



THE SHADOWED EYE OF HIRLAGER

A 5TH EDITION ADVENTURE

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THE SHADOWED EYE OF HALAGAR

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Ahngrin

Shadkhanin
Mountains

Sombor
Wood

Ashen
River

Wood
of the
Forgotten

Cthonia

Blackburn

Arden

Forest of
Woe

Dray
Wood

Alder

Black
Grove

Oak of
Ages

Sorrowful
Garden

Talking
Trees

Shadow River

Calder

Lost
Wood

Raven's
Den

Shadow Peaks

Lonely Tree

Eston

Woodman's
Hall

River of Good Faith

Ardor

Border
Keep

Elce
Castle

Burrow
Glades

Silent
Wood

Stronghold of the One

Trossford

River
Bottom

Journeyman's
Rest

Tower of
Tales

Ash
Mountains

Bog of
Bones

Seven
Arrows

Fen
Grove

Howden
Moor

Orcs

Shield
Tree

Tollbridge

Moor
Keep

Gypsies

Gypsy
Grove

Orcs

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HOW TO RUN THIS ADVENTURE

The Shadowed Eye of Halagar presents a vast adventure against a corrupted gold dragon after an extensive dungeon crawl.

EXPLOITS There are three minor adventures that can provide a foundation before delving into the depths of Halagar or as simple excursions. While two of the adventures are not essential to the plot, we recommend presenting *Shadows of Flame* to players prior to the adventure. As an alternative, the adventure can be a side quest for the Order of Wailing Knights and banshees that reside in the Writen Wood.

MILESTONES The momentum of the adventure does not rely on advancement through experience points. We suggest following the guidelines for character advancement as the narrative progresses:

- **Shadows of Flame:** The adventurers should be at least 10th level or 11th level.
- **The Gate of Brothers:** Increase adventurers to 12th level.
- **King of the Gorge:** When adventurers reach this milestone, advance the characters to 13th level.
- **The Red Citadel:** The dwarven keep protecting the

entrance is difficult. Advance character to either 14th or 15th level.

- **Halls of Halagar:** Advance characters to 15th level.
- **Chamber of the Dragon:** At your discretion, increase adventurers to either 16th or 17th level.

TREASURE To bring into being the immeasurable wealth of an ancient gold dragon, we shifted much of the treasure within the adventure to its epic conclusion. Therefore, much of the adventure lacks significant reward, though in turn, the dragon's hoard is quite larger than normal.

GLOSSARY This adventure may introduce terms that may seem unfamiliar.

- **Imperatoria:** An ancient human empire that almost conquered the known world. When the empire fell into decline, it led to the rise of the feudal lords and minor kingdoms after a brief dark period.
- **Oerl:** Leaders of citadels and great boroughs are known as *oerls* within the dwarven kingdoms. The last leader to rule the Red Citadel was Oerl Bjorn Oldspear.
- **Open-Ended Character:** This is a nonplayer character (NPC) with no prearranged conclusion within the adventure. The Game Master has the freedom to develop the character and determine how essential the character is to the plot.





THE SHADOWED EYE OF HALAGAR

The halls of the ancient dwarven empire and its shadowed inhabitants awaken.

The Shadowed Eye of Halagar is a collection of adventures for four to five player characters. Although designed for the *Feudal Lords Campaign*™, these adventures are suitable for any medieval fantasy setting.

Within the known world of Cthonia, these exploits happen upon the road toward the Valley of Dormant Fire, nestled deep in the Shadkhanim Mountains, and later in the vale itself. For a generic campaign, these encounters are best set in a mountainous region beyond a forested valley.

HISTORY

Halagar is one of seven dwarven citadels within the Shadkhanim Mountains, known as the City of Cinnabar during its height of power. The ornate, lacquered red stone enriched the grand dwarven halls and passages. Artisans ground the cinnabar to create the bright vermilion pigment. The celebrated color illuminated the manuscripts of men and adorned dwarven ceramics, murals, and tattoos.

The great dwarven oerls of Halagar further commanded great veins of iron ore and bent granite and limestone to their will. The dwarves depleted the surrounding forests for its valuable wood-charcoal and became masters of

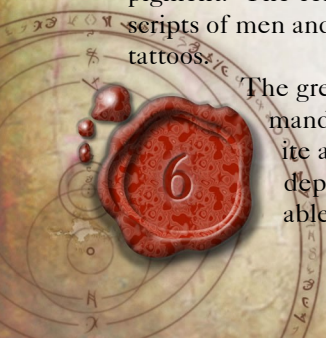
crucible steel.

Although, it was cinnabar that brought great fame as well as hubris upon the dwarves of Halagar. Dwarves learned to unleash the mercury locked within the red stone. The mercury aided in gilding silver and gold to lesser materials. It further freed precious metals from ore through a special mining process known as amalgamation.

Though stout and regarding themselves immune to the toxic crystal, exposure over several generations led to an unraveling of the dwarvish nervous system and for a great number, death. For years, the dwarves remained ignorant of the red halls they entombed themselves within. When it became evident, the dwarves called the sickness *scarlet fire*, for the loss of the nervous system caused victims to writhe and sweat as if being burnt alive.

Clan-King Thogr of the Shadkhanim Kingdom, ancestor of the now King Fjor, commanded the inhabitants to abandon Halagar and seal its gates. The last dwarven oerl of the Red Citadel, Bjorn Oldspear, refused the command and instead incited rebellion. The old oerl believed Thogr uncovered his treacherous scheme.

Bjorn Oldspear and the great artisans of Halagar held the privilege of minting coin for the dwarven realm of Shadkhanim as well as the burgeoning human kingdoms of Cthonia. Erelong, gilded coins of silver and gold filled the coffers of men unbeknownst of the plans the treacherous oerl brought upon them. Coins of Clan-King Thogr soon befell the same fate and the vaults of Halagar overflowed with stolen gold and silver.



DWARVEN LORE

Disease and war, spawned the dwarven migration known as *The Great Wandering* which led the stoic race from the shadowed mountains and into the world of men. Though this mythic race walks within the light of the surface world, many remain unaware of their culture and motivations.

THE VIEWS OF COMMONERS A DC 5 Intelligence or Charisma check reveals the following point of view:

"Keep thy eye on thy coin! The tales bards sing tell me all that I need to know—the great wingless dragon Fyrdur was once a dwarf himself, son of Hrythmar. After conspiring with his brother, Egyrth, Fyrdur killed his own father for the great hoard the old man possessed. Greed consumed the pitiful bastard and the horrid beast he'd become."

—Harold Farmer, Peasant

"If you ask me, the whole lot of 'em should be pitied—no women! At least I never saw one. And if they do have 'em, I bet they're as hairy as me dog here."

—Johann Shoehorn, Cobbler

"They are sly ones—Well, you'd have to be when you deal with the gods as they do. Always forging something for the makers and their chosen heroes. But sly, nevertheless. Take King Sveigdir, a northern chieftain of old—followed one of those sly, hairy dogs into a stone, never to return."

—William Shod, Blacksmith

THE VIEWS OF JOURNEYMEN A DC 10 Intelligence or Charisma check reveals the following points of view:

"I have yet to see one of these creatures, always hiding behind fortified stonework, though I have a dwarven blade. Witness the craftsmanship and attention to minute detail. Although I cannot read the runes, I assure you, it is not from a nobleman like that of my master, Lord Frederick of Dervishire. Nay—but that of a man like myself—a man of honor and dedication."

"I tell you this—my father was a weaponsmith and it might would take him thirty years to make a weapon such as the one I hold. The Nine Hells! Any nobleman that rides into battle would give his most valuable war-horse for this magnificent blade."

—Gaston of Seven Arrows, Mercenary

"Though they cast a wary eye toward it, magic is infused with the blood that runs through their veins. Yes, magic and greed pumps their stout hearts! It is this that allows them to lay their axe squarely into a man on the darkest of nights."

—Albert, Guardsman

"They are made of the earth, forged in the fire that boils the blood of giants. They are kin to the stone beneath their feet. Both of these facts are how they possess a firm footing and a cunning eye for stonework."

"This much I know—from three hundred paces, Hridgab, son of Gloien, pointed out the weakest point of our adversary's fortification. I focused my attention on that spot the entirety of an afternoon and I am here to tell you—we opened her up that evening."

—Sir Holden de Ghent, Siege Engineer

THE VIEWS OF LORE MASTERS A DC 15 Intelligence or Charisma check reveals the following points of view:

"The most common perception is to call them dwarf because of their short but stout nature. Make no mistake, these creatures are not due to some human abnormality and not birthed to fill the role of buffoons or jesters."

"They are quite different from other mythical creatures for they are asexual creatures born from the blood and bones of giants. They dwell in the deepest caverns, on cliffs, or in the very stones themselves."

"They forge weapons of great arcane power, though the old gods acquire such gifts through deceit and trickery and bribery which makes their greedy bones tingle. This is how a great champion of man, chosen of the saints, blessed by the old gods as a pious favorite, laid hands on such marvelous weapons and armor—treachery!"

DWARVEN LORE

“Though many believe nains ally themselves with that of their giant kin against mankind, this is not true. The nains have been known, or so I discovered in the most recent texts, to offer aid to a wary knight on a quest.”

—Thomas A’ Wort, Lore Master

“Yes, the proper names for them are nains and not that of dwarves. Furthermore, you should not mistake them for gnomes, which peasants often do, even though one can easily recognize the differences: gnomes are perfect in proportion for their size while nains have misshapen bodies and rather large heads with gnarly and weather-worn faces.

“It is rare to see a nain outside their stone sanctuaries, though on occasion, they venture out to partake in the festivities of men, especially during weddings and anniversaries. Though if not welcomed under the warm roof, nains are known to put ill curses on the household and those that live within.”

—Robert Guis, Lore Master

FROM THEIR OWN MOUTHS A DC 20 Intelligence or Charisma check reveals the following points of view as if spoken by a true dwarf:

“Dwarves, nains, asexual! Hab—it matters not what the children call us for the bones of their grandsons will be dust before I am too old to wield this axe.”

—Ögvaldr, Son of Örn

“Some say we have only a tongue and no written word; that our skilled craftsmen are taught through oral tradition. The latter is true and the former is not.

“Our written word, once sacred, was stolen from us by the highlanders of the northlands, the barbaric tribes of Gael, and other children. From them, our enemies—the giants, goblins, and the orcish peoples—perverted our word.

“Our runic letters brought these creatures from the darkness, and though still savage, to a more enlightened

time in their respective cultures. Our secrets of the forge, however, are still safe through oral tradition, lest our enemies learn the craft of weaponry, a gift granted by the gods to ensure our survival.”

—Skorri, Nain Sage, Son of Kolgrimr,
Keeper of the Forge Flame

“I hear that we hunger for war, but it is war that hungers for us—witness those that wish to take the warmth of our hearth from us: the orcish peoples, goblins, and the children miners that call themselves man.

“I wish for peace and a stout mead—though it is fate that forces us to forge weapons from our hearths rather than enjoy its fires. For it is said in the runic inscriptions of old, ‘For when the wars cease, the gods Lif and Lifdrasir, gentle as they are, will create a new and better world.’”

—Ingivaldr, Great Son of Undr,
Forger of Odnar’s Ring

While Bjorn Oldspeare prepared for war, Thogr exhibited patient wisdom for the king knew Halagar and its inhabitants would fall to the scarlet fire. When the last lord of Halagar became aware of his foolishness, greed and madness stilled reason.

As long as the halls of Halagar served as his tomb, the oerl demanded its wealth should never return to King Thogr. The dwarven lord commanded the reopening of the *Dusk Gate*, a portal into the realm of shadows, to conceal the great treasures of Halagar.

Madness flourished and Bjorn Oldspeare, fearing the ingress into the shadowlands would not hide his vast wealth, the dwarf began to consume the gold. It is at that moment when truth and myth became one. The powers of darkness and greed transformed Bjorn Oldspeare into the dragon, Gullhyndr the Gold-Horned One. The dark beast flooded the halls with umbral fire and enslaved his kin to eternal servitude as undead shades.

Gullhyndr skulks in the once grand halls of Halagar among an infestation of dungeon denizens and shadow servants. The *Dusk Gate* flourishes as the shadowy realm slowly consumes the surrounding environs. It brings great sorrow to the inhabitants and creatures of the Limestone Scar and threatens to spread to the valley beyond the Red Gate.

SECRET Bjorn Oldspeare did not transform into a dragon, but rather revealed its true nature. Gullhyndr sought to destabilize the economy with gilded coin and weaken the grasp the Imperatoria governors held over the region.

Few know the machinations of dragons and fewer still fail to comprehend the subtle schemes they nurture to fruition over several generations. While Gullhyndr did undermine the now forgotten empire, the dragon underestimated the dark seduction of the shadow realm? Or is it perhaps what the beast sought? Again, dragons are beyond mortal contrivances and those who dare to outwit such creatures find themselves often mistaken.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In contrast to the legend, the dragon did not reopen the *Dusk Gate* to shelter its wealth from King Thogr. Gullhyndr instead sought the umbral iron buried deep in the mountains of the shadow realm. The dragon further desired to distribute the dark iron throughout the known world while undermining the economic power of the Imperatoria Empire.

Almost a millennia ago, the gold dragon awakened from a revelation foreboding the northern advancement of the ancient empire. While the implications of a northern conquest proves too convoluted and complex to discuss within these pages, the dragon endeavored to seek the *Eye of Halagar*. The power of the dwarven crystal would either acknowledge or dismiss its visions.

Gullhyndr understood the risk when it embraced the *Eye of Halagar*. The orb proved too powerful an artifact for the aged dragon. It allowed Gullhyndr to foresee the future beyond its own impressive foresight. The dragon

foresaw the cultural devastation of the Imperatoria Empire during its conquest of the north as well as the reawakening of a foe long thought vanquished. Armed with such foreknowledge, Gullhyndr sacrificed its ethical nature to prepare the region for war.

Gullhyndr presaged the reemergence of a primordial people known as the Illuricai, translated as *those that force others to fall down*. Venerable dwarven ancestors discovered that primal shadow magic and umbral iron could overcome the great resistances the Illuricai possessed. Therefore, the dragon sought to accumulate and disperse the dark, ferrous metal in preparation should the visions prove true and the primordial foes return.

For the scheme to prevail, the dragon had to gain the confidence of the dwarves to restore the *Dusk Gate*. The dragon first crept into the dreams of those most righteous and shared its presaged visions. It further burdened the sleep of dwarven clan leaders that led to the rise of Bjorn Oldspeare as Oerl of Halagar, a guise nurtured by the dragon for three hundred years.

Machinations of the dragon gained momentum. The coins minted in Halagar were of umbral iron gilded in gold and silver. Dwarven numismatists and merchants ensured the gilded coins spread across Cthonia and to the lands south.

Despite hundred of years of meticulous planning, the immortal beast faltered when it succumbed to the dark essence of the *Dusk Gate*. Although the shadows of the nether world dominates the dragon, its mind is locked in a perpetual struggle against the lure of both artifacts. The glimmer of good that still exists in its heart, allowed Gullhyndr to set into motion its eventual freedom.

VARIANT: DWARVES AND SHADOW MAGIC

Unbeknownst to most dwarves, their primordial ancestors delved deep into the earth not to just unlock the secrets of stone, but to harness the magic of the shadow realm. Ancient umbra sorcerers released primeval shadows from the darkest depths with a simple torch.

This knowledge led to the creation of the Runic Road and the *Dusk Gate* as well as dwarven forays into the shadow realm. Though as wisdom took hold of the burgeoning race, their reliance in the dark craft began to founder for umbrage magic took great a toll from the dwarves.

THE FAILED ASSAULT While most dwarves understood the sacrifice that they and their future generations would endure, several clans refused to forego ancestral precepts to embrace mystical portends. Gullhyndr alleviated fears as it prophesied that four heroes bearing seals of cinabar would prove victorious in releasing the dragon from its shadowed fate.

The visions further indicated it would be during a time when the ancient dragon was at its weakest and after the demise of an old rival. Gullhyndr interpreted the foe as **Ancenagri**, the Burner of Fields, Red Dragon of the West. Even the wise Gullhyndr knew that the old red würm would one day attempt to reclaim these lands. As for



the four foretold heroes, the dragon surmised they would rise from the dwarves within Halagar.

Gullhyndr enlisted the aid of four honorable and loyal dwarven knights to free the dragon should its strength of heart fail against the darkness. The dragon bestowed four **cinnabar emblems** fashioned to weaken the snare of the *Dusk Gate* should the beast become too corrupted. Dubbed the Knights of Cinnabar, each accepted the task and swore allegiance to whom they believed was their righteous dwarven oerl, Bjorn Oldspear.

Nevertheless, the assault to reclaim the dragon from its shadow madness failed. The four emblems now rest within Halagar where each of the knights fell.

CURRENT EVENTS

Strife and confusion beleaguers Cthonia. It is a time known as the Chaos. Queen Thea the Blackbird and her twin brother, Prince Aldwyn the Usurper, both claim the Cthonian throne while old kingdoms threaten to rise from the ashes of war.

When Thomas Atheling, the last legitimate heir of King Aldred the Bastard, drowned in the Myrestone Keep Tragedy twenty-five years ago, it led to a succession crisis. In celebration of the knighthood bestowed upon his son and heir, King Aldred ordered the construction of Myrestone Keep within the Bog of Bones. Upon its completion, the foundation collapsed causing the fortress to sink in the depths of the mired waters. The entire garrison drowned, including Thomas Atheling. Now, years after the death of King Aldred, the oldest of his bastard children war one another for the right to succeed.

Unbeknownst to most, the secrets of the ancient dwarven stronghold of Halagar could determine the victor of the civil war that now plagues Cthonia.

ADVENTURE QUESTS

This adventure assumes characters travel northward into the Shadkhanim Mountains or along Shadow River. The following quests can further draw in adventurers for a more personal connection.

THE RUNIC ROAD Ancient dwarven stone thoroughfares run alongside most of the known roads in Cthonia. Each mile demonstrates the artisanship of dwarven masons and engineers—a broad trench about five feet deep is filled with heavy rock and layered with a mixture of sand and stone aggregate. Afterward, a layer of gravel bound with tar created from rock oil is cambered to allow rainwater to drain along the sides. Flagstones, each marked with dwarven runes, complete the path.

While extensive and well-crafted, the runic script holds great magic and prevents those not of dwarven blood to travel the paths. Those brave few who scoff at the ancient curses of dwarvish-folk discover the thoroughfare is difficult terrain and uncomfortable to travel. On the other hand, dwarves that travel the paths find their trek

takes almost half the normal time.

While most pathways endure, most remain hidden beneath encroaching undergrowth and time. Until recent, many miles of these roads became lost to the ages. **Uriam**, a mage within the court of Queen Thea, uncovered an old map emphasizing the ancient pathways of the dwarf-men. The magician convinced the queen to fund an expedition to Halagar in hopes to uncover the secrets of the dwarven thoroughfares. If the venture proves a success, it would allow soldiers under the Blackbird banner to outmaneuver her foe, Aldwyn the Usurper.

While Queen Thea cannot spare her veteran soldiers to the task, she is prepared to award adventurers 1,500 gp each to retrieve the secrets of the runic road and how she might learn to travel upon them.

RUNIC ROAD *Wondrous Item, rare*

This is an ancient stone thoroughfare of dwarven construction. Dwarves or those wearing umbra-crafted armor that walk upon the road move at double speed.

Curse: For each mile, those walking upon the road must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or reduce their natural lifespan by 1.

PLUNDERING OF RED GATE Montem monastery seeks adventurers to gather chunks of cinnabar from the *Gate of Brothers*. It is a grand dwarven entrance protecting the limestone gorge that leads to Halagar. The monks value the red mineral for its vermilion pigment and need it to create the paint for illuminating manuscripts.

Brother Athelstan ventured to collect the rock and failed to return. Elder brothers fear the monk fell to orcs raiders. Upon their return, the monks will pay 3d6 gp (to a maximum of 100 gp) for each chunk of cinnabar.

MERCHANT HOUSE GRACEHOOD A small merchant guild desires adventurers to route a new path to Ahngryn through the Limestone Scar. If the new causeway proves shorter than the other known routes, it could mean a rapid expanse for the struggling trade house. Its leader, Christopher Gracehood, and his investors raised 1,500 gp for each adventurer who chooses to undertake the task.

THE GREAT HORN OF AVERSION The descendant of Clan-King Thogr of the Shadkhanim Kingdom, King Fjor, seeks to reclaim the lost *Horn of Aversion* from Halagar. His ancient ancestors designed the great treasure to ward dwarven boroughs against intrusion from burrowing **purple worms**.

The grand horn that harbors the depths of Konungur, the bastion that houses the seat of the king, cracked several months ago. The keepers of the horn lack the great magic to repair the instrument.

Representatives of King Fjor prepare to offer a star ruby (1,000 gp) to each brave soul who ventures into Halagar and delivers the horn to Konungur.



VILLAINS

Throughout the adventure, the fellowship will encounter a number of foes. The following summarizes the role of each within the scope of the adventure and possible ambitions.

ANCENAGRI The great dragon from the west, Ancenagri once dominated the Valley of Dormant Fire long before Gullyhyndr began his machinations against the Imperatoria Empire. The **ancient red dragon** returned in an attempt to reclaim the region. Gullyhyndr encountered Ancenagri in the skies above the forested glen. Although the red dragon forced Gullyhyndr to retreat beneath its sanctum in Halagar, Ancenagri suffered serious wounds from the engagement. The red dragon now takes refuge in an old lair within the valley and plots its next course of action.

Ancenagri has the following goals:

- Recover from its wounds. Injuries dealt from dragons to one another take much longer to heal. Ancenagri requires much rest.
- At the moment, the red dragon has little interest in Halagar. Although, the draconic beast is well aware that Gullyhyndr will dampen its plans to reclaim the vale should the gold dragon recover. Therefore, Ancenagri seeks the death of its foe.

FJOR The Clan-King of Konungur seeks to expand his kingdom through reclamation of abandoned dwarven bastions within the Shadkhanim mountain range; Halagar being one. Tales tell that the *Horn of Aversion* was lost during the chaos that ensued when Oldspeare reopened the *Dusk Gate*, although the grand instrument still remains in Halagar.

Knowing the dangers and risk venturing into the sanctum of his ancestral nemesis, King Fjor decides to hire mercenaries for the task rather than a contingent of dwarven knights. The dwarf-king fears a massive movement of armed troops would upset the delicate alliances with his human and elven neighbors.

Fjor further surmises should his plans become known, it may incite a war he is not prepared to fight. Therefore, his advisors concocted the ruse of the cracked horn.

The dwarf-king has the following goal:

- Return the *Horn of Aversion* to its rightful place within Halagar and begin the process of rebuilding the once grand citadel.



Gullyhyndr

GIANTS OF THE SCAR While under the tenuous leadership of Gaddulg, King of the Gorge, the giants of the Limestone Scar are twisted and deranged from the shadows that exude from the *Dusk Gate*. Generations upon generations of living within reach of the shadow curse has transformed these once vigorous giants into demented husks that whisper rebellion and chaos.

GNOK The giant earth priest inhabits the tiered ruins within the extinct volcano located in the Limestone Scar. He is the treacherous advisor to the King of the Gorge, a giant known as Gaddulg. The shadow sickness that permeates the gorge stunted Gnok and the priest never grew to his full girth. To compensate for his smaller stature, Gnok dedicated himself to primordial earth gods and now holds substantial power.

Gnok has the following goals:

- Poison Gaddulg and claim dominion over the giants of the Limestone Scar.
- Seeks to claim *Eldingar*, a great maul of the giants.

GULLHYNDR The once noble beast lurks in the depths of Halagar corrupted from the shadow essence that seeps from the *Dusk Gate*. Gullyhyndr is a **shadow dragon** of immense age and power. Nonetheless, its wounds from its encounter with Ancenagri has left the gold shadow dragon weakened.

DESIGN: OPEN-ENDED CHARACTERS

Inwe and Urias are a new concept in adventure design that we call **open-ended characters**. These are nonplayer characters (NPCs) that can continue to be involved with the heroes long after the conclusion of the adventure.

At times, these characters might have goals and plans that run in unison with those of the adventurers. During these moments, these characters may prove to be a tenuous ally or even develop a friendship with one or more of the heroes while seeking to betray the others.

Here are a few suggestions to immerse these characters into the lives of the adventurers:

- This character can be a distant relative or an associate within the same organization as a player character.
- The character knows a secret to a trinket or some past knowledge that might aid the adventurer.
- The character is the source of a flaw or may know how to diminish the fault.
- The character might offer aid or teach the adventurer new spells or skills.

Gullhyndr is a complicated villain and its goals should remain elusive to players throughout the adventure. In its present state, it wishes to recover and to ensure the *Dusk Gate* remains undisturbed. Although, a semblance of its former conscience still lingers within its fractured mind and seeks freedom from its corruption.

INWE She is a famed hunter and assassin who witnessed the struggle between the two great dragons in the skies above the glen.

Inwe is an **open-ended character** with the following goals:

- She traveled to the vale in search of the *Twin Bows of Gemina* for her and her sister, Alayla. The magical bows are featured in the exploit, *Shadows of Flame*.

SHADOWAXE MAGES These were once faithful servants to the gold dragon prior to its corruption, known as the Keepers of the Gates. Now as corrupted as their master, this coven of dwarven mages seek to return to the old tenets of the umbra sorcerers.

URIAS, THE BRASS RAVEN As with Gullhyndr, the mage is a complex individual with a myriad of schemes. While known as Uriam within the court of Queen Thea, the thaumaturge is well entrenched in the cortege of Prince Aldwyn the Usurper.

Urias is an **open-ended character** with the following goals:

Retrieve as much dwarven umbral plate (or dark ingots) as possible from Halagar. The mage wishes to animate the armor to create a contingent of soldiers that can travel the runic road without hinderance.

ALLIES

While villains abound within the Valley of Dormant Fire, it is also rife with possible allies.

GADDULG The giant is known as the King of the Gorge and rules from a pyramid throne within an ancient caldera of an extinct volcano. Unlike most of his kin and vassals, Gaddulg does not suffer from the shadow sickness that plagues most in the gorge. He is regal in both stature and etiquette; bedecked in ancient scale and a helm bearing great, golden wings.

While the giant does not understand the reason for his prolonged resistance, the king is not ignorant to believe he is immune. Gaddulg deems it a matter of time. The giant-king has the following goal:

- Seal the *Dusk Gate*.

VARIANT: ELDINGAR, THE MAUL OF GIANTS

Gaddulg possess a huge maul known among giants as *Eldingar*. It is a symbol of power. Whomever challenges and wins the great weapon from its wielder inherits the throne and kingship. Although he may relinquish it for a time, the king will not part with the maul.

It is a *+2 maul* fashioned under the careful eye of Gullhyndr and the dwarven smiths of Halagar. In the guise of Bjorn Oldspear, the dragon presented the weapon to the then giant-king, Knyttneve (KEY-NAHYT-NEV-AH), for his contribution in the restoration of the *Dusk Gate*.

The wielder of *Eldingar* becomes lethargic and slothful, being content to remain within the scar. Attuning to the item renders the bearer immune to the shadow sickness that pervades the gorge. It further allows Gaddulg to recharge his *lightning strike* feature on a 4-6 instead of normal.

Gaddulg can wield *Eldingar* in place of a greatsword attack:

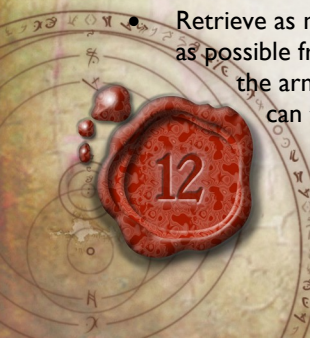
Eldingar: Melee Weapon Attack: +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 32 (6d6+11) bludgeoning damage.

While an ally, Gaddulg will strike down any who attempts to take *Eldingar* from his grasp or refuse to return the maul to the giant-king.

OLDR The gorge has a caretaker . . . to a degree. Manifested from the regional effects of the gold dragon, the dwarven hermit is an avatar of the good aspect of Gullhyndr that still lingers. Oldr bears great resemblance to Bjorn Oldspear without the regalia befitting a dwarven overlord.

Oldr has the following ambitions:

- While the hermit wishes to seal the *Dusk Gate*, he further wishes adventurers to spare the life of Gullhyndr. He believes those with a righteous heart have the courage required to free the dragon from its shadowed fate.





Konungur

THE AHNGRIN ROAD

The Ahngrin Road is not one thoroughfare, but a branch work of dwarf-wrought stone paths that pierce through the Shadkhanim mountains. Imperatoria soldiers named the labyrinth of passages after the dwarven word *shadkhan* meaning *old with great lineage*. As Ahngrin grew into a prosperous city, merchants gave the epithet of *Ahngrin* to the road since all known paths led to the polis. When travelers speak of *Shadkhanim*, most now refer to the mountain range and its high peaks.

Adventurers discover the route toward Halagar through lesser known paths within the Valley of Dormant Fire. All lead to *Hlad Brothdra*, the Gate of Brothers.

Should you wish to expand this journey, guide adventurers through one or more of the three exploits featured in *Appendix Three*. Otherwise, proceed to the following section.

Note: The Ahngrin Road is not one of the fabled runic pathways. While it is still a marvel to behold and a grand example of dwarven engineering, the mystical magic and method required to craft the runic flagstones were lost long before the construction of the Ahngrin Road.

THE GATE OF BROTHERS

Once fabled as the Red Gate, it was known for the decorative layer of cinnabar encasing its grand doors of granite.

The dwarves reconstructed the gate hundreds of years ago and refer to it now as *Hlad Brothra* or the Gate of Brothers. It is so named after the mythical dwarven twins, Kyn and Agirni.

As adventurers approach, read or paraphrase the following:

A grand gate of red-stained granite seals the passage before you like interlocking fingers of hands clasped in prayer. At either end, two stalwart guardians of stone, enormous in height and girth, stand in defiance to the enemies of the dwarf-men.

Carved in the semblance and trappings of Nógr and Vigr, two dwarven warriors from the Útanlands, the face of each bear a great likeness to the twins, Kyn and Agirni. Though their brows and swords are weathered and worn, the two figures still exude command and majesty.

INTELLIGENCE (HISTORY) Much of the soft lamina of red cinnabar succumbed to time and scavengers. Clever adventurers examining the remaining bas-reliefs and archeological evidence can make a check to compile a brief historical outline of the gate.

- **Easy (DC 10):** The gate was once known as the Red Gate for the red, lacquered layers that encase the grand stone doors.
- **Medium (DC 15):** After the fall of the Halagar, an elvish order known as the Wailing Knights cursed the passage beyond. The order feared the dwarves of Halagar would one day return.
- **Hard (DC 20):** Tales of old claim giants guarded the gates and forged the ancient *Key of Halagar*. A curse of shadows befell the giants of Halagar and all were driven mad.

WISDOM (SURVIVAL) Adventurers cautious of the strange, red stone can make a check to reveal the following information:

- **Easy (DC 10):** The red stone is cinnabar. It is a soft stone often carved to create

decorative motifs or exotic utensils. It is further mined for its pigment to create dye and paint.

- **Medium (DC 15):** Aside from its aesthetic value, processed cinnabar also aids in gilding silver and gold to objects.
- **Hard (DC 20):** Cinnabar is toxic and contains a high mercury content.

A successful Intelligence (Nature) check also allows a character to gain an insight into this knowledge.

CLIMBING THE GATE

Much of the soft lamina of red cinnabar succumbed to scavengers and time, although enough still remains as nibs and handholds for adventurers to climb. A successful group DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows adventurers to clamber to the top of the gate, while a further check is required to descend. Moreover, cracks and crimps within both granite statues avail themselves for those wanting a more challenging climb (DC 20).

If the group check fails, unless precautions were made, those responsible for the failure fall. The height of the gate is 150 ft.

POISON Adventurers climbing the gate or handling the cinnabar chunks must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become **poisoned** for 24 hours.

THE GATEKEEPER If a dwarf or a giant attunes himself to the *Key of Halagar* and devotes a further hour to become attuned with the *Gate of Brothers*, it opens upon command. Examination of the key and gate, along with a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) or DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, reveals this information.

SPELLCRAFT Strong dwarven runes still empower the gate against magic similar to the effect of an *antimagic field* spell. The area extends 50 feet in all directions from the gate. The bearer attuned to the *Key of Halagar* is immune to this effect.

THE EYES OF KYN AND AGIRNI A hollowed chamber resides in the head of each statue. The eyes serve as arrow slits. The stout wooden doors, behind which housed the gatekeeper and his staff, rotted long ago.

Within the head of Kyn, various clay urns and broken pottery yield little interest. Al-

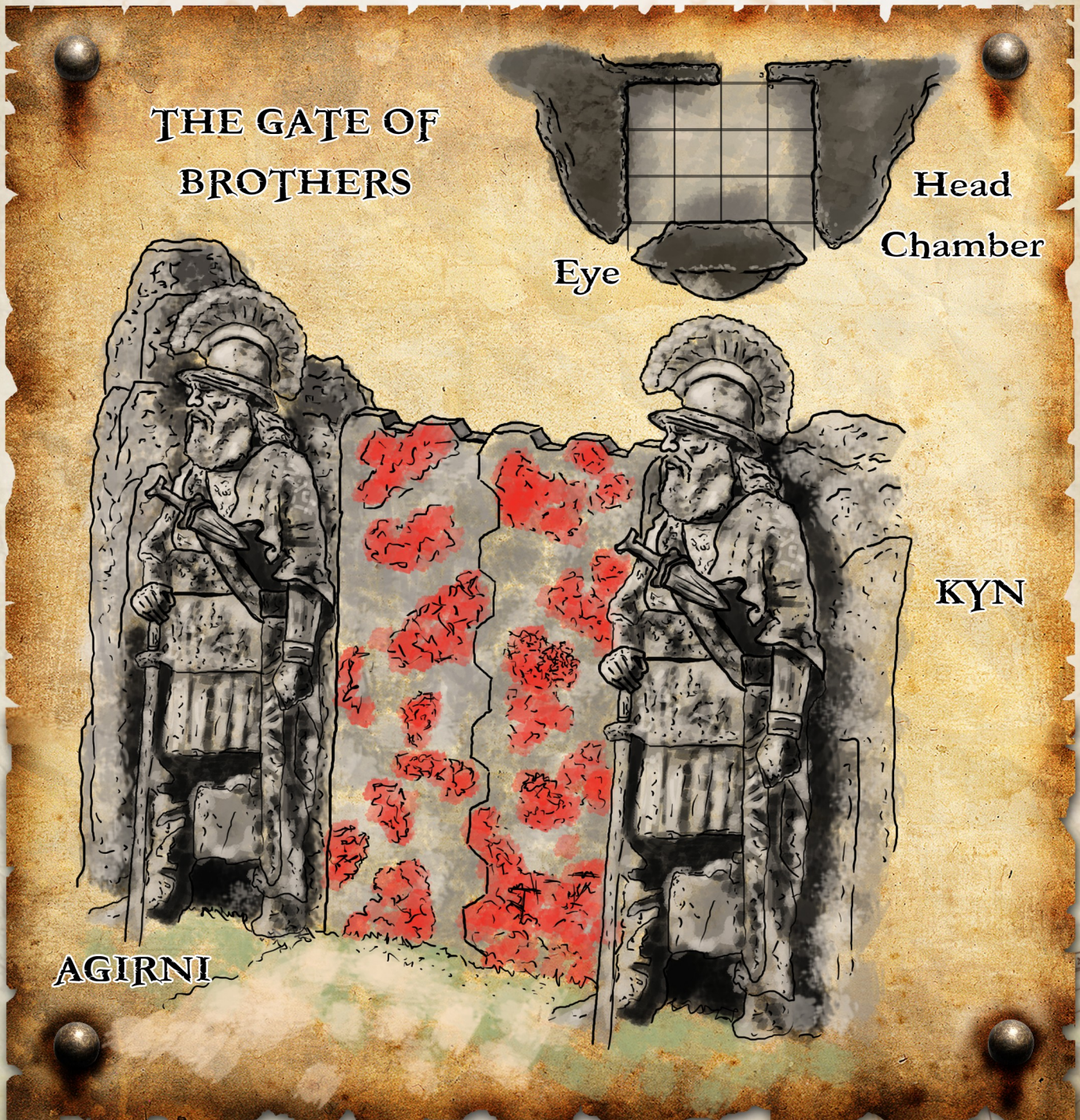
Adventurers with the outlander background know that the monks at Montem Monastery desire chunks of the red stone and pay a fair wage.

