

6 PCs



Levels 4-6

# It All Falls Down

By Michael McCarthy



B3

# IT ALL FALLS DOWN

A short adventure by Michael McCarthy, for a party of four 6<sup>th</sup> level adventurers.

## CONTENTS

Adventure Background.....	1	F2. Waterfall ascent.....	10
Adventure Hooks.....	1	Xibrell Map.....	11
Adventure Synopsis.....	1	G. Ancient Meteorite.....	12
The Iroth Family Tree.....	2	H. Xibrell.....	12
Chapter 1: The Interrogation.....	2	H1. City Proper.....	12
A. The Wrecked Mansion.....	2	H2. Xibrell Shack.....	12
The Mad Dwarf.....	3	H3. The heaps (CR 7).....	12
B. Grabgur's Shack.....	4	H4. Xibrell Barracks (CR6).....	13
Other Routes to Xibrell.....	4	H5. The font of madness (CR7).....	13
Chapter 2: The Chase.....	5	H6. Deep Descent.....	14
C. Collapsing Tunnels (CR 8).....	5	I. Chikfari Nest (CR 7).....	14
C1. Detonation Site.....	6	Chikfari.....	15
C2. First Leg.....	6	J. Surface Passage.....	15
C3. Second Leg.....	6	J1. Distant Tunnel (CR 7).....	15
C4. Third Leg.....	6	J2. The Rotway.....	16
Silverlight Tunnels Map.....	7	K. Abandoned Locations.....	16
D. Rubble-Strewn Chasm (CR 7).....	8	K1. Dusty labyrinth.....	16
Chapter 3: The Escape.....	9	K2. Dead adventurers.....	16
Encounters Underground.....	9	Concluding the Adventure.....	17
Adventure Location: Xibrell Tunnels.....	9	Experience Rewards.....	17
E. Abandoned Tomb (CR7).....	9	VTT Maps.....	18
F. Iwiscaspeir's Cavern. (CR 7).....	10	Player Maps.....	20
F1. Main Cavern.....	10		

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# ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

It is impossible for anyone but a duergar to truly understand a duergar. Their actions, their motives, and even their most base desires all stem from the madness that drives them. The Xibrell duergar are little different, save for their particular madness stemming from a curse instead of from their own minds.

Xibrell, a small duergar settlement near the surface, specializes in collecting surface things. Sometimes they seek animals, or slaves, other times coin or art, and as their obsessions dictate, occasionally worthless trash or pestilent disease. They collect from the surface, and bring it down to one of the many hidden vaults deep beneath the surface of the world.

Several months ago, a new dwarf arrived in Xibrell by the name of Grabgur Leadfoot. He murdered and stole for the duergar until he was accepted into their community, and presented them with a plan – they would empty the Iroth family vault of its wealth, gold and jewels accumulated by generations of powerful bankers.

Grabgur wasn't just looking for some easy coin, though; he was looking for revenge against the Iroths. For years, he served them loyally as a guard, before being fired from his position without reason - or so he claims. Deluded by years at the bottom of a bottle, he thinks nothing of his insult and attack of the young Edwin Iroth that day, placing the blame solely on the family he had worked with for nearly a decade.

But, at least then, Xibrell had no interest in merely gold and jewels. Their madness dictated that they needed to gather supplies; which meant charcoal, and blooming flowers. In response to his plan, they tortured Grabgur, severing his hand and letting him loose in the dark tunnels beneath Silverlight Hollow, the very city whose vault he had hoped to rob. Crippled and ashamed, Grabgur was forced to crawl back up to the surface and try once again to make his life amid normal society.

But, as the wind blew against the taking of wealth, so too would it change. Now, the duergar of Xibrell crave nothing more than rare jewels, and thanks to Grabgur they have just the plan burning in the back of their minds.

# ADVENTURE HOOKS

The PCs are likely to be mercenaries or professional detectives hired by the Iroth family to track down and recover the stolen treasure.

The PCs could be related to the Iroth family, either directly or indirectly. In interest of retaining their family's power and influence, the group endeavors to recover the stolen goods.

The PCs could be in Silverlight Hollow when the attack on the Iroth vault occurs, and seek to make right what the duergar's madness has upset.

# ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins shortly after the Xibrell duergar have broken into the Iroth vault. Amid the devastation of their home caused by careless explosives, the family discovered that one of the treasures of their vault, the priceless Saatman Emerald, was stolen - alongside every other gemstone in their vault.

As a ray of hope however, not all of the duergar had escaped the explosion, and the family has managed to save one from the brink of death to interrogate him.

This job falls to the PCs, who are far more likely to have the capacity to interrogate a prisoner than the stewards of the Iroth household. He will reveal, in his roundabout duergar way, that the plan to rob the vault was conceived by dwarf by the name of a Grabgur Leadfoot - a familiar name here in the city - a town drunk.

Grabgur is almost as useless as the duergar, having 'defected' from their mad group nearly a month before; he has been perpetually drunk ever since in an attempt to forget it. The PCs must sober him up to get any semblance of help from the dwarf, at which point he will reveal the presence of a number of tunnels beneath the city, and a route which the duergar would have been likely



to take – down towards one of their impenetrable vaults.

Descending into the tunnels is the easy part, for upon picking up pursuit the group finds the duergar have not travelled far. Instead, they have rigged the tunnels to explode and collapse behind them, which they begin to do the moment the PCs catch up with the duergar group.

Weaving through a network of collapsing catacombs, the PCs eventually catch the duergar and relieve them of their stolen goods. But now, trapped far underground the group must find another route back to the surface.

The group will eventually find one of several exits amid defending themselves from the dangerous occupants of the tunnels, and be able to return to the surface, and the city, with Iroth's treasure.

## CHAPTER 1: THE INTERROGATION

The adventure begins as the PCs arrive at the now flattened Iroth estate, having been invited or by their right as adventurers to arrive at the scene of an incident.

### A. THE WRECKED MANSION

Read the following:

*Arriving at the Iroth estate reveals truth in much of what you had heard. While acres of the expansive grounds remain in pristine condition, the western wing of the mansion itself has collapsed two stories into the ground. Dozens of people, from servants to doctors to the Iroth family themselves gather around the faintly smoking wreckage.*

*The smell of fire hangs in the air, tinted with sulfur, keeping a pall on the people here, even as the voices of the Iroth family can be heard shouting directions amid the chaos.*

Fortunately for the Iroth family, the vault itself was in the western wing of the mansion while the eastern wing is where the family and servants quarter.

That luck only extends so far, and there were still nearly a dozen casualties within the serving staff. As they were freed from the rubble, the vault began to come free as well, and it became clear this wasn't any accident. Some sort of chamber had been carved directly beneath the vault, and the supports for the rest of the wing had been blown out with some explosive device.

The family has only recently had the opportunity to examine the contents of their vault; revealing that yes, the family had been robbed in the attack. Every gemstone within the vault has been



### The Iroth Family Tree

While the Iroth family name is one of many vassals of the king, their real claim to power is the business of banking. For twenty-seven generations, they have been excellent bankers, and now control nearly all of the coinage within the Silverlight Hollow.

