

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



AGE OF ASHES

ADVENTURE PATH

FIRES OF THE HAUNTED CITY

By Linda Zayas-Palmer

Kovlar

0 800 FEET

The Barricade

Earthfire

Lakeside

Commerce

Traveler's Quarter

Farmburrw

Steel Loop

Earthfire Avenue

Kovlar Way



PATHFINDER

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Chapter 1: Echoes of the Dead 4

The heroes travel through Jewelgate, emerging in dangerous caverns in the Darklands. After fighting their way through these caverns, they reach Saggorak, a massive ruin filled with undead.

Chapter 2: Welcome to Kovlar 16

The heroes venture to the thriving dwarven settlement of Kovlar to the south, where they must unravel a series of mysteries and troubles plaguing the town. In so doing, they earn the trust of the ruling Court of Regents and uncover the sinister plots that the Scarlet Triad is weaving out in Saggorak.

Chapter 3: Into the Haunted City 34

Returning to Saggorak, the heroes work their way through perilous ruins inhabited by all manner of undead. Along the way, they draw the attention of Saggorak's ancient king, who proves either a useful ally or a formidable enemy, but their true foes lie in (and below) an ancient cathedral known as the Temple of All Gods.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Fires of the Haunted City" is designed for four characters.

12 The PCs should begin this adventure at 12th level.

13 The PCs should reach 13th level after performing tasks for the Court of Regents and before they investigate Chiselrock's Prison or the Hidden Forge.

14 The PCs should reach 14th level before they visit either the Sanctum of the Starved or the Haunted Halls in Saggorak.

The PCs should reach 15th level by the adventure's conclusion.

ILSSRAH'S PLOTS

Ilssrah Embermead is the second in command of the Scarlet Triad, but she has been away from Katapesh for many months as she seeks an alliance with the duergar. She also has learned that the magma dragon beneath Saggorak, Veshumirix, holds one of the shards of the *Orb of Gold Dragonkind*. Veshumirix has already agreed to part with the shard in exchange for Kovlar, and Ilssrah has sent the shard on to Katapesh—but the PCs shouldn't learn about this until the next adventure.

Ilssrah has pursued other numerous plans toward weakening Kovlar. One her most significant plays involved tempting the leader of the Stonemason's Guild, Mountainheart Kolarun Chiselrock, to ally with her. Ilssrah has not mentioned her alliance with the dragon to him. Instead, he believes that Ilssrah plans to attack the city to get what she needs, and then retreat. In exchange for his help in undermining its defenses, she has promised to set the stage for him to rise as a new hero-king of Kovlar.



CHAPTER 1: ECHOES OF THE DEAD

Saggorak was one of the original dwarven kingdoms from which the Five Kings Mountains draws its name. Founded in 1559 AR by Saggorn the Holy, the proud kingdom's first years were filled with strife. Yet between the conflicts, society in Saggorak flourished. It earned itself the moniker of the "Pious Kingdom," as Saggorn's faith inspired him to build opulent temples to the dwarven gods and stockpile sacred relics, transforming Saggorak into a center of faith and pilgrimage site.

When the centuries of warfare finally came to an end with the Kerse Accords, Saggorak experienced a golden age. Its population swelled, as prosperity encouraged larger families and drew in dwarves from outlying areas. The most dramatic surge in population came in the beginning of the 26th century AR, when armies of orcs laid siege to the kingdoms of the Five Kings Mountains. Saggorak's citizens were well supplied,

and they stood fast without contact with the outside world, but the orc siege of the city was relentless. After a dozen years, the last remaining citizen of Saggorak perished to starvation. Orcs took the city, looted it, and pillaged it, but they did not stay long, for Saggorak's people rose from death to strike against the invaders. Hundreds of orcs fell to this onslaught, their corpses bolstering Saggorak's army of restless dead, and the survivors finally abandoned the haunted city to its undead inheritors. Saggorak's last king, the now-undead King Harral, commanded the loyalty of his former citizens, rallying them into an organized force. Saggorak's lost souls remained vigilant against threats to their city, repelling opportunistic orcs as well as forces from the Darklands that wished to claim the city as their prize.

Little changed for 700 years, until the dwarf general Khaddon the Mighty launched a crusade against the

orc armies. When Khaddon's armies reached Saggorak, they realized that the city posed a unique challenge. Its undead defenders, which had repelled the orcs successfully for so long, saw Khaddon's forces as invaders as well. Khaddon's armies were more prepared for warfare against living foes than they were against the dead. Khaddon also recognized that if he were to reclaim the city, he would need to station a substantial contingent of his weary armies to protect the nearby entrance to the Darklands. As a result, Khaddon cleared out only the southernmost district of the haunted city, renaming it Kovlar.

Kovlar began primarily as a small military base, supported by a group of brave and skilled artisans who gradually rebuilt the city. To the surprise of Kovlar's citizens, the undead of neighboring Saggorak showed little interest in retaking Kovlar, so long as Kovlar remained squarely within its own walls. Paradoxically, Kovlar faced fewer threats than other dwarven settlements, as the undead sentinels effectively repelled most threats from the Darklands. Kovlar's people learned to live peacefully with their undead neighbors. Though the occasional group of crusaders still ventured into the city, the undead accepted these incursions, as for every undead destroyed by a crusader, the living fell in turn to become powerful new undead.

When Mengkare shattered the *Orb of Gold Dragonkind* and triggered the eruption of Droskar's Crag, the violent disaster caused death and displacement on a massive scale. Among the displaced creatures was a clutch of magma dragons, one of whom, Moschabbatt, claimed legendary treasures and became one of the most infamous dragons of Avistan. All that his envious younger brother Veshumirix managed to claim from the wreckage was a fragment of the *Orb of Gold Dragonkind*. As he fled the eruption, though, Veshumirix beheld a vision in the fire and ash—the visage of the draconic god of destruction, Dahak. His fevered dreams became consumed with visions of fire and destruction, and scenes of the death and treachery that had taken place under the mountains. While Veshumirix prayed and searched for a way to make his destructive desires come to fruition, he launched himself with renewed energy into the task of raising his own prestige. He sought an unclaimed source of dwarven artifacts and ready minions, and he found it in a location he had seen in his dreams: Saggorak.

Upon reaching the city, Veshumirix set about finding the leader of the undead forces, using his molten breath to incinerate those who stood in his way. He was the greatest threat the undead of Saggorak had ever faced, and his destructive rampage drew King Harral out of his well-defended palace. Harral put up an admirable fight, but Veshumirix slew him and stole away his treasures—Harral's crown chief among them. With that, he gained command over much of the undead in the city, and reduced those who openly opposed his new rule to ash.

But Saggorak was not enough to satisfy Veshumirix's greed for power. He considered conquering Kovlar next, but he knew that the city's walls were guarded with powerful wards that, unlike the ones on Saggorak's walls, had been kept in good repair. Furthermore, the dragon knew that attacking a dwarven settlement was sure to bring swarms of the annoying bearded pests from throughout the Five Kings Mountains to constantly bother him. It would be better, Veshumirix reasoned, to make the dwarves' ancestral enemies do his dirty work. And so he set his sights next upon the Darklands, in the hopes of building an army of undead, duergar, and Darklands monsters to take the city on his behalf.

CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

The PCs step through Jewelgate and are immediately confronted with the lingering spirit of a long-dead elf. Beyond the portal, they must navigate dangerous caverns and a ruined debate hall occupied by a small clan of gugs before entering the haunted city of Saggorak, where they have a fortuitous meeting with a dwarven scout who can lead them on to the nearby settlement of Kovlar.

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Recently, the Scarlet Triad has been searching for shards of the *Orb of Gold Dragonkind* themselves—a search that has led them to Veshumirix. Recognizing the danger of both Saggorak and the dragon, Scarlet Triad second-in-command Ilssrah Embermead, a dwarven cleric of Droskar, took it upon herself to secure the shard—and perhaps the aid of the dragon himself. Ilssrah began negotiations with the prideful dragon, promising him slaves and wealth in exchange for the shard, but the dragon was not easily persuaded to part with a relic from his first days. When Ilssrah learned of Veshumirix’s faith, though, she found a more valuable tactic: she told the dragon that her organization had leads on how to release a manifestation of Dahak, and claimed that they would need the shard of the *Orb of Gold Dragonkind* to do so. This promise, combined with the offer of slaves and wealth, convinced the dragon to ally with the Scarlet Triad. As if matters weren’t troubling enough, Ilssrah is also seeking an alliance with local duergar to help bolster her own trade in slaves, and hopes to profit handsomely off Kovlar’s doom if Veshumirix succeeds in devastating the settlement.

Getting Started

With the PCs having defeated the Scarlet Triad’s interests in Ravounel, word of their growing opposition to the slavers spreads all the way back to the Triad’s base of operations in Katapesh and, from there, to Ilssrah and her followers in Saggorak and Kovlar. The timing of how this information spreads is left vague—the PCs should have time to recover from “Tomorrow Must Burn,” to engage in downtime activities, and perhaps to work a bit more on restoring Citadel Altaerein. “Fires of the Haunted City” begins when the PCs decide to use the *Eye of the Wise* recovered from Summershade Quarry to activate the next portal in line in Alseta’s Ring: Jewelgate.

When the PCs are ready to do so, they need only touch the *Eye of the Wise* to the stone to activate Jewelgate. Doing so causes the stone within the arch to turn to mist. The portal remains active for 10 minutes before closing—the other side of the portal allows travelers from within Jewelgate’s way station to emerge, but not to reenter without activating the portal again.

JEWELGATE

Of all of the *aiudara* portals in Alseta’s Ring, Jewelgate proved the least useful to Candlaron and the elves who came after him. Jewelgate was designed as a tribute to Yuelral, the elven goddess of magic, who is known for her strong affinity for crystals and gems. To honor

the goddess, Candlaron chose a particularly lovely crystal cavern under what is known today as the Five Kings Mountains as the portal’s destination. He built the way station within Jewelgate to serve as a meditation chamber—a beautiful vault within which visitors could enjoy the glories of crystal formations as a precursor to the wonders of the cavern beyond.

Unfortunately, the crystal cavern was adjacent to the territory of a Darklands serpentfolk settlement. The serpentfolk were none too welcoming to the surface dwellers, and when the elves’ attempt to parley with them ended in bloodshed, Candlaron decided that it would be best to wait before using the portal again. To ensure that Jewelgate’s way station remained a work of art in Yuelral’s honor and that the serpentfolk didn’t try to invade it, one of Candlaron’s apprentices, a wizard named Talamira, volunteered to become the way station’s caretaker and guardian.

While the serpentfolk never managed to activate Jewelgate from the Nar-Voth side, they did what they could to make the crystalline caverns much less welcoming, should the elves ever decide to return. The strange magic they infused the crystals with had an unanticipated interaction with Jewelgate, and their sinister energies seeped into the way station’s own crystal gardens over the centuries. This influence was subtle and went unnoticed by Talamira at first, but eventually she realized something strange was going on as the sound of soft wailing from the crystals began to manifest.

When she first noted the strange effect, Talamira was intrigued by this magical “pollution” from the far side of the portal, and while she wasn’t able to exit the way station, she did what she could to study the influence. But when she attempted to enhance the magic of the crystals to study the effects, the insidious serpentfolk trap triggered, blasting Talamira with necromantic energies that slew her instantaneously. She rose as a ghost not long thereafter, so disoriented by the experience that she not only lost track of the passage of time—she didn’t even realize she’d been killed in the first place. Talamira has since spent many thousand years in a perpetual cycle of study and forgetfulness, unaware that her time has moved on.

Only one chamber exists within Jewelgate. As with all of the Alseta’s Ring way stations, this one exists in its own demiplane. Air and temperature are regulated by the demiplane to maintain comfortable living conditions within, but attempts to travel beyond the borders of the way station itself do not function, with the exception of planar travel such as using the two *aiudara* exits.

JEWELGATE WAY STATION SEVERE 12

Magnificent, colorful crystals grow out of one wall of this fifteen-foot-high musty stone chamber, fanning out from a stone archway and filling the room with kaleidoscopic light. This archway is studded with gems and decorated with carvings of panthers. Along one wall, a row of bookcases and a wooden desk remain in prime condition, oblivious to the weight of years. A long-dead skeleton sits slumped in a chair at the desk. The soft sound of muffled sobbing and wailing wafts through the air.

The sobbing and wailing sounds come from the crystals that glow and shimmer along the side of the way station opposite its entrance from Alseta's Ring—a successful DC 20 Perception check is all that's required to pinpoint the crystals as the source of the wailing. The necromantic magic in the crystals has only grown in power over time, and their magic triggers as soon as any living creature approaches within 20 feet—see Hazard on page 9.

Creature: Talamira still exists in this chamber, spending the majority of her time at the desk studying her notes or milling among the crystals, examining their facets and listening to their song. Now a ghost, the unfortunate elf has no capacity to fabricate new memories, nor does she comprehend that she is undead. She no longer attempts to turn pages in her journal, gather samples from crystals, or otherwise directly interact with the physical world. She's trapped in the moment before making such a decision, always intending to turn that page, gather that sample, or attempt to contact the outside world for advice, but never quite reaching the point of decision, as she forgets her intention to do so before she can act on it.

Talamira is a tragic figure, but she's also potentially dangerous if the PCs react poorly to her appearance. When she notices visitors to the way station, she rises up from her remains, appearing as she did in life (albeit in ghostly form) and floats forward toward the PCs, holding out her arms in welcome as she greets the visitors in Elven, welcoming them to Jewelgate and warning them that the far side of the portal is dangerous.

Talamira fights only if she is attacked—in this case, she fights until destroyed, as her condition of living purely in the moment prevents her from recalling a time when she wasn't fighting against the intruding PCs. If the PCs can establish communication with her and don't fight, her repeated welcomes to the way station should quickly reveal to the PCs that something strange is going on with her mind. If a PC starts to

approach the crystals, her expression changes to fear and she warns them not to approach the dangerous crystals. Should the PCs activate the wailing crystals, Talamira wails and howls in pain and anguish as she relives her own death at the hazard over and over, reverting to her welcoming posture if the PCs retreat from the crystals without deactivating the hazard.

As long as the wailing crystals aren't active, the PCs can attempt to speak to Talamira. Doing so is difficult, since she doesn't recall questions much longer than it takes to ask them. She can effectively answer questions only if they are asked with a single simple sentence, and she answers in similarly short sentences. You can

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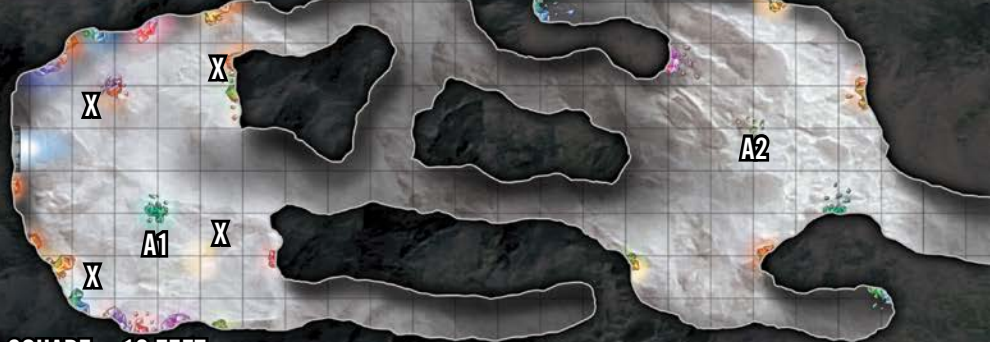
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JEWELGATE WAYSTATION



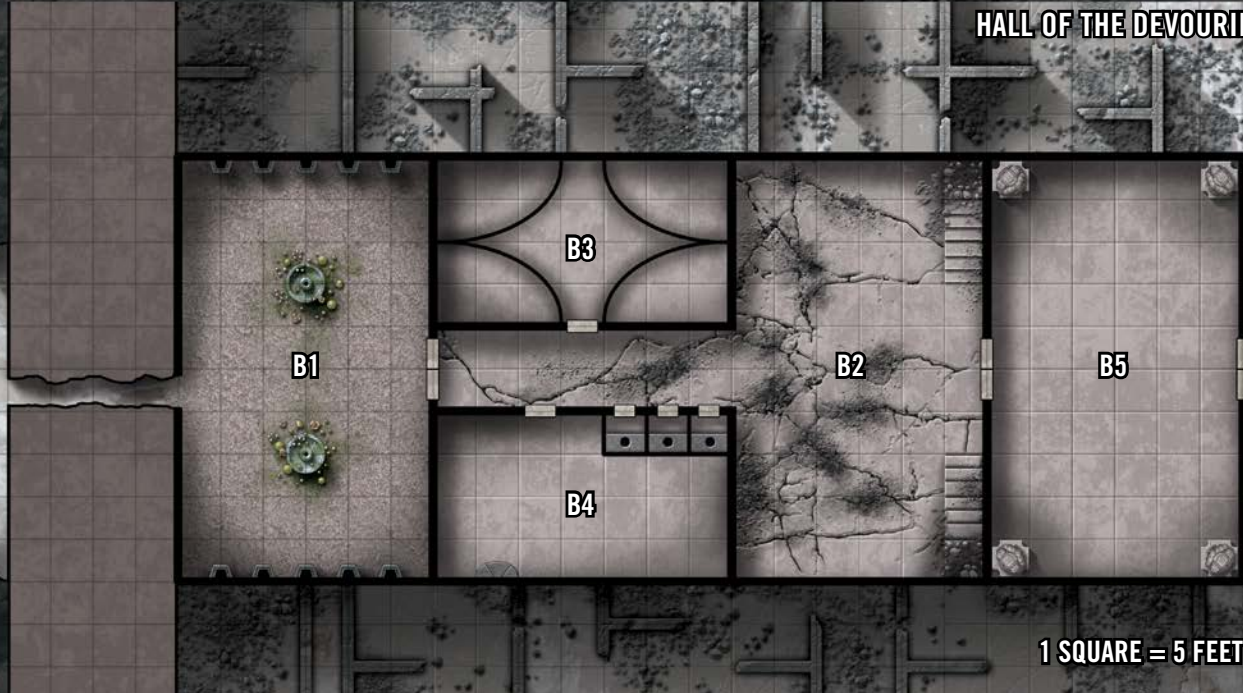
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

THE CRYSTAL TUNNELS



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

HALL OF THE DEVOURING GIANTS



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

use Talamira to reveal to the PCs some of the history of Alseta's Ring as you wish, to warn them of the crystals and the serpentfolk threat in the caves beyond (even though the serpentfolk are long gone, the caves remain dangerous), or even to provide hints as to how she can be laid to rest.

Talamira grows agitated if confronted with her undead nature. She doesn't seem to be able to sense her own remains, but any attempt to convince her that she is a ghost or to ask her how she can be put to rest requires a successful DC 36 Diplomacy check. On a success, she seems momentarily confused and then reverts to her welcomes, forgetting the question entirely. On a critical success she grows morose and says, "The crystals snuffed me out, and now they keep me here forever!" before reverting to welcomes. On a failure, she wails and cries out in anguish, unintentionally activating her resonant wail ability before she reverts to welcomes. On a critical failure, she wails, cries, and then attacks in a murderous rage, fighting until destroyed. Any attempt to disturb her remains or steal from her belongings at the desk also risks enraging her.

When someone starts to take such an action, she cries out in warning—should the PC persist in the action, she attacks as well, using Telekinetic Crystalline Assault to blast the PCs with razor-sharp shards of crystals before moving on to cast spells or wail.

TALAMIRA

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female elf ghost (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Elven

Skills Acrobatics +27, Aiudara Lore +30, Arcana +27, Nature +27

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

Site Bound Jewelgate way station

AC 34; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +23, **Will** +26

HP 185, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistance** all damage 10 (except force, ghost touch, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) Talamira's ghost is bound to the way station by the presence of the wailing crystals;

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if this hazard is deactivated or destroyed, Talamira sighs in relief as her memories are restored—this burst of psychic energy suffuses all PCs in the area, granting them access to the ancient tradition of magic she once followed, that of the crystal keeper archetype (page 74). A moment later, Talamira fades away, her soul moving on to the afterlife.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +27 (agile, finesse, magical),

Damage 3d10+12 negative

Arcane Innate Spells DC 33, attack +27; **7th** *power word blind*, *spell turning*; **6th** *chain lightning*, *cone of cold*, *flesh to stone*; **5th** *fireball*, *magic missile*, *phantasmal killer*; **4th** *confusion*, *lightning bolt*, *suggestion*; **3rd** *blindness*, *paralyze*, *slow*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *glitterdust*, *mirror image*; **1st** *grease*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (7th)** *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

Resonant Wail ♦♦ (arcane, emotion, enchantment, mental, sonic) Talamira releases an anguish-filled cry of despair. All creatures within 30 feet must attempt a DC 33 Will save to resist. Talamira can't use Resonant Wail for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature wails with anguish for 3 rounds. The shrieks resonate within the room's wailing crystals, giving the crystals a +2 status bonus on attack rolls against that creature during this time.

Failure As success, but the creature is slowed 1 for 1 minute as it sobs uncontrollably. If the creature is already slowed 1 by *crushing despair*, it is slowed 2 as long as it's under both effects simultaneously.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature is also stunned 3 from its overwhelming sadness.

Telekinetic Crystalline Assault ♦♦ (divine, evocation) Talamira fills the air with whirling crystals, dealing 7d6 slashing damage to all creatures in a 30-foot emanation (DC 33 basic Reflex save).

Hazard: Candlaron originally harvested several vibrant crystals from the other side of Jewelgate and cultivated them here, never anticipating that the serpentfolk would be able to use that fact to infect Jewelgate. When the serpentfolk transformed the crystals on the far side into dangerous crystalline husks (see area A1), that necromantic energy seeped across the planar boundaries into the crystals growing here, transforming them into an even more dangerous hazard.

WAILING CRYSTALS

HAZARD 13

COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

Stealth +27 (master) or DC 37 (master) to notice what appear to be screaming ghostly faces in the crystals

Description Three clusters of gleaming, colorful crystals

are corrupted with necromantic energy that causes them to reflect negative emotions. All three must be disabled or destroyed to negate the hazard.

Disable Thievery DC 29 (master) to carefully fracture the crystals or Crafting DC 27 (expert) to place objects to stop the resonance, both disabling one 5-foot patch of crystals.

AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +18

Hardness 18; **HP** 72 (BT 36) per 5-foot patch; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Echoing Cry ♫ (occult); **Trigger** A living creature approaches within 20 feet of a wailing crystal. **Effect** A despairing chorus of cries echoes off the crystals, working its way into the minds of all living creatures in Jewelgate Way Station, affecting them with *crushing despair* (7th level, DC 33). The hazard rolls initiative.

Routine (3 actions) The hazard uses each action for an Anguished Shriek. The wailing crystals lose 1 action for each 5-foot patch of crystals that is broken or destroyed.


Anguished Shriek (emotion, enchantment, mental, occult, sonic) A shrieking, distorted face composed of writhing necromantic energy lances out of the crystals to target a random living creature within 20 feet. The target takes 4d6 mental damage and 4d6 sonic damage (DC 33 basic Will save).

Reset The wailing crystals deactivate and reset once no living creatures are within 20 feet.

Treasure: Talamira's preservative magic has kept the books in this room in pristine condition. Several volumes on evocation magic are open on the desk, all written in Elven. Among the volumes on the bookshelves, the PCs can find several tomes filled with Talamira's research notes regarding the nature of *aiudara*—those of Alseta's Ring in particular. These texts can fill in PCs on the history of Alseta's Ring if they missed the chance to learn this from Talamira herself. The collection of ancient texts includes original copies of ancient elven philosophical treatises, as well as various works of arcane theory thought lost. Perhaps most importantly, these books contain information about a tradition of magic that has been all but lost to elven society—the practices of the crystal keeper. A PC who studies and references these texts gains access to the crystal keeper archetype (page 74). In all, the books in Talamira's library would sell for 500 gp to an interested buyer. The books all together are 20 Bulk.

In addition, tucked among the books are two scrolls: a *scroll of dimensional lock* and a *scroll of tongues*.

Exiting the Way Station: Activating the archway to pass through Jewelgate is straightforward. The PCs need only touch the *Eye of the Wise* to the stone arch,



allowing them to pass through into area A1 of the Crystal Tunnels.

XP Award: If the PCs manage to put Talamira's ghost to rest, award them XP as if they had defeated her in combat.

The Crystal Tunnels

The PCs emerge from Jewelgate in the upper reaches of the Darklands. Light is normally rare in the Darklands, but the ancient magic infused into the crystals of these caverns by serpentfolk long ago has an eerie side effect that causes the crystals in this cave to shimmer and glow softly with different hues. As a result, these caves are illuminated with dim light.

A1. CARNIVOROUS CAVERN MODERATE 12

The crystalline walls of this sixty-foot-wide cavern arch up thirty feet to a glittering roof. The ceiling, walls, and even the floor of this cave sparkle with crystals of various sizes, shapes, and colors, and glowing whorls of energy periodically dart from one crystal to another. The stone arch of Jewelgate looms along one wall of the cavern, framed by a starburst of crystals, while three tube-like exits, circular in cross-section, exit the cavern from the wall opposite.

A character who examines this room and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check realizes that the crystal growth along the walls suggests a regular pattern of being crushed only to grow back over time. This is the result of periodic tunneling through these caverns by the immense cave worms that hunt in the region—a successful DC 30 Nature check is enough to perceive that massive creatures have crawled through the cave, with a critical success suggesting this is the work of purple worms.

The crystals along the walls grow slowly, leeching nutrients out of the surrounding rock. These so-called lifeleech crystals have been infused with malevolent energies by ancient serpentfolk magic, and as a result they have a limited form of sentience and an instinctive desire to seek minerals that are rare in the walls around them, but common in the bones and flesh of living creatures (see Hazard below for details).

Creatures: Two carnivorous crystals have grown from the lifeleech crystals that infest this cavern. The ravenous oozes slither and clatter forth to attack any living creatures that enter the cavern, pursuing relentlessly and fighting to the death.

CARNIVOROUS CRYSTALS (2)

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Stealth +27

Hazard: The carnivorous crystals are not the only dangers in this room. Hidden among the more mundane crystals are razor-sharp patches of necromancy-infused lifeleech crystals. Created ages ago by serpentfolk, only a relatively small number of lifeleech crystals remain active today, but they are still dangerous. Each patch is about 10 feet in diameter, and the position of each is marked with an X on the map of area A1.

LIFELEECH CRYSTAL PATCHES (4)

HAZARD 11

ENVIRONMENTAL **MAGICAL**


Stealth DC 30 (expert) or *detect magic* to note the presence of necromantic energies suffusing the crystals.

Description Sharp, bloodthirsty crystals make walking through this chamber treacherous.

Disable Religion DC 30 (expert) to utter prayers that quell the crystals' necromantic compulsion to drink blood

AC 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +12

Hardness 20; **HP** 80 (BT 40); **Immunities** critical hits (except bludgeoning or sonic), object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** sonic 10

Slice Legs  **Trigger** A creature with blood moves through a patch of lifeleech crystals. **Effect** The crystals twist and slash, animating and cutting into the creature as it walks, dealing 5d8 slashing damage. The creature must attempt a DC 28 Reflex saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes full damage and is drained 1.

Failure The creature takes double damage and is drained 2.

Critical Failure As failure, plus the creature's blood causes fresh growth. A new 10-foot-square patch of lifeleech crystals grows in an adjacent space to the current patch of crystals.

Treasure: The last serpentfolk retreated from this region to deeper layers of the Darklands over 10,000 years ago, but an enduring remnant of their one-time presence remains behind: a *staff of marvelous medicines* with a pair of bronze serpents coiled around it. This staff lies in the center of the room and is almost entirely overgrown by nonhazardous crystals—a successful DC 30 Perception check is required to notice it.

A2. WORM NEST

MODERATE 12

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this cavern are adorned with softly glowing crystals. Several ten-foot-wide circular openings provide exits from the cavern—three to the west and two to the east, with depressions in the walls and floors elsewhere suggesting that other exits once existed but have either collapsed or have been overgrown by the glowing crystals—although the northeast exit from the cave is barren of crystals after a dozen feet.

The tunnel exit that leads off the map to the east winds but follows a roughly straight line for 1,000 feet before reaching area **B1**. This tunnel quickly grows lightless as it leads away from the glowing crystals that cover the walls of areas **A1–A2**.

Creatures: The purple worms that dwell in the area have learned to avoid area **A1** and its crystalline hazards, but as no such dangers are present here in the eastern reaches of these caves, the immense cave worms are more common. Currently, a particularly immense and cantankerous purple worm slumbers in this cavern, but it wakes quickly if loud combat takes place in area **A1** and prepares an attack should prey enter the chamber. The purple worm fights to the death, burrowing through the walls as needed to pursue PCs if they flee all the way east to area **B1**.

ELITE PURPLE WORM

CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 56

Initiative Perception +22

Hall of the Devouring Giants

Following the stone passage leading east from the crystal caverns, the PCs swiftly leave behind the glowing crystals and must navigate a long, dark tunnel that leads east for 1,000 feet before reaching a wall of worked stone in which a narrow fissure has left a 20-foot-deep crack. This fissure allows access into the haunted city of Saggorak via a complex known to those who dwell in nearby Kovlar as the Hall of the Devouring Giants.

This hall was once an event hall built against the encircling wall of stone that surrounds all of Saggorak. The wall was constructed by the dwarves as a sort of inner “shell” to the vast cavern in part as decoration and in part as protection; it provided a decorative boundary to Saggorak, and at the time of its creation, magical glyphs along the wall helped protect those who dwelt within. This magic has long ago faded. The crack between the crystal caves and the event hall being one of many indications of the passage of time. Medium creatures can navigate the fissure, but it is difficult terrain to them. Those who crawl through emerge into area **B1**.



Deadmouth

B1. DEBATE ROOM

MODERATE 12

Two dry fountains sit in the center of this thirty-foot-high, dome-roofed chamber. Noxious-looking patches of sickly fungus grow in thick tangles around each fountain, while the walls bear carvings of dwarves engaged in lively debate. The carvings are damaged and partially obscured by swaths of mold.

Creatures: Once used by the dwarves of Saggorak to stage lively debates around a pair of fountains, this chamber is now used by gugs as a pen for various creatures they’ve captured in the Darkland wilds and have sought to tame. Their latest project is a shadow-haunting bat-like creature called a deculi, a beast that the gugs have managed to befriend over the past several days.

When the PCs approach this area, they hear the two gugs howling and roaring in excitement while they watch the deculi tear into a small pile of dwarven ghouls that were recently defeated. Still terrified of the ghouls the creature “bravely” vanquished, the gugs find the deculi’s consumption of their feared foes delightful and relieving. The deculi, for its part, doesn’t mind the taste of recently undead flesh. Due

to their shared distractions, the monsters here take a –4 penalty to initiative checks, but once they notice the PCs, they attack at once. Once one gug is slain, the other retreats east to area **B2**. If the deculi is reduced to fewer than a quarter of its hit points, it flees into its shadow sanctuary to recover.

DECULI

CREATURE 12

Page 78

Initiative Perception +23

GUGS (2)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 198

Initiative Perception +19

B2. CRUMBLD HALL MODERATE 12

The floor of this grand chamber and the foyer beyond is riddled with cracks. A black, mold-like growth spills out of these cracks, connecting in a web of tendrils accented with twitching bulbs. Doors lead out of the room and its adjoining hall in several locations, and two rubble-choked stairwells lead up to collapses of stone to the east.

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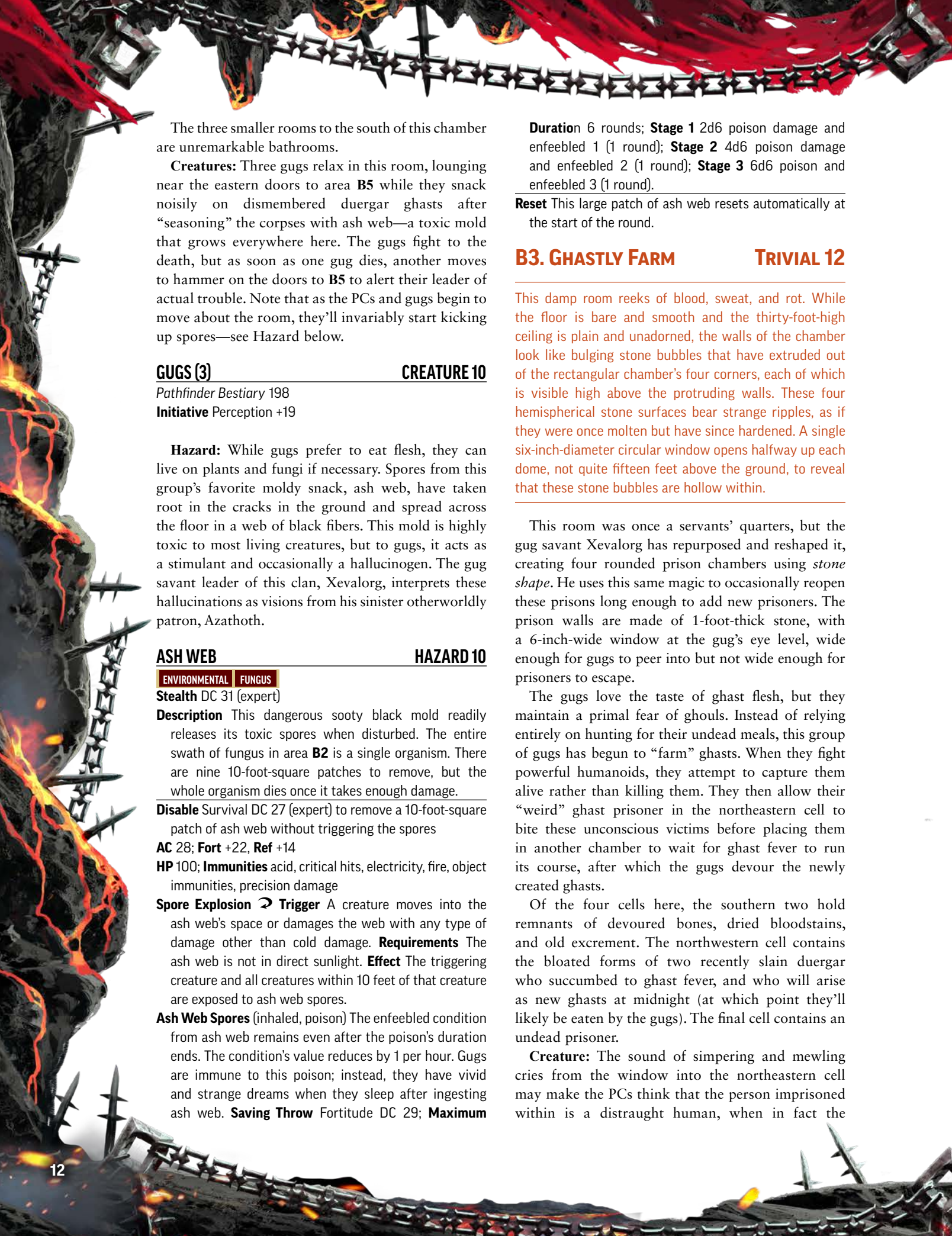
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The three smaller rooms to the south of this chamber are unremarkable bathrooms.

Creatures: Three gugs relax in this room, lounging near the eastern doors to area **B5** while they snack noisily on dismembered duergar ghosts after “seasoning” the corpses with ash web—a toxic mold that grows everywhere here. The gugs fight to the death, but as soon as one gug dies, another moves to hammer on the doors to **B5** to alert their leader of actual trouble. Note that as the PCs and gugs begin to move about the room, they’ll invariably start kicking up spores—see Hazard below.

GUGS (3)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 198

Initiative Perception +19

Hazard: While gugs prefer to eat flesh, they can live on plants and fungi if necessary. Spores from this group’s favorite moldy snack, ash web, have taken root in the cracks in the ground and spread across the floor in a web of black fibers. This mold is highly toxic to most living creatures, but to gugs, it acts as a stimulant and occasionally a hallucinogen. The gug savant leader of this clan, Xevalorg, interprets these hallucinations as visions from his sinister otherworldly patron, Azathoth.

ASH WEB

HAZARD 10

ENVIRONMENTAL **FUNGUS**


Stealth DC 31 (expert)

Description This dangerous sooty black mold readily releases its toxic spores when disturbed. The entire swath of fungus in area **B2** is a single organism. There are nine 10-foot-square patches to remove, but the whole organism dies once it takes enough damage.

Disable Survival DC 27 (expert) to remove a 10-foot-square patch of ash web without triggering the spores

AC 28; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +14

HP 100; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, electricity, fire, object immunities, precision damage

Spore Explosion  **Trigger** A creature moves into the ash web’s space or damages the web with any type of damage other than cold damage. **Requirements** The ash web is not in direct sunlight. **Effect** The triggering creature and all creatures within 10 feet of that creature are exposed to ash web spores.

Ash Web Spores (inhaled, poison) The enfeebled condition from ash web remains even after the poison’s duration ends. The condition’s value reduces by 1 per hour. Gugs are immune to this poison; instead, they have vivid and strange dreams when they sleep after ingesting ash web. **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 29; **Maximum**

Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison damage and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 6d6 poison and enfeebled 3 (1 round).

Reset This large patch of ash web resets automatically at the start of the round.

B3. GHASTLY FARM

TRIVIAL 12

This damp room reeks of blood, sweat, and rot. While the floor is bare and smooth and the thirty-foot-high ceiling is plain and unadorned, the walls of the chamber look like bulging stone bubbles that have extruded out of the rectangular chamber’s four corners, each of which is visible high above the protruding walls. These four hemispherical stone surfaces bear strange ripples, as if they were once molten but have since hardened. A single six-inch-diameter circular window opens halfway up each dome, not quite fifteen feet above the ground, to reveal that these stone bubbles are hollow within.

This room was once a servants’ quarters, but the gug savant Xevalorg has repurposed and reshaped it, creating four rounded prison chambers using *stone shape*. He uses this same magic to occasionally reopen these prisons long enough to add new prisoners. The prison walls are made of 1-foot-thick stone, with a 6-inch-wide window at the gug’s eye level, wide enough for gugs to peer into but not wide enough for prisoners to escape.

The gugs love the taste of ghost flesh, but they maintain a primal fear of ghouls. Instead of relying entirely on hunting for their undead meals, this group of gugs has begun to “farm” ghosts. When they fight powerful humanoids, they attempt to capture them alive rather than killing them. They then allow their “weird” ghost prisoner in the northeastern cell to bite these unconscious victims before placing them in another chamber to wait for ghost fever to run its course, after which the gugs devour the newly created ghosts.

Of the four cells here, the southern two hold remnants of devoured bones, dried bloodstains, and old excrement. The northwestern cell contains the bloated forms of two recently slain duergar who succumbed to ghost fever, and who will arise as new ghosts at midnight (at which point they’ll likely be eaten by the gugs). The final cell contains an undead prisoner.

Creature: The sound of simpering and mewling cries from the window into the northeastern cell may make the PCs think that the person imprisoned within is a distraught human, when in fact the

sound comes from a starving ghast. Once a human adventurer from the surface world, the story of how he ended up deep below ground in the Darklands as a ghast is a tragic tale that he's gone to great lengths to forget. The prisoner has even forgotten his own name and now goes by the name Deadmouth. While he has little interest in his past, he's eager to escape his current predicament. He knows that the gugs kept him around at first as a curiosity (the gugs, far more used to stocky dwarven undead, found his lanky frame strange and curious), but now that he's being kept as a source of "not-so-fresh meat," Deadmouth has increasingly grown bored and desperate for freedom. Of course, he's still a ravenous and sadistic eater of flesh, and PCs who feel sorry enough to rescue and release him should keep this in mind. Should a PC take it upon themselves to destroy and resurrect Deadmouth, feel free to have his memories return and perhaps reveal himself to be someone from your campaign whose mysterious disappearance has long intrigued historians—or simply have him be a grateful man who is forever in debt to the PCs for his new life.

