

A 3.5/OGL ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 2

D1



CROWN OF THE KOBOLD KING™



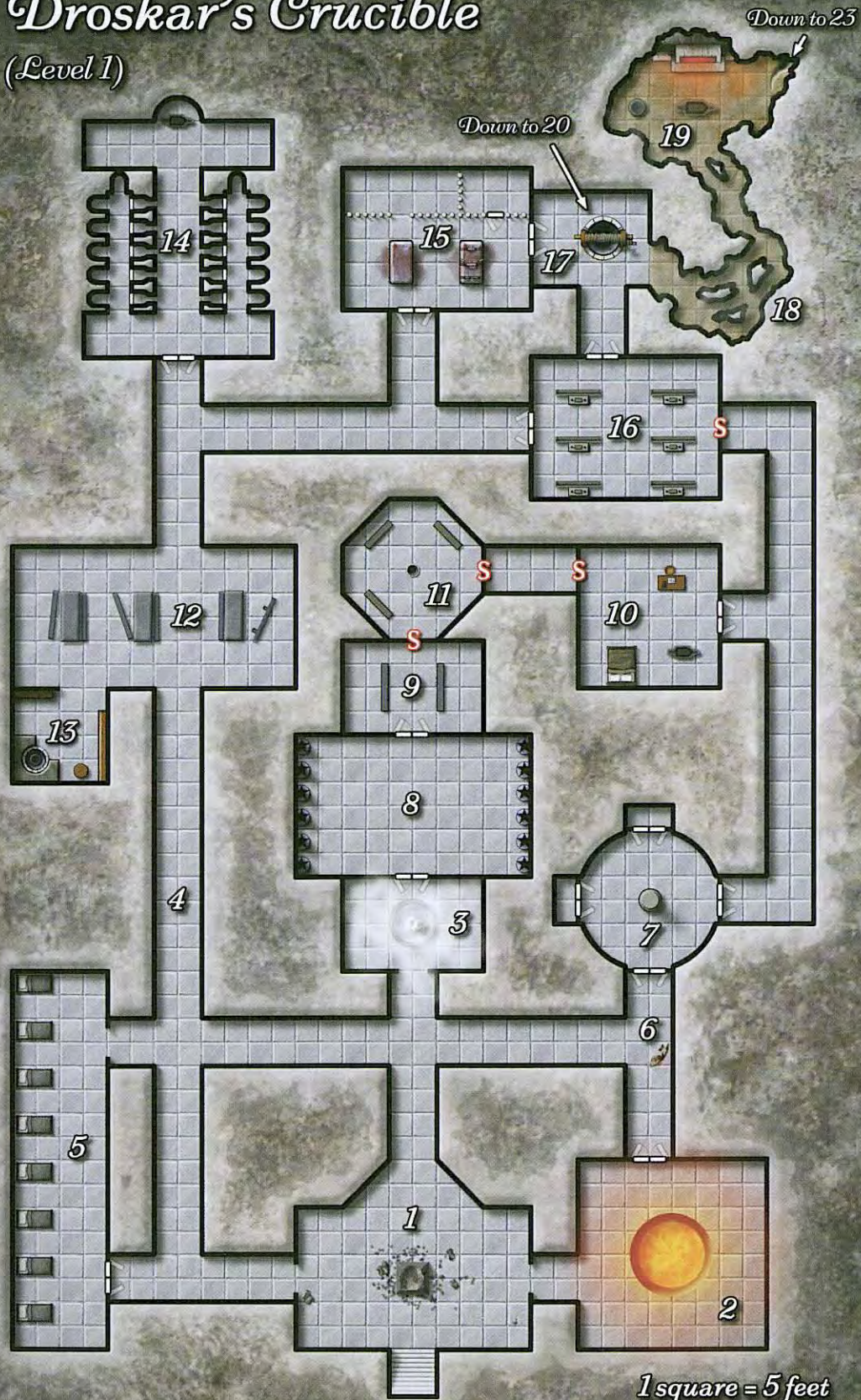
BY NICOLAS LOGUE

GAMEMASTERY™

MODULE

Droskar's Crucible

(Level 1)



Up to Surface Ruins

1 square = 5 feet





CROWN OF THE KOBOLD KING

GAMEMASTERY MODULE DI
WILDERNESS AND DUNGEON ADVENTURE

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Crown of the Kobold King is a GameMastery Module designed for four 2nd-level characters. This module is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game.

The OGL can be found on page 31 of this product.

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Only the desperate and the brave is the proud motto of Falcon's Hollow. Few choose a life on the outskirts of Darkmoon, whose dim, mist-laden forests are prowled by feral beasts, reeking trolls, and the restless souls of the dead. Fewer still possess the steely will to venture into the haunted ruins of the once-great dwarven kingdom. For those brave enough to claim them, treasures surpassing the dreams of princes and poets rest beneath the rocky slopes of Droskar's Crag, but so too does an ancient evil. Sibilant whispers ride the vale winds after nightfall, jumbled promises of doom, blasphemy, and rot hissed from the darkness beneath the mountain. From deep below the earth come soul-shredding abominations, and as these unspeakable horrors rise, the lesser denizens of these dwarven ruins are forced to the surface.



THE PATHFINDER CHRONICLES

Adventure Background

The reign of Merlokrep, first of his name, all-mighty Dragon King of the Truescale Kobolds, has suffered misfortune from the day of his coronation. When his consort, Vreggma, slipped on the dais steps and poked out the king's eye with one of the bristly points of his own crown, he should have known his rule would be ill-starred. But the sturdy resolve that saw him through the murder of his eighteen siblings and cleared his path to the throne did not allow Merlokrep to heed this inauspicious omen. Even when a third of his subjects perished in a haphazard mining excavation to retrieve more "shiny good-good" for his demanding consort, Merlokrep remained undaunted. When the foul "creeping shadows" rose from the dark caves below and withered his finest warriors to skeletal husks, the Dragon King finally took the hint. He gathered his most sycophantic followers and, taking only what they could carry (mostly shiny good-good), they fled up and away from the spreading darkness. Exiled from their comfortable warren on the lower levels, the kobolds now live directly beneath Droskar's Crucible, a monastery devoted to a once mighty and malevolent dwarven god, whose only legacy is the rocky mountain and the odd ruin that still bears his hateful name.

Merlokrep and his few surviving followers did their best to eke out an existence

among the other dangerous denizens of their new home, but kobolds are frail creatures. Merlokrep's tribe continued to shrink with each passing week as accidents, attacks by their new monstrous neighbors, and the king's own homicidal outbursts of rage over both, claimed more and more of his beloved people. Growing trepidation over the slew of hardships faced after Merlokrep ascended the throne finally jarred the memory of the tribe's elderly shaman, the ever-absentminded Jekkajak, called by many "He Who Forgets More Than You or He Knows." At a tribal dinner of stewed goatherd, Jekkajak suddenly lurched to his feet and babbled forth a dread prophecy long tucked in some cobwebbed corner of his crusty mind: "When the Doomed King sits the Throne, our great tribe merk-merks its last! To save our people, wash our troubles from the crown with the blood of pink-skin-spawn!" As the last word left his mouth accompanied by a dribble of stew, Jekkajak slumped face-first into his bowl and Merlokrep's path became instantly clear. The only way to save his tribe from annihilation lay in the blood of the pink skins' squishy children. In the dark of night, he sent forth his sneakiest to steal the pink-skinned babes from their strange fluffy beds. Before the kidnappers even reached the town, though, destiny intervened on their behalf.

Not far from the monastery's ruins stand the burnt remains of a hillside orphanage. For years, Elara's Halfway House took in the itinerant children of Falcon's Hollow and offered shelter to the numerous war orphans left in the wake of a recent conflict with nearby goblin kingdoms. A few months ago the orphanage burned to the ground in a mysterious fire. Every child and the headmistress perished in the tragic blaze, their only epitaph a charred husk of sooty timbers. As luck would have it, on the very evening Merlokrep's band of minions emerged from the ruins, a group of children from Falcon's Hollow picked their way through the gloom to Elara's Halfway House. Earlier that day, a heated debate over whether the halfway house was haunted provoked the five kids to spend the night in the orphanage's blackened remains. When the kobolds caught sight of these fresh pink morsels blindly bumbling through the dark, they quickly subdued them, dragging the children back to their king in triumph. Now, on the eve of their salvation, the kobolds of the Truescale Tribe cavort freakishly below the earth, while Jekkajak struggles to recall the proper protocol for sacrificial ceremonies. But Merlokrep's patience for his old shaman's amnesia grows thin, and the children hasten to their demise. Soon their young blood shall anoint the Crown of the Kobold King.