While the Iroth family is officially human, their long lives and fair features, suggest that they have some elvish or other supernatural ancestry within their heritage.

Listed below are the members of the Iroth family who live within their estate in Silverlight Hollow, but his is far from the family in its entirety - after so long the family has expanded to holdings across the countryside.

**Matthew Iroth**, the patriarch of the Iroth family. Despite being nearly a century in age, this rail-thin man is only recently beginning to physically degrade. He prepares to pass his position down to one of his grandsons within the year.

**Christine Iroth**, Matthew's only child, and the matriarch of the Iroth family. Mother of three boys, Thomas, Flavius, and Edwin, she keeps a sharp eye on the state of the house, but leaves the actual control to her father.

**The late Samuel Jennik** was a promising competing banker who married Christine and sired three fine heirs. He was being groomed to be the family's next patriarch before his sudden death almost ten years ago.

**Thomas and Flavius Iroth**, the two elder Iroth sons are twenty-six and twenty-two years of age respectively. Despite their family's prestige, these two boys are insufferably immature, often treating the staff as poorly as the business they feel they have the right to one day handle. They are unaware that they are currently being passed over in the inheritance of the family business.

**Edwin Iroth**, the youngest master of the house at only fifteen. With his father's death at such a young age Edwin has matured quickly, and assumes a great deal of responsibility in the house, and is the most likely inheritor of the family's business.

taken, from tiny gemstones pried free of jewelry to the priceless relic, the Saatman Emerald. A statuette of a draconic sphinx carved by a long-dead civilization, the priceless piece is one of Matthew Iroth's personal additions to the family's legacy, and he feels equally responsible to recover it – he wants the thieves found and executed for the attack.

Matthew Iroth doesn't know any of the specifics of why the vault was breached, but the family did recover from the wreckage a half-dead duergar, from the nearby and regularly aggressive Duergar

village of Xibrell.

Matthew will call the group over as they draw near the mansion, and after a brief introduction, he will explain to the PCs what he wants.

Read the following:

*“Thank you again, truly. I have mastered many skills in my long life, but recovering stolen property is not one of them” Matthew pauses for a moment to brush off a smudge from his sleeve, “The best news is that nobody was killed. Not even the Duergar – one of the rotten grey things from that underground city of theirs. We – or rather you – can figure out what was going on and why they robbed me in the first place.”*

*The master of the house gestures you all closer and drops his voice, “Then, kill the buggers, every one you find. They cause too much trouble. I’ll make sure you’re compensated.”*

*Continuing aloud like nothing was amiss, he added, “And most of all, the Saatman Emerald – I bought it from a dragon for a small fortune. Above anything else, make sure you recover it.”*

## THE MAD DWARF

The Duergar that Matthew refers to is a Xibrell native known as Arsonist, inventor and crafter of the thousand hammers, the magical explosive device used by the Duergar to dig beneath the Iroth vault, and soon the device they will use to collapse the tunnels behind them.

Arsonist, like all of the Xibrell Duergar, is chalk-white from his hair to his lips, and even madder than most of his kind, thanks to the cursed well their city is been built upon. Most of his hair has been burned away, and both of his legs are currently broken, leaving him at 1hp, yet his health isn’t yet one of his concerns – he craves nothing more but the gemstones he came here to collect.

Sating Arsonist’s desires aren’t likely to be helpful for the PCs, for he always absolutely craves one thing or another. If given a gemstone of any sort, he will ask to be healed, then fed, then for rum, a hammer, and finally dozens of skulls, and an endless string of still more outlandish desires.

Still, while evil and mad, Arsonist isn’t particularly smart. He will answer any question put to him in his roundabout way, and truthfully, not thinking anything of it. Below is a list of common questions and Arsonist’s answers to them.

### Skill Check

Should the PCs not be interested in detailed roleplaying, a **DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check** will produce the answer to “Who is ‘he’?”



**Who are you?**

*“Arsonist is me, and I glitter like a ruby, like a topaz. I break things, I fix them, and I break them again, because it is as fun as a diamond glitters in the light of the fire. Even he doesn’t break things like I do. No, not like I.”*

**How did you break into the vault?**

*“A thousand hammer blows opened the way, a thousand hammer blows closes it. A thousand hammer blows rained upon my head as the walls turned to ash... But the gems are empty of hammers.”*

**Where are you from? Or how do we get to Xibrell?**

*“Xibrell, Xibrell, Xibrell...” The duergar begins to chant, almost praying, then suddenly stops. “But not him, he wanted us to have gold, he was not us. Xibrell, Xibrell, Xibrell...”*

**Who is ‘he’?**

*“He wanted to take away our coal, our food! He wanted gold and jewels, pretty jewels. Grabgur with a foot of lead, not of sapphires, now he has a hand of lead too. We used his hand to strike a thousand hammer blows! Ehehehe” the duergar continues to laugh for some time before his face scrunches up, “His hand and his mind opened the floor and the walls to what we wanted. He is not us, he doesn’t know us. He thinks he is us, but he is not.”*

Mentioning Grabgur's name to Matthew or another member of the Iroth family reveals that Grabgur Leadfoot was once one of the Iroth family's guardsmen, let go for his issues with drinking and for one day attacking Edwin Iroth over a simple shift reassignment

Despite a several-month disappearance after the incident, during which Grabgur attempted to ally with the Xibrell duergar, Grabgur returned to the shack he calls home with a missing hand, and began to drink even more than normal, and can still be found there.

## B. GRABGUR'S SHACK

Every surface of this filthy hovel is littered with empty bottles, and the building seems to jingle with every footfall outside. In the center of this mess lays an equally dirty dwarf, his one remaining hand wrapped tight around some half-finished flask.

Grabgur's shack is small, only ten by fifteen feet in its entirety, and holds no more than a table, a bed, and a pair of sacks that contain Grabgur's few remaining possessions he has yet to sell for booze.

Grabgur himself is passed out from drink, and has been for several hours by the time the PCs arrive. When woken, he is nauseated and incomprehensible for at least ten minutes, though the PCs can help him recover faster using any sort of means that might be at their disposal.

Once lucid, Grabgur quickly makes it clear that he isn't going just tell the PCs what he knows for free – even though he might struggle for the words in his barely sober state.

*"Sho, now you want my help, huh? Xibrell finally learned how brif... bri... How smart I am."* Grabgur wipes some spittle out of his beard, instead smearing it across his cheek, *"I wahn... a weeks pay. No a year's pay, then I'll tell you."*

Grabgur's request isn't very difficult for the PCs to fulfill, partly because he can't remember clearly how much he had made. If pressed for a specific value, he will invent a wage of 5d6x50gp, and be happy with it if paid.

What he actually made, which can be discovered by asking any member of the Iroth family, was 700gp a year, a sum which they will provide to the PCs upon the assurance that this expense will recover the stolen gems.

### Skill Check

More frugal PCs can evade this cost with a **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **(Intimidation)** check. PCs that attempt to bribe him with a 75gp or more have advantage on the check.

Once persuaded to help the group, he will answer the PCs questions to the best of his ability, surprisingly quick to sober up now that his future ability to drink is on the line.