The gugs rarely feed Deadmouth, and he sustains himself on the bites they allow him to take out of captured prisoners, facilitating their transformation into ghosts. If Deadmouth notices the PCs, he attempts to negotiate with them, though his hunger makes it challenging for him to focus unless the PCs offer a meal (such as one of the corpses in the nearby cells). If the PCs don't want to give Deadmouth a corpse to feast upon, coaxing Deadmouth into focusing requires a PC to succeed at a DC 28 Diplomacy check.

If the PCs feed him or otherwise get him to focus, Deadmouth can tell the PCs a bit of lore about Saggorak—including the fact that this is where the PCs are now located, in the event that they've not yet figured this out. Deadmouth doesn't reveal any information that he believes could endanger the undead citizens of Saggorak; he instead brags that their king, Veshumirix, is a dragon born from the heart of the hottest volcano. Furthermore, Deadmouth tells the PCs that even if they survive for a few days against Saggorak's ravenous dead, they shouldn't expect to be able to survive a confrontation with the so-called "Molten King." He tells the PCs that if they know what's good for them, they'll "hide behind Kovlar's walls, like the rest of the heart-beating fleshlings there."

DEADMOUTH

CREATURE 2

Male ghast (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 169)

Initiative Perception +8

Treasure: Among the duergar bodies in the northwestern cell is a *mummified bat* talisman.

XP Award: If the PCs learn about Veshumirix from Deadmouth, grant them 40 XP.

B4. "HAUNTED" KITCHEN MODERATE 12

Although no one seem to have used the hearth in this dusty kitchen for centuries, the air in here remains warm. The stone tables and pantry shelves are devoid of food, but are strewn with a collection of stone and metal utensils.

The heat in this room seeps in from the hearth, which is connected via still-functioning stone "pipes" that connect to magma chambers below Saggorak.

Creature: A strange stony predator hides in the southern wall of this kitchen—a parasitic beast from the Plane of Earth known as a grikkito. As the PCs approach, the monster hails them in Dwarven, pretending to be the spirit of a dwarf who died to the gugs. It tries Common and Terran if none of the PCs understand Dwarven, entreating the PCs to enter and sanctify the room so that its tormented soul may at last find peace. If any PC draws within the hungry creature's reach, or if the PCs have clearly seen through its ruse, it attacks. It may be hungry, but it values its own life—if the PCs deal grievous harm to the creature, it flees.

GRIKKITOG

CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Bestiary 195

Initiative Deception +27

Languages Common, Dwarven, Terran

Treasure: The assorted cookware left in this room is enough to create a set of sterling artisan's tools for cooking.

B5. GRAND HALL

SEVERE 12

The forty-foot high ceiling of this grand hall is carved with images of dwarven faces peering down from above. Three plinths in the corners of the room hold statues of dwarven revelers, while the one to the southwest holds a stone throne sized for a giant.

Creatures: The gug's leader, Xevalorg, chose this room as his chamber, reshaping a statue of a dwarf into a throne from which he holds court. Xevalorg and his gugs take little interest in Saggorak's politics, and the creatures consider the PCs to be little more than raw material for ghast-flavored meals. As such, they aren't interested in conversing. Xevalorg is attended

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by three of his favorite gugs. Once they spot the PCs, all four creatures lurch forth to attack.

If the PC are able to defeat Xevalorg and the other denizens of the Hall of the Devouring Giants, they can rest here safely, as the undead of Saggorak avoid the gug stronghold.

XEVALORG

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE CE LARGE ABERRATION

Male gug savant (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 198)

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Terran, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +23 (+27 to Squeeze), Athletics +27, Religion +26, Stealth +23, Survival +24

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +4

AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +20, **Will** +23

HP 235

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +27 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d12+14 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +27 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+14 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 33, attack +27; **6th** flesh to stone; **5th** black tentacles, wall of stone; **4th** divine wrath, shape stone (×3); **3rd** earthbind, vampiric touch; **2nd** invisibility; **Constant (4th)** freedom of movement, see invisibility

Furious Claws ♦♦ Xevalorg makes up to four claw Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks count toward Xevalorg's multiple attack penalty, and the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after he makes all his attacks.

Eerie Flexibility Despite his size, Xevalorg's multiple joints allow him to fit through tight spaces as if he were a Medium creature. While Squeezing, he can move at his full Speed.

Rend ♦ claw

GUGS (3)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 198

Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: A small pile of treasure rests by Xevalorg's throne. Most of its contents are oddly shaped stones, fragments of bone, and other objects of little value to the PCs. However, the pile also contains ancient coins worth a total of 100 gp and two *elemental gems*, both of the variety that can be used to summon a living landslide.

MEETING PARJIL

Once the PCs exit the Hall of the Devouring Giants, be it via conventional means through the doors in area B5 or by breaking through one of the exterior walls, they enter the ruins of Saggorak. This adventure doesn't present a full map of the sprawling expanse of Saggorak, as the expectation is that the PCs will have detailed directions to specific locations in the haunted city once their adventures take them there. Although the PCs have no such context or knowledge when they first exit the Hall of Devouring Giants, the distant glow of the magical lights to the south along the wall separating Kovlar from the rest of Saggorak should serve as a beacon to lure the PCs.

Xevalorg

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Fortunately, the living dwarves of Kovlar do maintain something of a presence in Saggorak. In particular, a dwarven scout by the name of Parjil Longbraid has been keeping an eye on the hall for many days. Worried about rumors that a group of gugs had been spotted in the city, Parjil was sent by Kovlar to observe the monsters for several days to ascertain if they posed a threat. A priest of Magrim, the stern dwarven god of death and ancestors, Parjil is torn regarding the gugs and is unsure what to do about them. On the one hand, they're certainly dangerous and evil neighbors to be concerned about, but on the other hand, they seem to be preying mostly on the undead and appear to have little interest in meddling with Kovlar's affairs. As a result, Parjil has all but decided to leave the gugs alone, but when she spots the PCs emerging from the building, curiosity gets the better of her and she cautiously calls out to them.

As a worshipper of Magrim, Parjil has long loathed undead and their corruption of the natural cycle of life and death. She's spent much of her life patrolling the streets of Saggorak to keep an eye on the undead that haunt the ruins, and in those years, she has encountered numerous bands of surface adventurers. Between those who shared her hatred of undead and were on crusading quests and those who simply saw Saggorak as an abandoned location to loot, Parjil knows that adventuring groups represent a wide range of personalities and goals. She hopes that the PCs are more heroes than looters when she hails them, introducing herself as a sentinel of Kovlar and enemy to those who walk after death before she asks the PCs their names and purpose in Saggorak.

Parjil is open minded and experienced much in her life, but if the PCs reveal that they came to Saggorak via an *aiudara*, she is both surprised and intrigued, having never heard of or even suspected that such a gate existed in Saggorak. As far as she knew, the countless tunnels beyond Saggorak's walls led only into the Darklands, whose monsters clash with the spirits of the dwarven ancestors. If the PCs report what the captive ghaist said about a dragon king, she is further alarmed, as there have been no rumors of draconic activity in the region. Mention of the Scarlet

Triad likewise fails to solicit any sense of recognition. It shouldn't be long before Parjil recommends that the PCs return with her to Kovlar to speak to the Court of Regents—the city's leaders. If external forces are indeed turning their attention to Saggorak, the dwarves of Kovlar need to know.

As long as the PCs take a direct route to Kovlar in Parjil's company, they will not face further significant opposition at this point. At your option, the PCs might encounter a minor group of undead or other foes, but by and large you should hold off on significant clashes for now.

Parjil's role in this adventure is to facilitate the PCs' transition into the next chapter, so if the PCs opt instead to head into Saggorak on their own, you may need to look to Chapter 3 for inspiration and additional encounters.

Eventually, the dangers of Saggorak should convince the PCs to seek shelter in the safer and more civilized reaches of Kovlar to the south.

If the PCs accompany Parjil, they'll have time to take in the scenery during the hour-long walk through ruined Saggorak. The city's buildings are constructed primarily from stone, with accents of metal and crystal. The city is cloaked in darkness, as its undead inhabitants are not fond of light. Empty torch sconces and the occasional fragments of a shattered lantern are the only remnants of the lights that ancient dwarves once used to illuminate their city. A combination of rampant looting, neglect, and ongoing conflicts with various invaders from the Darklands and from Kovlar to the south have scarred the city, obscuring the original functions of many of its buildings.

In these dark and desolate streets, the lights of Kovlar shine all the brighter. The glow of the city's lights can be easily seen from most points in Saggorak. The tallest spires of Kovlar's buildings rise above its fortified walls, and warm, reddish-orange light glows from the thriving settlement. Any PCs who succeed at a DC 25 Society check recognize Kovlar and know that the city is best known for its high-quality weapons and armor, as well as the perilous haunted ruins outside its gates, and that the lights that illuminate its walls serve the dual purpose of putting visitors from the surface at ease and warding off the undead who still haunt the remainder of the subterranean region.



Parjil Longbraid



CHAPTER 2: WELCOME TO KOVLAR

The city of Kovlar occupies only a small portion of much larger Saggorak, and its well-defended and ancient districts are bustling and busy. This chapter assumes the PCs arrive in Kovlar accompanied by Parjil, who immediately escorts them to the Regents' Hall to meet with the Court of Regents. A more detailed gazetteer of Kovlar begins on page 64 of this book—you can use this information to expand upon the PCs' visit to the town as needed.

As the PCs approach the gate to Kovlar, Parjil calls out to the guard and introduces the PCs, facilitating their easy entry into the city. If the PCs approach the city walls on their own, they are greeted by a bewildered dwarven voice from one of the watchtowers, asking them who they are and where they came from. The guards are surprised to see potentially friendly faces coming in from Saggorak, as they have no record of anyone matching the PCs'

descriptions departing from Kovlar. Unless the PCs are rude or off-putting (in which case the guards refuse them entry), the guards allow the PCs entrance but inform them that Kovlar's rulers, the Court of Regents, will likely want to speak with them soon after they enter the city. Parjil agrees with this prediction, and is willing to lead the PCs to the court right away.

The Court of Regents

If Parjil isn't escorting the PCs and thus isn't on hand to lead the PCs directly to Regents' Hall, the PCs will be summoned within hours of their arrival—word of surface visitors spreads quickly in Kovlar. The summons grants an audience with the Court of Regents, and is an invitation from the current speaker of that body, Kelda Halrig. This adventure assumes that Parjil leads the PCs directly to Regents' Hall

before taking her leave from the group (she has no further role in this adventure, but you can certainly continue to use her as a guide for the PCs if you wish).

The meeting with the Court of Regents takes place at a large table in Regents' Hall, Kovlar's primary administrative building. Each regent is dressed in finery or armor and carries some sort of symbol of their profession, such as a blacksmith's hammer or a carpenter's saw. The attire of the entire council is unified by the identical iron and gold medallion each regent wears around their necks while conducting official business, called a regent's sigil. These badges of office are relevant to a quest later in the adventure (see *Theft from the Vaults* on page 25).

One side of the table is occupied by ten chairs, each decorated with motifs associated with one of Kovlar's ten guilds. A dwarf sits in each chair, each an individual leader of one of the guilds—a full list appears on pages 19–21. All ten guilds (and thus the ten leaders) have traditionally been considered equal in status and importance. Nevertheless, tradition has held that the leader of the largest guild also serves as the Court's speaker—the dwarf entrusted with calling meetings, leading them, and helping to navigate disputes. The current Court speaker is Kelda Halrig of the Anvillers' Guild.

The meeting with the regents begins as Kelda greets the PCs and welcomes them to Kovlar—read or paraphrase her following words.

"When the first Court of Regents convened centuries ago, they were regents for Khaddorn the Mighty, the hero who reclaimed Kovlar and most other underground places that remain civilized today from orc invaders. Perhaps someday, a queen or king will rise again who is worthy of that mantle, one as great as the rulers of old. Until that day, it is our solemn duty to work together to keep Kovlar safe and prosperous. You are newcomers to Kovlar, but it is my hope that you will honor this duty. If you are as capable as I hope, you may be able to aid us, but before we can trust you with the city's defense, we must know that you will indeed honor our traditions."

If Parjil escorted the PCs here, the regents know of the PCs' fight against the gugs, and Kelda takes the time to thank them for eliminating one of Saggorak's numerous threats to Kovlar's safety. She then asks the PCs to introduce themselves and state their business in Kovlar.

The regents listen quietly to the PCs, and appear rightfully concerned should the PCs mention the threats posed by the Scarlet Triad, rumors of a dragon in Saggorak, or even concerns about Dahak's influence over Alseta's Ring. At this point, Kelda confides in the PCs that Kovlar has certainly experienced an increased number of troubling incidents in the last few weeks, which make her fear that there is some darker plot afoot. She believes that the PCs might be able to get to the bottom of these incidents where her own guards have failed, and she knows that the Court of Regents would reward the PCs richly for their aid. There's just one problem—many of the members of the Court need convincing that turning to outsiders like the PCs is the best way to address their internal troubles. Indeed, a PC who makes a successful DC 25 Perception check to Sense Motive can certainly tell that, other than Kelda, the dwarven guild leader regard the PCs with some measure of suspicion.

INFLUENCING THE COURT

Once the PCs have introduced themselves, Kelda announces that each of

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

In the dwarven city of Kovlar, the PCs have many opportunities to rest, recover, shop, and make new friends, but the city is far from a safe haven. The dwarves are suspicious by nature and won't immediately trust the PCs, who will need to perform numerous tasks for the city's leaders to earn their confidence; in doing so, they uncover a conspiracy that links one of the city's leaders to the Scarlet Triad.

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the regents will now have the opportunity to speak to the PCs, giving each dwarven leader the chance to assess and judge the character of these potential heroes. For the remainder of this extended social encounter, the PCs have the chance to earn the favor of some or all of these leaders. Gaining the trust of each leader gives the PCs a new lead for them to investigate in the city, and if the PCs can earn the favor of a majority of the regents, the regents will grant the party additional treasures and support to aid their quests.

The meeting progresses as ten individual roleplaying encounters with a few guiding principles. As each regent addresses the PCs, they'll ask a single question about the PCs' goals, traditions, and personalities. This encounter should give the PCs a chance to vocalize their group's intentions. Kelda addresses the PCs first, but after this, the order in which the dwarves speak is left to you. Each interview consists of two phases, as summarized below—the specialized actions the PCs can take during both phases are detailed as well. Make sure the players are familiar with how these actions work before proceeding with the encounter!

Question: The regent introduces themselves to the PCs by name and their guild (for example: "I am Forgemaster Kelda Halrig of the Anvillers' Guild"), gives a quick summary of the guild's role in Kovlar's society, and then presents the group with a question meant to reveal each party member's goals, moral fiber, and personality. As each dwarf introduces themselves and poses their question to the party, each PC gets 1 action, which they can use to Deduce Traditions associated with the dwarven leader's guild. The PCs have just a moment to share this information with one another before they're expected to give their responses.

Response: Each PC then gets 1 action—a chance to reply to the question to prove their worth and earn the regent's favor by each taking an Influence Regent action. The dwarven regents aren't interested in listening to PCs talking over each other, and they ask the PCs to take turns responding. Not every PC is required to speak—a PC can opt to remain silent rather than risk potentially damaging the party's progress. Also, a PC can spend their time vouching for someone else, preparing to Aid that other PC. They must still remain silent when their ally speaks, but their ally applies the bonus or penalty from Aid anyway. Note that if a PC gets a critical success when Deducing Traditions, the party discovers that regent's Skepticism value and thus will know if they've managed to earn that regent's favor rather than having to wait until judgment.

Judgment: Each of the regents the PCs interact with in this adventure has a Skepticism score. If the PCs manage to reduce this value to 0 with their responses,

the regent is impressed and declares their trust in the party. If the PCs fail to reduce the regent's Skepticism to 0, the regent regretfully announces they do not trust the party. Those who start with a Skepticism of 0 will support the party unless the PCs make terrible mistakes.

DEDUCE TRADITIONS

CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC SECRET

By interpreting a regent's personality, drawing upon what you know about dwarven tradition, and making educated guesses, you surmise what sorts of skills are most valued by the dwarven regent's guild—and thus infer what types of skills would most likely curry that regent's favor. Deduce Traditions requires a successful DC 30 Perception check or a successful DC 25 Society check to yield accurate results.

Critical Success You learn one of the guild's favored skills and learn what that regent's Skepticism value is.

Success You learn one of the guild's favored skills.

Failure You learn none of the guild's favored skills.

Critical Failure You learn an incorrect favored skill.

INFLUENCE REGENT

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC MENTAL SECRET

You attempt to gain favor with one of Kovlar's regents, either by responding to their question with tact and respect and attempting a Diplomacy check, or by drawing upon your acumen in another skill. This second tactic usually can't succeed unless that skill is one favored by that regent's guild. At the GM's option, you may substitute an applicable Lore skill check for the Diplomacy check. If you attempt a Diplomacy or Lore check, it's a DC 32 check for success; if you attempt a favored skill check, it's a DC 28 check for success.

At the GM's option, a player who brings up a compelling point or roleplays particularly well in their attempt to Influence a Regent might gain a +2 circumstance bonus on the check.

Critical Success You reduce the regent's Skepticism by 2.

Success You reduce the regent's Skepticism by 1.

Failure You do not adjust the regent's Skepticism.

Critical Failure You increase the regent's Skepticism by 1.

THE REGENTS

Each regent, other than Kelda Halrig, is skeptical about the value a group of surface-dwelling adventurers can bring to solving Kovlar's troubles. The ten regents are presented individually below, each with their guild's name and favored skills. After this, a few notes on the regent's personality are given to aid you in roleplaying that character—this section also indicates what sorts of PC personalities might make earning that regent's trust more difficult. After this, the regent's query is listed; they pose this query to the PCs and judge their responses.

Each regent has a Skepticism value. Each PC can succeed at an Influence Regent action to reduce this value. Skepticism can't be reduced below 0, and thus it is possible for a poor roll at the end of the party's response to increase it back to 1. If the PCs haven't discovered a regent's Skepticism value via a critical success at Deducing Traditions, they should take care with deciding who in the party speaks. Wise parties start with their poorest speakers (or have those speakers pass) and end with their strongest, so as to minimize potential gaffes.

Finally, the regent's lead is listed—this is a specific encounter or investigation or clue that the PCs can then follow up in Kovlar to start uncovering the influence of the Scarlet Triad in the region. A regent reveals their lead only to a party they trust (when the regent's Skepticism value is 0). At your option, the PCs can learn about leads otherwise lost to them (by failing to earn a regent's trust) as a reward or discovery made later in this chapter.

FORGEMASTER KELDA HALRIG

LN female dwarf

Faction Anvillers' Guild

Favored Skills Arcana, Athletics, or Crafting

Personality Forgemaster Halrig is dutiful, honest, and forthright. She prefers to allow others to speak first and weigh their perspectives before sharing her thoughts, lest her political standing intimidate people away from sharing their perspectives. She reacts poorly to those who interrupt—a PC who interrupts a regent or another PC during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Kelda.

Query "How can metalwork better society as a whole?"

Skepticism 0; **Lead** Task 4: Shady Dealings (page 23)

ALLJOINER TORRA GARNIS

N female dwarf

Guild Carpenters' Guild

Favored Skills Acrobatics, Crafting, or Nature

Personality Alljoiner Garnis is curious and inquisitive. Of all of the members of the Court of Regents (other than Chiselrock, who is directly involved), she was the first to suspect the existence of a malicious force behind Kovlar's recent troubles. She reacts poorly to people who display a lack of imagination or who seem cynical—a PC who seems boring or sarcastic during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Torra.

Query "Your best friend asks you for advice on the best home in which to raise a family—what do you tell them?"

Skepticism 2; **Lead** Task 1: Check the Walls (page 21)

FORTUNATE ALGERA KORD

CN female dwarf

Guild Gamblers' Guild

Favored Skills Deception, Sleight of Hand, or Thievery

Personality Fortunate Kord is used to dealing with adventuring groups, gamblers, thieves, and other individuals who don't conform to the strict mores of dwarven society, so little phases her. She has a sharp, sarcastic sense of humor and reacts poorly to those who lack a sense of humor—a PC who comes across as too serious and humorless during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Algera.

Query "What's the funniest thing that's ever happened to you?"

Skepticism 1; **Lead** None.

Special If the PCs secure Kord's support, it's easier for the PCs to speak to the guild leader later when suspicion falls on her during Task 6: Theft from the Vaults (page 25).

COMMANDER GROKAR HAMMERSONG

LN male dwarf

Guild Guild of Arms

Favored Skills Acrobatics, Athletics, or Survival

Personality Commander Hammersong respects bravery and competence in battle. He has little patience for sadists, and a PC who comes across as cruel or bloodthirsty during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Grokar.

Query "Tell me your greatest personal triumph."

Skepticism 1; **Lead** Task 5: Deep Terror (page 24)

GOLDHAND WULDI IRONTEMPER

LN female dwarf

Guild Guild of Coins

Favored Skills Crafting, Performance, or Society

Personality Goldhand Irontemper is gregarious and welcoming. Her extended clan contains several branches on the surface, and she prides herself on keeping up to date on current events. She is annoyed by rude behavior—a PC who is disrespectful or boorish during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Wuldi.

Query "What is the best way to make your fortune?"

Skepticism 2; **Lead** Task 6: Theft from the Vaults (page 25)

SENTINEL FRASTIN STONEBORN

LG male dwarf

Guild Guild of Faith

Favored Skills Crafting, Religion, or Society

Personality Sentinel Stoneborn is particularly skeptical of the need to bring in outsiders to solve local problems, as well as the wisdom of deputizing armed strangers. He cares about the safety and security of Kovlar's people above all else. Frastin is especially disturbed by those who worship chaotic or evil deities. If he suspects a PC worships such a deity, that PC takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Frastin. This penalty

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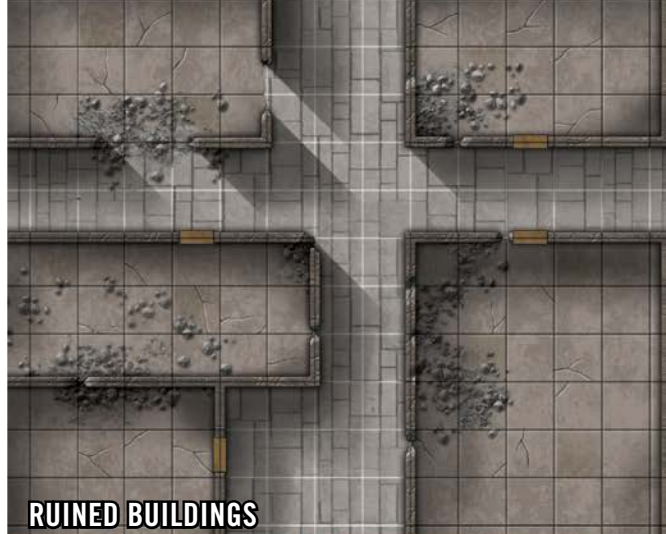
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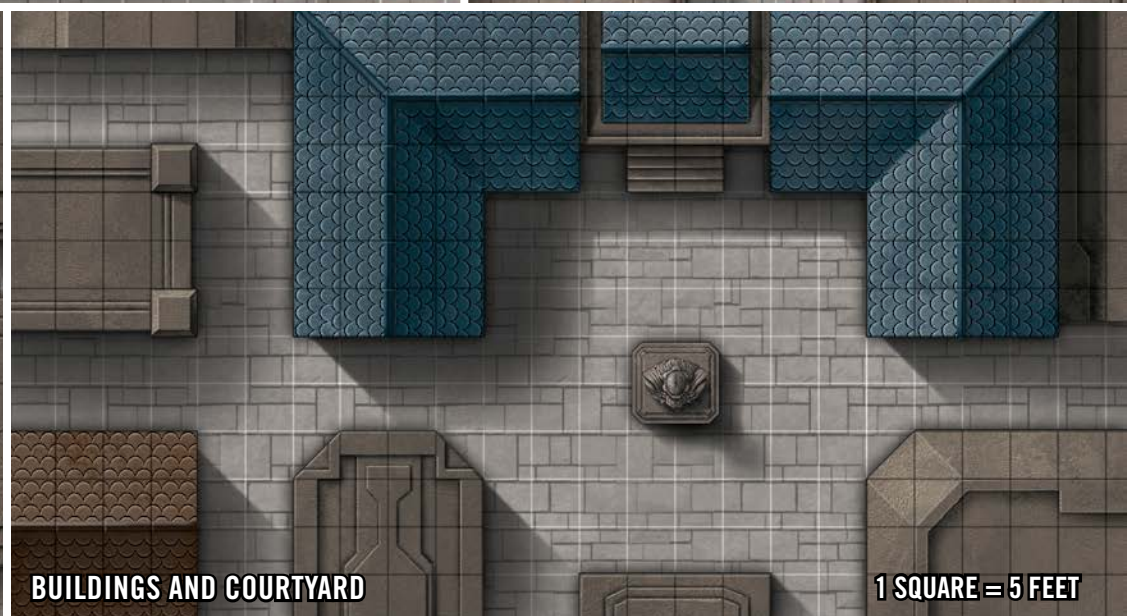
PRISON



RUINED BUILDINGS



BACK ALLEY



BUILDINGS AND COURTYARD

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

increases to -4 if he suspects the PC worships a chaotic evil deity.

Query "Why does the well-being, comfort, and safety of Kovlar's citizens even matter to you?"

Skepticism 3; Lead Task 2: Missing Persons (page 22)

ADORNED STOSK DOLGINDIR

N male dwarf

Guild Guild of Finery

Favored Skills Crafting, Deception, or Performance

Personality Adorned Dolgindir, the cousin of Highphysic Dolgindir, has a deep appreciation for aesthetics. He isn't shy about sharing his opinions on others' fashion choices, though he tends to offer more praise than criticism. Any PC who appears shabby or slovenly vexes him, and takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence him.

Query "Describe to me the most glorious outfit you've ever had the good fortune to wear."

Skepticism 2; Lead Task 2: Missing Persons (page 22)

ARCHMAGE HROMGAR NALRUVEN

LN male dwarf

Guild Guild of Spells

Favored Skills Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion

Personality Nalruven dedicates nearly all of his time to his guild, even more so than the other regents. When the topic turns to magic, he tends to ramble on until another regent has attempted to change the topic several times. Hromgar is bothered by those who fear or hate arcane magic—a PC who insults arcane traditions or acts superstitious during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Hromgar.

Query "What is the most amazing work of magic you have ever witnessed?"

Skepticism 2; Lead Task 3: A Curious Expedition (page 23)

HIGHPHYSIC NATRI DOLGINDIR

LG female dwarf

Guild Physic Guild

Favored Skills Crafting, Medicine, or Survival

Personality Like most historical leaders of the Physic Guild, Highphysic Dolgindir is insightful and skilled at reaching consensus. She has little patience for arrogance or bluster, and a PC who is egotistical or a braggart

during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Natri.

Query "Let's say that your best friend has been having a hard time—what do you do to cheer them up?"

Skepticism 2; Lead None.

Special If the PCs secure Natri's trust and support, she agrees to arrange for free restorative services for the party while they are in Kovlar, so that when a PC takes the Long-Term Rest downtime activity, they regain double the normal amount of HP.

MOUNTAINHEART KOLARUN CHISELROCK

LE male dwarf

Guild Stonemason's Guild

Favored Skills Crafting, Intimidation, or Society

Personality Mountainheart

Chiselrock is gruff and slow to accept change at the best of times. Since any investigation on the part of the PCs could well threaten his own plots to eventually become the new king of Kovlar, he is particularly unfriendly to them. Both kindness and spineless behavior rub Kolarun the wrong way—a PC who is overly friendly or submissive during this encounter takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attempts to Influence Kolarun.

Query "Why should you, outsiders to Kovlar, be allowed to meddle in our affairs?"

Skepticism 5; Lead None.

Special If the PCs manage to reduce Chiselrock's Skepticism to 0, he realizes that they're more dangerous than he anticipated. As a result, he sets into motion plans to have a pair of guards trail the PCs and potentially even try to capture them—see False Arrest on page 27.

Treasure: If the PCs earn the favor of at least seven of the regents, the court gives each PC their choice of a common permanent item of 12th level or lower. At the GM's discretion, they may also offer a few uncommon items among the possibilities.

XP Award: Each time the PCs earn the favor of one of the guild leaders, award them 10 XP, to a maximum award of 100 XP if they earn the favor of all ten leaders.

The Regents' Tasks

Most of the members of the Council of Regents have a lead for the PCs to follow up on. As the PCs progress in their investigation, the Scarlet Triad and its allies interfere (see False Arrest on page 27).

Many of these tasks provide clues to the location

of a site called the Hidden Forge. Keep track of the number of Hidden Forge clues the PCs accumulate over the course of performing these tasks, and see Locating the Hidden Forge on page 29 for how these clues can help lead the PCs to this encounter area.

TASK 1: CHECK THE WALLS

Alljoiner Garnis suspects a greater force is behind all the suspicious incidents that have happened lately. When she first brought the topic up before the rest of the regents, Mountainheart Chiselrock insultingly dismissed her concerns. Chiselrock then convinced Archmage Nalruven that there was nothing to worry about. The Alljoiner is concerned that these two regents may be neglecting their own

interests and allowing hidden enemies to sabotage the city. She asks the PCs to investigate the most important structure tied to the Stonemason's Guild and Guild of Spells: the walls of Kovlar.

CHECK THE WALLS

EXPLORATION SECRET

A PC spends a day studying the walls and patrolling them. The PC then attempts either a DC 32 Arcana check or a DC 27 Crafting check.

Critical Success The PC discovers an irregularity in the protective runes along the western portion of the wall—a subtle distortion of the stone and magic that's a sign of repetitive strain, and while no obvious source for this strain is apparent, the distortions suggest the hidden source lies somewhere underground in the immediate area. Unfortunately, further research into city documents and architectural plans do not reveal the existence of any underground chambers in the area, suggesting either that no such chamber exists or, if it does, the records are either faulty or missing.

Success The PC discovers the irregularity in the barrier in the western portion of the wall—enough to confirm Alljoiner Garnis's fears, yet not enough to suggest the source of the strain.

Failure While the PC is able to discern some basic information about the city's barriers, it is not enough to find the structural flaws. Once the PCs report to her, Alljoiner Garnis suggests the PC tries again to confirm their suspicions, as she still feels there's more to learn.

Critical Failure The PC discovers what they believe to be



Kolarun Chiselrock

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a flaw along the eastern walls that is, in fact, merely a quirk of the ancient magic's design. When the PCs report this finding to Alljoiner Garnis, she confronts Archmage Nalruven with the information, who immediately inspects the area and accurately points out the PCs' error. This failure on the PC's part results in both Alljoiner Garnis and Mountainheart Chiselrock becoming less supportive of the PCs' efforts in Kovlar.

Treasure: If the PCs confirm the Alljoiner's fears, she somberly rewards them with a *fortification armor runestone* as thanks.

Hidden Forge Clues: The PCs earn 1 Hidden Forge clue once they discover the strain on the wall. If they also determine the source of the strain lies somewhere underground, they instead earn 2 Hidden Forge clues.

XP Award: Grant the PCs 60 XP if they discover the strain on the walls, or 80 XP if they also discover the link to a theoretical underground location.

TASK 2: MISSING PERSONS

Sentinel Stoneborn of the Guild of Faith would like the PCs to investigate the disappearance of a man named Zamak, while Adorned Dolgindir of the Guild of Finery asks the PCs to investigate the vanishing of a tailor named Algret. Both of these missing people have ties to the Hidden Forge and Embermead's plans.

Zamak: Sentinel Stoneborn asks the PCs to investigate the disappearance of a man named Zamak, who vanished under suspicious circumstances after having an argument with his wife. Stoneborn informs the PCs what he knows of the situation—last week, Zamak and Olga, a married couple from the dwarven city of Larrad, arrived in Kovlar. The couple rented rooms in one of the city's most expensive establishments, the Gold Sky Inn, but after a very public argument about finances, Zamak stormed out of the inn to seek separate lodging at a much less expensive site called Sleep Like a Stone. When Olga went looking for her husband at the other inn the next day, Zamak had vanished without a trace.

Olga's still staying at the Gold Sky Inn, and if the PCs wish to speak to her she readily agrees, but has nothing to add to the mystery other than to tearfully beg for her husband's safe return. A trip to Sleep Like a Stone confirms (with a short discussion with the innkeeper) that Zamak made it there safely. The innkeeper recalls that Zamak was angry upon arrival and drank quite a lot in the common room before loudly proclaiming he "needed a walk to clear his head." He left the inn and never returned—the innkeeper assumed he'd returned to his wife but was distraught to learn Zamak vanished instead when she came looking for him later.

Further investigation requires the PCs to ask around in the streets and succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. On a success, they run across several people who claimed to have noticed Zamak stumbling around drunk, heading north through the Earthfire District, although after this clue Zamak's trail dries up—at least, until the PCs discover the Hidden Forge (page 29).

Algret: The last time Algret, a member of the Guild of Finery, was seen in public was one day before Zamak vanished. Her disappearance bothers Adorned Dolgindir for a very specific reason—a strange letter she left behind. Dolgindir explains that the letter appeared on his desk the morning after Algret went missing. According to the letter, Algret claims that she had been feeling extremely nauseated from a pregnancy, which she had hid because she thought her friends might not approve of the clandestine relationship that lead to her maternity. In the letter, she claims that she has been engaged in a series of trysts with a charming man from Highhelm. The letter said that she would be checking in with the Physic Guild, and not to worry if she didn't return to duty for a while. Adorned Dolgindir confides in the PCs that Algret didn't seem the type to hide a relationship for fear of what her friends might think—she has always been outspoken about her preferences and unflinching in her decisions. Dolgindir also informs the PCs that no one in the Physic Guild has seen Algret—while he also wryly notes that the Physic Guild sometimes hides information about their patients to protect their privacy, he adds that he doesn't believe the guild is covering anything up in this case.

If the PCs ask to see the letter, Dolgindir shows it to them. In truth, the letter is a forgery, written to cover up what really happened to Algret. (See "Chiselrock's Prison" on page 28 for details.) Dolgindir can provide other examples of Algret's handwriting if the PCs ask, at which point the PCs can attempt a DC 32 Perception or Society check to note that the letter is a forgery.

As with Zamak, a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check to Gather Information allows the PCs to determine that Algret was seen a few times as she headed into the Earthfire District. A critical success on this check allows the PCs to follow her trail all the way to Chiselrock's Prison—otherwise, the PCs lose the trail but may still discover her in the prison should they investigate that site later on.

Treasure: The PCs can rescue both of the missing dwarves later in this chapter—Zamak has been taken to the Hidden Forge (page 29), while Algret is now imprisoned in Chiselrock's Prison (page 28). If the PCs rescue Zamak, Sentinel Stoneborn gives them a *pink rhomboid aeon stone*. If they rescue Algret, Adorned Dolgindir gives them a *berserker's cloak*.

Hidden Forge Clues: If the PCs manage to track Zamak's trail to the Earthfire District, or Algret to Chiselrock's Prison, they earn a Hidden Forge clue.

XP Award: The PCs earn 40 XP for tracking a missing dwarf to the Earthfire District—80 XP in all if they track both of the missing people.

TASK 3: A CURIOUS EXPEDITION

The revelation of an active *aiudara* in close proximity to Kovlar intrigues Archmage Nalruven of the Guild of Spells, and upon learning of it he wishes to study Jewelgate. He asks the PCs to act as his guide and protection on a trip out into southern Saggorak to investigate the portal. If the PCs agree to the job, they shouldn't encounter anything particularly dangerous. Along the trip, the Archmage talks incessantly about magic, asking the PCs about their own studies, about their magic items, and even about their philosophies regarding the nature and origin of magic. When the PCs arrive at the gate in the crystal caverns, the Archmage takes particular interest in how the PCs reactivated the portal, the nature of Alseta's Ring, and the other keys that the PCs may know about. A thorough description of these facts delights the Archmage, requiring only that the PCs share much of what they have learned about the gates in a way that establishes their credibility. The PCs can establish their credibility if a PC succeeds at a DC 32 Arcana or Diplomacy check, or another DC 32 skill check that is appropriate to their strategy. Archmage Nalruven also asks the PCs to escort him through Jewelgate. Because he does not believe that there is a looming threat to Kovlar's safety, he is in no hurry to return to Kovlar. Instead, he is more than happy to spend some time in Breachhill with the PCs. He even offers to trade spells with the PCs, provided that the PCs can share any uncommon spells that are not already in the libraries of the Guild of Spells. The exact number and type of spells Nalruven has to trade is left to you to determine, although he should at the very least have access to *teleport*, which he's more than happy to teach to a PC.

XP Award: If the PCs establish their credibility with Archmage Nalruven, grant them 40 XP.

TASK 4: SHADY DEALINGS

Forgemaster Halrig asks the PCs to serve as neutral arbiters in a dispute between the Anvillers' Guild and several merchants from the city. Specifically, the Guild has been accused of deliberately selling inferior-quality merchandise that looks great but breaks after sustained exposure to real battle. This gravest of insults is hurting the Guild's business, and the Forgemaster wants the situation resolved quickly. If the PCs agree

to help, they are called in to the House of Oaths to inspect the merchandise.

The House of Oaths is the local temple of Kols the Oathkeeper, dwarven god of duty. When the party inspects the merchandise—an assortment of martial weapons—a PC can attempt a DC 30 Crafting check or a DC 35 Perception check to perform a thorough inspection. On a success, the PC notices subtly hidden flaws in the weapons' construction. On a critical success, they notice that although the weapons bear the maker's marks of different smiths, their crafting style is suspiciously similar, suggesting they were in fact all made by the same smith.

If the PCs point out these issues, the Forgemaster apologizes to the merchants, refunds them the cost of their purchases, and asks the PCs to help her sniff out the source of the problem. Otherwise, after a heated argument, the Forgemaster inspects the weapons personally. She detects the flaws and makes the same promises of reimbursement, but she does not involve the PCs in any further investigation into the issue.

Halrig knows that whoever is responsible for the shoddy weapons has avoided her detection thus far. Before knowledge of the results of the investigation spread around, she wants the PCs to figure out who within the Anvillers' Guild is responsible.

The Truth: The person responsible for the shoddy work causing the problems in the first place is a smith named Brigven. Despite decades of practice, Brigven proved unable to pass the official smithing exams to become a full member of the Anvillers' Guild. Filled with bitterness and shame, he was a ripe target for the cult of Droskar that has long operated in the city's shadows. Their assurances that he could become rich and respected by honing his guile and profiting off the work of others appealed to him. For a while, Brigven managed to skirt by, selling his products at a discount to those who would otherwise struggle to afford them as long as they promised him that if they were ever able to afford a weapon rune, they'd return the weapon to him to apply the rune. On the rare occasions when someone did return to have a rune placed on a weapon, he performed the service privately, secretly replacing the defective weapon with a weapon of high enough quality to hold the rune and altering its appearance to match. However, his business has been booming of late, so he has had to acquire more high-quality weapons. In the dead of night, he has been forging cheap weapons to replace the work of other members of the Anvillers' Guild, then trading out these copies for the real weapons.

Investigating the Guild: The tactics by which the PCs choose to investigate the shoddy work is up to them—

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if the PCs are at a loss for ideas, Forgemaster Halrig suggests that they pose as merchants, and promises to refund them for any purchases they make that they do not wish to keep—doing so requires the PCs to use the Deception skill. Other skills could work just as well, provided the PCs justify the choice with the nature of their investigation.

GUILD INVESTIGATION

CONCENTRATE EXPLORATION SECRET

A PC spends a day and attempts a DC 30 Skill check to pursue their investigation into the guild.

