a Toragdan community has become corrupted by Nurgal, a demon lord of senseless warfare, deserts, and the sun. Yet this corruption stems partly from the community's archon guardian, who delivered these increasingly evil edicts in Torag's name. Whether the PCs interrogate the archon or chase them back to Heaven, they travel to Forgeheart with Stoneriver to root out the growing cult within Torag's realm. Their success might earn them the dwarven pantheon's blessing, particularly that of Dranngvit the Debt Minder. This attack on Forgeheart is a terrible crime, and she asks the PCs to be her agents of vengeance who will take the fight to the Abyss itself!

Repercussions of Failure

It's possible that the PCs fail at various points in this final adventure. This need not end the campaign. The following scenarios present ways to continue the campaign even if the characters perish or surrender.

Failure to defeat Narseigus: If Narseigus defeats the PCs, he kills them without mercy, tossing their bodies into the magma. Narseigus claims Taargick's clan dagger and uses it to enter the Sky King's Tomb. He defeats its guardians, and though Stoneriver destroys part of Taargick's inscriptions, enough survive for Narseigus to potentially locate Felgunn. However, rediscovering the dwarven homeland is a task for other hryngars; Narseigus reinforces his control of Zogototaru, using the crimson worm to batter surface dwarves' settlements and become a menace in Nar-Voth. He remains friendly to Hagegraf, though more as an ally than loyal subject, making King Orgukagan nervous of a coup.

Sensing his tomb's desecration, the spirit of Taargick appeals to Torag for intervention. The Father of Creation won't interfere directly, but he does empower Taargick to represent the PCs at Pharamasma's Court and insist they died before their fated time. Whether swayed by Taargick's and the PCs' defense or acknowledging some past favor, their psychopomp judge grants them a second chance at life. Yet by the time they awaken in their restored bodies, Hagegraf and Narseigus have already inflicted untold destruction. Guided by Stoneriver, the PCs help lead a dwarven counterattack against hryngar forces and their cave worm juggernauts.

Failure to defeat Stoneriver: If Stoneriver defeats the PCs or convinces them to withdraw, he escorts them out of the tomb, reviews Taargick's remaining inscriptions, and scrubs away the most harmful messages. He then cleans up the tomb, closes its door, and travels to Highhelm to deliver news of the tomb's rediscovery. The site becomes a popular yet hazardous destination for pilgrims. Though the art challenges some visitors' cultural narratives, it's not so iconoclastic as to cause serious upheaval.

Though the PCs know what was once written on the tomb's walls, any worrisome context they might provide is ignored as the dwarves celebrate the discovery and the PCs' role in it. It's only a matter of time before skeptical visitors find some of the carvings that Stoneriver missed. Delivering rubbings of these lost records, these travelers contact the PCs, asking them to lead an expedition to rediscover Felgunn as they suspect Taargick would have wanted—even if doing so risks their new status as Highhelm's heroes.

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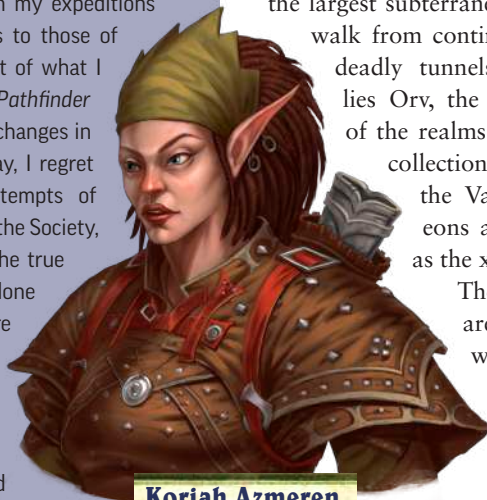
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RETURN TO THE DARKLANDS

"In 4691 AR, I took it upon myself to delve into the mysterious depths below, into a realm which, at that time, was shrouded in misinformation, mystery, and legend. I speak of the Darklands, and while today their existence is well known and even explored by adventurers from the surface world, back when I began my expeditions they were little more than myths to those of us in the lands above. While most of what I wrote down in Volume 44 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* was true, I made some changes in an attempt to hide the truth. Today, I regret that choice, for despite the attempts of myself, Eando, and a few others in the Society, our choice to hide the nature of the true rulers of the Darklands may have done more damage than good. As more and more adventurers travel to the three realms below, I hope this brief addendum not only brings clarity and transparency, but also warns those who would meddle in the politics and treacheries of sekmin society. They once ruled the realms below, and if they have their way, they'll do so again—and this time, I'm not sure those we uplanders will have the capacity to stop them when, inevitably, they bring war to our realm once more."

— Koriah Azmeren, 4723 ar



Koriah Azmeren

Another world lies beneath the feet of those who live on Golarion: a series of sprawling caverns that wind deep into the world below, where vistas alien to those who live under the sun serve as the homes to creatures and peoples as diverse in history and belief as they are in form. These caverns are called the Darklands by those who dwell above, yet to those who dwell within they are known by more ancient names. Closest to the surface lie the underground "wilds" of Nar-Voth, a sporadically connected network of caves and tunnels that extends from the surface to a depth of about 2,000 feet. Below this realm lies the heart of the Darklands—the planet-spanning network of caverns and subterranean wonderlands known as Sekamina.

It is this realm that one thinks of when picturing endless, stalactite-filled tunnels and sprawling caverns containing strange underground cities. Sekamina extends from the depth of 2,000 feet below the surface to a depth of about 8,000 feet and represents the largest subterranean realm of the three—one can walk from continent to continent traversing the deadly tunnels of Sekamina. Deeper below lies Orv, the strangest and most mysterious of the realms of the Darklands, a primordial collection of immense caverns known as the Vaults of Orv that were created eons ago by powerful entities known as the xiomorns, or "Vault Builders."

These immense underground worlds are akin to sprawling terrariums where the Vault Builders created isolated ecosystems and environs for their own mysterious amusements and desires. The powerful elemental magic that stabilized these vaults made them viable habitats for life and gave each their own unique realities echoing up through the caverns above, helping to moderate temperatures, pressure, and more. Without the creation of the vaults during the earliest days of the Age of Creation, the Darklands might not exist at all.

Points of Entry

Countless entrances to the Darklands exist across the face of the world, but most of these are minor, largely unknown tunnels that connect to small dungeons or caverns scattered across continents. Major points of entry that provide direct access to the realms below are more rare but also more well known. In the Inner Sea region alone, 15 major entrances to the Darklands exist. Most of these connect to the uppermost realm of Nar-Voth but do so in areas that in turn provide relatively swift access to Sekamina below. Only a very few provide somewhat direct access to one of the Vaults of Orv, and those that do are typically the more dangerous points of entry.

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THE EVOLVING DARKLANDS

Golarion's Darklands were one of the first regions we explored during the dawn of the Lost Omens campaign setting, but in the 15 years since the publication of *Pathfinder Chronicles: Into the Darklands*, the world of Golarion has grown. While the region originally drew inspiration from other underground realms in fantasy and science fiction and was largely populated by creatures and traditions from other games, the Darklands of today have developed an identity all their own.

This article takes the first real look at Golarion's Darklands as they exist in *Pathfinder Second Edition*. The three realms remain in place, but some of the dangers and societies within have changed to fit more naturally into the Lost Omens campaign setting as we've come to envision it after nearly two decades of growth. Yet while some names and expectations have shifted, the Darklands remain a place of great mystery and great danger—and thus, a perfect megadungeon for adventurers ready to delve beneath Golarion's surface!!

Hazards and Dangers

Even without monsters or supernatural dangers, underground exploration is perilous. Darkness, cave-ins, flooded tunnels, bad air, narrow squeezes, and even magma can each lead to injury or death. Other perils await the underground explorer as well, such as the following examples.

Blightburn is a deadly and radioactive crystal that emits a deep green glow. The very presence of blightburn is toxic to living creatures and those not resistant to radiation, but the crystals also have strange effects that warp magic used to navigate and travel. Some scholars theorize that the crystals are a deliberate creation by a long-forgotten entity in an attempt to keep the mysteries of the deepest reaches of the Darklands hidden from discovery.

Carbauxine gas is found most often in remote reaches of Sekamina. Transparent and odorless, the first (and often last) hint travelers receive of the presence of this gas is the fiery explosion that follows its exposure to an open flame. Certain enclaves of dwarves have engineered ways to use this flammable gas to fuel particularly hot-burning forges, yet such practices are perilous and often outlawed.

Cytillish is a glowing blue fungus that grows in moist heaps that look strangely like a mottled human brain. It is most commonly found in dero enclaves,

where its toxic elements are used heavily in their alchemical and magical experiments.

Ghost mold appears as glowing smear of black dust that reacts violently to the presence of life, glowing with a pale white luminescence as it releases clouds of spores that act upon the mind to invoke sensations of fear, paranoia, and confusion. Those who perish under these influences collapse into a new patch of ghost mold—and more often than not, their spirits linger on as ghostly guardians of the site.

Lazurite is the decayed form of a far older radioactive material that no longer exists on Golarion, yet even this “corpse ore” remains dangerous. It appears as a crumbling black crust when it's exposed in rock beds, and those who succumb to the painful radiation sickness it imparts often rise as ghouls.

Quickdeath gas is, like carbauxine gas, both colorless and odorless. Heavier than air, it pools in depressions and pits. Stumbling into affected areas can swiftly lead to dulled senses and suffocation.

“I spent seven long years in the Darklands, skulking and hiding and spying on what I found there, and seven more toiling over how best to convey what I'd learned on my explorations. When I finally published Volume 44 in 4707 AR, two years after I submitted my manuscript, I knew the awful truth of the sekmin empire, and by cloaking it in metaphor and fantasy, I had hoped to minimize the danger it presented. My fellow Pathfinder Eando encountered the same conundrum in his own adventures belowground, but he was unable to keep the truth from leaking out. Now that he's returned from his self-imposed exile, and now that I've seen that the sekmin war machine isn't quite as indomitable as I'd feared on my first experience with it, I hope that actual knowledge can help prepare us for what I fear may be rising from below... if not in a few years, certainly in a few decades.”

—Korah Azmeren, 4723 AR

Denizens of the Darklands

The ecosystem of the Darklands revolves around the presence of vast fungal forests and moldering tunnels, which in turn give sustenance to a wide range of increasingly large animals that have adapted to underground life. Rats, enormous insects, bats, fungus-eating lizards, slugs, spiders, worms, and similar creatures often grow to unusual size in the Darklands. These animals and scavengers tend to cleave close to large caverns that house the fungi and smaller animals that sustain them, but the larger and more dangerous of these creatures can range quite far in their hunts.