*"Thish is how it worked. You see."* Grabgur digs a dirty scrap of paper out from his pocket, revealing a crude map of the city with several lines overtop it, *"Theshe are the tunnels that go under the city. Xibrell tunnels. They're everywhere. Those little buggersh were going to sneak right under the mansion, and use those tunder hammersh to open a hole in the floor of the vault, and then empty it."*

Grabgur uses the stump of his missing hand to adjust the paper, then points to one of the thicker lines. *"Thash the main tunnel. It... It comes out just outside Xibrell."* The dwarf ends sarcastically, pushing the scrawled map towards you.

## OTHER ROUTES TO XIBRELL

It is entirely possible the PCs will simply set off directly searching for Xibrell without visiting Grabgur. The problem with this approach is that other than the dwarf, nobody in Silverlight Hollow actually knows where it is, and the Iroth family will make it clear that having any direction is better than searching blindly.

### Skill Check

Without Grabgur's map, it requires a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check to find an entrance to the Xibrell tunnels, and each failed check results in the waste of a full day searching. After two days the duergar will have made it safely to Xibrell, and after two more days wasted, by the time the PCs arrive they will have descended into the deeper tunnels, far beyond the scope of this particular adventure.



## CHAPTER 2: THE CHASE

While Grabgur's map isn't incredibly useful, it does provide enough information for the PCs to eventually find one of over a dozen narrow tunnels around the city, all funneling down to one main tunnel.

The walls of this massive tunnel are smooth and arched, suggesting some sort of natural space despite the rough-cut floor. Far in the distance, you can hear the sound of hammer on stone.

Long ago, most of these tunnels were lava flows, but in the intervening centuries the magma has drained away, leaving the 40-ft. wide, 30-ft. high tunnel empty. While the walls are natural stone, the duergar have taken the time to flatten out the floors of the tunnels, and they are hewn stone instead.

### C. COLLAPSING TUNNELS

The sound of hammers leads the PCs down the main tunnel, past a collapsed side-passage – which would have led beneath the Iroth vault – and eventually to the Xibrell duergar, not far away.

#### Skill Check

Between the collapsed side tunnel and the duergar's current location several hundred feet beyond, allow the PCs to make a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check**. Each PC that succeeds can identify a small nook along the cavern, containing a single *thousand-hammer*, rigged in such a way that it would explode, if undisturbed, upon the detonation of any other nearby *thousand-hammers*.

For each *thousand-hammer* the PCs recover, the inevitable collapse of the tunnel will be delayed by one round, up to a maximum of four rounds of delay.



#### *Thousand-Hammer*

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

#### DESCRIPTION

Mounted on a wooden handle, this wrapped package resembles a large, mundane hammer. However, the resemblance ends there. Often called thunder hammers for the cacophonous boom they cause when they detonate, they are designed to crack through stone and mortar with the power of a thousand hammer blows.

The user can set a *thousand-hammer* to detonate at any time from the end of the current round, to five rounds from when the hammer is set. Once triggered, it cannot be deactivated.

Upon detonation, all creatures within 15 ft. of the *thousand-hammer* must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** taking 5d6 thunder damage on a failed save. On a success the creature takes half damage. The *thousand-hammer* is destroyed in the explosion.

## C1. DETONATION SITE

The gentle curve of the tunnel reveals a group of ashen-skinned dwarves, tossing their pickaxes into a cart pulled by some sort of massive insect.

As they see you, they begin to whoop and holler obscenities, and one of them produces a hammer, or a package that looks like a hammer, and steps between your group and theirs.

The package in the duergar's hand is actually a *thousand-hammer*, already armed and prepared to detonate the very next round. Any PC who attempts to close the initial 60 ft. between the two groups is likely to be caught in the blast alongside the duergar himself.

More importantly, this *thousand-hammer's* detonation causes a chain reaction of every other hammer hidden along the length of the tunnel, which in turn causes the cavern to begin to cave-in on itself, a process which will not soon resolve itself.

Escaping the collapsing tunnels is a series of skill checks (determined by the GM) which normally begins one round after the duergar detonates the *thousand-hammer*, though this can be delayed if the PCs had removed any of the devices from the passage beforehand.

The initial collapse begins 60 feet behind the PCs starting location, and advances towards the group at a rate of 40 ft per round. Characters with a slower movement speed must use their bonus action to dash to remain away from the encroaching wall of collapsing rock, while faster PCs might be able to gain on, or even attack the duergar, who begin with a 60 ft. lead on the PCs. If the PCs initiate combat during the chase, the duergar act on initiative 10, and the cave-in progresses on initiative 1.

The duergar themselves are generally safe from the rockslide, immediately clambering into the cart and using the chikfari's superior movement speed to stay well ahead of the PCs and the cave-in, though never far out of sight.

### DM Note: Buried PCs

A serious threat during this encounter is that of a PC being buried in the cave-in and left behind. Should one or more of your PCs fall victim to the collapse, they must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** taking 8d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save and only half that damage on a success. Inquisitive PCs will find that the fragments of rubble are large enough that they can pick their way through slowly through the rubble of the wrecked passageway, eventually emerging at the lip of the pit in area D.

Attempting to travel back towards the city is likewise possible, but only as far as the intersection below the Iroth Manor, where the tunnel is utterly impassible.

## C2. FIRST LEG

As each explosion detonates further down the passage, huge cracks appear in the walls. It starts with stalactites falling from the ceiling, quickly escalating as the entire passageway behind you begins to collapse in on itself, sending debris and dust – and thousands of tons of rock – in your direction.

The first leg of the challenge is a direct sprint, down the gradually sloping tunnel for 200 ft. As the PCs run, smaller rocks will hurtle down the hillside, striking both the PCs and the duergar every three rounds. Any creature in the rocks path must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** taking 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a failed save and half that damage on a success.

The duergar, however, are mostly safe from the real threat of this collapse, riding in the cart as they are, as the chikfari receives improved cover from the rockslide's attacks due to the cart and the duergar behind it. Should the PCs attack the duergar during this time, three of them will retaliate with their javelins, while one continues to direct the chikfari.

## C3. SECOND LEG

The tunnel cuts suddenly to the side, then upwards. The insect pulling the duergar has no trouble catapulting them up the steep incline, even allowing itself a moment to pause at the apex.

This rocky upward slope requires the PCs to climb or leap their way up before the cave-in reaches them. Fortunately for them, the shift in the direction shields them from any further rubble.

The duergar will pause at the top for up to two rounds to taunt the PCs, pretending to pick the PCs off the wall with their javelins – though not actually firing upon them unless they are in extremely close pursuit.

### Skill Check

Climbing the 30 ft. slope requires a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. The slope is not so sheer that falling PCs will take any damage from the fall itself, though each failed attempt still returns them to the bottom.

## C4. THIRD LEG

With the deafening roar of rocks not far behind, the pathway suddenly drops down into a chasm, at the bottom of which is a shattered bridge.

Only 60 ft beyond the cliff the PCs have scaled, the passageway drops off suddenly. The bridge the duergar had been using has come free from its anchors and fallen into the pit, along with the duergar, who were on it at the time.