Critical Success The PCs' investigation results in compelling evidence that Brigven is the culprit behind the shoddy weapons, and reveals the location of his shop to the PCs. This evidence forces Brigven to give up as soon as the PCs confront him in his shop without forcing them to talk him into a confession.

Success The investigation implies that Brigven is behind the shoddy weapons, and reveals the location of his shop to the PCs.

Failure The investigation yields no results, but does not alert Brigven of the threat.

Critical Failure The investigation yields no results, and Brigven learns that the PCs are on to him. He abandons his shop and flees to the Hidden Forge to seek shelter with the other Droskar cultists. In this case, the PCs can encounter Brigven in area **D2**—you can represent him with the statistics for Thea in that encounter (page 31).

Visiting Brigven's Shop: Upon learning of Brigven's involvement, the PCs can visit his workshop. Here, they find displays of weapons, armor, and other supplies that superficially appear to be of high quality, but are actually forgeries bearing the same shabby flaws as the weapons infesting the guild. If Brigven fled his shop, he leaves the place unlocked and abandoned, and the PCs can use the evidence left behind to exonerate the Anvillers' Guild.

If Brigven is in his shop and the PCs confront him with evidence of his crimes, he claims innocence, saying he's being set up by agents in the Anvillers' Guild unless the PCs have compelling evidence, in which case he caves. Otherwise, the PCs can convince him to confess with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy

check to Request his confession, or a DC 32 Intimidate check to Coerce him into confessing.

If Brigven confesses, he attempts to bargain with the PCs, offering information on greater plots he claims to be privy to in return for mercy. He fears Droskar's wrath too much to reveal the location of the Hidden Forge directly, but he does tell the PCs that agents of Droskar are active within Kovlar and are working to bring the city to its knees, led by a terrifying woman named Ilssrah Embermead. He spins a false tale of being blackmailed. His Deception bonus is +26; if the PCs see through this lie, he stammers and sputters and finally admits that he joined the cult to make money.

Treasure: With the knowledge that

Brigven was responsible, Forgemaster Kalrig has a path forward. To reward the PCs, she teaches them the recipes for a pair of weapon runes: a *kin-warding rune* and *greater bloodbane rune* (see page 73). If the PCs also secure Brigven's confession and capture him alive (whether they find him here or later in the Hidden Forge), Halrig offers to enhance one of the PCs' weapons into a +2 *greater striking weapon* for free.

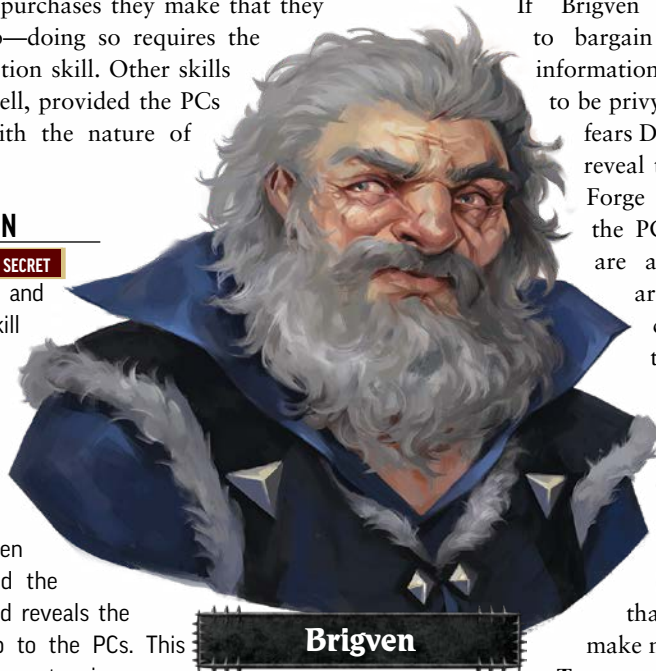
Hidden Forge Clues: If the PCs get Brigven to confess, they earn two Hidden Forge clues. If he's already fled to the Hidden Forge, they can earn only one Hidden Forge clue by searching his shop.

XP Award: If the PCs discover the flaws in the weapons in the House of Oaths, they earn 40 XP. If they also trace the shoddy weapons back to Brigven, they earn another 40 XP.

TASK 5: DEEP TERROR MODERATE 12

Kovlar's primary water source is nearby Bluecrab Lake, a freshwater body that is part natural formation and part feat of engineering. To protect the fauna and prevent pollution, Kovlar's laws strictly limit access to the lake to its western shores.

Recently, the population of aquatic creatures has been declining, particularly the numbers of the lake's eponymous bluecrabs. The city permitted a group of fishers to venture out farther onto the lake to investigate, but they never returned. What the people of Kovlar do not yet know is that the bluecrabs' deaths



were no accident. Embermead's allies introduced a toxin into several bluecrab spawning grounds, which proved lethal to the delicate crabs.

Commander Hammersong grants the PCs permission to go out on the lake, lending them a small boat for the expedition. Finding a bluecrab's body is a simple enough task—many of them have washed up on the lake's shore. If the PCs examine a bluecrab corpse and succeed at a DC 31 Medicine check, they determine that the crab shows signs of poisoning. A successful DC 29 Nature or Survival check allows the PCs to find a bluecrab spawning ground. Samples of water taken from here retain traces of the poison, which the PCs can detect with a DC 33 Craft check.

Creatures: A pair of elusive lake serpents have long lived in this lake. These creatures are an underground-dwelling variant of the more common sea serpents found in surface oceans. While these serpents were content for decades to stay hidden from the dwarves, Embermead and her allies' recent encroachment on their territory aggravated the creatures. Since then, the two serpents have lashed out violently at any dwarves they come across. The pair attack the PCs while they are in the open water, either ambushing their boat or attacking swimming PCs investigating the bluecrab spawning point.

LAKE SERPENTS (2)

CREATURE 12

Sea serpent

Pathfinder Bestiary 288

Initiative Stealth +28

Treasure: If the PCs end the threat from the cave serpents, Commander Hammersong gives each PC a consumable item from the Guild of Arms's provisions. The PCs can select from all 11th-level consumable items except poisons or scrolls.

XP Award: If the PCs discover the poisoning of the bluecrabs, they earn 40 XP.

TASK 6: THEFT FROM THE VAULTS

Goldhand Irontemper informs the PCs that a *runestone* with an *antimagic armor rune* has vanished from the vaults beneath the Regents' Hall. At first, nothing seemed amiss—after all, members of the Court of Regents have permission to travel down to the vaults and take out items on loan for short periods, so long as they confirm their loan once a month. However, the vault guard has reported that the *runestone* has been gone for five

weeks. When Irontemper went to check the logbook for a record of who had the *runestone*, she found that the book was missing several pages, right around the time that this *runestone* would have been checked out. What Irontemper had initially suspected was a simple case of a regent falling behind on their paperwork suddenly became much more suspicious.

The particulars of this situation make it politically difficult for Irontemper to investigate. Only regents are allowed to enter the vaults. The vault's guards are inevitables, and are not particularly subject to bribes or coercion. This means that either a regent was involved in this suspicious disappearance, or someone has found a way to break into the vault without a regent's sigil. These badges of office are also the only keys to the vault. In the first case, with another regent involved, Irontemper needs a neutral party to investigate to avoid accusations of bias or a cover-up on her part. In the second case, this disappearance has revealed a critical flaw in the vault's security,

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and it would not be appropriate for Irontemper to be in charge of investigating the deficits in her own protections. Either way, Irontemper wants the PCs to take over the investigation. She suggests that they start by talking to the vault's guards. She introduces the PCs to the kolyarut in charge of security, Esteldring, before stepping away to let the PCs conduct their investigation.

What Really Happened: The thief was a member of the Scarlet Triad, a human woman named Thea, aided in secret by one of the regents, Mountainheart Chiselrock. Chiselrock lent Thea his regent's sigil, allowing her to safely enter the vault. He told her about the vault's layout, its guardians, and Esteldring's logbook. Thea disguised herself as Fortunate Kord to further deceive the inevitable. To throw additional suspicion on Fortunate Kord, later that night, Thea broke into Fortunate Kord's house and swapped her regent's sigil for the one that had previously belonged to Chiselrock. She performed this final swap because of a misunderstanding of Esteldring's abilities—she knew that kolyaruts have some magical ability to track missing objects, and that *antimagic armor runes* are notoriously difficult to affect with magic. However, she was unaware of the limitations of *discern location*, and she believed that the kolyarut's magic would allow them to track down the specific sigil used to open the vault on that day. Finally, Thea returned a few weeks later and stole the relevant pages from the logbook to create the appearance of a cover-up.

Speaking to the Guardian: The kolyarut aeon in charge of security, Esteldring, is concerned about the disappearance, but not because it is a mystery. They tell the PCs that they recall who checked out the item: Fortunate Algera Kord. Esteldring understands that Irontemper needs to hire impartial outsiders to continue the investigation. If the PCs express doubt in Esteldring's assessment that Fortunate Kord was the one who came to the vaults, the inevitable explains that the vaults are specially keyed so that no one may enter without pressing one of the ten regent's sigils to the entrance. Esteldring confirms what the PCs may already know, that the regent's sigils are heavy medallions that serve as badges of office, which the regents wear on all official business.

If the PCs inspect the logbook, they find it is a dull document, but the methodical nature of the logs makes it easy to identify that the missing pages date two months back.

Esteldring has always been suspicious of the Gamblers' Guild representative. They cannot comprehend why the Gamblers' Guild is allowed to exist. For this reason, they do not consider the possibility that another member of the Court of

Regents could be responsible. However, the PCs may be able to uncover that the inevitable's case is not as airtight as they believe it to be. In the course of their conversation with the PCs, Esteldring should reveal the following information as it becomes relevant.

- The ten regent's sigils are identical, barring minor wear and tear over the centuries.
- In addition to being the only keys to the vault, the sigils are also the only keys to the private offices off of the main Court Chamber. As such, if someone stole a sigil, the theft would have been noticed within a day of its disappearance.
- None of the regents reported misplacing or losing their sigil.
- Fortunate Kord does not often check out items from the vault. Her last borrowed item was an antique tapestry over a decade ago. She has never been late in returning a borrowed item before.
- Fortunate Kord came to the vaults to check out the item after work hours. No other regents were in the building at the time.
- Esteldring is capable of using *discern location* once per day. They have already used it to try to locate the *runestone*, without success. Esteldring suspects (correctly) that this failure is due to the rune's inherent resistance to magic. Esteldring offers to use the spell at the PCs' direction to assist with their investigations. However, since the inevitable did not touch the regent's sigil that Thea used on that day, they cannot use the spell to prove that the sigil was indeed Fortunate Kord's.

Investigating Fortunate Kord: At some point during the investigation, the PCs should seek an interview with Fortunate Kord. The best place to find her is at the Whims of Fortune, a casino in the Traveler's Quarter of Kovlar, and coincidentally a place that supports her alibi—a group of customers at one of the tables at the Whims of Fortune are regulars who saw her there that night. They recall that night among snorting laughter—a young dwarven man attempted to cheat the casino to win money to impress his date, only to be physically thrown out of the establishment by Kord, who threw a barrel of garbage at him as he ran off for good measure.

If the PCs ask Fortunate Kord about the case, she sighs and shakes her head. She explains that she's used to facing suspicion and accusations, as many of Kovlar's people can be somewhat narrow minded. However, since it is an unofficial policy of the city to blame the Gamblers' Guild for any suspicious or potentially criminal activity, she is very interested in

learning what she can from the PCs to solve the case. If the PCs tell her which night she supposedly checked out the *runestone*, she grits her teeth in frustration. At this point, beyond telling the PCs that this issue has become personal for her and she will see to it that the perpetrator doesn't get away with this crime, she shuts down the conversation.

If the PCs have previously secured Kord's trust, she'll take a deep breath and continue to speak with them—otherwise, the PCs must make a successful DC 32 Diplomacy check to Request her cooperation or a successful DC 32 Intimidation check to Coerce her into helping. She then informs the PCs that her home was broken into on the night in question, and several items were stolen. Among these stolen items was a ruby and sapphire ring that had belonged to her grandmother. She had not seen any signs that her other possessions were tampered with; specifically, the regent's sigil was in her lockbox when she checked for it. Still, she fears that the two incidents may be connected. Thus far, only a few of her most trusted friends know of the theft—after all, if it were to become public knowledge, it would be an embarrassment.

Hidden Forge Clues: If the PCs learn about the theft and Kord's alibi, they earn a Hidden Forge clue.

Treasure: If the PCs establish Fortunate Kord's alibi, learn about the break-in, and propose an alternative theory to explain the situation, Goldhand Irontemper is impressed with their initiative. She rewards the PCs with a *dwarven thrower*, and she promises to keep the PCs in the loop with the continued investigation.

XP Award: For proving Fortunate Kord's innocence, grant the PCs 60 XP.

FALSE ARREST

MODERATE 12

If Mountainheart Chiselrock realizes the PCs are truly dangerous, he takes action against them. Alternatively, once the PCs make their first trip to the Hidden Forge, the Scarlet Triad puts pressure on Chiselrock to act, at which point he makes this move. At either such point, he sends a pair of stealthy members of the Guild of Arms to shadow the PCs. These stalkers are part of a small contingent of corrupt guards who are secretly working with Mountainheart Chiselrock and, through him, the Scarlet Triad. Chiselrock told these hand-picked guards a carefully curated version of the truth, convincing them a nefarious force at work in the city has put its citizens in grave danger. Furthermore, he told the guards that this force had infiltrated the Guild of Arms, and that Commander Hammersong may be complicit. Now that the PCs are investigating misdeeds in Kovlar, they threaten to expose Chiselrock's true plans. To get the PCs out of his way, Chiselrock uses his corrupt guards

to arrest the PCs and lock them up in a secure location. Instead of killing the PCs, he hopes to be able to use them as scapegoats if he needs someone to frame for his crimes.

Each time the guards follow the PCs to a new location, have them roll a Stealth check against the PCs' Perception DCs to see if the PCs notice that they are being followed. The guards continue to follow the PCs until they find anything that could pass for evidence that the PCs are suspicious characters, and then they attempt to arrest the PCs in a public location. After noticing the guards, the PCs may choose to tail them in return. If they do, the PCs can follow the guards back to their base—a disused warehouse in the Barricade District, a site the guards call "Chiselrock's Prison."

If the PCs attack the guards, more guards pour into the streets in the coming rounds. These additional guards are not under Chiselrock's sway, and they move to put the PCs under arrest for assaulting guards. If the PCs flee the guards, they become outlaws in Kovlar. No one in Kovlar has the physical or magical skill to enforce the PCs' arrest, so the PCs can continue their investigations, but in this development, the locals are generally fearful of and hostile toward the PCs so long as they are known widely to be wanted criminals.

Creatures: Use the statistics below to represent the guards working for Chiselrock, and one of the maps for city locations in this book of your choice to play out the combat. If the PCs manage to defeat the guards but capture them alive, they'll eagerly spill all they know about the supposed threat Chiselrock told them of, and can tell the PCs that they've been using Chiselrock's Prison to secretly house "dissidents" whom Chiselrock claims are enemies of the city.

CORRUPT GUARDS (2)

CREATURE 12

RARE LE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven

Skills Athletics +25, Diplomacy +19, Intimidation +21, Society +20, Stealth +25

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +1

Items +1 resilient breastplate, +1 composite shortbow (50 arrows), key to Chiselrock's Prison, +1 striking maul

AC 32; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21

HP 215

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Speed 20 feet

Melee ⚔ *maul* +28 (shove), **Damage** 2d12+15 bludgeoning

Ranged ⚔ composite shortbow +25 (deadly 1d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d8+8 piercing

Improved Knockdown ⚔⚔ A corrupt guard can dash their foe to the ground with a single blow. They attempt a

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single melee Strike. If this Strike hits, they also apply the critical success effect of a Trip. If they used a two-handed melee weapon (such as a maul) for the Strike, they can use the weapon's damage die size instead of the regular die size for the damage from a critical Trip, and they ignore Trip's requirement to have a hand free.

XP Award: If the PCs handle the situation with the guards without becoming outlaws, grant them 80 XP.

CHISELROCK'S PRISON **SEVERE 13**

When Mountainheart Kolarun Chiselrock threw in his lot with the Scarlet Triad, he knew he would encounter those who needed to be silenced until the politics of Kovlar shifted in his favor. He'd rather not outright execute such people, since he considers that a step too far. Instead, he selected an abandoned masonry warehouse in the Barricade District to serve as a secret prison, and staffed it with corrupt guards he paid well to help keep this secret. Few in Kovlar know what goes on inside this building, but if the truth came out, Chiselrock's treachery would be laid bare.

The PCs aren't required to investigate or even visit Chiselrock's Prison to eventually defeat Embermead's plot for Kovlar, but those who do find the site and expose Chiselrock will gain experience, treasures, and resources that will aid their goals. The method by which the PCs come to the prison is not set in stone. They could discover the site after investigating the vanishing of Algret. They might deduce the prison's use after speaking with some of Chiselrock's corrupt guards, or even after speaking to Mountainheart himself. And if the PCs find themselves on the wrong side of the law and are arrested—either by Chiselrock's guards or legitimate city watch, Mountainheart pulls strings to ensure that the captured PCs are sent to his prison (and that all paperwork regarding their arrest is “lost”), in which case the visit to this site becomes a jailbreak scenario.

Chiselrock's Prison is a stone building with no windows and a single stone double door barring entrance in its plain facade. From outside, the structure looks dilapidated, but a successful DC 31 Perception check is enough to note that the damage seems largely cosmetic or even artificial. The front door is kept locked (DC 31 Thievery [expert] to Pick the Lock), but all of the corrupt guards carry a key for it. Inside, the building is unlit and sparse, with no furnishings save for portable objects like bedrolls (or piles of straw for prisoners) within. The rooms themselves are detailed briefly in the sidebar on page 29.

Creatures: A group of six corrupt guards keep watch over the prison, working in three shifts of two

(two on duty in area C1, two resting in area C3, and two patrolling the streets of Kovlar or keeping up the appearances that they're still legitimate members of the Guild of Arms—these final two guards are unlikely to be encountered in the prison itself). If the PCs attempt to speak to them, the guards pretend to be protecting the site from vandals for an unnamed potential buyer of the warehouse, but they're not particularly gifted at deception. If the PCs press, the guards relent and allow them into the prison to look around, claiming that they have nothing to hide, but as soon as they seem to have an advantage they ambush the PCs and attempt to capture them alive. Once a guard is slain, the remainder fight to the death, knowing that if they're captured, things won't go well for them. If the PCs capture a guard, the guard won't speak unless they're either made helpful or Coerced into talking, in which case they give up Chiselrock as the man who hired them.

If the PCs can rescue her, Algret shares what she knows with the PCs—that she is in fact a spy in the employ of the Guild of Arms who had been charged with investigating possible corruption within the ranks. She followed her clues to this location, only to be set upon by the corrupt guards and imprisoned here. She was so deep undercover that few people even knew she was on the case, and by the time the PCs arrive she's all but lost hope.

CORRUPT GUARDS (4)

CREATURE 12

RARE	LE	MEDIUM	DWARF	HUMANOID
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Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: A search of area C2 reveals enough damning paperwork to reveal Chiselrock's treachery.

Confronting Mountainheart Chiselrock: Once she's rescued, Algret goes directly to Commander Hammersong to report as soon as she's able, providing testimony that's particularly damning for Mountainheart Chiselrock. Commander Hammersong is horrified to learn what has been going on within his ranks. As a result of Algret's testimony, all of the guards working with Chiselrock are arrested, and their questioning reveals more damning evidence against Chiselrock. Chiselrock is placed under house arrest, and Algret is placed in charge of the unit of guards supervising him. In addition to conducting their own investigations, the Guild of Arms allows the PCs to question Chiselrock. Chiselrock's Will save bonus is +25, his Deception bonus is +27, and his Perception bonus is +25. He is initially stubborn and unyielding, but as his plots fall apart, his resolve wavers. He doesn't know everything about the Scarlet Triad, but you can use him to give the

PCs clues as needed to answer questions and help direct them forward to the next part of the adventure.

When word of Chiselrock's arrest (or flight after accusations) reaches the streets, tensions in Kovlar rise. Few members of the Stonemasons' Guild are willing to believe that their leader's arrest was legitimate. Rumors begin to spread that Commander Hammersong is enacting a plot to impose martial law on the city. Some stonemasons cancel their contracts with the Guild of Arms, and arguments and tavern scuffles become commonplace between the guilds. This tension should largely exist in the background, but also serves to show how significant the disruptions being created by the Scarlet Triad are and emphasizes that these disturbances need to be stopped soon.

Hidden Forge Clues: A search of area C2 provides 2 Hidden Forge clues. If the PCs manage to see Chiselrock taken into custody, his desperate attempt to earn mercy reveal enough information that the PCs can locate the Hidden Forge automatically.

XP Award: If the PCs see to it that Chiselrock is taken into custody and removed from office, grant them 120 XP.

The Hidden Forge

While prayer to Droskar is not outright forbidden in Kovlar, his followers are greeted with suspicion in even the best of circumstances, and actual temples to the deity of toil are not permitted within Kovlar's walls. Kovlar's people take pride in their own hard work and creativity, and they believe that Droskar's promotion of slavery, cheating, and deception serve only to pervert the fundamental underpinnings of a fair and prosperous society. As such, clerics and other evangelists who openly promote Droskar's faith quickly find themselves denied rooms at inns and supplies at shops of all sorts. They are also among the favored targets for members of the Gamblers' Guild. But despite the city's general attitudes, a hidden temple of Droskar lies within Kovlar's walls—or more precisely, under those walls. Initially constructed by disaffected Droskar worshippers back during Saggorak's prime, this "Hidden Forge" remains a secret place for his worshippers to find shelter to this day.

On the night that Embermead arrived, during her prayers to Droskar, she heard the insistent clanging sound of a weapon being repeatedly struck on an anvil. Following the sound led her to the secret entrance to the Droskar temple, where the local cultists quickly welcomed her as their new leader, immediately eager to do whatever they could to assist with her plots. The PCs won't have the advantage of visions from a god to

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PRISON LOCATIONS

Use the map on page 20 for this location. Ceilings within the prison are 12 feet high.

C1. Entryway: Two guards are always on duty here.

C2. Office: Once the office of the warehouse foreman, this room is now used as Chiselrock's office on the rare occasions he visits the site.

C3. Barracks: The guards keep food and other basic provisions here, and sleep on simple bedrolls. At any one time, two guards are resting here.

C4. Cellblock: Once a central workshop with small alcoves for storage, this area has been converted into a cellblock. Each alcove is fitted with a brand new locked iron door (DC 31 Thievery to Pick the Lock), and contains a bucket for waste and a pile of straw for sleeping. Currently, only one prisoner is housed in a cell here—Algret, who languishes in the southernmost cell. She wears simple prisoner's rags, and has no weapons or armor.

C5. Storeroom: This dreary storeroom was used to house materials, but is now empty; if the PCs are captured, their gear is unceremoniously dumped in here for safe keeping.

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find the Hidden Forge's locations, though, and must rely upon traditional methods of investigation instead.

LOCATING THE HIDDEN FORGE

Many of the other missions give clues about the location of the Hidden Forge, a secret temple of Droskar under the city. The exact nature of these clues are left vague so that you can adjust them to fit the situation as needed, but each one the PCs discover should paint an increasingly clear picture of the nature of the threat. The first time the PCs find a Hidden Forge clue, they should learn of the existence of a cult of Droskar in the city. The second clue should confirm that there's a hidden temple devoted to him somewhere in Kovlar. Clues found beyond these first two should be increasingly specific without revealing enough information on their own to reveal the location of the temple known as the Hidden Forge.

Once the PCs find a Hidden Forge clue, they can use the "Seek the Hidden Forge" downtime action to attempt to locate the secret temple's position in Kovlar.

SEEK THE HIDDEN FORGE

DOWNTIME **SECRET**

Requirements At least one Hidden Forge clue.

By spending a day examining Hidden Forge clues, consulting with locals, studying maps of Kovlar, and otherwise



investigating the mystery, a PC attempts to determine the location of the secret shrine to Droskar in the dwarven city. A character can attempt to interpret these clues with a Perception, Society, or Survival check—the DC remains 36 regardless of the check used to interpret the clues. This DC is reduced by 2 for each Hidden Forge clue possessed beyond the first. Thus, if the character has access to two Hidden Forge Clues, the DC is reduced to 34, up to a maximum reduction to DC 22 if a character has 8 Hidden Forge Clues.

Critical Success The PC pinpoints the entrance to the Hidden Forge.

Success The PC makes significant progress toward determining the Hidden Forge's location, and gains a +4 circumstance bonus on their next check to Seek the Hidden Forge.

Failure The PC fails to determine anything informative from the clues.

Critical Failure As failure, but the Droskar cultists catch wind of the investigation and are able to prepare their defenses (see "Hidden Forge Features" below).

HIDDEN FORGE FEATURES

The Hidden Forge is located in an underground area

accessible via a secret entrance in a cellar below an abandoned building on the outskirts of the Earthfire District. The PCs learn about this secret entrance once they successfully locate the Hidden Forge, and opening the secret cellar door reveals a 10-foot-wide staircase that leads 80 feet down to area D1.

Within the Hidden Forge, most rooms have dim light from small forge-shaped decorations that flicker with *continual flames* here and there on the walls. Ceiling height is a spacious 15 feet in areas D1–D4, but higher in area D5.

If the PCs accidentally alert the Droskar cultists of their interest in the temple, all of the creatures in the Hidden Forge gain a +3 circumstance bonus to Initiative checks.

XP Award: Many slaves work themselves beyond their limits while subjected to harsh conditions within the Hidden Forge—dwarves and other creatures who have long been ruled by the cult of Droskar. If the PCs can defeat all of the guardians of the Hidden Forge, they can lead these slaves to freedom. If the PCs do so, award them 80 XP.

D1. ENTRYWAY

Low 13

A staircase rises beyond an archway in the north of this room. Opposite this archway in the south wall sits a solid stone door, above which a brief message has been chiseled.

The message chiseled above the door to area D2 reads, in Dwarven, “Profess the Faith”. A successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge is enough to recognize this phrase as an aphorism used by worshippers of Droskar.

Creatures: The two statues that flank the entrance to the hidden temple are in fact powerful stone golems. If anyone approaches within 20 feet of the door without speaking the passphrase “Profess the Faith” in Dwarven, or if anyone attacks the golems, the golems attack. They pursue foes throughout the Hidden Forge, but do not follow up the stairs if enemies flee the area entirely.

ELITE STONE GOLEMS (2)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 187

Initiative Perception +19

D2. HALLWAY

Moderate 13

The air in this room is unusually warm and laced with the stink of unwashed bodies. Several doors provide exits, with a single door to the south hanging open, through which the sound of machinery grinding can be heard.

The small rooms in the northwest corner of the room are used to dispose of garbage or as toilets.

Creatures: Kralgurn, the caretaker of the Hidden Forge, is a lifelong worshipper of Droskar. He guards this room, ensuring that the slaves kept in this complex don’t escape, and periodically barks orders to the slaves in area D4 to work harder and faster and quieter, as the whim strikes him.

The woman responsible for stealing the *runestone* from the Vaults, Thea, is also here, on orders from Embermead to supervise the duergar. Neither of these two are happy with the current arrangement. The duergar resents the supervision. Thea, for her part, finds the task uncomfortable and dreadfully boring.

KRALGURN

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DUERGAR DWARF HUMANOID

Male duergar (Pathfinder Bestiary 138)

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +28, Intimidation +28, Occultism +25

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Items +1 striking composite longbow (50 arrows), manacles, +1 resilient scale mail, scroll of discern location, +2 striking corrosive whip, 50 gp

AC 36; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +22, **Will** +25

HP 255

Light Blindness

Intimidating Attack of Opportunity (emotion, fear, mental) Kralgurn’s Attacks of Opportunity not only wound creatures, but also shatter their confidence. If Kralgurn hits and deals damage with an Attack of Opportunity, the target is frightened 2, or frightened 4 on a critical hit.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *corrosive whip* +31 (disarm, magical, nonlethal, reach, trip), **Damage** 2d4+16 slashing plus 1d6 acid

Ranged ♦ *composite longbow* +27 (deadly 1d10, magical, range increment 60 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+12 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 34; **2nd** *enlarge* (self only), *invisibility* (self only)

Fearsome Brute When Kralgurn attacks a frightened creature, he gains a circumstance bonus to damage equal to three times the target’s frightened value.

THEA

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human Scarlet Triad agent

Perception +21

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +22, Arcana +15, Athletics +19, Deception +23, Nature +19, Stealth +24, Thievery +24

Str +2, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

Items +1 blowgun (20 darts), +1 resilient leather armor, lethargy poison (4 doses), manacles, purple worm venom (2 doses), +1 striking rapier, ruby and sapphire ring

AC 32; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +24, **Will** +21

HP 195

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *rapier* +24 (deadly 1d8, disarm, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing

Ranged ♦ *blowgun* +24 (agile, nonlethal, range increment 20 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 7 piercing plus poison

Efficient Capture ♦♦♦ (attack, manipulate); **Requirements** Thea has manacles in hand and is adjacent to a creature.

Effect Thea attempts to bind the creature’s wrists or ankles with the manacles. If she succeeds at an attack roll with a +24 modifier against the target’s AC, she applies the manacles.

Precise Debilitations ♦ **Trigger** Thea’s Strike hits a flat-footed creature and deals damage. **Effect** Thea applies one of the following debilitations to the creature, which lasts until the end of her next turn.

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- **Brow Gash** The target becomes flat-footed.
- **Deep Cut** The target takes an additional 2d6 precision damage from Thea's attacks.
- **Hamstring** The target takes a -10-foot status penalty to its Speeds.
- **Low Blow** The target becomes enfeebled 1.

Sneak Attack 3d6

Weapon Trick When Thea critically succeeds at an attack roll against a flat-footed creature, she applies the critical specialization effect for the weapon she is wielding.

Arcane Spells Known DC 33; **3rd** *illusory disguise*; **2nd** *hideous laughter*; **1st** *fear*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *ghost sound*

Treasure: While Thea already gave the stolen *antimagic runestone* away to Veshumirix, she still wears the ring she stole from Fortunate Kord's house. The PCs can sell it on the market for 100 gp. However, if they return it to Fortunate Kord instead, the grateful leader of the Gamblers' Guild gives them a 500 gp reward.

D3. SLAVES' BEDCHAMBER

Triple-decker bunkbeds with lumpy mattresses fill every corner of this room. Other than the beds, the room contains rags, tattered clothing, lumpy soap, and a couple of low-quality combs with some broken teeth.

The slaves toiling in areas **D4** and **D5** are allowed a few hours each day to rest here. At any given time, 1d6 exhausted and noncombatant dwarves sleep here.

D4. THE CEASELESS MILL

What appears to be a modified wheel from a grain mill sits on a slab in this room, attached to a chain connected to a large and complex mechanical contraption in the corner.

Slaves: A total of nine exhausted slaves labor in this room, continually turning the spokes on the large wheel to cause the contraption in the corner to grind, smoke, and wheeze. This device seems to do nothing more than make the wheel itself more difficult to turn, and a successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge correctly identifies the device as a sort of altar devoted to Droskar—a device built solely as a method of honoring the taskmaster deity with pointless grueling labor provided by unfortunate slaves.

The slaves working here include the dwarf Zamak, the missing tourist that Fortunate Kord asked the PCs to find. If rescued, the slaves tell the PCs that the slavers worship Droskar, and that their leader is a ruthless dwarf woman named Ilssrah Embermead.

They were shocked to find duergars listening to a dwarf's orders, so they assume she must have significant power or leverage. They also tell the PCs that in addition to turning this wheel, they've been made to work the forge in area **D5**. They warn the PCs of the undead guardian there and tell the PCs that more slaves toil there as well.

D5. FORGE

MODERATE 13

An immense four-sided forge looms in the center of this large cave, its interior aglow with bubbling magma that heats the room to a sweltering temperature. A massive anvil sits before each of the forge's arched openings, while a dark metal pipe siphons smoke out of the forge up into the ceiling to the west.

Creature: Seven slaves toil here, watched by a powerful undead dwarf whose failure to Droskar in life has consigned him to eternal undeath as a powerful, accursed forge-spurned. This undead dwarf has gorged on suffering over the centuries, and in that time has grown immense himself, so that he is proportioned more like a giant than a dwarf. When he spots the PCs, he recognizes their potential as new slaves and immediately attempts to "recruit" them to his enslaved workforce. He fights until destroyed, but will not pursue the PCs beyond the Hidden Forge itself.

ACCURSED FORGE-SPURNED

CREATURE 15

RARE NE LARGE FIRE UNDEAD

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +29, Crafting +30, Droskar Lore +26

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +2

Items +2 resilient full plate, soul chain (+2 greater striking flaming adamantine spiked chain, 11th level), +2 striking adamantine warhammer

AC 37; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +24, **Will** +25

HP 285, eternal damnation, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold 10

Eternal Damnation (divine, necromancy) As long as its soul chain remains intact, the accursed forge-spurned can't be truly destroyed and rises again fully healed at the next sundown, even if its physical body was destroyed. Information about soul chains appears on page 83.

Searing Heat (fire) A creature that touches the accursed forge-spurned (including grappling it or hitting it with an unarmed attack) takes 4d6 fire damage (DC 33 basic Reflex save).

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Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ *soul chain* +31 (disarm, finesse, reach, trip),

Damage 3d8+14 slashing plus 1d6 fire and soul siphon

Melee ♦ *warhammer* +31 (shove), **Damage** 2d8+14 bludgeoning

Inflate Bellows ♦♦ **Requirement** The accursed forge-spurned has used Forge Breath. **Effect** The accursed forge-spurned re-inflates its flaccid lungs, enabling it to use Forge Breath again.

Forge Breath ♦♦ (divine, evocation, fire) The accursed forge-spurned breathes a cloud of stinging soot, ash, and glowing embers. This can affect either a 30-foot cone or a 20-foot burst centered on the accursed forge-spurned and persists for 1d4 rounds. Creatures that move into or start their turn in the area take 12d6 fire damage (DC 36 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails its save is also blinded for 1 minute. Creatures within the cloud are concealed, though not from the accursed forge-spurned. The accursed forge-spurned can't use Forge Breath again until it has used Inflate Bellows.

Soul Chain (divine, fire, necromancy) If a creature is slain by an attack from the *soul chain* and the accursed forge-spurned is able to retain the creature's corpse, it can bind the creature's soul into the *soul chain* (as *bind soul*) with a day of work at a forge and a DC 20 Crafting check. An individual whose soul is bound in this way can't be resurrected unless the soul chain is destroyed (Hardness 10, 40 HP, BT 20).

Soul Siphon (divine, necromancy) When the accursed forge-spurned critically hits a target with its *soul chain*, the chain leeches away a portion of the target's soul. The target must attempt a DC 36 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is drained 1.

Failure The target is drained 2.

Critical Failure The target is drained 2 and stunned 2 from the pain.

Slaves: The seven slaves in this room are exhausted and malnourished. They ask the PCs to escort them back to Kovlar's temple of Torag, where they can seek assistance. All of these slaves were travelers who were visiting Kovlar for a variety of reasons, and they need time, medical treatment, and money before they can consider making

the journey back home. They inform the PCs that the slavers who captured them come and go through the tunnel to the south, where the slavers keep their own camp in Saggorak, but can provide little more context as to what exactly lies at the far end.

Treasure: A self-repairing shield of incredible quality hangs from hooks on the walls of this room, displayed as a trophy. Ilssrah Embermead and her allies have been trying to unlock the secrets to crafting more shields like this one, to no avail. This is a *reforging shield* (see page 74).

D6. EXIT TUNNEL

This exit tunnel winds for miles through the stone below Kovlar, under the settlement's walls and into Saggorak, where it eventually connects to area E1—this route is used often by Scarlet Triad agents to come and go sight unseen into the city.



Accursed Forge-Spurned



CHAPTER 3: INTO THE HAUNTED CITY

Eventually, the PCs must travel into the ruined city of Saggorak to directly confront the Scarlet Triad. The most direct route into this chapter leads from the Hidden Forge—if the PCs follow the tunnel at area **D6**, they'll come to area **E1**, the basement below the old workshop now used as a base camp by the Scarlet Triad.

Saggorak's Factions

For centuries, most of Saggorak's inhabitants have been intelligent undead belonging to one of five factions. While all of these groups once served King Harral, Veshumirix's attack on the ruined city's status quo placed these factions at odds with one another. After a brief period of violence in the aftermath of this attack, the factions have settled into a stalemate, and none have a particular advantage over the other. The factions are summarized below.

THE BOUND

The Bound are so named for their intense connections to specific sites. Most of the Bound are incapable of breaking free of their localized ties; obsessive poltergeists that refuse to leave a particular portion of the city are one example. Ghosts and haunts are the most common members of the Bound. While haunts are not technically themselves undead creatures, Saggorak's inhabitants often consider them to be members of the Bound as well. The Bound have no official leader, but they do not openly oppose King Harral or anyone bearing a piece of Harral's royal regalia, including the Crown of Saggorak (currently claimed by Veshumirix) or Harral's robe (see area **F3**).

THE STARVED

The protracted siege and resulting famine that led to Saggorak's downfall produced an abundance of undead

connected to starvation; the majority of the Starved are ghouls and ghosts, but more powerful undead manifestations of starvation, like gashadokuro, exist in this faction as well. While the initial generation of these undead were almost universally dwarves, their predation on other creatures and the virulence of ghoul fever has given rise to ghouls from numerous other ancestries. Competition over food and resources, combined with raids from Darklands creatures like gugs, keeps their numbers in check and culls off their weakest members. The Starved retain some of the knowledge and traditions of smithing from Saggorak's glory days, skills they put to use creating weapons and armor they then trade with duergar for slaves to sate their hunger. Their most popular designs are weapons infused with a mineral known as lazurite, a substance that helps undead resist the effects of positive energy. Drawing upon their natural connection to lazurite, the Starved located a vein of the mineral beneath Saggorak (see area G). The Starved's most powerful creations are golems made from a type of lazurite-veined rock known as marrowstone. When Veshumirix appeared, he made an offer to Falrok, the Starved's ghost leader. The dragon promised to supply the Starved with all the bodies they could eat in exchange for their servitude, and implied the Starved would be destroyed if they refused. Falrok chose to side with the dragon. Most of the Starved who did not follow Falrok's initial decision to betray King Harral either changed their minds when Veshumirix defeated Harral in combat or were torn apart by their fellow ghouls in an attempt to avoid the dragon's fury.

THE WHISPERS

The Whispers are the eyes and ears of King Harral. So named for their silent movements and their tendency to whisper reports of any dissent into the king's ear, the Whispers are primarily composed of incorporeal undead that are not bound to a particular location, such as shadows and wraiths. The Whispers are the only faction to remain completely loyal to King Harral. In the current situation, most members of the Whispers are biding their time, watching within walls and floors for opportunities to undercut Veshumirix and pave the way for Harral's return to power.

THE ARMORED

Until recently, the Armored was the smallest and most powerful of the factions—a group composed of a frightful squad of graveknights. Though its members numbered only a few dozen, their power and connection to King Harral made them a political force in their own right. Today, only four members of the Armored survive, the rest having fallen to Veshumirix. Unfortunately for the Armored, the cunning dragon knew that graveknights return unless their armor is thoroughly ruined, and he gleefully cast the remnants of their armor into the magma lake in its lair. The last four members of the Armored remain by King Harral's side, doing whatever they can to protect him from threats (see An Audience with the King, page 40).