Adventure Summary

As the PCs knock about Falcon's Hollow they learn of the missing children. After taking up the quest to see them safely home, the party probes the rumormill for information on their whereabouts. The party gleans tales of the haunted halfway house, mutterings of missing goatherds and livestock, and more than a few harrowing legends concerning the ruins nestled beneath Droskar's Crag. Armed with this intelligence, the PCs venture forth into Darkmoon Vale.

At the burned-out remains of the orphanage, the PCs cross paths with Jeva, a tortured girl and the only survivor of the inferno at Elara's Halfway House months before. Jeva tells the PCs how five children came to the orphanage in the dead of night but were captured by freakish little monsters and dragged off into the shadow of Droskar's Crag. Jeva offers to lead the party to the

kobold lair, but the girl is not all she seems, and has her own sinister motives.

The PCs brave the dark ruins of Droskar's Crucible. On the first subterranean level they face a strange dwarven specter, a screeching vargouille, and deadly traps crafted with powerful dwarven magic. After detaining some whimpering kobold slaves and rescuing two of the missing children, the party learns that two other kids escaped their captor's clutches but are now lost in the dangerous recesses of the ruins. The party must explore an ossuary of restless skulls to save one wayward child. The PCs then brave a fiery forge and a hateful undead dwarf to retrieve the next. Finally, they must penetrate the darkness of the kobold warren to save the last child before his blood is offered to Merlokrep's crown.

FALCON'S HOLLOW

Town nonstandard (lumber consortium); **AL NE**
GP Limit 1,500 gp; **Assets** 40,550 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,400

Type isolated (human 94%, halfling 3%, half-elf 1%, elf 1%, other 1%)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Gavel Thuldrin Kreed, LE male human expert 3/rogue 4 (Gavel of the Lumber Consortium),
Magistrate Vamros Harg, NE male halfling aristocrat 2/sorcerer 5 (Magistrate-Elect),
Sheriff Deldrin Baleson, LN male half-elf expert 3/fighter 3 (Sheriff of Darkmoon Vale),
Boss Payden "Pay Day" Teedum, LE male human monk 2/fighter 3 (Overboss of the Lumber Consortium).

FALCON'S HOLLOW

Falcon's Hollow is perhaps better described as a scattered collection of several ramshackle communities rather than a single town. Enclaves of wealthy lumberlords sit comfortably on the Perch, looking down at numerous ghettos of indigents, downtrodden lumberjacks, religious zealots, and desperate settlers who in turn gaze across their fences with suspicion and distrust.

A teeming monster-fraught wilderness surrounds the hollow. Danger lurks just beyond the treeline, and most of Falcon Hollow's more canny residents realize the settlement will most likely be savaged by some horrid monstrous threat sooner rather than later. Until that day, the lumberlords do their best to snatch as much darkwood from the vale as they can. It's only a matter of time before their heedless ravaging of the wilderness around the town draws the notice of a fierce guardian.

Meanwhile, adventurers flock to Falcon's Hollow but most vanish into the shadows of Darkmoon Vale, never to be seen again. Even more lose their nerve after their first brush with the unholy terrors lurking in the night and end up slaving away at the cutyards or selling their swords to lumberlords who always need more unscrupulous ruffians to keep the rabble in line.

NOTES

See Appendix 1 for extensive information about Falcon's Hollow as a mini-setting and details on all of its important places and persons.

Introduction

The ramshackle town of Falcon's Hollow rests perilously close to the infamous Darkmoon Vale. The jagged shadow of nearby mountains casts a shroud of gloom on the desperate souls who call this place home. Many are drawn here to make their fortune cutting a swath of darkwood lumber through the lush forests of the vale. Others journey to these remote fringes to start over, piecing together their shattered lives on the edge of an untouched wilderness far from the things of man. Persecuted zealots and outcasts flock to Falcon's Hollow. Here, these fanatics practice their strange and often deviant rites unfettered by the mores of civilization. Still others are lured to Falcon's Hollow by the promise of great adventure. Peril and splendor await within the accursed halls of dwarven kings of old, whose glorious civilization long ago shattered and crumbled to dust.

When the PCs arrive in Falcon's Hollow it shouldn't take them long to learn about the missing children. Most of the town is talking about it to one extent or another. Consider cultivating personal relationships between PCs and the children's parents. Perhaps a fighter is an old army buddy of town butcher Colbrin Jabbs, a wizard is being mentored by Sharvaros, one might be indentured to Gavel Kreed, or the mother

or father of a PC might have adventured with Idris Eavewalker. For information on these NPCs, see Appendix 1.

If you need a way to get the PCs to Falcon's Hollow, you might have a powerful patron of the PCs or a high-echelon member of an organization they serve ask the party to investigate the dungeons below Droskar's Crucible. The patron is not concerned about a ragtag band of kobolds, but rather divinations reveal that a greater evil grows restless farther below the earth, a dread undead rumored to serve the infamous Whispering Tyrant. The party is to gather information from the recently surfaced kobolds about reasons for their emergence from the dark depths.

Alternatively, a dwarven PC might have a vested interest in Droskar's Crucible. Perhaps one of his ancestors served the evil god and he wants to reclaim his ancestor's remains or an heirloom. The PC might even be somehow related to Druingar the Glintaxe (see area 4) and seeks to succeed where Druingar failed.

PART ONE : LIGHTING THE WAY

Gravagos the Sage states: "When delving into the darker places of the world, only wisdom safely lights the way." As a fledgling band of adventurers, the PCs would do well to avail themselves of as much information as possible before venturing into the danger-fraught shadows of Darkmoon Vale. In addition, the PCs probably want to learn a few things about the disappearance of the five children before they begin scouring the countryside for them. The most likely subjects of their investigation are covered here.

The Missing Children

A simple DC 10 Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check reveals the following about the missing kids. For more information on their parents see Appendix 1.

Kimi Eavewalker: Daughter of the famed elven ranger Idris and a beautiful seamstress named Kitani, Kimi has not seen her father in two years. The ranger is constantly away adventuring and tracking down relics for a mysterious patron. Kimi idolizes her dad and has grown into a fearless tomboy chomping at the bit to follow in her father's adventurous footsteps as soon as



she is old enough to wield a sword. Kimi is the protector of this band of friends, often scrapping with boys twice her age who try to bully the others. She usually wins these bouts, and many of the town's children are afraid of her.

Hollin Hebbradan: Hollin is a freckled ten-year-old boy missing his two front teeth (from a bad spill off the waterwheel at the old mill). Hollin's mother died in childbirth and his father was savaged by an owlbear two years ago. Now Hollin's older sister, a beautiful young red-haired woman named Ralla, looks after him. The two have struggled to make ends meet and rumor has it Ralla works in one of the pleasure dens on Mud Street to keep food on the table. Hollin is a skilled woodcarver and he manages to earn a few copper pieces hawking his statuettes. The boy's only aspiration is to grow up faster and work the cutyards so his sister won't have to set foot in a brothel ever again.

Mikra Jabbs: The thirteen-year-old son of the town butcher, Colbrin Jabbs, Mikra's

difficult birth resulted in several mental deficiencies. He cannot read, is easily confused, and believes almost everything he is told. Mikra is well liked by everyone. While not incredibly bright, the boy possesses limitless kindness and his bright smile wins the hearts of almost anyone who meets him. Though the oldest of the bunch, Mikra is looked after by the others.

Jurin Kreed: Son of the wealthiest, most powerful, and vilest man in Falcon's Hollow, Jurin Kreed is a boy of eleven torn between his family and friends. In public, Jurin behaves insufferably, snarling at the other children and threatening to have his dad's bodyguards beat them if they don't do everything he says. People wonder why the other children don't simply avoid the spoiled bully, but Colbrin Jabbs knows the boy has a good heart deep down, and in private would do anything to help his friends. Jurin spends many hours at the Jabbs's house reading to his son Mikra in the afternoons.

Savram Vade: Son of the mysterious wizard Sharvaros, Savram is a quiet, withdrawn nine-year-old boy, whose bright eyes betray intelligence far beyond his years. When he is old enough he will no doubt follow his father into the cryptic life of a wizard.

Tracking Them Down

A DC 15 Gather Information check convinces a few neighborhood kids with loose lips to reveal "the secret dare" taken by the five missing kids: to spend a night at the burned-out ruin of Elara's Halfway House up on a mournful hill in Darkmoon Vale. A DC 20 Survival check made by anyone with the Track feat discerns five sets of child-sized footprints meandering northwest toward the orphanage.