# SILVERLIGHT TUNNELS

← Silverlight Hollow



0 600

SCALE IN FEET

The passageway continues on the opposite wall, 25 ft. away, but unless the PCs are able to jump that distance they will first be forced to find a way down to the bottom – area D – 40 ft below.

Fortunately, the chasm's presence will stop the cave-in from continuing, though only just on the cusp of the entrance to the chasm, leaving only a 5 ft. lip for PCs to stand on safely.

### Skill Check

Any PC who has used their bonus action to dash or who has stated that their character is running must react quickly to the sudden lack of ground beneath their feet. They must succeed at a **DC 17 Dexterity saving throw** to stop themselves from falling, or they must succeed at a **DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to launch themselves across the chasm to grab a hold of the other wall. Characters moving slower than a run may stop without making a save. PCs that fail at either the **Dexterity save** or the **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** fall into the cavern below and take 8d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall and the avalanche of rocks.

Climbing down the wall itself is relatively easy, **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, though doing so before the cave-in has stopped increases the **DC to 20**.

## D. RUBBLE~ STREWN CHASM

This huge chasm extends hundreds of feet in either direction, and nearly a hundred feet up as well, before filling with jagged stalactites. Along its bottom is a layer of fresh rubble, including a wrecked cart and bridge. Hundreds of the stolen gemstones litter the floor.

The chasm is approximately 350 ft. long, and ranges from 15 to 20 ft. wide, except at the very ends where it begins to narrow down to only a few feet across. At this point, the base of the chasm is 20 ft. across. The walls are relatively sheer, but equally rough, requiring only a **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to ascend or descend.

### Combat

Unlike the PCs, the duergar did not have the opportunity to react to the bridge collapsing beneath them. Each of them begins with 3d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall (the fallen cart sheltered them from the worst of the rocks). Depending on the lead they had on the PCs, they may have time to drink the *potions of healing* that they each carry before entering combat.

The chikfari did not fare as well, and landed on its neck, killing it instantly upon impact with the ground.

If the PCs do not catch up with the duergar within the hour, they will collect the scattered gemstones themselves and return to Xibrell in area H.

**(5) Duergar (Xibrell Raiders), CR 5; 1000 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 2000 XP; Easy. See the official entry for full Duergar stats.**

Before combat the duergar will drink *potions of healing* if they are badly injured from the fall. During combat The duergar will avoid closing with targets, using their crossbows as the PCs approach them. Once engaged in melee they do not fight as a group but rather as individuals. If the fight looks to be going against them the Xibrell duergar will back off to use *potions of healing* (if they have any remaining) when reduced to 15 hp or less, but will fight to the death



## Skill Check

With the entrance passage blocked by the cave-in, there are only two exits from the chasm, one directly opposite the entrance, leading to the passages just outside Xibrell, the other near the ceiling of the cavern. The main passage is immediately visible to anyone looking for an exit, but from the ground, it requires a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** to identify a carved ladder leading from the clearly visible middle passage to the less obvious higher passage connecting to area E. From the main passage, this ladder is easy to climb. The ladder is not immediately visible to anyone standing in the main passageway.

## Treasure

The gems the PCs were enlisted to recover, including the priceless Saatman Emerald, are scattered amongst the rocks and debris. It takes approximately two hours, divided amongst the PCs, to collect all 193 gems.

## Adventure Location: Xibrell Tunnels

**Location:** This network of tunnels serves as a lair to the Xibrell duergar, and the many beasts that they both hunt and avoid.

**History** The primary tunnels here were once an ancient **lava flow**, thousands of years ago. Now that they lay empty, they have been used as a landing for occasional excursions between the underworld and the surface. Only in the last forty years did the duergar settle the village now called Xibrell, before falling prey to one of many curses within these depths.

**Location:** Xibrell Tunnels

**Dangers:** Duergar, Monsters, Survival

**Lighting:** None

**Walls:** Natural Stone

**Doors:** none

**Mood/Theme:** Isolated, quiet tunnels in total darkness, with creatures within lurking around every corner.

# CHAPTER 3: THE ESCAPE

With the immediate threat of cave-in and mad duergar settled, the PCs will have to come to terms with being trapped underground. There are miles of tunnels to contend with, and all the dangerous things that live within.

## ENCOUNTERS UNDERGROUND

Many species of dangerous creatures live within the dark tunnels around Xibrell. Twice a day roll a d100. On a result of 1-50 the PCs will randomly encounter one of the many stalking threats.

Roll	Encounter	Roll	Encounter
1-10	2 Minotaur*	41-75	1d6 Duergar (Xibrell Raiders)
11-30	1d4 Chikfari	76-95	Cloaker*
31-40	1d4 Wights*	96-100	Drider

\* This encounter can only occur once. Ignore if rolled twice.

## E. ABANDONED TOMB

Dusty and long-forgotten, this marble structure seems to have sunk into the earth over the course of centuries. Despite the age, the uneven stones are free of moss and other growth, suggesting the pallor hanging over this place is more than just darkness.

The owner of this tomb, a warrior-priest of a dark god, has long since decayed to dust, and the treasures within his final resting place have been plundered. But, over the centuries, the necromantic energies that suffuse this place have raised one beast or another from the grave, creating an endless cycle of beasts that need to be destroyed, and the treasure of fallen heroes.

The corpses of several duergar now stalk the tunnels around this small tomb, collecting other bodies from the tunnels to eventually rise as things still worse than themselves.

An empty sarcophagus sits in the center of this room, stripped of even its lid. A dark altar sits behind it, glowing faintly while several sinister shapes stalk around it, casting shadows on the long-faded walls.

Hexagonal in shape, the body of the tomb is thirty feet across and ten feet high. In the center is a three-foot square block of solid obsidian, glowing faintly (as a candle), and an empty stone sarcophagus set halfway into the floor. Four mutilated bodies lay around the corners of the room, each of which will rise as a zombie in 1d6 days if left within the tomb.

## Combat

(6) Zombie and (1) Wight, CR 6; 1000 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 2500 XP; Medium. See the official entry for full Zombie and Wight stats.

## Treasure

While three of the bodies are of unprepared duergar, the fourth is a drow explorer from the underworld. He still carries with him a +1 *scimitar* (see official entry for statistics), sheathed at his belt.



# F. IWISCASPEIR'S CAVERN

For centuries this massive chamber was filled with water, slowly leeching salt and other minerals from the water and forming the massive smoky crystals that now dominate the cavern.

While this massive chamber is nearly 200 ft. across, roughly 50% of the available space is overtaken by the massive salt crystals, presenting either as difficult terrain (45% of the time), or a crystal so large as to make the space impassible (5%). Only a single obvious path leads from the entrance at one end to the waterfall at the other.

## F1. MAIN CAVERN

An inch of water covers the floor of this chamber, where huge crystalline prisms rise from the ground, piercing the walls and ceiling in equal measure. Scattered just beneath the surface of the water between these spires are polished coins and small shimmering scales.

In the distance, the faint sound of a waterfall can be heard.

The cave's owner, the dragon Iwiscaspeir, might be an evil dragon, but underground he rarely has any worthwhile companions to speak to. He will not attack immediately, waiting for the PCs to make the first move. But should they talk, he will quickly attempt to monopolize them for as long as he can – though he does intend on eating them after a time unless they prove particularly riveting.