For adventurers, the true peril comes from the Darklands' top-tier predators and ambush hunters, be they lowly oozes, fungal hunters such as drakauthixes, the skittering horrors known as gogiteths, or creatures that are as much a part of the earth itself like grikkitogs. Even worse are the apex predators: umbral or magma dragons, the undulant mind-blasting horror of shoggoths, or aberrant monstrosities like the earth-shaking vemeraks.

People of the Darklands

The preconception that the Darklands are nothing more than lightless, twisted tunnels filled with monsters is stubbornly rooted in surface dwellers' imaginations. In truth, a staggering variety of cultures thrive within the three realms belowground. The unforgiving environment and inhabitants shape these societies, favoring warlike and isolationist traditions as a result. Evidence of previous civilizations lies scattered throughout the Darklands as well, for here more than anywhere else, cultures can crumble and leave behind nothing but mysterious abandoned dwellings to intrigue and vex those who come after until these edifices themselves crumble away in turn.

Many people and societies are found throughout the Darklands below the Inner Sea Region. Most have a reputation for cruelty, but others stand as bastions against such violence—and even in the most treacherous cities, one can often find allies.

Alghollthus have one of the oldest societies of the Darklands. These mind-manipulating aquatic horrors have ruled the depths of the Darklands' underground oceans for longer than humanity has existed.

Ayindilar elves are descended from those who sought the Darklands as shelter from Earthfall. They maintain small, isolated, and self-sufficient settlements throughout Nar-Voth and Sekamina that often serve as safe havens for explorers. Known to some above as “cavern elves,” the Ayindilar elves may have once built larger, more grandiose cities deeper in Sekamina, but today those cities are lost or abandoned. Intriguing architectural similarities between smaller-scale Ayindilar structures in Nar-Voth and the more elaborate ruins in haunted Zirnakaynin do exist, however.

Caligni dwell primarily in Nar-Voth, their culture shaped by several different roles that define many of their powers and abilities, as does their servitude to

the mysterious shadowy creatures known as owbs.

Chardas are small in stature, yet their four arms and affinity for cold make them dangerous foes. Originally hailing from the vault known as the Land of Black

Blood in Orv, these amphibious people have slowly expanded into other aquatic regions of Orv and remote Sekamina.

Deros typically dwell in the uppermost reaches of the Darklands. There, their self-destructive obsession with the deadly sun, along with their urge to abduct surface-dwelling creatures on which to experiment, can be pursued with relative ease.

Drathnelars, known also as umbral gnomes, have dwelt in large enclaves throughout Sekamina for thousands of years, with some believing that these usually hairless gnomes were among the earliest to leave the

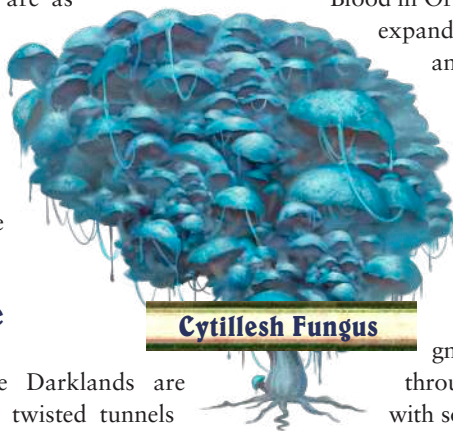
First World and settle in the depths below, perhaps seeking solace from some long-forgotten threat. Today, explorers often seek out drathnelar enclaves as safe harbors in the Darklands, although all guests must prove their trustworthiness to the wary gnomes before being allowed into their homes.

Fleshwarps exist in large numbers in the Darklands, although mostly solitary or in small numbers, where they are often mistaken for “just another monster” lurking in some forgotten tunnel. The reaches of Nar-Voth and Sekamina below Varisia do support larger fleshwarp settlements, usually exiles and ancestral survivors from the magical manipulations of the runelords of ancient Thassilon.

Ghouls are common throughout all levels of the Darklands, but Nemret Noktoria, an eerie necropolis deep below Osirion in Sekamina, serves as their capital city.

Gugs are lumbering, four-armed giants whose unnatural flexibility enables them to navigate surprisingly narrow and confining passages. These creatures tunneled into Golarion's Darklands from the underworld of the Dimension of Dreams and found Sekamina's tunnels in particular to be quite comfortable. The abominable practices of gugs who dwell in Orv's Midnight Mountains has helped to spread fearful tales about these people all the way to the surface world.

Hryngar dwarves abandoned the Quest for Sky ages ago, instead looking to the god Droskar for guidance and inspiration. Today, hryngars exist as an entirely different culture from other dwarves, and conflicts between the two groups are common—especially considering most hryngar cities were stolen from other



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dwarf clans in the aftermath of the Quest for Sky.

Kaseshi first came to the Darklands as servitors to the xiomorns, who employed them for smaller jobs during the creation of the Vaults of Orv. They were abandoned when the job was done, left to live what lives they could eke out on their own. Kaseshi are generally solitary creatures, for when they gather in numbers, their magical natures interact in ways that these earthly creatures sometimes find disconcerting.

Morlocks prefer to dwell in the transitional zone between Nar-Voth and Sekamina, but their curiosity often draws them closer to the surface, where they establish small outposts in dungeons and caverns. Many worship Lamashtu, and her faith has long influenced perceptions of their society—and rightly so, for most morlocks are violent and merciless when they

encounter strangers.

Munavris dwell in the deepest reaches of the Darklands, where they ply the surface of the vast Sightless Sea in Orv. Possessing eerie psychic powers and mastery over stoneworking (particularly jade, which they often use to augment armor or the hulls of their strange ships), the albino munavris have recently begun to extend tentative offers of alliance and cultural exchange, eager to find allies to fight back against the terrors of Orv.

Myceloids infest areas throughout the Darklands, often growing in regions adjacent to larger underground or even surface settlements that give the fungal people easy access to the sapient flesh they crave for meals.

Sekmins once ruled Sekamina, and this layer of the Darklands still carries their name. Known aboveground as serpentfolk, the sekmin empire was once thought to have collapsed, but in truth, they maintain the largest number of sprawling cities in Sekamina to this day. In some, they serve as rarely glimpsed social manipulators, while in others, they walk the streets openly. They make no secret of their designs on the surface world, and some fear they may soon launch a new war against surface dwellers to rival their previous conflict with ancient Azlant.

Seugathis hail from the Orvian Vault of Denebrum, where these magic-using, weapon-wielding worms serve enormous scions of their kind and follow the eldritch teachings of a priest caste devoted to Elder Mythos worship. They are encountered in the upper realms most often when they are sent on strange, enigmatic missions by their overlords.

Ulat-kinis were once human, but through centuries of manipulation at the invasive tendrils of the alghollthus, they now exist in the lakes and rivers of Nar-Voth and Sekamina as their own species of fishlike humanoids. Their greatest enemies are themselves, for they have long fought a civil war between those who remain loyal to their alghollthu rulers and those who have found faith in sinister deities who would take them as their own minions.

Urdefhans rule the vast Orvian Vault of Doga-Delloth. These transparent-skinned, blood-drinking humanoids owe their very existence to the ancient machinations of fiendish experiments and retain their devotion to the monstrous rulers of Abaddon to this day. Typically encountered in small exploratory parties closer to the surface, most urdefhans seem content to wage war in Orv against the munavris, the alghollthus, and any others who dare to encroach upon their perceived empires.

Xiomorns are the ancient architects of the



Serpentfolk

Darklands. Their society includes two castes: Vault Builders, who wielded vast powers of creation, and Vault Keepers, who were tasked with maintenance of the vaults as time wore on. The lesser Vault Keepers are the xiomorns encountered most often in the depths of Orv today, yet they still number among the rarest of the Darklands' peoples.

Xoarians rule the Orvian Vault of Ilvarandin, a place whispered of by many on the surface world as a hidden paradise where death has no claim, and every day can be lived out in pursuit of pleasure and sensation. In truth, though, such benefits apply only to the tentacled xoarians, agents from the interstellar Dominion of the Black who settled in the Darklands eons ago. Known to many surface dwellers as "body snatchers" or "corpse riders," these brain-bodied, tentacle-limbed creatures wear corpses as suits, for this is the only way their alien flesh and minds can experience emotion and sensation of any kind.

Xulgaths are familiar on the surface world, and many dwell in caverns not connected to the Darklands at all, yet their presence remains strong throughout all three layers of the realm. Those in the Orvian Vault of Deep Tolguth maintain an ancient empire they have ruled for ages, while those who once dwelled in the vault known today as the Black Desert were forced to scatter into the world above when the god Aroden destroyed their home.

The Three Realms

Nar-Voth, Sekamina, and Orv present three very different regions to explore. If Sekamina is the most cosmopolitan of the three realms, then Nar-Voth is the wilderness of the Darklands while Orv serves as its mythological underworld.

Most of the central settlements in Nar-Voth below the Inner Sea region are ruled by bryngars, although cities populated by deros, consortiums of strange fey, morlocks, and xulgaths can be found further out from below central Avistan.

Below, Sekamina's vast caverns are connected by a wide network of well-traveled tunnels which alternately serve the needs of trade and war. Here, sekmins remain the dominant power, dwelling in sprawling cities like the underground ports of Telderist and Delvingulf on the shores of Lake Nirthran, or in trade hubs like Giratayn and Blackstrand, or even in remote cities like Far Parathra, where sekmins indulge their most decadent urges.

Numerous other peoples dwell in Sekamina as well, and it's largely through their collective actions that the sekmins' brutal attempts at expansion have been contained over the past millennia. Here, enclaves

and cities of Ayindilar elves, drathnelars, fleshwarps, ghouls, gugs, morlocks, and xulgaths often make unexpected allies in the face of sekmin aggression, but these alliances always seem to be short-lived, collapsing quickly once the latest serpentfolk war effort has been defeated.

Perhaps the most mysterious and legend-haunted location in all Sekamina is the ancient city of Zirnakaynin. This sprawling ruin features architectural styles echoed today among many other cities, yet curiously Zirnakaynin lacks sekmin influence. Sekmins consider it forbidden, and they dedicate considerable effort to guarding all tunnels leading to this city. Who—or what—built Zirnakaynin, and what may live there today, remains unknown.

As mysterious and strange as the ruins of Zirnakaynin are, they pale in comparison to the Vaults of Orv. Here the ancient Vault Builders first created the building blocks of the Darklands, and here remain the most outlandish and unusual of domains below the surface. Be it the sprawling city of Ilvarandin, the primeval "hollow world" jungles of Deep Tolguth, the soaring range of the Midnight Mountains with their sentient fungal moons above, the worm-haunted ruins of the Black Desert, the freezing byways of the Land of Black Blood, or the vastness of the underground ocean known as the Sightless Sea (which connects to the Arcadian Ocean above through an inverted vortex of water known as the Braid), the Vaults of Orv are truly each worlds of their own.