Elara's Halfway House

If the PCs ask around about the burnt orphanage, they learn a middle-aged silver-haired human woman named Elara opened the orphanage ten years ago, hard on the heels of the Goblinblood War. The atrocities

committed by marauding bands of goblins left dozens of children without parents, and Elara took in droves of them.

ELARA'S HALFWAY HOUSE LORE

DC 10: "Elara was a selfless woman who spent the greater part of her life caring for those no one else wanted. The fire was a horrible tragedy."

DC 15: "The fire started out of nowhere and spread so fast, by the time the town's volunteer brigade arrived all that was left was a smoking ruin, every child dead, and Elara burnt to cinders. Hard to believe a blaze that fierce could start as an accident. I was always a'feard for the safety of that place. Elara built her halfway house far away from town and much too close to that haunted vale."

DC 20: "The last few months or so before the fire people claimed to hear all manner of clatter from the orphanage at night. Screams they say. Terrible screams. Some even claimed Elara lost her mind, took to torturing the children in the dead of night. That's why she built the place outside of town."

Droskar's Crucible

Darkmoon Vale was not always the savage frontier it is today. More than a millennium ago, a vast dwarven kingdom sprawled across the landscape and pervaded deep into the stubborn rock below. Their civilization was unrivaled in its time, but as most grand kingdoms do, the dwarves conquered themselves from within. As their glories became innumerable, the dwarves' decadence knew no bounds and their society began to collapse. Rampant indulgence fueled corruption, and soon the honor, discipline, and benevolence upon which the kingdom was built gave way to petty infighting over status, wealth, and power. The tattered kingdom sputtered and wheezed, but its death was delayed by the rise of a new cult devoted to a mirthless god of woe named Droskar. Droskar's followers reacted against the bon vivant trends that staggered the kingdom, instating a dreadful dogma of salvation through endless toil and brutal subservience to the Dark Smith, as Droskar was often called. The dwarves became slaves to their own industry, producing heaps of

weapons, armor, and gear to appease their dark god. The wilderness around them was fed to Droskar's fires of industry until the dwarves choked on their own black fumes and starved in the dust. It took centuries for the land to recover and become the beautiful and savage countryside that now surrounds Falcon's Hollow. Droskar's Crucible was a monastery devoted to worshipping the Dark Smith. If the PCs seek information see the following.

THE CRUCIBLE LORE

DC 15: "The Crucible is some sort o' dwarf ruin. Hosts of monsters plague its darkened halls, and they say ghosts o' the dwarves skulk there too."

DC 20: "It was a monastery long ago, where they worshiped some dark joyless god of toil. Druingar the Glintaxe, the great dwarven hero, quested there to find relics of his people's ancient empire. He never returned, and now those who venture close to the place at night claim his ghost glides through its gloomy halls, preying on anyone foolish enough to trespass there."

DC 25: "Something vile lives deep below. Recently, freakish little monstrosities have surfaced in the vale. I'm sure they murdered those goatherds found dead last week, and I wouldn't be surprised if they are behind those children's disappearance."

BALLAD OF THE GLINTAXE

If any PC makes a DC 15 bardic knowledge, Gather Information, or Knowledge (local) check, he has heard the Ballad of Glintaxe at least a few times.

*Glintaxe, mighty hero of the dwarven race,
Seeker of heirlooms lost without trace,
He ventured the deeps where old evil sleeps
He perished in the halls of some dark place.
His restless spirit still stalks the night,
His shining axe still glows bright,
I've seen his ghost, and this is no boast,
I've ne'er laid eyes on a more fearful sight.*

PART TWO: SEEKERS OF LOST CHILDREN

The PCs' first stop in their quest to find the missing children is likely Elara's Halfway House, the scene of the infamous dare and the last place any of the children were known to be. The halfway house stands on a small rise about 8 miles outside of town, right on the edge of the vale. Elara's motives for building the orphanage so far away from the relative safety of town are a matter of some speculation in the village, but the truth is that she was afraid of raising them too close to the evil influence of the seedy town and the greedy lumber barons. Her isolation allowed her to give the children a chance at an education, but the price proved to be her life and the destruction of everything she built.

Elara's Halfway House (EL 3)

As the PCs approach the site of the burned orphanage, read or paraphrase the following:

The blackened husk of the orphanage lies atop the hill. Charred timbers are strewn among piles of caked ash and the only edifice left standing is a soot-stained stone arch. A small stuffed doll lies below the arch, her face seared off and her patchwork dress spilling dirty stuffing. Beside her, a troop of half-melted tin soldiers stand in formation, their bodies twisted and deformed by the blaze that claimed their owner's life.

There is little of interest among the debris here, but a DC 20 Search check reveals a charred trapdoor beneath an inch of ash in the center of the ruins. The lock is melted shut and cannot be picked, but the door is badly damaged and easily smashed open.

Trapdoor: Hardness 5, hp 8, Break DC 15. If anyone breaches the door read or paraphrase the following.

The stench of rot belches forth from this rank cellar. A chipped, blood-stained oaken table rests against one wall, with all manner of blades and barbed instruments laid out on it. A single pair of rusted shackles is bolted into the opposite wall, whose bricks are stained in a bloody account of pain and cruelty. The robbed corpse of a woman on the floor is the source of the reeking stench of decay.

The woman is Elara. She did not die by fire, but at the hands of one of her



Treasure: Among the implements on the table are two masterwork silver daggers and a damp rotten bundle of herbs. A DC 20 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (nature) check identifies the decomposed herbs as wolfsbane.

Development: If the PCs have tracked the children this far, or if they search the area around the orphanage, they can discover the children's campsite not far from the ruin. A large, makeshift tent lies shredded on the ground beside a crude fireplace of flat stones. Signs of a struggle are everywhere, with broken twigs, crushed foliage, scraps of clothing, and patches of blood on the ground. A DC 15 Search check is good enough to turn up a few reptilian scales around the fire pit. DC 20 Knowledge (local) check identifies them as kobold scales.

The kobolds made little effort to conceal their tracks through the forest and it only takes a DC 15 Survival check to follow their trail.

demented charges, a disturbed little girl named Jeva. Jeva was the quiet, well-mannered young daughter of a well-to-do family of potters living in Falcon's Hollow. One day, the girl and her parents ventured into the countryside for a pleasant picnic. The family outing took a bloody turn when a large wolf burst from the brambles and savaged her parents before her eyes. Jeva's screams drew the attention of some nearby lumberjacks, who drove off the slaving beast, but not before it sank its teeth into her arm. Her parents dead, Jeva ended up at Elara's Halfway House.

No longer a sweet little girl, she was transformed into a hateful monstrous child. The first week of Jeva's stay a boy who bullied her in the yard one morning was found dead at the bottom of the stairs the next night, his neck broken, seemingly from a bad spill. A few days later, the elderly groundskeeper chided Jeva about playing in the garden. He was found with his throat torn out in his chambers early the next morning. The truth behind Jeva's murderous nature became apparent when the full moon rose and she transformed into a hideous werewolf, butchering three of her bedmates before Elara was able to lock her in a storage closet. From then on, Elara kept the little girl shackled to a wall in the basement and each night she tried to "purge the beast" from the girl with

silvered knives and whips. Her "treatment" only deepened Jeva's evil rage.

Finally, one night Jeva managed to pick her lock with a bobby pin that fell unnoticed from Elara's hair as she administered her nightly dose of "holy cleansing." Jeva overpowered her tormenter, gnawed through Elara's throat, and drank deep of the old woman's blood as she died. Jeva then prowled the halfway house, dispatching her fellow orphans in a night of red terror. Her thirst for blood and vengeance thoroughly slaked, she doused the place with casks of lamp oil stored in the basement and watched it burn.

An examination of Elara's corpse reveals the nature of her death (throat torn out), and a DC 15 Search check reveals a band of discolored skin on her ring finger (Jeva snatched the old woman's garnet ring).

Creatures: Elara's corpse now plays host to the brood of spiders nesting in the basement. As soon as anyone approaches the carcass, a swarm of spiders scuttles from her nose, eyes, mouth, and rent throat. Their proud mother lurks in a ceiling corner and descends to protect her children.