Guild artisans find the red mineral will fetch a handsome price at market.

Key of Halagar, pg. 89

though further investigation of the debris reveals a sealed, blue glass bottle filled with spirited dwarven ale and 5d6 cp.

A mated pair of **giant vultures** nest within the alcove of Agirni. The great birds will not attack adventurers unless provoked. The vultures will instead squawk and threaten intruders with massive wing displays and aggressive posturing. The pair feasts on the remains of those that succumb to the **banshees** in Writhen Wood.



W RITHEN WOOD

Clear of the *Red Gate*, the terrain slopes into a gradual descent into a deep gorge, known as the *Limestone Scar*. A grove of trees guard the entrance and stretch almost a mile beneath its shadow.

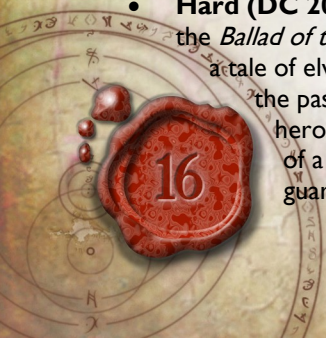
Read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the grand gate of red rock and granite, the path slopes downward into a limestone gorge filled with stonewood trees. The grove is sparse and without leaf. Roots and rocks and bones gather beneath the lanky hardwood of ash-gray bark. The wood seems to writhe in pain and if one looks close, it is possible to see the shapes and agony of elven women struggling beneath the pulp.

*Alongside each tree, a tall and slender stone cairn serves as a stalwart companion and a reminder this is a place for the dead. It brings to mind an elven blessing whispered upon the lips of the highlander folk within the region: *Sprea gadhir mi clach air do charn—I will put a stone on your cairn.* A moment after, you feel a sharp, cold wind beckon you to return from whence you came and not to venture into this cursed wood.*

INTELLIGENCE (HISTORY) Much folklore surrounds the saga of the endless war between the folk of the mountain and the folk of the wood.

- **Very Easy (DC 5):** The mining of iron-ore and cinnabar fouled rivers and depraved the plants and animals of fresh water. The dwarves of Halagar further deforested the valley for wood-charcoal to forge superior steel weapons (true).
- **Easy (DC 10):** As Halagar fell into ruin and its might within the valley waned, the elvish-folk of *Somber Wood* made an attempt to cultivate a dryad grove to silence the path and prevent dwarven descendants from reclaiming the keep (true).
- **Medium (DC 15):** With his dying breath, the last dwarven oerl of Halagar, Bjorn Oldspear, cursed the lands to the bleak realm of shadows—thus little grows in the gorge and the dryad saplings sickened and died (partially true).
- **Hard (DC 20):** The lips of woeful bards sing the *Ballad of the Wailing Knights*. The song tells a tale of elven maidens desperate to protect the pass from dwarven intrusion. The heroines sacrificed themselves as part of a ritual to become stonewood guardian spirits. A few young elvish



squires pilgrimage to Writhen Wood to receive a favor from the stonewood maidens. Upon betrothing themselves to a life of eternal wardship, the spirits emerge and proclaim the youth a Wailing Knight of Writhen Wood (true).

STONEWOOD SPIRITS

The elven maidens of the stone cairns are **banshees**. Adventurers passing through the grove awaken the spirits. A covey of **banshees** emerge from the stone cairns and writhing trees. Read or paraphrase the following:

The stonewood trees twist and stretch and writhe. Red sap seeps from beneath pale bark like blood from a festering wound. Dread grips your heart as the air grows cold. Faint cries of anger rise to a curling crescendo of fright as wisps of anima gather and take form into a choir of elvish maidens.

A twisted and contorted visage belies what little beauty, if any, each once beheld in life. Anger and hatred are all that remains.

"Intrenger," each sneers in dwarven tongue with wicked unison, "kalkstein arr tilbyre lite men doden (Trespassers, the Limestone Scar offers little but death)."

Calm and cautious adventurers may attempt a dialogue with the spirits to either learn more about the region or negotiate safe passage through Writhen Wood. The spirits are **hostile** and refuse to acknowledge any dwarf within the company.

Adventurers can persuade the elvish maidens to answer questions about the history and lore surrounding the valley with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Allow the player to have an **advantage** on the check should he or she remember the elven blessing and place a stone upon a cairn or otherwise roleplays the encounter well.

The forlorn choir will not entertain the notion of adventurers entering into Writhen Wood and the gorge beyond unless one of three deeds occur:

- **Woeful Performance:** An adventurer sings the *Ballad of the Wailing Knights* with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Performance) check. The music acts as if the musician weaved a *friends* spell upon the spectral maidens. As long as the song is well played, the elvish spirits are **indifferent** which allows a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check for adventurers to pass without harm. Should the musician cease concentration upon the song, the **banshees** will attack.
- **The Key to Halagar:** Adventurers presenting the dwarven key to the fey spirits will alleviate any fear of dwarves reclaiming the ancient hall. They accept the token with great honor and they, along with the key, dissipate.
- **Knighthood:** A male adventurer with **fey ancestry** declares an oath to serve the spirit maidens as a Wailing Knight.

BECOMING A WAILING KNIGHT An adventurer pledging an oath and performing an hour ritual, a part of which requires the character to drink a chalice filled with the blood red sap of the stonewood trees, becomes a Wailing Knight.

You are further tasked with a quest to seal the *Dusk Gate*. You must complete this quest as if affected by the *geas* spell. Once you complete the quest, you are no longer affected by the curse.

- **Curse:** As long as you serve as a Wailing Knight, you are unwilling to leave the gorge. You also have disadvantage on attack rolls against fey or humanoids with fey ancestry and on saving throws against their spells and special abilities.

DEVELOPMENT Unless any of the three previous events occur, the **banshees** will attack and harry the adventurers during their trek through the wood. Three such coveys reside within the grove and while the adventurers may negotiate safe passage with one coterie does not guarantee others will abide trespassers.

FIRST COVEY

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	5 Banshees	1,100
6+ Players	5 Banshees	
	3 Will-O'-Wisps	450

SECOND COVEY

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	1 Treant	5,000
	1 Banshee	1,100
	2 Will-O'-Wisps	450
6+ Players	1 Treant	
	3 Banshees	
	4 Will-O'-Wisps	
	2 Vine Blights	100

THIRD COVEY

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	3 Banshees	1,100
	2 Will-O'-Wisps	450
	4 Vine Blights	100
6+ Players	4 Banshees	
	4 Will-O'-Wisps	
	8 Vine Blights	



VARIANT: STONEWOOD TREANTS

Decaying trespassers hang from thick, black vines that cling and wrap around the ash gray branches. The rotting corpses produce a vile stench.

Stench: Any creature other than a plant or an undead that starts its turn within 5 feet of a stonewood treant must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. A successful save produces immunity to the stench of all stonewood treants for 1 hour.

VARIANT: DUSK RAVEN

To further create a horrific environment and keep the adventurers alert, rather than describe a will-o'-wisp, make a few aesthetic changes to create a dusk raven.

Similar to a normal raven, a dusk raven possess the *consume life* ability of a will-o'-wisp. After a few encounters, a flock (or unkindness) of ravens circling the company as they travel will bring a great uneasiness.

Adventurers fleeing one covey of **banshees** might disturb and encounter the others. It might give rise to a chase or overwhelm even the most stout of adventuring companies.

Furthermore, to enhance the despair and dread as adventurers travel through Writen Wood, consult the following table:

d10	Effect
1	Broken crossbow bolts with red stonewood sap upon the tip.
2	Cairn of skulls covered in a nest of spiders.
3	An adventurer no longer sees its shadow; it returns a few minutes after leaving the wood.
4	Screams echo from a distance; it bears heavy resemblance to one of the adventurers.
5	Patches of black moss that upon closer examination seems to spread at a slow pace.
6	Stonewood trees twist and turn as adventurers walk pass.
7	Low fog rolls along the ground. On occasion, adventurers spot rapid movement from beneath the fog as if someone crawls at a fast pace.
8	An adventurer notices black leaves among the trees ahead only to discover several swarms of ravens roost on the branches.
9	Adventurers smell a musty, metallic odor in the air.
10	Adventurers hear the faint song of the <i>Ballad of the Wailing Knights</i> in elvish.

2 pale green chrysoberyl, 1 violet garnet, 1 deep black jet (100 gp each).

- **Magic Items:** Beneath one of the cairns at each encounter with a covey, adventurers can find one of the following magical items: *cloak of elvenkind*, *boots of elvenkind*, and *boots of the winterlands*.

Should adventurers loot the cairns, a covey of **banshees** emerge from the cairns and twisted stonewood trees and attack. It is at your discretion whether this is one of the three planned interactions within Writen Wood or a further encounter.

Scattered throughout the wood adventurers discover the following:

- **Gems:** 3 transparent red spinals, 1 lustrous white pearl,



THE LIMESTONE SCAR

The sheer, exposed cliffs of limestone are known as scars. The gorge was created during the previous ice age either when roofs of large caverns collapsed or by powerful glacial rivers. The meltwater flowed through the mountains. The erosion produced a deep valley with a steep rock face.

The limestone gorge snakes a path through the mountains and often varies in height and width. It is a confusing network of trails that resembles a labyrinth that can bewilder even the most experienced guide.

NAVIGATING THE SCAR The flowchart on the following page charts the course adventurers travel to reach Halagar. It enables the Game Master to guide players through the Limestone Scar without the linear approach and extensive maps.

Once adventurers leave the Writhen Wood, begin at the box marked *Start*. The lead adventurer makes a Wisdom (Survival) check each hour, the result of which directs the company to a lettered box on the flowchart. The letter indicates one of five outcomes:

- **A (Event)**
- **B (Locale)**
- **C (Encounter)**
- **D (Unique Encounter)**

Each result and section lists a number of possibilities that can hinder, benefit, or provide a challenge for characters. When adventurers reach the end, proceed to the *Red Citadel*.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH Should adventurers stray from the gorge and venture along the mountaintops, they find it a strenuous journey. Navigate the area as outlined above, though adventurers in the lead are at a disadvantage to Wisdom (Survival) checks to determine the outcome of the flowchart. Furthermore, for each hour traveling over treacherous and rocky formations, adventurers must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

EVENTS (A)

The following provides minor sights and

sounds, along with elements that enhances the mood and color. It may lead to an encounter or impart important information to the adventurers.

PASSAGE Adventurers take notice of a recent disturbance among the scant sagebrush and small rocks of a well-worn path. Should the company follow the path, it may lead to an encounter, a safe alcove to rest, or simply disappear.

REMAINS Black bones of several humans or animal carcasses lie within a primitive fire-pit. Sharp teeth gnashed and broke the bones long ago to reach the soft, moist marrow.

Instead, adventurers discover the chilled corpse of a giant or elvish knight with an expression of fear frozen upon its face.

MINOR SOUNDS Adventurers hear a noise and pause to take notice—a few loose rocks tumbling in the gorge; rapid footfalls; the bellowing roar of some great beast; a whispered conversation; or the shadowed rumbles of ghosts. These sounds may head away from the company or move toward the group and lead to an encounter.

MINOR SIGHTS Adventurers witness a sight that causes the group to take heed—a tree adorned with battered shields; a fleeting shadow in the distance; old runestones bearing runic inscriptions; a passage blocked from an rockslide; a bubble of black oil bursting from the snowy ground; a mountain goat with a single **stirge** attached; or a crumbled watchtower. These sights should be interesting or even foreshadow coming dangers.

STREAMBED Adventurers come across either a streambed with orange-red water and dead fish or a long dry trench with a thick residue of orange iron deposits or red cinnabar.

HERD A herd of mountain goats or wild mules meander in a clearing. While a few mules might wander toward adventurers, the mountain goats stay their distance and spook if approached. The mules have thick and matted brown hair and are descendants of a stock once bred by dwarves for work in the mines.

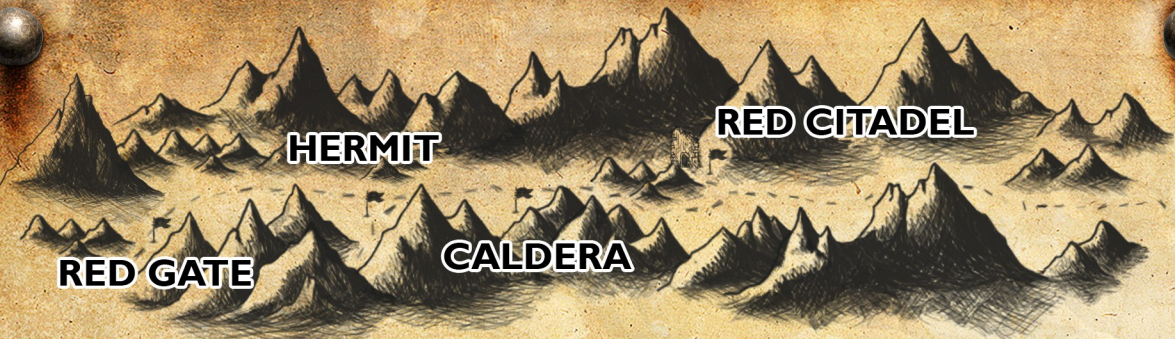
LOCALES (B)

Within the gorge, adventurers comes across a location that may provide a benefit or hindrance.

Forging for food and water within the Limestone Scar requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check. A successful check find 106 + Wisdom modifier pounds worth of food. A second roll determines the number of gallons of potable water the adventurer finds.

Adventurers may be tempted to fly, either through magical means or riding upon conjured creatures. This proves a dangerous task as it will attract keen sighted predators such as Rocs or a flight of wyverns.

Becoming Lost, 112



LIMESTONE SCAR
FLOWCHART

THE THREE PATHS The gorge separates into three distinct paths forcing adventurers to choose one. Adventurers can either select one of the paths or make a Wisdom (Survival) check after an hour of careful study to determine the best course.

Result	Effect
1-10 (Left)	Disadvantage on the next Wisdom (Survival) check.
11-15 (Center)	No effect.
16+ (Right)	Advantage on the next Wisdom (Survival) check.

THE FOUR PILLARS Mighty stones carved into wondrous shapes of the first dwarf-lords: Noranvindurinn, Vestribogen, Sunnanvindur, and Ostavind. Legends claim these four dwarves hold up the sky and create the four winds from their bellows. The statues are 150 ft. in height and within each of their gaping mouths, a large silver-plated horn rests upon a red tongue of cinnabar. If an adventurer climbs one of the statues with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check and blows a horn, huge gusts of wind summons dwarven spirit warriors as if the adventurer blew a *silver horn of Valhalla*. Once adventurers blow on one of the horns, none of the horns can summon the spirits warriors again until seven days pass.

FIELDS OF RUST While little vegetation grows within the limestone gorge, an orange-red fern with feathery fronds flourishes in abundance. Adventurers travelling through the field of these ferns, must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or suffer the effects as if struck by an antennae of a **rust monster**. An adventurer takes the time to study the plant with DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check, discovers its true nature.

HOUSES OF THE DEAD As those within Halagar began to sicken in great numbers, the lord of the great hall commanded to bury corpses outside the sacred city. While special decrees granted the privilege to the most distinguished individual, all others buried their loved ones far from the gates of Halagar. Known as the *Houses of the Dead*, a grand number of tombs line either side of the gorge for a mile. The structures vary in shape and ornamentation from the unduly modest to massive three story monuments rivaling city blocks. These buildings of marble and granite stretch a mile along the gorge and should express a melancholic atmosphere.

Should curious adventurers investigate any of the structures, select an outcome or roll on the table below:

d6	Effect
1	The marble door long ago crumbled to a pile of rubble, though the room beyond offers a place to rest weary bones.
2	An effigy in dwarvish that reads: <i>Pause for a moment, stranger, and read this message. Within this horrid tomb, rests an amiable woman, named Uthran. She loved her husband with a whole heart and bore him two fine sons. One still roams this earth, while the other lies beneath. She was a blithe companion, yet demure and humble. She kept house and spun wool. That is all that will be said—be on your way.</i>
3	The mausoleum adventurers explore crumbles from age as a collapsing roof trap.
4	Adventurers become affected from residue of the shadow realm and must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be filled with dread. Those affected have disadvantage on all saving throws until they overcome the shuddersome fear after a long rest and a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw.
5	Unwitting adventurers unleash a curse when entering this tomb. While within the area, they cannot regain hit points.
6	A simple marker bearing a dwarvish inscription: <i>Bear this rune upon your shield and my spirit, the last of my house, will honor you.</i> Should an adventurer etch the marking onto a shield, it acts as a <i>potion of heroism</i> when he or she incites the rune as an action. Afterward, it disappears.

While most of the tombs succumbed to grave robbers over the years, adventurers may find a few interesting bobbles. In addition to the results of the table above, for each hour adventurers explore the area, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) group check discovers the following:

d100	Result
01-30	5d6 (17) cp
31-60	6d6 x 10 (210) silver
61-70	4d6 x 10 (140) gp
71-95	2d4 (5) 25 gp art objects
96-00	Roll once on Magic Item Table C.

Silver Horn of Valhalla,
175

Collapsing Roof, 122

Rust Monster, 262



Quicksand, 110

Swarm of Ravens, 339

While the raven swarms have a low attack bonus, their presence heightens the mood of despair. Make sure to describe the ravens as pecking the eyes and ears of the adventurers.

Cult Fanatic, 345

The cult fanatics are lawful neutral. They remain in the rear or close to the knights and attempt to hamper adventurers with hold person and command.

Adventurers tracking down the giants discover a deadly encounter against 4 fomorian foes.

For a less deadly encounter, reduce the number of rocs by 1.

OIL SEEPS Natural rock oil abounds in the gorge and outer valley. On occasion, the yellow-black liquid escapes to the surface and forms dangerous pits of tar and thick bitumen.

A recent snowfall covered most pits and hides its dangers. Adventurers in the area must succeed in a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) group check to discern the peril. Should the company fail, those adventurers who did not make the mark, succumb to the deep oil seeps. Treat the tar pits as **quicksand**.

At your discretion, adventurers may encounter monsters while attempting to free themselves from the muck and mire.

CAVE Scuttling through the jagged terrain, adventurers discover either a cave entrance or a large opening in the ground. This may provide an opportunity to rest or serve as a lair for a hostile creature. It may lead to another part of the gorge. When an adventurer makes a Wisdom (Survival) check, instead of the result leading to a lettered box, consult the chart below:

d4	Result
1	Event
2	Locale
3	Encounter
4	Special Encounter

ENCOUNTERS (C)

You may use a normal mountain or arctic encounter or select one of the following devised encounters.

WAILING KNIGHTS Several elvish knights and cultists pledge eternal servitude to the banshees of Writhen Wood. The **wailing knights** attempt to hinder adventurers and thwart any design heroes may have to reach Halagar. The following retinues serves as suggestions when developing an encounter.

RETINUE

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	2 Wailing Knights	2,900
	1 Swarm of Ravens for each player	50
6+ Players	2 Wailing Knights	
	4 Cult Fanatics	450
	1 Swarm of Ravens for each player	

RETINUE

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	2 Revenants	1,800
6+ Players	1 Wailing Knight	2,900
	2 Revenants	

VARIANT: KNIGHT REVENANTS

The curse and oath that grips the heart of a wailing knight causes fallen knights to arise and track those that sent them to the grave. These undead are relentless trackers and continue to assault those responsible for their demise.

When adventurers first encounter the revenants, each wear chainmail granting them an AC of 15. Afterward, they possess any corpse they may find, including previously fallen adventurers or NPCs.

Should adventurers destroy the *Dusk Gate* and shatter the connection to the shadow realm, the wailing knights no longer rise from the dead.

SHOULDER BRIDGE An old stone bridge, known as *Urxbruhn* in the dwarven tongue, straddles over the gorge. Dwarven artisanship embellishes the ancient structure with intricate knotwork and runes. Two towering statues of thick-bearded dwarves bear the weight of the overpass upon mighty shoulders. As adventurers venture close to the bridge, a shower of stone boulders rain down upon them.

The company must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half damage on a successful one. Adventurers climbing the 150 ft. structure discover the tracks of several giants with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check.

The giants are no longer present, though adventurers eager for a fight can track them down. These creatures are descendants of the giant-clan that once allied with the dwarves of Halagar to protect the gorge. Though the penumbra caused by the *Dusk Gate* and the poisonous iron and cinnabar deposits, the giant folk in this region are twisted and foul. Use the **fomorian** statistics to represent these fetid giant offspring.

TITANS OF THE SKY A rare mated pair of **rocs** fight over the remains of large brown bear. The carcass falls from the sky and hits the ground hard splattering blood and muscle amongst the party. The two monstrous birds descend upon the company.

BLOOD SWARM Adventurers stumble into an area within the gorge prone to sinkholes. Extensive burrowing from a great **purple worm** and past flooding led to the erosion of this particular stretch of road. An adventurer taking an active role watching for danger can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check. A success discerns the hazard while a failure causes the ground to give way beneath the company. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 29 (4d10 + 2d6) bludgeoning damage and fall 20 feet on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The immediate area within the sinkhole is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain. It further disturbs a nest of **200 stirges**.

COMBAT SWARMS OF STIRGES

There is no need to roll combat dice for hundreds of creatures. Keep the encounter at a brisk pace.

Being tiny creatures, an average of 32 stirges envelop and attack each adventurer. Stirges attack those who fell into the sinkhole. Should any stirges remain, they attack those above.

To resolve combat in a quick fashion, observe the following resolution system. If the adventurer has an Armor Class of 22 or higher, 6 stirges hit and attach themselves without a need for an attack roll; AC 20-21, 8 hit; AC 18-19, 10 hit; AC 11-17, 15 hit.

Those that do not hit, take to flight from the sinkhole and scatter to the wind as do those detached by characters.

After freeing themselves from the rubble and blood swarm, adventurers can either climb out of the sinkhole or explore the tunnel. Should the company choose the latter, treat it as a *cave* in the *Locale* section.

IRON GIANT The gorge narrows to a tight and constricted passage for several hundred feet before opening into a wider expanse. As adventurers enter into the broad cleft, read or paraphrase the following:

The cramped pathway opens into a great breadth with several large alcoves along both sides of the limestone. Dead vines and ice smother the grand pillars and dwarvish sigils that mark the entrance into each niche.

Most stand empty though still echo the artistry dwarves commanded over stone: the ornate raking cornices; the pediments with dedicated sculptures depicting dwarvish livelihood; and friezes embellishing simple, yet alluring knot

work. A few collapsed long ago and now fill with fragments of former glories while fewer still exalt the dwarvish war machines of old—majestic men of towering iron.

All bear robust dwarven armor of hieroglyphic plate. Ribs of iron splay outward from the barrel chest of one as if something burst from its metal workings long ago. Another forever grinds its gears and servos to escape from beneath a pile of rubble and ice while a third remains rusted and inert save for its great helm that turns in earnest as you pass. Each wields an imposing blade with exception for the latter whose rusted fists appear to possess the skill to destroy a foe with a single blow.

Notwithstanding the brazen elements of time and neglect, one heart of iron burns fierce as a giant soldier of plate emerges from its nook. A great fire blazes from beneath its helm and ice that encased its armor soon fades into a plume of white vapor. As it did long ago, it now has a purpose and as it approaches closer it seeks to relish in it.

The single creature that advances toward the company is an **iron golem**. This is the mightiest of golems and proves to become an overwhelming encounter should adventurers choose to make a stand. Several of these expanses exist within the scar and served as killing fields for legions of foes that moved toward Halagar.

There are also a few notable features in this area:

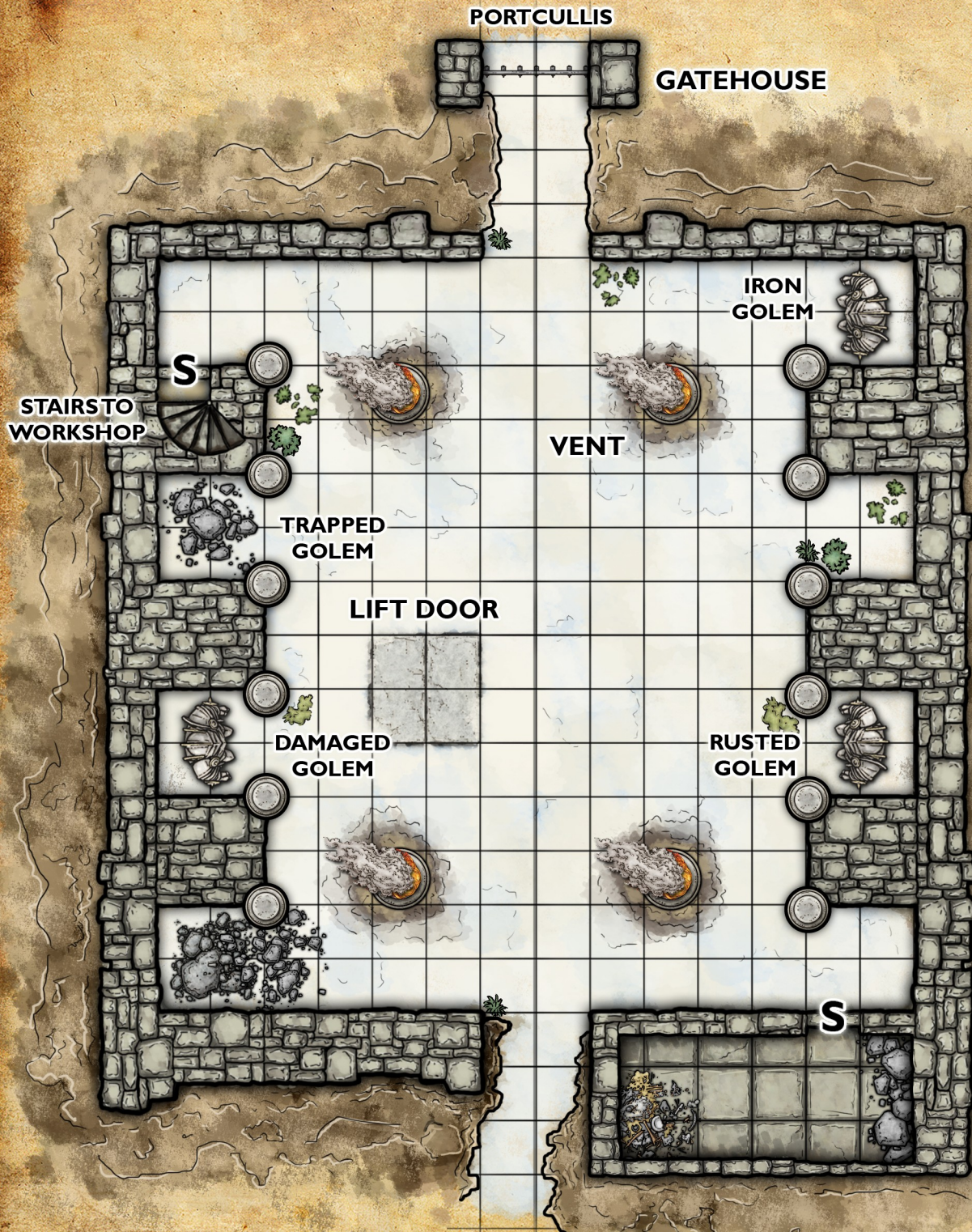
- **Vents:** Four volcanic vents rise to the surface providing heat to this portion of the gorge. Once covered with iron grates, the vents burn those that stand close to its edge. Any adjacent to the vent must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 2d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. This increases to 4d10 fire damage for those that move over or into the vents. The **iron golem** instead regains hit points equal to the damage dealt and can straddle a vent with little effort.
- **Lift:** The remnants of a manual lift lie hidden beneath the surface. Dwarves of old used the device to raise and lower the iron golem to and from the workshop when the hulks were need of repair. It required the power of eight creatures to winch the lift from the chamber to the surface. The structure is now dilapidated and the surface area which conceals the lift is weak and on the brink of collapse. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check determines the area is unfit to walk upon while a further DC 15

Stirges, 284

Iron Golem, 170

25

IRON GIANT MAP



Intelligence (Investigation) check discerns its true nature. The drop is 30 feet. Resourceful adventurers can make a DC 10 Charisma (Deception) group check and attempt to lead the golem to the weakened floor. While a success does little to harm the golem, it will confine the creature to the chamber below.

- **Secret Doors:** There are two secret doors at each end of the breadth and require a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate them. A further DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check learns the mechanisms to open the doors. Beyond one secret door is a spiral staircase that leads down to a workshop while the other opens to a small chamber to a once larger garrison, the halls of which crumbled long ago. Both provide ample room for adventurers to rest or a brief respite from the golem.
- **Workshop:** Beneath the surface, a sophisticated shop once housed the tools and workspace required to maintain the iron golems. An indiscriminate search uncovers mundane equipment such as chains, candles, and even block and tackle. Adventurers that succeed in a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover tinker and smith tools as well as 10 adamantine arrows.
- **Gatehouse:** At the other side of the area is a crumbled gatehouse. The worn, stone structure spans the gap and holds into place a lowered iron portcullis. It blocks further movement into the passage until raised. A winch atop the ruins still remains though with a weak rusted chain. Climbing the 20 feet needed to reach the winch requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Adventurers can take an action to winch the gate up with a DC 10 Dexterity check, the chain breaking on a failure. On the other hand, a strong hero can lift the portcullis with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

This is one of many such areas that adventurers can continue to encounter as they venture deeper into the gorge. It represents the extensive defenses the dwarves once possessed to protect the region from their enemies. Make subtle changes to keep adventurers alert and fearful of the dangers that await within Halagar. The following are a few suggestions:

- **Legion of Iron:** As adventurers enter and recognize the area, they further notice that iron golems fill all of the alcoves. The golems do not move to attack unless provoked although each watch in earnest as the company passes.
- **Crevasse:** The volcanic vents weakened the surface causing the entire floor to collapse into the workshop below. Adventures must navigate the thin ledges that remain as they pass by each alcove. The iron golems are inert though the sigils glow a fiery red and melt the ice that entombs each as adventurers draws close.
- **Indwellers:** Tents and makeshift hovels fill the alcoves

and the central area. The ruins now provide a home for rebellious **fomorian**s with whom the company must negotiate passage to the other side. Perhaps, instead of intelligent humanoids, it serves as a den for one or more **purple worms**. The creatures slumber within the ruins of a collapsed workshop beneath a surface of fresh snow. Adventurers realize their plight when the ground rumbles underneath to reveal they stand upon the segmented body of a gargantuan worm.

MARK OF THE HUNTER As adventurers travel through the gorge, three longbow attacks rain down upon the company from a concealed location.

Longbow Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, one target. **Hit:** 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) poison damage.

Those struck by an arrow must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, becoming poisoned on a failed save. The condition lasts until a *lesser restoration* spell or similar magic removes the poison.

The position of the archer could be a ruined watchtower or a natural cave high along the limestone cliff. Should adventurers investigate the location, they fail to discover the archer nor do they uncover the direction in which she left.

The attacks are from a mercenary of some distinction known as Inwë the Black Fang. She tracks the company in secret and hopes to weaken a few with her poison to make reaching Halagar more difficult. Inwë is described in further detail in the section below.

UNIQUE ENCOUNTERS (D)

The following encounters require more involvement and explore the more interesting denizens of the gorge. The *Hermit of the Limestone Scar* and *The King of the Gorge* are presented in the following pages. You should attempt to include these two encounters before adventurers reach Halagar. If the result of the flowchart leads to an unique encounter once all are complete, instead treat the outcome as a normal encounter (C) or proceed to Halagar.

THE HUNTER Inwë the Black Fang is briefly described in the introduction and can fill many different roles within the adventure given the history of the party. It is at your discretion as a Game Master to either include her into the adventure or dismiss her all together.

She may be a part of the dragon cult and bore witness to the great battle between Ancenagri and Gullhyndr. She now seeks to protect the remaining dragon from harm and believes the adventurers are dragon slayers. She may be a mercenary under the employ of the Order of Writhen Wood or a member of the faction.

To represent Inwë, use the statistics of an **erinyes** without the ability to fly.

HERMIT OF THE LIMESTONE SCAR

A solitary dwarf still lingers amongst the ruins of his ancestors. He calls himself Oldr to those curious adventurers who wish to know his name. In truth, the dwarf is a powerful illusion created by the regional effects of Gullhyndr and appears in the form of Bjorn Oldspear.

Oldr is an aspect of Gullhyndr that remains true and pure from the corruption of the *Dusk Gate*. While the illusion never reveals its true nature, the dwarf seeks to guide those true of heart toward the path that will release Gullhyndr from its shadowed shackles.

Adventurers can happen upon Oldr any number of different ways. Select from the options presented below or create one that best befits the situation.

The company is injured and seeks a short rest.

Worn from blood and iron, a gruff voice from the whirling wind beckons: "Hail adventurers from beyond the great Red Gate. If you seek rest, come—I live among the ruins of my ancestors—a place of old magic which most creatures and giants of the scar fear. It is safe and I would welcome the company."

The company is beleaguered with dead or unconscious companions.

Dread grips your heart as you await death at the hands of your foe. Though, it does not come. In its stead, a warm and gentle hand lifts your head; coaxes a soothing cordial down your throat; and drags you and your other companions in need from the deep snows to a pleasant hearth.

Adventurers follow a path or foul weather bedevils the company.

The winter gale whips with a violent chill and the blinding blast of biting snow threatens to blot out the path you now follow. Though through the whiteout, a glimmer of hope pierces the wind and snow. A stone hovel nestled against a crumbling tower promises warmth and a comfortable respite from the weather.

The company simply happens upon the hermit as they venture toward Halagar.

An old dwarf, guised in thick furs of a cave bear and the stout horns of a mountain ram, sits amongst rubble and rock. Bedecked with bones and baubles, the creature takes interest in a rough rock of cinnabar. He is quick to pocket the stone as he takes notice of your presence and stumbles to find his words.

"Pray, you gave me a bit of a startle, you did. Hmm, yes. Hail adventurers from beyond the great Red Gate. You hungry—cold? I live among the ruins of my ancestors—a place of old magic which most creatures and giants of the scar fear. It is safe and I would welcome the company. I would care to hear the journey that led you to these accursed lands."

The hermit lives in poor, though comfortable surroundings. Read or paraphrase the following:

Although the outer appearance belied a larger interior, stacks of scrolls, piled furniture and runestones, as well as a bleating mountain goat, clutters the spare room. It affords little space to maneuver as the dwarf invites you to crowd around a small table. The hermit pushes and shoves, squeezes and clammers, all with pardons and excuses to reach the great hearth and stew that bubbles upon the fire.