THE PAWNS

In Saggorak, mindless undead are known as the Pawns. Without specific directions, the Pawns tend to attack any living creature that comes near them. The Pawns can be controlled through the standard means of commanding undead unless they have direct orders from the bearer of the Crown of Saggorak. Such orders automatically override

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The PCs turn their attentions to the ruins of Saggorak itself and seek the agents of the Scarlet Triad who have settled therein. The city is haunted by undead, and a visit to the unliving dwarven king Harral can open up some opportunities—if the PCs agree to aid him, he can suggest ways to weaken the undead who have allied with the Scarlet Triad. Eventually, the PCs must confront Ilsrah in the looming Temple of All Gods, and finally face the dragon Veshumirix in the magma chambers far below.

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THE OLD WORKSHOP



all other commands. The crown's current bearer, Veshumirix, has stirred the majority of the Pawns to protect the area around the Temple of All Gods (area H) above his lair.

The Old Workshop

The tunnel from the Hidden Forge eventually leads to the basement of an old workshop once owned by a Droskar-worshipping alchemist. Today, this workshop has been claimed by the Scarlet Triad, who use it as a base camp and take advantage of the underground tunnel in the basement to come and go as they please between Saggorak and Kovlar.

Unless otherwise stated, all ceilings within the old workshop are 10 feet tall. The chambers within are lit by lanterns bearing *continual flames*.

E1. BASEMENT

MODERATE 13

This room is dimly lit, the sole source of light coming from below a metal grate at the center of the room. The ceiling rises to a height of thirty feet above, while shelves stacked

with supplies sit against the walls. A flight of stone stairs leads upward to the northeast.

The grate opens into a pit that drops 50 feet into a river of magma. A lock secures the grate (DC 30 Thievery to Pick this Lock). This pit was originally intended to be a garbage incinerator. The Scarlet Triad operatives store many of their non-perishable supplies and provisions on the shelves along the walls of this basement, and periodically use the chamber as a training room.

Creatures: When the PCs first arrive in this area, they interrupt a group of four Scarlet Triad agents (two men and two women) in the middle of a sparring contest. The agents eagerly switch gears from practice to application, and attack the PCs on sight. Once only one agent remains alive, they flee upstairs to warn the others stationed in the chambers above.

SCARLET TRIAD AGENTS (4)

CREATURE 11

Page 31 (Thea)

Initiative Perception +21

E2. SHRINE TO DROSKAR

A slab of stone sits against the north wall of this room, its front emblazoned with a carving of a fire under a stone arch. A bloodstained length of chain sits atop the slab between a pair of unlit censers.

Embermead set up a small shrine to Droskar in this room. In addition to conducting personal prayers here, she frequently forces her agents to make offerings to the shrine, punishing them if they prove insufficiently generous. Unsurprisingly, Embermead collects all of the offerings left here. She believes that doing so is a way to honor Droskar, who encourages his followers to use underhanded means of achieving their goals.

E3. MEN'S QUARTERS

A set of four uncomfortable-looking stone beds line either side of this room.

The male members of the Scarlet Triad tend to sleep in this room. The first time the PCs visit the camp, there's a 50% chance that 2 men are sleeping here, otherwise they can be found in area E4.

E4. COMMON ROOM

SEVERE 13

The southern portion of this room contains a pair of stone tables surrounded by chairs.

Creatures: Scarlet Triad members spend much of their free time in this room. In all, 6 agents are active in the area, although there's a chance that 2 of the men and 2 of the women are sleeping in areas E3 or E5 when the PCs first visit and if an agent from area E1 hasn't raised the alarm. Agents encountered here are enjoying games of dice, but immediately attack intruders upon seeing them. One agent spends the first round of combat to open the door to the north to call for Zuferian's aid (see area E6), but they then fight to the death.

SCARLET TRIAD AGENTS (6)

CREATURE 12

Page 31 (Thea)

Initiative Perception +21

Treasure: A small box under one of the tables is filled with pieces for various games, such as dice, cards, a board marked with chessboard-style grid, and several pouches of multicolored stones. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while examining these pieces notices that one of the decks of cards is

marked in an exceptionally subtle fashion and, if used to cheat at a game, grants a +2 item bonus to related skill checks. Together, the contents of the box are worth 50 gp.

E5. WOMEN'S QUARTERS

Three hard stone beds are in this room.

The female members of the Scarlet Triad tend to sleep in this room, with the exception of Ilssrah, who sleeps on a cot in the former forge of Torag in the Temple of all Gods (area H), and Zuferian, who has her own bedchamber (area E7). The first time the PCs visit the camp, there's a 50% chance that 2 women are sleeping here, otherwise they can be found in area E4.

E6. ALCHEMISTS' LABORATORY

Three stone tables along the south wall of this laboratory space are covered with alchemical gear, while to the north, a noxious brew bubbles in a cauldron set into a large stone hearth.

Formerly a kitchen and dining area, Zuferian has repurposed all of the stone tables as lab benches. She uses the hearth on the north wall to cook her noxious brews. Scarlet Triad members generally eat non-perishable food purchased in bulk from Kovlar, as the alternative is cooking in the same hearth that regularly prepares poison and deadly alchemical weapons.

Creatures: Zuferian spends much of her time in this laboratory, concocting ways to make her bombs more deadly. She acts as Ilssrah Embermead's top lieutenant, but is not a particularly charismatic leader, preferring instead to cow others into following her through fear and threat. She is short-tempered, sadistic, and quick to resort to violence when frustrated. More than one member of the Scarlet Triad bears scars from her outbursts. She has never dared to attack Embermead, however, whom she respects for her strength and cruelty. Zuferian is quite confident in her abilities, and once battle begins, she is too overcome with rage to consider surrender.

ZUFERIAN

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human

Perception +26

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +26, Arcana +27, Crafting +31 (+33 to Craft alchemical items), Intimidation +23, Occultism +25, Stealth +26, Thievery +28

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Str +2, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** +8, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +0

Items infused greater acid flask (4), greater alchemist goggles, infused greater alchemist's fire (4), alchemist's tools, greater elixirs of life (2), formula book, infused greater frost vial (4), +2 resilient leather armor, +2 striking light mace, infused greater thunderstone (4)

Infused Items Zuferian's items listed as infused last for 24 hours, or until her next daily preparations.

AC 36; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +29, **Will** +27

HP 265

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *light mace* (agile, finesse, shove) +30, **Damage** 2d4+8



Zuferian

Ranged ♦ alchemical bomb +30 (range increment 60 feet, splash), **Damage** varies by bomb

Alchemical Formulas greater acid flask, greater alchemist's fire, greater bottled lightning, greater darkvision elixir, deathcap powder, greater elixir of life, greater frost vial, lethargy poison, purple worm venom, greater tanglefoot bag

Expanded Splash Zuferian's bombs that have the splash trait deal 8 extra splash damage, and splash to 10 feet.

Quick Alchemy ♦ Zuferian creates a single alchemical item from her formula book (see Alchemical Formulas). This item has the infused trait, but it remains potent only until the start of her next turn. With her typical preparations, she can use this ability 7 times per day.

Quick Bomber ♦ Zuferian Interacts to draw a bomb, then Strikes with it.

True Debilitating Bomb *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 80

Uncanny Bombs *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 80

E7. ZUFERIAN'S ROOM

The corner of this room has a stone bed topped with an overstuffed mattress and several blankets, opposite a stone desk and chair.

Treasure: Zuferian keeps an impressive-looking suit of +2 greater resilient rock braced full plate armor from Saggorak on display here. She does not realize that the armor's property rune, *rock braced*, is itself a special rune from the finest of Saggorak's smiths (see page 73).

Zuferian has traveled to the Temple of All Gods (see page 49) several times, passing through the territory of the Starved faction. Among the notes kept on the desk, a simple map of the ruins of Saggorak can be an invaluable aid to the PCs, for it gives simple steps the PCs can follow from the Scarlet Triad's campsite here through the ruins to a building called the Temple of All Gods. Although the building is not further labeled, the fact that the map exists should be enough to imply the site's importance to the Scarlet Triad—in fact, it is here that the region's two greatest villains, Ilssrah and Veshumirix, weave their plots.

Exploring Saggorak

Once the PCs have fought their way through the Scarlet Triad's camp and exit the building, they'll find themselves deep in the ruins of Saggorak. The primary goal of the PCs in Saggorak should eventually become the Temple of All Gods and the magma caverns below. No map of the ruined city is provided, as it shouldn't be long before the PCs attract the attention of the Whisperers, after

which King Harral can guide their steps to the Temple of All Gods. Alternatively, the recovery of Zuferian's notes and map sketches in area **E7** can serve to lead the PCs directly to the site—but should they choose a direct approach without preparation beforehand, they may be in for more than they can handle.

As the PCs travel through Saggorak, feel free to have them encounter some of these denizens. You can use the street encounter maps on page 20 to play out these battles, or use the maps as inspiration to craft encounter areas of your own design. The PCs should be 14th level before they begin exploring the Temple of All Gods, and you can use that metric to judge when, where, and how often they'll be faced with encounters akin to those below. The order in which these minor encounters occur is up to you, with the exception of "The Old King's Offer." This encounter should occur not long after the PCs begin to explore Saggorak, certainly before they reach the Temple of All Gods and likely not long after their first clash with undead of the Bound or Starved factions.

DEVOURING DWARVES **Low 13**

The Starved make regular patrols through the city's ruined streets, constantly compelled by their gnawing hunger, never realizing the satisfaction of a full belly or the final release of death from starvation. PCs can encounter typical ghouls or ghosts as elements of such a patrol, but such fights against low-powered foes won't award experience. Instead, consider having the PCs encounter some of the Starved's more dangerous elements, such as a trio of looming devourers: undead dwarven priests who turned away from Torag during Saggorak's fall to beg for aid from the lower planes, only to become corrupted by those same forces. These devourers resemble nearly skeletal dwarves, save that they stand nearly 12 feet tall, and the reaching arms of partially consumed souls reach out of their ragged rib cages through ratty tangles of beard that hang down from the patches of skin that cling tenaciously to their flesh.

DEVOURERS (3) **CREATURE 11**

Page 79

Initiative Perception +22

THE GOLIATH'S WEB **Low 13**

Not all of Saggorak's dangers are undead. In this encounter, the PCs' route forward is blocked by sheets of thick spiderwebs. As the PCs arrive, the sound of sobbing comes from somewhere within the webs—this sound is little more than a harmless haunt, a manifestation of sorrow and despair that has lingered here for thousands of years, but it could be enough

to lure the PCs into the webs. A successful DC 31 Perception check or Religion check is enough for a listening PC to note the strange ghostly qualities to the sobbing and identify it as an otherwise harmless haunt.

In addition to providing difficult terrain, the webs are inhabited by three ghostly white goliath spiders—ravenous creatures that lunge out to attack the PCs on sight. The spiders have learned that the crying haunt is harmless but also functions as an excellent lure that tends to attract delicious living prey instead of heartless dry undead victims.

GOLIATH SPIDERS (3) **CREATURE 11**

Pathfinder Bestiary 307

Initiative Perception +22

HUNGRY GHOSTS **Low 13**

As the PCs travel through the ruins, they stumble into a region haunted by members of the Bound—a gathering of four ghostly dwarven wizards who dwell amid the crumbled ruins of a long-destroyed arcane school. As the ghost mages rise out of the rubble to attack, ghostly images of the school as it once stood flicker and fade around the PCs—an unnerving side effect of the ghosts' presence that has no other effect on combat. The ghosts themselves look particularly emaciated, for they died of starvation during Saggorak's orc siege. As they fight, other images of ghostly figures reverting to cannibalism flash in the area, and the ghost mages themselves beg the PCs for food even as they attempt to slaughter them, hoping to use their flesh to feed a starving society long gone. These four ghosts continue to rejuvenate until someone makes an offering of at least a weeks' worth of edible food, composed of something other than the cannibal victuals some of the citizens of Saggorak were forced to endure in their final days.

GHOST MAGES (4) **CREATURE 10**

Pathfinder Bestiary 167

Initiative Perception +17

STRANGE STALKERS **Low 13**

Among the more dangerous threats in the region are strange aberrant creatures known as gogiteths. These monsters plagued Saggorak even before the orc siege, and in the centuries since the city's fall, they have eagerly adapted to meals of undead flesh. The opportunity to feed on a living creature is one this pair certainly won't pass up!

GOGITETHS (2) **CREATURE 12**

Pathfinder Bestiary 183

Initiative Perception +21

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VENGEFUL FEASTERS

Low 13

When the PCs fought their way through the Hall of Devouring Giants, they likely slaughtered several of the gugs who dwelt therein—but others still remain in Saggorak. In this encounter, a group of four gugs who weren't present in the Hall when the PCs first arrived have tracked them down, following their own clues granted by visions experienced through the consumption of strange fungi. The gugs had little interest in invading Kovlar, but once the PCs return to Saggorak they unknowingly step back into the monsters' territory. The gugs prefer to attack from ambush, perhaps as the PCs sleep in the ruins or are recovering from another encounter, but once the fight begins, the vengeful gugs fight to the death.

GUGS (4)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 198

Initiative Perception +19

THE OLD KING'S OFFER

At some point after the PCs make their presence truly known in Saggorak (likely after fighting against one of the minor encounters above) but before they can make their way to the Temple of All Gods, a representative of the Old King, Harral, approaches them from the shadows. This creature is a wispy, dwarf-like wraith, and on its own is an insignificant threat to the PCs, yet the wraith doesn't act that way as it greets them. Read or paraphrase the following as it addresses them in Dwarven, assuming the PCs can understand the language (in the case where none can speak this language, the wraith also speaks Undercommon and Necril).

"Hold, ones who yet draw breath. I come not to feast upon your souls, but to bear a message from my king, the rightful ruler of Saggorak, Old King Harral. His eyes peer from every shadow, and he has seen your strength as you wander our city. He wishes to offer you information and allies in exchange for your assistance in laying a usurper low. You would be wise to come with me, and be honored, for the Old King does not often issue summons!"

If the PCs attack the wraith, it hisses in anger and flees, only to return some time later to repeat its offer. If slain, a different wraith approaches them. The offer to meet with the Old King is repeated three times in this way before Harral judges the PCs as lost causes, at which point he may, at your option, send his few remaining graveknights to try to forcibly collect the PCs.

If the PCs agree to the wraith's invitation, it bows low and leads them to King Harral's hall (see An Audience with the King below). Along the way, the wraith will answer questions the PCs have—use the following notes to aid in providing answers to the PCs as they travel.

The Bound: "They are the lamentable echoes of yesterday. They lack the bodies or the will to serve any but their own sorrow. The Old King protects them, but they do not return this with gratitude. Yet the Old King does not hold this against the Bound, for he understands they are lost."

The Old King: "King Harral has always been the king of Saggorak. He cannot be destroyed, and he will always be the rightful ruler of the city. The dragon thought it could destroy him, and indeed stole the Old King's crown, but the Old King will not be removed by a usurper so easily."

The Starved: "The Starved are undead built from flesh, and, as a result, they are chained to their own hunger to devour flesh. This makes them weak of will."

The Usurper: "A dragon invaded the city several years ago. It soon swayed the Starved to its side, but the Whispers and the Armored remained loyal to the Old King. The dragon attempted to incinerate the king himself, but the king returned, for he is forever."

The Whispers: "We are the silent ones who watch over the city. We are the King's eyes."

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING SEVERE 13

Though time and decay have taken their toll upon Saggorak's palace, King Harral and his undead minions have maintained its treasures to the best of their ability. However, much of what was once in the palace has been incinerated or destroyed, for it was here that Veshumirix recently confronted King Harral. In addition to turning the king's body and the bodies of many of the king's other servants to ash, Veshumirix also melted or burned away many of the palace's treasures. Only the magical wards on the throne room held up against the dragon's onslaught, allowing King Harral to still hold court in his new body as a result.

Creatures: Whether the PCs follow the wraith to this location or discover it independently, the king sits upon his throne, patiently awaiting their arrival. The king himself was a powerful wizard in life, and while he lived, the idea of extending his life after death via lichdom would have turned his stomach. It is therefore a cruel irony that he exists now as a lich-like guardian—he doesn't possess the phylactery of a standard lich, and he is compelled to exist only

to protect Saggorak, and will continue to do so until the city is gone. While the Old King hides it well, Veshumirix's devastating attack on the ruined city shook his confidence; he felt the destruction of each and every building and knows that with each structure reduced to slag, his own power and thus his ability to protect Saggorak's legacy dwindles. He fears that another direct confrontation with the dragon would only result in another defeat and the loss of more of the city's remaining buildings. The arrival of the PCs gives the undead king hope.

King Harral appears as a skeletal dwarven man, with sunken green eyes and a long silvery beard that clings to the bleached leathery flesh of his jaw. He wears the tattered and singed remains of royal regalia, but no crown graces his skull. Standing at King Harral's side are four menacing graveknights, the last surviving members of what was once a large order in his service, the former Armored faction. These knights were out tending to other duties when Veshumirix attacked, so they were spared the fate that most of their compatriots suffered when Veshumirix tossed their suits of armor into the lava in his lair, destroying them permanently. The graveknights are somewhat wary of the PCs, but they are willing to give them a chance to prove their usefulness to their king.

King Harral is arrogant, but he has heard of the PCs' prowess, and he is wise enough to know that people as skilled as the PCs tend to demand respect. The centuries of rule within haunted Saggorak and his festering frustration and hatred regarding his city's fate have left Harral embittered, cruel, and unforgiving, yet when he speaks to the PCs, he does so with the tone and demeanor appropriate for greeting important dignitaries or ambassadors, at least at first. However, if the PCs actively show him disrespect, his appraisal of the PCs degrades, and he speaks to them more as common mercenaries.

King Harral intends to offer the PCs what he believes is important advice in exchange for their assistance in defeating Veshumirix, and doesn't waste their time with overlong preambles once they arrive in the throne hall. He explains that when Veshumirix attacked Saggorak several years ago, the dragon descended upon the city in fury, raining down magma on anyone who dared to challenge him—and many who did not. The dragon's burning desire for power won out over the short-term thrill of destruction, and so whenever he found a battle too challenging, he retreated under the magma to rest and fight another day. Before long, King Harral himself came after the dragon. In a pitched battle, Veshumirix defeated the undead king, as well as most of the

king's graveknight retainers. What King Harral had hoped would result, at worst, in a glorious martyr's death became the greatest insult of his undeath, for he rejuvenated a day later on his throne, without his crown (see page 57 for the crown's current location).

Since that time, Veshumirix has been solidifying his position as ruler of Saggorak, with plans to eventually conquer Kovlar. King Harral notes that Veshumirix will not stop at ruling Saggorak—the dragon will destroy and enslave all of Kovlar as well. Worse, King Harral has learned that the dragon has allied with surface dwellers—he doesn't know much about the Scarlet Triad and is eager to learn what the PCs know about them, but other than confirming they work with the dragon, he has little further information about them to add.

If the PCs agree to help, King Harral tells the PCs that they can find Veshumirix and his Scarlet Triad allies in and below the Temple of All Gods, but he warns the PCs that simply charging forward to that location would be foolish. The streets and skies alike are patrolled by members of the Starved Faction and their commanded Pawns, undead who have pledged servitude to Veshumirix. As a result, King Harral recommends one of two routes that the PCs can take to reach the Temple of All Gods without having to face overwhelming opposition. These two options are detailed below, as are two other less viable tactics the PCs might consider.

Subterfuge: While the Bound have not declared their allegiance to any one leader, many of Saggorak's ghostly inhabitants maintain a presence in and around the Temple of All Gods. King Harral bears the Bound no ill will, but admits that the PCs may come into conflict with them. His suggestion is for the PCs to secure something that will help the Bound to recognize them not as intruders but as allies—and by wearing something of his old regalia that has been infused with Saggorak's traditions, they can do exactly this. The problem here is that the only surviving regalia that could potentially afford such protection lies in the Haunted Halls (page 43), themselves the domain of several of the Bound. If the PCs can recover and wear the regalia left in the Haunted Halls, they'll be able to avoid the attention of the haunts and other Bound who dwell in the Temple of All Gods.

Disrupt Leadership: By confronting the leader of the Starved and destroying him in his sanctum, the PCs can force the Starved to abandon their allegiance to the dragon, and the PCs won't encounter additional undead in the Temple of All Gods.

Ignoring the King's Advice: The PCs are, of course, free to make their way directly to the Temple of All

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Gods without first weakening the Starved, but if they do, they'll face many more undead foes there.

Violence: It's not beyond the realm of possibility that intolerant or zealous PCs might attack Harral, either out of inherent violence or convictions that all undead must be put to rest. In this case, Harral howls in fury at the treachery as he and his graveknights do their best to defeat the PCs—in this case, Harral hopes to recruit the PCs as undead slaves. If the PCs destroy King Harral and his graveknights but no further steps are taken, the undead simply rejuvenate. Destroying the graveknights' armor prevents their return, but to prevent the Old King from being restored in a new body on his throne, every remaining building in Saggorak must be destroyed. This task is likely beyond the PCs' capacity, of course—an easier way of ending King Harral's undeath would be to work with him and

save Saggorak from the dragon (see "Concluding the Adventure" for more details). For his part, King Harral does not hold a grudge, and if he's destroyed and reforms, he wearily sends another wraith to seek out the PCs and invite them for another meeting, during which he notes, "You may raise arms against me many times, but I am cursed to always return despite your victories. And I need but one triumph to end you. Do you not see the foolishness? Take my advice and turn this wrath to the Starved so that you might stand a chance against the dragon!"

KING HARRAL

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +25, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Celestial, Draconic, Dwarven, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +29, Crafting +25, Diplomacy +27, Intimidation +27, Religion +25, Society +23

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +7


Items +1 resilient full plate, +2 thundering striking maul, wand of smoldering fireballs (7th-level fireball)

AC 35; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +24, **Will** +28; +1 status to all saves vs. positive

HP 195, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** cold 10, physical 10 (except magic bludgeoning)

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 33

Rejuvenation (arcane, necromancy) 24 hours after King Harral is destroyed, his body rebuilds itself on his throne (or, if the throne is destroyed, on the site where the throne once sat), similarly to how a lich's body is restored via its phylactery. If all of Saggorak's buildings are destroyed, or if heroes perform a great service in saving Saggorak (see Concluding the Adventure), King Harral loses this ability.

Counterspell  **Trigger** A creature casts a spell King Harral has prepared. **Effect** The king expends a prepared spell to counter the triggering creature's casting of that same spell. He can then attempt to dispel the triggering spell.

Speed 25 feet

Melee  *thundering maul* +28 (magical, shove);

Damage 2d12+12 bludgeoning plus 1d6 sonic

Arcane Prepared Spells

DC 35, attack +27; **7th** duplicate foe, eclipse burst, reverse gravity;

6th disintegrate (×2),

vampiricexsanguination, wall

of force; **5th** black tentacles (×2),

King Harral

cloudkill, dispel magic; **4th** dimension door, fire shield, fly; freedom of movement; **3rd** blindness, magic missile (×2), vampiric touch; **2nd** deafness, false life, mirror image, see invisibility; **1st** fleet step, ray of enfeeblement (×2), true strike; **Cantrips (7th)** detect magic, electric arc, mage hand, message, shield

Steady Spellcasting If another creature's reaction would disrupt King Harral's spell, he attempts a DC 15 flat check. If he succeeds, the spell isn't disrupted.

GRAVEKNIGHTS (4)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 191

Initiative Perception +19

The Haunted Halls

This ruined stone manor once supported six small towers, designed to echo the architecture of a castle in miniature. One of these towers has crumbled, while another has collapsed, falling across the building and heavily damaging it. In contrast to the majority of the building, the southernmost room and towers are in perfect repair.

This was the last place King Harral truly slept before his death. In the middle of his rest, an angry mob of starving people converged on his home. Unable to make it past the guards in the foyer, they used explosives to knock down one of the towers and create their own entrance. Most of King Harral's guards died that day, and the king himself barely escaped. For the rest of the king's life, before he too succumbed to starvation, nightmares haunted him relentlessly, keeping him for resting for more than an hour at a time.

F1. FOYER

Low 14

Warm, bright fires crackle in the cubbyholes of the two small turrets in this room. The walls are adorned with relief carvings depicting dwarves at various stages of the Quest for Sky. The two pillars are wrapped with lush tapestries woven with thread of gold, which beautifully catch the firelight.

Creatures: The reason for this room's pristine condition is unusual: it is haunted by the souls of many of the dwarves who died protecting King Harral. In this room, these souls have infused the very stones, turning the room into a soulbound ruin.

SOULBOUND RUIN

CREATURE 15

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Initiative Perception +25

Soulbound Ruin Abilities explosive flames, leech soul

Treasure: The pair of lush tapestries in this room are worth 100 gp each.

F2. GRAND HALL

Moderate 14

One of this building's stone towers has collapsed into this ruined hall, bringing a large chunk of the ceiling down with it.

Creatures: A small group of ancient poltergeists haunts this room. The necromantic energy of Saggorak has made them significantly more deadly than most of their kind. They attack the PCs with shattered fragments of the fallen tower, fighting until destroyed.

SAGGORAK POLTERGEISTS (4)

CREATURE 12

RARE LE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Pathfinder Bestiary 264

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Dwarven, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +25, Intimidation +24, Stealth +25

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Site Bound The Saggorak poltergeists cannot travel more than 120 feet from area F2.

AC 33; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +25, **Will** +22

HP 180, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance against non-magical)

Natural Invisibility A poltergeist is naturally invisible. It becomes visible only when it uses Frighten.

Rejuvenation (necromancy, occult) When a poltergeist is destroyed, it re-forms, fully healed, where it was destroyed after 2d4 days. These Saggorak poltergeists no longer rejuvenate once King Harral no longer exists as an undead ruler of Saggorak.

Telekinetic Defense **Trigger** A creature approaches within 10 feet of the poltergeist. **Effect** The poltergeist makes a telekinetic object Strike against the triggering creature.

Speed fly 30 feet

Ranged **◆** telekinetic object +27 (evocation, magical, occult, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 4d12 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing (depending on object)

Occult Innate Spells DC 33, attack +27; **6th** *telekinetic haul* (at will), *telekinetic maneuver* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** *mage hand*

Frighten **◆** (concentrate, emotion, fear, incapacitation, mental); **Requirement** The poltergeist must be invisible.

Effect The poltergeist becomes visible, appearing as a skeletal, ghostlike humanoid. Each creature within 30 feet must attempt a DC 33 Will save, becoming frightened 2 on a failure. On a critical failure, it's also fleeing for as long as it's frightened. On a success, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute. At

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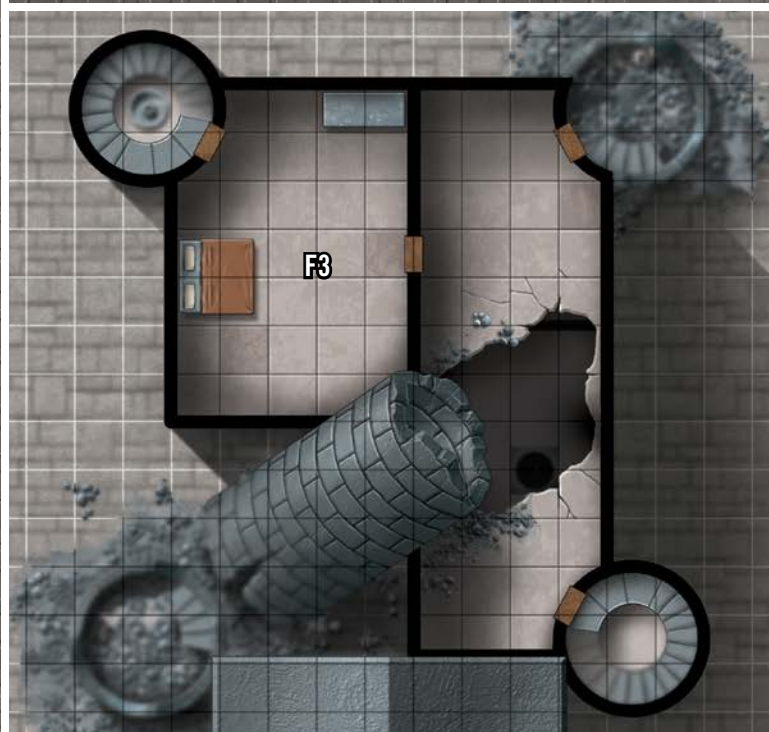
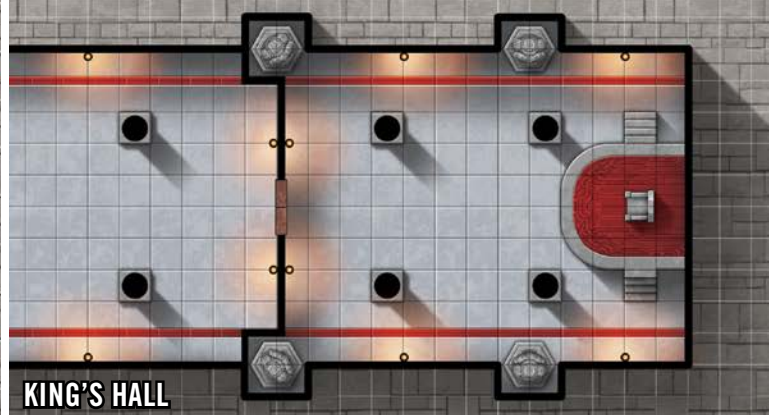
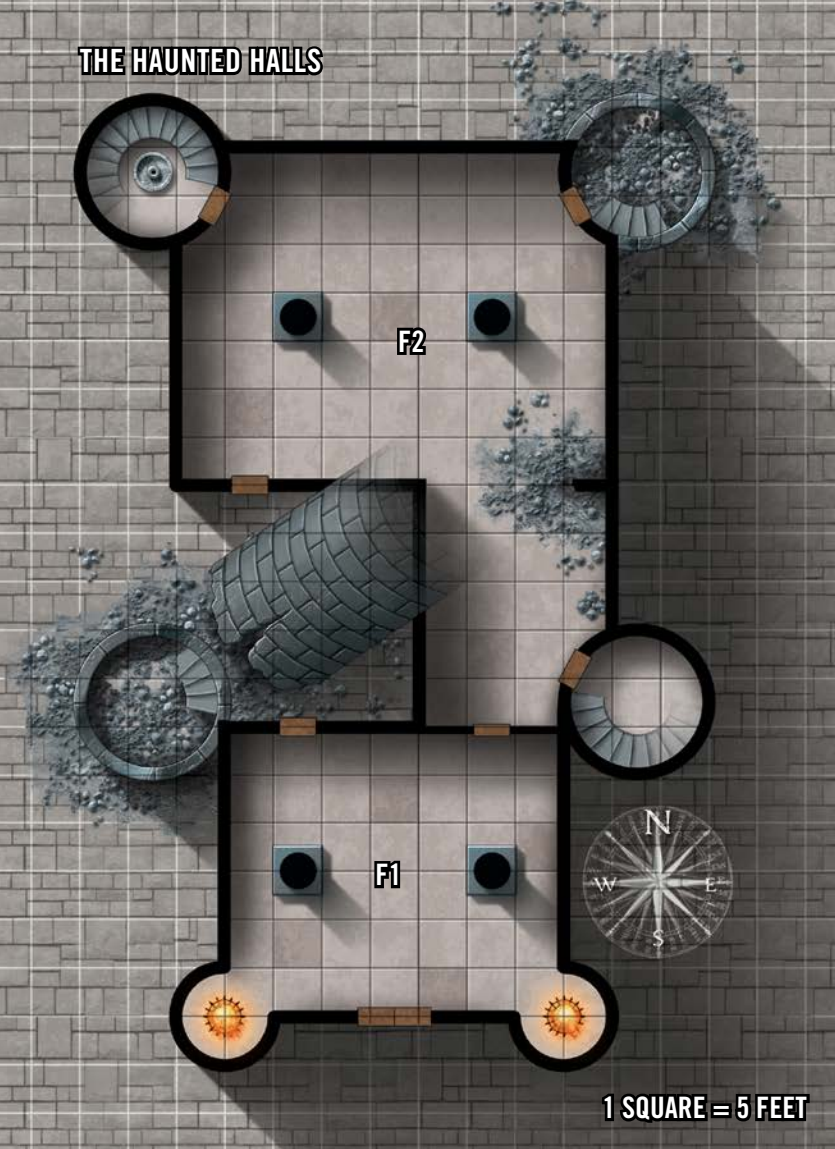
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THE HAUNTED HALLS



the start of its next turn, the poltergeist becomes invisible again.

Telekinetic Storm ➤➤ (concentrate, evocation, occult);

The poltergeist telekinetically throws numerous small and jagged chunks of stone rubble, either spreading them out among multiple foes or directing them at one target.

- When this effect is spread out among multiple foes, the poltergeist makes a telekinetic object Strike at a -2 penalty against each creature within 30 feet. These count as one attack for the poltergeist's multiple attack penalty, and the penalty doesn't increase until after all the attacks.
- When this effect has only one target, the poltergeist makes a telekinetic object Strike against the target, and the damage increases to 6d12. It deals 2d12 damage on a failure, and no damage on a critical failure.

F3. BEDROOM

The stone bed and a crumbling desk in one corner are all that remain of this ancient bedchamber's furnishings. A

robe in surprisingly good condition lies discarded on the floor near the foot of the bed.

If the Saggorak poltergeists in area F2 aren't defeated, they surge up here to attack intruders, gaining a +2 status bonus to attack rolls and save DCs as a result of their fury at the intrusion into King Harral's chambers.

Treasure: King Harral's robe lies discarded here—a *gray robe of the archmagi*. Because the king is now evil, he can no longer gain a benefit from this robe. He sees it as a painful reminder of his past, and he has no interest in having it returned to him. If a PC dons King Harral's robe, no incorporeal undead in the city will initiate an attack on the PC or any ally within 60 feet.

Sanctum of the Starved

While the Starved aren't particularly well organized as a faction, they do look to one particular member as an inspiration and a leader—the dwarven ghost Falrok. Destroying him will be enough to disrupt what little coherence the Starved have and force those

found in the Temple of All Gods to abandon their positions. Falrok has long dwelt in the depths of a series of lazurite mines, a twisting network of tunnels that sprawls below Saggorak. Without directions from King Harral, discovering Falrok's den should be difficult, but if the PCs work with the Old King, you can assume they make it to area **G1** of the mines with little difficulty.

There are no external light sources in the mine, and ceiling heights average 20 feet in the relatively expansive chambers detailed below.

The mine's walls are streaked with marrowstone, a white mineral that exudes lazurite as a black, radioactive crust on its surface. The leader of the Starved faction has been spending much of his time here lately, soaking in the radiation that emanates from the mineral. All four areas of the Sanctum of the Starved are infused with this hazardous material. Lazurite radiation creates an enjoyable sensation in the necrotic flesh of undead. The mineral exudes an aura of necromantic energy, and any intact corpse left within 30 feet of a deposit of the material has a 50% chance to rise as a free-willed ghoul or ghastr. Undead creatures within this area gain a +2 status bonus to all saving throws against positive effects.

G1. SANCTUM ENTRANCE Low 14

Mine cart tracks crisscross the relatively level floor of this cavern, while the walls of the place are streaked with crusty black ribbons of grainy, stone-like material. An ancient mine cart lies on its side on the tracks, its contents strewn on the ground.

Creatures: The art of crafting golems out of marrowstone or infusing them with lazurite is a painstaking process that most crafters never master. Falrok himself never quite managed the creation of actual marrowstone golems, but he came close. This room, the entrance to his sanctum, is protected by three of these constructs—ironically stronger individually than the classic marrowstone golems he never quite managed to craft. Each of these lazurite-infused stone golems has been crafted to resemble hulking dwarven ghastrs. They attack on sight, and pursue foes throughout the Sanctum but not beyond into the mines themselves.

Unless the PCs take particular care to keep things silent, a fight here quickly draws the attention of the gashadokuro in area **G3**, along with Falrok himself—these two undead creatures join the combat here after two rounds, increasing the difficulty of the encounter to Severe 14.

LAZURITE-INFUSED STONE GOLEMS (3) CREATURE 12

RARE **N** **LARGE** **CONSTRUCT** **GOLEM** **MINDLESS**

Perception +22

Skills Athletics +28

Str +8, **Dex** -1, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

AC 33; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19, **Will** +20

HP 195; **Immunities** acid, bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, magic (see below), mental, necromancy, nonlethal, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistance** physical 10 (except adamantite)

Golem Antimagic (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 184) harmed by cold and positive (5d10, 2d8 from areas and persistent damage); healed by negative (area 2d8 HP); slowed by earth

Necrotic Field (aura, divine, necromancy) 30 feet. Positive energy effects within the golem's necrotic field deal only half their normal damage. Additionally, all undead within its aura deal an additional 1d6 negative damage with their natural attacks.

Vulnerable to Stone to Flesh a *stone to flesh* spell negates the golem's antimagic and its resistance to physical damage for 1 round. A *flesh to stone* spell reverses this effect immediately.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ fist +26 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 bludgeoning plus 2d6 negative

Inexorable March ♦ The golem Strides up to its Speed, pushing back each creature whose space it moves into and damaging them if they try to stop its movement. A creature can bar the way by succeeding at a DC 36 Fortitude save. On a critical success, the resisting creature takes no damage; otherwise, it takes damage equal to that dealt by the golem's fist Strike.

Necrotic Affliction ◀ (necromancy) **Trigger** The golem hits a slowed creature. **Effect** The creature must succeed at a DC 34 Fortitude save or become drained 1 (or drained 2 on a critical failure) as the golem's lazurite leeches vital energies and causes wounds to rot.

Necrotic Pulse ♦ (arcane, concentrate, disease, necromancy, negative) Each creature in a 10-foot emanation must succeed at a DC 32 Fortitude save or take 1d6 persistent necrotic damage and be slowed 1 for 1 minute as their flesh and bones temporarily atrophy. The golem can't use Necrotic Pulse again for 1d4 rounds.

G2. GOLEM CRAFTING CAVE

Several well-used pickaxes in various states of repair are scattered across the ground of this chamber. A half-filled mine cart rests on tracks, while partially completed carvings of dwarven ghastrs adorn the walls to the south and east.