SPIDER SWARM CR 1
hp 9; MM 239

MEDIUM MONSTROUS SPIDER CR 1
hp 11; MM 288

Wolf in Girl's Clothing (EL 5)

Since she burned down the orphanage, Jeva has skulked about Darkmoon, preying on anyone crossing her path. On occasion, she goes down among the children of Falcon's Hollow, lures one or two into the woods to "play" and subsequently devours them. She lurks among the woods when the PCs approach and begins to stalk them in human form. If discovered, Jeva relies upon her considerable Bluff to present herself as a traumatized survivor of the orphanage fire. She begs the party for food before breaking into tears, refusing to talk about the fire unless pressed, at which point she weaves a harrowing tale of hearing her only friends wail as the flames melted their faces. If asked about Elara, she insists the headmistress was a wonderful woman who "only did what was best for us orphans, no matter how much it hurt..." She lets her ragged clothing hang off one shoulder to reveal the horrible scars left by Elara's ministrations, and if asked she says, "It was for my own good! She did this to us to make us better, she said." Tears follow fast.

All of this is just a ploy to win the PCs' hearts, and Jeva does everything in her power to endear herself to them (planning to betray and murder them all

Jeva



later for fun). If a PC is a devout follower of a religion, Jeva feigns interest in the faith, hoping he takes her under his wing (where it will be so much easier to claw at him later). She tries similar tactics to endear herself to others too. If asked about the missing children from Falcon's Hollow, Jeva is eager to help. She witnessed the kids' abduction because she was stalking the band of children herself before the kobolds interrupted her hunt. She is happy to help the party find the kids (mostly because she looks forward to sucking the marrow from their bones), and can show the way to Droskar's Crucible (she eats the occasional lone kobold from there when pickings are slim).

Jeva is a rail-thin, green-eyed girl of fourteen years, although she is particularly diminutive for her age. Her mouse-brown hair is a tangle of twigs and brambles and her face is smudged with dark stains. Her back, arms, and legs are covered with brutal scars from Elara's "curative treatments."

JEVA (HYBRID FORM)

Female human werewolf rogue 2
CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14
(+4 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 26 (2d8+4 and 2d6+4)

Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion; **DR** 5/silver

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +3 (1d4+1) and bite -1 (1d6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Jeva waits until the PCs are engaged with another foe or significantly weakened after a battle. At that point, she slips off to transform into hybrid form (she can take 10 on her Control Shape check to do so) and then slinks up on the party to sneak attack.

CR 4

During Combat If the PCs are engaged with another opponent, Jeva takes up a flanking position, otherwise she concentrates on the weakest foe and tries to rip him apart.

Morale Jeva is not suicidal and flees if reduced to fewer than 10 hp.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 12, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Bluff), Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Bluff +12, Control Shape +9, Diplomacy +8, Hide +11, Intimidate +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +8, Spot +6, Survival +6 (+10 tracking by scent), Tumble +10

Languages Common, Elven

SQ alternate form, wolf empathy, trapfinding

Gear garnet ring (10 gp), tattered clothes

BASE STATISTICS (IN HUMAN FORM)

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12

(+4 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 18

Fort +3, **Ref** +8

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15

Through the Woods

Either following the tracks of the kobolds, or guided by the strange wild orphan from the forest, the PCs at last enter the perilous Darkmoon Vale. Even at high noon, little light breaches the rocky eaves and thick forest canopy, making night one with day. For every 4 hours the party spends in the vale there is a 15% chance of a random encounter. Consult the table below should one occur (see GameMastery Module *Do: Hollow's Last Hope* for more encounters in Darkmoon Vale).

Darkmoon Vale Encounters

1-3: Unsettlingly large crows loom in the branches, cawing ominously as the PCs pass but otherwise not harassing them in any way.

4-5: As one PC passes a weeping willow tree, an assassin vine growing on its trunk animates and attacks.

Assassin Vine: hp 30, MM 20.

6-7: A pair of bugbear brothers are heard arguing over the corpse of a lumberjack they waylaid in a clearing ahead ("Me always gets toes, me like eats toes!"). If the PCs wait, the bugbears come to blows in a couple of rounds. Their cousin (a third

bugbear) relieves himself against a tree further off but rushes to join any fight that breaks out.

Bugbears (3): hp 16 each, MM 29.

8–9: Two muttering allips in the vague shape of dwarves pass the party. They are on a fell errand for whatever evil lurks below the monastery ruins and do not attack unless provoked, though their babbling affects the PCs unless they retreat out of range.

Allips (2): hp 26 each, MM 10.

10–11: The body of a half-elf adventurer clad in masterwork leather armor with a masterwork longsword strapped to his hip is slumped between a pair of large oak trees, his skull bashed in. A bulky sack stained with gore and bits of brain, tightly tied shut, sits nearby. The sack contains a haul of three hefty dwarven iron goblets set with fire opals (120 gp each). One of them is animated and brained the unlucky half-elf. If it detects the PCs it lurches about, trying to slay them too.

Animated Goblet: hp 15, MM 29 (Small animated object).

12–13: Sithmuk, an imp and formerly the familiar of a tiresome windbag of a wizard who met a gruesome end in Darkmoon, appears in the PCs' path in the form of a hawk with a broken wing. If the PCs adopt Sithmuk he bides his time and then tries to steal their most powerful magic item before turning invisible and fleeing.

Sithmuck the Imp: hp 13, MM 56.

14–15: A drunken hill giant named Kardoblag staggers through the wood uprooting trees as he tries to maintain his balance. Kardoblag met some ogres earlier and accepted their offer to drink a foul spirit of fermented darkwood leaf. When a jocular argument over how to properly roast halfling turned ugly, Kardoblag stove in the ogres' skulls and started home. In his inebriation he misplaced his wedding ring (he quickly slipped it off earlier when he spotted a "comely" female among the ogres) and now staggers about searching for it. Normally he would delight in reducing the PCs to paste, but with his head pounding from drink he only wishes to find his ring and get home (his wife will be angry enough when he shows up drunk, much less ringless). A DC 20 Search check locates his ring and earns his gratitude (he might not smash the PCs next time they meet).

Kardoblag the hill giant: hp 102, MM 123.


16–17: The PCs hear a beautiful lilting female voice on the wind. Perched on the branch of large oak ahead, a harpy sings to a band of four lumberjacks from Falcon's Hollow, all of whom march toward her waiting talons. If saved, the lumberjacks thank the PCs profusely and offer them their week's wages in thanks (a grand total of 20 sp).

Harpy: hp 31 each, MM 151.

18–19: The PCs happen upon the fresh corpse of large dire wolf. A DC 15 Heal or Search check reveals five bolt-sized sharp spines embedded in its neck and side. The manticore who slew the wolf suddenly bursts from the branches above and attacks shortly after.

Manticore: hp 57, MM 179.

20: Any PC making a DC 15 Search check notices a +2 shocking adamantite arrow stuck in the trunk of a nearby tree, forgotten after a frantic battle fought here long ago.



Designer Notes

NOT-SO-RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Some of these encounters are extremely dangerous, especially if the party is weakened from a previous battle or simply ill-equipped to handle the result you rolled. Don't hesitate to fudge a little and supply them with a different result. Also, the manner in which you narrate the beginning of the encounter should allow the PCs a chance to deal with it in more ways than just hurtling into combat. They might wish to avoid the allips altogether, allowing you to set up creepy ambiance and foreshadow the encounter with the allip in area 11. In the case of the encounter with Kardoblag, be sure to dissuade the PCs from attacking the giant—lest your adventure come to a bloody end before it has even really begun. Narrate clearly how drunk the giant is and don't leave the PCs guessing as to what he is doing—he can be mumbling about his lost ring to tip them off. Ideally, this random encounter is a fun roleplaying interaction instead of a quick and deadly fight resulting in a none-too-exhilarating slaughter.

PART THREE: INTO THE DARKNESS

As the PCs journey closer to the base of Droskar's Crag, the shadows of the vale deepen. When they emerge from a bleak treeline of twisted black elms they catch their first glimpse of the old monastery. The surface level of the monastery is fully detailed in *Do: Hollow's Last Hope*. If you don't have this module, use the following description:

Tall grasses and chunks of stone debris have all but overtaken this small yard. Off to one side, a wooden stable has collapsed into a mound of rotting timbers and moldy straw. The outer wall on the east side has also collapsed, leaving a ragged hole. Bits of foundation-work only suggest the monastery's original layout, fading memories of a world long ago crushed under the unforgiving heel of time.

If the PCs pick about the clearing they find little of interest beyond the ancient stonework and fallen stable. A DC 15 Search check reveals a small broken spear with a wicked barbed tip, discarded by a kobold hunter, with a slight residue of centipede poison still clinging to it. Anyone scouring the ruins finds the top of a broken staircase half obscured by uprooted bushes. Read or paraphrase the following as they descend into the black.

The constant woodland background noise seems to liquefy in the murk below the surface. Replacing it is the occasional quasi-discernable whisper, moan, hiss, or intermittent echo of jangling chains.