"Of course, the great irony is that, as dangerous as I felt the sekmin leaders were, they were but one of the dangers to be found in the Darklands. The machinations of the seugathis of Denebrum, the sinister plots of the urdefhan empire of Doga-Delloth, the alien manipulations from algholthus or the Dominion of the Black, the mysterious experiments of the dero enclaves, or the ruthless toiling expansion of Droskar's zealots all make for equal dangers—and threats that also serve to keep sekmins in check. The time of their uncontested rule over the Darklands has long passed, and these other perils threaten them as much as they do the rest of us. More importantly, I hope to bring some of the Darklands' less violent cultures to light. Today, it seems as if the old adage that fear and danger sells may not be as potent a guide toward publication. I hope that means that our ability to see the good in each other, and to welcome those who might at first confuse or frighten us, has grown. Make no mistake, the Darklands are dangerous, and always shall be. Yet this makes the prospect of potential allies in a world where the night lasts forever all the more appealing."

—Koriah Azmeren, 4723 AR

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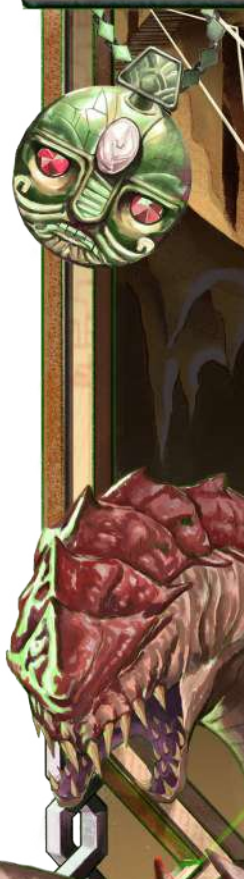
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FELGUNN

The fabled realm of Felgunn is a subterranean paradise blessed by gods and bursting with life. Though damaged, abandoned, and sealed when the Quest for Sky began, Felgunn wasn't wholly inaccessible. Over the ages, leshies, sprites, celestials, elementals, and stranger creatures trickled in, making their home beneath a cavern ceiling that reflects the sky. There, subterranean fauna have adapted to the light of their false sun and the river Evrith's iridescent waters, the latter of which seems to defy gravity on its course between stone and sky. All the while, valuable minerals sprout from the earth, harvested as easily as fruit from a tree. Ascending above these wonders is an elevated glass road that twists through the landscape. Felgunn is a realm of magic and miracles, a place where the ancient past, bountiful nature, and dwarven innovation intermix, becoming something altogether unique.

Now, guided by hidden routes recorded in Taargick's tomb, dwarves might rediscover their lost homeland.

History

Felgunn was founded in a time before memory, after Torag sparked life into the dwarven people but before the Quest for Sky. Ancient Felgunn was a dwarven nation that radiated outward from this magnificent cavern and connected to neighboring settlements, the wilds of Nar-Voth, and the depths of Sekamina.

In -5293 AR, the Starstone collided with Golarion, causing massive tremors throughout Felgunn and damaging buildings and infrastructure. This collision triggered the mass exodus of the dwarves, as they embarked upon the long-prophesied Quest for Sky. To ensure there was no turning back, they sealed Felgunn's entrances.

Yet even dwarven magic couldn't keep out everything. Traversing forgotten crevices, tiny fey gradually happened upon Felgunn, joined later by elementals gliding through the earth. Forgotten flora awoke as leshies who cared for their new home, and even the occasional celestial manifested here, drawn to the dwarven pantheon's sacred sites. Beyond the occasional squabble, these inhabitants reached a peaceful understanding that has lasted millennia.

Geography

Felgunn is a self-contained realm sustained by magic. Sweeping prairies fill the southeast and central regions, with tall "grasses" formed from slender fungal filaments intermixed with colorful flowers. Dubbed the North Downs and South Downs, these areas are prime agricultural land with tightly controlled cultivation.

To the northeast is Cap Wood, a vast mushroom forest that stretches toward the false sky, its lower reaches shrouded in a persistent fog of colorful spores. Cap Wood gives way to Dunfen, a shallow swamp with brown and gray foliage fed by runoff from Lake Lament, a crescent-shaped lake itself fed by four towering waterfalls named Taargick's Tears. The waterfalls erupt from solid stone, with no tunnel, crevasse, or even crack for this water to originate from.

Mount Kaervig, a perfectly shaped cone of stone, is the highest point in Felgunn. Orderly rows of metals, gems, and minerals sprout from its lower slopes like unliving shrubs ripe for harvest. Dubbed the Mine, these formations scatter light from Felgunn's false sun and moon, creating a twinkling beacon at all hours.

Felgunn's most wondrous geographical marker is Evrith River, an iridescent waterway that flows in a tilted oval track. The east end of the river gouges a deep trench, its center flows along the ground, and its west end soars through the sky and curves around Mount Kaervig before continuing its course back around and down. Nothing short of miraculous, Evrith River defies physics in its persistent, impossible course. Three bridges span the river's east end, connecting to the Golden City at Felgunn's heart.

Amid these fantastic sites is Aspirant's Way, an elevated glass road that curves across the whole landscape.

Ecology

Felgunn's false sun sustains its endemic flora and fauna. Brightly plumed parrobats soar over the Cap Wood; wolves with scaly hides stalk the Dunfen, hunting in packs while submerged beneath the murky water; and herds of horned geckos clamber along the slopes of Mount Kaervig, feeding on the bountiful mineral trees. Plants have likewise changed. Ambulatory sparkaburr

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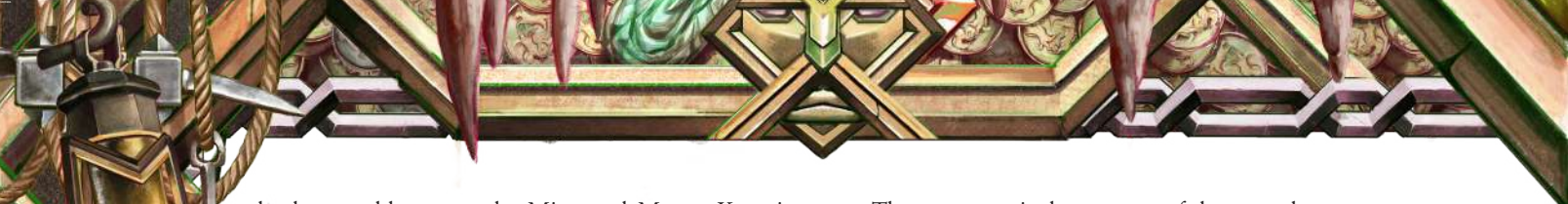
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bushes tumble across the Mine and Mount Kaervig, entangling and shocking anything they collide with; delicious flangeberry bouquets grow in the shade of towering danglegill mushrooms; solarblooms absorb sunlight, directing excess energy into laser beams to discourage herbivores; and endless strains of flowers grow among the North and South Downs.

THE GOLDEN CITY

Built from the ruins of the dwarven city that came before, the Golden City is now a place of towering spires, curved walls, and irregularly spaced streets that conceal much of its predecessors' urban planning.

The city is divided into three circular districts. The largest, Feidricor, contains government buildings, religious sites, and public spaces. Oprione is a place of leisure, entertainment, and commerce. Finally, Vaenwell is a dizzying neighborhood with spiraling streets and frequent dead ends. The Golden City could theoretically house 100,000 people, though only a tiny fraction of that live here, giving the place a feeling of emptiness and wasted elegance.

Ancient Gunndagar boasts an extensive network of tunnels and catacombs beneath its streets that's now referred to as the Undercity. Many buildings' foundations puncture and seal off Undercity tunnels. The Undercity is off-limits to all but the Order of the Chasmic Sky, who are engaged in subterranean renovations which have been on hold for millennia. It primarily hosts Felgunn's more mischievous minds, who often plot and launch crimes from its bowels.

Inhabitants

Today, Felgunn is home to fey, intelligent plants, elementals, and planar scions.

Leshies are born spontaneously and frequently within Felgunn. Their bodies grow naturally in the surrounding wilds and attract a nature spirit without outside meddling or druidic rituals. While many choose to remain in the wilds, most live in the city.

Fey are also common, particularly sprites, who are curious, energetic, and stubborn. Though most are born in the surrounding wilderness, many frolic in (and periodically modify) the Golden City.

Water and earth elementals make homes in the wilds of Felgunn. Earth elementals favor Mount Kaervig and the Mine, while water elementals inhabit Evrith River, Lake Lament, and Dunfen. Likewise, while celestials are uncommon, they periodically appear in Felgunn as if following forgotten orders. These planar visitors, as well as Felgunn's inherent magic, means that planar scions are common here, particularly nephilim, oreads, and undines.

The newest arrivals are some of the most dangerous. Over several decades, golden crystals have bloomed across the northern half of the cavern. Though beautiful, they gradually crystallize those who touch them, potentially petrifying the unwary. Rarely, a victim becomes infected, transforming into a crystalline facsimile of itself that's imbued with violent intentions. Occasionally, elemental creatures tear free from the crystals and begin hunting in the wilds, which has made it necessary for regular patrols to track and neutralize these beasts. The leading theory is that these crystals are rifts into the Plane of Earth, bleeding elemental energies that Felgunn has not yet learned to control.

Culture

Felgunn society draws heavily on dwarven culture, though not as a visitor might expect. Leshies and fey have marveled at the temples, inscriptions, and monuments dwarves left behind, in turn interpreting and incorporating these into their own customs, all viewed through a fey lens. Fake beards woven from fungi are a popular fashion accessory, sprites here adore warhammers, and there's so much dwarven-themed graffiti in some areas that it's hard to tell what's original and what's a recent addition.

The Order of the Chasmic Sky was founded to study and maintain this realm, and now governs the region. Some believe that the bearded forebears who once lived here will return, and that the Order should preserve the cavern for that day. Most, however, are ambivalent to the mythical dwarves; this is their home, now.

Life in Felgunn is easy and comfortable. There's excess space and shelter, the city's infrastructure requires little maintenance, and resources are abundant so long as nobody overharvests. This affords citizens plentiful free time. Most inhabitants value education, engaging in intellectual pursuits throughout their lives. After all, they're surrounded by historical mysteries and magical marvels! Likewise, many citizens engage in hobbies, sports, and other leisure activities.

GOVERNMENT AND LAW

The Order of the Chasmic Sky rules Felgunn, though in practice, little oversight is necessary. Most mind their own business, and where misbehavior occurs, it's corrected with lessons, mentoring, and other support systems. Intentional wrongdoing is punished with repentance—a prolonged and difficult (but achievable) task that must be completed before perpetrators are forgiven and the matter's closed.