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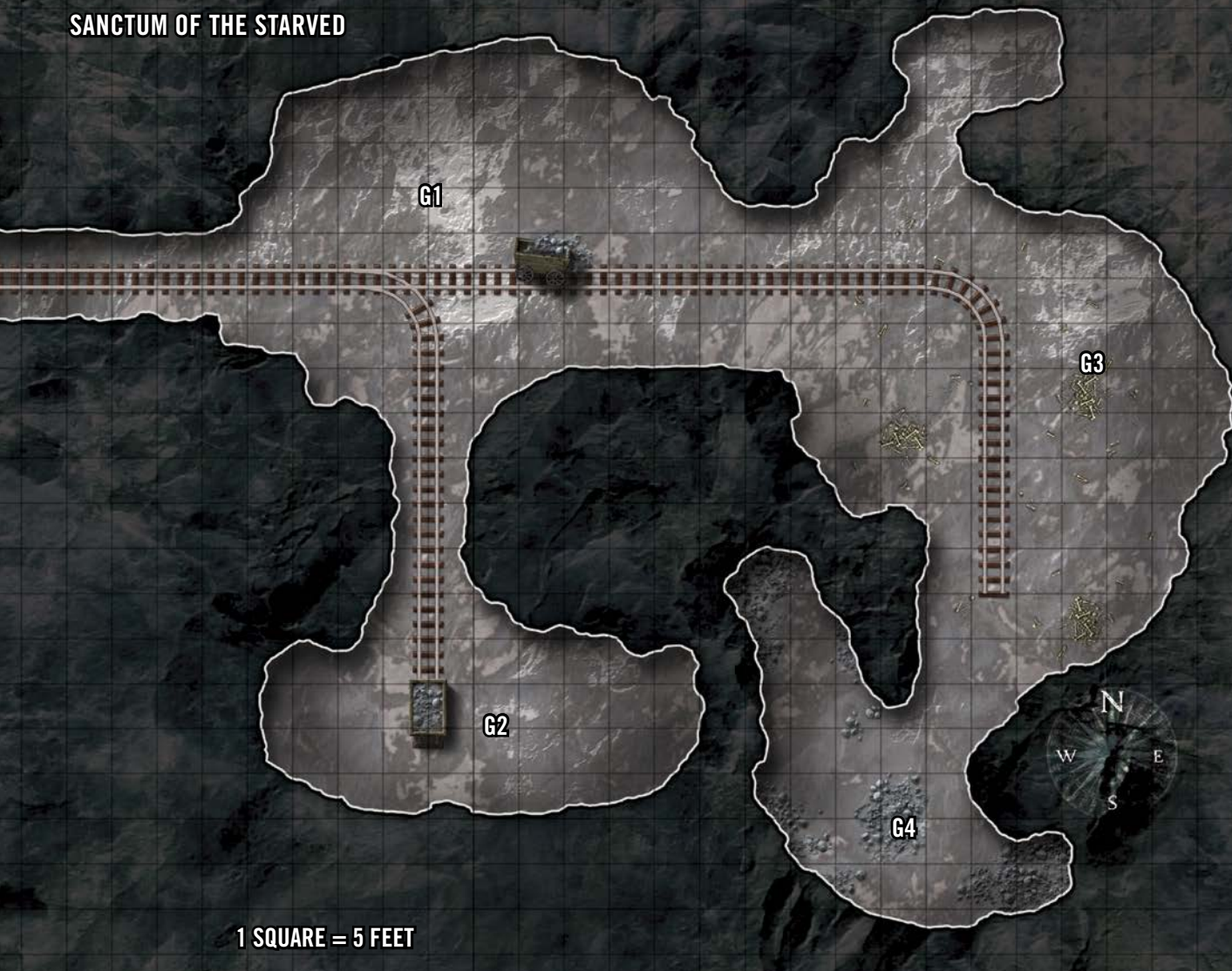
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1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Falrok periodically employs a mix of slaves and undead to mine raw lazurite from here, and also tinkers with the creation of new bodies for golems he has yet to create. A successful DC 30 Crafting check to Recall Knowledge is enough to note that the care taken in this cavern's wall carvings confirms that someone intends at some date to animate them as golems, but that this date is still far off.

Treasure: While most of the tools on the floor here are mundane and well-worn, one stands out—a high-grade adamantine pick.

G3. INSPECTION CHAMBER MODERATE 14

An empty mine track curves to the south in this large chamber, then dead ends before an entrance to a smaller cavern beyond. A half-dozen bodies in varying stages of decomposition lie near this dead end. The walls of this chamber are carved with the leering visages of hundreds of undead dwarves.

Creatures: Falrok is currently resting here, reflecting

on the contents of a letter he recently received from Ilssrah Embermead (see area G4). He initially pledged loyalty to Veshumirix out of fear, but over time this fear has transitioned into admiration, and he's increasingly taken interest in the plots of Veshumirix and Embermead alike. He now looks forward to assisting with the conquest of Kovlar and devouring the city's people.

Falrok tries to fight within range of the pile of bodies so that he can Consume Flesh as needed once he's wounded. The corpses are former slaves handed over by the Scarlet Triad, as revealed by the group's symbol burned into their flesh. There are 6 corpses in the pile. Falrok also commands the loyalty of a gashadokuro that never travels out of sight of its master.

FALROK

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Perception +28; darkvision

Languages Draconic, Dwarven, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +29, Crafting +24, Deception +27, Diplomacy +27, Saggorak Lore +24, Society +24, Stealth +29

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +6

Lazurite-Infused Flesh Falrok's flesh is infused with lazurite, and he gains the benefits undead creatures gain from this mineral at all times. When in an area infused with lazurite, such as the Sanctum of the Starved, these benefits increase to a +3 circumstance bonus to saving throws against positive effects. This infusion also grants Falrok his resistance to positive damage.

AC 37; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +29, **Will** +23; +3 status to all saves vs. positive

HP 250, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** positive 15

Stench 10 feet (aura, olfactory). A creature entering the aura or starting its turn there must succeed at a DC 34 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (plus slowed 1 as long as it's sickened on a critical failure). While within the aura, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves against disease and to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Opportune Backstab **Trigger** A creature within Falrok's melee reach is hit by a melee attack from one of his allies.

Effect When Falrok's enemy is hit by one of his allies, he capitalizes upon the distraction, making a Strike against the triggering creature.

Speed 30 feet, burrow 20 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +30 (finesse), **Damage** 3d8+12 piercing plus ghast fever and paralysis

Melee **◆** claw +30 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d6+12 slashing plus paralysis

Consume Flesh **◆** (manipulate) **Requirements** Falrok is adjacent to the corpse of a creature that died within the last hour. **Effect** Falrok devours a chunk of the corpse and regains 8d6 hit points. He can regain Hit Points from any given corpse only once.

Ghast Fever (disease, virulent) **Saving Throw** DC 34 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 4d8 negative damage and regains half as many Hit Points from all healing (1 day); **Stage 3** 4d8 negative damage and gains no benefit from healing (1 day); **Stage 4** dead, and rises as a ghast the next midnight.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) Any living creature hit by Falrok's attack must succeed at a DC 34 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save.

Sneak Attack 4d6 precision damage.

Swift Leap **◆** (move) Falrok jumps up to half his Speed. This movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Scoundrel When Falrok

successfully Feints, the target is flat-footed against melee attacks he attempts against it until the end of his next turn. On a critical success, the target is flat-footed against all melee attacks until the end of their next turn, not just Falrok's.

GASHADOKURO

CREATURE 13

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Initiative Perception +24

Repercussions: Falrok has led the Starved for centuries, and each of these undead constantly feel a tiny pulse of his influence in their empty stomachs. With his defeat, all remaining Starved in Saggorak feel a sudden pang of hunger unlike anything they've felt since they were alive—an echo of the last gnaw of the starvation that killed them. The undead universally recognize this pang as the result of Falrok's death and retreat into hiding—in time (after a period of months, likely beyond the scope of Age of Ashes) the Starved will emerge to seek a new leader among their kind, but for the rest of "Fires of the Haunted City" the PCs should fear no further attacks from these foes.

G4. BACK CAVERN

This small cavern bears no signs of excavation or mining, and its walls are thickly crusted with black

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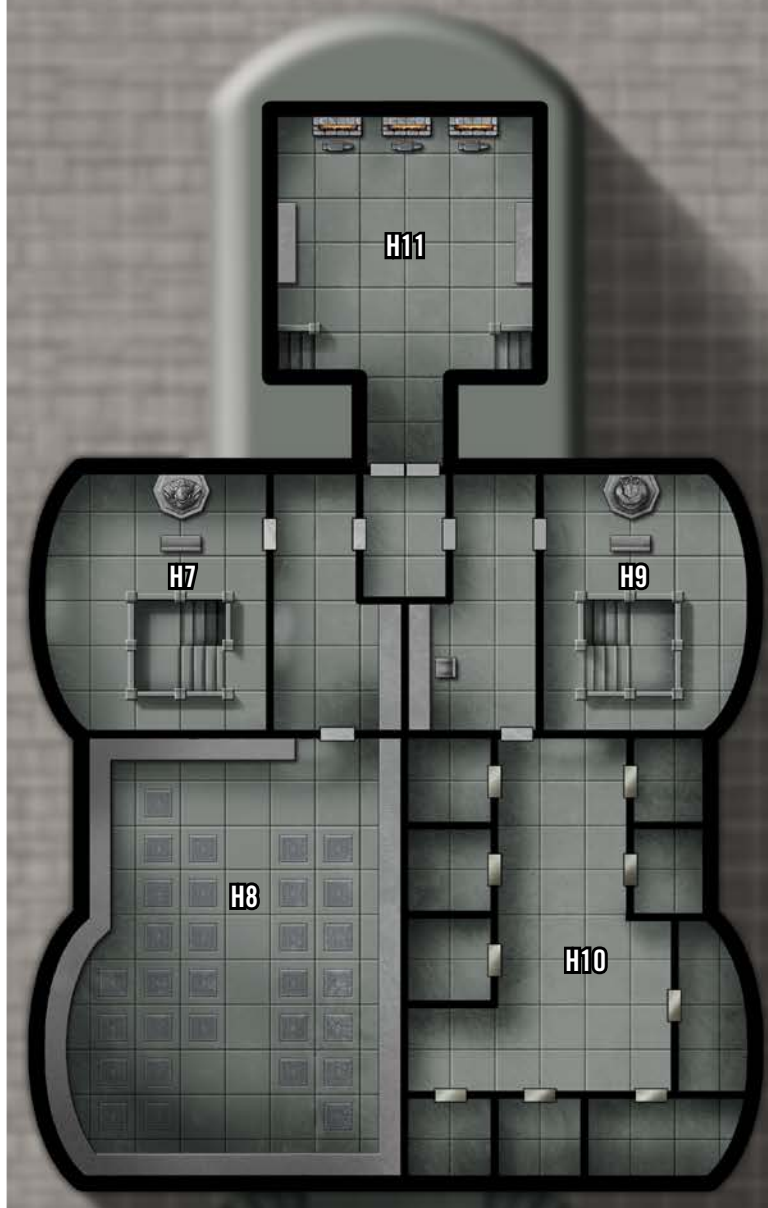
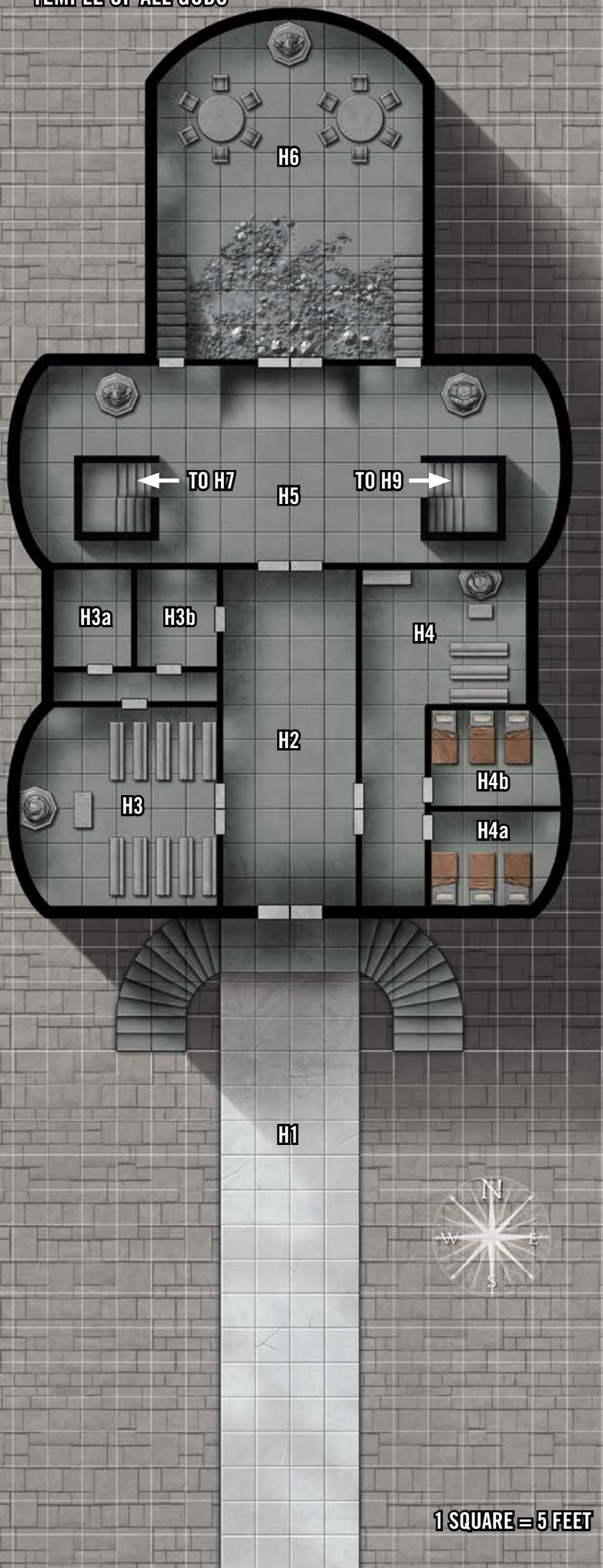
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Falrok

TEMPLE OF ALL GODS



grimy stone. The well-gnawed bones of many dwarves lie scattered about the room in heaps.

Clue: Falrok uses this room as a personal retreat. A successful DC 30 Perception check made while searching the room turns up a discarded letter sent to Falrok, written in Dwarven and signed by Ilssrah Embermead, in which the dwarf asks Falrok to meet with her in the atrium of the Temple of All Gods at “The first forge-hour” the following day. The letter explains that someone within Kovlar has been interfering with her plans, and suggests that Falrok remain on high alert from the intruders. In the letter, Ilssrah also describes these intruders, and the PCs should have no problem realizing she’s describing them. On a critical success with the Perception check, a character also finds a large iron key hidden in a skull, itself hidden in a nook. This key opens the front doors to the Temple of All Gods, and was provided to Falrok by Ilssrah as a token of trust.

Temple of All Gods

This towering stone temple once honored the entire dwarven pantheon—even Droskar, albeit in a backhanded manner. As a show of piety, Saggorn the Holy, Saggorak’s founder, spared no expense in funding its construction. One of the temple’s most astonishing features is its incorporation of an immense natural pillar of stone that connects the cavern floor to its ceiling high above—the northern reaches of the temple are built into this huge column, giving the entire structure a much more imposing look than if it simply stood on its own. The temple once had separate rooms and functional spaces dedicated to each deity’s area of interest, though Embermead and her allies have altered Torag’s chapel to honor Droskar instead. The temple once also had numerous outbuildings, such as a kitchen, baths, stables, and event spaces, but these structures were destroyed during Veshumirix’s conquest of Saggorak. Unless otherwise noted, there are no light sources within the Temple of All Gods, and ceiling height averages at 20 feet.

H1. THE APPROACH MODERATE 14

The looming facade of this towering stone cathedral is decorated with carvings that show a powerful dwarven hero in various acts of defeating all manner of strange monsters, single-handedly building huge stone structures, and forging powerful weapons. A pair of curving stone stairs rise up to meet a looming iron double door in the middle of the building, and a nest of some sort crafted of rubble and bones lies sprawled between the two stone stairwells.

REINFORCEMENTS

If the PCs haven’t defeated Falrok in the Sanctum of the Starved, they encounter additional foes in the Temple of All Gods in the form of two gashadokuro and Falrok himself. Falrok fights with his ally Ilssrah; you can place the two gashadokuro as you see fit elsewhere in the complex. If at least one PC wears the royal raiment from the Haunted Halls, they can avoid the haunt in area H10 and the warsworn in area H8.

With a successful DC 32 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a PC notes that the facade carvings depict a dramatized version of the city’s early history, with a focus on Saggorn the Holy. The carvings show him as a wise, pious, and benevolent ruler, who commanded the respect of dwarves and humans alike. They also depict him as an excellent military commander, leading armies of virtuous and disciplined dwarves to battle against orcs, monsters from the Darklands, and other dwarves who are depicted in a far less flattering light.

The iron double door itself is kept locked—keys for the doors are carried by all of the building’s inhabitants (as well as hidden in Falrok’s lair in area G4). The doors can be opened with a successful DC 32 Thievery check to Pick a Lock or a DC 34 Athletics check to Force them Open, or by enough damage (although this method is likely to alert the duergar in H2).

Creature: An immense monstrosity—a three-headed centipede-like monster known as a mukradi—has nested for decades in the curve formed by the stairs leading up to the temple’s entrance. The monster was hostile to the Scarlet Triad agents when they first arrived in the region, but several offerings of slaves and a bit of skilled diplomacy secured the cooperation of the beast. It now considers the duergar and slaver inhabitants of the Temple of All Gods as, if not allies, at least not enemies. However, as soon as it notices the PCs, it roars up out of its nest to attack them, fighting to the death.

ELITE MUKRADI

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 239

Initiative Perception +26

H2. CENTRAL HALL LOW 14

The stone floor of this otherwise bare hallway is polished to a reflective sheen. Stone doors open in the north, west, and east walls, while iron doors stand to the south.

AGE OF ASHES

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Creatures: As part of the ongoing negotiations with the duergar slavers, several powerful slave lords from the Duergar metropolis of Hagegraf have agreed to reside in the Temple of All Gods until a final agreement with the Scarlet Triad can be reached. A pair of these slave lords is always on duty here to ensure that these negotiations aren't compromised by intruders; the duergar attack on sight, but if one of them is reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points, they make a fighting retreat to area H4 to join their resting companions and make their last stand.

DUERGAR SLAVE LORDS (2)

CREATURE 13

RARE LE MEDIUM DUERGAR DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +23, Intimidation +22, Society +21, Stealth +27, Survival +26

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Duergar Slave Lord

Items +2 striking composite longbow (100 arrows), +1 striking hatchet (2), key to the Temple of All Gods, +1 resilient studded leather

AC 35; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +28, **Will** +23; +2 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 240

Improved Evasion When a duergar slave lord rolls a success on a Reflex save, they get a critical success instead. When they roll a critical failure on a Reflex save, they get a failure instead. Finally, when they fail a Reflex save against a damaging effect, they take half damage.

Light Blindness

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ hatchet +28 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ composite longbow +29 (deadly 1d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 33; **2nd** enlarge (self only), invisibility (self only)

Hunt Prey ♦ (concentrate) The slave lord designates as its prey a single creature that they can see or hear or that they are Tracking. They gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks when they Seek their prey and a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks when they track their prey. They also ignore the penalty for making ranged attacks within their second range increment against their prey.

The first time a slave lord hits their hunted prey in a round, they deal 2d8 additional precision damage. A slave lord can have only one prey designated at a time.

Hunter's Flurry ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The slave lord makes two bow Strikes or two melee Strikes, each using a different weapon. These Strikes must target the slave lord's prey. If both Strikes hit, combine their damage for the purpose of

resistances and weaknesses.

H3. CHAPEL OF BOLKA

A pair of rows of stone benches line the north and south sections of this chapel, facing a pulpit to the west overlooked by a kind-looking dwarven woman holding a mace in one hand. The statue is crusted with dust, and in places is badly chipped—broken arrows littering the floor around the statue suggest the source of the chipping.

A successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge notes that this chapel is devoted to the dwarven goddess of marriage, Bolka.

A critical success is sufficient to remember the tradition of storing wedding rings and other nuptial gifts in hidden compartments within conference rooms near such chapels in the belief that doing so would strengthen the resulting wedding—recalling this lore grants the PCs a +4 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to locate the hidden treasure in area **H3a**.

The damage to the statue was done by irreverent duergar slave lords using Bolka as target practice.

The small chambers on the north of the chapel (areas **H3a–H3b**) were once used for private conversations between couples and priests. The walls setting off the hallways to these rooms are filled with regular rows of holes, forming a lacy lattice pattern. Golden chains hang from many of the lattices. Traditionally, couples wrote promises to each other on paper or metal and hung them from these chains.

Treasure: The western conference room (area **H3a**) still contains a small stash of jewelry hidden behind a sliding panel in the eastern wall. A successful DC 38 Perception check reveals this panel; sliding it aside reveals a collection of rings and jewelry worth 500 gp, along with a *major ring of fire resistance*.

H4. FOLGRIT'S WING MODERATE 14

The walls of this hallway are depicted with what may have once been beautiful carvings of dwarven children and mothers, but the damage done to the walls has ruined any aesthetic value they may have once had. To the north, the hall widens out into a small chapel.

This portion of the temple was dedicated to Folgrit, dwarven goddess of motherhood and children. In addition to providing support for young mothers, the temple took in orphans from throughout the city and facilitated their adoption into loving families.

Creatures: The two rooms on the east (areas **H4a–H4b**) were once childrens' rooms. They now house Embermead and her allies, who have placed sleeping bags atop the children's old stone bed frames. Currently, three duergar slave lords rest in **H4b** (**H4a** is used by Ilssrah alone, although she's currently found in area **H12**). Unless roused by allies, they take a –4 circumstance penalty to Initiative checks.

DUERGAR SLAVE LORDS (3)

CREATURE 13

Page 50

Initiative Perception +26

H5. ATRIUM

Two large statues of an imposing dwarven man preside

over this room. In the north, a ramp slopes upward, leading toward a majestic iron double door, while matching stairways lead up to the east and west.

The western flight of stairs lead up to area **H7**, while the eastern ones lead to area **H9**. The central ramp to the north once provided access to **H12**, but Embermead and her allies jammed these doors by piling several tons of rubble on the other side of it. Now, the only direct access to area **H12** is via the stairs in area **H11**.

H6. HALLS OF OATH AND MERCY LOW 13

Two sets of stairs lead down from the entrances into this hall. A pair of circular altars surrounded by stone chairs sit in the middle of the room. Several pieces of parchment lie on the stone altars, while the walls have been inscribed with hundreds, if not thousands of words.

This room was primarily used for meetings international or personal in nature when the participants wanted to ensure peaceful conduct. On one end of the spectrum, they hosted diplomatic meetings with ambassadors from other kingdoms. On the other end, people seeking to resolve individual disputes would call upon the dwarven gods' blessing for a peaceful resolution. Each time a significant feud or ongoing conflict was resolved in the hall, the priests inscribed the names of the participants upon the walls of the chamber, along with a brief summary of the feud's topic. Those who resumed conflicts that these walls claimed were resolved were subject to harsh fines or could be arrested and imprisoned in the dungeons below. The walls still contain an inscribed warning to that effect in Dwarven, "Go now in peace, those who Grundinnar and Kols have blessed here. To break this sacred oath is to invite Drangvitt's wrath." As the inscription suggests, the priests of Grundinnar and Kols shared these halls. The name of Grundinnar, god of friendship and loyalty, was invoked when building relationships was at the forefront of the discussion. In contrast, the name of Kols the Oathkeeper was invoked when the participants wanted to ensure that no one would break their solemn promises.

This room is also where the Scarlet Triad has been pursuing negotiations with duergar slavers from Hagegraf, as a few minutes looking through the parchment notes reveals—this examination also confirms many of Ilssrah's plans for the region, as detailed on page 3; use these notes to answer any minor questions the PCs may still have about the dwarven woman's goals in the region, as you see fit.

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Creatures: A pair of two-armed glabrezus stand vigil here, agents of Droskar whose smaller arms were removed years ago as punishment. Embermead summoned them to serve as protection should the negotiations with the duergar turn sour, and promised to work magic to restore their missing arms after their service is completed. Embermead is cautious around the demons, but she hasn't entirely escaped their manipulations. The glabrezus attack the PCs on sight—note that they lack the claw attacks of typical treachery demons, and must rely only on their pincers and jaws in melee.

GLABREZUS (2)

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 79

Initiative Deception +28

Treasure: A successful DC 34 Perception check is enough to discover a hidden panel in the northern wall that contains a small stash of scrolls. These consist of a *scroll of restoration* (6th level), a *scroll of divine decree*, and a *scroll of regenerate*.

H7. MAGRIM'S ALTAR

The remnants of candles still cover a squat stone altar decorated with images of skulls crawling with moles. A serene-faced statue of a dwarven man holding a hammer in one hand and a mole in the other stands nearby.

This chamber was devoted to Magrim, the dwarven god of the afterlife. The altar and his statue can be identified as such with a successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge.

Treasure: A successful DC 34 Perception check is enough to notice that one of the skulls on the altar is in fact a cleverly hidden drawer. Opening this secret compartment reveals a single elixir of rejuvenation in a gold vial bearing Magrim's likeness (the vial alone is worth 100 gp).

H8. MAGRIM'S MAUSOLEUM MODERATE 14

The walls of this large room consist of narrow shelves that hold hundreds upon hundreds of small stone or metal urns.

The urns on display in the walls of this mausoleum contain the ashes of several hundred dwarves.

Creatures: As the numbers of the dead swelled in the last days of Saggorak, Magrimites were forced to leave bodies in this room to await burial, dressing them in their finest armor and using magic to prevent their decay. When the last of the Magrimites perished, these

bodies combined into a grotesque mass of flesh—a warsworn. The massive undead monster remains here to this day, and attacks any who enter—Scarlet Triad, duergar, or PC alike. It does not pursue foes from this room.

WARSWORN

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Bestiary 323

Initiative Perception +27

H9. DRANGVITT'S ALTAR

This cramped chapel is infused with a sense of menace by a massive statue of a furious dwarf in the north, his hand extended forward to clutch a stone offering bowl over an altar stone. The altar is carved with the image of hounds chasing dwarves holding sacks of coins.

This shrine is dedicated to Drangvitt, the dwarven god of debt, pursuit, and vengeance, as a DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge reveals.

Treasure: Several precious items still remain in Drangvitt's offering bowl. While both Ilssrah and the dwarves have little regard for most dwarven deities, they do share a cautious respect bordering on suspicious fear of him, and while they've been tempted by the valuables that still sit in his offering bowl, fears of divine curses have kept them from robbing the shrine. While the PCs might have similar fears, no such curse exists—the treasures in the offering bowl include three talismans—a *flame navette*, an *iron cudgel*, and a *viper's fang*—as well as various pieces of jewelry worth a total of 200 gp.

H10. JAIL

MODERATE 14

A total of nine jail cells made of iron bars line the walls of this room. Within each cell lie crumbled tangles of dry dwarven bones.

Those who committed offenses that dishonored the gods were once imprisoned in these cells. While breaking pacts sealed in the Halls of Oath and Mercy was the most common crime to merit this fate, other crimes could also earn this punishment, depending upon the judgment of the temple's priests. In times of conflict, the dungeons also held high-ranking military deserters, who were despised as traitors acting against the teachings of several members of the dwarven pantheon.

Hazard: As Saggorak's days grew short, the final inhabitants of this jail were particularly reviled. Mass starvation took hold, and a group of

opportunistic dwarves plotted to lower Saggorak's defenses and let the orc armies in, in exchange for the orcs sparing their lives and letting them flee to the surface. However, one of the members of this group, Ludika, had a crisis of conscience before going through with it. She informed what remained of Saggorak's military of the plot. The military arrested the entire group and threw them in this prison. Blinded by fury, the military threw Ludika into the same cell as the people she had just exposed. Within hours, a fight broke out, and her former coconspirators beat her to death. That night, her spirit returned and killed everyone in the prison, including her murderers and all of the guards. Lacking the resources and the will to deal with this situation, the survivors of Saggorak simply sealed the prison to prevent anyone from entering. The haunting spirits remain as strong as ever in this room today.

ECHOES OF BETRAYAL

HAZARD 16

UNIQUE NE COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth DC 35 (master) to hear the quiet murmurs of angry spirits

Description Malevolent spirits led by a ghostly image of Ludika rise and begin a deadly brawl. These spirits attempt to overwhelm living creatures, forcing them to join the battle.

Disable Religion DC 35 (master) three times to exorcise the spirits or Diplomacy DC 39 (expert) three times to talk them down.

Confuse 2 (emotion, fear, illusion, mental, occult)

Trigger At least three creatures enter area **H10**. **Effect** The haunt takes control of all creatures in the prison, affecting them with *confusion* (8th level, DC 37).

Routine (1 action) As 1 action, the haunt causes a barrage of ghostly fists to lash from the walls, floors, and ceiling. The haunt attempts a spectral fist Strike against each creature in area **H10**.

Melee spectral fist +35 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 5d10 bludgeoning, and the creature must attempt a new DC 37 Will save against *confusion* if it's not already confused.

Reset After 24 hours, the haunt returns.

The spirits are permanently put to rest only if a lawfully appointed judge from Saggorak (or Kovlar) comes into the prison, takes damage from the haunt, and survives the attack.

against the northern wall of this cramped room, the ceiling a mere six feet high. The walls are decorated with images of a stern dwarf with one arm wrapped in chains, which he uses to whip enslaved dwarven smiths. The three anvils before the forges are themselves likewise decorated with imagery of wrapped chains.

To symbolize the sin that caused Droskar to be cast out from Torag's forges, Droskar's section is smaller and intentionally placed in a way to invite comparison with other gods' sections. By design, reaching Droskar's forge requires going down stairs and walking past the chapel of at least one other god. Most of its decorations are deliberately inferior copies of those that adorn Torag's hall. It even has

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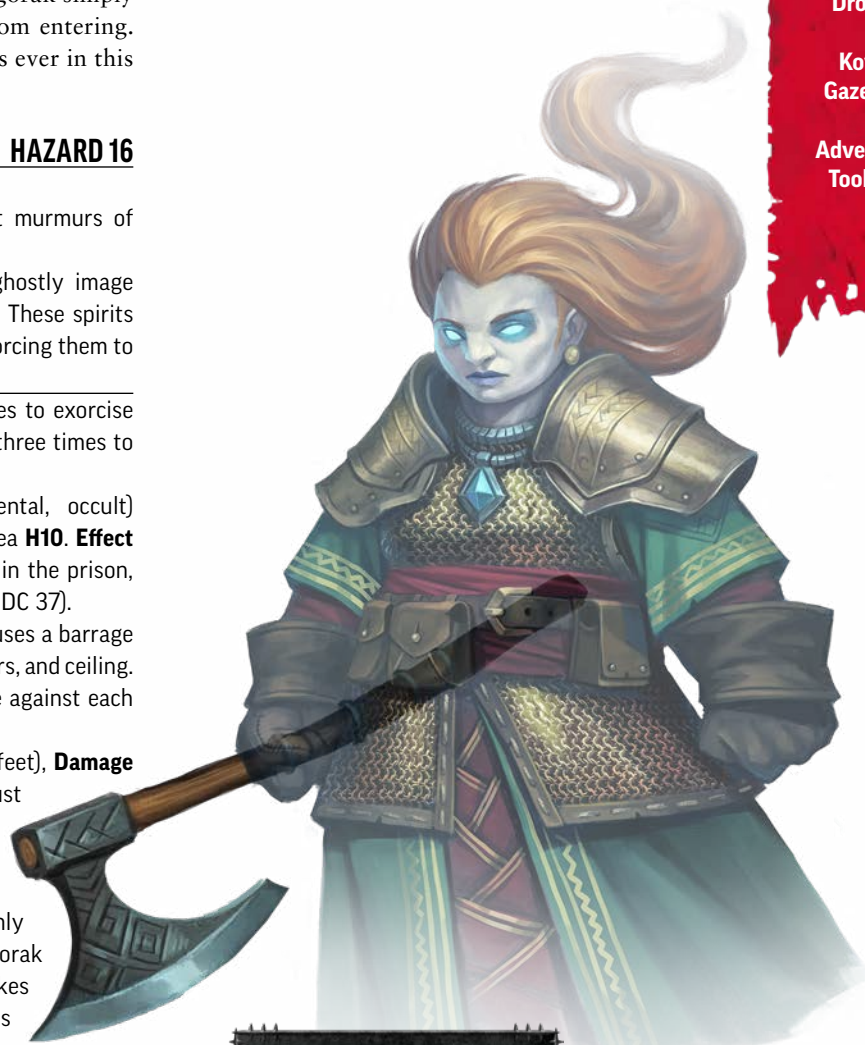
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H11. DROSKAR'S FORGE

LOW 14

A set of three forges with matching anvils are positioned

smaller forges, which are not connected to the magma channels that power Torag's. The deliberate slights inherent in the design of Droskar's hall of worship were plain to the Dark Smith's followers.

As a result, few of them used these spaces. Instead, they created the same hidden forge beneath Kovlar that the PCs visited previously (see area C). The two staircases in this room lead up through the walls of this forge, winding twice around the circumference to eventually reach area H12 above.

Creatures: A group of four Scarlet Triad agents rest and relax here when they're not needed by Ilssrah. They attack intruders on sight, but as soon as one of them is slain, the other three make a fighting retreat up the stairs to area H12 to join their leader, Ilssrah.

SCARLET TRIAD AGENTS (4)

CREATURE 11

Page 31 (Thea)

Initiative Perception +21

H12. TORAG'S FORGE

SEVERE 14

This room combines elements of a smithy and a temple, its three massive stone forges each accompanied by metal anvils that seem to double as altars. Carvings of a towering dwarven smith adorn the walls, particularly to the south, where they frame an iron double door that seems to have been partially melted shut.

The temple's builders placed Torag's shrine in the core of the stone pillar behind the Temple of All Gods, itself located above a deep well of magma far below. Staircases to the south wind down and out of the pillar to area H11, while to the north a much larger staircase winds down in a spiral pattern through the heart of the pillar. These stairs descend for several hundred feet, eventually connecting to area I1 in Veshumirix's Lair.

Relief carvings of Torag decorate the walls. A PC who examines the reliefs and succeeds at a DC 25 Crafting check recognizes that the carving style of each of Torag's faces is different from the style of the rest of the relief. PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check notices that these faces look like depictions of Droskar, rather than Torag.

Creatures: It is here that the PCs finally confront

Ilssrah Embermead, who is guarded by a pair of iron golems. Ilssrah demands to know why the PCs have been interfering in her plans. She tries to find out how much the PCs have figured out about the Scarlet Triad's operations without revealing any information about their future schemes. Quick-thinking PCs might be able to learn something from her with the right sorts of answers or taunts, at your option.

Though she may hate the PCs, Embermead isn't willing to die to ensure their downfall. If she is critically injured and she can find an opportunity to do so, she attempts to flee. If she does so, she may be encountered in the next adventure as you see fit, but if she does so, she's forced to leave the *Guiding Chisel* behind (see Treasure, below).



Ilssrah Embermead

ILSSRAH EMBERMEAD

CREATURE 15

Page 89

Initiative Perception +29

IRON GOLEMS (2)

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 188

Initiative Perception +21

Treasure: Embermead has long guarded the *Guiding Chisel*, a magical item that also functions as the portal key to Duskgate. With this key, the PCs could technically leave now and progress with their exploration of Alseta's ring. However, if they don't enter Veshumirix's lair below and confront the dragon, there could be serious consequences for Kovlar. The chisel itself lies on the main altar forge, where Ilssrah has been spending many days in futile attempts to refocus the chisel's magic to function more in line with her Droskarian beliefs.

The Dragon's Domain

Of all of the members and allies of the Scarlet Triad, only Embermead has survived the journey down to Veshumirix's volcanic home, but today, the dragon has few visitors. As long as the PCs venture down to Veshumirix's lair within a week of defeating Embermead, Veshumirix doesn't realize that anything is amiss. As such, the PCs have time to rest and recover before entering the inferno below.

Veshumirix makes his lair in a series of magma-

filled chambers beneath Saggorak. Underneath the surface of the molten rock, an assortment of magma channels plunges many miles deep into the earth. Many of the rooms in Veshumirix's lair feature open lakes of lava. A creature within 10 feet of the surface of a lava lake at the end of their turn takes 5d6 fire damage (DC 27 basic Reflex save). A creature that starts its turn in lava takes 20d6 fire damage and is immobilized in the viscous liquid until it Escapes (DC 27) or uses a swim or burrow Speed to move through the molten stone.

I1. OVERFLOW CHAMBER **Low 14**

This room was originally designed as a safety mechanism to prevent eruptions from spewing lava throughout the temple.

Creatures: A group of Veshumirix's most loyal undead servants guard this room: four dragonscarred dead. They were once a group of valiant dwarven heroes from Highhelm. Fifty years ago, they attempted to slay Veshumirix to stop the dragon's path of conquest and destruction, but they were no match for the dragon's ferocity. Despite his boastful taunts, the dragon secretly admired their tenacity and skill, and he decided to turn them into his own servants through expensive and complicated necromantic rituals. The dragonscarred dead fight until destroyed, and pursue PCs relentlessly through these caverns, or even up into the Temple of All Gods above, but return to their post here if their foes flee beyond the Temple.

DRAGONSCARRED DEAD (4) **CREATURE 13**

Page 82

Initiative Perception +24

I2: THE GATEKEEPER **Low 14**

Massive stalactites hang down from the roof of this large cavern, while below a bubbling lake of magma sears and slowly churns. A stone ledge along the west wall narrows as it leads south to an exit, the lake of magma twenty feet below and the ceiling thirty feet above.

Creatures: A massive volcano-dwelling fey creature, a dalos named Kradolai, has recently settled in this chamber after exploring the churning tunnels of magma that riddle the Darklands below the Five Kings Mountains. Kradolai arrived in the

Material Plane by accident after she fell asleep in an angry First World volcano that then took offense at her slumber. She is making the best of her unusual situation and is actually enjoying her "vacation" to this world's magma veins, even if the lava is a bit cold for her taste.

Kradolai is particularly delighted with Veshumirix, as she's always found magma dragons to be appealing to the eye. Though Veshumirix was initially hostile to the fey, Kradolai proved that she had no interest in conquering the dragon's territory

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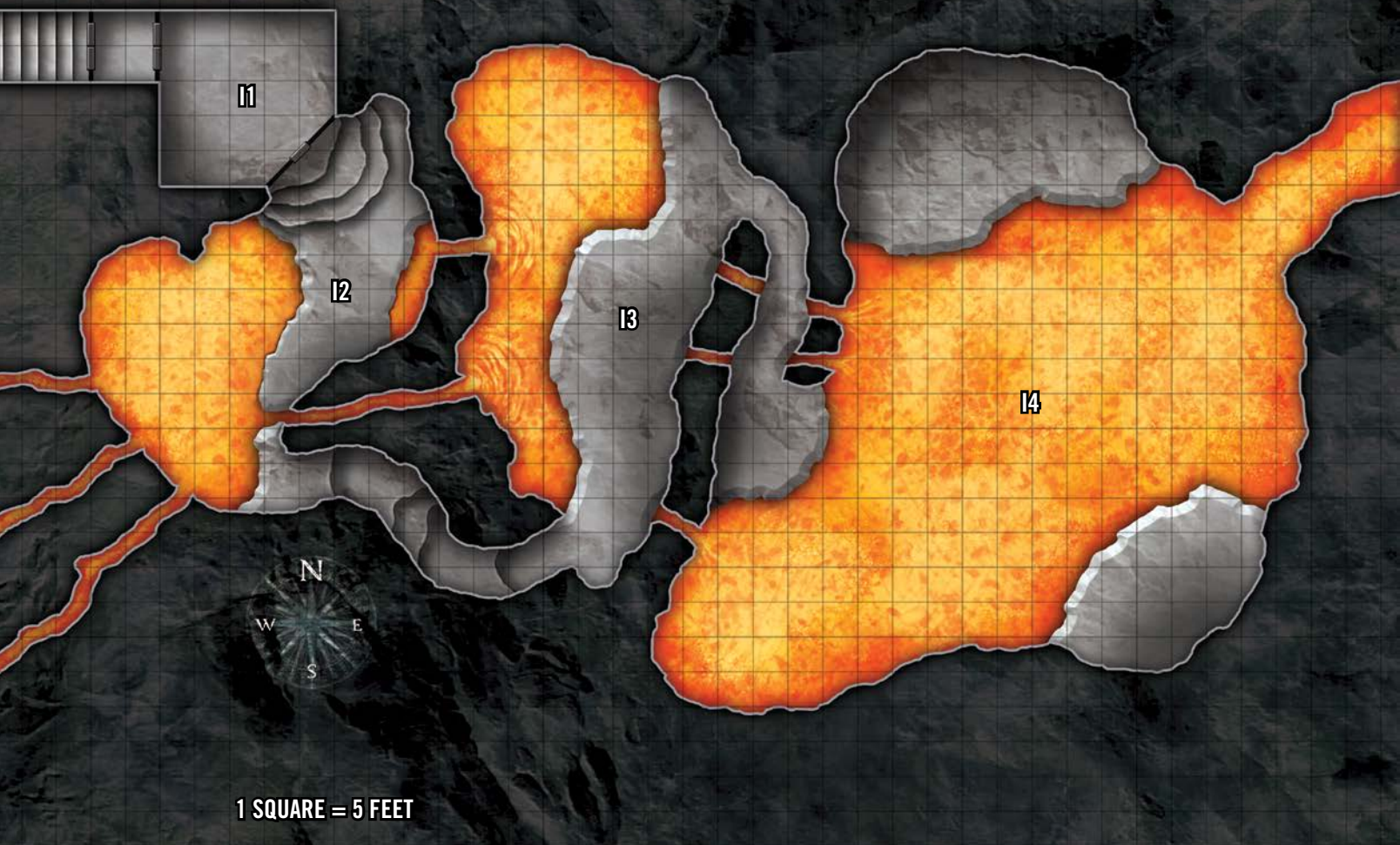
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and has indeed proven to be skilled at conversation at several topics of interest to Veshumirix. The two of them coexist peacefully, with an arrangement to protect each other's claims without interfering in each other's affairs. Kradolai greets the PCs cordially as a result, regretfully informing them that they may not continue. She attacks if the PCs disrespect her wishes, but her alliance with Veshumirix is not worth dying over; if Kradolai is reduced to fewer than a quarter of her Hit Points, she gives up on the situation and flees.