Level One: Droskar's Crucible

The first level of this dungeon is comprised of the sub-level of an ancient dwarven monastery. Droskar's Crucible was constructed during the dismal twilight of a stumbling kingdom, whose decadence resulted in a horrible backlash of tyranny under the crushing fist of a grim god named Droskar.

Droskar demanded utter obedience from his charges, who showed their devotion through constant toil. Sloth, corruption, and decadence vanished for the first decade of Droskar's theocratic order, as the dwarves united to create awe-inspiring testaments to their dark god's power. Crafting works of masonry and metallurgy were the



only means of abating the Dark Smith's unceasing anger, but as Droskar grew in might and influence he demanded more and more labor to satisfy his tremendous ego. As his pride grew, fidelity to Droskar no longer inspired great works, only works, and the quality of dwarven craftsmanship plummeted as they attempted to ceaselessly churn out monuments, temples, and armories in his honor.

The crucible is a hallmark of this decline in imagination and spirit. Its spartan interior is a testament to the joyless final days of the dwarves. Smooth halls stretch between cold-stoned chambers. Crudely hewn tunnels connect the underground monastery directly to dreary mines and the thundering forges that long ago hammered out steel day and night. The only area of craftsmanship in which Droskar demanded continued ingenuity was trapmaking, and the crucible showcases a few dangerous examples of the craft.

Dungeon Features

The stairs descend more than 20 feet below the surface and no sound penetrates from above. The monastery's walls are masonry, and there is no source of light anywhere save the forges and crucible of offering (areas 2 and 19). The monastery was constructed to warp sound in strange ways, allowing for the special qualities of the Listening Chamber (area 11). In all other areas besides the Listening Chamber, creatures suffer a –5 penalty on Listen checks.

Where present, doors are strong, wooden and—unless otherwise noted—locked.

1. Monument Chamber (EL 2)

The stairway opens into a large rectangular chamber. The stone walls of this area are covered with intricate carvings of dwarves toiling in mines or smithies. In the center of the chamber stands the bottom half of a broken

obsidian obelisk. Crude picks, hammers, and other tools lie scattered around the chamber.

A monolith of polished obsidian dedicated to Droskar once stood in this atrium to the monastery's underground level. Carved with devotions to the Dark Smith and bearing a dismal mural of dwarven supplicants bowing at the Dark Furnace, the monolith was shattered when the empire fell.

Creatures: Kobold slaves gather the obsidian for its reflective qualities. Vreggma, Chief Consort and “Only One Allowed to Nag-Nag His Greatness,” loves to gaze at her own reflection. She enjoys posing before large pieces of polished obsidian and is having slaves construct a black mirror in her quarters. Currently, two kobold slaves toil near the west doorway, trying to drag a 60-pound chunk of the fallen monument behind them. Four kobold warriors accompany them (not so

much to protect the slaves as to ensure they do not run away).

KOBOLD SLAVES (2) CR 1/4
hp 2 each; MM 161

These slaves are only armed with slings and do not wear leather armor (AC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat The slaves use their slings and avoid melee.

Morale As soon as one warrior falls, they begin edging toward an exit. As soon as all the warriors fall they flee.

KOBOLD WARRIORS (4) CR 1/4
hp 4 each; MM 161


TACTICS

During Combat The warriors hiss and sputter when they detect the PCs and rush to attack.

Morale The warriors fight to the death.

Development: If the PCs subdue the whimpering slaves (named Kibbo and Jarrdreg), they might prove invaluable, if irritating, allies through the rest of the adventure. Kibbo refers to each PC as Great Liberator so-and-so and Jarrdreg applies a fitting title to each PC such as Grand Axy-Cut (for an axe-wielding fighter type), or Great Chief Bore-to-Snore (for a wizard he sees cast sleep). The kobolds are lickspittles and gladly jump to complete any demeaning task they perceive as an order, even obvious jests.

Designer Notes



LAST FLIGHT OF THE KOBOLDS

The kobold slaves' flight in this encounter can lead the PCs into their encounter in area 4 (Glintaxe Attacks). If the PCs pursue the slaves, they might witness the slaves rush around the corner into area 5 (Monk's Quarters), hear their pathetic screams as their flesh is sizzled away, and then catch sight of the "apparition" as it emerges from area 5 and glides toward the party.

They know all about the "pink-skinned blood bags for the crown," and are happy to talk. The children were dragged down to level 2 to join the other captives (see area 12 for more details on the other captives). If the PCs do not speak Draconic, Kibbo and Jarrdreg prove useful in area 11 and in any parleys with other kobolds. They also can tell the PCs a little bit about the tribe's most dangerous members (the unique NPCs on level 2).

PCs who read Dwarven may piece together and dust off some of the broken chunks of the monument to read the following:

"...Toil is the only true path to Salvation. Those who will not work shall have their blood boiled in the Dark Furnace for all time... there is no decadent paradise awaiting us after death, as our corrupt forefathers claimed, only industrious labor in Droskar's Forge awaits the faithful, this great work is its own reward... the unfaithful, they will serve in the end, their blood and bones shall stoke the fires of our industry... the world will burn to the glory of Droskar."

2. Crucible of Offering (EL 3)

At the center of this large stone chamber is a deep pit filled with molten slag and sizzling blood that casts a hellish red gleam on the walls. Three narrow chutes open in the ceiling directly above the pit. The air here is oppressively hot and thick with ash.

This large stone chamber is where the monks and visiting devotees of Droskar offered their blood and steel to the dark god. The forge spurned (see Appendix 2) that is currently lurking in area 19 has kept the pit active for centuries. Old vent shafts above once breached the surface 20 feet up but are now choked with centuries of soot.

Creatures: The warmth of the Crucible attracted a grick, who roosts in the old vents. The grick prowls the ruins for prey but is delighted when a party of delicious humanoids delivers themselves right to its home. It attacks from its hiding place in the vents above.

GRICK CR 3
hp 9; MM 139

3. Fountain Chamber (EL 4)

A large fountain dominates this small chamber. Steam rolls off the superheated water pouring from a stone obelisk at the fountain's center, filling the entire chamber with its haze.

The fountain is fed by a hot spring that sits here at the nexus of the monastery proper. The water is thick with minerals and tastes of stone. The steam affords everyone in this chamber concealment.

Creatures: A mated pair of shocker lizards resides in the shallow fountain here.

SHOCKER LIZARDS (2) CR 2
hp 13 each; MM 225

TACTICS

During Combat The shocker lizards unleash a stunning discharge against anyone who approaches within 5 feet of the fountain. If this does not rebuke the intruders they resort to a lethal shock.

4. Glintaxe Attacks (EL 3)

An evil hiss rises from the darkness ahead. A floating dwarven form shrouded in full plate rounds the corner. The air about this dwarven specter shimmers eerily, and the walls and floor sizzle and smoke where it passes. The thing's boots scorn the earth, gliding a full foot above the masonry floor. It drags a cruel bloodletter axe in the air behind it.

Creature: Druingar the Glintaxe approaches the PCs—or rather, his armor and axe do. Glintaxe arrived at the monastery planning to probe its secrets and retrieve the *Grasp of Droskar*, an axe created by one of his ancestors a thousand years ago. Sadly, his wild carousing the night before his arrival left the usually steady warrior a little under the weather. Addled by drink and exhausted from the long hike to the Crucible, he decided to catch a short nap in area 5 before continuing deeper into the ruined monastery. As he slumbered, a gelatinous cube engulfed him and quickly digested the dwarven hero.

His mithral armor and magical axe (locked to his gauntlet) proved indigestible and remain suspended inside the cube. The magical glow shed by his enchanted axe refracts through the cube, creating a ghostly shimmer.



Designer Notes

THE GHOST THAT WASN'T

The fun of this encounter is that the PCs have been led to believe by the information gathered in town that the armor trapped in the cube is a floating ghost. Play up the spooky feel of the scene at first and describe the eerie “shimmering” surrounding the Glintaxe as he comes. If the PCs attack with a ranged weapon first they immediately gain a strong clue to the true nature of the threat, as the weapon melts away to nothing before it even reaches Glintaxe. Give the PCs some clues and appropriate skill checks like Search or Knowledge (dungeoneering) to allow them a chance to discern “Glintaxe’s” true nature before they charge in and get engulfed by the cube.

Also, many of the kobolds have seen Glintaxe and they are terrified of the “flying dwarf ghost.” Any PC who dons Glintaxe’s armor and carries his axe strikes terror into lesser kobolds. Slaves failing a DC 12 Will save flee at the armor’s approach. Other kobolds failing the save become shaken at the sight of “Glintaxe.”