Respect for nature is an integral part of life in Felgunn. Most believe Felgunn's ecosystems must be protected, and citizens caught polluting or otherwise harming the

environment or being ecologically irresponsible are penalized. One who harms Felgunn harms everyone within Felgunn.

FAITH

Temples to the dwarven pantheon are plentiful and well maintained. However, the dwarven pantheon has been reinterpreted as if these gods were Eldest, the fey divinities of the First World. Without clear records of the faiths, inhabitants have invented their own traditions. Heretical as this seems, a few priests receive spells from their dwarven patrons!

Nature religions are also common, especially the Green Faith, Gozreh, Cernunnos, and Halcamora. For those who care more about protecting Felgunn than they do about nature itself, Soralyon is popular.

Thanks to the high population of fey, the Eldest are venerated with frequency, particularly Imbreh, Magdh, Shyka, the Green Mother, and the Lantern King.

Those who cherish Felgunn's false sky sometimes worship Desna or Sarenrae.

NOTABLE INHABITANTS

The following are notable inhabitants of Felgunn.

Brizaine (LN nonbinary oread leshy councilor): The eldest member of the Order of the Chasmic Sky, Brizaine served on the ruling council for 550 years. Every time she seems ready to die, she stubbornly sprouts runners that grow into a clone that steps in when she perishes.

Endrinelda (NG agender heaven-touched earth elemental): Endrinelda is the leader of the Order of the Chasmic Sky. Unaffiliated with the ruling council, they maintain the integrity of the Order, oversee the training and education of its members, act as facilitator when tempers flare, and determine how best to invest the Order's time.

They Who Speak For Many (NG agender leshy warden): They Who Speak For Many is a devoted Reclaimer who lives in Newhelm and whose main focus is the preservation of Felgunn's natural ecosystems.

Zimadri (CG female draxie sprite performer): Zimadri is a skilled vocalist and quite outspoken in Felgunn's political scene. She's passionate about demanding better representation for all of Felgunn's citizens on the ruling council. Zimadri operates out of Spotlight, a popular theater in Oprione that also hosts political and philosophical debates twice weekly.



Gazetteer

Felgunn boasts the following locations of interest.

1. TAARGICK'S SHRINE

Taargick's death caused various hauntings and apparent miracles in Felgunn, and the few fey witnesses preserved the experience by creating a tomb for the phantom. Half shrine, half sepulcher, this somber edifice attracts worshippers who still assume Taargick was some demigod who watches over the cavern. On starless nights, red lightning arcs from the tomb's upper spires, spreading light but emitting no sound. Many believe one's fate can be divined from the lightning's

patterns and forks.

2. NEWHELM

Newhelm is an orderly village focused on practicality, hard work, and community service. Most citizens volunteer to help harvest resources, maintain the town, or serve as wardens in the surrounding wilds.

Two years ago, a young oread claiming to be Taargick Reborn arrived in Newhelm and set up shop as a preacher—though the thought of one so young (and clearly deluded) imparting wisdom on his elders seemed absurd. A small but passionate cult following has sprung up around Taargick Reborn, many of whom claim to have seen the boy work miracles and grant wishes.

3. CONUNDRUM SEALS

Each of Felgunn's original entrances is blocked by a golden wall covered in indecipherable text and spiraling patterns. Dubbed Conundrum Seals, the walls resemble Golden City architecture and are assumed to be the work of Torag. A secretive sect of scholars called the Unblinking refute this theory, believing the seals were created by something that wanted to keep the inhabitants trapped inside, rather than invaders out.

4. FOUNDER'S EMBRACE

Citizens of Newhelm are buried in simple stone burial niches carved into the southern walls of Felgunn cavern, alongside the exterior of the Sky King's Tomb. Those buried here are said to be protected by King Taargick.

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5. RUINS OF TARGUNN

These ancient ruins were once a mining town, refinery, and smithy. A place of industry, the surrounding terrain is still stained black from old pollution. Valuable items and minerals are regularly found buried amid the rubble and ruins, though many remain wary of excavating or restoring such an ecologically harmful site.

6. RAINBOW CLOCK

A massive spire of solidified light, the Rainbow Clock is surrounded by Evrith River. At all hours, the spire collects the light of the sun or moon and shines it out across Felgunn cavern as a brilliant rainbow. As time passes, this rainbow of light shifts position, circling the cavern once every 24 hours, making it a reliable clock.

7. FORT KARUMBAAL

A 600-foot stretch of thick stone walls are all that remains of ancient Fort Karumbaal. Dubbed Fort Crumble by the troublemaking gremlins who lair within, the surrounding region is littered with hazards and snares—a sign the gremlins are planning something and don't want trespassers interfering.

8. THE FITFUL DREAMER

Half buried beneath ten-thousand-years' worth of sediment and plant growth sleeps a scaled beast that's larger than any giant or dragon yet known. While the creature breathes, the surrounding earth shifts. When it twitches in the throes of an bad dream, the earth itself heaves. Although the creature is unidentified, anyone who sleeps nearby has horrible nightmares, leading most to suspect the creature is best left undisturbed.

9. BEYOND STAIRS

This ancient set of steps spirals up into the sky then dead ends at a wooden door. The door is pristine, locked, and clearly leads nowhere. Dwarven runes roughly carved into the door's lintel warn away trespassers, claiming "death lurks beyond."

10. AWAKE FROM SLUMBER

Named by the leshies who are so often born here, Awake From Slumber is a magical grove in Cap Wood where flora naturally grow into forms suitable for serving as vessels for nature spirits—and becoming leshies in the future. Because so many leshies awaken here, many elder leshies return to help the newly sprouted leshies get their bearings. When a leshy dies, their body is returned to Awake From Slumber, to fertilize the next generation of their brethren.

11. ULGUNN

These ancient, crumbled ruins were once a dwarven fungus farming town. The site is currently undergoing a thorough archaeological excavation by members of the Order of the Chasmic Sky. Of late, dig teams have been plagued by mysterious disappearances and dangerous accidents, leading to rumors that the site is cursed. Their members are stymied but refuse to call in aid from the governing council for fear of losing control of the site.

12. LONELY SOLDIER

A single, slender parapet clearly once part of a larger fortification is all that remains standing here today. Despite recent archaeological excavations, no stones or other materials from the previous structure remain in the area. Some of the parapet's exterior stones have mundane symbols carved into them, including a bird, a tree, a sun, and a strawberry. These symbols never repeat, save for the bird, which appears 11 times.

13. THE BLEED

In this region, shadows are longer and colors are muted. Dubbed the Bleed by local fey, this landscape has been tainted by energy from the Shadow Plane and is known for its haunting winds and the eerie, unblinking shadowy beings that ever surveil nearby travelers. If the source of this planar bleed isn't found and stopped, all of Felgunn could fall to darkness.

14. CELESTIAL SEAT

A celestial guardian maintains vigil at this tall stone throne carved into a mountainside, remaining utterly immobile while on duty. Every 100 years to the day, the celestial vanishes for a day, only to be replaced by a completely different celestial.

15. CORES

At the heart of every district in the Golden City is a massive tower constructed of solid gold and covered in strange sigils. The interior of each tower is partially accessible, with some floors open to citizens. Others display all the markings of an entrance, but are unable to be opened. Each Core is used for government offices, council meetings, and other managerial tasks.

16. ARGIKIAN COLLEGE

Argikian College is the primary education center in Felgunn. Team debates, which pit student teams and challengers from outside the college's current enrollment against one another, are held each weekend in the college courtyard, with the winning team earning a cash prize and a magical item created that week by student artisans.

17. EVERLASTING SYNOD

Citizens of Troskira are entombed within the Everlasting Synod, a grand, golden spire in Feidricor that contains countless vertically aligned burial shafts beneath the floor. Fey tend to avoid the Synod, claiming the site has a foul aura and that the burial shafts were never meant to hold the dead but instead had another purpose entirely.

18. FIRST FAMILY'S HALL

First Family's Hall is the grandest temple to the dwarven pantheon in Felgunn. A massive statue of Torag presides over the hall, with an individual shrine and worship space dedicated to each of the other members of the dwarven pantheon, including a shrine to Taargick, who is treated as some manner of saint by locals.

19. ORDER OF THE CHASMIC SKY

Headquarters for the Order of the Chasmic Sky, this grand building contains living spaces, a vast library, workshops, meeting halls, conservatories, and a museum containing relics of the ancient past recovered during the Order's various excavations and restorations.

20. THREE JUDGE TOWER

This imposing building carries out law and order in Felgunn. Although imprisonment is rare, the upper levels of this facility were recently repurposed to serve as holding cells for dangerous criminals. Some whisper it's also a place to make outspoken opponents of the Trinary Scales disappear.

21. QUATERNARY STADIUM

This massive stadium surrounds Oprione's Core and is split into four quadrants. Each quadrant contains c-shaped rows of bleachers, which can be magically moved and adjusted, making space for a variety of sports, performances, and competitions. Each quadrant can function individually, hosting up to four events at once, though for some mega-events all four quadrants serve as one. While gambling is frowned upon by some, it's a mainstay of events held at Quaternary Stadium.

22. SACCHARINE

This melixie-run restaurant and bakery serves delicious meals, each highlighting the natural sweetness of Felgunn's fruits and vegetables. Saccharine maintains a large apiary on its roof, which creates the honey prevalent in many of the

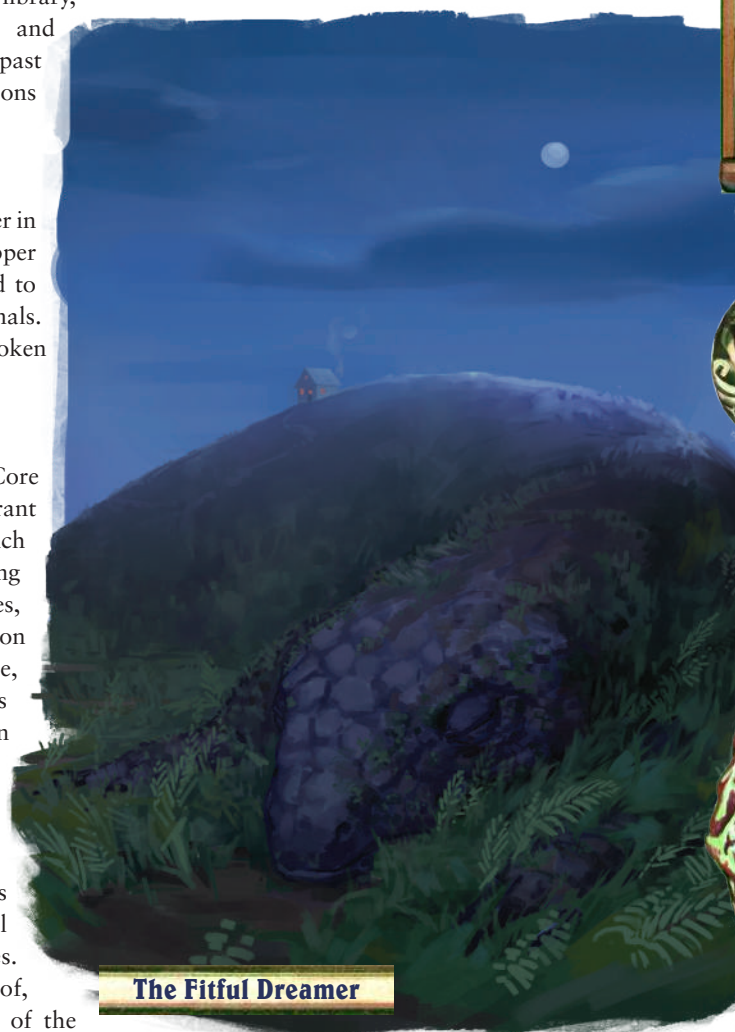
restaurant's dishes. Saccharine is particularly popular among fey and youths of all ancestries.