Should the PCs improve his attitude to friendly from neutral, and ask him how he arrived here, or for an exit, he will tell the PCs how he discovered this cavern quite by accident, squirming down a narrow tunnel from the surface, eventually emerging from the same hole that now serves as his waterfall.

## Treasure

Iwiscaspeir has yet to collect much treasure, what little he had collected was lost from his previous lair. Still, he has collected 1,946gp and 654sp, which cover the floor.



## Combat

(1) Young Black Dragon CR 7; 2900 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 2900 XP; Medium. See the official entry for full Young Black Dragon stats.



## F2. WATERFALL ASCENT

Despite the steady rain of water, this passageway continues to climb up towards the surface.

This long, mostly vertical shaft rises all the way from Iwiscaspeir's cavern to a river on the surface, but climbing it is no easy feat.

## Skill Check

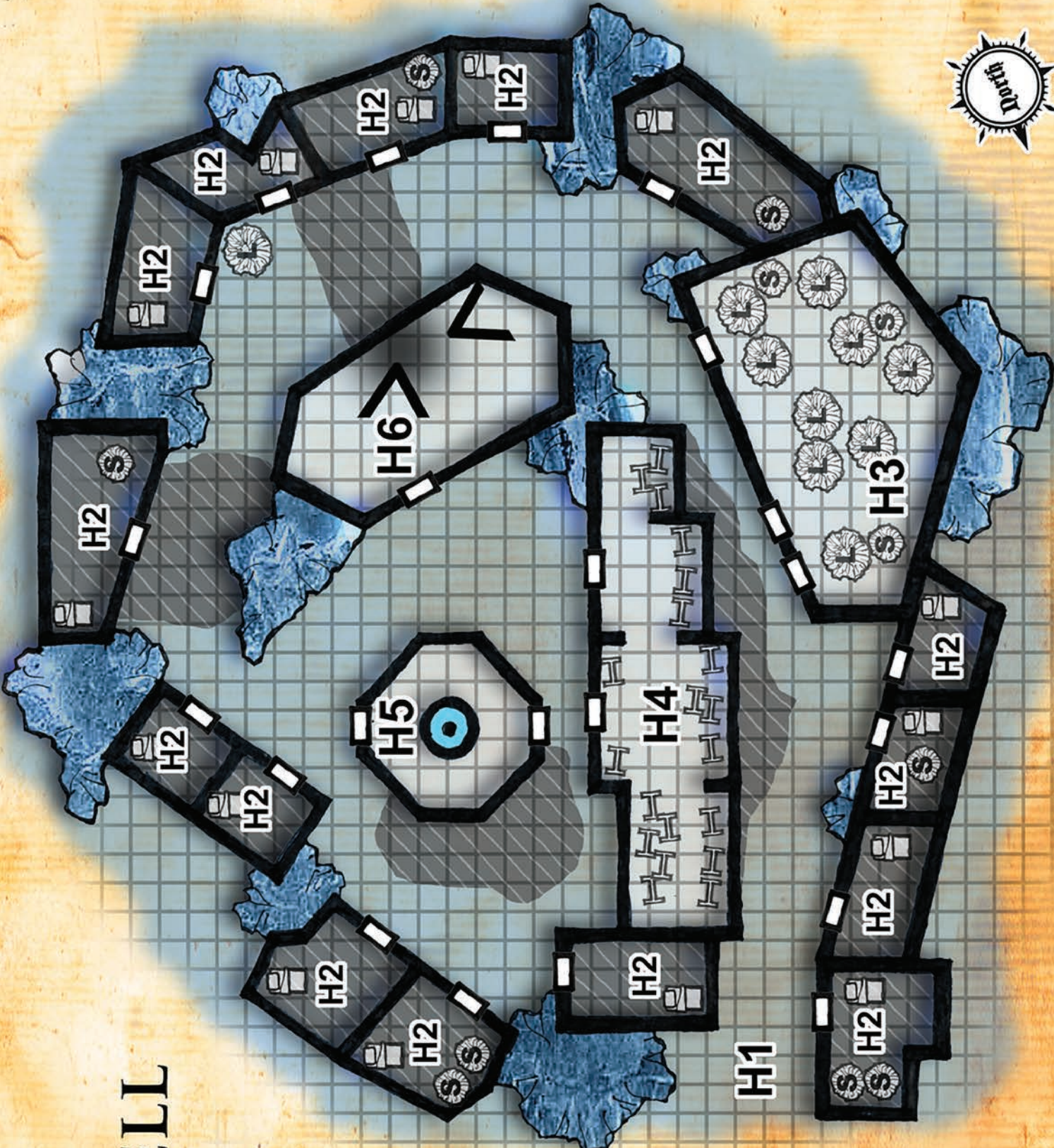
The slick, unworked stone directly beneath the waterfall is incredibly difficult to climb, requiring a DC 20 **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to make progress up the 90 ft. ascent. Once the first leg is complete, the PCs are able to climb up the narrow space, gaining advantage on the check. Further, there are effectively landings every hundred feet as the passage twists and turns while it climbs the five hundred feet to the surface.



If the PCs ascend to the surface in this manner, they will find themselves emerging from a river bank a short two miles from Silverlight Hollow. Once they have, proceed to concluding the adventure.



# XIBRELL



BED



LARGE HEAP, 4FT HIGH



SMALL HEAP, 2 FT HIGH



DOOR



WEAPONS RACK



DIFFICULT TERRAIN



SCALE IN FEET

# G. ANCIENT METEORITE

Eons in the past, a meteor hit the world, burying itself far underground. PCs passing through this tunnel may spot this unusual stone.

## Skill Check

A DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check identifies the silvery metal peeking through the surrounding rock. Once freed from the wall, this sixty pound meteor could be smelted down to produce ten pounds of adamantine.



# H. XIBRELL

The walls of the tunnels abruptly fall away, and the ceiling opens up hundreds of feet above. Ahead, a city of ramshackle buildings has been built in the center of this huge cavern, filling in the spaces between stalagmites to create the illusion of a single, massive structure.

This conglomeration of buildings is the city of Xibrell, home to the duergar who have been harrying the city of Silverlight Hollow for so long. When the PCs arrive, four of the remaining ten duergar will be away, scavenging and stealing from the surface world. For each day that passes, 1d4 scavenging duergar will return, and a similar 1d4 will leave on their own mission.

Unless the PCs burn down the village, the duergar will remain oblivious to any attack the PCs might have made on the city, even stepping over bodies in the streets to go about their individual tasks like nothing was wrong. Of course, if they actually see the PCs, they will immediately attack.

The walls of Xibrell's buildings are poorly constructed of stone and wood and the floor is carved stone.

# H1. CITY PROPER

The exterior space of the village, if you could call it that, is divided into sections; spotless, filthy, polished and rough-hewn. Divided by clear lines, no two building faces seem quite alike.

The duergar make a deliberate point of keeping some sections of the city clean, though they still leave others littered with rubble. Rubble-covered areas are considered difficult terrain.