6. Hall of the Headless Corpse (EL 1)

A headless corpse in patchwork leather armor lies strewn in the middle of this section of corridor.

This poor sod was a recent victim of the vargouille in area 7.

Creatures: A trio of dire rats feed noisily on the rotting carcass, attacking anyone who interrupts them.

DIRE RATS (3) CR 1/3
hp 5; MM 64

TACTICS

During Combat The rats gang up on the creature that interrupts them.

Treasure: The skeleton’s belongings were long ago picked clean by the kobolds, but its boots of elvenkind did not fit any of them. In addition, a blood-soaked journal lies here, a few gory pages still legible (see the following handout).

Area 7. Lodestone Trap (EL 5)

This large circular stone chamber has four massive iron doors in the north, south, east, and west walls. The south and east doors stand open, while the north and west doors remain closed. At the center of the room a strange

stone obelisk rises from floor to ceiling, its surface covered with metal bands and encrusted with deposits of a strange greenish mineral. The floor of this chamber is strewn with headless skeletons and scattered bones (no skulls among them). A dented steel shield and bits of metal armor lie at the foot of the obelisk.

This large circular stone chamber contains a complex trap. The doors on the south and east walls of this chamber are framed with heavy iron doors on swinging hinges, which open away from the chamber, but brace against the masonry door-frame and jam shut if pulled or pushed toward the chamber’s interior. The north and west doors are reversed to be pulled open inward (although they are very heavy). Behind these doors are small alcoves where the creatures wait.

Creatures: Two vargouilles are released from their alcove prisons by the lodestone obelisk’s activation.

VARGOUILLES (2) CR 2
hp 5 each; MM 254

TACTICS

During Combat As soon as the PCs spring the trap, the vargouilles flit from their hiding places with a shriek and attack.

Trap: The obelisk is a giant lodestone whose magnetic properties are activated

GELATINOUS CUBE CR 3

hp 54; MM 201

TACTICS

During Combat The cube mindlessly moves toward any potential meal (the PCs included).

Treasure: Druingar’s suit of mithral full-plate needs a good wash to rinse off the acidic residue of the cube but is otherwise functional. His +1 battleaxe sheds light and bears the inscription “Glintaxe.”

5. Monks Quarters (EL 3)

This long barracks is completely unadorned save for rows of uncomfortable stone beds.

Creatures: Five stirges nest here, now feeding on anyone who enters this chamber.

STIRGES (5) CR 1/2
hp 5 each; MM 236

I warned Kemmrick. The secrets of the dwarves should remain beneath the ground, but he would not be placated. We’ve already lost Martren, and without his divine guidance we are truly lost in the dark. Monsters lurk in every shadow, but something worse jangles in the deep. I feel its evil from afar, like a blistering heat threatening to melt away my soul. The Dark Smith might be forgotten, but I fear one of his vile servants still prowls these halls, keeping the fires of Droskar burning for hundreds of years...

...their shrieks tore my courage from me and left my heart cold. I don’t know what they did to me when their rancid-tasting lips locked on mine, but my thoughts jumble now, and my hair falls away in bloody clumps...if only Martren were here, he would know what sickness ails me and pray for my salvation. The only prayer I can muster is that this plague takes me before that hellish shackled servant of Droskar returns to drag me off in chains as he did Kemmrick. I still hear his screams in my mind.

...ears wet...thirst so thirst...lost in the dark...tongue gone now...itchy...face rot rot rot...blood tastes good...fly soon fly.

when more than 30 pounds is applied to any one of dozens of pressure plates on the chamber floor. The abbot alone knew the safe path through the chamber, which involves skirting the circumference west and then cutting a path east after passing the obelisk and looping back south to the eastern exit.

Anyone stepping on a pressure plate unleashes a magical discharge of energy and takes 1d6 electricity damage. This charge also activates the powerful magnetic quality of the obelisk. The entry doors are yanked shut and jammed by the magnetic pull, just as those over the alcoves are wrenched open. Anyone wearing metal armor is dragged 10 feet toward the central obelisk every round (DC 10 Strength check to resist this pull, DC 15 Strength check to move normally, although half speed away from the lodestone). Once pulled to the obelisk, such characters are pinned (as in a grapple). Success on a DC 10 Strength check is required to take any action, and a 15 on the check allows a character to pull free of the obelisk. Metal objects secured on a person are ripped free and cling to the obelisk.



Metal objects gripped (shields or weapons) are wrenched from the hands of anyone failing a DC 10 Strength check (even if this check is made attacks made with held metal weapons have a -2 penalty). The lodestone retains its magnetic quality for 1d4 minutes but can be deactivated earlier if it is struck with a second electrical discharge.

LODESTONE OBELISK TRAP CR 2

Type magic device; **Search** DC 21; **Disable** Device DC 21

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect *shocking grasp* (1d6 electricity damage) and activate obelisk (see above)

8. Monument of the Forge War (EL 3)

This arched chamber contains two rows of statues, one on the east wall and one on the west. The statues to the east depict fearsome dwarven warriors clad in simple plate armor and hefting their warhammers high. Opposite these are statues of dwarves depicted in grotesque caricatures as overly obese, pig-nosed brutes with huge grinning mouths and beady eyes. The western statues stand in two lines, the front kneeling, and both holding sharp, jutting spears leveled at the smiths opposite them. The corpse of a kobold is impaled on the west wall. His limp body sags on the haft of a stone spear, eye to eye with his statuesque killer.

The eastern statues depict Droskar's Smiths, dwarven warriors that gave their lives in a brutal battle with the forces of the old empire that had fallen into decadence. They laid low the elite armies of the King (depicted to the west) and paved the way for a joyless theocracy dedicated to Droskar, but they perished to the last in the bloody battle. A DC 20 Knowledge (history) check reveals this information.

Trap: The kobold fell prey to a deadly trap meant to prevent anyone from reaching area 9 beyond. This room is constructed with tumbling gears housed in the walls and pressure plates across the floor near the middle of the room. When triggered the room lurches suddenly on its side, rotating 90 degrees. Those in the room are hurled toward the double line of spears on the west wall. On the following round the smiths charge across the room (falling on

pulley-suspended cables) and smash into anyone pinned by the spears (a DC 15 Reflex save avoids the hammer wielding statues). The chamber rights itself automatically one minute later, resetting the trap.

SPEAR LEGION TRAP CR 3

Type mechanical; **Search** DC 20; **Disable** Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect 1st round: Atk spear +10 melee (1d8/x3), 2nd round: crush 2d6 bludgeoning (DC 15 Reflex negates); multiple targets (everyone in the room)

9. Chronicle of the Faithful

This simple room has polished walls of obsidian that bear long lists of Dwarven names.

GRASP OF DROSKAR

Aura moderate transmutation and divination; **CL** 10th

Slot gauntlet; **Price** 12,302 gp

DESCRIPTION

This left-handed black iron gauntlet appears little more than a dull soot-stained plated glove at first glance, but in truth it is a powerful boon granted by Droskar to his most faithful subjects. Placing the glove on your left hand causes excruciating pain as your appendage curls into a tight fist and then slowly transforms to supernaturally hard black stone. You cannot use your left hand for anything beyond smashing it into objects or creatures (you cannot carry a shield or secondary weapon and you take a -4 on skill checks that usually require two hands). The gauntlet cannot be removed without a successful casting of *remove curse*, *break enchantment*, or a similar spell. The gauntlet grants you a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and acts as a +1 *adamantine gauntlet*. The item also grants you the ability to use the gauntlet as a secondary natural weapon. In addition, the *Grasp of Droskar* allows its wearer to use *stone shape* once per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's strength*, *magic fang*, *stone shape*; **Cost** 7,802 gp, 360 XP

The inscriptions here give the names of the dwarven heroes who fell in the war against the king's loyalist troops.

A trigger at the bottom corner of the east wall (under the name "Grindbolt Stoneslider") opens a secret sliding door to area 11. A DC 15 Search check locates the trigger.

10. Abbot's Quarters (EL 1)

This large chamber was clearly once the personal living quarters of an important dwarf. A simple stone bed stands in one corner near a large stone table. A large anvil also rests here, looking somewhat out of place. A massive maul has been attached to the anvil by a crude mechanical arm, and a dwarf skeleton, his skull crushed, rests atop the anvil.