23. BARREL DRUM

A hotspot for nightlife, the Barrel Drum is a moody bar that features live music each night. On weekends, they open slightly earlier and serve dinner at sundown. The Barrel Drum is the secret base of operations for a gang of blackmailers and extortionists called the Red Sign, which come and go via the Undercity.

24. BEETLE'S BOOKS AND BOARDS

This unassuming book and board game shop is the after-hours meeting place for an insidious cult of Droskar. Though also considered one of the Eldest by Felgunn's new inhabitants, Droskar's iconography clearly marked him as an outcast and villain to scholars. Even so, he has adherents here: followers who are willing to kill to keep their allegiance a secret and have done so a dozen times before.



The Fitful Dreamer

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The following items are attainable throughout the course of “Heavy is the Crown.”

Artifacts

DEMON'S KNOT

The *demon's knot* is a cursed necklace that serves as Kaivirris's prison. A demon trapped within the necklace's gemstone, Kaivirris has weakened the walls of his prison over time, enabling him to influence and corrupt any who don it. This deterioration will continue until Kaivirris is freed or until the *demon's knot* is destroyed. It will eventually cause the *demon's knot* to become an intelligent item, granting Kaivirris the ability to communicate and gain full control over his prison and its powers.

DEMON'S KNOT

ITEM 15

UNIQUE ARTIFACT CURSED ENCHANTMENT EVIL INVESTED MAGICAL

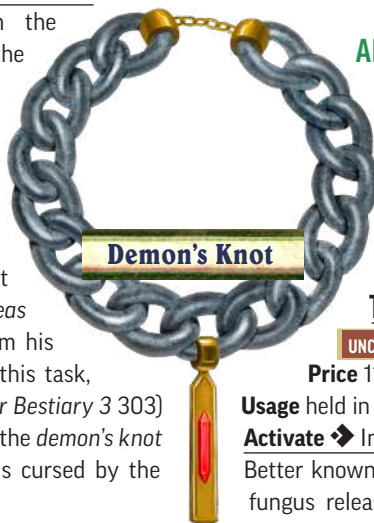
Usage worn necklace; Bulk L

The demon Kaivirris is housed in the magnificent ruby that serves as the centerpiece of this beautiful, gold-plated, cold iron pendant necklace. Creatures within 30 feet of the *demon's knot* feel a subtle urge to acquire the necklace and take a -1 status penalty to Will saves.

Upon donning the *demon's knot*, it fuses to you. You are subject to a *geas* that requires you to free Kaivirris from his prison. If you die without completing this task, you become a sulfur zombie (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 303) that always remains within 100 feet of the *demon's knot* and is under the control of whoever is cursed by the *demon's knot*.

The *demon's knot* sustains your physical form and protects your mind from mental control. You don't need to eat or drink. You become immune to the confused and controlled conditions.

The *demon's knot* corrupts anyone wearing it. You gain weakness to cold iron 10 and good 10. Whenever you're within 60 feet of a celestial, you're frightened 2 and can't reduce the value of the frightened condition below 2.



Activate ♦ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You allow Kaivirris's corrupting influence over you to outwardly manifest. For 1 minute, your features adopt a cruel cast, and you radiate a palpable aura of evil. During this time, you gain a +2 status bonus to Intimidation checks, and your Strikes deal an additional 1d6 evil damage.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The *demon's knot* casts *chilling darkness*.

Destruction A celestial creature must hold the necklace in their hands for at least an hour while meditating on the damage it has caused, then weep on the ruby. It must then be completely sealed within a cold iron container and cast into the heart of an active volcano, allowing the magma to melt the container and the necklace within.

Equipment & Treasure

The following new equipment, magic items, and treasures can be found in “Heavy is the Crown.”

ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Many calignis are skilled at crafting alchemical substances and have a fondness for utilizing poisons. The following poison is used by the calignis of the Bloodbane Coalition, but it might be found elsewhere in Golarion.

TERROR SPORES

ITEM 9

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INHALED POISON

Price 110 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact

Better known as the shrieking toadstool, the tragzioma fungus releases spores when disturbed by browsers, sending nearby creatures into a screaming panic that attracts opportunistic carnivores. Delicate alchemical processes have stabilized and concentrated the spores into a poison.

Saving Throw DC 28 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 round; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** frightened 2 (1 round); **Stage 2** frightened 3 (1 round); **Stage 3** frightened 3 and fleeing for 1 round (1 round)

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TOXIC EFFLUENCE

ITEM 10

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE CONTACT POISON

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk L

Price 160 gp

Activate ♦♦ Interact

This dark green sludge has a caustic scent and gritty texture. Capable of entering the body through contact with flesh, toxic effluence becomes harmful once it hits the bloodstream, where it causes internal chemical burns, intense pain, and muscle spasms.

Saving Throw DC 29 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison damage, 3d6 fire damage, clumsy 1, and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison damage, 4d6 fire damage, clumsy 2, and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 5d6 poison damage, 5d6 fire damage, clumsy 3, and enfeebled 3 (1 round)

MAGIC TATTOOS

A tattoo is a type of item that is drawn or cut into a creature's skin and usually takes the form of images or symbols.

VOLCANIC VIGOR

ITEM 10+

UNCOMMON EVOCATION FIRE INVESTED MAGICAL TATTOO

Usage tattoo; Bulk –

This tattoo takes the shape of a muscular orc, with molten flesh and hollow eye sockets that seep smoke. You don't take damage from extreme heat or severe heat (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 518).

Activate ♦♦ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect**

You stomp on the ground, causing a 5-foot radius, 30-foot tall cylinder of lava to erupt from the ground within a range of 30 feet. The cylinder deals 7d6 fire damage. All creatures in the area must attempt a DC 27 basic Reflex save.

Type volcanic vigor; **Level** 10; **Price** 900 gp

Type greater volcanic vigor; **Level** 15; **Price** 6,000 gp

The damage of your lava eruption increases to 12d6, the range increases to 60 feet, and you can choose to increase the radius of the cylinder to 10 feet. Similarly, the height of the cylinder increases to 60 feet, and the DC increases to 34. While exposed to incredible heat, you take only minor heat damage every hour, instead of moderate heat damage every minute. You can see through ash and smoke.

DWARVEN TREASURES

The following magic items are typically of dwarven make, often based on designs passed down through generations, with each new generation improving on previous innovations. However, being a dwarf is not a requirement for creating either of the following marvelous wonders.

SENTINEL HORN

ITEM 6

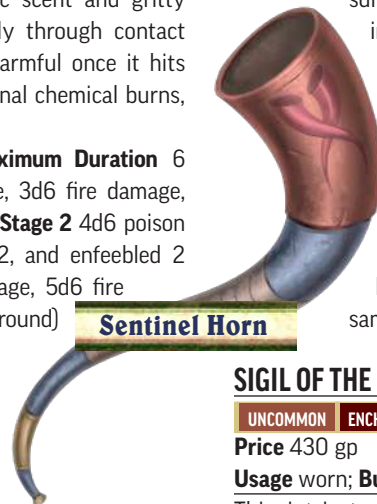
UNCOMMON AUDITORY DIVINATION MAGICAL

Price 250 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

This curved brass horn is a virtuoso instrument with a surprisingly deep tone, etched with images of interlocking lines and swirls. Sentinel horns come in pairs, and each works with only the other of its pair. The listed Price is for a pair of sentinel horns.

Activate ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** You play a specific tune on the horn. When you do, the other horn also plays the same tune, not matter how far away it is, as long as it is on the same plane.



Sentinel Horn

SIGIL OF THE FIRST CLAN

ITEM 8

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 430 gp

Usage worn; Bulk –

This intricate gold and adamantine clasp depicts the sigil of Clan Taargick, house of the famed King Taargick, founder of Tar Taargadth. When displayed prominently, other dwarves give more weight to your words. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidation checks against dwarves and against anyone who considers themselves a staunch ally of Clan Taargick. Against anyone who considers Clan Taargick an enemy, such as worshippers of Droskar and many orcs, you instead take a –1 circumstance penalty to Diplomacy and Intimidation checks.

Activate ♦ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect**

You wield the authority of Clan Taargick like a gavel, enforcing your word as law. You cast 1st-level *command* with a DC of 24.

TOME OF DRIPPING SHADOW

This ancient black tome bound in fetchling skin and tied with a ribbon of blue velvet contains the incantations and research of dozens of shadowcasters throughout the last several centuries. An unknown number of copies of this tome exist, but these rare grimoires refuse to be hidden for long. When the owner of a *tome of dripping shadow* abandons it or hides it away, the tome finds its way to another spellcaster drawn to shadow magic before the next new moon, unless otherwise magically bound. During the Quest for Sky, Rivethun practitioners discovered at least one of these tomes. They studied it, looking for ways to prevent it from slipping away and finding a new spellcaster to corrupt. Rules for grimoires appear on page 162 of *Pathfinder Secrets of Magic*.

TOME OF DRIPPING SHADOW

ITEM 10

RARE GRIMOIRE ILLUSION MAGICAL SHADOW

Price 1,000 gp

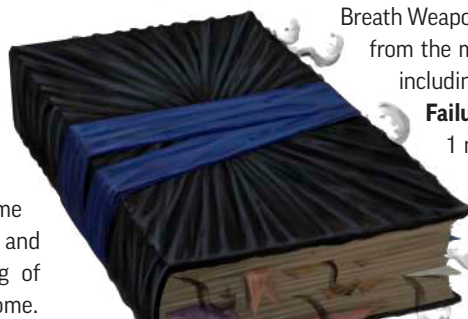
Bulk L

This book constantly drips evanescent tendrils of shadow that seethe and writhe. The tendrils have a will of their own, retreating from light sources and curling toward darkness. While you hold the tome, you gain darkvision; if you already have darkvision, you gain greater darkvision instead.