KRADOLAI

Female dalos (page 77)
Initiative Perception +23

CREATURE 13

13. GUARDIAN'S WALK MODERATE 14

Another huge lake of magma bubbles and seethes in the western half of this sweltering cavern. A wide stone ledge runs along the room's eastern side, twenty feet above the level of magma below.

Creatures: A pair of elemental infernos infused with volcanic power live here, appearing as creatures that combine the features of a great ape and a bipedal saurian. If they spot the PCs, they attack at once, using their Inferno Leap ability to lurch up out of the lava to land on the ledge above. Those who can't fit on the ledge remain below and use fire mote attacks at range.

MAGMA GUARDIANS (4)

CREATURE 12

Elite elemental infernos (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 149)
Initiative Perception +22

14. VESHUMIRIX'S LAIR

SEVERE 14

The cave tunnel ends in a ledge overlooking lake of lava that takes up the majority of this immense cavern. The lake is fed by a slow-moving magma channel in its northeast corner, and the ledge descends steeply until it is a mere ten feet above the surface. Two larger ledges are to the north and south—the southern one scattered with choice pieces of valuables and treasures!

Creatures: While Veshumirix has always been proud and ambitious, his conquest of Saggorak has made him arrogant. Ilssrah Embermead's recent overtures played well to his ego. By earning the dragon's trust, she learned of his goals as well. Veshumirix took particular interest in Embermead's claim that she and her allies were working to harness Dahak's destructive power, which was a slight embellishment on Embermead's part to cater to Veshumirix's interests.

The dragon immediately becomes enraged once he realizes that the PCs have invaded his lair and presumably slain many of his minions. He sees the PCs' arrival as an act of wartime invasion against a rightful king, which must not go unpunished. When combat begins, the dragon is joined by a pair of magma guardians—elementals who are unflinchingly loyal to Veshumirix and fight to the death to protect him.

If Veshumirix is defeated, the dragon roars in agony, telling the PCs that, even though they have stopped him, they will not survive Dahak's fury when he returns to cleanse the world of all life.

VESHUMIRIX

CREATURE 16

Page 91

Initiative Perception +28

MAGMA GUARDIANS (2)

CREATURE 12

Elite elemental infernos (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 149)

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: Veshumirix's hoard consists of 24,000 sp, 2,100 gp, 170 pp, 5,500 gp in various art objects and gemstones, a *dragonscale amulet* (see page 73) taken from a would-be dragonslayer, the *antimagic rune* stolen from Kovlar, and a +3 *greater striking ancestral echoing dwarven waraxe* (see page 73 for the *ancestral echoing* rune). While Veshumirix has already handed over the shard of the *orb of gold dragonkind* to the Scarlet Triad, his collection still holds the Crown of Saggorak. In addition to being a precious art object worth 1,000 gp, the crown is priceless to King Harral, and if the PCs return it to the undead dwarf (see *Concluding the Adventure*) he may be able to finally find peace.

Concluding the Adventure

Ilssrah Embermead's defeat puts an end to the Scarlet Triad's plans to court an alliance with duergar. Now that the *Guiding Chisel* is in their grasp, the PCs can open the way to Duskgate at their convenience. They can continue to build relations with their allies in Kovlar as they wish, but the dwarven city has no further direct role to play in Age of Ashes, as written.

By this point, with the true extent of the threats facing Kovlar revealed, most members of the Stonemasons' Guild come to accept that Chiselrock was corrupt. His betrayal deals a blow to the guild's prestige, but they slowly begin to distance themselves from his crimes.

If the PCs slew Veshumirix, Kovlar no longer has to fear a powerful and unpredictable alliance of foes operating within and outside of its walls. In recognition of the great services the PCs have done for the city, the Court of Regents grants them citizenship, as well as the right to receive a full decade of training from any of the guilds, free of charge.

If the PCs lose their battle against Veshumirix, or if they chose not to fight the dragon at all, he continues to solidify his base of power in Saggorak. Working with his undead minions and any surviving members of the Scarlet Triad, the dragon schemes to undermine and eventually conquer Kovlar. Rather than opening with a direct attack on the city, he aims to first weaken the Court of Regents, sow division, and bait soldiers into combat with an army of undead. Only then does he intend to burn through Kovlar's defenses and attack the city. The PCs, if they have not already been following the situation, receive a distress call at this time. Within a few months, unless heroes rise to stop him, the dragon succeeds at his plan to take over the city and claim its riches for his burgeoning hoard. King Harral mounts a resistance to the dragon, but his forces prove insufficient, and most of the undead who are capable of leaving the sites of their deaths to warn of the attack fall to Magrimate crusaders unaware of the complicated political situation in the haunted city.

Finally, there's the matter of the undead of Saggorak. For so many centuries, the city has remained haunted, but Veshumirix's attack has devastated the ruins. Just as fire can painfully cauterize a wound and then allow it to heal, the devastation of the dragon's presence could allow Saggorak's ruins to recover. If the PCs allied with King Harral and return his crown, the undead dwarf is astounded by the unexpected move. This act of generosity, combined with the fact that so few of his undead remain, causes the king to sigh in relief and swiftly crumble away to dust, leaving behind his weapons and crown. As long as the crown remains on his throne, Saggorak will continue to recover, and in time could be reclaimed by the living, but if the crown is removed before all of the undead move on, King Harral reforms, angrier than ever.

If the PCs help to bring peace to King Harral, they should earn at least 80 XP—or whatever amount is needed for them to reach 15th level.

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The ancient adversary of the dwarven pantheon, Droskar once served Torag and lived among his holy family as the Father of Creation's most gifted student. But on the day Torag discovered that Droskar's seeming mastery of blacksmithing was a lie, his ingenious designs actually the creation of a demigod he'd secretly enslaved, a schism erupted. Disgusted, the Father of Creation cast Droskar out of Heaven's caverns, cursing him to never create an original work—but not before spiteful Droskar slew his captive, ensuring that the now-forgotten demigod couldn't usurp his place at Torag's forge.

Alone, rejected by the dwarves who had once worshipped him as a master artificer, Droskar raged. Hadn't he accomplished great works? True, he had enslaved another to achieve them—but didn't all gods use lesser creatures? Torag himself had legions of celestial servitors to carry out his commands. For him to punish Droskar for doing the same was clearly hypocrisy of the highest order. Brooding on such thoughts, the Dark Smith grew ever more spiteful, convinced of the injustice of his sentence.

It was in this twisted state that he heard the wailed prayers of a civilization on the edge of collapse—those dwarves who had refused to leave their ancestral Darklands cities during the Quest for Sky. Left behind by their kin and abandoned by Torag for their heresy, the dwarves found themselves beset by enemies on all sides, their numbers too few to adequately defend their homes. Despairing, they cried out for help from any god who'd listen.

And Droskar answered. Appreciating the symbolism of taking on those mortals betrayed by Torag, Droskar offered them salvation—power and protection in both the mortal world and the afterlife. Through the magic he provided, the forsaken dwarves could reclaim the shattered remnants of their empire. Yet in return, he demanded that they toil under his command for eternity.

To the dwarves, it seemed a fair trade. Droskar's faith was harsh and uncompromising, but so was

life in the Darklands. Under his protection, at least they would work in relative safety and be valued for their skills. Droskar's emphasis on crafting and engineering, and the ironclad absolutism of his faith's few tenets, appealed to traditional dwarven values: social stability through hierarchy. Success through labor. The glory of one through the efforts of many. The dwarves accepted the Dark Smith's patronage and, empowered by their new liege, set about reconquering their realm, their skin turning gray as forge-ash to show that they were Droskar's chosen people—the duergar.

Since then, Droskar's faith has spread slowly among surface peoples, but his church remains centered solidly among the duergar, who regard it as the state religion. Where he does find traction among others, it tends to be among individual ascetics—monks, wizards, artisans, soldiers, and others who devote themselves completely to some form of work or study—or else small enclaves of desperate people struggling to survive in harsh environments. Outside of dwarven strongholds and the cavern cultures of Nar-Voth, his cult is most popular in mercantile Druma, in the slave pits of Okeno and orc-held Belkzen, and among scattered enclaves in the Sodden Lands.

There is freedom in slavery. Work strengthens. Repetition teaches. By denying us the option of weakness, a master perfects us. In the fires of our labor, we are reformed.

—The Book of Chains

Personification and Realm

Droskar always appears as a massive male dwarf who towers over whatever beings he addresses regardless of their size. His skin is ash-gray and gnarled with white scar tissue from burns at the forge, and his hair and beard are literal clouds of black smoke flecked with glowing embers. He wears a leather forge apron made from the tanned hide of a red dragon, but his heavily muscled arms are always left bare to display his most distinguishing feature: charred hands and forearms, the blackened and scab-hardened skin swirling into patterns that resemble flames and chains that extend toward his elbows. In one hand he wields his forge hammer, Karandosh. The other holds a tangle of seven thick-linked chains that trail off



into smoke. This is the legendary *Soulchain*. In addition to using it as a flail against those who displease him, Droskar can yank on a chain to summon any creature into his presence, dragging them across planar boundaries via smoking portals and automatically binding any who've sworn allegiance to him.

Droskar's realm is the Ashen Forge, an endless tangle of mine shafts that worm through the stone and flesh of the Abyss, constantly collapsing and being rebuilt by his minions. Subterranean fortresses staffed by the souls of Droskari warriors stud the tunnels at key junctures, defending the realm from the gibbering demons and qliphoth that periodically flood in from every direction, while the souls of artisans work an endless series of forges, quenching their masterworks in the blood-rivers of their enemies. Droskar directs their labor from a spherical central cavern called the Dark Furnace, its gravity twisted so that his greatest servants can work anywhere upon its inner surface. The Dark Smith himself lounges in the cavern's center upon the Forge Throne, a seat formed from the shrieking souls of those who've disobeyed him, hammered into intricate shapes yet still fully conscious of their fates. Chains connect the throne to the cavern's walls in every direction, suspending it like a spider in

its web, and it's said that Droskar can hear anything that happens in his realm by listening to the metallic vibrations that perpetually rattle these chains.

Dogma and Worshippers

Droskar is a hard and unforgiving god, his relatively simple tenets enforced with brutal efficiency. He teaches that success and safety come only through unceasing toil, and that work purifies the soul—lessons that prepare the spirits of his followers to aid him in the Ashen Forge for eternity. For the Dark Smith, the ends always justify the means, and if you fail at something, it means you weren't ruthless or diligent enough. On the other hand, Droskar also acknowledges that you can achieve much by swindling and treachery. He supports slavery and the exploitation of others, as forcing others to perform drudgery allows you to achieve more than you could alone, while also freeing you up to work on the more pleasant or creative aspects of your pursuits. He disdains sloth, however, and rulers who grow soft through the efforts of their thralls deserve to be overthrown by those beneath them who've been hardened in the crucible of labor. His priests venerate hard work and the skills that come through repetition, teaching that greatness is never

inborn, but rather achieved through pushing yourself (and your underlings) to the absolute limit. Success is always better than failure, and thus his followers are free to do whatever is necessary to achieve their goals—including lying, cheating, theft, and murder.

Just as pressure produces diamonds and ore must be hammered into shape, Droskar believes that fierce competition produces the strength and wit society needs to survive and advance. The victors may justly enslave the losers—yet unlike Asmodeus, Droskar is generally ambivalent about contracts and the rule of law. He values hierarchy and authoritarianism for their efficiency, offering his blessing to those despots at the top, yet he cares little for who occupies which rung of his ladder. If a slave becomes a master through guile or murder, then in Droskar's eyes, such is evidence of their fitness to rule. As a smith stymied by Torag's curse, Droskar jealously elevates artisans and those who craft and build, giving them pride of place among his followers in hopes that their souls will one day help him craft a work so great that even Torag won't be able to deny his skill.

Temples and Shrines

From simple smithies to massive cathedral-factories, Droskar's temples are places of labor and crafting. In societies where his faithful must worship in secret, a shrine might be nothing more than his holy symbol etched into the bottom of a farrier's anvil, so that every strike is secretly a prayer to the Dark Smith. Among duergar and other openly devout congregations, however, his churches incorporate huge foundries, mills, quarries, or other such places, often forming the industrial heart of a given settlement. Regardless of the trade being practiced, such temples usually have a raised dais with a large anvil that acts as an altar, from which the temple's forgemaster can preach the god's wisdom.

Given the faith's devotion to labor, the construction and improvement of temples is a primary form of worship, with churches constantly being expanded or torn down and replaced with more impressive versions. The seven most prominent temples to Droskar are marvels of engineering and destinations for Droskari pilgrims, such as the Akrizoth Horologe in Hagegraf, whose arcane clock tower measures the output of Droskar's own forges, or the Hanging Pillars, whose inverted towers hang like icicles down the quarried sides of Fellstrok's Glitterwall Chasm.

A Priest's Role

Priests of Droskar act as stern parents to parishioners, extolling the value of hard work and the necessity of toil to secure a more comfortable role in Droskar's afterlife. They preach hierarchy but lead through example, driving

themselves as hard as those beneath them. While a priest of Droskar may have other vocations, their primary job is always to spread the Dark Smith's influence.

The Droskari church has a strict but relatively flat hierarchy. Lay worshippers are referred to simply as Droskari, while priests who haven't yet completed their three-year-minimum training period are called apprentices. Above these are the fully vested priests, known as forgemasters. Most churches have only a single forgemaster, but where many priests band together, the strongest is declared high forgemaster, with as much authority over the others as they have over their apprentices. Above all of these sit the Chainwrights—a council of seven powerful priests who act as Droskar's hands on the Material Plane, communing with his heralds and administering the collective church from his seven greatest cathedrals.

Regardless of objective rank, a member of the church must always address a superior as "master," and priests of a given rank have complete authority over any below them. Paradoxically, while Droskar's faith generally demands absolute obedience to an established master, it has no commandment requiring the masterless to seek out authority figures, nor any particular issue with an inferior killing their master and taking their place. Most newly minted forgemasters are thus quickly driven off by their former mentors, with the majority of Droskari priests traveling the world independently to spread the Dark Smith's teachings and establish new congregations. Such adventuring priests know that a god's prestige is measured by that of his worshippers, and thus many see securing their own wealth and power as a valid means of worship, provided they labor hard with Droskar in their hearts.

Holidays

As the god of endless labor, Droskar has little use for holidays and festivals. While his priests grudgingly acknowledge the need for rest and recuperation in order to do one's best work, they also believe that mortals are inherently weak-willed and lazy, and that it's the job of the righteous to push the faithful right up to the point where the work begins to suffer. Idleness is a rot that creeps and grows, and for a day to pass without some effort made at work is to invite moral decay. Which is not to say that everything must be hardship—pleasure and celebration are to be found in the service of work, and even love and reproduction are necessary parts of keeping society as a whole functional and productive.

It should be no surprise, then, that Droskar's one major holiday revolves around work. Known as the Tithe, this festival spans the last week of the duergar

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calendar and provides a church-sponsored opportunity for everyone to exhibit and celebrate their skills and crafts. Rulers use the week to unveil new public works, while each worshipper from child apprentice to master artist unveils and attempts to sell their single greatest work from the year, with all proceeds going to the church treasury. Many also participate in public crafting contests, competing in feats of speed and skill. The holiday is especially important for slaves, who compete alongside their masters in these games, as church officials mark particularly skilled slaves as Droskar's Chosen, and their masters must then either emancipate them as a symbolic tribute to the Dark Smith or pay an exorbitant fee to the church to retain them.

Aphorisms

Droskar's priests tend to be terse and brusque, preferring action to argument, yet a few key sayings can be found among Droskari everywhere.

Fold the Steel: A common command and comfort, this phrase refers to the process of forging steel, in which repeated folding evens out impurities and weak points to create a stronger blade. As a command, it urges the faithful to continue toiling, as each repetition of a task increases their skill and resilience. Yet it can also be a comfort to the suffering, comparing each loss they suffer to a hammer blow from the Dark Smith, strengthening the steel of their souls.

Any Road to Glory: This admonishment is a reminder that Droskar doesn't care how you succeed, only that you do so. While used as a justification by thieves and cheats, it also guides rulers to break treaties, sacrifice troops, or otherwise focus on utilitarian rather than moral concerns in the name of victory and advancement.

Holy Text

Writers and other artists have produced extensive works dedicated to the Dark Smith, yet while many of these are incorporated into sermons and ceremonies as a sort of extended canon, the only universally recognized scripture is the *Book of Chains*. When Droskar first claimed the duergar, he chose the greatest of their orators—a dwarf named Gernet Loresong—as his mouthpiece, revealing his tenets in a powerful vision. Aflame with divine dictates, Gernet gave the greatest speech of his life, a mix of commandments from Droskar and pious reflections by the scholar himself. His apprentices dutifully transcribed his words—and it's well they did, for as Gernet spoke, his body began to leak smoke, and upon finishing he collapsed into dust and ash.

Only a dozen pages long, the *Book of Chains* is

traditionally inscribed on steel plates and bound with metal rings. Each page begins with a command from Droskar—often as simple as “serve” or “toil”—followed by poetic elaborations from Gernet, whom the duergar now call the Ashen Prophet.

Relations with Other Religions

Droskar's relationship with the rest of the dwarven pantheon is strained, to say the least, and the same goes for their respective churches. Most dwarves abhor Droskar and go out of their way to ostracize or attack his faithful, and the Droskari eagerly enslave them in return. Of the dwarven gods, only Dranngvit, dwarven goddess of vengeance and hatred, has any real sympathy for the Dark Smith, though good-natured Grundinnar the Peacemaker still harbors some hope of reconciling Droskar and Torag and bringing the Master of the Dark Furnace back into the fold.

Perhaps ironically, Droskar's church finds the most common ground with the secular teachings of the Prophecies of Kalistrade, whose emphasis on ascetic self-perfection and wealth as a manifestation of virtue pair nicely with the Dark Smith's edicts. As a result, Druma has the highest concentration of open Droskar worshippers in the Inner Sea region, and the Dark Smith's emphasis on the divine right of those in power to dominate those beneath them tends to quietly find favor with elite capitalists across Golarion.



Droskar (NE)

Cast out and cursed by Torag, the Dark Smith works constantly to prove his significance, cheating and enslaving others to further his goals.

Edicts achieve goals at any cost, continually improve your abilities, establish dominance, work ceaselessly

Anathema fail to work toward goals or grow in skill, relax excessively or give in to sloth

Follower Alignments LE, NE, CE

DEVOTEE BENEFITS

Divine Font harm

Divine Skill Crafting

Favored Weapon light hammer

Domains duty (*Lost Omens Gods and Magic*), earth, trickery, tyranny

Cleric Spells 1st: *ant haul*, 3rd: *haste*, 6th: *dominate*

Alternate Domains ambition, fire, toil

New Rules

The following new rules can be used to customize both priests of Droskar and ordinary members of the faith.

BACKGROUND

DROSKARI DISCIPLE

BACKGROUND

You grew up in the church of the Dark Smith, where you learned the value of hard work and achieving vocational mastery.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Skill Training skill feat, and you're trained in the Droskar Lore skill.

FEAT

FALSE FAITH

FEAT 1

CLERIC

Prerequisites worshipper of Droskar

Droskar knows you may need to disguise yourself in societies that oppose your faith. After spending 1 hour in prayer to Droskar, you can cast spells using the religious symbol of a different deity as your divine focus, and you can address verbal prayers to that deity. Droskar intercepts your prayers and answers them without the named god knowing.

This ability applies to the religious symbol of only one god at a time—making a different religious symbol work in this fashion requires another hour of prayer and causes the old one to cease functioning. You can always use a religious symbol of Droskar without affecting this ability.

TOIL DOMAIN

The toil domain is an alternate domain (described fully in *Lost Omens Gods and Magic*) and can be selected using the Expanded Domain Initiate feat from that book.

TOIL

ALTERNATE DOMAIN

You work constantly and refuse to let anything stand in your way.

Domain Spell *practice makes perfect*

Advanced Domain Spell *tireless worker*

FOCUS SPELLS

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON

CLERIC

DIVINATION

Domain toil

Cast ☞ somatic; **Trigger** You or an ally within range fails a skill check for a skill in which you or they are trained.

Range 30 feet

The target gains a +2 status bonus to the triggering check, or a +3 bonus if the target has master or better proficiency in the skill. This bonus can change the outcome of the target's check.

TIRELESS WORKER

FOCUS 4

HEALING

NECROMANCY

Domain toil

Cast ☞☞ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You suppress your choice of one of the following conditions that's affecting the target: clumsy, encumbered, enfeebled, or fatigued. If you don't remove the effect that caused the condition, the condition returns after the spell's duration expires.

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Priest of Droskar



KOVLAR GAZETTEER

Deep beneath the Five Kings Mountains, the citizens of Kovlar have learned not to fear the undead-haunted ruins that lurk just outside their city's walls. Instead, they proudly cling to their ancestral home, trusting the dizzying array of protective spells inscribed into the stone to keep their ancestors' spirits at bay.

History

Kovlar was once a single district of grand Saggorak, the capital of one of the five ancient kingdoms that give the Five Kings Mountains their name. The city's proudest tradition was its people's devotion to the dwarven god Torag and the rest of the dwarven pantheon, a tradition that earned it the moniker the Pious Kingdom of Saggorak. Still, it was far from a peaceful nation. Its founder, Saggorn the Holy, was one of the instigators of seven centuries of civil

war among the dwarves, which fractured the Five Kingdoms and severely strained the resources of the Five Kings' vassals on the surface, most notably Druma. Saggorak's builders encircled the city and each of its districts with sturdy walls reinforced by rune magic to keep out invaders, both terrible creatures from the Darklands and invading dwarves.

For all its defenses, Saggorak met its end in warfare over 2,000 years ago at the hands of an army of orcs. Unable to breach the city's walls, the orcs instead launched a siege. Saggorak held fast for years, but with little means of producing its own food, famine struck. The brave few who went on raids to secure provisions never returned, and the once-majestic city became a mass grave. When the orcs finally breached the walls and attempted to conquer Saggorak's southern district, the tide of furious dwarven spirits that had begun to haunt the

place overwhelmed them. Though the orcs retreated, their initial efforts to clear out the undead paved the way for the dwarven king Khadon the Mighty to save what remained of the ruined capital. Khadon purified the southern district, fortified its walls against the undead that plagued the rest of the city, and named the new settlement Kovlar.

Kovlar's roots were militaristic. As Khadon the Mighty turned his focus to continued warfare against the orcs, he left a contingent of his army in charge of the city, along with several groups of master artisans to rebuild the local infrastructure. But the city's walls proved more than capable of protecting it, and as decades went by without major incident, Kovlar's artisans grew to resent the restrictive laws meant to protect them. As the influence of Kovlar's tiny military waned, artisans gradually seized control of the city.

Government

Kovlar's primary governing body is the Court of Regents, a council that began as an alliance between the leaders of the city's artisan and mercantile guilds, but which has grown to control almost every aspect of Kovlar's administration. Its duties include imposing taxes, directing public works projects, and legislating policies to maintain the city's safety and prosperity. Because of the outsized political influence guilds hold in the city, most citizens of Kovlar strive to maintain at least a nominal affiliation with one. The largest of these organizations, the Anvillers' Guild, represents almost 10 percent of the population, including many of the city's most talented smiths. In total, nine guilds have voting seats on the Court of Regents: the Anvillers' Guild, the Carpenters' Guild, the Guild of Arms, the Guild of Coins, the Guild of Faith, the Guild of Finery, the Guild of Spells, the Physic Guild, and the Stonemasons' Guild. Additionally, the Gamblers' Guild is given a non-voting representative.

Guild membership is a cornerstone of life in Kovlar, and the political stances of guilds, as well as their attitudes toward outsiders and each other, help define the character of civic life. Locals identify strongly with their guilds, a loyalty second only to their affiliation with their family and clan. To ensure fair representation, Kovlar forbids its citizens from being part of more than one guild.

Each of the 10 guilds are summarized below, along with their leader and the guild's favored skills—those pursuits and trainings that members of that guild tend to see as most valuable. Use of a guild's favored skills is the best way for a visitor to Kovlar to earn the respect of each guild's corresponding member of the Court of Regents (this becomes important during Chapter 2 of "Fires of

the Haunted City"—see *Influencing the Court* on page 17). A visitor to Kovlar can attempt a DC 15 Society check to Recall Knowledge or a DC 10 Diplomacy check to Gather Information to learn the general information about a specific guild presented below, its favored skills, and the name of its leader.

ANVILLERS' GUILD

Leader Forgemaster Kelda Halrig (LN female dwarf smith)

Favored Skills Arcana, Athletics, Crafting

As the most powerful guild in Kovlar, the Anvillers' Guild encompasses nearly every crafter and tradesperson whose trade involves metalwork, as well as those who work in glass. Kovlar has made a name for itself as a place to purchase quality weapons and armor, and the guild requires its members to pass stringent tests of skill before they are allowed to sell their goods on the public market. The Anvillers' Guild asks its members to try to avoid the complications posed by interguild politics, an attitude that sometimes upsets members of other organizations.

CARPENTERS' GUILD

Leader Alljoiner Torra Garnis (N female dwarf carpenter)

Favored Skills Acrobatics, Crafting, Nature

As its name suggests, the Carpenters' Guild represents craftspeople who work primarily with wood or paper. The guild has also expanded its reach to include those whose creations do not fit neatly into any other categories, such as potters. For centuries, the Carpenters' Guild has maintained a friendly rivalry with the Stonemasons' Guild. According to the taunts of the Carpenters' Guild, the Stonemasons' Guild is filled with inflexible people who work slowly, focusing on the distant future to the detriment of the present. Conversely, Stonemasons' Guild members cite the relative impermanence of wooden crafts as a sign of their inferiority. The Carpenters' Guild works closely with the Physic Guild.

GAMBLERS' GUILD

Leader Fortunate Algera Kord (CN female dwarf mogul)

Favored Skills Deception, Sleight of Hand, Thievery

The members of this guild are gamblers insofar as they undertake risky enterprises, and they like to think of themselves as daring risk-takers. While a few members make their livelihood from gambling, this guild includes thieves, thrill-seekers, and adventurers who believe that their members should be given a chance to prove themselves. Though the Court of Regents doesn't trust the Gamblers' Guild to make decisions for common welfare, members of the council acknowledge that the gamblers serve an important function in society. The guild regulates Kovlar's underworld, both requiring its members to abstain from the most serious crimes, such as assault and murder, and helping the Guild of

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Arms capture criminals of all kinds operating outside of the guild's auspices. While traditionalists may disparage them as merely an organized criminal organization, the Gamblers' Guild is also a hotbed for new ideas. In addition to providing regular forums to discuss innovations in technology and thought, members of this guild take chances on investments that those from other guilds would not touch. An up-and-coming inventor with a spotty record is unlikely to receive a loan from the Guild of Coins, but the Gamblers' Guild has a higher tolerance for risk.

GUILD OF ARMS

Leader Commander Grokar Hammersong (LN male dwarf warrior)

Favored Skills Acrobatics, Athletics, Survival

The Guild of Arms consists primarily of soldiers and guards. The guild's members focus their efforts on protecting the city from within and fending off monstrous incursions on the roads connecting Kovlar to other settlements. They rarely venture out into Saggorak, as the guild's traditional position is that moving out from the defensive advantage of the city's enchanted walls is folly. Still, the guild believes that it is important for Kovlar's citizens to know how to stay safe. As such, its members provide free self-defense training to Kovlar's youth, with a strong focus on retreating to defensive positions where those with martial training can protect them. The guild also provides several programs of intensive training for adults. These programs are offered free of charge to guild members, for a small fee to other citizens of Kovlar, and for a hefty price to outsiders.

GUILD OF COINS

Leader Goldhand Wuldi Irontemper (LN female dwarf merchant)

Favored Skills Crafting, Performance, Society

The Guild of Coins is responsible for matters of finance and trade within the city. Its members manage banks, issue loans, and regulate commerce. The guild welcomes merchants in good standing to its ranks. Outsiders looking to trade in expensive goods may struggle to find buyers if they do not first secure a permit from the Guild of Coins. This guild maintains far-reaching connections across the Inner Sea region among traders who have come to trust Kovlar's reputation for high-quality wares.

GUILD OF FAITH

Leader Sentinel Frastin Stoneborn (LG male dwarf high priest of Torag)

Favored Skills Crafting, Religion, Society

Because guilds are virtually the only route to political influence in Kovlar, even groups that would not normally form such organizations do so here. The Guild of Faith includes priests, acolytes, and others whose primary

occupation relates to their faith. Still, not all religious figures chose to join the Guild of Faith; for example, quite a few devout followers of Torag belong to the Anvillers' Guild instead. Some people who favor the Anvillers' Guild are motivated by a desire to express their faith through action, but the social standing of the Anvillers' Guild also draws more ambitious individuals who might otherwise belong to the Guild of Faith.

GUILD OF FINERY

Leader Adorned Stosk Dolgindir (N male dwarf tailor)

Favored Skills Crafting, Deception, Performance

The Guild of Finery began as a guild of tailors and weavers. In a factional dispute several centuries ago, it also absorbed the Jeweler's Guild from the Stonemasons' Guild. Today, the Guild of Finery concerns itself with matters of fashion and style. Its members often wear their highest-quality apparel around the city to advertise their work. After all, even when it comes to high fashion, Kovlar's customers have little interest in clothing that isn't durable.

GUILD OF SPELLS

Leader Archmage Hromgar Nalruven (LN male dwarf abjurer)

Favored Skills Arcana, Nature, Occultism

While the Guild of Spells's charter ostensibly welcomes members from all magical traditions, almost all of its members practice arcane magic. The guild's most advanced spellwork is predominantly defensive magic, such as spells and rituals of the abjuration school. Guild members are expected to freely share their knowledge and discoveries with each other, a practice that has enabled the guild to compile a considerable library of spells and magical lore over the years. The guild is not so generous in sharing its collection with outsiders, charging steep prices to anyone hoping to learn any of the uncommon spells found in their archives.

PHYSIC GUILD

Leader Highphysic Natri Dolgindir (LG female dwarf herbalist)

Favored Skills Diplomacy, Medicine, Survival

The Physic Guild is a union of many smaller guilds whose work pertains to health and the body. Its component guilds support alchemists, barbers, chefs, doctors, farmers, and herbalists. Because the interests of these disparate groups are sometimes at odds, members of the guild have an unspoken agreement to always select a regent who can present a nuanced view of the guild's perspectives. As a result, the leader of the Physic Guild is generally skilled at resolving disputes. In the Court of Regents, the Physic Guild leader can often be counted upon to calm the court when tempers flare.

STONEMASONS' GUILD

Leader Mountainheart Kolarun Chiselrock (LE male dwarf stonemason)

Favored Skills Crafting, Intimidation, Society

Second only to the Anvillers' Guild in size and influence, the Stonemasons' Guild is responsible for most of Kovlar's construction and renovation. Most of its members focus primarily on architecture, though a minority specialize in creating public decorations such as fountains and sculptures. The Stonemasons' Guild works closely with the Guild of Faith to commemorate the dead, creating sanctified urns and grave markers to help Kovlar's people remember the stories of their ancestors. This guild also maintains close ties to the Guild of Spells, which weaves defensive wards into the stonemason's most significant creations at no cost as a collaborative effort to protect the city.

Culture

Kovlar's culture prizes innovation as long as it doesn't come at the expense of reliability. Some of the innovations a Kovlarite praises may seem small—a slight change to the shape of a weapon's handle or a tunic's stitching—but the people of Kovlar believe slow and steady improvement is the route to long-term success.

Friendly competitions are commonplace in this city, whether contests of skill at the forge, of music, or of sport. Crowds gather to watch these contests both for the entertainment and to ensure that no cheating takes place. There is no surer way to face scorn in Kovlar than to be caught cheating or taking credit for the work of another. Such acts are said to be the work of the dwarven god of slavery and toil, Droskar (for more information, see page 59), and are punished harshly in the courts of both law and public opinion.

While disrespecting one's ancestors is taboo in Kovlar, so too is preserving their memories to the detriment of the living. For example, while citizens pride their city for maintaining much of its original Saggorak architecture, this doesn't stop builders from improving on existing structures or expanding them. Buildings that are mostly preserved in their original states stand next to new constructions that incorporate scattered fragments of original stonework into contemporary designs. In Kovlar's markets, merchants present new crafts alongside artifacts with storied histories. From the regalia of ancient dwarven nobility to the treasures from Druma's tributes to Saggorn the Holy, there's no shortage of relics in Kovlar, even as the dwarven residents keep their eyes toward the future.

Life Underground

Life so far beneath the surface requires certain considerations unfamiliar to surface-dwelling peoples.

KOVLAR

SETTLEMENT 5

LN CITY DWARF

Government council

Population 4,620 (99% dwarves, 1% other ancestries)

Languages Common, Dwarven

Religions Torag, other dwarven deities

City of Artisans Items of up to 8th level can be found in Kovlar, and armor and weapons of up to 12th level.

Primary Imports Meat, iron, wood

Primary Exports Armor, artisanal goods, weapons

Forgemaster Kelda Halrig (LN female dwarf) leader of the Anvillers' Guild and Chief Councilor of the Court of Regents

Commander Grokar Hammersong (LN male dwarf) leader of the Guild of Arms

Fortunate Algera Kord (CN female dwarf) leader of the Gamblers' Guild

Sentinel Frastin Stoneborn (LG male dwarf) high priest of Torag

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Kovlar's means of supporting its citizens are for the most part adapted from Saggorak's original systems. Magma channels run from an underground chamber beneath the ruins of Saggorak to a sacred forge in the heart of Kovlar. Aeroducts leading off these channels provide heat through strategically placed vents throughout the city, both warming the caverns and maintaining a steady breeze from the outside world, ensuring the air doesn't become stagnant. Aqueducts connected to the lake at the east end of the city provide a continuous source of fresh water. Fortunately for Kovlar, the water flows in from the east, reaching Kovlar before the rest of the old city and thus preventing undead contamination. While fishing and fungus farming provide enough food to sustain the population, imported food from the surface occasionally adds variety to Kovlarites' diet.

No natural sunlight reaches the city, and as the vast majority of Kovlar's citizens are dwarves who do not rely upon light for sight, the streets are typically only dimly lit by the continual glow of forges in the Earthfire District and a smattering of lanterns, magical lights, bioluminescent mushrooms, and glowbug hives along the streets and cavern walls. Brighter illumination is reserved for workshops, art galleries, and other places where the appreciation of the subtleties of color is paramount.

The lack of sunlight can be disconcerting for visitors accustomed to the surface, in part because of the absence of a cycle of day and night. To make



matters more confounding for outsiders, Kovlar's people adhere to the tradition of forge-days common among many grondaksen (the underground dwarves' own name for their people). Forge-days are 32 hours long, with 12 hours for sleeping followed by 20 hours of work and leisure. During the sleeping hours, Kovlar's guards quench fire-based lanterns, making the streets somewhat darker. Fortunately, a large clocktower at the center of the city provides one reliable way to determine the time, though even with this, an outsider must keep diligent logs to translate the forge-day hours into a time format more common to the surface world.

Death at the Gates

Perhaps no topic has been the cause of more arguments and debates in Kovlar's history than what to do about haunted Saggorak. When a Kovlarite argues that it is high time for the city to muster an army to put their ancestors to rest at long last, a dozen others quickly point to the many failed expeditions into the ruined city. Particularly cautious citizens fear that if Saggorak were ever to be truly rid of undead, threats from farther into the Darklands would emerge to fill the power vacuum. Historically, most of the people who have departed from Kovlar's north gates into Saggorak's ruins have never returned, adding their bodies and souls to the undead hordes. As a result, departure out of Kovlar's north gates is highly restricted, and potential adventurers must pass rigorous checks with the city's Guild of Arms to be granted permission. In recent years, few other than the clergy of the god Magrim have passed these requirements.

Sayings

The following sayings are common in Kovlar.

Forging the Hammer Before the Nail: In a literal sense, this expression refers to overeager smiths who attempt to skip ahead to more advanced projects than they are ready for. Figuratively, the phrase is more expansive in its meaning. Depending upon the context, people who gloss over crucial steps to get a result faster, those who loudly overestimate their own abilities, and individuals who make arguments with weak foundations can all be said to be forging the hammer before the nail.

Lost in Saggorak: A person who is "lost in Saggorak" is fixated on unpleasant aspects of the past. This could be someone who dwells on unpleasant circumstances from their childhood, or someone who continually frets over a mistake they made recently. While outsiders sometimes misinterpret the phrase as accusatory or disparaging, most Kovlarites offer and understand the

sentiment either as a simple description of a common behavior or with some amount of sympathy.

Soupbeard/Soupbraid: A soupbeard or soupbraid is a person with poor hygiene and grooming standards. Because most underground dwarves can grow beards, regardless of biological sex, these terms are mostly used interchangeably. Soupbeard and soupbraid are also more generic insults. While these terms can be used in a good-natured way among friends and family, calling a stranger either one is likely to start a fight.

Holidays

The paired holidays of Grimnight and Bounty are Kovlar's way of remembering its ancestors. Grimnight is an annual day of remembrance for lost ancestors. Starting at dawn, all adult citizens in good health abstain from food. On Grimnight itself, those who are fasting prepare and deliver food to everyone who is not participating in the fast, such as children, elders, and people in ill health. Families then stay up late into the night, sharing the stories they remember of the hardships their ancestors faced. The day after Grimnight is Bounty, a daylong feast marked by dancing and song. During Bounty, families recount tales of their ancestor's triumphs. As a whole, the festival represents Kovlar's story of rising from Saggorak's ashes. Many citizens of Saggorak believe that Grimnight helps to pacify the spirits in Saggorak, and that the spirits are at their calmest on the day after. According to this belief, Bounty is the safest day of the year for feasts and celebrations, and some even believe that the day itself is lucky. As a result, it is the most popular day of the year for everything from marriage proposals to entering into business contracts. It is also a day when Kovlar's people resolve to improve themselves in the next year, calling upon their ancestors to bolster their chances of success.

Locations

Kovlar is divided into six major districts. These districts and their most prominent locations are outlined below.

THE BARRICADE

The Barricade is the northernmost district of Kovlar and the closest to the ruins of old Saggorak.

Garrison: These rows of low stone barracks originally served as a garrison for soldiers. In recent years, they were repurposed into family homes and training grounds for the members of the Guild of Arms. Kovlar's rarely used jailhouse is also located in the garrison.

Magrim's Watch: Magrim's Watch is a sprawling complex of graves and mausoleums, with a temple of Magrim, dwarven god of the afterlife, at the center.