This is where the abbot of Droskar's Crucible lived. The last abbot was a gnarled old dwarven monk named Gristogar Ashbreath, who served Droskar unwaveringly even as the theocracy crumbled around him. When the last disciple tried to abandon the crucible, Gristogar shattered the traitor's spine with a well-placed punch and retired to his quarters to meditate. After some contemplation, the abbot went to the forges and painstakingly crafted his final testament of devotion to the Dark Smith, a simple metal machine consisting of a large anvil with a hammer above locked on a mechanical hinge. When activated, the hammer slams to the anvil with thundering force. Gristogar lugged the device back to his quarters, prayed his last, laid his head upon the anvil, and triggered it. The mighty hammer blow pulped his head, sending shards of skull in all directions. His skeleton remains unmolested here, slumped across his gruesome machine.

Creature: Gristogar crafted a homunculus to serve him ages ago. The pathetic little creature's spirit broke with his master's suicide and it languishes here.

HOMUNCULUS CR 1
hp 11; MM 154

TACTICS

During Combat When someone enters this room, the homunculus snarls: "Leave my master in peace!" before attacking.

Treasure: A half-finished obsidian statuette of an owlbear rests on the table



(worth 20 gp). In addition, an obsidian tablet rests on his table carved with a last message to the dark god. This relic of the old dwarven theocracy is worth 300 gp. Gristogar's robe has rotted almost to nothing, but his cloth *slippers of spider climb* have not yet succumbed to time's rot. The skeleton's left hand still bears a fire-blackened cold

benches sit next to strange conical openings along the wall. A pedestal in the center of the room shows a map of this level, demonstrating the connections of each opening to their dedicated areas of reconnaissance.

Creature: An allip agent of the dark fiend that lurks deep below the monastery is here gathering intelligence for its hideous master.

ALLIP

hp 26; MM 10

TACTICS

During Combat As soon as any creature enters the chamber the allip begins babbling and attacks.

Development: Anyone making a DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check understands the purpose of this chamber and also ascertains that the strange stone trumpet channels a speaker's voice into area 16, where it echoes and booms powerfully. If the PCs arrive here before exploring the rest of this level, they can get an idea of what awaits them by listening at the holes.

The northwest opening allows anyone next to it to hear what transpires in the ossuary. Currently the PCs hear the sobs of the young boy, Savram Vade, who is trapped in area 14.

The western opening listens in on the Mess Hall (area 12). Listeners there discern the squeaking yaps of kobolds hurling curses and threats, followed by the crack of a stone striking one in the head and squeal of pain. Then a girl's voice calls out in Common: "Run Mikra! Get out of here!" If the PCs continue to listen, the girl cries out in pain and curses, then the sounds of a desperate struggle ensue.

The northeast opening ties into the Chamber of Penance (area 16), where the young kobold mystic named Kerrdremak argues with a handful of kobold warriors. Kerrdremak, the shaman-in-training under Jekkajak, is complaining to the warriors about the troubles befalling their people as of late. He recaps the information in the Adventure Background in a monologue of consternation at the tragedies befalling their tribe, only interrupted by squeaked affirmations from his audience.

If the PCs choose, they might use the trumpet to fool Kerrdremak and his little band of malcontents into believing

they are destined to overthrow their king and shaman—or simply torment the pathetic creatures.

Area 12. Mess Hall (EL Varies)

Three large stone tables stand in the middle of this room, while the long benches that once stood next to them have been knocked askew and overturned.

This is where the monks of the Crucible took their grim meals of tasteless gruel in silence.

Creatures: This chamber is now the site of a heated battle between kobold warriors of Merlokrep and a few of their captives, who escaped their holding pen on level 2 and made it to here before being overtaken. Edgrin Galesong, a chubby halfling and bard extraordinaire, is a member of the Gray Eagles, an adventuring troupe based in Falcon's Hollow who ventured into the vale a week ago seeking treasure. The Gray Eagles were swarmed by a large hunting party of kobolds. Most of Edgrin's companions were killed, but he and a half-elf wizard named Tyran Moonsliver were captured alive and dragged back as captives destined either for eating or sacrifice.

Originally dejected by the death of his friends, Edgrin consigned himself to his fate, but when the children were hurled into the holding pen with him Edgrin grew determined to help them escape. The bard and Tyran overwhelmed their guards with more than a little help from the courageous Kimi Eavewalker. As they sprinted for freedom, Tyran and Hollin were felled by paralytic-poison-coated spears, but the other children and Edgrin made it to level 1.

They took a wrong turn toward area 18, where Edgrin watched helplessly as the forge spurned there dragged little Jurin Kreed into the darkness. The escapees reversed direction but the kobolds, fast on their heels, caught up to them here in the Mess Hall. Edgrin and Kimi decided to make a stand and buy Mikra and Savram time to escape. Now the overweight halfling and brave little girl fight for their lives against a band of evil kobolds in a pitched battle.

Edgrin is a sweaty, moon-faced little halfling whose heart is as big as his stomach. His once debonair, brocaded, green-vel-

Our people have lost their way. They flee the shelter of your great forges. Our fires dim, my master. We have failed you. No use to you here, I now come to you. I shall join you in the Black Forge, whether to serve at your anvil or stake its flames with my soul.

iron gauntlet. This gauntlet is a magic item invested with power by Droskar himself. The gauntlet is one of several commonly referred to as the *Grasp of Droskar*.

Development: A secret door rests behind Gristogar's carving table, opened by depressing a square stone on the floor under the table (Search DC 20).

Area 11. Listening Chamber (EL 3)

Simple stone benches line the walls of this octagonal room. These benches are positioned near small openings along the west, northwest, and northeast walls. An unusual device that resembles a stone trumpet is attached to the northeast wall near the opening. A faint whispering sound permeates this chamber.

This secret room is where Gristogar Ashbreath spied upon his disciples to ensure their faithful devotion to Droskar. The entire monastery was constructed to channel sound into this room from several places. Gristogar spent many hours here each day listening to his monks at their vespers in the chamber of penance (area 16), conversations over meals in the mess hall (area 12), and secrets whispered to the dead in the ossuary (area 14). Three stone

vet doublet and silk leggings are torn and covered in grime, and his lute still hangs on a strap at his side although he splintered it on a kobold's skull in defense of the kids. Edgrin is all courage and spitfire, willing to die to save any of the children. Kimi is a black-haired young half-elf girl with fierce green eyes wearing a leather hunting vest, slacks, and high hard boots, looking like a miniaturized adventurer. Her bravery flows from her need to protect Mikra, who she treats as her kid brother although he is older than her. Kimi cannot be dissuaded from helping the party save the other children, and if ordered to wait in safety somewhere, she sneaks off to find the others as soon as the PCs turn their backs.

EDGRIN GALESONG CR 2

Male halfling bard 2
CG Small humanoid
Init +2; Senses Listen +5,
Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11
(+2 Dex, +1 size)
hp 10, currently 6 (2d6)
Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +5 (+7
vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.
Melee dagger +1 (1d4-1)
Ranged rock +4 (1d2-1)
Special Actions

bardic music 2/day
(countersong, fascinate,
inspire courage +1)

Spells Known (CL 2nd):

1st (1/day, 0 left)—*cure light wounds*,
hideous laughter (DC 13)
0 (4/day, 2 left)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 12),
detect magic, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *light*

TACTICS

During Combat Edgrin employs his spells and bardic music to help the PCs.

Morale Edgrin will die to save the kids.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 9, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13,
Cha 15
Base Atk +1; **Grp** -4
Feats Dodge
Skills Balance +5, Bluff +4, Climb +4,
Concentration +2, Diplomacy +5, Escape
Artist +5, Hide +8, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move

Silently +6, Perform (sing) +7, Perform
(strings) +7.

Languages Common, Halfling
SQ bardic knowledge
Gear broken lute, dirty clothes

YAGRIK, BLOODSCALE WARRIOR CR 2

Male kobold fighter 2
LE Small humanoid (reptilian)
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60ft.; Listen +2,
Spot +2



Edgrin

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15
(+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)
hp 13 (2d10-2)
Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee short spear +4 (1d3 plus poison)
Melee flying talon +4 (1d3 plus poison)
Ranged javelin +4 (1d3 plus poison)
Special Attacks Small centipede poison (injury,
DC 11, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex)

TACTICS

Before Combat Bloodscale warriors try to coat their weapons in poison if time permits.