Preparing spells from this tome strengthens your shadow magic and gives you a greater understanding of shadow spells you add to this tome. Any shadow spells you prepare from this tome that are at least 2 levels lower than the highest-level spell you can cast are treated as 1 level higher for the purposes of counteracting them. When you add a shadow spell to this tome, you can prepare heightened versions of that spell up to the highest level of that spell that you are able to cast.

Activate envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger**

A target of a shadow spell you prepared from the grimoire critically fails a saving throw against the spell; **Effect** You recall a fragment of the shadow magic that suffuses your target and wrap it around yourself like a caul. The triggering creature's saving throw result is a failure, not a critical failure. For the next minute, you become concealed to all creatures and you are hidden from the triggering creature, regardless of what precise sense it has. If you use a hostile action against the triggering creature, you become only concealed to it (rather than hidden) at the end of the hostile action.



Tome of Dripping Shadow

A shimmering muzzle of pure magical force clamps the target's mouth shut. The target can attempt a Fortitude save to resist the muzzle. For targets with more than one mouth, the caster must target a single mouth.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success For 1 round, the target can't use jaws Strikes, Breath Weapons, or any other attack that originates from the mouth, nor can they imbibe anything, including potions, mutagens, and elixirs.

Failure As success, but the effect lasts 1 minute, and they must succeed at a DC 11 flat check to Cast a Spell with verbal components.

Critical Failure As success, but the effect lasts 1 minute and the target can't speak.

Heightened (5th) You can target up to 5 creatures.

BLAST OF THE BELLOWES

SPELL 2

RARE AIR EVOCATION

Traditions arcane, divine, primal

Cast somatic, verbal

Range 100 feet; **Area** 20-foot burst

Duration 1 minute

You create a churning eddy of warm air that makes it difficult to fly within the area. This area is difficult terrain for flying creatures. Each time a flying creature enters the area or ends its turn there, it must attempt an Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature descends 30 feet.

Critical Failure The creature descends 60 feet.

Heightened (4th) The duration increases to 10 minutes.

RUNES

This rune can be discovered in "Heavy is the Crown."

CAVERN'S HEART

RUNE 14

RARE CONJURATION EARTH MAGICAL

Price 4,100 gp

Usage etched onto medium or heavy armor

This armor can channel your life force into an enhanced wall of stone.

Activate command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect**

By stamping your foot on the ground and calling out to spirits of stone, you summon a stone wall. This is a wall of stone, except that the wall is tied to your own life force. When the stone wall is damaged, you are damaged instead. If you are reduced to 0 HP, the wall is destroyed. The effect is dismissed if you move more than 30 feet away from the stone wall or if you spend a single action with the concentrate trait.

SPELLS

Because spellcasters often protect and guard their spells, whether to conserve their power or to prevent the spell from getting into the wrong hands, spells are one of the easiest pieces of knowledge to lose as civilizations move, expand, and dwindle. The PCs' adventures in ancient dwarven ruins grants them an opportunity to reclaim lost knowledge. The following spells can be discovered in "Heavy is the Crown."

BINDING MUZZLE

SPELL 2

RARE EVOCATION FORCE

Traditions arcane, occult

Cast somatic, verbal

Range 100 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Saving Throw Fortitude

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Stone Brawler (Archetype)

Stone brawlers learn to encase themselves in temporary, magical rock that empowers their unarmed strikes and defends their bodies. Their relationship to stone is often transactional, and they call on the resilient material for utilitarian purposes. Most stone brawlers view rock as a tool to be utilized in the heat of battle, much as a fencer values their sword or a wizard their magic.

The practice of conjuring stone is most common where resources are scarce, such as Belkzen, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, or within the Darklands, where the value and resilience of stone is well known.



Stone Brawler

STONE BRAWLER DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Constitution 14

You've learned to call the primal power of elemental stone to your aid. You gain the Stonestrike Stance action.

Stonestrike Stance ♦ **Requirements** You are standing on the ground; **Effect** You enter the stance of unyielding stone and draw upon the power of the living rock, encasing your fists in stone and allowing you to make stonestrike attacks. These deal 1d8 bludgeoning damage, are in the brawling group, and have the forceful, magical, and unarmed traits.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the stone brawler archetype.

STONE SKIN

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stone Brawler Dedication

Your skin takes on the hardness of stone. You gain resistance to physical damage (except adamantine) equal to your number of class feats from the Stone Brawler archetype.

STONE DEFLECTION ♦

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stone Brawler Dedication

Requirements You are in Stonestrike Stance.

You gather the resiliency of stone to block attacks against you. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC and to any defenses against being Shoved or Tripped until the beginning of your next turn.

ORE FISTS

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stone Brawler Dedication

When you enter the Stonestrike Stance, your fists appear to be covered with veins of unrefined ore. Your stonestrike attacks count as cold iron and silver when determining weaknesses and bypassing resistances.

STONEBANE

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stone Brawler Dedication

Your stonestrike attacks deal 1d6 additional damage against constructs, creatures with the earth trait, and earthen objects, such as a stone door.

ADAMANTINE FISTS

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ore Fists

You imbue your unarmed strikes with one of the strongest metals. Your stonestrike attacks are treated as adamantine.

Stonebound (Archetype)

A stonebound is a devoted sentinel who draws on the power of the earth and stone to protect their people.

While stonebound are most commonly found in dwarven enclaves, the practice of binding oneself to the nature of stone is found in the mountains of Garund, Vudra, Arcadia, and in various Darklands communities. A person who binds themselves to stone becomes more resilient to damage, capable of surviving for longer than their unbound counterparts, and often gains a deeper understanding of stone beyond mere knowledge.

Historians theorize that this technique originated in Orv and spread from there. The practice of binding to stone is most common where elemental power, especially the essence of earth, is the strongest. This practice has begun to spread to Belkzen, throughout the Darklands, and across the deserts of northern Garund. Most recently, the Martial Mineral Masters in Quain have adopted the technique for their new dojo and flour mill. The most famous stonebound public figure is Sorrina Westyr, Spellmaster for the Pathfinder Society, who spent a decade in the Elemental Plane of Earth.

STONEBOUND DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Constitution 14

You bind yourself to the very essence of stone. You become trained in Plane of Earth Lore and learn the Terran language. If you are already trained in Plane of Earth Lore, you become trained in a skill of your choice. If you already speak Terran, you learn a common language of your choice. Increase your maximum Hit Points by your level.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the stonebound archetype.

ELEMENTAL EXISTENCE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

Your body becomes infused with elemental earth. You gain the Adopted Ancestry feat and gain a 1st level oread ancestry feat (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 106) as a bonus feat, ignoring the limitations of the lineage trait. When you gain new ancestry feats, you can select oread feats in addition to feats allowed by your ancestry and heritage.

STONE GUARDIAN

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

You learn to call a powerful guardian of earth and stone to your side. You can cast *summon elemental* as an innate primal spell once per day, and can only summon elementals with the earth trait. This spell is automatically heightened to half your level rounded up.

STONE BLOOD

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

Your blood becomes thick and sluggish, but no less effective at oxygenating your cells. You can selectively stop your bleeding with ease. Reduce the DC of flat checks to stop persistent bleed damage from 15 to 10, and you can use a single action that has the concentrate trait to gain an early flat check without physically binding the wounds. You recover from the drained condition twice as quickly as normal.

STONEBOUND MAGIC

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

You've learned to manifest your connection to stone by conjuring it to your side. You gain *scatter scree* (*Secrets of Magic* 127) as a primal innate cantrip. At 8th level, you gain *meld into stone* as a primal innate spell once per day. At 10th level, you gain *shape stone* as a primal innate spell once per day. At 12th level, you gain *wall of stone* as a primal innate spell once per day.

STATUE

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

Your body and equipment appear to be made of stone as you hold perfectly still. Until the next time you act, you appear to be a statue and do not need to eat, drink, or breathe, but you are flat-footed. Your Deception DC to pass as a statue is equal to 10 + your proficiency bonus (do not apply any other bonuses, penalties, or modifiers).

ROCKY FLESH

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

Your flesh takes on the hardness of stone. You gain resistance to physical damage (except adamantine) equal to your number of class feats from the Stonebound archetype.

LIVING STONE

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stonebound Dedication

Your body becomes living stone. You don't need to eat or drink and need only 6 hours of rest to feel well rested. You must still rest at least 8 hours and spend 1 hour of preparation to regain resources usable only a limited number of times per day, such as spell slots. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against diseases, poisons, and effects that would cause the paralyzed or stunned conditions. When you roll a successful saving throw against a disease or poison, you get a critical success instead.

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BROOD VARIANCE

The cave worms presented here are typical of standard rock worms.

For crimson worms, use the elite adjustment and add immunity to fire. For azure worms, increase their swim Speed to 40. Gray worms gain negative healing and a weakness to positive energy 5. Glacial worms gain immunity to cold.

Cave Worm

Cave worms are gigantic scavengers who shape their environment as they bore through rock, ice, or other substances on their search for food. These behemoths consume everything in their path. Though they usually prefer soil, minerals, and occasionally constructed buildings, they will also eat living creatures, plants, and other organic materials. There are numerous species of cave worms, each a different color and perfectly adapted to their surrounding environment.

Cave worms rarely exceed a typical animal's intelligence. They're also poor parents that lay a clutch of eggs sealed in a protein shell before abandoning them. After a short incubation period, the young hatch, forming a swarming mass of ravenous larval cave worms. When nearing maturity or when starved of sufficiently rich soil, these larval worms turn on one another. They fight for dominance or flee until only a few remain. The survivors grow quickly, rapidly becoming juvenile cave worms.

JUVENILE CAVE WORM

A juvenile cave worm has left its brood or eaten them, and has started to establish its own territory, hunting in regular intervals. These young worms tend to be more aggressive towards other life forms than their relatively mellow adult kin.

JUVENILE CAVE WORM

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON N LARGE ANIMAL

Perception +12; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 100 feet

Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +14

Str +6, **Dex** +0, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -1

AC 26; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

HP 170

Relentless When a juvenile cave worm gains the paralyzed, slowed, or stunned condition, reduce the duration by half, to a minimum of 1 round. It also recovers from penalties to its Speeds and the immobilized condition at the end of its turn. Finally, it ignores non-magical difficult terrain and treats greater difficult terrain like difficult terrain.

Shake It Off ➤ **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** The juvenile cave worm would be affected by a condition or adverse effect (such as *baleful polymorph*); **Effect** The juvenile cave worm negates the triggering condition or effect. Effects from artifacts, deities, or a similarly powerful source can't be avoided in this way.