Your host reaches for the bowls and discovers they are few in number. Two are cracked, both of which he returns to their proper place along with a well-kept bowl, and wipes the last clean with a rag from his pocket before he explains: "I apologize, it is rare that I have visitors. You must make do and share the one bowl. The other is clean and I hate to dirty it—as you can see,

there is much to tidy and I give great solace in having at least one bowl clean. Though, I relish in saying, there is plenty of stew." He gives a quick nod to the goat before continuing: "I butchered and cleaned his brother earlier this week."

He fills a bowl and slaps it into a lap of one who is the closest while the dwarf samples the brew with a thick, wooden ladle.

"Eat," he beckons, "Do not give a worry about me. As I said, there is plenty and I will just eat from the pot." He brings the ladle to his lips, "Oh," he lets slip and motions to the great utensil in hand, "It seems I have the only spoon. I suppose it is bottoms up for the rest of thee!"

Oldr knows the history pertaining to Halagar and willing to share this knowledge with the group. Although, the dwarf does not divulge the secret nature of himself or that Bjorn



Oldspair is in truth a dragon and always has been. Nor will the hermit reveal any intentions or schemes Gullhyndr planned.

Oldr further attempts to root out the ambitions of the company while he entertains and binds any wounds. He does this through a series of subtle questions throughout the conversation.

Oldr ponders each answer with care to discover the dominant moral and ethical axis of the company. The dwarf will either aid or hinder adventurers depending on the result of his questioning.

The hermit poses the following questions. Possible general responses of adventurers also accompany each question to help determine the final decision of Oldr.

If you passed through the Red Gate, you then witnessed the elvish maidens who damned themselves to prevent dwarves from returning to Halagar—tell me, could you sacrifice yourself to a greater cause?

- Yes, I would not hesitate (Good +2).
- Yes, though after long thought (Good +1).
- Yes, if I knew my fate was not final and their was hope of return (Neutral +1).
- No (Neutral +2).

I hear the wealth within the vaults Halagar is great and even in my old age, I have been tempted to seek it out. Tell me, could you leave such wealth if it would bring ruin to others?

- Yes, it would not be the first time (Good +2).
- Yes, though I would inform my lord (Neutral +2).
- It depends, such a vast hoard is tempting (Neutral +1).
- No, I have the power to prevent such ruin (Evil +1).
- No (Evil +2).

What will you do with such a vast hoard of treasure should your journey prove successful?

- I would aid the less fortunate and destitute (Good +2).
- Provide protection for my lands and those close to me (Good +1).
- Elevate my position (Evil +1).
- It would give me the power I need to rule (Evil +2).

Though I wish for dwarves to one day return to Halagar, in my old age, I have grown to respect the Order of Wailing Knights and their courage. I even deal in trade with a trusted few, and at times, offer my services as a guide. May I be so bold and ask a favor? When you have further dealings with those of the order, could you leave them to their injuries rather than lead them to their grave?

- No, we can show no mercy for the troubles they caused us thus far is too great (Evil +2).
- No, they choose their own fate and should understand the risk when pledging an oath (Evil +1).
- No, unless they are willing to negotiate (Neutral +1).

- Yes. The order only does what they believe is right (Neutral +2).
- Yes (Good +2).

Oldr further assesses the actions of the company so that he may witness firsthand the integrity of the group.

If I were younger, I would like to visit the halls myself but I fear I was injured with an arrow a few days past and its poison still lingers in my blood.

- Provide healing in the form of a 1st level spell or similar magic (Good +1).
- Provide healing in the form of a 2nd level spell or greater magic (Good +2).
- Make a Wisdom (Medicine) check to heal the wound (Neutral +1).
- Ignore the wound (Neutral +2).

I even possess a map of the great dwarven halls. Here let me show you—I am sure it will prove some interest. As you can see, while it is incomplete and hard to read from age, it does hint of another entrance into the ruins.

- The company offers to purchase the map for a 100 gp or less (Neutral +1).
- The company offers to purchase the map for a sum more than 100 gp (Neutral +2).
- An adventurer steals the map or studies the map without permission (Evil +1).
- An adventurer attacks Oldr for the map (Evil +2).

Regardless of the outcome, Oldr refuses to part with the map or any offer to trek to Halagar. Once adventurers have a quick glance, the hermit returns it to its proper place. Should any request to examine the parchment closer, the dwarf feigns a desire to keep the secrets of Halagar for himself and ignores further requests.

The adventurers show kindness and reward Oldr for his hospitality.

- Offers nothing (Evil +1).
- Steals supplies or anything else of interest (Evil +2).
- Offers nothing save for a few kind words of appreciation (Neutral +1).
- Offers a monetary reward (Neutral +2)
- Offers a substantial reward such as a magic item or some other item of similar worth (Good +2).

To determine the outcome, count the total for each answer and deed. Be sure to include all those who give an answer or takes action, regardless if it is not the same result. Furthermore, there is no need to include adventurers who remain quiet or do not engage with Oldr. Remember, the hermit is attempting to determine what is the dominant moral compass of the group. Those more outspoken are often the guiding hand in making decisions.

Before tallying the final result, further examine the ideals of each character background that will serve as a basis for which Oldr evaluates the company. The hermit is astute and a superb judge of character.

- A character has a good ideal (Good +2).
- A character has a lawful ideal (Neutral +1).
- A character has a neutral ideal (Neutral +2).
- A character has a chaotic ideal (Evil +1).
- A character has an evil ideal (Evil +2).

Whichever moral sense scores the highest, that is the probable dominant position of the company. Once you discover the result, refer to one of the three outcomes below:

- **Good:** He bids them luck and advises they should seek out the King of the Gorge, a giant known as Gaddulg. The giant-king possesses a runestone that may aid them as they explore the ruined citadel. Oldr informs the company that the king has a good heart, though one must earn his trust and he favors strength of courage above all else. The dwarf further allows the adventurers to have the map of Halagar and a pearl, which glows a bright light as if a torch.
- **Neutral:** Oldr bids them luck and advises they should seek out the King of the Gorge, a giant known as Gaddulg. The giant-king possesses a runestone that may aid them as they explore the ruined citadel.
- **Evil:** Oldr bids them luck and advises they should seek out the King of the Gorge, a giant known as Gaddulg. The giant-king possesses something of great magic that may aid them as they explore the ruined citadel. In truth, the hermit hopes the adventurers will deliver themselves to Gaddulg so that the giant may have a chance to slaughter the group.

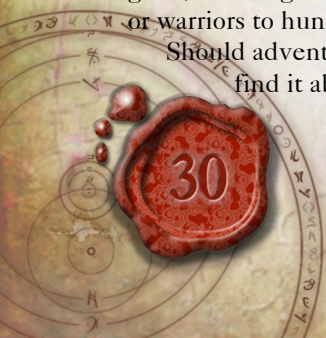
MAP OF HALAGAR *Mundane Item, rare*

The map is old and worn. While Halagar is too vast to map out in detail, the map offers suggestions which direction to proceed through its red halls. It also emphasizes a second entrance through either the well or garderobe (**Area H5** and **H6**).

While using the map, the lead adventurer has advantage on Intelligence (History or Investigation) checks to navigate the ruins of Halagar.

Afterward, Oldr appears before Gaddulg and informs the giant-king of the results. Depending on the mood of the giant, Gaddulg may send emissaries to request an audience or warriors to hunt the company.

Should adventurers attempt to return to the hovel, they find it abandoned long ago and in ruin.



KING OF THE GORGE

Gaddulg holds court within an extinct volcano surrounded by a tuft ring. At the heart of the caldera is a frozen lake concealing a deep kimberlite pipe beneath its arctic shell. Primordial dwarves mined diamonds from the deep, volcanic cone before exposing an underground river which flooded the chamber. The dwarves later discovered a greater pipe where the stout race would later construct Halagar.

Angled, stepped sides lead toward the basin and support three tiers, upon which teem of ancient ruins and hovels of salvaged stone. Several large sloping stairs of stone allow movement between each tier.

CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF GADDULG

If adventurers meet Oldr before encountering Gaddulg, the dwarven hermit determines one of three mores dominates the group: good, neutral, or evil.

While Gaddulg considers the wisdom of Oldr, the king holds his own council. Though Gaddulg and Oldr have similar goals, the giant-king has no concern beyond the closing of the *Dusk Gate*. Therefore, it is possible for adventurers to change the perception of Gaddulg through acts of respect. Adventurers that make the effort to instill a good impression on the king through roleplay, permit a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Each success changes his perception by one step.

THE TIRED RUINS

Crumbled remains of a gatehouse guards the wide crevassed path that leads to the caldera. Two misshapen giants stand watch, though pay little mind and without a word, allow adventurers to pass.

Likewise, as the company wanders the ruins seeking Gaddulg, adventurers discover most of the giants despondent and disheartened. On occasion a wretched creature pauses to give a curious glance, however most do not take notice of their presence.

If adventurers beseech a giant for the whereabouts of Gaddulg, the misshapen sot

mumbles, “Fylja mir—*Follow me,*” then plods toward the basin. As the giant guides adventurers toward the center, on several occasions the wretch pauses to converse to one or more of his fellow brethren on simple matters of life. Otherwise, the company encounters Gaddulg upon a crumpling step pyramid at lowest portion of the caldera.

As adventurers enter the ruined giant borough, read or paraphrase the following:

The path into the caldera falls away before you and down a slight sloping grade of terraces upon which lingers the remnants of a primordial village. Stairs of hewn rock intervene at several junctures to allow movement between each tier.

The earliest stone houses are small structures enclosing a single room. Most are silent and deserted; but hint, at first sight, at being abandoned in haste. Belongings still remain as if everyday life continues to flourish within their walls. You discover an earthen pot still perched upon a simple fireplace, and beside the hearthstone a little bit of charcoal. The bone in the pot is so dry and porous that it is as light as a cork. In one corner of the room you discover a pile of mats, though upon closer examination they crumble into fragments.

Other, more prominent houses boast larger archways and graven sigils in an old giant dialect. Within such great houses, life still stirs though only in the slightest; its huge inhabitants appear cursed and bleak. Beyond a partition of worn furs in one grim place, a twisted and wretched creature lay shriveled upon a bed of mats and wool. The mountainous woman, turned upon her side, stretches toward an earthen cup just out of her reach. Her weakness spawns an impassable gulf of an inch or two between that of her hand and cup.

On occasion, aside from crumbling stone structures, masses of fallen rock and whole husks of once verdant trees bar the path toward the basin. Others threaten to tumble downward from their insecure footholds along the volcanic cliff face.

You snake through decaying streets and alleys beneath roving shadows as wretched giants move and plod throughout the borough as you travel toward its heart.

To further enrich the encounter as adventurers amble through the caldera, consult the following table:

It is possible for adventurers to meet Gaddulg before encountering Oldr. If adventurers succumb to the hands of a group of fomorians, the giants will bring them before the king.

*Gaddulg will seize this good fortune and challenge adventurers to his test. He may further bargain with adventurers and promise to release them in exchange for their word to seal the *Dusk Gate*.*

Should they agree, the king reveals the location of the Riddari Stone claiming it may aid in their quest. Though, they must first defeat the primordial guardian protecting the runestone.

This is also a chance to introduce Inwe to adventurers. They may even recognize the fletching of her arrows from a previous encounter. The mysterious hunter claims she negotiates with Gaddulg for the return of the elven prisoners. The giant is adamant that no quarrel will come to blows while she remains. Like them, she is his guest.

Adventurers of noble heart may also seek to negotiate the release of the elven prisoners as a gesture of good will.

Gaddulg informs them that though he is king, he offers little influence to aid in this matter. On the other hand, if the company wishes to free the prisoners, Gaddulg stresses their captors respect strength above all else. There are 2 fomorians and 1 ettin.

d8 Sights and Sounds

1 Most of the larger, gigantic ruins rest upon smaller foundations of simple, well-hewn stone. Those that understand dwarven script recognize similar sigils though the runes prove difficult to understand.

2 Outside a crude shelter of cracked stone and frozen earth, a large white wolf sleeps. Wisps of powdered blue vapor escapes from its nose with each breath. As adventurers pass, the mangy creature stirs to reveal one piercing blue eye as it speaks in garbled giant: "Ardeť dags jaga—Is it time to hunt?"

A voice from within the stone lodge replies, "Gaddulg, koomer adda dit huvad—Gaddulg will have your head."

3 Several large and small mountain goats bound the jagged clefts and earth that spew from the steep rock between tiers.

4 A number of deformed and grotesque giants plod among the ruins and scavenge huge stones and pillars with their might.

5 An elven knight, accompanied by her squire and a few acolytes, linger within a cage of bone and leather. A large cauldron bubbles near as several giants leer in earnest. Each bear faded and worn heraldry of the Order of Writhen Wood.

6 A few boisterous drunkards begin to quarrel. Soon after, those capable heft and hurl sheep and small mountain goats at one another. The poor animals bleat and blather as the giants fling them into the air.

7 A cryptic phrase catches the attention of any who speaks the gruff giant dialect:

"I hear the king will toast the ravens from his ale house this night."

Another giant responds:

"We shall then all feast tonight."

It is a kenning that alludes to an assassination attempt against the king. It means: "I hear the king will bleed from his cup to-night."

8 A giant collapses before the company and heaves black bile and blood. Without divine healing, the goliath dies after a few more painful seizures.

EVENTS

As adventurers meander through the ruins, several events occur. While a few of these incidents have suggestions when they should occur, feel free to stage the encounters at your discretion rather than adhere to the order of presentation.

The events are as follows:

- AUDIENCE WITH GADDULG
- TEST OF COURAGE
- BANQUET
- REQUEST
- BLACK CUP
- HALL OF GIANT KINGS

AUDIENCE WITH GADDULG

The king observes his minions from atop of a foundering ancient dwarven pyramid. If the company first encountered Oldr, the giant-king awaits for their possible arrival and treats the adventurers in accordance to the decision reached by the hermit. Otherwise, Gaddulg views the companions as if Oldr came to a neutral result.

Read or paraphrase the following and then consult the reaction of Gaddulg based on the moral conclusion reached by Oldr.

The giant-king emerges from a once noble structure that rests atop a vast pyramidal mound of dwarven design. On a broad terrace at the base of the temple is a sacrificial altar and upon its dark mass, the distinct gleam of humanoid bones. Beyond the stone altar, a grand archway splits the stairs leading to the peak and hints of greater dread within the bowls of the pyramid. The giant descends the stone stairs and crouches to further scrutinize your features.

"Impressive, is it not?" The king refers to the sloping stone structure that now shadows the giant. "I doubt a time existed when dwarves were not the masters of rock. I hear the great southern pyramids of the ancient desert empires spawned from the imaginations of dwarven engineers. Tales honor them with the distinction; calling them the Mountains of the Sun.

"Though you are not at the ass of the world—you are at its peak and I am curious to learn to what purpose you risk entering my lands."

Although in command of a shambled kingdom, Gaddulg is king and demands respect from those choosing to address him.



TEST OF COURAGE

If adventurers take interest in the runestone rumored to hold primeval magic, the giant responds:

"Yes, a most ancient stone bearing runic inscription rests within this caldera and it is true the magic holds tremendous power. It is sacred to our people and determines who among us is strong enough to lead. You speak of the Riddari Stone.

"Though, I am not convinced you have the strength to possess such a gift. Therefore, you must first prove yourself."

Gaddulg dares the adventurers to choose one among them brave enough to challenge the king to honorable one-on-one combat. While the giant implies that magic cannot measure courage, Gaddulg does permit its use. Although, the giant reminds the company that he too commands supernatural gifts and will wield such power should the chosen champion insist on allowing magic to bolster his or her prowess.

If an adventurer agrees to the duel, read or paraphrase the following depending on their previous encounter with Oldr:

GOOD *Great laughter erupts from Gaddulg as the giant-king spouts: "I jest, though Oldr knew your hearts resonated courageous strength. I have no wish to challenge or test you further for the true ordeal still awaits beneath the dark depths of the ice lake. It will require all of your strength and skill.*

"Come, I will show you. Though, I seek a favor in return."

Gaddulg further welcomes the adventurers to feast at his table later in the evening. The giant-king is eager to hear of their exploits and will pry them loose with fine, dwarven ale.

NEUTRAL *Great laughter erupts from Gaddulg as the giant-king spouts: "I jest, though I do see that courageous strength does resonate from your hearts. I have no wish to challenge or test you further for the true ordeal still awaits beneath the dark depths of the ice lake. It will require all of your strength and skill.*

"Come, I will show you. Though, I seek a favor in return."

Gaddulg escorts them to the ice lake to reveal the location of the *Riddari Stone*.

EVIL *Gaddulg crouches once again and looks into the eye of the chosen champion. "It is either courage or greed that lurks behind your gaze. I cannot tell. Perhaps the old hermit spoke ill to soon, hmmm. It is of no matter. I have no wish to challenge or test you further for the true ordeal still awaits beneath the dark depths of the ice lake. It will require all of your strength and skill.*

"Come, I will show you."

Gaddulg escorts them to the ice lake to reveal the location of the *Riddari Stone*.

If adventurers refuse the duel, then the company fails his test of courage. The giant-king bids those deemed good or neutral by the hermit a hearty farewell, while he attacks those the dwarf judged evil.

BANQUET

If a company deemed good accepts the invitation to feast, it can happen later in the evening or after adventurers re-emerge from the cold, murky depths of the ice lake. Stage this event at your discretion and feel free to add the following details:

- **Food:** Sausage stuffed with blood and lard, meat spiced with thyme and garlic, buttered root vegetables, smoked mutton, and roc eggs.
- **Oath:** Hugar, a great warrior, stands and swears that he will not flee from battle as long as his brother still fights.
- **Song:** A giant skald recites or sings great poems of King Knyttneve, an giant ruler of old.

REQUEST

For revealing the location of the *Riddari Stone*, Gaddulg requests adventurers to also seek out and destroy the *Dusk Gate*.

"When Bjorn Oldspear, the last oerl of Halagar, became mad with greed, he commanded the dwarves and giants to erect a portal to the shadow realm so he may hide his vast wealth. We know it now as the Dusk Gate.

"A melancholic atmosphere of apathy and dread permeates from the portal. The halls of Halagar can no longer contain the seeping darkness. As for my kin, after many generations, madness and depravity blossoms. A day soon approaches when my reign will end and chaos ensues. Even as we speak, many of my vassals begin to rebel and roam the gorge in small clans. Before long, these traitorous wretches will hamper trade and livelihoods of those farther south.

"I cannot reason with the ghosts of my forbearers or ascertain their thoughts as to why they aided in its construction. Time proved their foolishness and now our people linger upon the brink of a bitter end. In fact, all life in the Lime-stone Scar suffers and soon it will spread beyond the Red Gate.

"Should you reach Halagar and delve in its depths, will you hold an oath to me, Gaddulg, King of the Gorge, to seal the gate and if possible, destroy it?"

QUESTIONS Adventurers may have the following questions:

Why are you not able to destroy the gate?

"It was my intention when I challenged Gamal for kingship and won the right to wield Eldingar, the Maul of Giants, nearly one hundred years ago. Afterward, I felt the weight of the crown. I fear that should I venture to Halagar, any influence I still hold over my people will fade. Dissent and turmoil will reign. My leadership and ever present eye keeps

swords and axes at rest."

Unbeknownst to the giant, *Eldingar* causes Gaddulg to be slothful and lethargic. Gaddulg further fears that should dissidence grip the giants in his absence, the Order of Writhen Wood will become a great threat to his divided people.

How does one seal or destroy the gate?

"I am not sure. I can only share with you what I know, or rather what I surmised from those before me. I am not the first king to wish the Dusk Gate sealed. Come, listen to my ancestors. I wish to hear what their voices will depart upon you."

Gaddulg escorts adventurers within the base of the pyramid and into the Hall of Giant Kings.

SUGGESTED TIME This event can take place during the banquet or after adventurers emerge from the encounter with the **aboleth** (see *The Riddari Stone* below). Furthermore, this incident can also occur in the Hall of Giant Kings after adventurers reclaim *Eldingar* from Gnok and while Gaddulg remains unconscious from the poison. Rather than Gaddulg beseeching the company, the remnants of the giant-kings make the request.

BLACK CUP

At some point during the time adventurers are within the tiered city, a minion of Gaddulg betrays the king and fills poison in his cup. Adventurers that heard and understood the cryptic phrase earlier as they meandered through the rubble can warn the king and prevent the incident.

While the poison will fail to kill Gaddulg, it will incapacitate the giant for a spell. As bodyguards move to protect the king from the approaching onslaught soon to follow, he reacts to the adventurers depending on the result of their morale test:

GOOD The king beseeches adventurers to guard *Eldingar* with their lives as other giants will seek to covet it in his weakened state. If the *Hall of Giant-Kings* has yet to occur, Gaddulg further begs:

"It seems I am not long for this world . . . take to the temple of my kings . . . the pyramid . . . it will be safe for you . . . the others fear . . . Eldingar is the key . . . hear their voices . . ."

Once adventurers break for the pyramid or maneuver to guard the massive maul, Gnok, the giant seer reveals his true power and attacks. Use the **dao** statistics to represent the giant earth priest.

NEUTRAL Gaddulg musters the strength to address the adventurers before he collapses:

"I trust . . . you are not . . . responsible for this."

Gnok overhears the last words of the king and seizes the moment. The earth priest bellows to the captain of the guard, Korus, that the adventurers poisoned the king. While Korus moves to engage the company, the seer snatches *Eldingar* and flees to the temple pyramid.

Korus is a **frost giant raider** (see Appendix).

EVIL Gaddulg musters the strength to bellow out an accusation against the adventurers before he collapses:

"You . . . you . . . poisoned me . . . kill them before I draw my last breath."

Gnok seizes this moment to act. The earth seer commands Korus, a **frost giant raider** (see Appendix), to kill the adventurers. While the company and bodyguards are distracted, Gnok claims *Eldingar* for himself and flees to the temple pyramid.

DEVELOPMENT After the commotion, Gaddulg is quick to recover and seeks out *Eldingar* while those loyal to the king hunt down those responsible. Regardless of the result of their moral test, allow adventurers a moment to redeem themselves.

If the company deemed neutral or evil follows Gnok and protects the magical maul by defeating the earth priest, the perception of Gaddulg shifts one step.

He further thanks the adventurers and offers his sincerest apology for his misconceptions.

SUGGESTED TIME This event is can take place after the banquet. It may also occur either as Gaddulg escorts adventurers to the Hall of Giant Kings or to the frozen lake (see *The Riddari Stone* below).

HALL OF GIANT KINGS

Although primordial dwarves constructed the step pyramid, giant forbearers renovated the structure to accommodate their needs. Once

Dao, 142

Aboleth, 13

35

adventurers step beyond the sacrificial alter and pass through the grand archway, read or paraphrase the following:

Within the base of the great step pyramid, a vast hall of polished obsidian stands testament to ancient giant stonework. Smooth and buffed runes mark the walls and floors. Light dances upon the black, volcanic glass and illuminates eight huge alcoves. Immense husks of mummified giants stand upright in seven of the eight niches, the farthest remains empty as it awaits one final corpse: that of Gaddulg, the last of the giant-kings.

If adventurers move against Gnok, they discover the giant seer struggling to lift the great head of the enchanted maul into a rectangle niche.

VOICES OF THE KINGS Once a creature places *Eldingar* into the rectangle niche, sparks of lightning erupt from the maul and pierce the mummified hearts of the dead kings. The halls of the volcanic glass glow a light blue from beneath its polished veneer. The energy stirs and awakens each giant husk, although the mummified kings do not move from the alcoves. Instead, they murmur with croaked voices and in unison:

"Why do you awaken us from our sleep? What council do you wish from us?"

If Gaddulg is present, the giant encourages adventurers to engage with the shriveled corpses. The mummified kings answer questions as if adventures cast the spell *Speak with Dead* with the exception that the council represents one target.

The kings know the history pertaining to Halagar and willing to share this knowledge with the group. If adventurers inquire how to seal or destroy the *Dusk Gate*, they respond as follows:

- **King Knyttneve:** "I, King Knyttneve, first to wield *Eldingar*, forged my spirit into this husk so I may deliver what I know to my successors. I crafted the runes upon these walls to summon this council of kings. It pains my soul to see before me the descendants of many sovereigns. It reveals that the *Dusk Gate* remains and each of your reigns, a failure."
- **King Torig:** "The tiered city of the giants prospered during my reign. Bjorn Oldspear and I broke bread together and is a fine ally. I see no reason to move against Halagar."
- **King Gamal:** "The power of *Eldingar* still commands your will, King Torig, as it did mine. The maul, though crafted by dwarf-men, holds draconic magic, a power all giants should fear."

Oldspear betrayed us all."

- **King Torig:** "Bjorn Oldspear assured me that the halls of cinnabar would hold the shadow sickness at bay."
- **King Azag:** "I, King Azag, first ruler interred to this council by the defiler, Knyttneve, for he disturbed my bones to summon forth my advice, knew the predecessor of Bjorn Oldspear, Marmod, Son of Mogar. I say this: the dwarves of old did not just dwell in shadows to become masters of stone. Shadow magic lurks in the depths of the deepest of mountains. It needs one spark of light to awaken it. Bjorn Oldspear did not forge the *Dusk Gate*, the last oerl opened it."
- **King Torig:** "Bjorn Oldspear had no choice. The fortunes of Halagar dwindled as did the iron veins it commanded. However, the mountains beyond the veil of shadow would yield plenty of its dark iron to those that would risk the venture."
- **King Jorn:** "Though Knyttneve forged the binds to shackle our people to the dwarves, it was you, King Torig, who sacrificed generations to mine the shadow mountains."
- **King Volkdin:** "King Torig, as we all were at one time, was nothing but a mere pawn within a scheme of a greater intellect."
- **King Elic:** "Enough! It is obvious we all share in the travesty of our people. Even I, King Elic, forsook those dwarves seeking to assault the Chamber of the Dragon, the hold of Oldspear. It is now that I can amend my treacherous reign as king. Listen! Listen to what I tell you now: the gate possesses four round recesses—each designed to house a cinnabar disc bearing powerful runes. Bjorn knew the dread the *Dusk Gate* could unleash. Upon removing the discs, the dwarven lord entrusted four knights with one of each of the seals. It fell upon them to close the gate should the whispers of the shadow realm corrupt the last oerl. Their rebellion failed. The dragon possessed great foreknowledge. I imagine the four knights still grasp the cinnabar seals wherever they fell in Halagar."
- **King Volkdin:** "Yes, seek the four seals. Though be forewarned, the Shadowed Eye of Halagar is the true adversary."
- **King Knyttneve:** "Yes. Very wise, King Volkdin. The great false eye of the dragon is the key to destroying the *Dusk Gate*, though it cannot be done without the four seals."



THE RIDDARI STONE

The ancient relic lies hidden beneath dark, murky waters within the lake-filled volcanic pipe. The first 20 feet of the lake is frozen, though a sloping pit burrows through the ice to the gelid waters beneath. Adventurers attempting to clamber down must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or slip into the waters and suffers 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

Gaddulg speaks to the adventurers before they disappear beneath the lake. Read or paraphrase the following:

"There are many natural caves and abandoned mines deep within the frigid waters, though the cavern you seek is roughly fifty feet below the surface. If it still remains and the frozen depths do not stiffen your muscles or cloud your vision, a glowing pearl will guide you to its entrance."

Gaddulg further offers more information if the hermit deemed the company good or neutral.

GOOD *"A foul and primordial creature lurks in the waters beneath the ice lake and guards the Riddari Stone. I hold no knowledge of its purpose nor did my forbearers. Though I do know this: it is ever-present; it is immortal and cannot be killed."*

"It is in my youth that I sought the power of the relic. I wished to challenge the aging sloth, Gamal and lead my people against the Dusk Gate. Full of courage and fury, I dove deep and met the beast."

"With my hand deep in its gills, I held its maw at bay. It whipped and thrashed. Its tail thumped hard against my chest. Its tentacles grip my throat. With all the strength I could muster, I pressed forward."

"I prayed before the stone and held firm against the tides. I prayed as it probed my mind with its piercing thoughts. I prayed as my skin curled and changed into a translucent slime."

"When I emerged. I challenged Gamal and my prayers were answered. Will the stone answer you? We shall see."

"Good fortune to each of you. I shall await your return."

This information may allow adventurers to prepare themselves what is to come and hint that an **aboleth** lurks below.

NEUTRAL *"A foul and primordial creature lurks in the waters beneath the ice lake and guards the Riddari Stone. I hold no knowledge of its purpose nor did my forbearers. Though I do know this: it is ever-present; it is immortal*

and cannot be killed.

"It is in my youth that I sought the power of the relic. I wished to challenge the aging sloth, Gamal and lead my people against the Dusk Gate. Full of courage and fury, I dove deep and met the beast."

"When I emerged. I challenged Gamal and my prayers were answered. Will the stone answer you? We shall see."

"Good fortune to each of you. I shall await your return."

Should adventurers inquire about the nature of the beast, Gaddulg responds with a smile:

"You must see for yourself."

EVIL *"Good fortune to each of you. I shall await your return."*

THE DEPTHS BELOW

While the volcanic pipe stretches deep into the bowels of the earth, the underwater cavern the adventurers seek is not quite at a dangerous depth. In truth, it is a fathorage of 60 feet.

The water is calm and requires no Strength (Athletics) check, although you may require a DC 10 Constitution check to gain any distance in the frozen waters. Without a swimming speed, adventurers will reach the depth in 4 rounds. Those with a swimming speed reach the depth in half the time.

Although, the lighted pearl does mark the entrance, the width of the conical pipe is still broad at this point and the mucus in the water causes the encounter distance to be 10 feet. Therefore, adventurers must succeed a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to peer into the dark expanse and discover the beacon of light.

THE RIDDARI CAVERN

The passage leading to the vast cavern that holds the relic is a further 60 feet with a width and height of roughly 15 feet. Adventurers struggling for a gasp of air, must succeed in a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check find small air pockets along the ceiling.

THE FALSE STONE Halfway down the passage, the **aboleth** begins its initial assault. The aberration crafts an illusion of the *Riddari Stone* in the minds of those it sees within 60 feet after delivering the following telepathic message:

"Those seeking the ancient relic of stone must

Before adventurers seek the Riddari Stone, you should revise and familiarize yourself the following rules:

Frigid Water, 110

Swimming, 116

Suffocating, 183

Underwater

Combat, 198

While the aboleth possesses darkvision, the mucus filled depths still hamper visibility. Although, the creature does detect the presence of creatures entering its domain through its telepathic speech which does not require sight. Its telepathy will not provide the exact location of a creature, though adventurers carrying a light source will provide a target for the aboleth.

Phantasmal Force, 264.

RIDDARI CAVERN

CAVITY

LEADS TO
CAVITY ABOVE

RIDDARI
STONE

GIANT
SKELETON

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



first open their mind or be forever blind to its gifts.”

Adventurers must make a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw, suffering the effects of the *phantasmal force* spell on a failed save. Furthermore, those adventurers choosing to open their thoughts also fail the save despite a success.

For those under the effects of the spell, read or paraphrase the following:

A dark cloud envelops the passage as a fragile stone marker appears. Its sides worn from underwater currents, the relic bears two primordial sigils upon its face. A voice beckons: “Come before the relic and choose one of the two runes.”

Allow a moment for unaffected adventurers to change their initial decision. Those that do lower their mental defenses, succumb to the illusion.

While the phantasm distracts the adventurers and hides the aboleth, it moves closer and attempts to *enslave* as many foes as possible before the company launches its attack. Afterward, it retreats into the cavern and allows charmed adventurers to deal with the intruders.

THE CAVERN The subterranean lair of the aboleth is immense and has the following features:

- **Cavity:** While most of the cavern remains submerged, a grotto 20 feet above the entrance provides air and brief respite from the chilled waters. Adventurers can discover this antre swimming near ceiling or searching for an air pocket.
- **Speleothems:** Stalagmites and stalactites, as well as natural rock pillars, blossom in the underwater cavern. The formations can provide **half cover** to those that take refuge behind them.
- **Riddari Stone:** The center of the cavern holds the ancient relic known as the *Riddari Stone*. It is a worn stone marker standing 10 feet in height and adorned with prehistoric graphic representations of dragons and giants. One adventurer relenting to the ancient sigils discover one sword in his or her possession becomes either a *giant slayer* or a *dragon slayer*. This transformation last 9 days, after which the weapon returns to its normal state. Afterward, the *Riddari Stone* remains dormant and can no longer bestow magic upon a sword for 9 days.

While the aboleth first engages adventurers in the passage, the aberration makes a final stand in this cavern. After its defeat, the spirit of the creature returns to its guardianship once the elemental powers of water amalgamates a new body.

TREASURE Aside from the benefits of the *Riddari Stone*, the cavern holds the following treasure:

- **Art Objects:** An ancient pearl necklace with stylized shells once belonging to a primeval water cult; a

VARIANT: ABOLETH LAIR ACTIONS

In addition to the lair actions presented in the *Monster Core Rulebook*, the aboleth can also cause this effect:

- Strong underwater currents surge within 90 feet of the aboleth. Any creature underwater within 20 feet of such a current, must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pulled 20 feet toward the aboleth and suffer the effects of being knocked prone. Escaping the current costs an amount of movement equal to half the speed of the creature.

BOWL OF COMMANDING WATER ELEMENTALS

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This is a small clay statue of a seated male figure in contemplation while within his lap, rests a rusted iron bowl. The clay represents the command water possesses over earth; to shape it to its desire.

Minor Property: Though the iron bowl appears incapable of holding water, it does not leak.

Quirk: While filled with water, the owner often sits and ponders his or her own reflection.

RING OF MINDSHIELDING

Ring, uncommon

Adventurers discover this simple bronze ring among the skeletal remains of a giant. Though a ring, medium-sized creatures may wear it as a bracelet.

Previous Owner: Grugar, a misguided and twisted giant warrior who sought to challenge King Elic several hundred years ago. The giant has a voracious appetite and may on occasion act as a translator, even if the bearer understands the giant or dwarven dialect.

Quirk: The bearer often appears to talk to oneself when alone.

greataxe of dwarven design; a giant ivory cup with etchings of daily life of long ago; and a clay amphora depicting dwarven mythology (250 gp each).

- **Magic Items:** A *bowl of commanding water elementals* and a *ring of mindshielding* (see above).

RED CITADEL

Great iron doors rust, mortar crumbles, gray rock splits, and huge worms infest ancient stone. Welcome to Halagar!

THE FOUR KNIGHTS OF CINNABAR

Gullhyndr, in the guise of the last dwarven oerl, Bjorn Oldspear, entrusted four seals of cinnabar to four dwarven knights. The gold dragon foresaw its corruption and hoped the band of warriors would possess the strength to seal the *Dusk Gate*. The knights failed in their task, the first fell assaulting the Red Citadel.

ENTERING HALAGAR

Entering the fortified citadel during its height would prove a fruitless endeavor, though time has now made it a rather a simple task. While the ballistas and horns remain silent, a pair of mated **rocs** nest atop the larger of the two towers.

There are three access points into Halagar: the bronze door, the giant gate, and the sewers. As adventurers approach, read or paraphrase the following:

Deep within the Limestone Scar and under the stone cowl of a great mountain face lies Halagar, the Red Citadel. Despite being forsaken to weather and age, Halagar still remains a wondrous and noble engineering feat though a haunted colloquy between honor and greed.

A round crenellated bastion juts from a mountainous ridge, high above the gorge like a fat gut bursting from rich meats and ale. A pair of snow-covered turrets, one stout and the other tall and proud, perch upon the bulwark. Sparse remnants of carved cinnabar still cling to the ancient citadel giving the illusion that it bleeds from its mortared stone.

While the main doors remain unseen, it is imaginable the larger, rotund tower boasts a grand iron gate. The taller, slender turret protects a rough hewn path of spiraling stone stairs that wraps upward around its guardian and through mountainous rock.