The temple has a small permanent clergy led by Requiate Ladarza the Steadfast, and it also welcomes visiting clergy from Magrim's grand cathedral in Larrad. The fell energies of Saggorak pull at the souls of those who die in Kovlar, making the city's occupants particularly prone to rising as undead. To manage this problem, Kovlar offers free burial on sanctified ground to everyone who dies within its walls. For a fee, instead of being buried, a citizen of Kovlar can instead be memorialized through petrification. Those who opt for this method of preservation are carefully posed with implements of their trade and other prized possessions before being exposed to the breath of the temple's captive gorgon. The temple also uses petrification to dispose of the corpses of monstrous creatures that occasionally invade Kovlar from the Darklands, as well as the bodies of particularly heinous criminals. Instead of being posed artfully, however, these statues are smashed to pieces and used in construction. In Kovlar, the word "gravestone" refers to this unusual building material. While there are reports of strange occurrences and unsettling sensations around gravestone structures, the church of Magrim's investigations into the matter have consistently failed to turn up evidence of haunting around them. As such, the church has not stopped producing gravestone, and members of the clergy have come to regard such rumors as superstitious nonsense.

Wall of the Ancients: Thousands of feet long and 20 feet thick, this fortified barricade is an engineering marvel. In addition to its use as a physical barrier, the wall is the focus point of a magical barrier that encases the entire city in a *wall of force* that continually repairs itself. For more on these magical defenses, see Task 1: Check the Walls on page 21. The interior of the wall is also adorned with complex genealogical charts of those dwarves who have lived and died in the city. Most of them were made after Kovlar's founding, but some of these charts date back to the days of Saggorak.

COMMERCE

Home to dozens of shops, the commerce district is a thriving marketplace. The rise of so many major threats since the death of Aroden—from the Worldwound to the return of the Whispering Tyrant—has increased the demand for arms on the surface world, bolstering Kovlar's economy. The commerce district also contains the following significant buildings.

The Archive: This library contains one of the most thorough records of dwarven lineages on Golarion. In addition to the names of each dwarf, pulled in part from the inscriptions on the Wall of the Ancients, the lineages include

snippets of the most popular stories passed down through their descendants. While the genealogical information is relatively accurate, many of these stories are heavily embellished or outright falsehoods. After all, as its curators explain, the purpose of the record is to preserve each family's story, rather than to simply tell the history that can be found in other tomes. Still, a determined scholar who knew what to look for could find clues to great treasures and lost settlements buried among the legends.

Guild Halls: With the exception of the Anvillers' Guild in Earthfire, the Guild of Arms in the Barricade, and the Gamblers' Guild in the Traveler's Quarter, most guilds base their operations out of the Commerce District.

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Fortunate Algera Kord



House of Oaths: The House of Oaths oversees matters of law, from notarizing agreements to hosting trials for those accused of crimes within Kovlar. It also serves as a temple to Kols, dwarven god of duty. The high priest of Kols, Arbiter Duvarit, is the head judge here, though he takes only cases of great significance. When cases involve disputes between prominent local factions, Duvarit often asks visiting merchants to participate in the trial as neutral parties.

Regents' Hall: Regents' Hall is the principal administrative office in Kovlar. It contains at least one office for each official guild in Kovlar, as well as extensive records of legal and financial matters. The basement of the Regents' Hall contains a secured vault whose contents are known only to guild leaders and their most trusted advisors. This vault is guarded by contracted agents from Axis, the extraplanar city devoted to universal law, at great cost.

EARTHFIRE

The Earthfire district is the heart of Kovlar's smithing industry. Because of the prestige associated with this part of the city, Kovlar does not have a separate residential district—instead, most of its homes are officially part of Earthfire, and the majority of the buildings north of Steel Loop are residential.

Anvillers' Forge: Located along Earthfire Avenue, the Anvillers' Forge is the base of operations for the Anvillers' Guild. This building contains two separate connections to the magma channels beneath the road, while also housing dozens of more conventional coal forges and a variety of offices and storerooms. The leader of the Anvillers' Guild, Forgemaster Kelda Halrig, lives on the top floor of the forge.

Clocktower: While settlements on the surface can rely on the sun for timekeeping, the massive clocktower in the center of Kovlar is the most accurate way to tell time in Kovlar. Access is strictly monitored to prevent pranksters and vandals from mucking up one of the city's most important buildings. In addition to the dwarf guards stationed outside the tower, small groups of clockwork constructs operate within the building itself, maintaining its internal mechanisms and patrolling for intruders.

Droskar's Forge: Worship of Droskar is severely frowned upon in Kovlar, so the Dark Smith's followers must hide their activities carefully. In this secret temple tucked beneath the city, they engage in nefarious activities ranging from smuggling to slavery. More information about this clandestine temple can be found in The Hidden Forge section on page 29.

Earthfire Avenue: Earthfire Avenue is home to the finest forges in Kovlar. This road's twists and turns

follow the path of a magma channel deep below the city. An ancient system of fire-resistant switches and locks allows smiths to bring carefully controlled flows of magma to Kovlar's surface for use in their forges. Many of the durable buildings along Earthfire Avenue consist of original architecture from the height of Saggorak. Properties along the road are particularly valuable, and many of Kovlar's most well-to-do citizens own homes here.

Temple of Torag: The central feature of this hammer-shaped temple of Torag is a massive forge. While most who work the forges in Earthfire are unfriendly to anyone who isn't part of the Anvillers' Guild, the anvils here are open to everyone. The Anvillers' Guild's restrictions are a regular source of tension between the temple, which maintains that forging is part of proper worship, and the guild, which insists that the city's economy relies upon its reputation for quality goods.

FARMBURROW

Kovlar's recent growth has pushed its poorest people out of the city proper and into the tunnels below. This relatively new district is named for its proximity to the city's fungus farms as well as the occupation of many of its inhabitants. Work on Kovlar's farms pays poorly compared to many other occupations, making it hard for farmers to escape the district.

Treehouses: This ramshackle collection of buildings contains the homes of Kovlar's farmers and many of its poorer citizens. Despite what the name might imply, these houses are not built atop trees. Instead, they are made of wood, which Kovlarites consider to be an inferior crafting material.

Fungus Farms: These former mining tunnels were stripped of the last of their valuable minerals long ago. Kovlar's people have made use of these winding chambers by covering the ground with nutrient-rich compost and turning them into farms for fungi that grow underground. The most common fungus, ironbloom mushrooms, are a staple of Kovlar's cuisine. They have a light salty flavor and an earthy aftertaste.

LAKESIDE

The winding road that leads to the Lakeside District is built on an old riverbed that once ran from Bluecrab Lake. Kovlar's settlers dammed the tributary to create additional real estate and make it easier to manage the city's water supply.

Bluecrab Lake: This deep reservoir is fed with fresh water from the city's aqueducts and an underground waterfall. It hosts a robust ecosystem of edible fish and crustaceans native to the Darklands, the bioluminescent bluecrabs being a local favorite. To maintain the

lake's value as a food source, Kovlar tightly controls fishing and crabbing, limits who can obtain permits to sail, and imposes strict regulations to curb pollution. Despite these measures, the lake's fish stocks have been steadily dwindling in recent years. Rumors of a dull droning sound emanating from the lake's depths have the fishers spooked, but thus far the Physic Guild has made no moves to investigate the matter.

Lakeside Bathhouse: Smithing and other arts popular in Kovlar are dirty work. Despite this, Kovlar's people have high standards of personal grooming and hygiene, making bathhouses like this one a popular business. Visitors are expected to rinse off before entering the shared baths, which feature refreshing cold pools, warm baths, and natural hot springs heated by the magma channels beneath the city. While the main bath is open to all genders and ages at the same time, the bathhouse also features small, secluded pools for anyone seeking a greater degree of privacy. Loud conversations in the public bathing area are taboo, as is standing close to other bathers.

Nadrym's Barbershop: Many dwarves take pride in their hair and beards, and the people of Kovlar are no exception. Nadrym's is the most popular barbershop and salon in the city. Unlike in many local shops, which have little experience with non-dwarves, Nadrym's prides itself on employing stylists who have experience with a wide variety of ancestries and ethnicities from both underground and above. The namesake owner of the barbershop has grown bored of traditional cuts and offers substantial discounts to anyone willing to try a more daring hairdo or beard style.

TRAVELER'S QUARTER

The southernmost tip of the city is set aside for merchants, tourists, and other visitors to the city.

Gold Sky Inn: This high-class establishment's name comes from its gilded ceilings. It features several art galleries with rotating exhibitions of modern dwarven art, as well as a small theater. Some citizens rent rooms here for a taste of luxury. The staff has a reputation for discretion, so it's also a place for clandestine affairs, be they financial, political, or romantic.

While a night's stay at the Gold Sky Inn is quite expensive, the inn's proprietor, Stinna, accepts payment in the form of art. She also offers skilled musicians, actors, and other performers the opportunity to perform on the inn's stage in exchange for room and board. Recently, the most popular recurring act in the theater is the Mystery Troupe, a group of performers whose appearances seem to change with each show, and whose true identities are a closely guarded secret. The night before a performance, the Mystery Troupe

sets a suggestion box out in front of the theater. When morning comes, they open the box and improvise a comedic play based on the suggestions. At the play's intermission, the troupe draws and reads an additional random idea from the box, which they must then incorporate into the second half of the show.

Grandmothers' Alehouse: This popular alehouse claims that some of its recipes date back to before the Quest for Sky, when dwarves still lived solely beneath the earth and the light of the sun was merely a myth. Whether there is any truth to these claims or not, their famous Hundred-Grandmothers' Ale is not for the fainthearted. Its recipe is a closely guarded secret, passed down through the family of the current owners, Margit and Valik Firhoft. In addition to this famous brew, the Firhofts enjoy experimenting with new drinks. The most popular new libations earn names that suggest their potency (such as Inferno's Revenge) or honor local heroes. Members of the Gamblers' Guild frequent this establishment, betting proud travelers that they can't down the more powerful beverages without making a face.

Memorial of Kings: This museum was founded to commemorate the rulers of Saggorak before the city's fall. Its relics include the crown of Saggorak's founder, Saggorn the Holy, as well as an early copy of the Kerse Accords, the peace treaty that ended a civil war among the original five dwarven kingdoms. While some of its relics are legitimate, the provenances of others are far more questionable. Eager to expand public interest in his collection, the current curator, Jostar, has taken to purchasing samples of Saggorak art and architecture from those brave enough to venture out into the haunted city, then hiring unscrupulous restorers to embellish the items before passing them off as royal objects.

Sleep Like a Stone: This modest inn has small private rooms, as well as a large open sleeping space. It has started to offer reusable mushroom-fiber earplugs to anyone sleeping in the common room, as the combined snoring of a dozen burly dwarves has earned the establishment the nickname "Sleep by the Anvil."

Whims of Fortune: Whims of Fortune is a casino run by the Gamblers' Guild, which supplies the games and manages all the betting in the central hall, guaranteeing the winnings of anyone who achieves a fair victory. In the building's other wings, players may run their own games. Here, guild agents keep watch over the various games to protect against cheating and to calm any fights that may ensue. Those caught engaging in violence within the establishment must pay a fine to the house, while cheaters are banned with no chance to appeal.

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“Fires of the Haunted City” follows the PCs’ journey and exploration of two different dwarven settlements—the thriving city of Kovlar and the haunted ruins of Saggorak. In this adventure, the PCs have ample opportunities to find their own way through the story line, to spend downtime exploring Kovlar, or to discover new sites for adventure of the GM’s own design in Saggorak. Many of the following treasures and options appear in specific locations in the adventure, but not all—feel free to use them to reward PCs as you see fit!

Adventure Treasures

Dwarves are renowned for the quality of their smithing and the magical runes they master. The treasures explored below are examples of works produced by these storied dwarven magical traditions.

SAGGORAK RUNES

Ancient dwarven blacksmiths in Saggorak designed a series of spectacularly powerful runes. Only someone with legendary proficiency in Crafting, or a well-versed dwarven crafter from the city of Kovlar, can apply, transfer, or remove a rune with the Saggorak trait. If the PCs reduce any of the regents' Skepticism values to 0 during the course of "Fires of the Haunted City," any of them could help in this regard.

Because of their considerable power, all Saggorak runes take up two property rune slots, and consequently they can be applied only to armor and weapons with at least a +2 *potency* rune.

ANCESTRAL ECHOING

RUNE 15

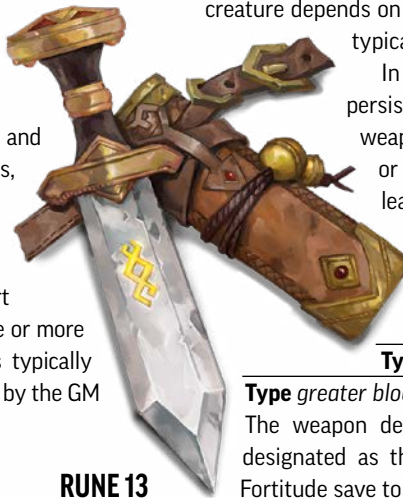
RARE DWARF EVOCATION MAGICAL SAGGORAK

Price 9,500 gp

Usage etched onto a weapon

The wisdom of this weapon's past owners flows into your mind, amplifying your own abilities with the weapon. Your proficiency rank with this weapon is one step higher than normal, to a maximum of the highest proficiency rank you have in any weapon. For instance, if you had master proficiency with martial weapons and expert proficiency with advanced weapons, you would have master proficiency with advanced weapon that had this rune.

In addition, while wielding the *ancestral echoing weapon*, you have expert proficiency in one Lore skill relevant to one or more of the weapon's previous owners. This is typically Dwarven Lore but is ultimately determined by the GM depending on the weapon's history.



ROCK-BRACED

RUNE 13

RARE ABJURATION DWARF MAGICAL SAGGORAK

Price 3,000 gp

Usage etched onto medium or heavy armor

Rock-braced armor makes you as hard to move as a boulder. Whenever another creature attempts to forcibly move you from your space, you gain a +4 item bonus to your Fortitude DC against the check to move you. If the creature would not normally need to attempt a check to move you, then the creature must succeed at an Athletics check against your Fortitude DC (including the +4 item bonus) or you are unmoved.

CLAN DAGGER RUNES

Clan daggers are weapons of great cultural and personal significance to many dwarves. The following runes were invented specifically to enhance clan daggers, but they can be applied to any weapon that meets the runes' requirements.

KIN-WARDING

RUNE 3

UNCOMMON ABJURATION DWARF MAGICAL

Price 52 gp

Usage etched onto a clan dagger

A *kin-warding* clan dagger can deflect attacks aimed at your allies. When you use the weapon's parry trait, you can point the clan dagger at an adjacent ally instead of defending yourself, creating a shield of runes around them. The runic barrier grants your ally the weapon's circumstance bonus to AC, but you do not gain the bonus yourself.

BLOODBANE

RUNE 8

UNCOMMON DWARF EVOCATION MAGICAL

Usage etched onto a clan dagger

A *bloodbane* clan dagger is especially vicious against the ancestral enemies of the clan. When you damage an appropriate type of creature with the weapon, that creature takes 1 persistent bleed damage. The type of creature depends on the clan that made the dagger, but is typically drow, duergar, giant, or orc.

In addition, whenever you inflict persistent bleed damage with a *bloodbane* weapon (whether from its innate ability or in some other way), the weapon leaves ragged wounds. The bleeding creature must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or become sickened 1. The creature is then temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Type *bloodbane*; Level 8; Price 475 gp

Type *greater bloodbane*; Level 13; Price 2,800 gp

The weapon deals 1d4 bleed damage to creatures designated as the clan's enemy, and the DC of the Fortitude save to avoid becoming sickened is 30.

SAGGORAK'S TREASURES

These treasures have lain dormant in the ruins of Saggorak for many generations.

DRAGONSACLE AMULET

ITEM 15

RARE ENCHANTMENT INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 5,800 gp

Usage worn; Bulk –

This amulet is made from the scales of five ancient dragons. You gain resistance 5 to acid, cold, electricity,

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fire, and poison. If you take damage of one of these types from a dragon's Breath Weapon, the amulet begins to glow brightly; for the next 10 minutes, your resistance against that type of damage increases to 20. If you are subjected to a dragon's frightful presence, you can roll your saving throw twice and use the higher result to determine the aura's effects. This is a fortune effect.

Activate ♦♦ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You exude an aura that terrifies all foes in a 60-foot radius, as the frightful presence ability (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 343) with a DC 34 Will save.

GUIDING CHISEL

ITEM 16

UNIQUE CONJURATION ELF MAGICAL

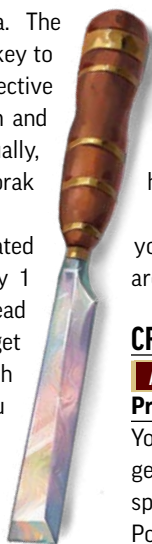
Price 10,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This magical chisel evokes the holy symbol of the elven goddess of art and architecture, Findeladlara. The *Guiding Chisel's* original function was as a portal key to Duskgate, but as Alseta's Ring faded from the collective memories of the elves, the chisel became known and used exclusively for its other abilities. Eventually, elven emissaries gave it to the dwarves of Saggorak as a gesture of friendship.

You gain a +3 item bonus to Crafting checks related to stonemasonry. In addition, it takes you only 1 day to Craft items using the *Guiding Chisel* instead of 4 days, and you quadruple the discount you get for spending additional days Crafting items with the *Guiding Chisel*. If it's unclear whether you could use the *Guiding Chisel* to Craft an item, the GM decides.

Activate 10 minutes (command, envision, Interact); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You embed the *Guiding Chisel* in the ground and imagine a building. After 10 minutes, you remove the chisel and the building appears. The building can take any shape you wish, filling up to ten contiguous 10-foot cubes within 1,000 feet of the chisel. The building lasts until you use the chisel to create another building. This building has the structure trait.



REFORGING SHIELD

ITEM 15

RARE ABJURATION MAGICAL

Price 6,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This steel shield contains a smoldering core of magma that never cools. Whenever the *reforging shield's* current Hit Points are below its Break Threshold, the shield recovers 5 Hit Points at the start of its wielder's turn each round until it is no longer broken. Each time a character Repairs the shield, the shield recovers double the number of Hit Points. The shield has Hardness 15, HP 120, and BT 60.

Crystal Keeper Archetype

In the era before Earthfall, the elven people of Golarion exhibited a wide range of mastery over magic. A sect of elves who venerated the goddess Yuelral first developed the techniques of the crystal keeper, but this tradition has since been long forgotten by most of the world. There are those who still remember, though—PCs can gain access to the crystal keeper archetype from the tragic figure that haunts Jewelgate waystation in "Fires of the Haunted City."

CRYSTAL KEEPER DEDICATION

FEAT 4

RARE ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Elven Lore or Society

You can use Arcana, Occultism, Religion, or Society to Decipher Writing by meditating before a crystal, regardless of the type of writing. When you Decipher Writing and roll a critical failure, you get a failure instead, and when you Decipher Writing and roll a success, you get a critical success instead.

Additionally, you gain resistance 10 to damage from hazards associated with crystals.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the crystal keeper archetype.

CRYSTAL WARD SPELLS

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Crystal Keeper Dedication

Your study of crystals and the energies held within a gem's facets grants you special arcane crystal ward spells, which are a type of focus spell. It costs 1 Focus Point to cast a focus spell, and you start with a focus pool of 1 Focus Point. You refill your focus pool when you make your next daily preparations, and you can regain 1 Focus Point by spending 10 minutes using the Refocus activity (*Core Rulebook* 300) to research and memorize the properties of gems.

Focus spells are automatically heightened to half your level rounded up. Certain feats can give you more focus spells and increase the size of your focus pool, though your focus pool can never hold more than 3 Focus Points. You gain the *electrified crystal ward* focus spell, and you are trained in arcane spell attack rolls and spell DCs. Your spellcasting ability is Intelligence.

SIMPLE CRYSTAL MAGIC

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Crystal Keeper Dedication

As long as you meditate before a gemstone worth at least 10 gp as part of your daily preparations, you are capable of seeing magic as flowing runes that reveal

information about magic objects, and you can scribe a personal rune that represents you. You gain the *read aura* and *sigil* cantrips. You cast these cantrips as arcane innate spells at will. A cantrip is heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up.

ARMOR RUNE SHIFTER

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Crystal Keeper Dedication

You learn the secrets of armor runes by viewing them through gems and can alter them at your discretion. Once per day when you make your daily preparations, you can focus on a rune's magical energies through a crystal's facets to alter a single property rune on one suit of armor in your possession to suppress its normal effects and make it function as a different property rune. You can temporarily alter the rune to function as one of the following runes: *energy-resistant*, *fortification*, *glamered*, *invisibility*, *shadow*, or *slick*. The property rune remains altered until you make your next daily preparations. The armor must meet the prerequisites for the temporary rune, and any other runes that required the suppressed rune are also suppressed while the rune is transformed. The rune is obviously altered, and thus the armor can't be sold as though it had the temporary rune.

WEAPON-RUNE SHIFTER

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Crystal Keeper Dedication

You learn how to alter the magic of weapon runes by using a crystal as a focusing component. Once per day during your daily preparations, you can focus on a rune's magical energies through a crystal's facets to alter a single property rune on one weapon in your possession to suppress its normal effects and make it function as a different property rune. You can temporarily alter the rune to function as one of the following runes: *corrosive*, *flaming*, *frost*, *ghost touch*, *grievous*, *returning*, *shock*, *thundering*, or *wounding*. The property rune remains altered until you make your next daily preparations. The weapon must meet the prerequisites for the temporary rune, and any other runes that required the suppressed rune are also suppressed while the rune is transformed. The rune is obviously altered, and thus the weapon can't be sold as though it had the temporary rune.

CRYSTAL KEEPER FOCUS SPELLS

ELECTRIFIED CRYSTAL WARD

FOCUS 3

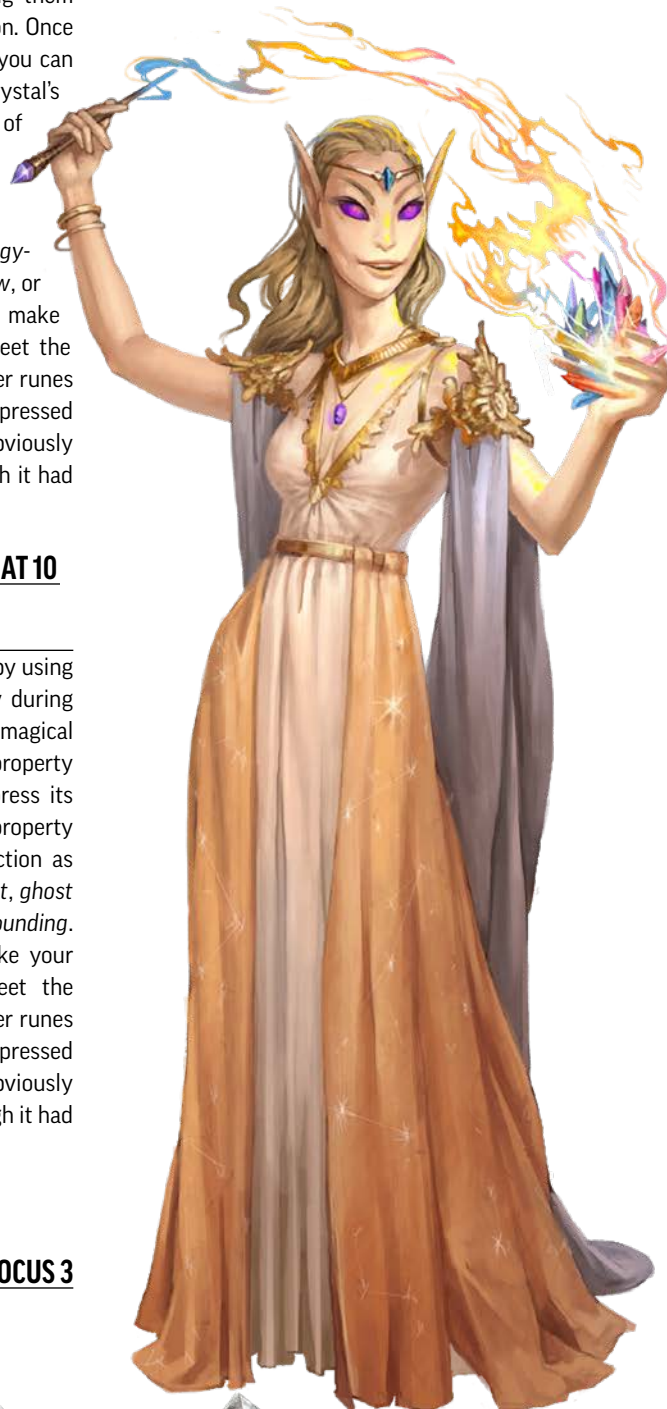
RARE ELECTRICITY EVOCATION

Cast ◆◆ somatic

Range touch; **Targets** 1 hinge or latch

You create an *electric latch rune* hazard (Core Rulebook 523) on the target, creating a special crystalline lock on the object. You can also substitute your spell DC for any of the hazard's listed DCs. You can have only one such hazard active at a time, and if you cast this spell while a previous *electric latch rune* is active, the older hazard discharges harmlessly.

Heightened (+2) The hazard's damage increases by 1d12.



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Carnivorous crystals reproduce in two ways. Their preferred method is by infecting their victims with magical enzymes that cause living flesh to rapidly petrify and transform into immobile crystal. At the end of this process, the crystallized victim shatters as a newly born carnivorous crystal emerges from its cocoon. Like other oozes, however, they are also capable of reproducing by splitting, though they typically do so only under extreme duress.

Carnivorous Crystal

Carnivorous crystals are strange ooze creatures native to the Plane of Earth. Unlike most oozes, their bodies are not homogeneously fluid; rather, interspersed within their glassy, viscous resin are thousands of sharp mineral formations that nevertheless possess some of the same flexibility and mobility as the rest of the creature's gooey body.

CARNIVOROUS CRYSTAL

CREATURE 11

N MEDIUM EARTH MINDLESS OOZE

Perception +15; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Athletics +24

Str +7, **Dex** -5, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Motion Sense A carnivorous crystal can sense nearby motion through vibration and air movement.

AC 20; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15

HP 300; **Immunities** acid, critical hits (except bludgeoning or sonic), mental, precision, unconscious, visual; **Weaknesses** sonic 10; **Resistances** piercing 10, slashing 10

Split Whenever the carnivorous crystal takes a critical hit from an attack that deals bludgeoning or sonic damage, or it critically fails its saving throw against an effect that deals bludgeoning or sonic damage, it might split. If the carnivorous crystal has at least 15 HP remaining after taking the damage, it splits into two identical crystals, each with half the original's Hit Points. When the carnivorous

crystal splits, one crystal remains in the same space and the other appears in an adjacent unoccupied space. If no adjacent space is unoccupied, the crystal automatically pushes creatures out of the way to fill a space.

Subsonic Hum (auditory, aura, mental) 60 feet. A creature that enters or starts its turn within the aura must succeed at a DC 28 Will save or become stunned 1.

Speed 10 feet, climb 10 feet

Melee ♦ pseudopod +24 (versatile S), **Damage** 4d8+7 piercing

Crystallize ♦ (attack) **Requirement** The crystal has a creature engulfed. **Effect** The engulfed creature must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or become slowed 1 until it is no longer engulfed. If the creature is already slowed, it becomes petrified as it is turned into crystal and expelled by the carnivorous crystal onto the ground. In 1d4 hours, the petrified victim shatters and a new carnivorous crystal emerges from the remains.

Engulf ♦♦ DC 28, 2d6 slashing, Escape DC 28, Rupture 25 (bludgeoning only).

Freeze ♦♦ (concentrate) Until the next time it acts, the carnivorous crystal appears to be a mundane crystal formation. It has an automatic result of 40 on Deception and Stealth checks and DCs to pass as a crystal formation.

Razor Sharp If a carnivorous crystal hits with an attack and rolls a natural 19 on the d20 roll, the attack is a critical hit. This has no effect if the 19 would be a failure.

Dalos

Dalos are reclusive fey that dwell within or near remote volcanoes and volcanic vents and resemble the massive calderas they call home. They more often dwell within the superheated confines of these locales than in the “cold wastelands” beyond their warmth and are therefore rarely encountered outside such environments. Like most fey, dalos are capricious and vengeful. They hate being disturbed above all else and will often warn away intruders with only the throw of a red-hot boulder before attacking outright.

A dalos stands 25 feet tall and weighs in excess of 20,000 pounds.

DALOS

CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON CE HUGE EARTH FEY FIRE

Perception +23; low-light vision

Languages Ignan, Sylvan, Terran

Skills Athletics +29, Nature +23, Survival +23

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

AC 34; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +19, **Will** +23

HP 240; **Immunities** fire; **Resistances** physical 15 (except bludgeoning); **Weaknesses** cold 10, cold iron 10

Volcanic Heat (aura, fire) 10 feet, 3d6 fire damage (DC 29 basic Reflex save)

Magma Splash (fire) Whenever the dalos takes damage from a melee Strike, magma splashes from its open wound and sticks to nearby creatures. Each creature in a 10-foot emanation must attempt a DC 31 Reflex save. On a failure, the creature takes 3d6 persistent fire damage as the superheated rock sticks to them and cools. The DC to end this persistent damage decreases by 5 each turn after the first as the magma cools.

Speed 30 feet, burrow 20 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ fist +27 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+11 bludgeoning plus 2d6 fire

Ranged ♦ rock +25 (range increment 150 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 31; 7th *earthbind* (×3), *slow*, *stinking cloud*

Belch Smoke ♦♦♦ The dalos blasts smoke from its head, creating a 20-foot-radius cloud of smoke that drifts to a location within 120 feet. This has the effects of *obscuring mist*.

Heat Rock ♦ (fire) The dalos uses an Interact action to pluck a rock from its body or the nearby environment, then uses its internal fires to heat a rock it's holding until the rock is red hot. A heated rock that hits a target on a ranged Strike deals an additional 4d6 fire damage. Once the dalos heats a rock, that rock retains its heat for 2 rounds before cooling.

Lava Bomb ♦♦ (earth, fire) The dalos causes a volcanic explosion to erupt from its head, lobbing a mass of molten rock up to 100 feet. This lava bomb deals 6d8 fire damage and 6d8 bludgeoning damage to each creature in a 20-foot radius of its impact point, with a DC 33 basic Reflex save. The dalos can't use Lava Bomb again for 1d4 rounds.

Throw Rock ♦



DALOS ALLIES

Because of their reclusiveness, dalos are unlikely to be encountered in the company of other creatures, though on occasion they may serve as begrudging guardians for powerful magma dragons or tribes of fire giants.

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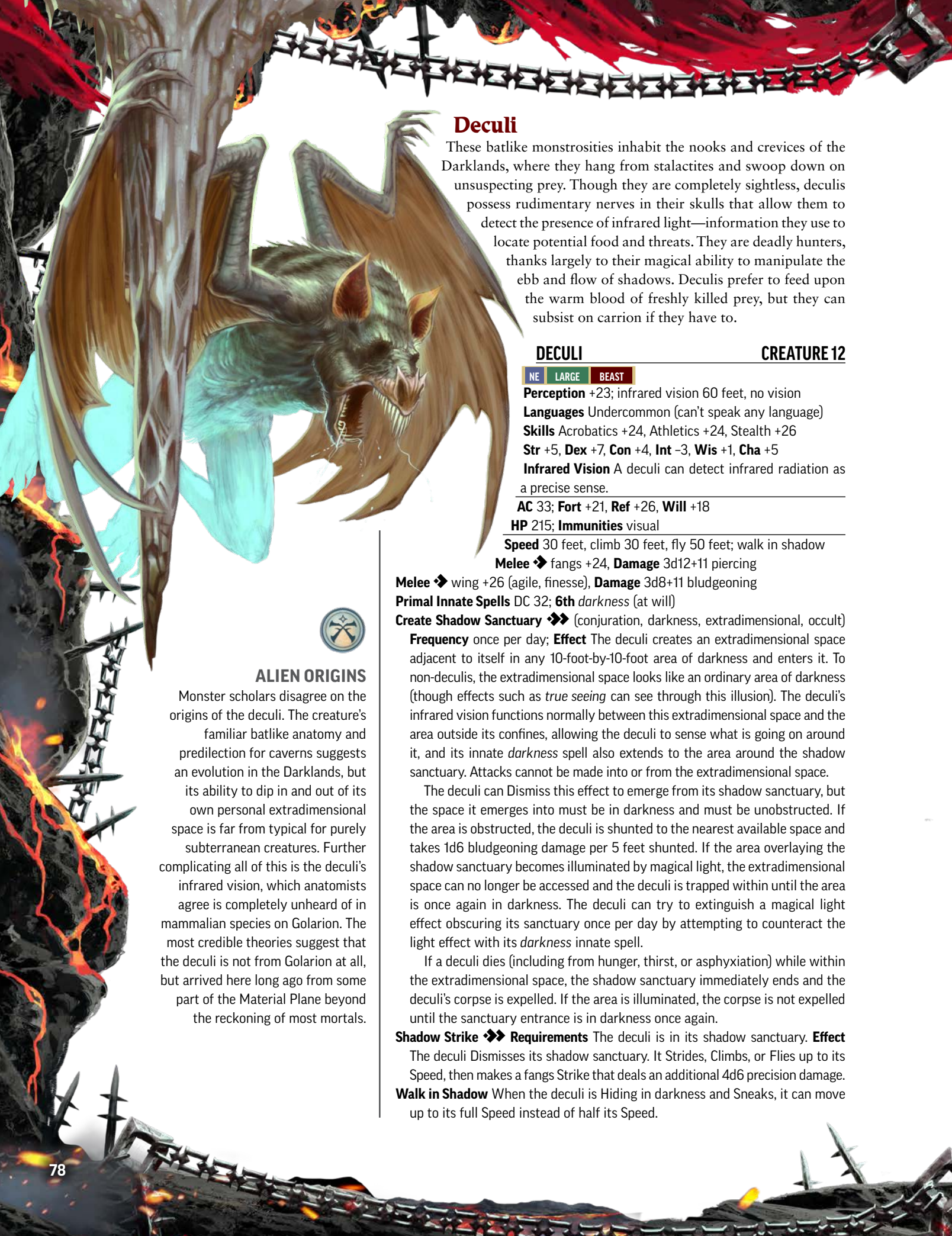
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Deculi

These batlike monstrosities inhabit the nooks and crevices of the Darklands, where they hang from stalactites and swoop down on unsuspecting prey. Though they are completely sightless, deculis possess rudimentary nerves in their skulls that allow them to detect the presence of infrared light—information they use to locate potential food and threats. They are deadly hunters, thanks largely to their magical ability to manipulate the ebb and flow of shadows. Deculi prefer to feed upon the warm blood of freshly killed prey, but they can subsist on carrion if they have to.

DECULI

CREATURE 12

NE LARGE BEAST

Perception +23; infrared vision 60 feet, no vision

Languages Undercommon (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +24, Stealth +26

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +5

Infrared Vision A deculi can detect infrared radiation as a precise sense.

AC 33; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +26, **Will** +18

HP 215; **Immunities** visual

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet, fly 50 feet; walk in shadow

Melee ♦ fangs +24, **Damage** 3d12+11 piercing

Melee ♦ wing +26 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d8+11 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 32; **6th** darkness (at will)

Create Shadow Sanctuary ♦♦ (conjunction, darkness, extradimensional, occult)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** The deculi creates an extradimensional space adjacent to itself in any 10-foot-by-10-foot area of darkness and enters it. To non-deculis, the extradimensional space looks like an ordinary area of darkness (though effects such as *true seeing* can see through this illusion). The deculi's infrared vision functions normally between this extradimensional space and the area outside its confines, allowing the deculi to sense what is going on around it, and its innate *darkness* spell also extends to the area around the shadow sanctuary. Attacks cannot be made into or from the extradimensional space.

The deculi can Dismiss this effect to emerge from its shadow sanctuary, but the space it emerges into must be in darkness and must be unobstructed. If the area is obstructed, the deculi is shunted to the nearest available space and takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 5 feet shunted. If the area overlaying the shadow sanctuary becomes illuminated by magical light, the extradimensional space can no longer be accessed and the deculi is trapped within until the area is once again in darkness. The deculi can try to extinguish a magical light effect obscuring its sanctuary once per day by attempting to counteract the light effect with its *darkness* innate spell.

If a deculi dies (including from hunger, thirst, or asphyxiation) while within the extradimensional space, the shadow sanctuary immediately ends and the deculi's corpse is expelled. If the area is illuminated, the corpse is not expelled until the sanctuary entrance is in darkness once again.

Shadow Strike ♦♦ **Requirements** The deculi is in its shadow sanctuary. **Effect** The deculi Dismisses its shadow sanctuary. It Strides, Climbs, or Flies up to its Speed, then makes a fangs Strike that deals an additional 4d6 precision damage.

Walk in Shadow When the deculi is Hiding in darkness and Sneaks, it can move up to its full Speed instead of half its Speed.



ALIEN ORIGINS

Monster scholars disagree on the origins of the deculi. The creature's familiar batlike anatomy and predilection for caverns suggests an evolution in the Darklands, but its ability to dip in and out of its own personal extradimensional space is far from typical for purely subterranean creatures. Further complicating all of this is the deculi's infrared vision, which anatomists agree is completely unheard of in mammalian species on Golarion. The most credible theories suggest that the deculi is not from Golarion at all, but arrived here long ago from some part of the Material Plane beyond the reckoning of most mortals.

Devourer

When fiends and powerful evil spellcasters are lost beyond the farthest reaches of the multiverse, they sometimes return as horrific undead called devourers that consume the souls of the living to fuel their arcane machinations.

DEVOURER

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON NE LARGE UNDEAD

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal, Necril

Skills Arcana +21, Deception +21, Intimidation +23, Occultism +23, Stealth +20

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

AC 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +18, **Will** +24; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 175, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, spell deflection, unconscious

Spell Deflection (abjuration, divine) A spellcaster can target a devourer with a mental spell, *banishment*, *bind soul*, *divine decree*, *divine wrath*, *possession*, *spirit blast*, or *spirit song* to attempt to counteract the devourer's Devour Soul effect. If this counteract attempt succeeds, the trapped soul is released (though the creature remains dead), and the devourer can't use any soul charges from the creature. Devourers are otherwise immune to these spells.

Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +24 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+13 slashing plus drain life

Occult Innate Spells DC 31, see the soul spells ability; **6th** *feeblemind*, *true seeing*; **4th** *confusion*, *suggestion*; **3rd** *bind undead*, *paralyze*; **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *harm*

Occult Rituals DC 31; *create undead*

Devour Soul ♦♦ (death, divine, necromancy) The devourer touches a creature within reach, dealing 8d6 negative damage (DC 26 basic Fortitude save). If a creature is slain by this attack, its soul becomes trapped within the devourer. While trapped, a creature cannot be resurrected except by powerful magic such as a *wish* spell. Destroying the devourer or successfully counteracting Devour Soul (see spell deflection) releases the soul. The devourer can hold only one soul at a time.

A soul has 5 soul charges per level. The devourer can expend charges to cast spells (see the soul spells ability below). If the soul is freed and the creature returns to life, the creature is drained 1 for every 5 soul charges expended. If reduced to 0 charges, the soul is consumed and can be restored to life only by powerful magic such as *wish*.

Drain Life (divine, necromancy) When the devourer damages a living creature with its claw Strike, the devourer gains 10 temporary Hit Points and the creature must succeed at a DC 24 Fortitude save or become drained 1. Further damage dealt by the devourer increases the amount of drain by 1 on a failed save, to a maximum of drained 4.

Soul Spells A devourer casts occult innate spells, but to do so must expend a number of soul charges equal to the spell's level (similar to casting a spell using charges from a staff). It can heighten any spell to a maximum of 6th level by expending more charges as it Casts the Spell. When encountered, a devourer typically has one trapped soul with 10 soul charges.