# H2. XIBRELL SHACK

Like every other aspect of life in Xibrell, few portions of the duergar's living conditions are well maintained; for instance their clothing is well mended, but their rooms are uniformly filthy; or how they sleep in neat beds, while the floor is covered with rancid piles of chewed bones.

None of the shacks contain anything of value.

# H3. THE HEAPS

An elaborate set of arches supports a roof and walls made of rough sheets of wood and metal. Between the arches, dozens of very distinct piles lay around the room, and several duergar carefully shift one item or another within and between them.

The piles in this room contain the majority of what the duergar have collected - save for the truly 'valuable' pieces stored in vaults far beneath the world.

The collections here are quite varied in their contents, though little of it is useful for the PCs. Each pile is distinct; rocks, surface plants, salted lizards, scraps of cloth and many further things besides, each in a neat pile.

When the PCs enter, the duergar will hide behind the stacks until the PCs enter the room, and remain in hiding so long as the PCs don't touch anything. If they do, the duergar will immediately leap out and attack.

## Shifting Stacks Hazard

The stacks around the room are huge and precarious. While a creature could enter these spaces as though they were difficult terrain, one round later any entered stack collapses, requiring a DC 18 **Dexterity saving throw** to avoid being knocked prone. PCs that have been knocked prone also take 1d6 piercing damage from the random assortment of sharp objects littered in and around the stacks.



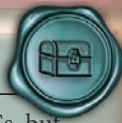
## Combat

(4) Duergar (Xibrell Raiders), CR 4; 800 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 1600 XP; Easy. See the official entry for full Duergar stats.



## Treasure

Most of the stacks are ultimately worthless to the PCs, but one of the smaller stacks is of assorted papers. Amid them are a fourth, a third, two second and eight first level spell scrolls. The GM should choose which spells are written on the scrolls.



## H 4. XIBRELL BARRACKS

Crude weapons line the walls in rows. Hundreds, if not thousands of rusty, broken and poorly made weapons fill racks three and four rows deep from the walls.

While most of the weapons here are broken and useless, simply one of the many things the duergar collect uselessly, they are equally obsessive about maintaining those few they do use. At all hours of the day, several duergar remain here, polishing, sharpening and generally maintaining the armory.

### Combat

(4) Duergar (Xibrell Raiders), CR 4; 800 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 1600 XP; Easy. See the official entry for full Duergar stats.

### Treasure

Amid the broken weapons is one +1 heavy crossbow.

## H 5. THE FONT OF MADNESS

This gazebo-like structure holds only a grimy fountain, and must predate the rest of the city by years. The stonework is immaculate, and the dirty water of the fountain seems to burble of its own accord, as if it was laughing.

Though the duergar aren't fully aware of it, their madness doesn't stem from within themselves but from within the spirit of an insane derro who died in this cavern centuries ago. She drowned in the very spring that feeds the fountain that was to serve as the cornerstone of a magnificent city, and anyone drinking from it – the duergar especially – share in her obsessive madness.

Norah's ghost lives within the fountain, and should any combat take place within Xibrell, she will emerge and begin to circle the fountain, picking specks of invisible dirt from it until disturbed, before assaulting any creature she sees. To be laid permanently to rest, the PCs must destroy the fountain (AC 12, hp 20).

If a PC drinks from the questionable fountain before Norah's spirit has been permanently destroyed, have them make a **DC 14 Intelligence saving throw**. On a failure they will be struck with temporary insanity for the next 4 hours (at which point they may repeat the save). The form this madness takes causes the target to feel an overwhelming compulsion to collect random items. Each failed save doubles the duration of the madness.



### Combat

(1) Ghost of Norah, CR 5; 1800 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 1800 XP; Easy.

**Before combat** Norah uses *Minor illusion* to create a haunting discordant melody that surrounds her. During combat Norah will attempt to *Intimidate* targets into drinking from the well, or use *charm person* on them if that fails. She will use *darkness* to sow confusion among her opponents. Norah fights to the death, but will not pursue PCs beyond the center of Xibrell.



## Ghost of Norah

*Small undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 39 (6d8+12)

**Speed** 0 ft, fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** common, undercommon

**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The ghost of norah is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The ghost of norah has the following bard spells prepared:

3/day each: *darkness, detect magic*

Cantrips (at will): *vicious mockery, minor illusion*

1<sup>st</sup> level spells (3 slots): *bane, charm person, thunderwave, dissonant whispers, tasha's hideous laughter*

**Ethereal Sight.** The ghost of norah can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The ghost of norah can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends her turn inside an object.

### ACTIONS

**Withering Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

**Etherealness.** The ghost of norah enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

**Horrifying Visage.** Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost of norah that can see it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost of norah's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

**Possession (Recharge 6).** One humanoid that the ghost of norah can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost of norah; the ghost of norah then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost of norah now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost of norah can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, or when the ghost of norah ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost of norah is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the ghost of norah reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost of norah's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

## H6. DEEP DESCENT

While few of the tunnels around Xibrell go anywhere, there is one that leads down, seemingly forever. It was from this tunnel that the duergar that founded Xibrell came from the underworld, and it is through this tunnel that they descend to deliver the treasures they steal.

It is certainly possible the PCs would be interested in descending further into the underground, but such an expedition is outside the scope of this adventure. It would be prudent to suggest your PCs leave this pit alone until they know they are prepared for the dangers.

## I. CHIKFARI NEST

While several patches of this large spherical chamber show the rock beneath, most of the walls have been covered by some sort of white material, like silk or spider thread. Several bulbous shapes hang from the center of the ceiling, and a collection of bones has accumulated at the bottom of the floor.

This cavern is home to the chikfari that the duergar often use as mounts, and occasionally use as food. They are well-used to visitors entering their cave, and will quickly approach the PCs looking for food, but will not attack unless to defend themselves, though this may not immediately be obvious. Currently there are two chikfari in residence.

The passageway itself opens up about five feet from the bottom of the spherical room, which extends nearly a hundred feet above.



## Combat

(2) Chikfari, CR 9; 3600 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 5400 XP; Hard.



### Chikfari

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 51 (6d10+18)

**Speed** 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 15

**Damage Resistances** piercing

**Languages** undercommon (cant speak)

**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Standing Leap.** The Chikfari's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

**Devastating Kick.** A chikfari's massive rear legs are incredibly powerful. Whenever a chikfari hits a creature that is Large or smaller with a kick attack, it may cause the creature to be knocked back 10 ft.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The chikifari makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its kick.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target becomes poisoned.

**Kick.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The target is knocked back 10 ft. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Though chikfari, or 'kicking insects', are borderline intelligent creatures in their own right, they remain little more than dangerous beasts simply due to their short lifespan of barely 10 years. As a result, they often build nests near other intelligent subterranean creatures, where they serve as mounts in exchange for food – and often eventually become food themselves well before their natural lifespan, though they fail to recognize the problem with that.

When hatched, an immature chikfari is nearly fully developed. They are smaller than their fully grown

counterparts, more closely matching a mule in size compared to a full horse, but have little to develop other than to grow to full size.

A fully grown chikfari stands 4 feet tall at the shoulder, approximately 12 feet long, and weighs between 1,200 and 1,400 pounds.