RUINS

As the mountain shadows Halagar, the citadel also looms over the ruins of an age-old township. Little remains save for the scarce foundations of several minor buildings and a few crumbling walls.

It is a mere diversion and while adventurers might find a few broken baubles and trinkets, any interest soon wanes. Although should the company linger too long investigating the rubble, both **rocs** located in **Area H7** swoop down and attack.

The great birds of prey attempts to pluck one of the adventurers from the ruins and return to its nest. It will then feed the offering to its screeching offspring.

THE BRONZE DOOR

The larger, rotund tower embedded in the mountain face boasts a massive bronze door (located in **Area H6**). Adventurers passing through these doors and traversing the bridge beyond are able to enter the ancient dwarven borough.

GIANT GATE

A further marvel awaits those with an adventurous spirit strong enough to reach its heights: the grand archway of the giant gate. King Torig oversaw the construction of the enormous portcullis and massive stone doors during the great alliance between dwarves and the giant folk.

The archway serves two purposes. The first was to allow giant prospectors direct access to the *Dusk Gate* to may mine the shadow mountains. Though, in its present state, it further allows Gullhyndr to leave the citadel in dragon form without needing to navigate the dangers of the citadel.

CLIMBING TO THE GATE Adventurers willing to climb the 300 feet to the Giant Gate discover it requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Huge stairs once juttred from the cliff face to allow the giants of the scar access, though crumbled long ago. It is a dangerous trek and will no doubt attract the attention of the **rocs** in **Area H7** or the **wyverns** in **Area H1**.

INTELLIGENCE (INVESTIGATION) Once adventurers reach the stone abutment that supports the massive portcullis, they first notice that the thick iron bars splay outward. The opening in the portcullis is large enough for a gargantuan creature to gain entrance.

- **Easy (DC 10):** Adventurers discover a large amount of frozen blood of a dark red hue. It is the remnants from wounds Gullhyndr suffered during the struggle with Ancenagri.

CLIMBING DOWNWARD Most of the massive stone stairs that once spiraled downward either collapsed or offer only a brief respite for those clambering into the depths below. Climbing the 1000-foot shaft requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) group check. If the group check fails, those that do not make a successful check fall 1d10x10 feet before landing on a ledge or manage to catch hold.

At intervening levels, the shaft does open into the ruins of Halagar. Otherwise, the crumbling stairwell leads to the *Chamber of the Dragon* (see page X).

ENCOUNTERS Since this is the main thoroughfare for Gullhyndr, not much life takes refuge in the massive stairwell. Though at your discretion, feel free to include one or more of the *shaft encounters* in the following section.

d6 Shaft Encounters

- 1 Adventurers encounter thick layers of web. Breaking through the web requires a DC 15 Strength check. Failing the check by 5 or more causes the creature to become restrained. Otherwise, it resembles a web produced by a **giant spider**.
- 2 A colony of bulbous fungi sprout from the walls and cling to the stone in a 20-foot square section of the shaft. Adventurers attempting to navigate the patch without disturbing the fungi must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, puncturing the egg-shaped caps and causing them to explode on a failed save. The spore ruptures and resembles the *death burst* of a **gas spore**.
- 3 10 **shadow spiders** (use the statistics of **phase spiders** except the spiders shift to the plane of shadows rather than the ethereal realm). Unlike other creatures, the spiders are not prone while within the shaft.
- 4 Carrion crawlers often scavenge the shaft for refuse and prey. Fresh mucus trails the creature leaves in its wake proves dangerous for those climbing the shaft. Adventurers discover mucus along the walls as they climb and suffer from the effects of **carrion crawler mucus poison**. Paralyzed creatures fall the remaining distance unless caught by the thick layers of web further down.
- 5 Part of the stone shaft crumbles and gives way causing the adventurers to slip and tumble downward. The character must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, dropping 100 feet on a failed save, or falling half the distance on a successful one. Furthermore, any companions below the falling character fall as well. Adventurers below a tumbling character can make a successful DC 12 Strength saving throw to reduce the falling distance by 20 feet. A creature tumbling down the shaft suffers 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage, in addition to any falling damage.
- 6 Strands of thick web choke the shaft. Several weak sections of the wall gave way long ago exposing a large fissure in the rock. A nest of 4 **humming death spiders** inhabit the cleft space (see Appendix).

SEWERS

The large tower houses a garderobe while the small, slender tower has a covered well. Both have a 10-foot square shaft leading to the sew-

ers 500 feet deep below the surface.

CLIMBING DOWNWARD While adventurers can climb down either shaft with ease, it proves an arduous task due to the distance and dangers that lurk in the cramped space. Consider those entering the shaft **prone** unless a spell, such as *spider climb*, or another feature allows the character to descend with his or her hands free. Furthermore, for each 100 feet the adventurers climb downward, select or determine at random one of the encounters located above.

While the well (**Area H5**) leads to a large cistern, the garderobe (**Area H6**) opens to a dry river bed. **Purple worms** diverted the underground river several decades ago with constant burrowing. The ancient refuse and feces attracted the huge creatures.

THE RED CITADEL

The great bastion embedded in the face of the mountain guards the dwarven borough beyond.

GENERAL FEATURES

The citadel has the following general features:

LIGHT The stone cowl that shadows the citadel does little to shield the bastion from the sun. It is bathed in bright light unless adventurers venture to fortress at another time of day.

An opening in the ceiling of the slender tower (**Area H5**) provides a beam of light as well as the encircling arrow slits. Therefore, the area has dim light.

The larger tower (**Area H6**), on the other hand, is in darkness save for the slight rays of light from arrow loops.

DOORS Two bronze-reinforced stone doors stand as stalwart sentinels at each entry into both towers (**Area H5** and **H6**). Eight square panels decorate the bronze façade on each pair of doors and depict daily life in Halagar. Adventurers who investigate the door discover it is possible to depress each of the ornate panels.

Furthermore, each door bears a riddle.

Giant Spider, 328

Gas Spore, 138

Phase Spider, 334

Carrion Crawler, 37



A character attuned to the Key of Halagar has advantage on Intelligence checks to unlock either bronze door.

Key of Halagar, 89

- **Riddle to Enter Area H5:** *One who embodies the bird, yet cannot fly; can swim in the ocean, yet always stay dry.*
- **Riddle to Enter Area H6:** *One who is shrill and rides the hard road, has two mouths that kiss hard, though kiss only gold.*

The answer to the first riddle is *shadow*. Therefore, adventurers pressing the fifth panel (see table below) will open the door to **Area H5**. The answer to the second riddle is *hammer* and thus bearing down on the second panel will open the door to **Area H6**.

DOOR PANELS

Number	Description
1	Alewives brewing mead in large vats.
2	Smiths hammering upon a great anvil (opens Area H6).
3	Cooks sparking a hearth fire with flint and steel.
4	Warriors brandishing ale at a banquet.
5	Miners excavating cinnabar, their shadows upon the cavern walls (opens Area H5).
6	Workers stoking the forge fires.
7	Masons and artisans carving grand statues.
8	Runic lore masters etching mystical symbols in stone.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that selecting the panel that corresponds with the correct answer to the riddle opens the door. Although, bearing down on the wrong panel or attempting to pick the lock will cause the metal to seethe as under the effect of a powerful *heat metal* spell.

The bronze veneer hides a complex network of gears and locking spring mechanisms making the door difficult to open without the proper knowhow. To pick the complex lock requires four successful Intelligence checks before four failures. Pressing a wrong panel also counts as a failed result.

To further complicate matters, for each failure or wrong panel selected, one **stone golem** located in **Area H4** becomes active and attacks.

After four failures, the mechanism resets

UNLOCKING THE DOOR

Intelligence Check	Result
9 or lower	One failure; suffer 22 (5d8) points of fire damage and the adventurer has disadvantage on next check.
10-14	One failure; suffer 13 (3d8) points of fire damage.
15-19	One success; suffer 9 (2d8) points of fire damage.
20 or higher	One success; suffer 9 (2d8) points of fire damage and the adventurer has advantage on the next check.

and the adventurer must begin again. Moreover, increase the fire damage dealt by an additional 1d8 unless adventurers first take a long rest before making another attempt.

A *knock* spell allows one success while *dispel magic* (DC 17) makes the *heat metal* enchantment inert for one attempt. Any effort to *disintegrate* the bronze doors or the walls of either tower, as well as endeavoring to gain entrance through *conjunction* magic fails as if countered and also incites the golems in **Area H4** to attack.

ARROW SLITS Each tower has a series of arrow loops that served dwarven archers when repelling invaders. These arrow slits begin at the height of 5 feet and have a small set of stairs with a platform in each alcove.

AREA H1

Rough hewn stairs climb toward the citadel where the mountain face splits creating an ascending ravine. Long ago, warriors from **Area H5** would rain arrows and boiling oil upon invaders as they clambered the staircase.

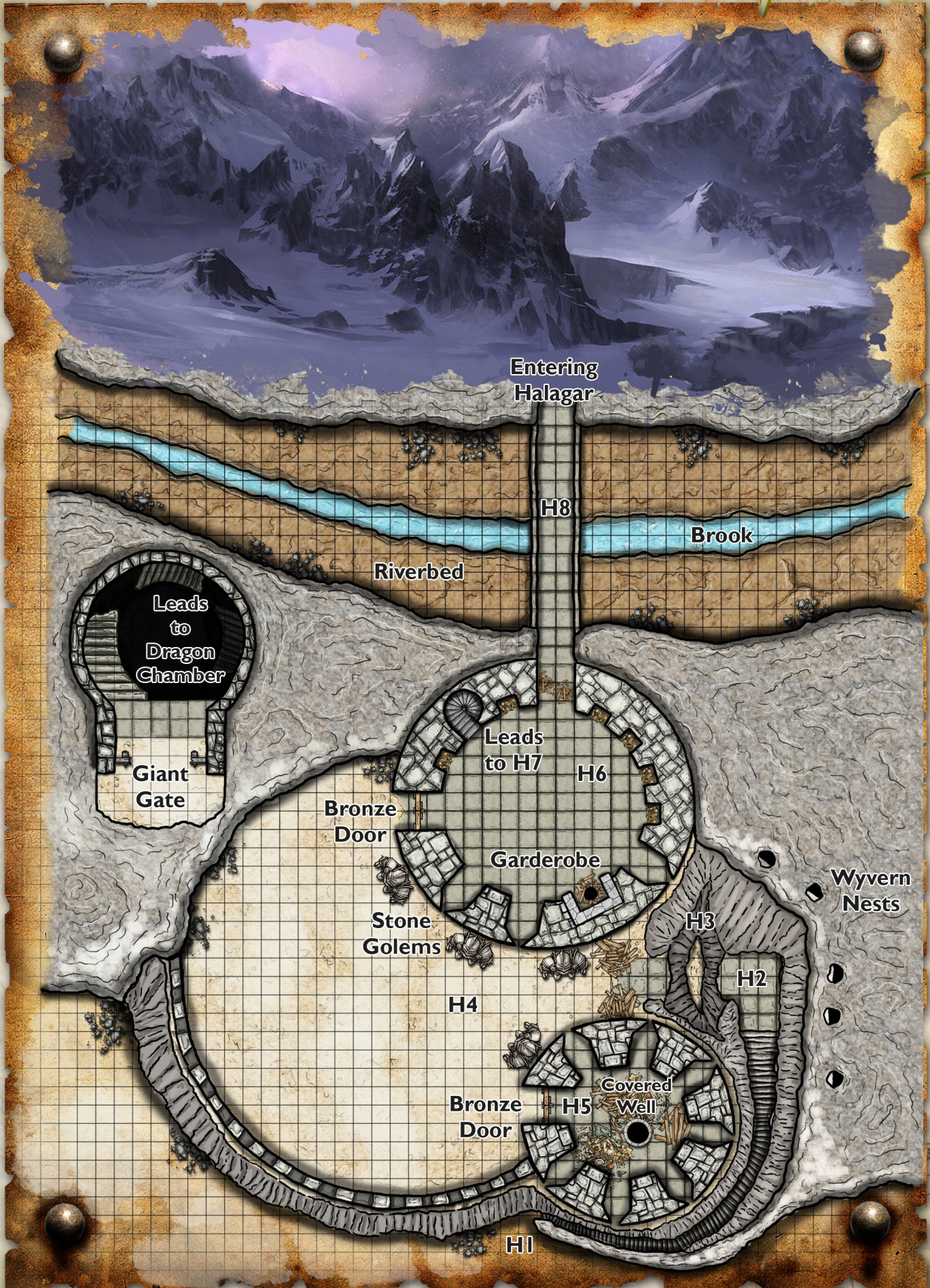
WYVERNS While the tower remains silent, the path is not any less dangerous. Four **wyverns** nest in the rocky slopes above the stone steps. The winged beasts are careful not to intrude into **Area H4** and will not pursue adventurers unless the pair of **rocs** nesting in **Area H7** are no longer a threat.

TREASURE Should adventurers navigate the 30-foot climb into the crevasses that nest the

Wyvern, 303

Stone Golem, 170





wyverns, they discover a small treasure trove collected from previous victims. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check leads adventurers to the nests above.

- **Coin:** 235 electrum and 111 gold coins lay scattered amongst the rubble where the creatures nest.
- **Gems:** Searching the skeletal remains of past victims, an adventurer uncovers a rotted pouch containing 1 obsidian gem (10 gp) and 1 malachite gem (10 gp).

AREA H2

The stairs open to a platform of stone tiles that once bridged a gap and led into the inner walls of the bastion. The stonework collapsed long ago leaving a small rift for adventurers to leap across. Characters possessing a 14 Strength score or greater can jump the crevasse with ease while others must make a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check or fall 20 feet into **Area H3** and take 7 (2d6) points of bludgeoning damage.

AREA H3

Beneath the rubble, skeletal remains of eleven dwarven warriors lie scattered at the bottom of the crevasse. The skeletons are of Thoim, a Knight of Cinnabar, and his retinue.

EMBLEM OF CINNABAR Adventurers searching the area discover a scrawled letter in a scroll case with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (see Handout on page 91). It reads:

King Elic has yet to appear and make due on his promise to assault Giant Gate. It is perhaps for the best. Though, I will not relinquish my honor on this day or my oath to the Oerl. I intend to march to the bronze door and hope my brethren will let myself and those that follow to pass in the hallowed halls of my ancestors.

My brethren . . . they are more shadow than dwarf and the Oerl . . . Oldspear is something more now . . . though I believe it less. I hear he consumes the gold coins in the treasure vaults and grows scales along his back. The oerl foresaw his own fate—or did he seek it?

What madness led to this rebellion—that I should draw arms against my kin? Perhaps it is the same madness that now seeks ancient rituals to transform my own self so that I may have hope to complete the task at hand.

If some other pair of eyes finds this note upon my corpse . . . listen well. We are four in number—one for each cinnabar emblem—the Knights of Cinnabar. Pry this emblem from my hand and seek out one of the other three to place this burden upon them. Should all fail, I beseech your honor and courage to gather the other three emblems and close the Dusk Gate. Otherwise, the shadow world will envelop the Limestone Scar and the world beyond as it has done with most of my kin.

RESTORATIVE OINTMENT

Wondrous Item, uncommon

A jar of this unguent is 3 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep and contains five applications. Placed upon a poisoned wound or swallowed, the ointment detoxifies any poison. Applied to a diseased area, it removes disease. Rubbed on a wound, the ointment cures 2d8+2 points of damage as a higher level *cure wounds* spell.

Quirk: When applied, the recipient hears a faint soothing song in elvish and feels optimistic on what the future holds.

History: Before the dwarven knight planned his assault on Halagar, Thoim sought the Elven Council of Somber Wood. While the stubborn dwarf did not seek aid (he would never allow elves to enter the halls of his kin), the knight did warn of the possible dangers of the *Dusk Gate* should he fail.

The elves bid farewell and luck to Thoim. The council further gave the dwarf this elvish ointment to stave off any effects that would otherwise cripple the knight and prevent him from fulfilling his task.

Soon afterward, the elves organized the Order of the Wailing Knights.

Scavenging the bones and rubble, adventurers find a skeletal hand grasping a red, soft stone emblem; mystical runes and esoteric symbols etched across its face.



INTELLIGENCE (HISTORY) Dwarves that hail from the Shadkhanim Mountains are familiar with the Knights of Cinnabar, though from vague songs and dubious lore.

- **Easy (DC 10):** An old dwarven tale of honor and fate mentions the order in a brief passage: *A crown of gold that does not shine, shadows behold its glorious light, knights of stone and cinnabar, a clash foretold through the Eye of Halagar.*

- **Medium (DC 15):** The four knights are as follows: Thoim, Son of Thoru; Anbar the Boar; Immlad, Son of Thorthal; and Gimlad, Son of Balthan.

TREASURE Aside from mundane arms and armor, adventurers further find the following treasure amongst the lost retinue:

- **Coins:** 103 gold pieces and 12 platinum coins.
- **Magic Item:** *Restorative ointment* (see sidebar).

The journal located in **Area H5** describes the fate of Thoim and his retinue.

AREA H4

As adventurers pass between the two towers, the broken platform opens to a vast courtyard. It measures roughly 375 feet in circumference with a 120-foot diameter. Within this area, two towers stand watch while a further 120-foot crenellated wall overlooks the gorge from a height of 100 feet.

Along a portion of the perimeter of both towers, four stone 10-foot tall statues of dwarven knights watch in silence. Each bears a pair of great hammers, one in each fist. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals their true nature: stone golems, though inert.

The weathered statues remain silent unless attacked or should adventurers fail at opening the bronze doors of either tower (**Area H5** and **Area H6**).

TREASURE Bones from a variety of creatures litter the area. These are the remains from past victims of the **rocs** located in **Area H7** along with one or two **roc offspring** that failed to survive. Adventurers searching the courtyard uncover the following:

- **Coins:** 130 gold pieces and 53 platinum coins.
- **Gem:** 1 fire opal (1,000 gp).
- **Magic Item:** *Creation* spell scroll.

AREA H5

This tower stands 75 feet in height and has a diameter of 60 feet. The walls are 10 feet thick and boasts numerous arrow slits to repel invaders. When adventurers manage to access the tower, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the bronze door, a ten-foot passage leads into an empty shell that once housed fifty or more warriors. The wooden floors of the upper rooms collapsed long ago along with the support beams that braced the stone ceiling, although stone abutments still remain in place.

The hatch leading to the rooftop yielded to time as well leaving a portion of the inner walls exposed to the elements. Small insets in the thick stone wall forge a ladder to reach the ceiling while a circular stone slab rests near the center of the chamber. All manner of debris, broken bottles and rotted sacs, litter the area.

Adventurers can clamber to the rooftop with little effort using the insets, although ice threatens any who attempt the climb. Those who climb the ladder must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, falling 50 ft. and taking 5d6

damage on a failed save.

The stone slab near the center of the tower floor covers the well that leads to the **sewers**. It requires a DC 15 Strength check to shift, although dwarves can move the slab aside with a successful DC 10 Strength check.

JOURNAL Those that search through the rubbish discover a worn codex. Most of the weathered pages are ruined save for the last few paragraphs (see Handout on page 92). It reads:

Thoim and his retinue stood before the Red Citadel in glory and honor this morning. All prepared to ascend the stone stairs and approach the great bronze door.

While we made ready our arrows and oil, I failed to deliver my orders as the retinue clambered the stairs in a slow a steady pace. Despite the change within each of us who remain loyal to the Oerl, they are still kin.

We watched in earnest as they stood on the stonework that bridged the small chasm. Thoim demanded entrance into the wooden palisade that guarded the inner courtyard. The knight and ten of his most loyal warriors encased themselves with ancient enchantments that made their skins as hard as stone so no blade could bite it. It soon became apparent to most that the magic bore the weight of stone as well—the bridge collapsed beneath the sheer burden. All ten warriors, as well as one who stood too close, fell into the chasm.

Crushed by their fellow brethren, we all endured the screams of their folly. It is then I heard the Commander of the Gate Tower, Rinar, Son of Korin, to tip the vats and unleash the boiling oil upon them. Those that remained on the platform and stairs soon left and sought lives elsewhere.

What a vile, black stew we set upon the hearth this day.

TREASURE A further DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a dwarven harquebus preserved in hidden section of the floor. The compartment also contains enough powder and ammunition for 10 shots.

The harquebus has the same statistics as a renaissance musket. It is considered a complex item, although dwarves and gnomes can determine how it works as if it were a simple item (see *Alien Technology* in the Core Rulebook).

If an adventurer fails four or more attempts before first taking a long rest, the harquebus backfires and is destroyed beyond repair. The backfire causes 1d12 piercing damage unless the adventurer makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.

AREA H6

This tower bears similar method of construction although it has a larger circumference and just 50 feet in height. When adventurers enter the structure, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the bronze door, the rotund tower reveals its simple, yet elegant construction. Mosaic tile floors depict wondrous runic designs to inspire awe in dwarven artisanship while

fading frescoes present an idyllic life within the heart of the mountain contrary to the cold and dreary world limned in bardic songs.

Numerous bronze effigies of dwarven warriors circumnavigate the inner walls. Each warrior stands within tiered alcoves that ascend to the top of the tower. The bronze statues exemplify dwarven wealth and strength.

The spiral staircase opens to the top of the tower (**Area H7**) where the **rocs** and their offspring nest. A large stone frame that once housed a gilded stone door leads to the stone bridge in **Area H8** and the entrance into the borough. In one recess lies a crumbling stone wardrobe. Climbing into the shaft gives adventurers access to the **sewers**.

As adventurers enter the tower and behold its vanishing beauty, the bronze dwarven warriors animate and leap from their niches to attack. To represent the bronze statues, reference the **azer** statistics with the proper aesthetic changes.

The bronze guardians attack in three waves. The number in each wave depends on the size of the company.

AZERS

Players	Creatures Per Wave	XP
4-5 Players	6 Azers	5,400
6+ Players	10 Azers	9,000

VARIANT: IMPRESSIVE MIGHT

These bronze statues possess the strength to deliver a punishing blow with its warhammer in one hand and still wield a shield. Therefore, the bronze warriors inflict damage as if it used two hands for the attack.

TREASURE Each bronze statue is hollow and contains the bones of an ancient dwarf who dedicated his body and spirit to become an eternal guardian. One warrior weighs 300 lbs. and the bronze scrap metal of each is worth 150 gp.

AREA H7

A large **roc** nest engulfs the tower battlements above **Area H6**. Nest debris covers the opening of the stairs, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check to navigate the tangled branches. When adventurers ascend to the crown of the tower, read or paraphrase the following:

Small trees, brush and bone, winter sage and giant tufts of feathers, form a large nest that overwhelms the 60-foot diameter battlements. Harsh, shrill cries and shrieks pierce the air as six nestlings clamor and crawl over one another.

While young, the nestlings are not defenseless. Treat the young rocs as **giant eagles**.

If the both rocs are dead from a previous encounter, 4 **wyverns** seek a simple meal and threaten the offspring. Continue to read

the following:

Several large and aggressive dragons with leathery wings and a muscular tail tip with a poisonous stinger dance around the young roc brood.

This is in fact the second nest the rocs established beneath the stone cowl within the mountain face. The main nest was once located in the courtyard below (**Area H4**), although the giant birds of prey sought better protection for their offspring and moved to the top of the rotund tower.

Unfortunately, it is soon to collapse. As with the slender tower, the wooden beams that once supported the stone ceiling long ago deteriorated leaving the area unstable. While the interior stone barrel vaults still remain and serve as the main support, the dwarven engineers never intended the weight of two **rocs** to nest at its peak.

Brisk movement made during combat could cause the ceiling to collapse. Whenever an adventurer engages in a melee attack, he or she must also make a DC 10 Dexterity (Athletics) check, causing 5 points of damage to the floor on a failed check. If the floor accumulates 10 points of damage, it crumbles into ruin. All creatures standing on the floor fall 50 feet into **Area H6** and suffers 17 (5d6) points of bludgeoning damage.

The rocs sense that the floor cannot hold their weight. Therefore, the great birds move along the stronger stone crenellations that circle the edge of the tower.

TREASURE The nest contains the following valuables:

- **Coin:** 167 gold coins and 43 silver lie scattered within the nest amongst scraps of leather and bones.
- **Magic Item:** A bent hollowed metal tube is a *chime of opening*. Nevertheless, the magic contained in the damaged cylinder behaves awry (see sidebar).

BENT CHIME OF OPENING *Wondrous Item, rare*
A broken *chime of opening* is a bent hollow metal tube about 1 foot long. When struck, it sends forth magical vibrations that cause locks, lids, doors, valves, and portals to close rather than open. Otherwise, it mimics a normal *chime of opening*.

Quirk: It appears as a normal *chime of opening* until the bearer employs it to open a shut door. If the object is already closed or locked, the object becomes harder to open or unlock; the DC to break it or pick the lock increases by 10.

An adventurer who succeeds a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, discovers it will work as a normal if he or she attunes to the object.

History: It is evident from the craftsmanship and runic markings, that a dwarven arcane artisan enchanted the cylinder. Although, the chime does not hail from Halagar. The previous owner could have been a thief hoping it would open the ancient vaults of Halagar or a wailing knight attempting to close the Dusk Gate with such an item. Whomever she once was matters little, since her bones lie strewn in the nest.

AREA H8

A crumbling archway and a stone bridge is all that awaits those seeking to enter Halagar. As the company ventures beyond the rotund tower and into the depths of the mountain, read or paraphrase the following:

The hall into the mountain stretches nearly forty feet before the passage slopes upward forming an arched bridge that spans a great, black chasm.

GENERAL FEATURES The chasm is 70 feet in width and well over 300 feet in length. It is 200 feet deep and at its bottom, a lingering ungrounded river.

- **Light:** The area is devoid of light and in complete darkness.
- **Sounds:** An underground aqueduct system feeds refuse from sewer shafts into the river below. A few of these channels still work and the sound of falling water echoes throughout the cavern. Coupled with this sound, adventurers can hear the resonance of a trickling river from below.
- **Bridge:** A 10-foot wide stone bridge measures the width of the chasm allowing adventurers to cross into Halagar.
- **Chasm:** The gorge is 200 feet deep and shrouded in complete darkness.

GILDED GUARDIANS Four guardians rest in alcoves 10 feet above either ends of the bridge. The defenders are large stone dwarven statues in gilded bronze. Each wields a massive stone warhammer.

Adventurers with a light source notice the two alcoves above the entrance into the cavern with a DC 15 passive Wisdom (Perception) check. Those who possess darkvision can easily discern the two guardians at the opposite end once in range of their sight.

The defenders remain motionless until adventurers reach the midway point. Afterward, all guardians leap toward the center and surround the group. To represent a gilded protector, refer to the **bulette** statistics and make the proper aesthetic changes.

ROLEPLAYING THE GILDED GUARDIANS

The gilded warriors mobilize their **leap** action to force adventurers from the bridge. Adventurers have the option of failing the Strength or Dexterity saving throw to remain on the bridge if the only unoccupied space sends them to the river below.

The guardians have sufficient space to leapfrog over a companion to enter the space directly ahead with a high jump (this requires 15-foot of movement).

THE FETID RIVER The **purple worms** infesting the mountain diverted the flow of water from this river over

several years of burrowing. A small brook, shadowed within a riverbed heaped with muck and decaying creatures, is all that remains.

Creatures falling from the bridge above suffers 70 (20d6) points of bludgeoning damage and become prone. If adventurers investigate the bottom of the chasm or plunge to its lower depths, read or paraphrase the following:

The ground is moist and fetid as bones and fungi bloom from rancid carcasses that glut the expanding riverbank. The sludge threatens to one day engulf the dwindling river that meanders through the heart of the chasm.

Crumbling stone walls and platforms along the edge of the gorge as well as a series of interlocking gates reveal that the inhabitants of Halagar once navigated this river. Remnants of wooden barges along with crates and barrels jut from the muck.

The numerous stone platforms offer a reprieve from the muck while a few rough hewn stairs offer an escape from the chasm as each lead upward and into the rock.

Moving through the muck requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check, otherwise adventurers must use a bonus action to move normally.

FERAL GIANTS As adventurers probe the chasm and seek refuge from the mire, read or paraphrase the following:

Ravenous and guttural growls break the silence. The darkness recoils with each step forward and spews forth a massive monstrous worm of purple flesh. You fear the rumblings you heard were from the behemoth shifting its colossal segmented mass, however the creature remains still.

The leviathan worm is dead and it rots among the other foul remains glommed by murky riverbank. A huge shadowed form creeps from the carcass from which it feeds. The feral giant gives a mirthful howl with each step forward. The gleam in its eyes betray its thoughts as the towering savage imagines the taste of fresh flesh ripping from your bones.

A second giant lurks within the body of the worm. To represent the feral giant, refer to the **abominable yeti** statistics and make the following aesthetic changes: the creature delivers necrotic damage instead of cold damage and has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in underground terrain.

TREASURE Banded agates (10 gp each) rest within the eye sockets of each bridge guardian. The two feral giants have little of value, though one possesses a silver music box that is the size of a small chest.

It is broke and in its current condition, it is worth 25 gp. Although, an adventurer possessing a trained skill in tinker tools can devote 5 days of downtime and make a successful DC 15 Intelligence check to repair the object. The restored music box has a value of 200 gp.

HALLS OF HALAGAR

The once vibrant red stone passages of Halagar served as a beacon for dwarven artisanship. Nevertheless, when the veins of iron and cinnabar waned, the profitable trade routes it once commanded, along with its decadent grandeur, fell into decline. Desperate for a renaissance, the last Oerl of Halagar, Bjorn Oldspear, sacrificed its most treasured resource: its people.

Silence and shadows now still the heart of the once grand borough. The dwarven halls are a collection of intertwining staircases that descend into stone chambers cut in the rooted depth of the Shadkhanim Mountains. Intricate carvings of cinnabar gild the stone passages and adduce fantasies of its once glorious reign.

Reflections of its inhabitants linger within the corridors as torpid shadows in a dying light. Plague haunts its hallowed halls as sickness creeps from the *Dusk Gate* and the toxic cinnabar induces the dreaded disease, *scarlet fire*.

SHADOWED SICKNESS Adventurers exploring the depths of Halagar have little to fear from the shadowed sickness that claimed its inhabitants and disfigured the giants of the Limestone Scar. While the sickness will spread throughout the region and lead to much death and agony if adventurers fail to seal the *Dusk Gate*, it is a slow disease crippling its victims over generations.

Nevertheless, the creeping umbra of the Shadowlands does hold sway over those either on the brink of death or returning from its cold clutches. Whenever an adventurer makes a death saving throw and fails, or returns to life, consult the following table to determine their fate.

SCARLET FIRE While the cinnabar hinders the progress of the shadowed sickness of the *Dusk Gate*, it possesses a dangerous toxin that menaces all who venture within the red stone halls. At your discretion, though limited to once a day, you can require an adventurer to make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the adventurer is affected by *scarlet fire*. Consult the following table to determine the effects of the disease.

Dwarves or adventurers who possess a chunk of cinnabar have advantage on the saving throw. Although handling cinnabar has its own dangerous drawbacks.

If an adventurer should already suffer an ill-effect of the disease, any new effect replaces the old. Furthermore, after the affected adventurer finishes a long rest, he or she can overcome the *scarlet fire* with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw.

A *heal* spell or a paladin can expend 15 hit points with his alleviating touch to cure the target. Healing an afflicted dwarf requires the normal expenditure to flush the target of the disease.

CINNABAR POISONING Adventurers handling the cinnabar chunks or a cinnabar emblem must succeed on a DC 13 Constitu-



POZAS '10

SHADOW SICKNESS

Constitution Check	Result
5 or lower	Shadows engulf the creature transforming it into an undead shadow. If the adventures seal the <i>Dusk Gate</i> within a week of the transformation, the creature returns to its previous state. Otherwise, the transformation is permanent.
6-11	The creature suffers from Sunlight Weakness. A <i>heal</i> spell of 6th level or higher cures the affliction.
12-17	One appendage or feature darkens and withers. This change is permanent, but otherwise has no impact on game mechanics.
18-19	Normal.
20 or higher	The creature gains a beneficial feature such as darkvision; possesses the capability to hide as a bonus action while in dim light or darkness; add 1d6 necrotic damage when they use inspiration for an attack roll; or something similar at your discretion.

SCARLET FIRE

d6	Effect
1-3	Fever: The adventurer has disadvantage on death saving throws as well as Dexterity checks. Furthermore, the adventurer gains the following flaw: "I must sit and rest. I need some water. I am too tired to move on."
4-5	Fire: The adventurer has disadvantage on all saving throws. In addition, the adventurer gains the following flaw: "I'm burning from the inside out, I must submerge myself in water."
6	Fevered Delusions: The adventurer suffers from short-term madness.

tion saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours. If the adventurer succeeds, the character is unaffected from the effects of handling the cinnabar for a number of days equal to his or her Constitution modifier. Although, the character is still susceptible to *scarlet fire*.

NAVIGATING HALAGAR The flowchart on the following page charts the course adventurers travel within the dwarven halls of Halagar. It enables the Game Master to guide players through the huge borough without the linear approach and need for extensive maps.

Once adventurers leave the Red Citadel, begin at the

box marked *Start*. Depending on how adventurers enter Halagar, through the main gate, the giant gate, or through the sewers, mark where the fellowship begins.

The lead adventurer makes an Intelligence (History or Investigation) check each hour, the result of which directs the company to a lettered box on the flowchart. The letter indicates one of five outcomes:

- **A (Event)**
- **B (Locale)**
- **C (Encounter)**
- **D (Unique Encounter)**

Each result and section lists a number of possibilities that can hinder, benefit, or impart a challenge.

STARTING LOCATIONS

Adventurers have four possible starting locations to begin their journey into the dwarven borough.

THE MAIN GATE If adventurers brave the stone bridge spanning the chasm and vanquish its guardians, the fellowship enters Halagar as normal.

THE GIANT GATE Adventurers exploring the depths of the broken stairwell will descend into the *Chamber of the Dragon* (see page X) unless they leave the shaft at any of the intervening levels. Should adventurers forsake the shaft, they enter Halagar as normal.

SEWERS Adventurers clambering into the depths of the mountain through the sewer shafts, enter through a cistern describe in *Locales*.

RIVERBED Those adventurers who plunged into the dark chasm can escape the muck of the riverbed by ascending any of the stairs located on the stone platforms along the edge.