Speed 30 feet, burrow 30 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +20 (deadly d10, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+9 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee ♦ body +18, **Damage** 1d8+10 bludgeoning

Clumsy Leap ♦♦ The cave worm flings its body, Leaping 30 feet. If it lands next to a creature, it can Strike that creature with its jaws. If the jaws Strike fails, it can Strike with its body using the same multiple attack penalty as the failed jaws Strike, but it becomes flat-footed until the start of its next turn.

Killing Shake ♦♦ **Requirements** The juvenile cave worm has a Medium or smaller creature grabbed; **Effect** The juvenile cave worm shakes the creature back and forth quickly, tearing flesh with

its multiple rows of teeth. The target takes 2d12+9 slashing damage and is knocked prone. If the creature is adjacent to a solid surface, such as a stone wall, it takes an additional 2d6 bludgeoning damage. The creature attempts a DC 23 basic Reflex save against all damage; if the creature succeeds, it isn't knocked prone.

Rock Tunneler A juvenile cave worm can burrow through solid stone at a Speed of 10 feet. It can leave a tunnel if it desires, and it usually does.

Swallow Whole ♦ Medium, 1d8+10 bludgeoning, Rupture 18 (*Bestiary* 344)

LARVAL CAVE WORM BROOD

While gestating, cave worms adapt to their surrounding environments, becoming accustomed to extreme temperatures and hazards nearby. For example, cave worms hatched in volcanic environments mature into crimson worms, while those raised near water sources mature into azure worms. Regardless of their environment, larval cave worms all have translucent bodies and pallid carapaces that harden and change color as they mature.

When a brood of cave worms hatches from their eggs, the foot-long worms mass together, forming a swarm of ravenous larval worms. This swarm travels ceaselessly, consuming anything in its path. The young are drawn to movement, as living, squirming prey tends to be the most nutritious. As they age, they incorporate more minerals into their diet to support carapace growth.

LARVAL CAVE WORM BROOD

CREATURE 10

RARE N HUGE ANIMAL SWARM

Perception +14; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 100 feet

Skills Athletics +22

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -2

AC 27; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +19, **Will** +12

HP 220; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind; **Weaknesses** area damage 13, splash damage 13; **Resistances** bludgeoning 7, piercing 13, slashing 13

Relentless When a larval cave worm brood gains the paralyzed, slowed, or stunned condition, reduce the duration by half, to a minimum of 1 round. They also recover from penalties to their Speeds and the immobilized condition at the end of their turn. Finally, they ignore non-magical difficult terrain and treat greater difficult terrain like difficult terrain.

Shake It Off ⤵ **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** The larval cave worm brood would be affected by a condition or adverse effect (such as *baleful polymorph*); **Effect** The larval brood negates the triggering condition or effect. Effects from artifacts, deities, or a similarly powerful source can't be avoided in this way.

Speed 30 feet, burrow 30 feet, swim 20 feet

Ferocious Gnaw ♦ Each foe in the larval swarm's space takes 6d6 piercing damage (DC 29 basic Reflex save).

Pummeling Thrash ♦ (attack) **Requirements** The larval swarm's most recent action was Ferocious Gnaw; **Effect** The larval swarm frantically thrashes in an effort to consume its prey. The larval swarm attempts an Athletics check and compares the result to the Reflex DC of each creature in its space.

Critical Success The creature falls prone and takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage.

Success The creature falls prone and takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage.



EARLY HATCHING

A single cave worm egg can produce several thousand larval cave worms when it slowly matures over a millennia. However, if a cave worm egg is disturbed or damaged before its natural cycle completes, the egg enters a rapid stage of maturation. Only a few hundred worms survive this process, creating significantly fewer offspring than when allowed to mature slowly.

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Larval Cave Worm Brood



BLEEDING EDGE KILLING TECH

Hryngar assassins use the most advanced gadgets and technology available to them. Their inventors are hard at work reverse engineering any specialized equipment they find so they can provide moderately equivalent designs to the best assassins. Elite assassins gain one consumable gadget (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears*) of their level or lower, often selected for a specific job.

Hryngar

Deep under the surface of Golarion, dwarves still dwell in the darkness. Once abandoned by their kin who were obsessed with reaching the surface, these dwarves have found that by working harder than their brethren, they can build a society far greater than anything under the sun. Droskar, Master of the Dark Furnace, teaches them that toiling for their masters, who in turn toil for their masters above, will lead all of them to become stronger than ever. Every hryngar knows that their labor defines them, and brings them glory in the eyes of Droskar and their peers. Exhaustion at the end of the work day is an honor, proof of their worth in society.

HRYNGAR ASSASSIN

In secret conclaves around Nar-Voth, hidden in plain sight within hryngar settlements, are the workshops and training grounds for the Darklands' most technologically sophisticated group of killers. Most hryngar assassins train from childhood, having been recruited from orphanages, and are under a life-debt obligation to their guild leader.

While on contract, hryngar assassins are on the lookout for new technologies, gadgets, and alchemical creations. They bring what they find back to their guild to be reverse engineered and replicated for other guild assassins. When the opportunity presents itself, they destroy the schematics and formulae that other organizations, inventors, and alchemists have created if they can't steal them.

HRYNGAR ASSASSIN

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +13, Crafting +13, Stealth +19, Survival +14, Thievery +17

Str +2, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items clockwork grappling gun^{G&G}, dagger, extreme climbing kit, hunting spider venom (5 doses applied to first magazine), +1 *striking repeating heavy crossbow*^{G&G} (4 magazines with 5 bolts each)

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12; +2 status to all saves vs. magic
HP 115

Light Blindness

Disengaging Shot ➤ **Requirements** The hryngar assassin is equipped with a loaded repeating heavy crossbow; **Trigger** A creature critically misses the hryngar assassin with a melee Strike; **Effect** The hryngar assassin Strides, then Strikes the triggering creature with their repeating heavy crossbow; the target is flat-footed against this Strike.

Speed 25 feet; climb 10 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +17 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

Ranged ♦ repeating heavy crossbow +18 (range 180 feet, reload 1, repeating), **Damage** 2d10+2 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 25; **2nd** *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *paranoia*; **Cantrips (4th)** *sigil*

Sneak Attack The hryngar assassin deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Surprise Attack On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are flat-footed to the hryngar assassin.



Hryngar Assassin

HYRNGAR BRECCIA SQUAD

A hryngar breccia squad is a group of hryngar martial combatants armed with melee weapons and steel shields. Though more likely to be encountered near large hryngar settlements, these strike forces see wide use throughout the Darklands. Hryngar breccia squads often serve as military units, mercenary companies, city patrols, and caravan guards. Like all warriors, the favored combat methods of a hryngar breccia squad change by location, often due to surrounding environment and popular equipment.

HYRNGAR BRECCIA SQUAD

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON LE GARGANTUAN DWARF HYRNGAR HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +21, Crafting +18, Intimidation +16, Religion +18, Survival +18

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

AC 28; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +15, **Will** +18; +2 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 150; **Thresholds** 100 (12 squares), 50 (8 squares); **Weaknesses** area damage 12, splash damage 6

Light Blindness

Troop Defenses

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Shield Block ↻

Speed 20 feet; troop movement

Bolt Barrage ⬠ The hryngar breccia squad draws or reloads its crossbows, then launches a ranged attack in the form of a volley. This volley is a 10-foot burst within 120 feet that deals 4d8 piercing damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save). When the hryngar breccia squad is reduced to 8 or fewer squares, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Form Up ⬠ (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 305)

General Melee ⬠ to ⬠⬠⬠ **Frequency** once per round;

Effect The hryngar breccia squad engages in a coordinated attack with its melee weapons against each enemy within 5 feet (DC 28 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

⬠ 1d8+6 bludgeoning damage

⬠⬠ 2d8+10 bludgeoning damage

⬠⬠⬠ 3d8+14 bludgeoning damage

Push Back ⬠ **Requirements** The hryngar breccia squad has its shields raised; **Effect** The hryngar breccia squad pushes against adjacent foes, knocking them back. The hryngar breccia squad attempts an Athletics check to Shove, comparing the result to the Fortitude DC of each enemy within 5 feet of the hryngar breccia squad. The hryngar breccia squad is not knocked prone on a critical failure.

Raise Shields ⬠ The hryngar breccia squad raises steel shields, with the effects of Raise a Shield.

Troop Movement Whenever the hryngar breccia squad 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 hryngar breccia squad enters difficult terrain, the extra movement cost applies to the entire hryngar breccia squad.



RIFT JUMPERS

Hryngar breccia squads that specialize in spelunking are known as Rift Jumpers, named for their reckless leaps into perilous chasms. They swap their shields and warhammers for light picks and train with their climbing equipment until it serves as an extension of their body. Rift Jumpers lose the Raise Shields, Shield Block, and Push Back actions, and gain a climb Speed of 20 feet.



Hryngar Breccia Squad

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FORGEHEART FIVE

Stoneriver has fathered numerous children through the years, each clever, brave, and bold. Among these, five have joined together to combat evil as a team. Calling themselves the Forgeheart Five, these overly optimistic and bombastic creatures strive to be as virtuous and heroic as their father. Thus far, their methods have been more flashy than effective.

Stoneriver

A servant of Torag, Stoneriver resembles a pangolin with glowing blue eyes and brassy, rune-covered scales. Stoneriver burrows through Golarion's mantle and crust as he hunts down subterranean fiends, aids virtuous communities, and defends sacred sites, often collaborating with dwarves.

STONERIVER

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE LG GARGANTUAN CELESTIAL FIRE

Perception +23 (+33 to detect lies and illusions); darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Celestial, Dwarven; *tongues*

Skills Acrobatics +20, Athletics +26, Diplomacy +21, Intimidation +21, Stealth +20, Survival +23, Torag Lore +24

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +7, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

AC 32; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21; +2 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 220, regeneration 30 (deactivated by cold or evil); **Immunities** fear, fire; **Weaknesses** cold 10

Bolster Torag's Chosen (abjuration, aura, divine) 20 feet. Dwarves and creatures that worship Torag in the area gain a +1 status bonus to AC and Will saves.

Retributive Strike ⤴

Speed 30 feet, burrow 30 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ⬥ tongue +26 (good, disarm, magical, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 3d6+11 bludgeoning plus 1d6 good and Improved Grab

Melee ⬥ claw +26 (agile, good, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+11 slashing plus 1d6 good and 1d6 fire

Melee ⬥ tail +26 (backswing, fatal d12, good, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+11 slashing plus 1d6 good and 1d6 fire

Divine Innate Spells DC 29, attack +24; **5th** *blazing fissure*^{SOM}, *flame strike*; **4th** *divine wrath*, *searing light* (×2); **3rd** *heal* (×2); **2nd** *remove fear* (at will), *restoration*; **1st** *detect alignment* (at will, evil only); **Cantrips** (5th) *light*;

Constant (5th) *tongues*

Devour Magic (divine, transmutation) Whenever Stoneriver deals damage with *Swallow Whole*, he consumes one of the swallowed creature's magical effects, as *dispel magic* with a +21 counteract modifier.