Other species of similar Chikfari have been identified, deeper underground, typically much more vicious than the more common breeds, though at a glance they can only be identified by coloration. Several of these breeds are known to be able to fly, and some possess more directly threatening abilities, like the Zelfari's ability to shoot the spines on its legs at opponents.

### Treasure



One of the victims of the duergar, feed to the Chikfari, had been an alchemist, and while he met a poor fate, his satchel fared better, still containing several intact vials; 6 *potions of healing*, and 3 *potions of greater healing*.

## J. SURFACE PASSAGE

While the duergar may have destroyed their largest tunnel leading to Silverlight Hollow, they have a number of passages leading to areas all over the nearby countryside.

### J1. DISTANT TUNNEL

#### Skill Check



When the PCs are passing through the tunnel that connects to this area, a DC 16 **Wisdom (Survival)** check will identify the smell of fresh air coming from one of the hundreds of otherwise identical, smaller side passages.

This passage does lead, ultimately to the surface, but contains hundreds of smaller branches along its length before then, many of which serve as occasional lairs for creatures above or below the surface.



The passageway steadily rises, and the air gradually becomes fresher the further you go. Eventually, the light of what must be day is visible as the passage continues to bend, rising towards the surface.

Near the mouth of the tunnel, a cloaker has picked the center of a 40 ft. wide section of tunnel as a prime hunting spot. The duergar know of this cloaker and skirt the edges of the area to avoid it, often even leading pursuers through the ambush when they can.

### Combat

(1) Cloaker, CR 8; 3900 XP; Adjusted Difficulty 3900 XP; Hard. See the official entry for full Cloaker stats.



## j2. THE ROTWAY

The rotway, the duergar's original surface tunnel, is the only one of the tunnels that lead to the surface that isn't difficult to locate. However, the creation of other tunnels has instead allowed this dank space to flourish with all sorts of molds and fungi.

The walls of this twisting passage are little more than packed dirt, reinforced by the thousands of mushrooms and creepers growing throughout. The air is heavy with moisture, and every motion seems to release a cloud of spores.

### Skill Check

Though an uninformed guess or failed skill check suggests otherwise, a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check can identify that none of the fungus within the tunnel are actually harmful, unless eaten or through long-term exposure.

If the PCs ascend to the surface in this manner, they will find themselves emerging into a large, similarly mold-ridden cave concealed in a hillside nearly fifteen miles from the walls of Silverlight Hollow.

## K. ABANDONED LOCATIONS

While most of the tunnels do teem with activity, some places have simply been abandoned.

Two such locations are presented here, but there are likely to be many more bones, empty lairs, or long lost treasures waiting for PCs interested in exploring.

### K1. DUSTY LABYRINTH

Not even lichen grows down this path, as it opens into a square cavern carved into the living rock.

Once the home of a Minotaur or some other maze-dwelling creature, these catacombs have been untouched for decades, and are utterly empty but for a single dusty humanoid skeleton at the very center, some prisoner once chained to an iron post.

### K2. DEAD ADVENTURERS

A trio of skulls sits amid a scattering of other bones in this small clearing here. What looks to be the markings of a long-ago campfire discolors the middle of the room.

The skeletons of a small group of clearly unprepared adventurers lay here, with little sign as to what may have killed them long ago.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Returning overland to Silverlight Hollow is a relatively simple process and a safe one too, considering the dangers that lurked below the surface. Regardless of the distance the PCs might travel, they should find their return to civilization all but idyllic.

The PCs will be greeted upon their return not by Matthew, but by the young Edwin Iroth, who will deliberately take the PCs around the city to see the damage caused by the collapsing tunnels. This tour isn't entirely to blame the PCs though, but more to see what sort of guilt they might feel, and to justify the extermination of an entire city's worth of Duergar, which he has been told by his grandfather they were subtly requested to do.

The return of the Saatman Emerald is handled in a very businesslike manner, with Edwin granting the PCs a reward of 4,000gp in coin or masterwork items for its return. The news of the destruction of Xibrell, however, is quickly hushed and pulled to the side.

While the family is glad the mad dwarves are gone, they don't want to develop a reputation for simply eliminating cities that cause problems. Instead of a direct payment, the PCs will subtly be told that it is a pity none of the other gemstones could be recovered from the site of the quake. These 192 other gems the PCs likely collected vary widely in value, and are worth approximately 3,000gp in total.

With the PCs task completed, the Iroth family will hold a small celebration at their safe return, and perhaps plan on working with the group again, in the future.

## EXPERIENCE REWARDS

- 2,200XP for convincing Grabgur to reveal the route to Xibrell.
- 2,200XP for returning to the surface through the waterfall ascent or the rotway.
- 3,000XP for returning to the surface through the distant tunnels.
- 2,200XP for eliminating all of the Xibrell duergar.
- 4,700XP for returning the Saatman emerald.