Once adventurers begin exploring Halagar in search of the three remaining cinnabar emblems, read or paraphrase the following:

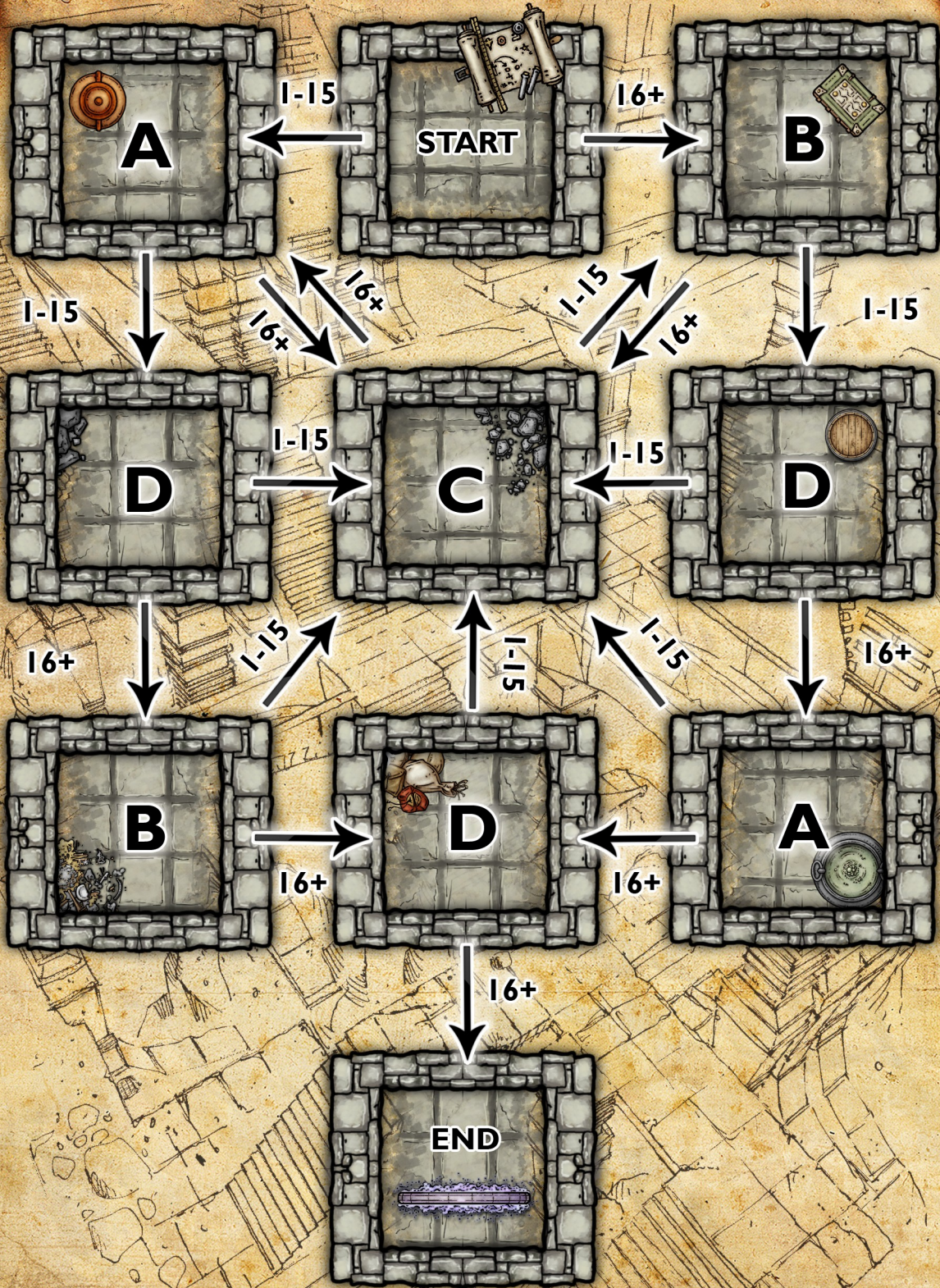
Most of the stone stairways are sound and intact, featuring broad and shallow steps for a short and stout gait. Several descend three hundred feet into shrouded depths, some more, some less.

The arched passages twist and turn, and prove too numerous to map with any accurate detail. While on occasion, you catch glimpse of other passages and stairs, either sloping upwards or running headlong into darkness.

The deeper you descend the air becomes sultry and thick, though never foul or stagnant. Several shafts pour cooler air from above, while dim light slips in from small passages of reflective obsidian filled with neglected mirrors.

The halls of Halagar are vast and labyrinthine beyond measure and though the paths numerous, further dangers slow your step: fissures and chasms fracture the walls and floors; pas-

HALAGAR FLOWCHART



d6 Passages

- 1 A slight rumbling shakes the corridor followed by a rupture bursting up from the floor beneath the adventurers. While the fissure is not wide enough to pose a threat, volcanic steam issues from its gap. Adventurers must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, suffering 4d10 fire damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a successful save.
- 2 Dark mold and fungi blossom in the passage, clinging to the floors and walls. While the first 40 feet of the mold and fungi are benign, the next 10 feet beyond grows a patch of **brown mold**. Adventurers can identify the substance with a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Nature) check.
- 3 A wave of shadowed souls darken the passage as each of the twisting and writhing shades engulf the corridor and pass over the adventurers. The undead do not attack as they are trapped between realms, although adventurers must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, gaining 1 level of exhaustion on a failed save.
- 4 Crumbling bits of wall and arrow slits reveal this was once a fortified passage. Adventurers investigating either side of the corridor or peer into the cracks and arrow loops discover the rooms beyond the weakened wall.

A pack of 10 **carriion crawlers** nest in the rooms on either side of the passage. The creatures attack adventurers with their long tentacles through the arrow slits and cracks. The defensive position of the monsters provide each with a +5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws.

While two secret doors allow entrance into the fortified rooms, a few large crumbled portions of the wall near the top of the passage also lead into either areas with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. To discover the secret doors, adventurer must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.
- 5 A burrowing **purple worm** devastated this passage long ago causing a rift in the corridor and a deep pit where the creature tunneled downward. Waters from a diverted underground river follow its trail and over the edge to create a waterfall.

While the 20-foot wide stream is navigable, it is 10 feet deep. Furthermore, a **gelatinous cube** lurks in its depths. The water helps conceal the creature making it nearly impossible to spot. Adventurers succeed spotting the cube on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

If the cube engulfs a creature, each attack that deals 10 or more damage to the cube, will cause the cube to shift toward the waterfall. If it suffers over 20 points of damage while it engulfs a creature, it tumbles over the waterfall. The drop is 150 feet.

Bits of the red stone linger in the waters and might be mistaken for a cinnabar emblem.
- 6 The mountain trembles and causes a 30-foot wide chasm to open beneath the adventurers. A successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw prevents falling 70 feet.

sages threaten to collapse; nests of bones from denizens long ago threaten to awake and drag you into an endless slumber; and echoing stone amplifies the slightest whisper alerting any who remain to your presence.

GENERAL FEATURES

Halagar has the following general features:

LIGHT Dim light permeates the corridors and chambers. While bright light once blossomed in these areas, the large mirrors housed within extended light shafts are either cracked or caked in dust and dirt. Thick webs and other debris filling the shafts also hinder light from reaching the inner sanctums of Halagar. At your discretion, feel free to douse certain areas in complete darkness as neglect of the mirrors and shafts finally took its toll.

DOORS Most doors in Halagar are of thick stone or heavy, dark wood. Not all of the doors have locks or even still remain. It is at your discretion when the group encounters a locked or stuck door. A successful DC 15 Strength check forces a locked or stuck door to open. Otherwise, locked doors require a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to gain entrance.

WALLS The halls of well traveled thoroughfares have a decorative facade of crumbling cinnabar covering thick stone masonry.

EVENTS (A)

The following provides minor sights and sounds along with elements that enhances the mood and color. It may lead to an encounter or impart important information to the adventurers.

PASSAGE The passage is fraught with danger. Consult the adjacent table to determine the result.

STAIRS While several passages contain staircases, a labyrinth of stairs do exist within vast caverns. These paths leave adventurers exposed to denizens and hundreds of feet above the cavern floor. Consult the table of the following page to determine the outcome.

MINOR SOUNDS Adventurers hear a noise and pause to take notice—a rumbling of a burrowing **purple worm**, the echoes of a device churning on rusted gears; several pairs of footsteps descending the stairs behind them though nothing comes; a hearth echoes moans from the floor below; a hissing from a half-guessed location or shaft; the sound of a hammer striking an anvil; or something scuttling or slivering close to the group. These sounds may head away from the company or move toward the group and lead to an encounter.

MINOR SIGHTS Adventurers witness a sight that causes the group to take heed—a

d6 Stairs

- 1 Trembling from a minor quake or burrowing **purple worm** causes the stairs to sway and threatens to topple adventurers over the side. Each character must make a DC 10 Dexterity check, falling from the stairs on a failed save. The fall is 2d6 x 10 feet. Adventurers could land on another set of stairs, a deep ravine, or into the web of a pair of **shadowmist spiders** (see *shadowmist spiders* in *Encounters*).
- 2 The stairs lead up to a 20-foot square stone terrace. Huge statues adorn either side of the platform. The stone vestiges depict solemn dwarves, their massive hands supporting the terrace. Both have a pipe resting between their lips.

After a few moments of investigating the platform, several dwarves, enveloped in writhing shadows, ascend the stairs and stand upon the terrace in silence. Interaction with the dwarves proves impossible as they exist in the shadow realm.

Upon their arrival, the platform begins its descent. Characters hear grinding gears and other mechanisms whirring within both great stone effigies. When it reaches the bottom, the dwarves depart and adventurers discover more shades operating a three-tiered turnstile of a vast weight and pulley system.
- 3 The cold damp of winter and the chilling shadow essence formed a sheen of black ice upon the stairwell. Adventurers must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save from tumbling down the stairs. If the set of stairs are in an open cavern, a second DC 10 Dexterity saving is required, otherwise the character slips from the edge and falls 60 feet onto another platform.
- 4 An adventurer discovers an old skeleton of a dwarven miner upon the stairs. Most of its equipment and rotting satchel proves of little use, though investigators uncover an interesting type of oil lamp, known as a davy lamp (see sidebar).
- 5 A swarm of **darkmantles** (5 per player) drop from the cavern ceiling and attack. The mass of monstrosities press into the area, hoping to crush the head of one of the adventurers.
- 6 The cavern ceiling collapses under the weight of a burrowing **purple worm**. The gargantuan monstrosity crashes into the winding web of stairs the adventurers clamber upon and cause the structures to crumple.

Creatures within the area, either beneath the area or on top the unstable structure must make three DC 15 Dexterity saving throws, suffering 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and restrained on each failed save.

Describe the scene as heroes avoid crushing rocks, ride toppling structures, leap to stable platforms, and the narrowly escape the thrashing and writhing worm, before each saving throw.

The worm can attack the fellowship afterward at your discretion. It suffers 60 points of bludgeoning damage and stunned during the first round of combat.

DAVY LAMP

Mundane Item, rare

This unusual lamp is a well-kept dwarven secret. While it appears as an oil lamp, it is tall and cylindrical and the wick is enclosed in a fine mesh screen.

While lit, the flame within the fine mesh screen cannot ignite methane or other flammable gases. The mesh allows air to pass through it, though fine enough to prevent the flame to engender an explosion with gases outside the screen.

If flammable gases are present, the flame burns high with a tinge of blue at the tip. If the mine air is oxygen-poor, the flames burns low or completely vanishes.

If taken to the open market, it could fetch a price of 20 gp or higher. Possession of such a lamp would also reduce the dangers to miners and thus change mining operations in the human lands. Dwarves might see this as a threat to their way of life or hint at future war due to intrusion of human miners into dwarven realms.

A short rest and a successful DC 10 Intelligence (tinkers' tools) check uncovers its value and purpose.

portion of the ceiling collapses in front of the lead adventurer; a fissure splits the floor 10 feet ahead of the group; slime coats the floor, wall, or ceiling; a huge pile of pebble-like dirt (a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Nature) check uncovers it is feces from a **purple worm**); overgrown fungi fills the corridor; or a **stirge** clings to a weak and young **shadow spider**. These sights should be interesting or even foreshadow coming dangers.

SLIPS OF SHADOW Gloom and a melancholic aura permeates throughout as the shadow realm dominates the entire area. During the next 1d4 hours, adventurers cannot regain hit points.

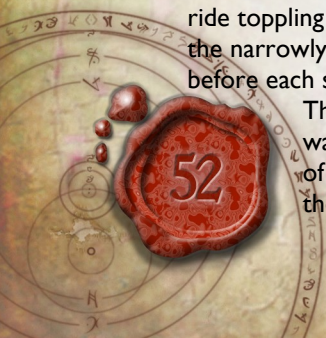
LOCALES (B)

Within Halagar, adventurers comes across a location that may provide a benefit or act as a hindrance.

COMMON ROOMS Adventurers explore a chamber or a room. The table on page 56 describes each room as well as a brief description and a possible vignette. If adventurers seek a specific type of chamber, such as an armory or drinking hall, he or she must first succeed at a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Investigation) check, otherwise choose or select the room at random. Adventurers who speak dwarven gain an advantage on the check.

MAIN THOROUGHFARE Adventurers discover one of the numerous main thoroughfares essential for dwarven underground urban development. Each connects to a central, tiered forum that once served as the hub of social and political life.

While each level as well as the many thoroughfares of the dwarven borough differ to some extent, most average 60 feet in width and stretch a half-a-mile in length. The



d6 Thoroughfare Events

- 1 A high-arched path leads into a natural grotto that once served as a mantic spring for those seeking wise council. Imitation gemstones embellish the cavern ceiling and appear as stars, twinkling dim light. The waters are warm and several intimate rooms surround the pool providing a place for adventurers to rest.
- 2 One building features a large atrium with a circular light shaft extending thousands of feet to the mountain surface. Mirrored obsidian and transparent quartz, fashioned with wondrous dwarven artisanship, channels light to an intricate sundial in the center of the chamber.
- 3 While fungal forests dominate the garden terraces, several varieties of hardy, underground plants thrive. Few have flowers and instead depend on ants and nectar spiders for pollination. The crimson sap clings to creatures passing through the wild growth. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the honey-like dew has unique properties. During a short rest, if an adventurer succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom check (proficiency in brewer's supplies required along with the supplies themselves), he or she can brew the substance and collect it in a vial. On a success, treat the result as a *potion of greater healing*. On a high success (DC 25 or greater), instead treat as a *potion of vitality*. Otherwise, it appears as a success, though in reality, the adventurer brewed a *potion of poison*.
- 4 Portions of a crumbling stone wall within a prominent apartment home exposes ceramic pipes. These pipes allow hot air from deep volcanic vents it heat the room. Numerous lead pipes also run through the walls and floors and with a successful DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a curious adventurer discovers that many of the homes possessed running water.
- 5 A **shadowaxe mage** stalks the adventurers and confronts them from a terrace (see *shadowaxe mages* in *Encounters*).
- 6 The buildings adventurers explore crumbles from age. Treat as a **collapsing roof** trap.

columns and most buildings are 30 feet in height.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The main thoroughfare comprises of a great number of prominent low-rise buildings and apartment blocks bedecked with ornate marble facades and intricate tile work. Hundreds of columns with high-wrought spiral fluting adorn the monumental colonnade and, along with the flat rooftops, support the cavern ceiling.

Abandoned emporiums and offices line either side of the wide colonnaded avenue, while homes and terraces grace the upper floors connected by a network of elevated walkways. Large polygonal limestone paving stones surface the promenade, while a few damaged areas expose an extensive drainage system beneath.

The boulevard features many interesting structures en-

riched with elaborate mosaics and an array of opulent arches. While most consist of **common rooms**, curious adventurers investigating the buildings may discover an interesting find or dangerous hazard. Select an outcome or roll on the table above.

WRITHING WORM A purple worm in its final throes of death spans the gap of a huge chasm. The worm serves as the only means to cross to the gorge. Adventurers succeeding in a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover it suffers a mortal wound from other, larger purple worms. There are two means to transverse the worm to reach the other side of the chasm:

- **Through the Worm:** Adventurers edging closer to its mouth to enter, must succeed in either a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to enter the head. On a failed check, the gargantuan worm attempts to attack with what little energy it still possesses (+9 to hit; 3d8 + 9 piercing damage on a hit). Navigating the interior requires 3 rounds. At the end of each round, adventurers must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, suffering 2d6 damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Along Top of the Worm:** This poses to be a dangerous, yet more inviting, prospect than traveling through the worm. Adventurers edging closer to its mouth to climb on top must succeed in either a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failed check, the gargantuan worm attempts to attack with what little energy it still possesses (+9 to hit; 3d8 + 9 piercing damage on a hit and succeed a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or swallowed). Navigating the exterior requires 2 rounds. At the end of each turn, the adventurer must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. To stand requires a second check, falling 150 feet and landing prone on a failure. For each 10 feet the adventurer falls, he or she suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Falling in the gorge below can lead to an encounter, such as the *Fetid River (Area H8)*, or a new area to explore, such as a thoroughfare, room, or open stairway.

MINES Adventurers delve deep and uncover the abandon dwarven mines. This area provides many wonders, though also holds many unseen dangers. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you descend, the passages become cramped and crude thoroughfares that hold a myriad of mining equipment such as sledges, ore carts, and wondrous mechanisms designed to tunnel through thick rock. The walls and ceilings of these passages are a rough stone, stark and embellished with lanterns and pulleys rather than glorious mosaics. Although the floors are planate and grooved with rails to traffic mine cars, the shadowed tunnels have little to desire.

The veins of iron ore no longer pulse be-

neath Halagar as it once did hundreds of years ago and while wild crystals of cinnabar still blossom, the poisonous calcines that litter the cavernous passages remind of the danger its vibrant deep red color possesses.

Soon after entering the mines, it should become obvious that, although the mine is no longer in operation, numerous creatures still inhabit the area. Adventurers discover a few mines shafts and tunnels still in use, hear movement and hammering down ruinous corridors, recent structural repairs, and other such tell-tale signs the mines still possess inhabitants. When adventurers investigate these disturbances, they uncover no explanation.

A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the mines bridge the shadow realm with those of the material plane. As the adventurers venture deeper in the mines, they travel along the border of the shadow world where most of the dwarven denizens of Halagar now reside. What the characters witness are known as *shadow echoes*: visages and slight insights of what is occurring in the shadow realm.

Furthermore, adventurers may encounter the following sites or locales while travelling the mines:

- **Monument:** A statue of a dwarven priest holds a vessel filled with dank water. An adventurer with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals the priest is, Duras the Miner, the lead architect of the mines. A successful passive DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check allows adventurers to make out a worn impression in the stone slab at the base of the statue where dwarves previously knelt. Should characters kneel before the statue and make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) or Charisma (Performance) check, the water clears and grants one adventurer a *potion of vitality*.
- **Dwarven Engine:** This is a mechanism of reciprocating ladders and stationary platforms that help miners travel up and down to various working levels within the mine. It is powered by a waterwheel which is connected to a series of rods and travelling platforms that rise and lower. Miners climb on the travelling platform that takes them to a stationary platform. Once stationary, the miner waits for the next traveling platform to either take them up or down.

The dwarven engines characters encounter might still be in use or in need of repair. They can extend deep within the earth 300 feet. A character can take a short rest to study the structure and make a four successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) checks before 4 failures. The series of successful checks indicate that the character can sell the idea to a non-dwarven mining guild for 350 gp. A failed challenge results in a lack of understanding the device.

Note: Dwarven characters, especially those trained in Investigation or tinkers' tools understand the concepts behind the machine, however closely guard its secrets. Thus, they will not reveal its design to non-dwarves and might encourage their companions to do the same.

d6

Mines Events

- 1 A undetectable toxic gas fills the area adventurers explore. This is known as *whitedamp*. For each minute the fellowship remains in the area, each suffers 1d6 poison damage. The davy lamp does not protect against whitedamp.
- 2 A mixture of unbreathable gases remain after oxygen left the passage and chamber long ago. This is known as *blackdamp*. There is no obvious odor, although adventurers begin to feel light-headed and dizzy. Each must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, becoming poisoned on a failed save. Poisoned creatures also suffer one level of **exhaustion**. Adventurers can repeat the saving throw at the end of a rest, ending the effect on a success or suffering another level of exhaustion if still within the area. The davy lamp becomes extinguished, alerting the adventurers to the danger and thus granting an advantage to the saving throws should they retreat.
- 3 Adventurers explore a section designated for coal mining. The chambers are filled with flammable gases known as *iredamp*. If adventurers carry a davy lamp, it provides light without causing an explosion. Those that carry a lit torch or cast a spell with a fire descriptor, causes an explosion similar to the effects of a *fireball* spell with a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.
- 4-6 An interesting site or locale (see below for further details).
 - **The Water Engine:** This is an engine, similar to a later steam engine, equipped with pistons and valves, deriving its energy from water pressure. It is an extremely complicated piece of machinery and the dwarves of Halagar used it to operate railway turntables for mining carts, hoists, and cranes. As with the dwarven engine, characters can attempt to study the water engine as outline above. However, since it is a complicated piece of machinery, increase the Intelligence (Investigation) check DC to 20.
 - **Draining Adit:** A draining adit is a long, sloping tunnel that helps drain water from a mine. Characters might temporarily use these tunnels to evade denizens or **shadowaxe mages**.
 - **Coke:** Adventures come across a small bin of coke, a form of fuel created from coal. When burned, it does not produce smoke and therefore useful for not attracting unwanted attention from campfires or cooking while within interior spaces. Adventurers find 5 long rests worth of coke.
 - **Purple Worm:** As the characters delve deeper into the

mines, they encounter a deep ravine or various mucus laden tunnels that reveal a gargantuan purple worm. It does not move, as it is resting and poses no danger to adventurers unless they decide to rouse the creature.

ENCOUNTERS (C)

You may use a normal underground or dungeon encounter or select one of the following devised encounters.

SHADOWMIST SPIDERS These intelligent spiders live in the great vast caverns and chambers of Halagar. **Shadowmist spiders** are often found in pairs; one in shadowmist form moves toward an unsuspecting adventurer from above, while another prepares an ambush from beneath stairs or further down a passage (see *Appendix: Monsters* for more details).

SHADOWWAXE MAGE COVEN Corrupted agents of Gullhyndr have embraced the old ways of the once powerful umbra sorcerers. The coven scours Halagar for hidden secrets of the ancient sect (see *Appendix: Monsters* for more details).

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	1 Shadowwaxe Mage	8,400
6+ Players	1 Shadowwaxe Mage	
	2 Umbral Warriors	2,900

SECOND ENCOUNTER

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	3 Umbral Warriors	2,900
6+ Players	3 Umbral Warriors	
	5 Shadows	100

THIRD ENCOUNTER

Players	Creatures	XP
4-5 Players	1 Shadowwaxe Mage	8,400
	1 Umbral Warrior	2,900
	5 Shadows	100
6+ Players	1 Shadowwaxe Mage	8,400
	2 Umbral Warriors	2,900
	5 Shadows	100

UNIQUE ENCOUNTERS (D)

The following encounters require more involvement and explore the more interesting denizens of Halagar. *Acidic Riddles*, *Eidolon of Peace*, and *Squirm of Worms* are presented in the following pages. You should attempt to in-



RAMOS

clude these three encounters before adventurers reach the *Chamber of the Dragon* as each guards a cinnabar emblem. If the result of the flowchart leads to an unique encounter once all are complete, instead treat the outcome as a normal encounter (C) or proceed to the *Chamber of the Dragon*.

ACIDIC RIDDLES Two copper dragon siblings, Aenigmatus and his sister, Iocus, ventured into Halagar many hundreds of years ago. The twins sought to explore the abandoned borough for the dwarven kennings that often adorn such haunts. The mysterious silence of Gullhyndr after several generations also sparked the curiosity of the pair. Unfortunately, it ended with their demise and now serve as eternal guardians.

EIDOLON OF PEACE A **ghost** of a dwarven governess hides a grievous sin that perpetuates her unlife. A powerful enchantment ensorcells those that enter her sanctum to remain as its protectors.

A SQUIRM OF WORMS Adventurers must survive a chase involving numerous burrowing worms toward a chamber of a long failed dwarven skirmish.

CHAMBERS AND ROOMS

The rooms and chambers presented in this section offer a glimpse of the vast dwarven borough.

ARMORY Most armories throughout Halagar, whether it is one of the two royal armories or one housing weapons bound for commerce, bear similar construction to one another. The standard armory is an octagonal chamber with three terraced floors that expand upward. A circle of eight marbled columns support the vaulted ceiling and from each pillar, a lantern hangs from an iron rod.

Thick stone doors, coupled with an iron gateway, protect the armories from intruders. To determine the condition of the doors, roll a d20. On a roll of 16 or higher, the doors might prevent entry into the room. Otherwise, the path is clear.

- **16: Locked.** Adventurers must succeed at a DC 15 Dexterity check (proficiency in thieves' tools required along with the tools themselves) to open. Adventurers can attempt to break through the iron gate (AC 19; 18 hit points; immune to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage; damage threshold 10).
- **17: Rusted Lock.** Adventurers must succeed at a DC 20 Dexterity check (proficiency in thieves' tools required along with the tools themselves) to open. Adventurers can attempt to break through the iron gate (AC 17; 18 hit points; immune to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage; damage threshold 8).
- **18: Stuck.** Adventurers must succeed at a DC 15 Strength check to shift the stone door. Adventurers can attempt to break through the thick stone (AC 17; 18 hit points; immune to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage; damage threshold 8).
- **19: Barred.** This armory is protected by an iron door that is barred on the other side. Adventurers can attempt to break through the iron gate (AC 19; 27 hit points; immune to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage; damage threshold 10).
- **20: Trapped.** This is a false iron door that appears locked. Any attempt to pick the lock, break through the entry, or otherwise bypass the door, triggers the trap. It requires a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, triggering the trap on a failed check. Once triggered an ancient sigil of death appears upon the door and the chamber glows a dim light in a 60-foot-radius sphere. Creatures with the sphere must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, suffering 10d10 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one.

BARRACKS Situated at crucial points throughout the borough, barracks once housed a contingent of dwarven warriors. Each chamber accommodates between four and thirty soldiers.

Wooden beds and a large chest at the foot of each, as well as a small chest for personal effects for each warrior, adorn the rooms. Ornate tapestries depicting famous scenes of dwarven heroic sagas and banners of fallen comrades hang from limestone walls.

Larger barracks have a room for sparring and a bathhouse heated by steam from volcanic vents. Several smaller rooms often connect to the barracks to serve as private quarters for sergeants of the guard.

CISTERNS Numerous water wells near the surface funnels rainwater deep into the mountain and deposits the water in vast lime plastered cisterns. Layers of sand and gravel first filters the rainwater before it reaches the grand chambers.

Most of these underground areas rival cathedrals in size, with vaulted ceilings and a forest of 300 or more marble columns. Many pillars appear to have come from ruins of older buildings or structures.

The columns are ornate and possess a single graven eye. As the cistern waters lower, the eye appears to cry. Below each eye, a stone plaque in dwarven script reads:

The tears that fall from this column honor those dwarven laborers who perished constructing this cistern.

The chamber can hold 100,000 tons of liquid, though most cisterns have just a few feet of water remaining along its bottom.

CRYPTS Adventurers exploring any one of the grand temples might uncover a sealed entrance into the undercrofts reserved for the dead. Dwarven houses entomb prominent members in hallowed vaults, interred in a sarcophagus while priests cremate most others. The crypts are rectangular chambers, unlit, with low basalt ceilings and contain one or two central sarcophagi of important ancestors. Within the walls surrounding the stone coffin, urns rest in niches. Dwarven houses not able to afford a grand monumental sarcophagus instead wrapped celebrated ancestors in a burial shroud and placed the remains in ornate alcoves.

Rumblings of purple worms caused a few of these chambers to collapse over the years and on occasion, flooding. However, most crypts remain intact due to the austere construction methods of dwarves.

DRINKING HALL This is a large rectangular room decorated with festive frescoes of dwarven heroic feats. Mosaic tiles of intricate geometric designs adorn the vaulted ceilings while ornate iron rods display rotting heraldic tapestries.

Cobwebs and dust cling to tall, robust mugs large enough to swaddle a child. Although several opulent and stout armchairs accent the chamber, most of the furniture is dark hardwood.

In each corner, a trio of marble open-mouthed busts



d20	Room	Findings
1	Armory	Artisan's tools, leatherworker's tools, smith's tools; 1d10 light hammers, spears, and battle axes; 1d8 pikes and warhammers; 1d6 greataxes and heavy crossbows; 1d4, on a 1, a hand crossbow; 1d4 ring mail armors; 1d4, on a 1, a breast plate; 1d4, on a 1, ornate full plate; 1d100 crossbow bolts; 1d10 powder and ammunition for a dwarven harquebus. The armor is made of shadow iron.
2	Barracks	Personal belongings such as mementos, a common ring, 1d4 gold coins, a glass eye, bone dice, a few weapons, or a dwarven shirt of a unique blend.
3	Cistern	Nothing of interest save for a few bones from a long deceased creature.
4	Crematorium	Furnaces that provide a safe place to light a hearth fire for a long rest.
5	Crypt	Trinkets and mementos of ancestral blessings; skeletal remains clothed in deteriorated garments or armor befitting the rank held in life; the area could have an effect as the <i>bestow curse</i> , <i>fear</i> , <i>ray of sickness</i> , <i>stinking cloud</i> , or similar spells (save DC 15); 1d4, on a 1, discover 2d4 art objects (25 gp each).
6	Drinking Hall	Broken bottles, enormous steins, axes hang from pillars, 40 gallon casks, skins and hides decorate the walls, large drinking horns, bloodstone set of dice (50 gp), and a small marble idol of a mangy-bearded dwarf stained red from drink (25 gp).
7	Forge	Shadow iron ingots, smith's tools, 1d4 high quality ingots that reduce the downtime for forging weapons (5 days each).
8	Guard Tower	Small kegs filled with foul water, rotted sacks of decrepit foodstuffs, 1d4 heavy crossbows, 1d100 crossbow bolts, and 1d4 powder and ammunition for a dwarven harquebus. Some rooms contain an inset in the stone wall large enough to serve as a temporary bed.
9	Kitchen	Cooking utensils, iron pots, bones of long rotted animals, as well as a hearth for a well-ventilated fire.
10	Living Quarters	Myriad of personal items, tapestry, fine furniture, painted fabric, or possible clues that led to the downfall of Halagar.
11	Museum	2d4 art objects (250 gp each); ancient weapons that appear magic in nature though break when a natural 1 is rolled; archaic armor imbued with mystical runes though opponents score a critical hit upon the wearer on a natural 18 or higher; an uncommonly large gemstone (1,000 gp); or an uncommon magic item protected by a <i>bestow curse</i> spell glyph (save DC 19) until the item is returned.
12	Prison	Bones of forgotten prisoners, keys to other fortified areas such as an armory or guard tower.
13	Scriptorium	Calligrapher's supplies; cartographer's tools; fine chisels; or large stone runes (treat as a spell scroll).
14	Smelter	Piles of rock and ore; molds to create ingots or sheets from liquid metal; a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers 2d4 rocks with scant remnants of gold (25 gp each).
15	Storeroom	Very few of the supplies found in these stores are salvageable.
16	Temple	While wondrous to behold, much of the temple is austere with little material wealth. A small chamber within the temple may contain fine vestments, candles, calligrapher's tools, sealing wax, and similar mundane items.
17	Vault	1d4, on a 1, 2d4 art objects (250 gp) each, scattering of 1d100 gp, and 1 object from Magic Item Table B.
18	Waste Room	Fetid creatures such as carrion crawlers or otyughs .
19	Workshop	Variety of tools based on the production; potter's tools, cobbler's tools, glassblower's tools, etc.
20	GM Choice	Either select one of your choosing or reroll and add an encounter.

juts from the walls as if in perpetual song. The center figure holds a great stein. Should someone fill the mug with a bit of drink, the trio erupts in dwarven song:

*Ale, ale, ale!
A long time ago,
when all one could drink was the blood of a foe,
there came a dwarf with a thick-mane of a mop,
broken and bent his woman,*

*and flavored his drink from her hops.
He could have been an oerl, thane, or clan-king,
and to his praises, we all shall sing,
for he filled our mugs with cheer, thus we forever hail,
that mangy-bearded dwarf who brewed for us,
ale, ale, ale!*

FORGE These smaller chambers, known as shaping halls, bear semblance to the larger

INVOLVE THE PLAYERS

While the preceding page and table list wondrous and mundane objects, when adventurers explore an area filled with such items, instead of rolling on yet another table, ask players to describe what their character found. Better yet, on occasion, allow players to elaborate on room details or describe prominent statues. This creates a vivid experience when players share their own insight of what remains in a great dwarven stronghold.

smelters where dwarves once molded ingots and sheets from liquid metal. Each chamber has its own special purpose along with the ideal tools required to accomplish the task. Some shaping halls forge wire for chainmail or wondrous filigree while others hammer heavy ingots into fine dwarven weapons.

GUARD TOWER At strategic points, the passages meet within a tall chamber dominated by a three-story guard tower or several half towers that jut from cavern walls. A three-foot diameter vertical shaft connects the three rooms, one at each level of the tower while a secret stone door protects the entrance. To determine the condition of the secret door, roll a d20 and consult the *Armory* description for the result.

The upper floors possess arrow loops and murder-holes to defend against intruders should they gain entrance in the rooms below. The central shaft also served as a murder-hole. Large round stones rest on a smooth, recessed path in the floor that encircles the chamber. Designed to guide the heavy stones toward the central shaft, this further allowed defenders to devastate and discourage foes from advancing upward.

Furthermore, this may serve as a site for a small contingent of **shadowaxe mages** or some other group of denizens. If an intelligent creature occupies the tower, it can attack adventurers with the large round stones as they ascend the shaft as an action.

Adventurers climbing the shaft must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 55 (10d10) points of bludgeoning damage and **restrained** by the boulder. A restrained character can end the condition as an action and with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

LIVING QUARTERS Most dwarves resided in the one of the numerous thoroughfares. Dwarven homes are comfortable, even opulent, and far from the stark houses of human peasants. While wealth does create division in dwarven realms as it does in human lands, the overall standard of living is much higher. Dwarven homes reflect this paradigm.

Handcrafted wooden furniture exemplifies dwarven tradecraft as well as the patience required to create fine work over a period of decades. Homes of great wealth possess fine woven tapestries, intricate mosaics, and large frescoes. Elaborate, painted fabrics adorn walls of houses of modest, or even poor, means; their rooms once brightened by flowering fungal or phosphorus blooms.

PRISONS Few dungeons are more secluded or isolated than those constructed by dwarves. The dungeons are domed, basalt chambers that house eight pits within the floor. The oubliettes are 7 feet in diameter and 20 feet deep, its only opening is a 3-inch iron grate at its top. Sandstone lines the individual cells to retain heat and repel moisture. The heat from underground volcanic vents keeps prisoners listless and dehydrated, thus preventing escape for even the most determined captive.

SMELTER This vast chamber is where dwarves once smelt ore for forges. The smelting halls house grand furnaces that can withstand great heat. While most accommodate for fires fueled from coal, a few possess mystical dwarven runes to bear the heat produced from deep volcanic magma.

STOREROOM These are low-vaulted chambers, often filled with barrels of putrid salted meats, rotted sacks of flour and grain, cider and cheap wine with a strong, unpleasant smell of vinegar, as well as other foodstuffs that produce a fetid odor. Adventurers find a few empty chambers or stores flooded from a diverted riverbed; a swollen shut door barring entrance (DC 15 Strength check to open).

TEMPLE Eight large, imposing temples dominate Halagar. The temples are octagonal in shape with white marble columns and rib-vaulted ceilings, decorated in silver leaf and gold filigree, often reaching 100 feet in height. Grand marble statues standing 50 to 75 feet depict various ancient gods or fabled dwarves integral to dwarven lore and tradition.

While the stonework and artisanship within the temple has no parallel in the human realm, these chambers hold little wealth save for large bronze lanterns. The dwarves believe that vast and audacious treasure in sanctified areas diminish the attention from worship.

Adventurers that take the time and effort to light the large bronze lanterns, fiery shadows appear deep in the marble walls. The animated figures depict pivotal moments in dwarven creation myths.

VAULTS The treasuries are solid basalt, simple barrel vaults guarded with runic adamantine gates. Without the proper rune-key and mystical phrase, an intruder may find himself forever lost in labyrinthine passages similar to the effects of a *maze* spell. Further glyphs and wards protect the chambers and the valuables within, though Gullhyndr emptied most of the vaults years ago. Traps also guard against intrusion (see *Armory*, trapped door, earlier in this section).