FORMS FROM BEYOND

Regardless of their original ancestry, devourers are always Large—fully 10 feet tall—as the remains of their mortal form strain to contain the evil within. However, their withered and hollowed-out bodies rarely weigh more than a mere 200 pounds.

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MAGMA DRAGON SPELLCASTERS

To make a magma dragon spellcaster, remove the dragon's Draconic Frenzy and draconic momentum abilities and give it the following spells. You can swap out any number of these with other primal spells, provided you keep the same number of spells for each level. You might also want to increase the dragon's Wisdom or Charisma modifier by 1 or 2 to reflect its mastery of magic.

YOUNG

Primal Prepared Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*; **3rd** *fireball*, *haste*, *wall of wind*; **2nd** *glitterdust*, *obscuring mist*, *restore senses*; **1st** *air bubble*, *grease*, *pass without trace*; **Cantrips (5th)** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *light*, *produce flame*, *read aura*

ADULT

Primal Prepared Spells DC 33, attack +25; As young magma dragon, plus **6th** *chain lightning*, *true seeing*; **5th** *cloudkill*, *prying eye*; **4th** *solid fog*; **Cantrips (7th)**

ANCIENT

Primal Prepared Spells DC 42, attack +34; As adult magma dragon, plus **8th** *earthquake*, *horrid wilting*, *wind walk*; **7th** *energy aegis*, *plane shift*, *volcanic eruption*; **6th** *flesh to stone*; **Cantrips (9th)**

Dragon, Magma

Magma dragons are considered unpredictable and brash by other dragons. They lair within volcanically active mountains and throughout the steaming, stony borderlands between the Plane of Fire and the Plane of Earth.

YOUNG MAGMA DRAGON

CREATURE 9

RARE CN LARGE DRAGON FIRE

Perception +18; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Draconic, Ignan

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +18, Deception +14, Intimidation +18, Nature +16, Stealth +16, Survival +16

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

AC 28; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +16, **Will** +18

HP 175; **Immunities** fire, paralyzed, sleep; **Weaknesses** cold 10

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 24

Wing Deflection ➤ **Trigger** The dragon is targeted with an attack. **Effect** The dragon raises its wing, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack. If the dragon is Flying, it descends 10 feet after the attack.

Speed 30 feet, fly 100 feet, swim 30 feet; magma swim

Melee ➤ jaws +21 (fire, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing plus 2d6 fire

Melee ➤ claw +21 (agile), **Damage** 2d10+8 slashing

Melee ➤ tail +19 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d12+7 bludgeoning

Melee ➤ horns +19 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d12+7 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** *burning hands* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *produce flame*

Breath Weapon ➤➤ (evocation, fire, primal) The dragon breathes a blast of magma that deals 5d6 fire damage and 3d12 bludgeoning damage in a 30-foot cone (DC 28 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Draconic Frenzy ➤➤ The dragon makes two claw Strikes and one horns Strike in any order.

Draconic Momentum The dragon recharges its Breath Weapon whenever it scores a critical hit with a Strike.

Magma Swim A magma dragon's swim Speed functions only when the dragon is swimming through magma or molten lava.

ADULT MAGMA DRAGON

CREATURE 13

RARE CN HUGE DRAGON FIRE

Perception +23; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Draconic, Ignan, Terran

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +28, Deception +19, Intimidation +25, Nature +21, Stealth +22, Survival +21

Str +8, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4

AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +21, **Will** +23; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 270; **Immunities** fire, paralyzed, sleep; **Weaknesses** cold 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 29

Wing Deflection ➤ As young magma dragon.

Speed 40 feet, fly 140 feet; magma swim 40 feet

Melee ➤ jaws +27 (fire, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+11 piercing plus 3d6 fire

Melee ➤ claw +27 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+11 slashing

Melee ➤ tail +25 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 2d12+10 bludgeoning

Melee ➤ horns +25 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 31, attack +23; **6th** *burning hands* (at will), *wall of fire* (at will); **Cantrips (7th)** *produce flame*



PRIMAL DRAGONS

Magma dragons belong to a caste of dragons known as primal dragons—massive scaled beings that hail from the Elemental Planes and the Plane of Shadow. Other primal dragons include power-hungry brine dragons from the Plane of Water, whimsical cloud dragons from the Plane of Air, haughty crystal dragons from the Plane of Earth, and sadistic umbral dragons from the Shadow Plane.

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Breath Weapon ♦♦ (evocation, fire, primal) The dragon breathes a blast of magma that deals 7d6 fire damage and 4d12 bludgeoning damage in a 40-foot cone (DC 33 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Draconic Frenzy ♦♦ As young magma dragon.

Draconic Momentum As young magma dragon.

Magma Swim As young magma dragon.

Volcanic Purge ♦ If the next action the dragon uses is Breath Weapon, the magma clings to those it damages. Each creature that fails its save against the Breath Weapon takes 3d6 persistent fire damage, and as long as it has this persistent fire damage, it also takes a -10-foot status penalty to its Speeds.

ANCIENT MAGMA DRAGON

CREATURE 18

RARE CN GARGANTUAN DRAGON FIRE

Perception +33; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Terran, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +35, Deception +28, Intimidation +32, Nature +29, Stealth +28, Survival +29

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

AC 42; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +31, **Will** +30; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 390; **Immunities** fire, paralyzed, sleep; **Weaknesses** cold 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 36

Wing Deflection ♦ As young magma dragon.

Speed 50 feet, fly 200 feet; magma swim 50 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +36 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 piercing plus 4d6 fire

Melee ♦ claw +36 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+20 slashing

Melee ♦ tail +34 (magical, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 3d12+18 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ horns +34 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 2d12+18 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** *fireball*, **8th** *burning hands* (at will), *wall of fire* (at will); **Cantrips** (9th) *produce flame*; **Constant** (4th) *fire shield*

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (evocation, fire, primal) The dragon breathes a blast of magma that deals 10d6 fire damage and 4d12 bludgeoning damage in a 60-foot cone (DC 42 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Draconic Frenzy ♦♦ As young magma dragon.

Draconic Momentum As young magma dragon.

Magma Swim As young magma dragon.

Magma Tomb ♦♦ Once per day, the dragon can spit a molten boulder at a target within 120 feet. This deals 10d6 fire damage and 4d12 bludgeoning damage, with a DC 42 basic Reflex save. If the creature fails its save, it's encased in magma that instantly cools and has Hardness 10, HP 40, and BT 20. The encased creature can't breathe and is restrained.

Volcanic Purge ♦ As adult magma dragon, but the damage is 4d6.





OTHER TYPES

For dragonscarred dead created by non-fire dragons, replace fire in traits, immunities, and breath-seared sword damage with the type appropriate for the creator dragon's breath weapon. The dragonscarred dead's regeneration is deactivated as follows: acid (deactivated by electricity), cold (fire), electricity (acid), poison (fire or cold).

Dragonscarred Dead

Not all would-be dragonslayers who die a valiant death rest peacefully amid the annals of legend. Sometimes, a draconic necromancer is so impressed by its fallen foe that the dragon ritually raises the dead warrior to serve the dragon in undeath. These undead guardians are infused with a fraction of the power of the dragon who slew them, channeling the same energy as their draconic masters' breath.

Dragonscarred dead are similar to skeletal champions or graveknights in that they are not merely reanimated servants who mindlessly follow orders, but are instead powerful wardens who maintain the same agency they bore in life. While a dragonscarred dead is often magically compelled to follow its reanimator's commands, some of these undead dragonslayers manage to escape their masters and pursue their own vile agendas—which may involve rallying allies to challenge their draconic creator once more and finish the dire mission they started in life.

DRAGONSCARRED DEAD

CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM FIRE UNDEAD

Perception +24; darkvision, guardian sense

Languages Common, Draconic, Necril

Skills Athletics +25, Dragon Lore +22, Intimidation +21

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

Items broken greatsword

Guardian Sense (arcane, detection, divination) The dragonscarred dead is immediately aware of any intruder that enters the lair of its creator dragon. It does not know the exact location of the intruder but remains aware of the intruder's presence until the intruder either leaves or is destroyed.

AC 33; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +22; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 210, regeneration 20 (deactivated by cold);

Immunities death effects, disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold 10, good 10

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 29

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ breath-seared greatsword +27 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 1d12+9 slashing plus 2d6 negative plus 3d6 fire

Breath-Seared Sword The dragonscarred dead's weapon is magically scorched by a dragon's breath. When wielded by the dragonscarred dead who carried it in life, the sword deals an extra 2d6 negative damage and 3d6 fire damage. In the hands of any other creature, it is merely a broken greatsword.

Glare of Rage ♦♦ (arcane, enchantment, mental, visual) The dragonscarred dead focuses its boundless frustration in a gaze targeting one creature it can see within 30 feet. That creature must attempt a DC 30 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is stunned 1.

Failure The creature is stunned for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is stunned for 1d4 rounds and is fatigued.

Forge-Spurned

Evil dwarves who die having failed to live up to the exacting standards of the duergar god Droskar are sometimes forced to return to the material world as undead abominations known as forge-spurned.

FORGE-SPURNED

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM FIRE UNDEAD

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +14, Crafting +14, Droskar Lore +12

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Items *soul chain*, warhammer

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

HP 75, eternal damnation, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold 5

Eternal Damnation (divine, necromancy) As long as its *soul chain* remains intact, a forge-spurned can't be truly destroyed. It rises again fully healed at the next sundown, even if its physical body was destroyed.

Searing Heat (fire) A creature that touches a forge-spurned (including by Grappling it or hitting it with an unarmed attack) takes 2d6 fire damage with a DC 21 basic Reflex save.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ *soul chain* +15 (disarm, trip), **Damage** 2d8+5 slashing plus 1d6 fire

Melee ♦ warhammer +14 (shove), **Damage** 1d8+7 bludgeoning

Inflate Bellows ♦♦ **Requirement** The forge-spurned has used Forge Breath. **Effect** The forge-spurned draws a massive breath to refill its emptied lungs, enabling it to use Forge Breath again.

Forge Breath ♦♦ (divine, evocation, fire) The forge-spurned breathes a cloud of stinging soot, ash, and glowing embers. This can affect either a 30-foot cone or a 20-foot burst centered on the forge-spurned and persists for 1d4 rounds. Each creature that moves into or starts their turn in the area takes 6d6 fire damage, with a DC 21 basic Reflex save. A creature that fails its save is also blinded for 1 minute. Creatures within the cloud are concealed, though not from the forge-spurned. The forge-spurned can't use Forge Breath again until it has used Inflate Bellows.

Soul Chain (divine, fire, necromancy) If a creature is slain by an attack from the *soul chain* and the forge-spurned is able to retain the creature's corpse, it can bind the creature's soul into the *soul chain* (as *bind soul*) with a day of work at a forge and a successful DC 20 Crafting check. An individual whose soul is bound in this way can't be resurrected unless the *soul chain* is destroyed (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10).



SOUL CHAINS

A forge-spurned wields a *soul chain*: a cursed +1 striking flaming spiked chain. Any other creature that has a *soul chain* must succeed at a DC 22 Will save each day at sundown or transform into a forge-spurned permanently. A forge-spurned stops at nothing to retrieve its *soul chain* if it's lost.

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NOCTURNAL TERRORS

The gashadokuro hunts for victims mainly after dusk, especially in the hour just after midnight. In parts of Tian Xia, particularly in the tumultuous regions of war and famine following the collapse of Imperial Lung Wa, parents hush their hungry children to sleep by warning that nighttime cravings will cause a gashadokuro to visit the household.

Gashadokuro

The dreaded gashadokuro is an undead hunter of the night, a giant skeleton that rises from the earth in the aftermath of a mass starvation event and seeks to inflict its unending hunger on the living.

A gashadokuro that comes about due to a poor growing season is more prone to stalk remote village farmlands at night, while a gashadokuro that arose from the victims of a government-instigated food shortage has few compunctions about stomping straight into bustling cities in broad daylight. These latter gashadokuro even seem to target aristocrats and government authorities—whether or not they are the same politicians whose negligence resulted in the famine in the first place—leading many to believe that the gashadokuro seeks to slake its thirst for revenge even more than it seeks to sate its unending hunger.

GASHADOKURO

CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON NE HUGE UNDEAD

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +27, Intimidation +24

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

AC 33; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +21, **Will** +24

HP 230, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, piercing 10, slashing 10

Starvation Aura (aura, divine, mental, necromancy) 60 feet. Any creature that ends its turn in the aura feels the intense pain of starvation and must attempt a DC 30 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature becomes fatigued and takes 6d6 damage. Damage and fatigue a creature takes from this aura can't be healed until the affected creature has eaten a full meal.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +27 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+14 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ claw +27 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+14 slashing

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (divine, necromancy)

The gashadokuro breathes a spray of bone shards in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area takes 8d12 piercing damage (DC 34 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Corpse Consumption (divine, necromancy) If the gashadokuro kills a creature with Swallow Whole, it immediately regains Hit Points equal to the swallowed creature's level. As long as the gashadokuro still exists, creatures consumed in this way can't be resurrected except by *wish* or a similarly powerful effect.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d6+8 bludgeoning, Rupture 24



Soulbound Ruin

Those who tread in ruined places sometimes speak of a sense that a supernatural presence is there alongside them, as if the spirits of the dead were watching intently. Such presences can be very real, often taking the form of ghosts or other shades of undead that cannot let go of their attachment to the Material Plane. But sometimes, instead of manifesting as distinct spirits, the souls of the dead infuse the very stone and mortar around them. When enough souls attach themselves to a single place—be it a home, crypt, or castle—it can take on a life of its own, becoming a soulbound ruin.

SOULBOUND RUIN

CREATURE 15

NE GARGANTUAN CONSTRUCT UNDEAD

Perception +25; darkvision

Languages Common, other languages typical to the region


Skills Athletics +30, Deception +26

Str +10, **Dex** +0, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 37; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +21, **Will** +27


HP 310, negative healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 15; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine)

Vulnerability to Exorcism When a soulbound ruin 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 effects, it takes 10 damage per spell level.

Impede  **Frequency** once per turn; **Trigger** A creature within the soulbound ruin uses an action with the move trait. **Effect** The soulbound ruin reacts violently to stop the creature's movement, shooting spikes, throwing bricks, or otherwise impeding the target. The target must succeed at a DC 35 Reflex save or fall prone.

Speed can't move

Melee  edifice +30, **Damage** 4d10+9 bludgeoning

Collapse Ceiling  The ruin collapses up to three 10-foot-by-10-foot sections of its ceiling. The ruin takes 10 damage per section it collapses, and it can't collapse the same section until it has been repaired. Each creature in one of these areas takes 8d10 bludgeoning damage with a DC 35 basic Reflex save. On a failed save, the creature is also restrained under the rubble until it Escapes (DC 33).

Self-Repair The ruin can spend 10 minutes repairing itself to regain up to 30 Hit Points. If the ruin is interrupted during this time, it loses its focus and the repair fails. This ability functions even if the ruin is reduced to 0 HP, unless a *consecrate* ritual has been performed to purify the building, in which case the soulbound ruin is destroyed. This ritual must be dedicated to a good deity or a deity with a strong opposition to undead, such as Pharasma.

Pervasive Attacks A soulbound ruin's edifice Strikes can target any creature inside the ruin.



SOULBOUND RUIN ORIGINS

Most often, soulbound ruins arise from guardians who died protecting the place, such as soldiers, priests, or patriots who refused to back down from an imminent threat. After death, the tormented spirits no longer recognize friend from foe and attack anyone or anything that trespasses upon their warded ground.

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KELDA HALRIG

Despite a diverse background in numerous skills and professions, Kelda Halrig's greatest passion is smithing, and her talents at the anvil are unrivaled in Kovlar.

Kelda's siblings were all adults long before she was born. As a result, she effectively grew up with four parental figures, each of whom was invested in making sure the youngest member of their family grew up with a strong work ethic. Her mother was an officer in the Guild of Arms, a veteran who patrolled the roads between Kovlar and other cities in the Five Kings Mountains in search of monsters and bandits that threatened travelers. Her brother was a member of the same guild, but served in the division of the guild that keeps the peace within Kovlar's walls. Her father was a jeweler in the Guild of Finery, while her sister was an herbalist of the Physic Guild. Kelda exceeded her family's expectations, flourishing in her studies and becoming a prodigy in the forge, but as she grew older, the pressure of these combined expectations wore on her. In the hope of having a good reason to spend some time outside of Kovlar, Kelda followed her mother's footsteps into the Guild of Arms.

Despite Kelda's desire to travel, her mother pressured her to join a division that remained within Kovlar, as she had seen too many horrors and had lost too many dear friends in the perilous tunnels beyond the city, and she didn't want her daughter to face the same pain. Kelda ignored her mother's advice, submitting an application to join a patrolling division. Her mother threw her weight as an officer into convincing the division's commander not to admit her youngest child to their ranks. When Kelda learned what her mother had done, she felt terribly betrayed, and her resentment only grew as her mother refused to relent or even apologize.

Kelda still felt a sense of duty to her family and to the guild that had trained her, however, so she accepted a post within Kovlar and served for several decades. Her relationship with her mother remained strained during these years, and the well-meaning attempts of other members of the guild to reconcile them grated on Kelda's nerves. Eventually, she took the drastic step of resigning from the guild and leaving Kovlar, traveling to the metropolis of Highhelm to the south.

Here, Kelda returned to blacksmithing, taking on an apprenticeship and quickly earning the approval of her mentors. She took particular interest in the history and evolution of traditional techniques. When she earned the right to sell her own work, she didn't settle for what she had already learned, instead dedicating her time to learning even more about the craft. She offered to work for other smiths, giving them labor in exchange for their insights. She also spent days poring over old tomes for clues about ancient techniques, using her research to create reproductions of historical weapons. Smithing alone proved unable to satisfy her curiosity, though, and she also took to studying stonemasonry, tailoring, and a variety of other trades. With each trade she studied, she learned insights and ways of thinking that sharpened her skills at other crafts. Though she wasn't living in Kovlar, she regularly returned to the city to visit her family and eventually reconciled with her mother.

Kelda was certain that she would one day wish to return to Kovlar, but not before she felt she was ready to commit to a single guild. Eventually, she reached the conclusion that smithing was her favorite trade, and she returned to Kovlar to petition for membership in the Anvillers' Guild. Her first few months back in Kovlar were challenging. Though she was clearly quite skilled, she had trouble earning respect from other smiths. Because of her decision to leave for Highhelm and pursue an eclectic path of study, many of her guildmates saw her as flighty, impulsive, and immature. But in time, the quality of her work and her devotion to the craft earned her the respect of her peers. She proved to be an excellent mentor to new apprentices, and her own masterpieces came to surpass those of the Forgemaster of the Anvillers' Guild. In keeping with the Anvillers' Guild tradition, she was soon after selected to become the new Forgemaster.

Though she has devoted the last few decades of her life to the service of Kovlar, she knows that her path isn't for everyone. Based in part on her own experiences, she believes it is important for young people to explore

several different careers before committing to one. As a result, she has instituted an exchange program across Kovlar's guilds, in which apprentices can receive training in a variety of trades before choosing their favorite. This program is popular among Kovlar's youth, but some guild leaders, such as Torra Garnis of the Carpenters' Guild, view it with suspicion, believing that Kelda's true aim is to lure the most promising and diligent apprentices over to the Anvillers' Guild. Others worry that Kelda seeks to consolidate multiple guilds to grow her own influence. Kelda has been cultivating relationships with smiths outside of Kovlar as well, including her contacts from Highhelm, encouraging them to train with the Anvillers' Guild and share their own techniques in return.

Kelda has a strong sense of duty and honor that guides her actions. She is disciplined and methodical in her work, both in the forge and on the floor of the Court of Regents. Because she has grown accustomed to the influence her words hold in Kovlar, she prefers to allow others to speak first and weigh their perspectives before sharing her own thoughts. She is disdainful of overly flowery and polite speech, which she insists exists to obscure the truth. As a result, she is unflinchingly honest, and she has little patience with people who are offended by her assessments.

Kelda is a stocky, muscular dwarven woman with brown eyes and freckles. She usually keeps her graying auburn tied up in a pair of long, looped braids fastened with metal clasps to keep them away from the forge fires. When working, she wears a fine leather blacksmith's apron with ornate iron buckles, and she often carries her blacksmith's hammer.

Campaign Use

Kelda's roots are now firmly planted in Kovlar, so she is unlikely to leave the city. However, by the time "Fires of the Haunted City" concludes, she recognizes the great service the PCs have done for Kovlar in foiling Embermead's and Veshumirix's plots. After the PCs' victory, she is willing to personally take commissions to create weapons and armor for them and she can even arrange Earn Income tasks of up to 12th level among the various guilds, should the PCs wish to work in the city.

If one of the PCs attempts to court Kelda, she finds their interest amusing. She has not given much attention to matters of the heart in recent decades, as she has found few capable of measuring up to her exacting standards. While she has no interest in short-term arrangements, a loyal, brave, honest PC of any gender with a strong drive toward self-improvement might capture her heart, particularly if that PC is also a master craftsman.

Kelda's ties to Kovlar may keep her from accepting a long-term post working for the PCs in Citadel Altaerein, but at your option, and if the PCs are particularly compelling (or tempt her with a large enough payment), she could be convinced to help for a short amount of time with downtime activities in Citadel Altaerein. Part of this might require the PCs installing additional protection in and around Jewelgate's exit into the Darklands and in the adjoining ruins within Saggorak.



KELDA HALRIG

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +22, Crafting +27 (+29 blacksmithing), Diplomacy +23, Kovlar Lore +25, Society +21

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

Gear +2 *greater striking greater flaming warhammer*, +1 *striking light hammer* (3), leather armor, sterling blacksmith's tools

AC 24; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +13, **Will** +16

HP 135

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ warhammer +20 (shove), **Damage** 2d8+13 bludgeoning

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

Master Smith As the most skillful blacksmith in Kovlar, Kelda's abilities far surpass those of typical smiths. She can Craft items as if she were 16th level. Additionally, she knows how to make a vast catalog of items, including numerous uncommon formulas and several rare formulas. The exact formulas she knows can be tailored to fit the needs of each particular group of PCs, but most are for weapons, armor, and other items that could reasonably be made in a forge.

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ILSSRAH EMBERMEAD

Second in command of the Scarlet Triad, Ilssrah Embermead has known the culture of her people only as a resource to be bought and sold, and her dwarven kin as fodder for slavery.

Ilssrah began life as an exile. Her parents were skilled thieves, masters of pilfering from merchants without being caught. In their view, such wealthy individuals could easily afford to be parted with some of their coin. As time went on, they grew increasingly confident in their skills and began breaking into homes as well. On one such excursion, the home's owner came after the intruders with an axe in hand. Ilssrah's parents panicked and fought back with lethal force, killing their victim, only to be caught literally red-handed a few moments later by the city guards. For their crimes, the family was banished from their home in Tar Dorgin, the most traditionalist of all dwarven settlements. Their surname, Hrisvild, was changed to Hrisvild-slag, symbolizing the stain their actions had left upon their family's honor. They retreated to the surface, where they initially sought a means to perform a great act of heroism to redeem their name, so that their shame would not pass down through their family line. It was during this time that Ilssrah was born, as Ilssrah Hrisvild-slagdam. Her parents sent word to their family of their daughter's birth, but no one showed any interest in meeting Ilssrah. By the time Ilssrah was old enough to speak, her parents' initial desire to seek atonement had faded, replaced with a simmering resentment for the society that had rejected their daughter.

Instead of seeking redemption, Ilssrah's parents poured all of their efforts into making sure Ilssrah could flourish without her ancestral society's approval. They taught her to view the world with detached cynicism, and encouraged her to eschew trust in anything but her own wits. They taught her to steal, lie, cheat, and manipulate for her own gain. The young Ilssrah took readily to manipulation, and she had no compunction about using her skills to force her parents into giving her what she wanted. Recognizing how precious she was to her parents, she often threatened to run away or to turn over evidence of her parents' crimes to the authorities in order to twist them to her will. Eventually, her mother grew fed up with her daughter's antics and, in a fit of rage, beat Ilssrah until the girl fell unconscious.

When Ilssrah woke, she resolved that one of two things must be true: either her parent's claims of love had been only a manipulation on their part, or the beating was a test of her resolve. Either way, she no longer felt welcome in their home. In the dead of night, she slipped away, and she never saw her parents again. She was 15 years old, not even halfway to dwarven adulthood.

The next decade passed with Ilssrah bouncing back and forth between the streets and the homes of well-meaning families. The only times Ilssrah felt comfortable relating to others were moments when she was certain she was in complete control of the situation. In time, she found some measure of solace in the teachings of Droskar the Dark Smith, which glorified her behavior, and when she prayed to him, he granted her the power to rule over others that she so deeply craved. In the years following, she traveled from city to city across the surface, manipulating others to earn prestige and wealth.

Ilssrah is a relatively recent addition to the Scarlet Triad, having joined the organization only after it developed connections with the slave trade. She proved herself a proficient slaver, with a good eye for selecting slaves with useful skills or bodies well-suited to hard labor. She refrained from certain acts of cruelty that other slavers practiced, such as killing or maiming slaves. This restraint had nothing to do with mercy or compassion; on the contrary, it stemmed from a desire to extract as much toil and profit as she could from each person under her control. Cold, ruthless, and merciless, Ilssrah believes that the only way to guarantee loyalty is through power and fear, and she sees other people—particularly dwarves—as tools to be manipulated.

Ilssrah is a middle-aged dwarven woman with light-colored skin who often has a severe expression upon her face. She wears a blackened breastplate emblazoned with the holy symbol of Droskar along with the symbol of the Scarlet Triad. She carries two weapons: a wicked-looking spiked hammer, and a red-hot length of chain covered in barbs. She has long ago abandoned the family name her parents saddled her with, and now those who speak of her know her only as Ilssrah Embermead.

Campaign Use

While Ilssrah doesn't bother with revenge for petty slights, she has poured decades of effort into building her position within the Scarlet Triad and her hard-earned duergar contacts. If the PCs thwart her plans and she survives, she devotes herself to bringing about their ruin. She can see no more appropriate fate for the PCs than to serve as her slaves.

ILSSRAH EMBERMEAD

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +29; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarf, Gnoll, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +27, Deception +26, Intimidation +28, Religion +31

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +5

Items +2 resilient adamantite breastplate, *Fleshroaster* (+2 striking flaming spiked chain), +1 striking returning light hammer, good manacles (4), religious symbol of Droskar

AC 40; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +24, **Will** +30

HP 270

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *Fleshroaster* +31 (disarm, finesse, magical, trip), **Damage** 2d8+14 slashing plus 1d6 fire

Melee ♦ returning light hammer +30 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d6+14 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ returning light hammer +28 (agile, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+14 bludgeoning

Divine Prepared Spells DC 36, attack +32; **8th** divine aura, harm (×6), spiritual epidemic; **7th** divine decree, energy aegis, heal; **6th** blade barrier, heroism, true seeing; **5th** death ward, heal, sending; **4th** air walk, anathematic reprisal, divine wrath; **3rd** circle of protection, locate (×2); **2nd** augury, darkness, silence; **1st** command, purify food and drink, ray of enfeeblement; **Cantrips (8th)** detect magic, disrupt undead, message, shield, sigil

Cleric Domain Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 36; **8th** commanding lash (Core Rulebook 390), touch of obedience (Core Rulebook 398)

Efficient Capture ♦♦♦ (attack, manipulate) **Requirements** Ilssrah has manacles in hand and is adjacent to a creature. **Effect** Ilssrah attempts to bind the creature's wrists or ankles with the manacles. If she succeeds at an attack roll with a +30 modifier against the target's AC, she applies the manacles.

Hammer the Chained ♦♦ Ilssrah attempts a melee Strike with *Fleshroaster*. If she hits, she also draws her light hammer, makes a melee Strike with it against the same target, and immediately returns it to her belt. She then resumes her grip on *Fleshroaster*. Both Strikes count

toward Ilssrah's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until both Strikes have been made.

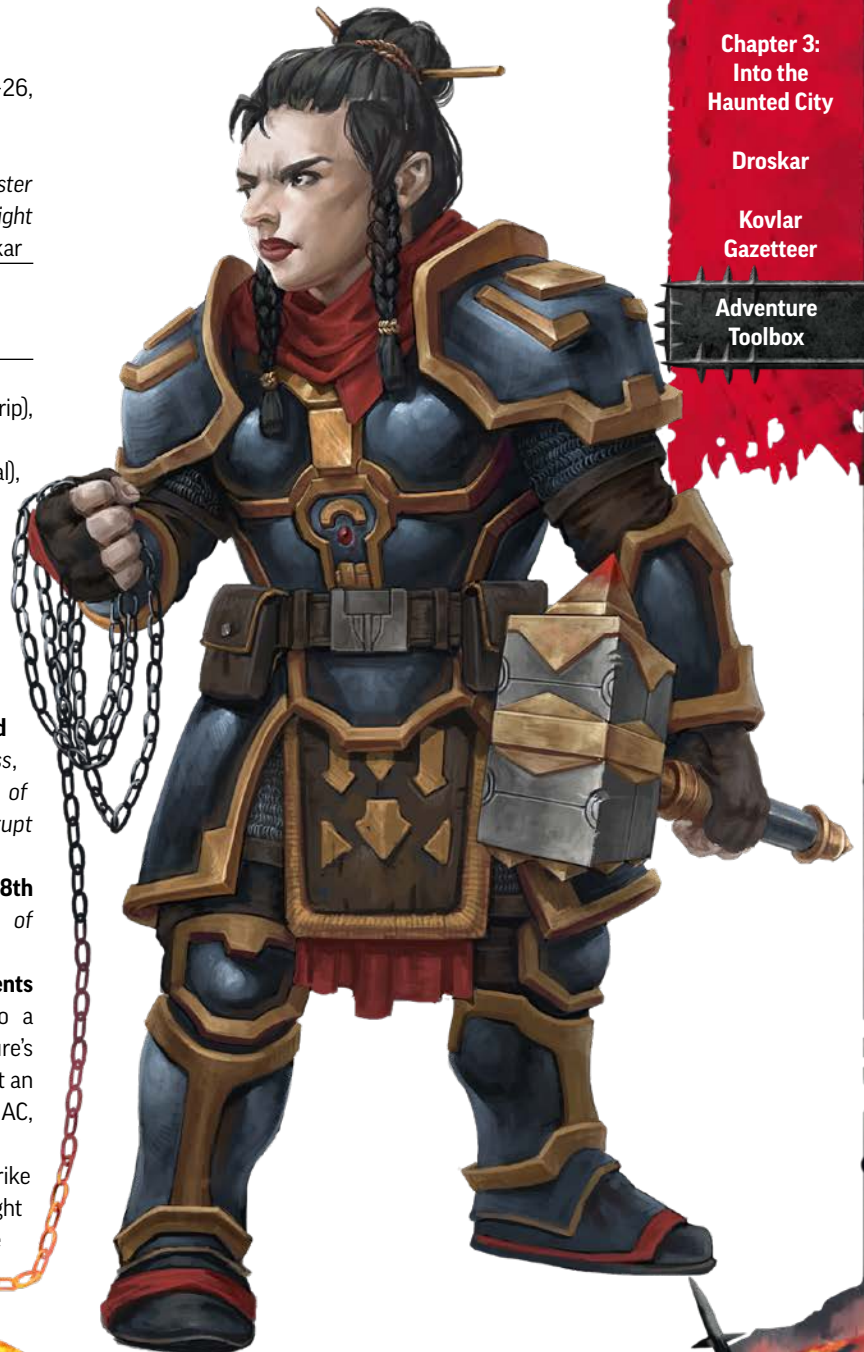
If the hammer Strike hits, it deals damage as normal and the target must attempt a DC 35 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 for 1 round.

Failure The creature is clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The creature is clumsy 2 and stupefied 2 for 1 minute.



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VESHUMIRIX

Veshumirix is capable of patience and farsighted behavior, but he is also prone to outbursts of cruelty and destruction. His ego is surprisingly fragile for a dragon of his strength, and he has no tolerance for the failures of his underlings.

Veshumirix hatched in 3965 AR, one of a clutch of seven dragons tucked away in a magma chamber beneath the tallest pair of mountains in the Five King's Mountains: Torag's Crag. As typical among the fiercely independent magma dragons, Veshumirix and his siblings were left to fend for themselves.

Conflict between Veshumirix and his siblings began almost immediately. Veshumirix was the second to hatch, shortly after his brother Moschabbatt, and proved the weaker of the two. Eventually, on the verge of death from his wounds, Veshumirix was forced to admit defeat, retreat, and plot revenge.

But Veshumirix's plots were not to be fulfilled. He did not realize that far greater forces were at work in the volcano, paying no mind to the petty squabble of wyrmlings. When the gold dragon Mengkare inadvertently triggered the Rending, the massive volcanic eruption utterly destroyed Veshumirix's modest lair and swept the young dragon toward the volcano's core. Veshumirix let the current carry him in hopes of studying the source of the devastation, hoping he might one day learn to harness such power for himself and unleash it. He expected to see a mighty great wyrm magma dragon rising from the ruin, but instead, he arrived just in time to see Mengkare abandoning the site. Confused, he combed the area, looking for anyone who could explain what had happened. As he searched, he came across a beautiful, shiny fragment for his hoard: one of the shards of the destroyed *Orb of Gold Dragonkind*. The reports he gathered in bits and pieces from other creatures of the volcano were imperfect records, embellished in the stories of the few witnesses who had escaped the epicenter. While these tales revealed to Veshumirix that his magma dragon theory had been incorrect, they also gave him the false impression that the gold dragon Mengkare had mastered a means of triggering titanic eruptions.

At first, Veshumirix was furious that a gold dragon had discovered such power and was being spoken of in reverent tones as a greater master of the volcanoes than the mightiest of magma dragons.

Veshumirix swore to himself that he would one day surpass Mengkare. In his childish but malevolent fancies, he imagined himself tearing Mengkare limb from limb before triggering an even larger eruption, one large enough to blanket the whole world in magma and ash. Before slaying Mengkare, though, Veshumirix was first determined to bring ruin to his brother Moschabbatt.

When Veshumirix returned to his birthplace—now called Droskar's Crag—to confront his brother, he was dealt another resounding defeat. Veshumirix could have easily died that day, but Moschabbatt was so overconfident in his assault that he neglected to check for life remaining in his brother's battered form. After feigning death for several agonizing days, Veshumirix fled Droskar's Crag for other volcanic caverns. There, he licked his wounds and set his sights on more modest ambitions, at least for the short term. Still, his mercurial moods ruled his behavior. Sometimes he operated as a bandit, engaging in murderous raids along Darklands tunnels that ran near his home. Other times, he likened himself to a petty tyrant, enjoying his rule over whatever he could subjugate for months or years before tearing apart his underlings in a fit of rage. When he lacked the energy to kill or reign, he instead submerged himself in molten rock and brooded.

Eventually, Veshumirix grew to adulthood, entering the second century of his life. This milestone rekindled his old obsessions. With renewed confidence in his abilities, he sought out whatever knowledge he could find on Mengkare. Yet his search disappointed him profoundly. No one under the mountains had heard anything of what had become of the dragon who caused the Rending. This failure sent him into a decade-long wandering rampage of destruction, during which he returned underground and terrorized various small outposts throughout the Darklands. Eventually, his obsession with revenge and destruction drew the attention of the servitors of the evil dragon god Dahak. Veshumirix began to receive a disturbing barrage of visions of ruin and

destruction, but rather than turn away from this darkness, Veshumirix embraced it. He kept an eye on his brother's deeds from the distance, watching as Moschabbatt became a legendary figure, gaining the allegiance of hordes of kobolds and various creatures of flame. Veshumirix's jealousy festered and grew. Finally, he received a vision of a different kind: one that showed him reigning supreme atop a vast pile of treasure, a crown on his head and his brother's corpse at his feet. His obsessions shifted, and he knew he would stop at nothing to find that glorious victory he had seen. Fortunately for Veshumirix, this city of the dead was far easier to locate than Mengkare.

Campaign Use

If Veshumirix survives the adventure, he is likely to seek revenge against the PCs in the future. Beyond that, he is a ready ally for the Scarlet Triad in future adventures. He wants to aid the organization in the short term, but he is secretly planning a betrayal to steal the destructive power they are building so he can wield it against Moschabbatt.

VESHUMIRIX CREATURE 16

UNIQUE CE HUGE DRAGON FIRE

Perception +28; darkvision, scent (imprecise)
60 feet

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Terran, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +30, Deception +26, Intimidation +32, Nature +24, Stealth +27, Survival +24

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

AC 39; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +28, **Will** +26; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 300; **Immunities** fire, paralyzed, sleep; **Weaknesses** cold 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental)
90 feet, DC 34

Wing Deflection ➤ As young magma dragon (page 80).

Speed 50 feet, fly 160 feet; magma swim 50 feet

Melee ➤ jaws +33 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 piercing plus 4d6 fire

Melee ➤ claw +33 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 slashing

Melee ➤ tail +31 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 2d12+15 bludgeoning

Melee ➤ horns +31 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage**

2d12+15 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 40; **8th** burning hands (at will), fireball, wall of fire (at will); **Cantrips (8th)** produce flame; **Constant (4th)** fire shield

Breath Weapon ➤➤ (evocation, fire, primal) Veshumirix breathes a blast of magma that deals 9d6 fire damage and 4d12 bludgeoning damage in a 60-foot cone (DC 42 basic Reflex save). He can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Draconic Frenzy ➤➤ As young magma dragon (page 80).

Draconic Momentum As young magma dragon (page 80).

Magma Swim As young magma dragon (page 80).

Volcanic Purge ➤ As adult magma dragon (page 80), but the damage is 4d6.

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Morta Valaskin

Morta Valaskin is one of Breachill's more talked-about citizens—and not without cause. Not only do her eccentricities provide excellent fuel for rumors (currently, the competing rumors that she's a vampire, a psychopomp, a visitor from the First World, or a spy from the Shadow Plane are the most common), her role as the town's mortician ensures that she's constantly surrounded by an air of somberness. Morta is herself one of the town's most informed gossips, and she views the rumors about herself with a sense of irony and amusement. Her skill and insight into all manners occult make her an excellent trainer for the PCs to hire.



Kellen Carondil

As the head priest of one of the few temples in Breachill dedicated to only a single deity, Kellen Carondil has fostered a reputation in town as a kindly and supportive soul. He teaches that Desna visits everyone as they dream each night to provide advice, support, inspiration, and entertainment. He also offers the Great Dreamhouse, Desna's temple in town, as a place for weary travelers of all stripes to rest—free of charge, more often than not (and assuming said travelers don't seem to be potential troublemakers). With nearly 30 acolytes and priests active in the Great Dreamhouse, the worship of Desna is one of Breachill's most widespread faiths—an honor Kellen doesn't take lightly. Kellen would make an excellent trainer in all matters religious for the PCs, or alternately as a medic to aid in the construction of an infirmary for Citadel Altaerein.



Jewelgate

Jewelgate appears as an arch of pale green stone shot through with veins of rose-colored crystal. Large gemstones and crystals grow from the stones—if pried from the arch, they crumble to dust as new stones grow to fill the vacancy created by the missing crystals. A row of stalactites hangs from its upper arch, while wafting curls of silvery mist dance within the arch. This portal was created to honor the elven goddess Yuelral, the patron of jewelers, spellcasters, and those who work with crystals. Originally, the portal led to a wondrous underground chamber where crystals of astounding size and variety grew, but unknown to the portal's first users, serpentfolk controlled this realm. These denizens of the Darklands reacted violently to the first elven visitors, forcing Candlaron to abandon this portal and establish a trusted watcher-guardian within its way station. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check confirms the portal's association with Yuelral, and discerns hints that the portal likely leads either somewhere underground or into a vicinity where crystals are common. From this side of the portal, there's no indication that an ancient curse by the serpentfolk has seeped from the Darklands into the way station within Jewelgate.



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