Improved Grab ⬥

Measure Soul ⬥⬥ (concentrate, divination, divine, mental) Stoneriver mentally pries through the mind of a creature within 60 feet, dealing 10d8 mental damage (DC 29 basic Will save). Stoneriver can choose to make this damage nonlethal or choose not to damage the creature at all. For 1 minute, Stoneriver gains a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and Perception checks against that creature. If the creature is evil and it failed its save, the creature is additionally frightened 2 (frightened 4 on a critical failure). Stoneriver can't use Measure Soul again for 1d4 rounds.

Rock Tunneler Stoneriver can burrow through solid stone, leaving behind a tunnel if he desires.

Swallow Whole ⬥ (attack) Large, 6d6 bludgeoning plus 2d6 fire and devour magic, Rupture 40



Toilforged Sentinel

Toilforged sentinels are intelligent war machines painstakingly constructed from iron, steel, and other metals over the course of a full year. With twin treads, a central cage filled with eternal flames, and numerous weapons (including a hammer, cannon, and grasping claw capable of snatching up foes), a toilforged sentinel is an intimidating sight. Creatures consumed by a sentinel's flames become captives, their souls eternally bound to the flames, powering the device. Such souls are freed upon the sentinel's destruction.

TOILFORGED SENTINEL

CREATURE 8

RARE **NE** **HUGE** **CONSTRUCT** **SOULBOUND**

Perception +14; darkvision, find the faithless (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +18, Droskar Lore +15, Intimidation +13

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Find the Faithless (magical) The toilforged sentinel detects the presence of creatures that don't worship Droskar within 60 feet as an imprecise sense.

AC 27; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

HP 130; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious;

Weaknesses cold 6, water 11, vulnerability to exorcism; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantite or orichalcum)

Exertion Aura (aura, divine, mental) 20 feet. A toilforged sentinel saps the energy of nearby creatures. Each round a living creature begins its turn in the aura, it must attempt a DC 22 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 mental damage (2d6 on a critical failure) and becomes fatigued. This fatigue ends as soon as the creature remains outside of the aura for 1 minute.

Vulnerability to Exorcism When a toilforged sentinel fails a saving throw against a spell that would banish tormented spirits or manipulate souls, such as *banishment* or *bind soul*, instead of experiencing the listed effect, it takes 10 damage per spell level.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ grasping claw +16 (grapple, magical, reach 30 feet, tethered), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing plus Improved Grab

Melee ♦ hammer +20 (magical, reach 15 feet, shove), **Damage** 2d12+11 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ flaming cannon +17 (range increment 200 feet), **Damage** 3d10 bludgeoning and 1d6 fire

Droskar's Grasp The toilforged sentinel can Grab a creature using only one hand.

It can move normally with a creature grabbed or restrained in its claw, carrying the creature along. If it has a creature grabbed in this way, it can't use its claw Strike. It activates Swallow Whole with its claw by depositing a grabbed creature into its soul furnace.

Soul Furnace The toilforged sentinel has a cage incorporated into its central body, filled with profane fire and called a soul furnace.

As long as a toilforged sentinels' soul furnace contains a living creature, the toilforged sentinel is quickened (Stride or Strike).

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d6 fire and 3d6 negative, Rupture 21



SALVATION

Toilforged sentinels are religious constructs created to destroy heretics: those who refuse to worship Droskar. They take orders only from the clergy of Droskar and find particular satisfaction from consuming worshippers of Torag and other dwarven deities.

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NARSEIGUS

Driven by political and magical ambition, this sorcerer has rediscovered a unique spellcasting art used to command cave worms.

For all its emphasis on personal toil, hryngar culture rewards ensnaring others in a web of obligation and subservience. The more one's subordinates produce, the greater their master's take, so a hryngar who commands a mighty cave worm would be powerful indeed! At least this is what Narseigus believes.

His early training to be a miner was interrupted by the emergence of his magical talents. When his arm momentarily and unexpectedly transformed into a tentacle that strangled his mentor, this one murderous act both spared him any education debt to his mentor and set him on a new career path... only for him to become indebted to magical masters who claimed most of his subsequent profits. In his limited spare time, he read avidly, always seeking new inspiration that could advance his career and livelihood.

This research eventually unearthed worm calling, an obscure hryngar magical tradition that had fallen out of favor—both due the psychological damage involved and the catastrophic consequences that might ensue should a cave worm break free. Knowing of no living worm callers (or at least unable to indebt himself to even more masters), Narseigus began piecing together the techniques from fragmentary sources. Yet the written word had limits. He increasingly realized that mastering this art required studying cave worms, learning their every instinct to attune his mind to theirs. Absconding without closing out his debts, he embarked on a decades-long expedition throughout Nar-Voth to follow cave worms, hone his spells, and swindle supplies as needed.

And then he felt it: the telltale tremors of a cave worm, but massive beyond any he'd ever witnessed. He eagerly tracked the beast, witnessing its trail of destruction and discovering that this was the legendary crimson worm, Zogototaru. The creature's power captivated him. Why should he settle for controlling lesser worms when he could enthrall such a behemoth? Yet even though Zogototaru had left countless tunnels over the millennia, tracing her whereabouts proved challenging. Narseigus at last identified her lair, though getting to that lair would require traversing dwarven territory and excavating countless tons of stone. To his chagrin, he needed help.

Fortunately, King Orgukagan of Hagegraf needed a miracle. With no great deeds to his name, the king knew his reign was unremarkable and his ongoing rule was equally precarious. Thus, when Narseigus proposed a military venture that would both crush Rolgrimmur and help Narseigus seize a mighty asset to fuel future victories, the king eagerly bankrolled his operation. The sorcerer received everything he needed for his research, including privileged access to the king's ear. The operation's scope steadily expanded, earning Narseigus a coalition army, growing clout, and an impressive list of enemies who resented his rise to power.

But for Narseigus, it would all be a means to an end. All that mattered was his magic.

Campaign Role

For much of the campaign, Narseigus is a sinister mastermind always several steps ahead of the PCs. They gradually learned of him in "Cult of the Cave Worm," the previous adventure, uncovering his plans to invade Rolgrimmur, command Zogototaru, and break into the Sky King's Tomb. However, his self-serving objectives have made him many enemies, and the more the PCs uncover, the more of his embittered rivals they meet and might turn against him. Ultimately, he can only rely on his thralls.

Yet Narseigus is so driven that he rarely glances back to notice the damage the PCs cause. By the time he does notice, it's too late. He's one of the final fights of the campaign, letting the PCs clash with Zogototaru and orchestrate Narseigus's comeuppance in one exciting scene.

Narratively, Narseigus provides time pressure to what could otherwise be a casual expedition. After all, Taargick's tomb has survived over 9,000 years. What's another few months? But with Narseigus and his schemes, finding the tomb and thwarting the sorcerer become intertwined goals, keeping the PCs on the move.

NARSEIGUS WORMCALLER

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +20; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 10 feet

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Dwarven, Orcish, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +19, Cave Worm Lore +24, Deception +24, Diplomacy +24, Intimidation +24, Nature +22, Occultism +22, Survival +20

Str +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +6

Items religious symbol, +1 striking staff, wand of widening (5th-level spell)

AC 31; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +24; +2 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 140

Inexorable When Narseigus gains the paralyzed, slowed, or stunned condition, roll a DC 15 flat check. On a success, he ignores the condition.

Light Blindness

Shake It Off ♦ (fortune, primal) **Frequency** once per day;

Trigger Narseigus fails or critically fails a saving throw against a condition or adverse effect (such as *baleful polymorph*); **Effect** Narseigus rerolls the triggering saving throw and uses the better result.

Speed 20 feet, burrow 20 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ staff +20 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+8 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ tail +25 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d10+13 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 30; **6th** *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *paranoia*; **Cantrips (6th)** *sigil*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +24; **6th** (3 slots) *dominate*, *feeblemind*, *slow*; **5th** (4 slots) *grim tendrils*, *vampiric touch*, *vomit swarm*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *enervation*, *locate*, *soothe*; **3rd** (4 slots) *comprehend language*, *haste*, *magic missile*; **2nd** (4 slots) *blur*, *darkness*, *invisibility*; **1st** (4 slots) *alarm*, *command*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (6th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *mage hand*, *read aura*, *shield*

Sorcerer Bloodline Spells DC 30, 3 Focus Points; **6th** *tentacular limbs*, *aberrant whispers*, *unusual anatomy*

Quicken Casting ♦ (concentrate, metamagic)

If Narseigus' next action is to cast an occult spontaneous cantrip or an occult spontaneous spell of 4th level or lower, he reduces the number of actions to cast it by 1 (minimum 1 action).

Steady Spellcasting If a reaction would disrupt Narseigus' spellcasting action, he attempts a DC 15 flat check. On a success, the action isn't disrupted.

Worm Form ♦ (morph, occult, transmutation) Narseigus partially transforms his lower body into that of a cave worm. He can use only his tail unarmed Strike and his burrow and climb Speeds while in this form. This transformation lasts for 1 minute.

Worm's Feast (conjunction, primal) ♦♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Narseigus calls forth a brood of infantile cave worms to feast on his enemy's flesh. One creature within 30 feet must attempt a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The worms writhe away harmlessly.

Success The target takes 2d6 piercing damage and 4d6 persistent piercing damage.

Failure The target takes 6d6 piercing damage and 4d6 persistent piercing damage.

Critical Failure As failure, plus the target is flat-footed as long as it takes persistent piercing damage.



HEAVY IS THE CROWN

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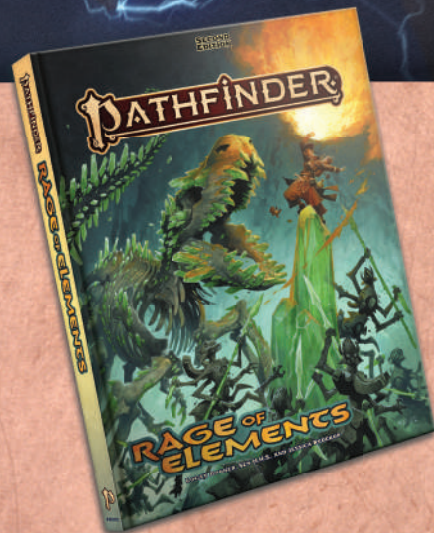
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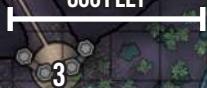
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