A CIDIC RIDDLES

After madness invaded the mind of Gullhyndr, a pair of copper dragons attempted to reason with the elder winged reptile, however to no avail. Gullhyndr murdered Aenigmatus and his twin sister, Iocus. Dwarven dusk-mages, thralls to the shadow dragon and ensorcelled by the nefarious means of their ancestors, bound the dragons in death to serves as sentinels. The undead draconic twins now guard a cavernous area known as the Broken Stairs.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Broken Stairs has the following features:

LIGHT Darkness. The light shafts that once illuminated this chamber ceased long ago due to age and neglect.

STAIRS A series of labyrinthine stairs and platforms crowd this cavernous chamber. The stairs ascend and descend, twist and turn, riddled with gaps and debris, and vary in length between 30 to 100 feet. The steps are low and broad, though have a width of 5 feet.

TERRACES A number of terraces serve as crossroads and once were vibrant hanging gardens, though much of the vegetation withered long ago. Tangled shadow vines choke the platforms and stairs. Huge dwarven statues support the terraces.

RUNIC MONOLITHS Four obsidian stone pillars adorn the chamber, each bearing arcane sigils and mystical dwarven runes. The four obelisks bestow the twins with esoteric powers and, in unison, bind their draconic souls to the chamber.

THE BROKEN STAIRS

When adventurers enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

The vast, natural cavern ahead has many sinuous and serpentine stairs. Several steps climb while others descend, all toward large stone terraces that serve as intervening crossroads or promenades. However, a few stairs wind around simple columns that support the ceiling.

Throughout the cavern, four prominent porticos bear semblance to ancient temples. Within the center of each



structure, rests a monolith of dark obsidian.

EVENTS The labyrinth of stairs and stone terraces are dangerous to navigate. At the end of each turn, the adventurer must roll a d20 to determine whether a difficult situation occurs (see *Events* table on the following page). If an event does happen, it affects the next adventurer in the initiative order. Either adventurer can negate the occurrence by expending an **inspiration**.

AENIGMATUS AND IOCUS

As adventurers navigate the maze of stairs and explore the chamber, Aenigmatus and Iocus attack. Read or paraphrase the following:

A pair of great tattered, leather wings emerge from the darkness below and scatters dust and rock debris throughout the cavern. The tenuous appendages lift an immense, fiendish carcass; copper scales, tinged in a foul green, cling to its ruddy brown bones.

"I dare to beg you welcome, for I know you will not come. Therefore, I bid you farewell, as your time is about to come undone."

The twins are **undead copper dragons** (see *Appendix: Monsters*).

While the draconic voices of the twins sound similar, an adventurer that succeeds at a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check, surmises that two dragons are present—one male and one female.

ROLEPLAYING THE TWINS

Aenigmatus and locus act in tandem when utilizing their breath weapons. When one breathes **acid**, the other heaves its **slowing breath**. The pair further uses stealth to give the illusion there is just one dragon.

The dragons amuse one another spouting riddles at the adventurers to solve. If an adventurer blurts out a correct answer, the draconic pair can spare the character from their wrath for that round or earn an inspiration. Here are a list of some simple riddles and the answers:

R: *What do you call a man who has two faces?*

A: *A twin.*

R: *What loses its head in the morning, yet it returns at night?*

A: *A pillow.*

R: *If ten dwarven masons construct a wall of stone in ten hours, how long will take five human masons to construct the same wall?*

A: *It will take no time since the wall is already built.*

R: *What organ named itself?*

A: *The brain.*

During the encounter, the pair expounds their demise through a lyrical poem:

*A rousing tale of a pair of young pfennigs,
delving dwarven haunts for riddles and kennings,
spied a gold coin flipped on its head,
left for the ferryman to ferry the dead.
Curiosity peaked, and peeked beneath they did,
to uncover a find:
a woeful, auric shadow, most unkind.*

OBSEDIAN MONOLITHS

Dwarven shadowaxe mages, under the behest of Gull-hyndr, constructed the four obelisks to bind the draconic souls and animate the twin corpses. Furthermore, each empowers the dragons with a bonus or special trait.

REACHING THE MONOLITHS It may become apparent during the encounter, that destroying the obelisks will weaken the dragons.

To master the knot work of stairs, adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence check at the end of each round or otherwise fail to reach the portico. Unless the adventurers are specific to which monolith they move toward, determine at random.

d20 Event

- 1 Draconic wings roust strong winds along the stairs. Make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage and knocked prone.
- 2 Rocks, bones, or choking vines block the path. Make either a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to pass over the debris. Otherwise, the impediment causes you to lose your bonus action this round.
- 3 The stairs or a portion of a terrace crumbles beneath your feet. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to leap to safety, falling 1d4 x 10 feet and landing prone on a failed save. For each 10 feet you fall, suffer 1d6 bludgeoning damage.
- 4 A large, skeletal tail sweeps across the path (+7 to hit; 2d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage on a hit).
- 5 You run through a swarm of **stirges** (+5 to hit; 1d4 + 3 piercing damage on a hit, attaching to you and continues to drain blood until removed as an action).
- 6 A crude rope bridge spans a gap between a set of stairs and a terrace. Crossing the bridge requires a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, becoming prone on a failed check. To stand requires a second check, falling 1d4 x 10 feet and landing prone on a failure. For each 10 feet you fall, suffer 1d6 bludgeoning damage.
- 7 A fungal plant bursts a cloud of blinding dust along the path. Make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. At the end of each of your turns, you can repeat the saving throw to end the effect.
- 8 The girth of the dragon topples a statue as it flies past. The statue tumbles down the steps or crashes onto the path from above. Make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the statue. Otherwise, you suffer 1d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save.
- 9 Esoteric sigils threaten the path ahead. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Intelligence check to navigate the mystical runes. On a failed check, succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be cursed for 1 hour. While cursed, you have a disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws and all ability checks.
- 10 A large patch of clinging fungi burst as you past. The spore cloud causes the path to become sticky. Make a DC 10 Strength saving throw, becoming restrained on a failed save. You can take an action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing yourself on a success.
- 11-20 No event.

DISABLING THE OBELISKS Interpreting the mystical runes to render the monoliths inoperative is a complex task. To discern the sigils required to disable the monolith requires four successful Intelligence (Arcana) checks.

MONOLITHS

d4	Effect
1	Provides a +2 bonus to Armor Class.
2	Immune to effects that turn undead.
3	If an undead dragon has at least 1 hit point at the start of its turn, it regains 10 hit points.
4	Breath weapons recharge on a 4-6.

INDOMITABLE FORTITUDE

In addition to the individual benefits the obelisks provide, if any of the four monoliths remain intact, the undead dragons have the following trait:

Indomitable Fortitude If damage reduces the undead dragon to 0 hit points, it drops to 1 hit point instead.

Intelligence Check Result

9 or lower	One failure; suffer 14 (4d6) points of necrotic damage and one dragon regains the same amount of damage dealt. The adventurer has disadvantage on next check.
10-14	One failure; suffer 7 (2d6) points of necrotic damage.
15-19	One success; suffer 3 (1d6) points of necrotic damage.
20 or higher	One success; suffer 3 (1d6) points of necrotic damage and the adventurer has advantage on the next check.

Adventurers can choose to attack the monoliths instead (AC 17; 27 hit points; immune to fire, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage; damage threshold 15). A hit against the monolith counts as a failure of the lowest degree. While the attacker suffers damage if he

VARIANT: FOUR OR MORE FAILURES

While in this scenario, there are no repercussions for having four or more failures when attempting to disable the monoliths. However, consider the following alternative if the encounter proves less of a challenge for adventurers.

Necrotic Guardians When an adventurer achieves four or more failures, the necrotic energy released from the monolith forms into a guardian spirit. Treat the adventurer as if he or she drew the **skull card** from the **Deck of Many Things**.

or she is within 5 feet, the necrotic energy released from the attack still heals a dragon should it strike at a further distance.

HOARD

Treasure and bones collected from many years of daring explorers and scavenging feral giants are spread across several of the larger terraces. In addition to finding one of the remaining **cinnabar emblems**, adventurers discover the following:

- **Coins:** 540 copper pieces, 1,250 silver coins, 520 gold pieces, and 12 platinum coins.
- **Gems:** Black jasper, a moonstone, 2 pure white onyx gems, and a zircon (50 gp each).
- **Art Objects:** Dwarven vestments with gold embroidery and an engraved dwarven drinking horn (25 gp each).
- **Armor:** A set of several shadow iron suits of mail and plate. Each bear the heraldic markings of Gimlad, Son of Balthan, and his retinue.

Skull Card, 164

Portico A structure that consists of a roof supported by columns.

Pfenning A copper-coated coin.

THE EIDOLON OF PEACE

Anbar the Boar, Knight of Cinnabar and bearer of one of the great red seals, was a brave and courageous warrior, although an impetuous leader. Anbar and his retinue were the first to fall to Gullhyndr in a titanic clash against shadowwax mages and dwarven umbra warriors.

Anbar and most of his retinue perished among the grand thoroughfares that the dwarven knight once admired. The few that survived retreated with his remains and sought out those that still refused to enter the *Dusk Gate*.

Instead, the survivors discovered a demented governess possessing magic powerful enough to bind them as her guardians. Her refusal to leave her protective sanctum sealed the governess and her captives to their fate as each starved to death.

THE GOVERNESS

The governess is a **ghost** and in life, she had a secret: Sada possessed the ability to entwine magic with song. This served her well as a governess of a prominent dwarven noble house. In her presence, children did as told. Sada soothed them to sleep and often doused childhood fears with a simple song. The governess soon garnered a reputation amongst the elite.

Therefore, when the conflict arose between the Knights of Cinnabar and Gullhyndr, Sada offered to protect the children of those who refused to enter the *Dusk Gate*. When the cause was lost, she slipped into despair. The shadowwax mages searched the borough and thoroughfares for survivors to mine the shadow iron.

Her magic hid those she protected for a time. However, as days wore on, it proved fruitless as the shadow essence began to corrupt and twist her mind. The children were also becoming restless.

Sada fell from all reason and took the lives of her charges. She still protected the small corpses and acted as though they were as vibrant and full of life as she remembered.

When the survivors stumbled into her secret refuge, Sada bound them with a powerful enchantment to serve the children as guardians. While death allowed the others to escape, the enchantment infused her spirit and now proves difficult to overcome for any who enter.

MEETING THE GOVERNESS

Adventurers can encounter the governess while exploring the abandoned dwarven thoroughfares or when they are in need of rest. If met outside her sanctum, she attempts to lure adventurers to her lair with kindness. She offers protection and warns adventurers that the shadows have eyes filled with malice.

ROLEPLAYING THE GOVERNESS

Sada seems benevolent and kind, though a demented streak brews beneath her timid demeanor. She obliges adventurers with answers to most of their questions, but only in brief and cryptic responses. The governess might refer to small characters as children.

Here are a list of some simple questions and the answers:

Q: *What is your name?*

A: *"I am the governess. I protect the children."*

R: *There are children here?*

A: *Yes, there are children here and they are in need of protection. Come, follow me.*

Q: *Have you seen a red seal of cinnabar?*

A: *Yes. It is in the house of my master. It is where the children are kept. It is a secret place. Can you keep a secret?*

Q: *Who is your master?*

A: *He is long from your world. You have no need to fear him. Are you hungry? There is much to eat and drink.*

The governess may have some questions for the adventurers or otherwise breaks from sanity:

- *Are you bad children? No, of course you are not. Children are not bad. However, they are restless and do not understand the dangers of the world.*
- *Shhhh! Children should not be too loud. They will come. No worries. I will protect you.*
- *Shall I tell you a secret? You promise not to share what I tell you to others? I am an Eidolon of Peace. The great dwarven goddess, Elbryn, the mother of all children, sent me to protect you.*
- *I shall put you to sleep soon and my, the dreams you will have.*

THE SANCTUM

The governess resides in the noble house of her former master, Thifgar, Son of Gargin. Most of the structure collapsed long ago from earthquakes and burrowing purple worms. The great dining hall and secret alcove is all that remains.

As adventurers enter the residence, read or paraphrase the following:

Aside from the foyer and the small antechamber that leads into the great dining hall, as well as the hall itself, it is all that remains of the once palatial dwarven manor. The rest of the rooms lie buried beneath tons of rock and rubble and debris.

The fading frescoes and worn tapestries within the hall, along with the fine furniture and ostentatious décor, still hold glimpses of its former splendor despite the wreckage and bones and the clutter it now entertains. A magnificent table, with its ornate and detailed carvings and fine inlay of gemstones, celebrates dwarven craftsmanship and command over wood as well as stone.

wood as well as stone.

Dust and decrepit food now serve as the main entrée, though the parade of opulent silverware and elaborate trenchers harkens a grand, magical place to mind.

THE TRAP Once adventurers enter the ruins, each becomes bound to protect and remain in the sanctum as if affected by a powerful *geas* spell. The adventurers are no longer affected by this trap once the governess dismisses it or she is destroyed by *sullied grief*, the dagger hidden amongst the debris.

A *wish* spell can also end the effect as well as a successful DC 19 Wisdom saving throw after the duration of a year has ended.

Although a *dispel magic* spell will not end the effect, it will provide an advantage on the next saving throw or skill check from the list of events.

GEAS AND THE CHARMED CONDITION

The powerful enchantment, while connected to the governess, it is more of a residual effect from the haunted area. Therefore, those under the effect of the *geas* spell can attack Sada, though charmed adventurers cannot cause harm to the locale.

Furthermore, adventurers that cannot be charmed are not under the effect of the enchantment, nor are those under their protection from such effects. However, once an adventurer leaves the protection, he or she falls under its effect.

ESCAPING THE GOVERNESS

Adventurers can escape the sanctum by either negotiating their release or destroying the governess with *sullied grief*.

NEGOTIATION Adventurers are only able to negotiate with the governess when she is lucid and willing to listen to reason. The *event table* reveals when the governess has a brief respite from her madness and able to have an intelligible conversation.

While the governess might reveal a few bits of knowledge about when she was alive, the ghost is reserved about her misdeeds that led to her insanity.

Adventurers must have four successes before four failures. If successful, the governess sees reason and releases the company. Otherwise, she retreats and will not return until the following day. When the governess manifests the next morning, adventurers can start negotiations from the beginning.

SEARCHING FOR THE DAGGER Through discovering clues and investigating the sanctum, adventurers might begin looking for something that will silence the governess.

The powerful enchantment that binds the adventurers to the sanctum is an extension of the twisted mind of the governess. Therefore, it proves difficult since she does not want the dagger found. The weapon connects the ghost to its devious act and the governess does not want to confront what she did prior to her death.

ETERNAL GUARDIAN

The governess cannot be destroyed. Sada is bound to remain through her heinous crime and suffers great torment. In addition to her normal immunities, the governess also possesses the following feature:

Eternal Guardian If she is destroyed, the governess returns in 1 hour and regains all of her hit points. Only a final strike with the dagger, *sullied grief*, can prevent this trait from functioning.

Upon her return, adventurers are once again vulnerable to her *horrifying visage* and *possession* actions.

SULLIED GRIEF

This is a nonmagical dagger the governess wielded when she murdered her young charges. It is hidden within a box beneath rubble and debris. A *nondetection* spell masks the weapon.

Persuasion Check Result

9 or lower	One failure. The governess misconstrues the conversation and screams; characters within ear shot suffer 22 (4d10) points of psychic damage. The adventurer has disadvantage on the next check.
10-19	One failure. The governess reacts with a frightening visage; characters that can see the governess suffer 11 (2d10) points of psychic damage.
20-24	One failure. The governess retreats from the room, returning within the hour.
25 or higher	One success; the adventurer has advantage on the next check.

Investigation Check Result

9 or lower	One failure. The adventurer must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, suffering from <i>confusion</i> on a failed save. The adventurer also has disadvantage on the next check.
10-14	One failure. The adventurer must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the adventurer ceases searching the area and sits at the dining table as if under the effect of a <i>suggestion</i> spell.
15-19	One success.
20 or higher	One success; the adventurer is close to finding the box that contains the dagger and has advantage on the next check.

d20 Event

- 1 The adventurers have a strong urge to guard the entrance or barricade any exposed openings. All adventurers must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw, losing track of 1d6 hours of time on a failed save.
A remove curse or greater restoration ends the condition and awakens the character from their automated state.
- 2 *Do you children miss your mommies and daddies? I know you do. I can help you see them. The dagger? You hid the dagger, you naughty, naughty children. But never you mind, close your eyes and I will take you to parents.* The governess attacks (+5 to hit; 4d6 + 3 necrotic damage).
- 3 *I have done something horrible, have I? That is why you have come. To right my wrong.* The governess appears lucid. Adventurers can attempt to reason with the governess with a Wisdom (Persuasion) skill check.
- 4 *She has gone mad. Look . . . look at what she has done. I must leave here. The children speak of a dagger. I must find the dagger!* A ghostly dwarven warrior arises from the remains of an armored skeleton and attempts to possess the character. The adventurer must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, suffering **short-term madness** on a failed save.
- 5 The adventurer notices a subtle gesture as the governess walks around the dining table. Characters can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, seeing the following ghostly vision on a success: *The governess pours a cup of wine at each place at the great dining table. "Come, children. It is time to eat. Drink the sweet wine. It will help you sleep tonight and calm your fears."* The governess hides a dagger behind her back.
- 6 *I hid something here. It will help you leave this place. No, you must not find it. Yes, I must atone.* The governess appears lucid. Adventurers can attempt to reason with the governess with a Wisdom (Persuasion) skill check.
- 7 *I am frightened. I must go home. I do not live here. Why does my heart bleed? Hide the dagger! Hide the dagger before she kills us all!* A ghostly dwarven child emerges from the floor and attempts to possess the character. The adventurer must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, suffering **long-term madness** on a failed save.
- 8 A ghostly dwarven warrior manifests and attempt to possess the adventurer. The character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, suffering a **lingering injury** on a failed save. The injury mimics a wound the warrior had in life. The adventurer can repeat the saving throw after a rest, ending the effect on a success.
- 9 *Are you looking for something? Perhaps, I can help. I am very helpful. The children always loved my songs. Shall I sing?* The governess appears lucid. Adventurers can attempt to reason with the governess with a Wisdom (Persuasion) skill check.
- 10 A hoard of ghostly dwarven children manifests and all attempt to possess the adventurer. The character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, suffering **system shock** on a failed save.
- 11-20 **Discovery.** If adventurers find all the discoveries, then allow the character to reason with the governess or search for the dagger.

Once adventurers make four success before four failures, they discover the box that holds *sullied grief*. Otherwise, they suffer 27 (5d10) points of psychic damage and must begin the search again.

EVENTS Negotiating with the governess or searching for *sullied grief* is a dangerous endeavor. While she appears kind and nurturing, Sada turns violent if adventurers threaten to leave or confront her past deeds.

At the end of each turn, an adventurer must roll a d20 to determine whether a diffi-

cult situation occurs. If an event does happen, it affects the next adventurer in the initiative order unless stated otherwise. Either adventurer can negate the occurrence by expending an **inspiration**.

DISCOVERIES As adventurers search the premises, they uncover the following clues to aid them in their escape:

- Among the rubble and debris, the adventurer discovers the skeletal remains of a dwarven warrior in dark iron plate that

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bears the heraldic symbols of Anbar, the Boar, a Knight of Cinnabar. Within his armor, a pouch contains a **cinnabar emblem**.

- Riches abound within the ruined estate. Select one of the treasures from the list below.
- The adventurer spots the faint outline of a secret door with a successful DC 15 passive Wisdom (Perception) check. While devoid of any corpses, it has the remains of rotted blankets, clothes for children, and toys. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals dark stains of blood cover the floor and lower portion of the walls. A further DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers that someone attempted to wash the blood. If the governess is present, she looks on and remarks with sadness, *"There was too much. There was too much blood. I could not clean it all."* Afterward, she retreats and returns within the hour.
- With a DC 15 passive Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurer notices that the great dining table was once moved. A further successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discerns that the tiles beneath the table were once removed as well and put back in haste. A successful DC 10 Strength check moves the heavy table enough for adventurers to lift the flagstone. The characters discover the skeletal remains of ten dwarven children. Adventurers examining the bones, determine that a single dagger thrust to the heart killed each of the children with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. If the governess is present, she attacks those that attempt to move the table.

TREASURE

The great dining hall conceals many rich adornments amongst the debris and rubble. In addition to finding one of the remaining **cinnabar emblems**, adventurers uncover the following:

- **Coins:** 731 copper, 852 silver pieces, 50 gold coins.
- **Gems:** The gemstone inlays in the table are slivers of blue quartz and worth a total of 50 gp.
- **Art Objects:** Silver ewer with etchings of the dwarven crest of Thifgar, a small tapestry of a blue sapphire, table furnishings, and a bronze tree branch with gilded leaves bearing ancestral names (25 gp each).
- **Armor:** A set of several shadow iron suits of mail and plate. Each bear the heraldic markings of Anbar the Boar and his retinue.
- **Magic Items:** 3 sheets of music which act as *spell scrolls* for the following spells: *enthrall*, *suggestion*, and *modify memory*. Furthermore, should adventurers destroy Sada with *Sullied Grief*, her spirit imparts the dagger with magical properties.

SULLIED GRIEF

Weapon (dagger), very rare (requires attunement).

This once nonmagical dagger is now infused with the spirit of Sada, a dwarven governess in command of bardic spellcraft. It is a chaotic good *+2 dagger* that communicates with the bearer through strong, heartfelt emotions.

It possesses an 11 Intelligence, 5 Wisdom, and 16 Charisma score and is aware of its surroundings out to 30 feet. *Sullied Grief* seeks to protect children and when they are near the blade, the young ones can hear a faint and soothing song.

It may come into conflict with the bearer should he or she refuse to aid a child in need or come to the defense of a youth.

In addition to its enhancement, the bearer is now proficient in song, which includes composition as well as singing.



A SQUIRM OF WORMS

The last Knight of Cinnabar, Gimlad, Son of Balthan, retreated to the mines to regroup after his initial defeat when the lord attempted to support the preemptive strike of Anbar. In one last desperate effort to cause a devastating loss to the shadowaxe mages and umbra warriors, Gimlad stole the *Great Horn of Aversion*. The large horn holds esoteric energies that kept the hoards of purple worms from the penetrating the halls of Halagar.

The dwarven knight believed its removal would bring destruction to Halagar and the *Dusk Gate* while keeping his retinue safe within the mines. Gullhyndr, possessing great forethought from the *Shadowed Eye of Halagar*, anticipated this action from Gimlad and organized an assault upon the mines.

As the battle to reclaim the horn raged beneath the grand halls of Halagar, the tremendous clatter of the two skirmishing armies brought down upon them a cascade of purple worms. The squirm of monstrosities pummeled the chamber, killing Gimlad, along with the several hundred remaining warriors and refugees. This catastrophe ended the rebellion and secured the dominance of the shadowaxe mage coven.

THE CASCADE OF WORMS

As adventurers explore the mines seeking the chamber that holds the remains of Gimlad, the group encounters a pack a ravenous worms on the hunt.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The cramped tunnel emerges into a great chamber of rough-hewn rock that houses a wondrous network of rails and ore carts. The large cavern proves to be the heart of the mine and the numerous railways that lead from this massive grotto serve as its arteries.

Much of the remarkable dwarven contraptions remain: intricate systems of weights and pulleys, coupled with impressive cranes, and an awe-inspiring set of endless chains upon rollers designed to carry ore across short distances. Although it deserves a moment for one to take pause and revere the gifts possessed by the mountain people, a tremor shakes the cavern almost bringing you to a knee.

Rock explodes from the chamber walls and ceilings as mounds of writhing purple flesh flood the grotto. The thick mass of the worms crush the cranes and bend the tracks, their many rows of gnashing teeth grind rock as they descend upon you.

How many? It is hard to tell. You count one . . . two, three . . . four . . . five . . . then stop as you realize the herd will soon consume you where you stand. You spy a number of remaining ore carts that may free you from this stampede of writhing and ravenous worms.

However, only if you reach them before you fall beneath the shadows of these great monstrosities.

An ore cart holds two people comfortably while three proves a tight squeeze, causing all passengers to have disadvantage on ability checks and attacks. Each ore cart is a part of a set of three, joined together by couplings.

To reach a mine cart requires a DC 10 Dexterity check, allowing one **purple worm** to make a **bite attack** on a failed check. The highest Dexterity check determines the order in which adventurers reach the mine cart.

Regardless of whether adventurers succeed the Dexterity check, all reach an ore cart (well, those who are not swallowed) and a **chase** begins (consult the *5th Edition Core Rulebook* for details how to run a chase).

ROLEPLAYING THE CHASE

The purpose of the chase is to bring excitement to a combat and to create a unique encounter. The following guidelines and events on the following page intend to keep a heightened pace filled with wrought and adventure.

FIGHTING THE PURPLE HOARD

While adventurers appear to fight a hoard of rampaging purple worms during the chase, it is just one worm they fight. For every 50 points of damage dealt, have one of the worms leave the chase. When adventurers deal 250 points of damage, the last gives up and the chase ends.

During the chase, the purple worm can take actions as normal, however allude to the appearance that multiple worms attack the group (one attacks with its bite, while a second attacks with its tail stinger).

While adventurers ride the ore carts, each are at a disadvantage to ranged attacks. Adventurers can make melee attacks as normal, though may need to take the **ready action** for when the worm comes close.

SWALLOWED CREATURES

It is possible for one or adventurers to become swallowed by a purple worm, even before the chase begins! Should swallowed characters free themselves, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to leap onto a fleeing ore cart, suffering 2d4 bludgeoning damage on a failed check. Those that fail the check still make it to the cart, though cling to its outer edge. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check allows the character to pull themselves into the cart.

CLIMBING BETWEEN CARTS

Adventurers might need to climb from ore cart to ore cart. Doing so requires an action and a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Failing this check causes 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

MINE CHUTES

Ore chutes riddle the mine shafts and rail system. Adventurers that find themselves dismounted from his or her mine cart can escape down an ore chute. The chase does not end as a purple worm tunnels behind the adventurer during the slide.

A roll of a 1 through 5 on a d10 indicates the chute leads to another cart. A roll of a 6 or higher, the character suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage with no ore cart in sight. However, one or more chutes are present.



d20 Event

- 1 An abrupt jerk threatens to break one of the couplings connecting the ore cart. The adventurer must make a DC 10 Intelligence check, the coupling breaks and the ore cart separates on a failed check. Those proficient with tinker's tools can add their proficiency bonus.
- 2 Debris threatens to derail the mine cart. The character must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to reach an approaching lever to switch tracks, derailing the mine cart on a failure. Derailed characters suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage and must fight a purple worm for 1 round. Removing the debris and fixing the ore cart upon the track requires one action and a successful DC 10 Strength check, otherwise combat is extended for another round.
- 3 A cloud of volcanic steam bursts from a wall due to the tremors caused by the chase. The adventurer must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, suffering 1d10 fire damage on a failed save.
- 4 A purple worm gains momentum to attack an adventurer in the last ore cart with a bite (+9 to hit; 3d8 + 9 piercing damage, DC 19 Dexterity save or swallowed).
- 5 Debris and rock rain from above and into the mine cart. The adventurer must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 2d4 bludgeoning damage on a failed save.
- 6 A sudden drop upsets passengers in the ore cart. Adventurers must make a group DC 10 Intelligence saving throw to navigate the carts back onto the track before it lands. On a failed save, adventurers fall 1d4 x 10 feet, suffering 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 10 feet fallen.
- 7 A purple worm is able to run parallel to the track long enough to attack with its tail stinger (+9 to hit; 3d6 + 9 piercing damage, DC 19 Constitution save or suffer 12d6 poison damage, half as much on a success.
- 8 A collapsed trestle bridge ahead threatens to spill the mine carts and passengers into a deep chasm. Each character must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) to leap into an empty mine cart that runs parallel. A failed check causes adventurers to plummet 1d10 x 10 feet, suffering 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 10 feet fallen. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw avoids the fall as the character manages to cling to the edge of the chasm.
- 9 A smooth rail section allows the adventurer to take a steady shot. The character does not suffer disadvantage on a ranged attack.
- 10 A **black pudding** or a **giant spider** drops into the mine cart as adventurers pass beneath or through thick webbing.
- 11-20 No event.

THE WRITHING GROTTO

Once adventurers escape the rampaging purple worms, the mine cart rails end at the edge of a large chamber filled with larva.

Read or paraphrase the following:

An abrupt end to your escape finds the ore carts, along with you and your companions, plunging into the depths of a dark cavern.

Adventurers can make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to leap from the falling mine cart to catch the edge of the drop. Those that fail, continue with the following:

The fall is brief and causes little impact on your sore bones and muscles as you land upon a thick, heaving mound of soft writhing flesh. Your body sinks up to your waist. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of twisting and squirming worm-like larva slither around your body and between legs, disturbed by your sudden appearance.

Adventurers that remain swallowed or separated from the group still find themselves in the grotto, whether they happened upon it wandering a lone passage, deposited into the chamber from an ore chute, or expelled from a purple worm as it regurgitates its stomach contents for the young larva to consume.

The natural grotto is 120 feet in length and just as wide. Stalactites hang from the ceiling, which is 30 feet in height. Purple worm larva and slithering young fill the chamber save for a rough hewn rock that climbs 10 feet above the writhing mass. The rock has room enough for two medium creatures and upon it, rests the *Great Horn of Aversion*.

GENERAL FEATURES The writhing grotto has the following features:

- **Light:** The natural chamber is in complete darkness.
- **Mass of Larva:** Most of the larva remain still when characters first enter the chamber, moving only slightly as adventurers wade through the mass. Treat it as difficult terrain.
- **Rock Platform:** As stated before, a rough hewn pillar of rock extends 10 feet above the mass of larva. Adventurers can climb the pillar with ease, although there is room enough for two medium creatures. While it is possible to fit a third creature, all suffer a disadvantage on attacks and ability checks.

Once adventurers arrive at the center of the chamber or attempt to climb the pillar to reach the *horn*, a **purple worm** that protects and feeds the young larva attacks.

BROOD CHAMBER ACTIONS The elder worm and its larva can take an action to cause one of the following effects, although the chamber cannot use the same effect twice in



BROOD MOTHER

The elder worm that lairs in the writhing grotto serves two purposes: to guard the chamber and serve as food for the young. It is a normal **purple worm** with the following features:

Hit Points: 125—the larva feast upon the flesh of the brood

a row. The brood chamber acts on initiative count 20 and loses all ties for initiative.

- The brood mother unleashes pheromones that cause the young to become frenzied. The larva strike up to three creatures that the purple worm can sense within 60 feet. The larva makes one melee attack roll (+6 to hit; the larva has advantage against any creature that does not possess all of its hit points) against each target. On a hit, the target takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage and must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target suffers 14 (4d6) poison damage, or half as much if it succeeds.
- The elder worm spews a 20-foot cone of semi-digested mixture of acidic mud. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much if it succeeds.
- The brood mother emits a shriek within 120 feet that incites a larger larva to make a crude attempt to swallow a creature. The larva makes one melee attack roll (+7 to hit) against a target. On a hit, the target takes 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage and grappled (DC 15 to escape). While grappled, the target is blinded, restrained, and cannot breathe. At the start of the each following brood chamber action, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

BLOWING THE HORN The great horn remains undisturbed and silent after several hundred years. Unleashing its full potential during the encounter can aid adventurers as the group skirmishes against the purple worm and its larva.

Blowing the horn requires an action and 4 successful Charisma (Performance) checks to restore it to its former effectiveness. The successes do not need to be consecutive.

When adventurers achieve four successes, the writhing mass of larva flee the chamber. While the brood mother remains, it no longer possesses the *writhing frenzy* feature.

TREASURE

Once adventurers restore the horn and rid the grotto of the throng of worms, the fellowship can search the skeletal remains that litter the cavern floor. Aside from a **cinnabar emblem**, adventurers discover the following:

mother.

Writhing Frenzy: While within the writhing grotto, the elder worm has advantage on melee attack rolls.

Despite the reduced hit points, the challenge rating of the brood mother remains unchanged.

Performance Check Result

9 or lower	One failure. The noise angers the elder worm and it makes a special shove attack against the blower. On a success, the blower is flung from the rock and knocked prone.
10-14	One failure.
15-19	One success.
20 or higher	One success; forego the brood chamber action for 1 round.

GREAT HORN OF AVERSION *Wondrous item, very rare.*

This is large ivory horn of an ancient dragon. It is 10 feet in length with a 3-foot radius bell. It often resembles a much larger, robust version of an alphorn, weighing 50 lbs. This horn is unique to Halagar and thus depicts engravings of daily dwarven life of those that reside in the region.

If blown once an hour, for one day, it wards a 10-mile radius against purple worms as if under the effect of the *sanc-tuary spell* (DC 19 spell save). The duration of the effect is one day.

History: Dwarven boroughs often use such items to mark the hours of the day as well as protect against purple worm intrusions. Dwarves that discover that the great horn is once again secure at the heart of the borough, believe it is a further omen that it is safe to return to Halagar.

- **Coins:** 4,563 gold pieces, 874 platinum coins.
- **Gems:** 3 black pearls and 1 alexandrite (500 gp each).
- **Art Objects:** A gold ring set with moonstones and a set of shadow silk robes with gold embroidery from the corpse of a fallen shadowaxe mage leader (250 gp each).
- **Armor:** A set of several shadow iron suits of mail and plate. Each bear the heraldic markings of Gimlad, Son of Balthan, and his retinue.
- **Magic Items:** 2 *potions of healing*, 2 *potions of greater healing*, *spell scroll of heroism* (1st level), +1 *ammunition* (harquebus), *goggles of night*, and the *great horn of aversion* (see sidebar).

CHAMBER OF THE DRAGON

While in command of the *Eye of Halagar*, Gullhyndr anticipated the dangers of once again empowering the *Dusk Gate* after

a millennia. Therefore, under the guise of Bjorn Oldspear, the dragon reconstructed the primordial chamber that preserved the gate. The draconic seer sought to limit the impact of the gate upon the region and to benefit those foretold to release the dragon from its fate.

The dragon demanded the doors leading into the sanctum removed and arranged artisans to adorn the chamber in cinnabar. Gullhyndr further commanded stone masons to construct small pillars throughout the chamber for added support to the ceiling as well as limit its movement while in its true form.

Furthermore, unbeknownst to the shadowaxe mage coven, Gullhyndr created the cinnabar emblems and entrusted four dwarven knights to their safekeeping. The emblems allow someone to close the gate without the needed arcane rituals and spellcraft. The dragon kept this secret from the coven and thus the mages have no knowledge of the emblems or their significance.

ENTERING THE CHAMBER

Adventurers that decide to descend the giant stairwell enter the chamber through the western archway. Should the adventurers choose to reach the Red Chamber by navigating the depths of Halagar, they emerge from one of three passages. Roll a d6 or choose an entrance from which adventurers enter the chamber.

d6	Result
1-2	Entry 1, the northern archway.
3-4	Entry 2, the eastern archway.
5-6	Entry 3, the southern archway.

GENERAL FEATURES The Red Chamber has the following features:

- **Ceilings:** Ceilings are 60 feet high.
- **Columns, Large:** Eight 35-foot radius columns fill the chamber. Four of the columns possess an alcove, each housing an obsidian obelisk and a secret passage. The



other four remaining pillars have a room significant to either Gullhyndr or the shadowaxe coven.