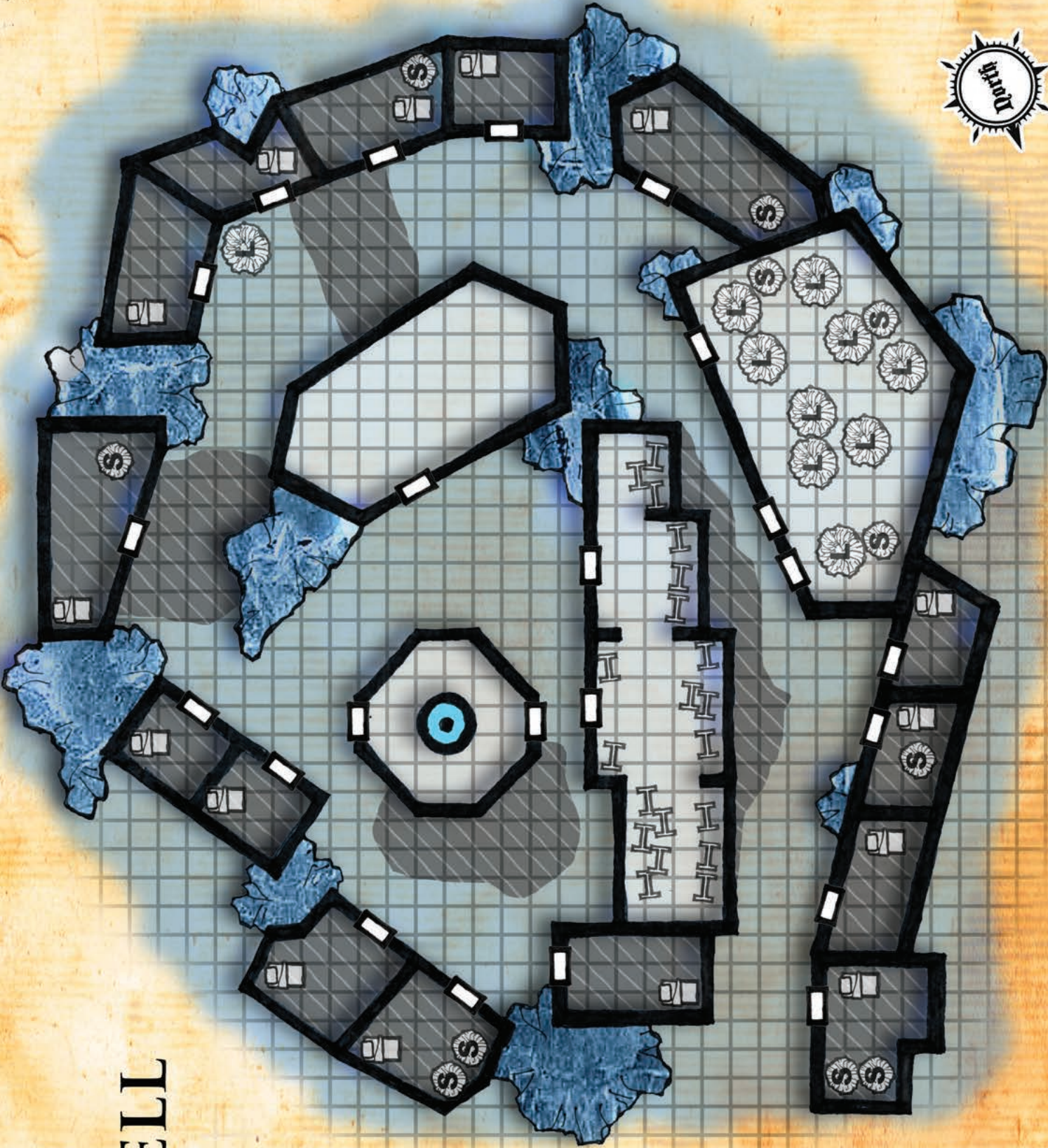


# SILVERLIGHT TUNNELS





# XIBRELL



BED



LARGE HEAP, 4FT HIGH



SMALL HEAP, 2 FT HIGH



DOOR



WEAPONS RACK



DIFFICULT TERRAIN



SCALE IN FEET



# SILVERLIGHT TUNNELS

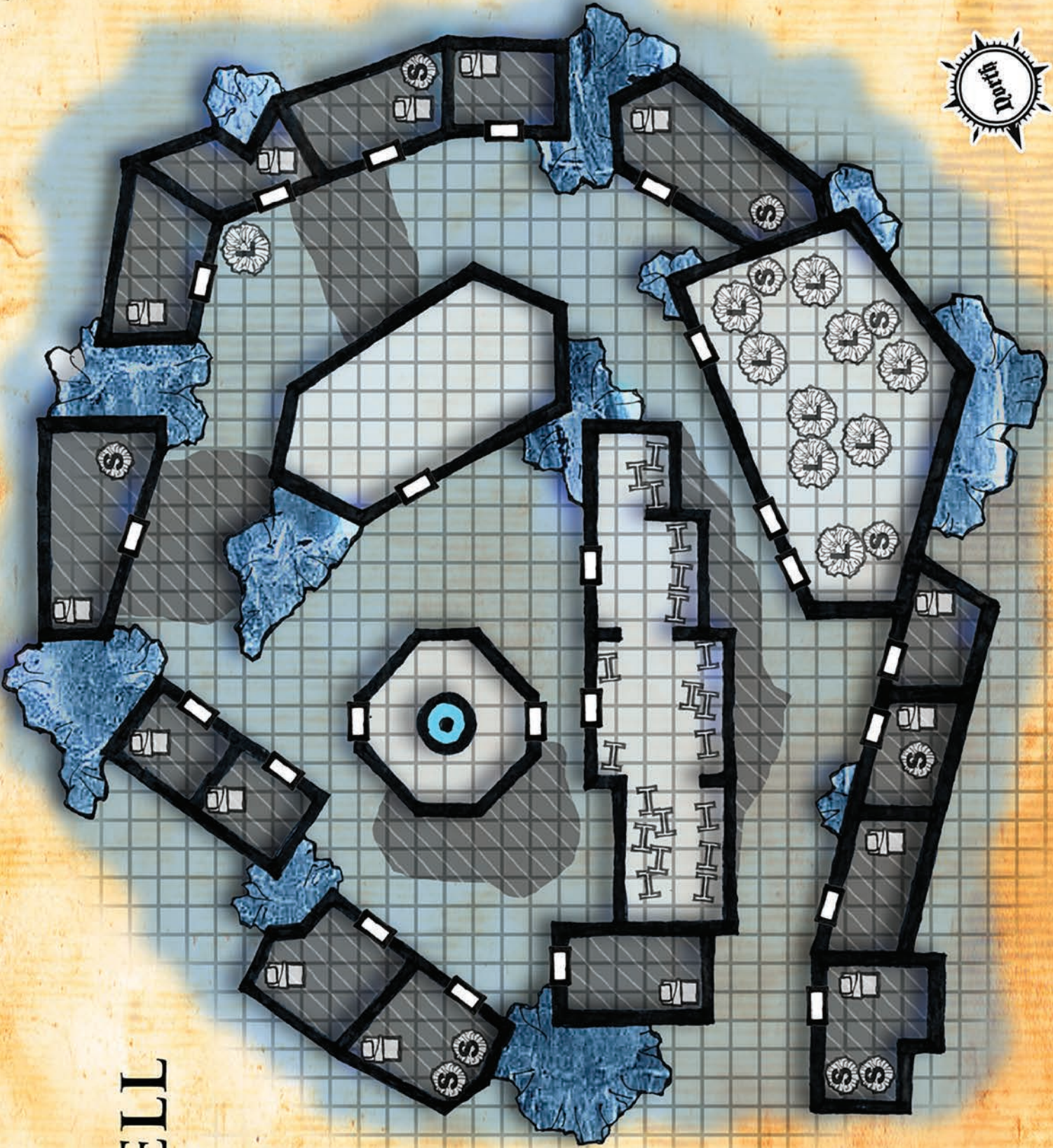


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SCALE IN FEET



# XIBRELL



BED



LARGE HEAP, 4FT HIGH



SMALL HEAP, 2 FT HIGH



DOOR



WEAPONS RACK



DIFFICULT TERRAIN



SCALE IN FEET

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**A SHORT ADVENTURE BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY, FOR A PARTY OF FOUR 6<sup>TH</sup> LEVEL ADVENTURERS.**

The Saatman emerald is an artifact, a relic of a long lost civilization that has been safely hidden in the Iroth family vault for years. But now, it, along with thousands of other precious gems have been stolen! A secretive group of duergar, long since driven insane from a curse, have broken into the family home and stolen away with the emerald, which must be recovered before it is lost in the miles of tunnels that lead ever deeper into the world.

But getting the relic back is the easy part! The players will soon find themselves running for their lives, and lost in an underground catacomb as the duergar are more than happy to collapse the tunnels behind themselves. Are the players lost forever, or perhaps, are there other treasures to recover on the long road back to the world above?

**Also included in “It all Falls Down”:**

- The Thousand-Hammer, a wall-toppling magic item bound to pack a punch
- A new monster, the Chikfari, along with several variants the PCs can hope to catch and train as mounts
- Details on the Iroth family, complete with treachery brewing
- Maps by three time ENnie Award winning cartographer Todd Gamble