- **Columns, Small:** These are cross-shaped columns that extend into arches that support the chamber ceiling.
- **Dusk Gate:** This portal into the shadow realm appears as a large, shadowed 50-foot diameter sphere. The upper hemisphere appears as a dome, extending 25 feet above the chamber floor and encompasses the platform and adjacent stairs. The lower portion of the hemisphere rests in a pit within the chamber floor.
- **Light:** Energy exuded from the *Dusk Gate* causes the chamber to pulse with a dim blue light, while areas behind the large and small columns are dark. Umbral wisps and undead shadow essences expelled from the gate creates a haze, thus the chamber is **lightly obscured**.
- **Pit:** In the center of the chamber, a 25-foot deep pit holds half of the shadowed sphere known as the *Dusk Gate*. The pit is the shape of an inverted hemisphere, thus creatures falling into the sloping depression take no damage but rather slide toward the center. However, the indentation is made of a smooth, polished obsidian surface proving difficult to climb, requiring a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

ROLEPLAYING THE ENCOUNTER

Gullhyndr is an **ancient gold shadow dragon**, although the encounter with Ancenagri has left the elder wurm injured with deep draconic wounds. Therefore, use the statistics of an **adult gold shadow dragon** to represent Gullhyndr with the exception that the dragon remains gargantuan in size.

Gullhyndr has a challenge rating of 20.

FIGHTING THE DRAGON AND ITS MINIONS

It is important to maintain the appearance of an epic encounter as adventurers struggle against a gargantuan foe and its legion of minions. While the clash is an encounter between the adventurers and a single creature, here are a few suggestions to create a memorable conclusion:

- If Gullhyndr is a viable target for an attack or spell, treat attacks against other creatures as if it was against the dragon. Use the dragon statistics to determine whether the attack or spell has an affect and mark damage accordingly.
- If Gullhyndr is not a viable target (if hidden), treat attacks against other creatures as a miss or a hit, though having no effect. Feel free to record damage or to improvise reactions as having an effect to maintain the appearance of a swirling melee.

TACTICS

While the chamber confines the movement of the dragon in its true form, the shadows and arched buttresses supporting the ceiling provide ample space to hide. The dragon further possesses the ability to hide as a bonus action and does so at every available opportunity. In addition to its double proficiency bonus, the shadow haze within the chamber further grants the dragon a +5 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks against the passive Wisdom (Perception) checks of the adventurers.

MAGIC ITEMS

Gullhyndr wears a *brooch of shielding*.

FEATURES

Gullhyndr has the following additional traits:

Shadow Guardians (1/day): Three undead shadows

- **Platform:** Four sets of stairs lead to an open platform 15 feet above the pit and into the center of the *Dusk Gate*.
- **Walls:** Cracked and crumbling cinnabar adorn the walls as well as the columns within the chamber.

SHADOW GUARDIANS While no doors remain to impede adventurers from entering the chamber, undead shadows are bound to protect the entrance from intruders (+4 to hit; 2d6+2 necrotic damage, decreasing the Strength score of the target 1d4 points). This reduction in Strength lasts until the target finishes a rest. Once the adventurers enter the chamber, the shadows no longer molest the characters.

swarm and protect Gullhyndr from harm as under the effect of a *mirror image* spell¹. The undead shadows are immune to turn undead, although *dispel magic* or another similar effect can disrupt the magic binding them to the dragon.

Shadowaxe Mage Coven: Gullhyndr can command the shadowaxe mage coven to cast a spell as an action. The innate spellcasting ability of the coven is Charisma (spell save DC 21). The coven can cast the following spells without the need for components:

1/day each: *banishment*, *guardian of the faith*¹, *harm*, *heal*, *spirit guardians*^{1 2}.

¹ These spells are in effect at the start of the combat.

² These spells require concentration.

ACTIONS

When Gullhyndr uses its multiattack or legendary tail attack, replace the attack with one or more of the following aesthetic changes:

- An umbra warrior attacks with its greatsword (Claw).
- An undead shadow strikes from the darkness (Claw).
- Umbra archers fire a volley at a target within 15 ft. (Tail).
- Umbra heavy crossbow men fire a volley at a target within 10 ft. (Bite).

REACTION

Gullhyndr has the following reaction:

Shadow Shield Guardian (1/day): An undead shadow appears and protects Gullhyndr as the *shield* spell. The undead shadow is immune to turn undead, although *dispel magic* or another similar effect can disrupt the magic binding it to the dragon.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

In addition to the normal legendary actions, include the following:

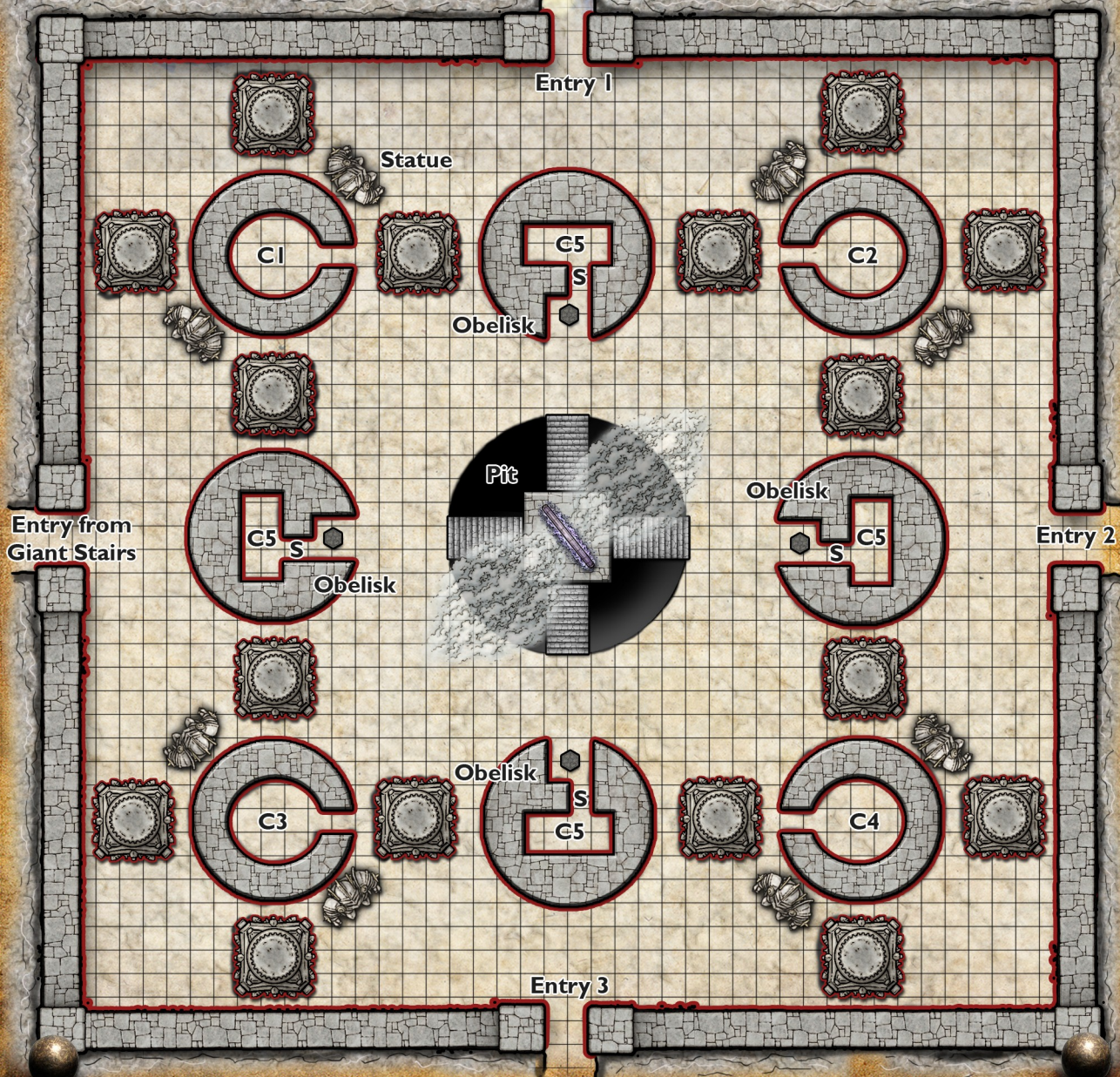
Spell (Costs 3 Actions): Gullhyndr commands the shadowaxe mage coven to cast a spell from the list of prepared spells above.

When adventurers do enter the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

Lacquered red stone adorns the chamber walls as well as eight immense pillars that support a sixty-foot ceiling. Numerous, much smaller, cross-shaped columns climb upward before blossoming into stone arches that further brace the weight of the mountain.

A translucent orb of writhing dark shadow, pulses a sickish blue light, bathing the chamber in a deep purple hue. It is fifty-feet in diameter, half of which, rests in a vast yawning of obsidian at the center of the room. Four sets of stairs lead from the edge of the gaping pit and to a stone platform within the heart of the Dusk Gate.

CHAMBER OF THE DRAGON



THE DUSK GATE

Within the center of the chamber, the *Dusk Gate* pulses with necrotic powers as wisps of shadow essence spread from its edge and into the chamber.

GATE GUARDIANS Undead shadows swarm about the sphere and protect the area as the *spirit guardians* and *guardian of the faith* spells. The undead shadows are immune to turn undead, although *dispel magic* or another similar effect can disrupt the magic binding them to the area.

ENTERING THE GATE Adventurers ascending the stairs or entering the area containing the *Dusk Gate* pass into the shadow realm. The chamber appears the same in both realms and adventurers can still witness the skirmish and even participate in the ongoing attack as if on the same plane.

Although, adventurers still in the shadow plane when a hero places the last cinnabar emblem upon an obelisk, the portal closes and the characters remain trapped. To leave the shadow realm, the adventurer must leave the area before the gate closes and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

CLOSING THE GATE Four obsidian obelisks rest in alcoves within four separate large columns, each adjacent to a secret room (**Area C5**). To close the gate, adventurers must take an action to place a cinnabar emblem into a small circular depression located upon each of the obelisks.

When an adventurer places the final emblem, read or paraphrase the following:

A thunderous clap resonates forcing a large portion of the cinnabar veneer to crumble from walls and columns. In an instant, the dark immense sphere implodes ripping the shadows and wraiths that swarm the chamber from this world to whence they came.

The remaining umbra warriors and shadowaxe mages vanish, as the shadow realm no longer holds influence in this chamber. Closing the gate traps those dark dwarven souls in a cold and desolate world, now beyond the reach of mortal men.

The closure of the gate causes the *forbiddance* spell to take effect within the entire chamber. If the cinnabar emblems remain in place for 30 days, the effect lasts until *dispel magic* targets each obelisk and the cinnabar emblems removed.

Furthermore, with the *Dusk Gate* sealed, the dragon can no longer command his undead shadows and dwarven minions. However, the dragon remains and still possesses the **shadow template**. Gullhyndr continues the fight.

BOONS When an adventurer places a cinnabar emblem upon an obelisk, a mystical surge grants one of the following boons to the character performing the action:

- **Melee Prowess:** While within the Red Chamber, when an adventurer misses with a melee weapon attack, he or she can choose to instead hit with the attack. Once the adventurer benefits from this boon, the power diminishes.
- **Fortitude:** While within the Red Chamber, the adventurer gains 40 temporary hit points. Once the adventurer leaves the chamber or otherwise loses the hit points, the power diminishes.
- **Good Fortune:** While within the Red Chamber, the adventurer can add a d10 to an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw. Once the adventurer benefits from this boon, the power diminishes.
- **Keen Aim:** While within the Red Chamber and before an adventurer makes a ranged attack roll, he or she can gain a +20 bonus to the attack. Once the adventurer benefits from this boon, the power diminishes.

You can select a boon appropriate for the adventurer placing the emblem. Furthermore, more than one character can have the same boon.

SHADOWAXE COVEN

The shadowaxe coven of mages stand in a circle upon the platform within the *Dusk Gate*. They chant in an ancient umbral tongue devised by dwarven umbra sorcerers a millennia ago. Aside from wielding magic as the dragon dictates, the coven remains on the platform and has no other bearing on the encounter.

GULLHYNDR, THE GOLD-HORNED ONE

Gullhyndr is an ancient gold dragon and acts with cunning despite its draconic wounds. The dark, corrupted mind of the dragon seeks to prevent adventurers from sealing the *Dusk Gate*.

When characters venture within 60 feet of the *Dusk Gate*, read or paraphrase the following:

Upon the platform, several shadowaxe mages stand in a circle, lost in chant as a voice emerges from the swirling shadows and wraiths that haunt the chamber and guard the gate.

"Have you come looking for Bjorn Oldspear?"

A silhouette of a dwarven lord, armored in regal fashion, walks amongst a whorl of guardian spirits and umbra warriors. The lord brandishes a greataxe of umbral iron.

The pulsing light of the Dusk Gate illuminates his face. The visage bears close resemblance to the Limestone Scar hermit, Oldr, though Bjorn Oldspear has but one good eye. His false eye is a crystal marble wreathed in gloom: the Shadowed Eye of Halagar.

"No," he continues, "You do not seek Bjorn Oldspear for the Eye has shown me as much. I know you. Although I do not recognize the faces you wear, your heart reveals much. You are the Knights of Cinnabar and you seek Gullhyndr, the Gold-Horned One.

"Let me not disappoint you. It is a great honor to



breathe your last breath in the shadow of a dragon.”

Joints and bones break and snap as great wings emerge while sinews of flesh and muscle transform into great claws and a thick tail. Hardened scales mount a defense and grow from fibrous tissue like a mass of shields interlocking into a great shield wall. Terrible haunches launch the gargantuan beast into the air amidst a protectorate of undead shadows.

INTERNAL STRUGGLE The mind of Gullhyndr is divided. While the sinister nature of the shadow realm has twisted the physical and moral aspect of the dragon, a semblance of its true heart still remains. The following represents this internal struggle:

- **Refrains from Killing:** If Gullhyndr drops an adventurer to 0 hit points, the character must make a Charisma (Persuasion) check against the passive Wisdom (Insight) check of the dragon (DC 18). On a success, the adventurer is still at 0 hit points, though he or she is **stable** and does not need to make **death saving throws**.
- **Does not Interfere:** Though Gullhyndr targets adventurers seeking the obelisks to close the portal, the dragon does not remove or order the removal of the cinnabar emblems once in place.

DEFEATING GULLHYNDR When the dragon drops to 0 hit points, the shadow essence that envelops the creature vanishes. At this moment, the adventurers must make a decision to either spare Gullhyndr or end its life.

If adventurers execute the dragon, the legendary creature dies with little fanfare. On the other hand, should adventurers spare its life, Gullhyndr expresses its gratitude and bestows great rewards of wealth and treasure.

REEMERGENCE OF OLDR

It is possible that during the encounter, Oldr will emerge and interact with the adventurers. Oldr is the good aspect of Gullhyndr, manifested through the mystical dream powers gold dragons possess.

When an adventurer is banished to the dream plane from a **lair action** or from the *banishment* spell, Oldr appears. You can further have Oldr appear as a telepathic image for a brief moment when an adventurer places the cinnabar emblem upon an obelisk.

FIRST APPEARANCE Oldr appears before the adventurer and attempts to present the internal struggle within Gullhyndr.

Read or paraphrase the following:

“I am all that remains of the good aspect of Gullhyndr, the Gold-Horned One. The conflict within its mind . . . my mind . . . it is a struggle and lasted longer than we anticipated.

“I hope you endure long enough to release Gullhyndr from its fate . . . to atone for its hubris . . . and the lives . . . so many lives.”

SECOND APPEARANCE If adventurers are still unclear how to close the *Dusk Gate*, Oldr offers aid.

“While I knew the corruption of the Dusk Gate could bend the souls of those loyal to me, the dire portents the Eye of Halagar revealed overshadowed my righteous heart. Unbeknownst to my allies, I crafted the cinnabar emblems to allow someone to close the portal without need of the arcane knowledge required for the task.

“Within the large pillars, the four aligned with the stairs that lead into the black sphere, rests an obsidian obelisk. Place an emblem into each of the monoliths, the last will close the gate. Furthermore, when one places an emblem, a surge of power will bestow the bearer with fleeting gifts of prowess and fortune.”

THIRD APPEARANCE Oldr appears to beseech adventurers to spare Gullhyndr.

“I cannot expect for you to comprehend the machinations of the draconic mind nor the penance to atone for my aberrant and immoral leadership of the dwarves. There are many within your world and sphere of influence who would claim I have no right to ask you to spare my life—should I lay defeated at your feet.

“I refuse to insult the morals that guide your hand at this moment . . . right or wrong, good or evil. I refuse to burden you of my intellect or to disgrace your judgment upon me. I will, at most, declare there is still much to accomplish before my death.”

Although labeled and arranged in a particular order, feel free to present Oldr during any moment or sequence you desire.

ROOMS

There are a number of rooms within the chamber. Each has a ceiling of 15 feet and of modest construction. Save for the treasure vaults (**Area C5**), each hold little of interest. One chamber is sleeping quarters for umbra warriors (**Area C1**), another serves as a kitchen (**Area C2**), while the third is a scriptorium for the shadowaxe mages (**Area C3**), and the last room is the personal quarters of Gullhyndr when posing as Bjorn Oldspear (**Area C4**).

TREASURE

The four larger columns housing the obsidian also has a series of secret rooms (**Area C5**). The hidden chambers hold the vast hoard of Gullhyndr. Regardless of whether adventurers defeat the dragon or spare its life, reward the fellowship with the following treasure:

- **Coins:** 2,129 copper, 7,148 silver coins, 73,457 gold, 27,226 platinum pieces.
- **Gems:** 2 bloodstones, 1 jasper, 1 quartz (50 gp each); 3 black pearls, 2 peridots, 1 blue spinel, 1 topaz (500 gp each); 2 black



opals, 1 emerald, 4 fire opals, 3 opals, 1 star ruby, 1 yellow sapphire (1,000 gp each).

- **Art Objects:** black velvet mask with numerous citrines, gold bracelet with cinnabar charms, a decorative cloth painting of a dwarven procession (25 gp each); an electrum ring with a natural cinnabar crystal (100 gp); dwarven stein of gold inlaid with rubies (7,500 gp).
- **Magic Items:** *+1 plate armor, cubic gate* (see sidebar), *decanter of endless water, dust of dryness, ever-smoking bottle*.
- **Artifacts:** *Eye of Halagar* (see sidebar).

CONCLUSION

With the defeat of Gullhyndr and the closing of the *Dusk Gate*, the adventurers change the social and political dynamics of the Limestone Scar and the Valley of Dormant Fire.

CLAN-KING FJOR The dwarven king of Konungar plans to reestablish Halagar and extend his influence to the Limestone Scar. The dwarf lord may seek adventurers to act as emissaries and speak on his behalf to Gullhyndr. If adventurers slay the dragon, his great dwarven greed might demand adventurers to return the vast wealth of Halagar.

GULLHYNDR Should adventurers spare the dragon, Gullhyndr considers this portion of its overall scheme victorious. The dragon, on the other hand, remains injured and weak and must contend with its shift in alignment from **Lawful Good** to **Chaotic Good**.

As for the threat that caused the gold dragon to allow corruption to enter into its heart — well, that is for you to decide and explore. Gullhyndr refuses to defend its actions or reveal to adventurers the nature of its portends that, without doubt, led it adrift from its once ethical heart. Nonetheless, the dragon will view the adventurers as valuable allies and will seek the fellowship for future endeavors.

ORDER OF WRITHEN WOOD While the Wailing Knights and elves of Somber Wood view the closing of the *Dusk Gate* a triumph, many remain cautious to the thought of dwarves once again returning to the Scar. The elves may seek to explore the ruins for themselves or invite adventurers to act as emissaries.

RUNIC ROAD With the secrets of the runic road rediscovered, the adventurers can tip the balance of power between Queen Thea and her rival, Prince Aldwyn the Usurper. If Urias survives the adventure and accomplishes his goal, the mage may prove a greater threat to the region.

THE EYE OF HALAGAR

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This is a deep red crystal sphere of cinnabar about 6 inches in diameter. The *Eye of Halagar* is a *crystal ball* with the following additional properties.

Crystal Ball of Foresight: While scrying with the crystal ball, you can take an action to cast *legend lore*, focusing on a person, place, or object, within 30 feet of the spell's sensor. Furthermore, you can choose to sense a future event that involves your focus as a bonus action. Although the information you learn is accurate, it is cryptic and shrouded in fleeting images that can induce madness.

Your senses extend one week into the future. You must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw, suffering short-term madness on a failed save. If you fail the saving throw by 5 or more, you instead ail from long-term madness. Should you fail the saving throw by 10 or more, you instead succumb to indefinite madness.

You can extend your senses involving your focus to an event farther into the future. For each week beyond the first, increase the DC of the Charisma saving by 1.

Beneficial Properties: The *Eye of Halagar* has the following random beneficial properties:

- 2 minor properties.
- 1 major property.

Detrimental Properties: The *Eye of Halagar* has the following random detrimental properties:

- 2 minor properties.

Spells: The crystal ball has 7 charges. While peering into the orb, you can take an action and expend 1 or more charges to cast one of the following spells from the crystal:

- *Augury* (0 charges)
- *Clairvoyance* (1 charge)
- *Divination* (2 charges)
- *True Seeing* (3 charges)
- *Foresight* (4 charges)

The crystal ball regains 1d4 + 3 expended charges each day at dawn.

Destroying the Crystal Ball: A creature attuned to the orb can peer into its depths to sense the future event that will lead to its destruction (refer to the *Crystal Ball of Foresight* property above). The event happens in 5d10 weeks and the nature of the event is at the discretion of the Game Master. Although, here are a few suggestions:

- The creature foresees a skirmish with a powerful monster in which a misplaced strike shatters the orb.
- The creature portends a dangerous trek near an active volcano where it and the orb slip and fall within its depths, burned alive in molten lava.

If the creature dismisses the vision or avoids its fate, the orb remains intact.

M ONSTERS

This adventure features the following characters and monsters.



FROST GIANT RAIDER

CR 8

Huge Giant, neutral evil

8,400 XP

Initiative +0

Senses passive Perception 14

DEFENSES

Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor)

Hit Points 136 (13d12 + 52)

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Speed 40 ft.

Skills Athletics +10, Perception +4

Languages Giant

ACTIONS

Multiattack The frost giant raider makes two attacks: one with its smash and grab and one with its warhammer.

Melee Weapon Attack—Warhammer +10 to hit; reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Smash and Grab *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit; reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frost giant raider cannot smash and grab another target.

HUMMING DEATH SPIDERS

CR 6

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

2,300 XP

Initiative +2

Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 15

DEFENSES

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5, Wis +6, Cha +6

Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Immunities poison damage, poisoned condition

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Skills Perception +5

Languages Undercommon

TRAITS

Death Hum The humming death spider produces an abhorrent humming sound by vibrating its web. The humming death spider is immune. A creature starting its turn within 30 feet of the humming death spider must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 minute. A creature that cannot hear is immune to the effect. If the creature takes damage, the effect ends. If the saving throw is successful or the effects end, the creature is immune to the death hum for 24 hours.

Spell Resistance The humming death spider has an advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spider Climb The humming death spider can climb on vertical surfaces, including ceilings, without the need for an ability check.

Web Trotter The humming death spider ignores restrictions while moving on a web.

ACTIONS

Melee Weapon Attack—Stinger +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) piercing damage and 24 (7d6) poison damage. Reduced the hit point maximum of the target equal to the poison damage dealt. If the reduced hit point maximum of the target is 0, the creature dies. The reduction to the hit point maximum lasts until the target finishes a long rest or the recipient of a *greater restoration* or similar spell.



SHADOWAXE MAGE

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

CR 12

8,400 XP

Initiative +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

DEFENSES

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Speed 30 ft.

Skills Arcana +10, History +6, Perception +4, Stealth +6

Languages Dwarven, Common

TRAITS

Light Sensitivity: An umbra warrior has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight while in areas of bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Mystical Weapons The weapon attacks of the shadowaxe mage are magical.

Regeneration If the shadowaxe mage has at least 1 hit point at the start of its turn, it regains 10 hit points.

Shadow Armor The shadowaxe mage possesses an armor class of 15 and while within dim light or shadows, it has resistance to all damage that is not force, psychic, or radiant.

Shadow Jaunt The shadowaxe mage can shift from the Material Plane to the Plane of Shadow as a bonus action.

Spell Resistance The shadowaxe mage has an advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting A shadowaxe mage is an innate spellcaster. Charisma is its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). A shadowaxe mage can cast the following spells without material components:

At will: *detect magic*¹, *detect thoughts*¹, *mage hand*, *major image*¹
2/day each: *fear*¹, *fireball*, *mirror image*, *tongues*
1/day each: *mislead*¹

¹ These spells require concentration.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The shadowaxe mage makes three attacks: one with its shadow touch and two with its greataxe.

Melee Weapon Attack—Greataxe +9 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 11 (1d12+5) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) cold damage.

Melee Weapon Attack—Shadow Touch +9 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) cold damage.

SHADOWMIST SPIDER

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

CR 10

5,900 XP

Initiative +2

Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12

DEFENSES

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5, Wis +6, Cha +6

Resistances cold, necrotic, nonmagical weapons (bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing)

Immunities poison damage, poisoned condition

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Skills Deception +10, Insight +6

Languages Undercommon

TRAITS

Spell Resistance The shadowmist spider has an advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spider Climb The shadowmist spider can climb on vertical surfaces, including ceilings, without the need for an ability check.

Web Trotter The shadowmist spider ignores restrictions while moving on a web.

Spellcasting The shadowmist spider is an innate spellcaster whose ability is Charisma (save DC 14) and can cast the following spells without material components:

At will: *misty step*, *web*
1/day: *dominate person*¹

¹ These spells require concentration.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The shadowmist spider makes two melee attacks.

Melee Weapon Attack—Bite +10 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage and 21 (6d6) poison damage.

Shadowmist Form The shadowmist spider can assume the form of a shadowy mist or return to its normal state. If it dies, it reverts to its normal form.

While in shadowmist form, the spider is incapacitated and cannot speak. It has a fly speed of 20 feet, can hover, pass through airtight spaces, and can enter as well as end its movement in the space of a hostile creature. A creature that starts its turn in the space of a shadowmist spider must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, becoming poisoned on a failed save. This effect lasts until the start of its next turn.

In shadowmist form, it gains immunity to nonmagical damage and has advantage on the following saving throws: Constitution, Dexterity, and Strength.

UMBRA WARRIOR

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

CR 7

2,900 XP

Initiative +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

DEFENSES

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 52)

Saving Throws Con +7

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)

Speed 30 ft.

Skills Perception +1, Stealth +5

Languages Common, Dwarvish

TRAITS

Light Sensitivity: An umbra warrior has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight while in areas of bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Regeneration If the umbra warrior has at least 1 hit point at the start of its turn, it regains 10 hit points.

Shadow Armor The umbra warrior possesses an armor class of 15 and while within dim light or shadows, it has resistance to all damage that is not force, psychic, or radiant.

Shadow Jaunt The umbra warrior can shift from the Material Plane to the Plane of Shadow as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The umbra warrior makes three melee attacks: one with its slam and two with its greataxe.

Melee Weapon Attack—Slam +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) bludgeoning damage.

Melee Weapon Attack—Greataxe +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 11 (1d12+5) slashing damage.

Umbra warriors are descendants of the dwarves loyal to Gullhyndr during the rebellion. Their ancestors entered the *Dusk Gate* becoming permanent denizens of the dark halls of Halagar located in the realm of shadows.

VARIANT: SHADOWAXE WEAPON

Umbra warriors often wield shadowaxes, magic weapons infused with the essence of the shadow realm. The warriors act as a conduit to the shadow realm as each exist between both planes like living shadows. Once an umbra warrior is defeated, the link breaks and the shadowaxe becomes a normal greataxe.

An **umbra warrior** wielding a shadowaxe has a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with the greataxe. Furthermore, humanoid creatures hit with the weapon must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, becoming infected with the disease known as the *shadow culling* on a failure.

While infected, the creature cannot regain hit points and at the end of a 24-hour period, reduce its maximum hit points by 10 (3d6). If the disease reduce the maximum hit points to 0, the creature dies and an undead **shadow** emerges from the remains.



UNDEAD COPPER DRAGON CR 8

Huge undead, neutral evil

3,900 XP

Initiative +1

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

DEFENSES

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +5

Resistances necrotic

Immunities acid and poison damage; the following conditions: charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

Skills Deception +5, Perception +7, Stealth +4

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven

TRAITS

Spell Resistance The undead copper dragon has an advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Undead Vigor The undead copper dragon does not suffer from exhaustion.

Spellcasting The undead copper dragon is an innate spellcaster whose ability is Charisma (save DC 13) and can cast the following spells without material components:

1/day: *invisibility*¹, *mirror image*

¹ These spells require concentration.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The undead copper dragon can make three melee attacks: one bite attack followed with two claw attacks.

Melee Weapon Attack—Bite +7 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Melee Weapon Attack—Claw +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one target). *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Breath Weapons (Recharge on a 5-6) The undead copper dragon can either make a breath weapon attack with its *acid breath* or *slow breath*.

Acidic Breath This is a 5-foot wide, 40-foot line of acid. Each creature within the effect must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 40 (9d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one.

Slow Breath This is a 30-foot cone of gas. Each creature in the effect must succeed in a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Creatures failing the save are unable to use reactions, move at half speed, and can make no more than one attack during its turn. Furthermore, a creature cannot take both an action and bonus action during its turn. The duration lasts for 1 minute, although the creature can make another saving throw attempt at the end of each of its turn. If successful, the effects end.

URIAS, THE BRASS RAVEN CR 13

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

10,000 XP

Initiative +7

Senses passive Perception 12

DEFENSES

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +10, Wis +7

Resistances nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (with *stoneskin*)

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (in raven form)

Skills Arcana +15, History +15

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, plus 3 more

TRAITS

Heightened Senses Urias cannot be surprised while he is conscious and hidden creatures do not gain advantage on attack rolls against the wizard. Furthermore, Urias has a +5 bonus to initiative checks.

Signature Spells (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest) Urias can cast *blink* and *counterspell* once without expending a spell slot.

Spellcasting Urias is a 20th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19, +13 to hit with spell attacks). Urias can cast *invisibility* and *shield* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor*¹

2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*³, *detect thoughts*³, *hold person*³, *levitate*³, *m. acid arrow*,

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*³, *stoneskin*³

5th level (3 slots): *animate objects*³, *b. hand*³, *telekinesis*³

6th level (2 slots): *contingency (mislead)*², *flesh to stone*, *globe of invulnerability*³

7th level (2 slots): *etherealness*, *simulacrum*², *reverse gravity*³, *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *clone*², *mind blank*¹

9th level (1 slot): *shapechange*³

¹ Urias casts these spells on himself before combat begins.

² These spells are in effect from a previous casting.

³ These spells require concentration.

ACTIONS

Melee Weapon Attack—Quarterstaff +6 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8) slashing damage.



URIAS THE BRASS RAVEN

ROLEPLAYING URIAS While confident in his knowledge of magical theory, Urias is cautious when wielding his arcane gifts. Magic, for the mage, is not science but rather an artistic medium and therefore, fickle. Urias does not like to lie.

FURTHER GOALS As all who possess great forethought, Urias may have numerous plans and several contingencies should his machinations unravel. The mage may even seek the *Eye of Halagar* to gaze in its depths to determine if he succeeds in a future endeavor or his next course of action. If adventurers possess the crystal, Urias may return to borrow the orb or negotiate its transfer.

PROTECTIONS Urias is old and well prepared. The aged wizard created a *simulacrum* of himself to handle mundane tasks while he continues with vital work. Most dealings adventurers have with Urias are with his simulacrum while the mage hides away in his personal caravan.

Should adventurers attempt to slay Urias, the mage does not hesitate to cast *shapechange*. His favorite choice is an **adult brass dragon**.

VARIANT: URIAS THE TRANSMUTER

Urias studied the art of transmutation to become an agent of change in political affairs. Urias has the following features with this variant:

Unkindness of Ravens: Urias can use his action to polymorph into a medium swarm of ravens for 1 hour. Urias needs to finish a short or long rest to use this feature again.

Heart Stone: Urias can use an action to consume the mystical energy stored in the stone to remove all curses, diseases, and poisons, affecting a creature he touches. The mage further regains all lost hit points.

WAILING KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (elf), lawful neutral

CR 7

2,900 XP

Initiative +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 14

DEFENSES

Armor Class 17 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 76 (14d8 + 13); 81 (with *aid*)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +6, Wis +4

Resistances damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (with *stoneskin*)

Immunities frightened condition

STATISTICS

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Speed 30 ft.

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Languages Elvish, Common

TRAITS

Courage The wailing knight has a +4 bonus to saving throws.

Fey Ancestors The wailing knight has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic cannot put the wailing knight to sleep.

Spellcasting The wailing knight is a 13th-level spellcaster.

Charisma is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The wailing knight has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level: *ensnaring strike*³, *wrathful smite*³

2nd level: *aid*¹, *branding smite*³, *misty step*³

3rd level: *blinding smite*³, *dispel magic*, *revivify*

4th level: *stoneskin*^{1, 2}

¹ The wailing knight casts these spells on himself before combat.

² These spells require concentration.

³ The wailing knight casts these spells as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The wailing knight can use its Wailing Song. It then makes two melee weapon attacks.

Melee Weapon Attack—Longsword +6 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage and the target has disadvantage on the next saving throw against a spell cast by the wailing knight.

Wailing Song Each non-undead creature of the wailing knight's choice within 60 feet of the wailing knight that can hear him must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effects ends for it, the creature is immune to the wailing knight's Wailing Song for the next 24 hours.

Wrath of Nature (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest)

Spectral vines ensnares one creature within 10 feet of the wailing knight unless it succeeds on either a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or be restrained. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, it frees itself and the vines dissipate.



SHADOWS OF FLAME

An ancient dragon returns to an age-old lair to bind its wounds.

The Shadow of Flame is a short adventure for four to five player 10th-level characters. Although designed for the *Feudal Lords Campaign*™, this adventure is suitable for any medieval fantasy setting.

This wilderness encounter is best set in a mountainous region within a forested valley.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ancenagri once held dominion over the forested valleys within the Shadkhanim mountains during an age long forgotten. Though lasting, the reign of the dragon came to an end as grand citadels climbed mountain peaks and the stone beneath swelled with dwarven kin.

Bards of old sing tale of Nógr and Vigr, two dwarven warriors from the Útanlands, who roused the fire within the bellies of their brethren and drove the great beast from its lair. Though victorious, the fracas devastated the land and shattered the economy of the region. Those that survived left the dwarven citadel of Halagar for greener pastures and richer veins.

INTELLIGENCE (HISTORY) Learned adventurers that make a skill check remember the following information:

- **Easy (DC 10):** Well-read characters (or those that frequent taverns often and enjoy the songs of bards) know the information presented above.¹
- **Medium (DC 15):** Nógr and Vigr are ancient dwarven words for *abundant* and *able to fight*. The two names are not of heroes, but of clans. Furthermore, the Útanlands is a fabled region and simply translates as *abroad*.¹
- **Hard (DC 20):** A very old dwarven prophecy reveals: *The true hoard of Ancenagri holds the key to the doors of Halagar. With the portcullis breached, the dwarves will once again return home.*¹
- **Very Hard (DC 25):** Ancenagri is ancient draconic for *The Burner of Fields*.

¹ Dwarves do not need to make an Intelligence

(History) check to know the information presented above.

ADVENTURE SECRETS

Ancenagri, an **ancient red dragon**, attempted to reclaim the region the fiend once dominated ages ago, though thwarted by another ancient dragon, Gullhyrindr. The epic clash wounded both great wyrms leaving them vulnerable to mortal blades. While Gullhyrindr returned to Halagar, Ancenagri scoured the land for one of its primitive lairs hidden within the valley. The dragon now rests, weak and wary of intruders.

Gullhyrindr the Gold-Horned, an **ancient gold shadow dragon**, guards Halagar and awaits for the dwarven peoples to one day return to their halls of stone.

LJÓTUR ORC TRIBE Drawn to its power, an orc tribe gathered in the age-old ruins set in the mountainous crag where the dragon now lairs. Ancenagri crushed the skull of the tribal leader and demanded worship. The draconic beast granted leadership to the shaman, Geyma.

While Ancenagri ponders the orcs and their adoration, the dragon intends to devour all but the most utile to regain its strength. The monster avails the shrewdness of Geyma towards this purpose. With each passing day, Geyma selects a fresh sacrifice from among his people to satiate the anger of the beast. In secret, the most defiant orcs call the shaman, Geyma the Bone-Herder.

THE PROPHECY The *true hoard* within the dwarven prophecy is the *heart* of Ancenagri and the *portcullis* refers to the ribcage of the beast. Within the lair, the death of the **red dragon** will lead to the key to Halagar and usher a new age for the region.

INTELLIGENCE (NATURE) The most mythologized creatures on Terra, the origin of dragons hide amongst obscure riddled mysteries. To learn about these magnificent creatures and their secret nature, adventurers must seek them out. Although, astute trackers and lore masters that make a skill check may remember gleaning the following information about dragons:

- **Medium (DC 15):** The ancient Elancai word for dragon is *drakonta*, meaning *to watch* or *to hoard*.
- **Hard (DC 20):** There are no dragons

This adventure first appeared for free on the Alea Publishing Group website. If you have yet to present the adventure to your players, it can serve as a prelude to the *Shadowed Eye of Halagar*.

younger than adult, although many found fossilized remains lending credence to a time when dragons could reproduce.

- **Very Hard (DC 25):** Many modern first-hand accounts attest that most dragons are either black, brown, or green. However, over the years scholars attached a specific color based on early, frightening encounters. For instance, a man running for his life after a dragon emerged from inky swamp waters, with black mud clinging to its scales, described the creature as a black dragon. Another early account tells of a red dragon basking near a lava pool, when in reality, the red glow of the magma reflecting from its brown scales might make such a beast appear red or even orange.
- **Nearly Impossible (DC 30):** An astute few believe that their innate draconic attraction to gold, jewels, and other riches, is to actually to control and regulate humanoid commerce.

WOUNDED Ancenagri is wounded and though it is ancient, represent the beast with the **young red dragon** statistics. It is still gargantuan in size.

QUESTS

An expedition to vanquish a dragon holds great glory for the most stalwart of fortune-hunters and is quite an undertaking. The following quests can further inspire adventurers to act.

WATCHER IN THE WOODS An **orc**, known to his kin as Mund, follows the company in secret once the group enters within five miles of the lair. Attentive adventurers might notice something or someone watches their movement from the woods. Attempts made to glimpse the intruder are at a disadvantage.

Mund fears for his tribe and knows Geyma cannot be trusted. The orc offered himself to the dragon as a finer petitioner than the shaman in hopes to later undermine the beast. Ancenagri answered in blood and bone. The dragon ripped the left arm from the orc and swallowed the appendage after a quick snap with its jaws.

Ancenagri drew an elven cloak (see sidebar) from beneath its scales and then awarded it to the brazen orc with the instruction to survey the surrounding area. Confused and frightened, Mund now serves as the eyes and hears of the dragon while it recuperates.

Once confronted, Mund surrenders to the company rather than run. The orc sees the arrival of the adventurers within the region as a propitious moment he can exploit. The creature has the following goals:

- Drive the beast from its lair or offer a more enticing sacrifice to save his people from doom. The orc gleaned from Geyma that the dragon prefers female flesh; in particular, human flesh.
- Murder or undermine the control of Geyma to gain leadership of the tribe.
- Escape from the shadow of the dragon with his son, Einga (**Area 8**), into the wilderness should all fail.

Mund does not need to accomplish all his goals. One would suffice. The orc offers his services as a tracker and guide. He further offers them the cloak as well, though adventurers must first promise to aid in freeing his son. Mund is reluctant to part with the precious gift for he recognizes it will later aid in his flight with Einga.

Mund cannot be trusted. If the orc can accomplish his goals by betraying the company, he will.

ELVEN CLOAK OF GREETING

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement).

This cloak of neutral, green cloth proves identic to a normal cloak of the same color. Though, when a fey creature looks upon the cloak, it appears regal with intricate thread and knot work. Should a creature touch the fabric, it harkens a brief pleasing memory, such as the smell of fresh baked bread or sausages sizzling upon warm fire.

When an attuned wearer of an *elven cloak of greeting* casts the *friends* cantrip, the target does not become hostile afterward. The wearer must finish a short rest before he or she can use this feature again.

VARIANT: ELVEN CLOAK

At your discretion, you can elevate the rarity of this magic item to rare and combine it with the features of a *cloak of elvenkind*.

HERMIT OF STONE Egill Draga, an old dwarf, lives in solitude within the valley of his ancestors. With his stone cunning, the dwarf gathers hewn brick from the surrounding ruins and delivers them to local masons. *Draga*

NOTES ON MUND

To make Mund memorable, here are a few suggestions:

He cowers at strength.

When adventurers draw a weapon or some other mundane item, Mund says with a grin, "Nice."

He blinks often, though not in tandem; one eye at a time.

Quotes:

"Oooo, nice! Really nice."

"Nice, nice!"

"Niicee."

NOTES ON EGILL

While travelling with the company, the dwarf often asks to drag or haul gear for the adventurers.

He admits, he is stronger than most pack horses and ornerier than a mule.

He hopes to soon return to his beloved human wife, Ethra.

She is lonely when he is away.

The dwarf does not accompany adventurers into the lair. Instead, he instructs them to return when Ancenagri is dead. Then, he will reveal the secret vault.

He further reminds them that the treasure that rests upon the marble dais is his and not to be touched.

means *to haul* in the dwarvish tongue and Egill wears the moniker with pride.

The dwarf was within the ruins of the great crag when Ancenagri returned to the old lair. Egill fled and now fears for the small villages and hamlets that depend on the richness of the valley to survive.

The hermit also knows of the dwarven prophecy and the small creature becomes elated when adventurers cross his path. The dwarf believes it a good omen and encourages the company to slay the beast.

Though a poor man and not interested in riches, the dwarf entices adventurers with the location of a secret treasure vault within the ruins (**Area 6**). Without further detail, the dwarf invites adventurers to take what they wish from the vault, though there is one treasure that must remain. Egill further relates an increase of **orc** raids as the creatures spread across the valley in search for human sacrifices to satiate the beast.

Egill has the following goals:

- He interred his late wife, Ethra, within the secret vault to spend eternity among the splendor of the ancients. He fears the orcs or dragon will uncover the tomb and defile her remains. While he is concerned with the plight of the local villagers, his love for her place of rest is paramount.

When Egill speaks of his wife, it is in the present as if she was still alive. Adventurers should not know of her passing until discovering the secret vault.

THE ENVIRONS

As adventurers draw closer to the lair of Ancenagri, the company witnesses events to indicate that the very presence of the dragon changes the landscape and twists the nature of magic in the valley.

BURNING TREE Temperatures begin to rise within the valley. While journeying the wooded paths, the top of a tall pine bursts into flames. Burning pine needles and pine cones rain down upon adventurers. Those failing a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw suffer 1d10 fire damage.

MINOR EARTHQUAKE The ground rumbles beneath causing adventurers to lose their balance. Those failing a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw fall prone.

FLAMING PORTAL As adventurers relax

around the campfire for the evening, the blaze erupts into large bonfire. While the company attempts to get the flames under control, the fire begins to take shape as **3 fire elementals** emerge.

FLAMING EMISSARIES An alternative to the *flaming portal* event, adventurers befriend a group of druids (Rowena and Trahern) that watch and protect the valley. They have come to investigate the changing landscape and discern the cause. They offer their talents to guide adventurers through the valley. As the company relaxes around the campfire for the evening, the three druids begin to convulse into a seizure. Unable to harness their wild shape feature, the two druids burst aflame and transform into frantic **fire elementals**. Once destroyed, charred corpses are all that remains of the druids.

FISSURE The ground trembles and quivers until the earth beneath the company splits creating a huge fissure. Those failing a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw fall 40 ft. and suffer 4d6 bludgeoning damage. To further endanger those who fell deep within the fissure, **15 magmin** or **magma mephits** clamber from exposed lave tubes.

WILDFIRE MAGIC Spellcasters that weave an evocation spell must make a DC 10 Concentration check or lose the ability to harness the magical energy. While it does not disrupt the spell, the surge of power spawns a number of **fire snakes** equivalent to the spell level.

LAIR OF ANCENAGRI

While the main lair and cave is a natural formation, the ancient people of Imperatoria constructed the surrounding ruins as a dedication to the Gemina mystery cult.

GENERAL FEATURES The religious edifice endured the fall of the Imperatoria Empire. It once served as a place of wonder and mystery to the Gemina cult long before Ancenagri settled the valley.

- **Light:** The areas or rooms are not intentional lit. Depending on the time of day, natural light does seep into areas exposed to the wilderness. The light is bright and stretches 20 feet from the entrance, then an additional 20 feet of dim light.
- **Ceilings:** 10 feet high unless otherwise noted.



An orc's hair usually is black. It has lupine ears and reddish eyes.

Orcs prefer wearing vivid colors that many humans would consider unpleasant, such as blood red, mustard yellow, yellow-green, and deep purple. Their equipment is dirty and unkempt.

Orc acolytes mutilate their skin in habitual devotion to their god. Upon initiation and in a state of fervor, the orc removes its right eye without a murmur.

Dragon Breath, 1606.
DC 17 Dex save for half.

Stalagmites are on the ground and stalactites hang from the ceiling. Or is it the other way around?

Half Cover +2 AC bonus and Dexterity saving throws.

- **Secret Doors:** Designed to blend with the natural environment, each door rests in nested hinges and carved from a single, solid block of stone. Before three of the doors, a marble basin sits upon a stone pedestal. Ancient acolytes created a smoky haze in the basins which would conceal the high priest entering or leaving the area. Once discovered with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a DC 10 Strength check opens doors.
- **Speleothems:** Stalagmites and stalactites blossom in natural caverns. The formations can provide **half cover** to those that take refuge behind them.

AREA 1 The cave entrance is 20 feet high and filled with a variety of speleothems. Adjacent to the entrance rests an ancient alcove that once served the high priest during ritual ceremonies. Uxi, an **orc war chief**, awaits an audience with Geyma. Two **orc eyes of the orcish god** serve as acolytes to Geyma and also wait for the shaman.

AREA 2 As with the broad entrance, stalagmites and stalactites crowd the cavernous passage. The ceiling is also 20 feet in height and slopes to a steep incline 70 feet from the entrance.

Read or paraphrase the following as adventurers move deep toward the lair:

The air is thick and hot. Mouths are dry. Sweat pools along the brow then trickles downward to hamper vision. Skin burns and threatens to blister.

Ahead, a powerful heaving reverberates throughout the cavern. Damaged and discarded dragon scales mingle amongst bone and sinew beneath a splintered shield of a long dead noble house.

You hear a stalagmite crumble as a tail sweeps across the chamber floor while the gentle crackle of fire and bubbling water lick your ears. Sulfur and rot penetrate the nostrils and push the fetid odor deep toward the gut.

AREA 2A The steep slope leads to **Area 3**. It is 30 feet in height and requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check due to the worn and smooth surface. Within 10 feet from the start of the climb, a gaping cavern offers reprieve from the ascent. Those with a light source notice the passage, within 15 feet, splits into three ancient lava tubes (**Area 3a**), each with a sheer stone staircase carved into the wall.

Adventurers that choose the latter soon regret their decision as Ancenagri fills one of the tubes with its fiery breath. Those within the tubes have a **disadvantage** on Dexterity saving throws while adventurers still in the chamber do not.

While adventurers reach this area, Ancenagri begins a conversation at first believing it to be Geyma.

“Ek heg enga orf fyrir ig, Geyma. Ek er ekki hungar e augnablikinu. Lata mig hvila bein min.”

Orc Translation: *“I have no need of you, Geyma. I do not hunger at the moment. Let me rest my bones.”*

Ancenagri further engages the adventurers:

“Ahhhh, you do not smell of orc, but of sweet flesh. I am very familiar with the taste of each of your kind. Approach no further. I am in no mood to verify ancient stories or to bathe artifacts you wish destroyed in my fiery breath. Handle your own affairs and leave me be.”

If adventurers still approach, read the following:

You still come forward? Still risk yourself to seek and audience with me? I have no treasure here, glory-seekers, or has Gullhyrindr the Gold Horned One tempted you to seek me out? Come then, I am here!”

AREA 3 The huge cavern spans nearly 100 feet from any of the entrances leading into the chamber. The height of the ceiling is 50 feet.

UXI

Uxi is a figurehead for the Ljótur orc tribe since Ancenagri crushed the skull of the previous tribal leader. He serves as an agent for Geyma. Though the orc chief does covet more power, Uxi is a coward and will not oppose Geyma unless an opportunity presents itself. Should the skirmish with adventurers prove futile, Uxi offers to aid the company to draw Geyma into an ambush. If the adventurers agree and devise a plan, Uxi will fight as an ally. Despite any good intentions, Mund will plunge a dagger in the back of Uxi at the first apt moment, killing the war chief. Mund dismisses the act, explaining the chieftain planned to betray the adventurers to the dragon. In truth, Mund is eliminating any competition for his eventual leadership over the tribe.

ANCENAGRI

Ancenagri is an **ancient red dragon**, though with the injuries the beast sustained, it is greatly weakened. Therefore, use the statistics of a **young red dragon**. The dragon is gargantuan and has the following spells prepared with the ability to cast each 1/day:

3rd level: *counterspell*, *fireball*, *haste*^{1 2}, *hypnotic pattern*²

¹ Spells active before combat.

² This spell requires concentration.

TACTICS

Ancenagri is vulnerable and feels any attack a serious threat. Therefore, the dragon is not reluctant to kill one or more adventurers. Though Ancenagri cannot fly for any great distance, the dragon has enough strength to reach the ceiling where it clings to the stalactites. With its girth and long neck, the dragon can span the 50-foot distance with its 30-foot cone of fiery death to cover a wide area below.

The dragon will cast *fireball* to further weaken foes and after *haste* ends, attempts to enthrall enemies with *hypnotic pattern*. Should adventurers succumb to *hypnotic pattern* and with much of the threat diminished, Ancenagri will drag victims to the bubbling pool, (**Area 3d**) and thrown them in to watch as they squirm.

LAIR ACTIONS

Ancenagri has **lair actions** described in the *Monster Core Rulebook*, though instead of magma erupting from the ground, instead have super-heated steam or boiling water gush from open fissures.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon is too weak to utilize its normal **legendary actions**. Though, while upon the cavern ceiling, the dragon can take the following legendary action a turn:

Throw Stalactite: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 100/120 ft., one target.

Hit: 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage.

ESCAPE

Ancenagri will only fight to the death if it feels trapped or the attempt futile. The dragon is reluctant to leave its lair knowing that Gullhyrindr remains in the valley. Should adventurers flee, the dragon does not pursue beyond the entrance (**Area 1** or **Area 5**). Though, it will enlist the orc tribe to hunt down the transgressors and return them to the beast for retribution.

TREASURE

Ancenagri holds coin and gems beneath its scales, though most lay scattered across the valley from the skirmish with Gullhyrindr (adventurers might stumble across a few coins before confronting Ancenagri). The following coins and gems remain: 80 gp, 10 pp, and 1,000 bits of crushed ruby and sapphires (1 gp each). Furthermore, a sword, buried to the hilt, rests in the back of the dragon just below its left wing. It is the remnants of the failed assault led by Sir Aethlard Talbot 132 years ago. It requires **attunement** to pry it from Ancenagri. It is a **sword of vengeance**.

A natural chimney to the north of the cavern exits from the mountainous crag (**Area 3c**) while a large spring bubbles in the southeast part of the chamber (**Area 3d**). Underground volcanic vents heat the pool. Once adventurers enter the lair, read or paraphrase the following:

Bone fragments litter the scorched limestone

floor. It wrecks of filth. Along the naturally uneven surface, long spires of rock reach toward the ceiling while stalactites dangle from above. The rock and mineral formations offer scant protection for those seeking refuge from the great draconic beast that rises before you.

With its wings shredded and the tip of its tail chewed to a mashy pulp, the dragon still stands proud and poised to fight. Its scales, the

NOTES ON ANCENAGRI

When dragons war upon one another, injuries from their draconic kin do not heal as normal often lingering for years, even decades depending on the severity of the wound.

Though Ancenagri is a red dragon, the creature has scales of a dark auburn, or red-brown. Although, it lost a lot of blood from its injuries leaving the creature with a sick, white pallor.

Both Mund and Egill describe the dragon as white. Mund further adds that the creature appears injured and often spends most of its time sleeping.

Spell saves DC 16.

Spellcasting Ability +8

Counterspell, 228

Fireball, 241

Haste, 250

Hypnotic Pattern, 252



color of a sick, white pallor, fester from its grievous wounds, though glints of sapphires and rubies persist to sparkle from beneath puss and blood.

AREA 3A Ancient lava tubes lead from **Area 2a**. Steep stone staircases carved from the rock once aided priests of the mystery cult to ascend into the main cavern. Geyma now escorts sacrifices for the dragon through these tubes when the beast demands to be fed.

AREA 3B The ledge is dangerous and close to collapse. The lava tubes (**Area 3a**) weakened the rock eons ago, though the recent return of Ancenagri and the minor tremors in the valley has made it a precarious place to stand.

When the dragon performs a **tremor lair action**, the ledge cascades down the steep incline in **Area 2**. In addition to the normal effects associated with the **tremor lair action**, those on the ledge must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half on a successful one. Adventurers still within the lava tubes instead suffer 10d10 bludgeoning damage and are also **restrained** on a failed save, or half as much damage should they succeed. As an action, adventurers can make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to free themselves from the rubble and end the **restrained** condition.

AREA 3C This natural chimney allows the dragon to enter and leave the large chamber without the need for **Area 1** and **Area 5**. With its wings marred, however, Ancenagri must climb through the opening should the dragon need to escape.

AREA 3D Ancenagri often soaks in the scolding pool to ease its bones and cleanse the wounds that now ail the beast. Bloated bodies of half-eaten ores and mountain goats float and writhe upon the bubbling waters. Volcanic vents heat the water and anyone submerging themselves must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 10d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one.

AREA 4 This is an ancient bath. Fading and crumbling frescoes adorn the walls depicting the mystery cult engaged in philosophical discussions and worship. Each of the priests depicted in the paintings are paired in a group of two. Imperatoria priests bathed petitioners before the oracle would receive them.

Geyma instructed his acolytes to bath the

THE STORY OF KYN AND AGIRNI

Should Egill be present, the dwarf can translate the script and offers his interpretation in **Area 6**:

"I am not sure about the ritual practices of ancient humans, though my people have a tale of caution that resembles this mind-boggler. It is of two twin brothers, Kyn and Agirni.

"When Clan-King Akaft passed, the two inherited the treasures of the kingdom. Kyn wanted to enrich the people, for greed filled King Akaft, thus they suffered, and Agirni wished for war to reclaim lost lands."

Should the company boasts any humans, Egill further adds:

"I would recite the entirety of the epic poem—it is nearly one-hundred thousand lines in length—though the life of a human is too short and your heart too impatient. When I courted Ethra, it only lasted a year. Can you imagine a courtship only lasting one year?"

Afterward, and with a laugh, the dwarf continues:

"Kyn soon had a revelation. Gold is not in the heart dwarves. It is stone. Stone is everlasting. As long as his people have the mountains, they will prosper. Therefore, he left Agirni with the treasure and his desires.

"Agirni outfitted a company of sell-swords and warred only to die a horrible and inglorious death on the battlefield. So I thought to myself when I first encountered this inscription and recalled the tale of Kyn and Agirni—stone. Stone is the answer. It is the only answer.

"Therefore, whenever I venture down this passage, I pile a heap of stone in the alcove. With stone, I am protected to hold my treasure."

Egill does not know the details or the nature of the trapped passage leading to **Area 6** only to reveal that he has learned throughout his travels that the hearts of men are as covetous as a dwarf—and religious men, as covetous as a dragon. Therefore, he errs on the side of caution.

ores the priest has prepared to sacrifice.

There are **4 orc eyes of the orcish god** poking and prodding screaming **orc** females

If released, the orc females flee the area. Should adventurers have yet to encounter Uxi, the orc chief may take this opportunity to approach the company with his plan to rest away control from Geyma.

Geyma and his bodyguard, Brynja, are found in either **Area 4** or **Area 7**.



into the scalding waters.

- **Bath:** As with the pool in **Area 3d**, this bath is heated from underground volcanic vents. Anyone entering the water suffers 4d10 fire damage. For each further round of exposure to the scalding water, characters take an additional 1d10 fire damage.

AREA 5 This cave entrance is similar to **Area I**, though it is 60 feet from the ground and requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to enter.

- **Deadfall:** Loose rock and rubble overhead threatens to collapse upon encroachers should any venture too deep in the cavernous passage. The recent rumbling in the valley has left the route too dangerous to enter. Ancenagri avoids this passage. Cautious adventurers detect the deadfall with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. A further successful DC 10 group Wisdom (Survival) check avoids causing a cave in. Otherwise, debris cascades down upon interlopers. Those within the deadfall suffer 10d10 bludgeoning damage and are also **restrained** on a failed DC 15 Dexterity save, or half as much damage should they succeed. Furthermore, those adventurers that are successful must declare which direction they attempt to leap for safety—forward or toward the rear. This deter-

mines whether adventurers are either trapped inside or outside the lair. As an action, adventurers can make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to free themselves from the rubble and end the **restrained** condition.

If unaware of their presence, the deadfall spirits Ancenagri to take immediate action. The dragon brings its full fury upon those adventurers who remain exposed after the collapse. Furthermore, the passage also crumbles once Ancenagri performs a **tremor lair action**.

AREA 6 An undiscovered secret door reveals a long, downward sloping passage into a room that once served as the vault for the mystery cult. Should Ancenagri meet its demise at the hands of the adventurers, Egill fulfills his promise and exposes the entrance.

Upon entering the corridor, a stone idol of two twin brothers rest within an alcove along with an inscription in ancient common:

*Two twins of old, one devout and one bold,
together devoured a treasure of gold;
one to behold and one to share,
each warned the other to beware.*

*One knelt and prayed and tried to save the other from his covetous ways,
though time in prayer was time he could share,
and left his brother with the gold as his grave.*

Players should choose in secret which direction to leap to avoid the deadfall. Have each send a text or write a note.

Ancenagri blessed Geyma with archaic draconic blood magic to increase the power of the orc shaman. To represent Geyma, use the statistics of a cambion with the following changes:

31 day each: burning hands, command, detect magic

11 day: fireball

Geyma also does not have wings and cannot fly.

Brynja, the bodyguard of Geyma, is also blessed with draconic blood.

Use the half-red dragon veteran to represent Brynja and make the appropriate aesthetic changes.

Those that succeed at a DC 5 Intelligence check can translate the archaic script. As for its meaning, that is left to the interpretation of the adventurers. Adventurers that decide to ignore the fable and bound down the corridor, soon discover a dangerous trap.

- **Flooded Passage:** For each one adventurer that proceeds down the sloping corridor, one must remain in the alcove. If this does not occur, a hidden stone panel opens from the floor and fills the passage as well as the vault in scalding water from the pool in **Area 3d**. Those succumbing to the trap must make two saves: a DC 20 Strength saving throw and a DC 15 Constitution save. Adventurers that succeed in the Strength save manage to climb back toward the alcove, while those that fail are swept into **Area 6**. An adventurer failing a Constitution save suffers 10d10 fire damage from the heated water or half as much damage on a success. For each further round of exposure to the scalding water, the character takes an additional 1d10 fire damage. To swim against the rushing water as it floods the passage requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics check). After 3 rounds, this becomes a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check and the DC is further reduced to 10 after another 3 rounds.

While a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check of the alcove reveals pressure plates, the exact amount of weight needed remains unknown. Both the inscription and the tale Egill shares about twin brothers should offer a clue.

Those that enter the vault without falling victim to the trap, behold the glorious wonders of ancient treasure. The marble walls and floors contain the following vast riches:

- A scattered pile of coins and gems comprised of 500 cp, 10,000 sp, 2,200 gp, 120 pp, a blue diamond (400 gp), a fire opal (140 gp), a white opal (130 gp), and a purple corundum (120 gp).
- Ivory statuette of Gemina twins, each holding 2 star rubies (290 gp).
- Two silver-plated ritual daggers with 2 emeralds embedded in the hilt (230 gp each).
- An etched silver urn with three canary diamonds along the rim (2,180 gp).
- A pair of ritual mystery cult masks dedicated to the Gemina twins (90 gp each).

- 6 silver plates, each depicting a different heroic exploit of the Gemina twins (80 gp each).
- *The Bows of Gemina* (see sidebar).

TWIN BOWS OF GEMINA

Weapons (a pair of longbows), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with these magic weapons.

These are a pair of identical oryx horn bows with carved images of horsemen on the hunt. When you succeed in a critical hit, if the next attack from the other wielder of the bow hits against the same target, it too is a critical hit.

By taking an action to concentrate, you know the direction of the other bow from his or her current direction. Should you distance yourself for more than one hundred feet from the other bow, you and the other bearer suffer sadness and weep when swamped with overwhelming odds.

THE TOMB OF ETHRA Wrapped in soft, *dwarven linen* (see sidebar), the body of Ethra rests upon a marble altar. Though now marred, four reliefs at the base once depicted scenes from the religious fables of the Gemina twins. In place of the reliefs, Egill sculpted crude images of his life together with Ethra.

DWARVEN SHROUD OF VIGR

Wondrous item, rare.

This is a burial shroud of dwarven artisanship woven from the silken thread of crystal spiders. A dead creature wrapped in the *dwarven burial shroud* does not suffer ill effects of being returned to life as described in *raise dead* and *resurrection*. Once returned to life, the *shroud* dissipates. Preparing the body of a dead creature requires a short rest. While wrapping the body, a light somber, harmonic tune is heard.

Once prepared, should a creature remove the body from the shroud, the creature is cursed. The ill-fated creature suffers a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. After a long rest, reduce the penalty by 1 until it disappears.

AREA 7 Once the revered chamber of the two Gemina priests who maintained the religious site, it now serves as the living quarters for Geyma and his bodyguard, Brynja. This chamber is well preserved and features running water, a small bath, and privy. Rich mosaics decorate the floor and walls depicting

ritual instruction for priests as well as storied images of the Gemina twins.

Within the chamber, 4 **orc eyes of the orcish god** rummage through broken tablets and vials of scented oil in hopes to glean insight into the wonders of the ancients.

AREA 8 This cave is an unfinished shrine and at one time housed an bath similar to that of **Area 4**. The recent seismic changes caused the bath to collapse into a network of silent volcanic tubes. Geyma holds sacrificial victims in the pit before being bathed and escorted to the dragon.

Geyma discovered the toxic gases belched from the volcanic tubes weakens those in the pit, thus none of the victims attempt escape. After the first 1 hour within the pit, a creature incurs 1 level of exhaustion. For each day, thereafter, the creature suffers another level of exhaustion.

Adventurers that investigate the volcanic tubes suffer 1 level of exhaustion for each 30 feet they travel. At your discretion, these tubes can lead to **Area 2a** or **Area 3**.

Einga, the son of Mund, is in the pit along with 15 others. Furthermore, orcs bring any captured adventurers to this cave and imprisons them into the pit. Ten **orc** warriors guard the cave and the victims below.

AREA 9 The orc encampment spreads from the great rock formation and into the surrounding valley. The Ljótur tribe boasts upward of 200 **orcs**. While most of the tents near the lair are noble pavilions captured during previous raids and thus reserved for warriors, others of the tribe labor to build a more permanent settlement. Nonetheless, the noxious gases from the volcanic tubes in **Area 8** will poison the tribe in a few months.

AREAS 10 and 11 These two conjoining caves serve as storage for the tribe and 10 **orcs** warriors stand guard. The air is foul as the heat of the caves slowly cook unprepared deer and humanoid carcasses. For every 5 lbs. of mundane goods taken from these caves, an adventurer can maintain a poor lifestyle for 1 day.

DEFEATING ANCENAGRI

Should adventurers defeat the dragon, the valley begins to revert to its previous natural state. If Egill Draga is alive and well, and adventurers did not desecrate the tomb of his beloved, the dwarf spreads the tale of their glorious triumph to all who will listen. Likewise, should Mund accomplish his goals with the aid of the adventurers, the **orc** treats them with respect in future dealings. He may guide the company through orc infested lands or teach a few several phrases of his natural tongue.

KEY TO HALAGAR A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check beneath the scales near the breast of the dragon reveals a wrought iron key of ornate design (see Treasure).

KEY TO HALAGAR *Mundane Item, rare*

This is a large key of winter-forged, dwarven iron. It bears dwarven knot work and the name *halagar* in dwarven script, though in the language of giants.

Despite its appearance, the *key to halagar* is not magical. Although, it does hold great significance to all dwarves who view it. When revealed to an adventurous dwarf, it is a symbol that it is safe to return to the ancient halls of Halagar. A dwarf will treat the holder of the key with kindness and may relinquish a small keg of fine dwarven ale in celebration.

VARIANT: KEY TO HALAGAR

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Using this variant, the key holds greater importance for heroes in the adventure, the *Shattered Eye of Halagar*. A character attuned to the key can open the *Gate of Brothers* and advantage to unlock the bronze doors in the Red Citadel.



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King Elic has yet to appear and make due on his promise to assault Giant Gate. It is perhaps for the best. Though, I will not relinquish my honor on this day or my oath to the Oerl. I intend to march to the bronze door and hope my brethren will let myself and those that follow to pass in the hallowed halls of my ancestors.

My brethren . . . they are more shadow than dwarf and the Oerl . . . Oldspear is something more now . . . though I believe it less. I hear he consumes the gold coins in the treasure vaults and grows scales along his back. The oerl foresaw his own fate . . . or did he seek it?

What madness led to this rebellion . . . that I should draw arms against my kin? Perhaps it is the same madness that now seeks ancient rituals to transform my own self so that I may have hope to complete the task at hand.

If some other pair of eyes finds this note upon my corpse . . . listen well. We are four in number, one for each cinnabar emblem, the Knights of Cinnabar. Pry this emblem from my hand and seek out one of the other three to place this burden upon them.

Should all fail, I beseech your honor and courage to gather the other three emblems and close the Dusk Gate. Otherwise, the shadow world will envelop the Limestone Scar and the world beyond as it has done with most of my kin.

Thoim, Son of Thoru

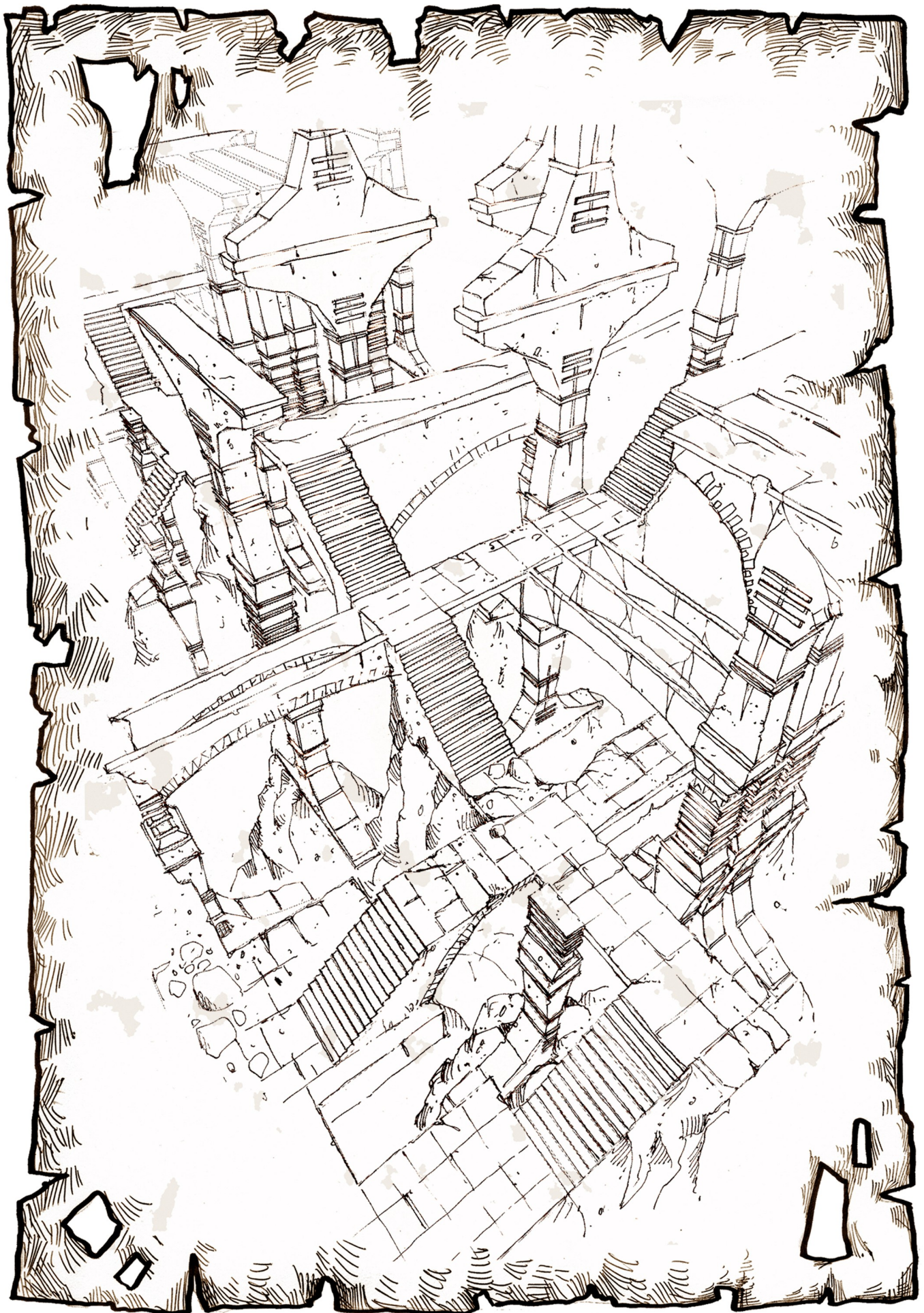
Thoim and his retinue stood before the Red Citadel in glory and honor this morning. All prepared to ascend the stone stairs and approach the great bronze door.

While we made ready our arrows and oil, I failed to deliver my orders as the retinue clambered the stairs in a slow a steady pace. Despite the change within each of us who remain loyal to the Oerl, they are still kin.

We watched in earnest as they stood on the stonework that bridged the small chasm. Thoim demanded entrance into the wooden palisade that guarded the inner courtyard. The knight and ten of his most loyal warriors encased themselves with ancient enchantments that made their skins as hard as stone so no blade could bite it. It soon became apparent to most that the magic bore the weight of stone as well for the bridge collapsed beneath the sheer burden. All ten warriors, as well as one who stood too close, fell into the chasm.

Crushed by their fellow brethren, we all endured the screams of their folly. It is then I heard the Commander of the Gate Tower, Rinar, Son of Korin, to tip the vats and unleash the boiling oil upon them. Those that remained on the platform and stairs soon left and sought lives elsewhere.

What a vile, black stew we set upon the hearth this day.



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