During Combat Hurl javelins from afar, trip or disarm foes with flying talons, or charge with short spear if they are mounted.
Morale Bloodscales are brainwashed to fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 10,
Cha 9
Base Atk +2; **Grp** -2
Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency
(flying talon), Weapon Finesse
Skills Climb +2, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide
+4, Jump +0, Profession (miner) +2, Ride +5,
Search +2.
Languages Draconic
SQ light sensitivity
Combat Gear 4 doses Small centipede
poison **Other Gear** short spear, studded
leather, flying talon, 2 javelins

KOBOLD WARRIORS (6) CR 1/4

hp 4 each; MM 161

TACTICS

During Combat When the PCs enter, Edgrin is grappling with Yagrik and two kobolds have Kimi backed into a corner. They attempt to recapture her without harming her too badly, as Jekkajak wants her alive. Mikra is crying under a table and clutching his head.

The other four kobolds rush to engage the PCs.

Morale If Yagrik falls or more than two of their number are slain, the kobolds flee.

Development: If Edgrin survives the fight he does all he can to aid the party's efforts to save

FLYING TALON

This light exotic piercing weapon consists of a three-pronged barbed hook attached to a length of chain. The talon gives its wielder a reach of 10 feet and deals 1d4 piercing damage (or 1d3 for Small creatures), threatening a critical on a natural 20. In addition, the wielder may initiate disarm or trip attacks with the talon, gaining a +2 bonus on either check. If the opponent resists the trip attempt and tries to trip him in turn, the wielder may drop the talon to avoid falling prone.

Cost: 15 gp; Weight: 5 lb

Tyran and the rest of the kids. He tells them Savram fled the Mess Hall toward the north, and discloses the fate of Jurin Kreed, who was taken alive by the forge spurned.

Area 13. Kitchen

This once well-appointed kitchen has suffered from long neglect. Shelves covered in broken stone and other refuse line the walls, while across the room an old rusty cauldron rests in the ashes of an ancient fire.

Treasure: The refuse on the eastern shelf conceals two *potions of owl's wisdom*, stashed here by a kobold thief after a successful raid and then forgotten when the thief was captured by the forge spurned in area 19.

Area 14. Ossuary (EL 5)

This dark ossuary is cold and full of the sound of dripping water. A dark corridor runs north down the center of the room, while to either side two large bays open into small niches that contain ancient dwarven skeletons. At the far end of the corridor rests a large iron anvil.

This grim mini-catacomb of alcoves contains the bones of several dwarven monks of the crucible. All of the niches were once barred with locked iron grates. The grates are rusted and broken along the far east and west walls. The ones that seal the alcoves directly adjacent to the corridor, however, are still solid.

Iron Grates (10): hardness 10; hp 30 each; break DC 28.

Creatures: Each of the twelve open alcoves (six on each side) contains a dwarf skeleton. These skeletons do not animate unless they are attacked or someone tries to break through the sealed grates that line the corridor. The sealed alcoves also contain dwarf skeletons, five on either side of the corridor. Unless attacked, these monks' remains do not animate until the PCs try to traverse the hallway. Small openings between the backs of the niches and the hallway allow the skeletons to reach through the wall to claw at the PCs as they pass.


HEAD-HURLING MONK SKELETONS (22)CR 1/3
hp 6 each; MM 288 (human warrior skeleton) with the following changes
Init +7; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 13); Ref +2;

Ranged skull +3 (1d3+1); Dex 17; no scimitar or shield

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons in the open alcoves hurl their skulls at the PCs before closing to attack with their claws. The skeletons in the sealed alcoves reach through the openings to claw at PCs as they try to navigate the corridor.

Development: Savram Vade covers behind the anvil on the opposite end of the corridor. He ran down the corridor, receiving a vicious cut on his arm from a skeleton's claw. A DC 15 Diplomacy check is required to calm the boy, otherwise he shrieks if anyone tries to touch him and



Designer Notes

THE CHILDREN IN THE DUNGEON

The missing children serve not only as motivation to the PCs, but the reason they are split up is to force the party to investigate most of the first level in order to retrieve them all safely. The kids also add great roleplaying opportunities to the adventure, so try not to forget they are there. There are no stat blocks included for the children, but there is no reason they cannot lend the PCs a hand in battle now and then when the party needs it most. Simply narrate them distracting a foe by throwing rocks, combining their strength to topple something on a foe, tripping kobolds with a length of rope, and so on. You might even consider giving Savram the ability to cast a few o-level spells.

crawls further into the alcove behind the anvil out of reach of any Medium characters. Kimi can calm him and get him to come out without making a check.

Area 15. Abattoir (EL 5)

Two large stone blocks rest in the center of this room, while to either side hang large rusty hooks over small channels in the stone floor

that lead to old drains long since choked with refuse. A kobold lies on one of the blocks. The little creature's chest has been ripped open and its entrails hang obscenely off the sides of the block.

This yawning stone chamber served as a slaughterhouse centuries ago, where livestock were bled and their meat stripped from bone.

Creatures: Four dwarven ghouls, sad and rotting holdovers from their collapsed kingdom, now skulk in this bloody hall. Perhaps their shredded souls still cling to the memories of bloody slaughter they saw transpire here in life, and now they partake of their grisly meals in the abattoir. When the PCs enter the ghouls are at the butcher's block, one gnawing on the kobold's leg, another slurping up strips of entrails like sausages. They attack as soon as they detect the party.

GHOULS (4)
hp 13 each; MM 119

CR 1

Area 16. Chamber of Penance (EL 3)

Six stone prayer platforms with well-worn knee rests carved in to them are spread through this large chamber.

Long ago, disciples of the crucible came here to pray to their dark god and beg his leniency for being too lax in their toil or committing crimes against his creed.

Creatures: A malcontent mystic of the Truescale Tribe named Kerrdremak holds court here over five kobold warriors. They are charged with scouting the upper halls and reporting obvious threats to Merlokrep and his elite bloodscales below. Consternation at his tribe's many recent tragedies has caused Kerrdremak to unceasingly express his laments to the other five. The group is rife for rebellion, although Kerrdremak is too spineless to suggest it, and the warriors lack the conviction (or intelligence) to commit to regicide.

If the PCs make a DC 10 Listen check while approaching this chamber (or eavesdrop from area 11), and speak Draconic, they note Kerrdremak's disillusionment and may even appeal to it and earn some allies against the Kobold King. If the PCs

appear and do not immediately parley in Draconic, Kerrdremak and the warriors attack them.

Kerrdremak is a hunch-backed kobold with dark blue scales. One of his ears is immensely oversized (a birth defect) and droops under the weight of several human finger-bone earrings. These grim trophies jangle obscenely whenever he nods his head. If Kerrdremak is convinced to aid the PCs in any way he nods frantically (accidentally calling attention to the dangling finger-bones), claiming “Kerrdremak always likey pink-skins, me never hurt huu-mans!”

KERRDREMAK CR 1

Male kobold adept 3
LE Small humanoid (reptilian)
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4,
Spot +4

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12
(+1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 10 (3d6)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk club +3 (1d3)

Spells Prepared (CL 3rd):

1st—burning hands (DC 13), cause fear (DC 13),
command (DC 13)

0—create water, cure minor wounds, mending

TACTICS

During Combat Kerrdremak casts spells and shies away from melee.

Morale Kerrdremak surrenders if reduced to 5 hp or less.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 15,
Cha 12

Base Atk +1; Grp -3

Feats Alertness (as long as Taily is within arm's reach), Combat Casting, Weapon Focus (club)

Skills Concentration +4, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Heal +6, Hide +5, Profession (miner) +4, Search +2, Spellcraft +2, Survival +4.

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ light sensitivity, summon familiar (rat named Taily)

Gear masterwork club, torn brown robes, oversized dwarven boots.

KOBOLD WARRIORS (5) CR 1/4

hp 4 each; MM 161

TACTICS

Morale These kobolds only fight as long as they think they are on the winning side.

Depending on the situation, they flee or switch sides if it appears they might be losing.

Area 17. Elevator (EL 4 and 3)

A ten-foot-diameter pit occupies the center of this chamber. Directly over the pit a long chain feeds through complex pulley system before disappearing into the depths.

This area once served as a refuse pit for the dwarves of the monastery. When the kobolds were pushed into the warrens below this area, and forced to make constant trips to the surface to gather food and fresh water, they grew tired of constantly scampering up the walls of the pit. The kobolds used a large cauldron, several lengths of chain, and pulleys stored in area 20 to construct a rudimentary pulley-operated elevator for ease of travel between the two levels.

Creatures: Four kobold sentries commanded by an elite dark talon hunter are posted here to guard the elevator.

DARK TALON HUNTER CR 3

Male kobold rogue 2/fighter 1

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6,

Spot +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15

(+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 15 (2d6 plus 1d10)

Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee flying talon +6 (1d3 plus poison) or

Melee dagger +6 (1d2)

Ranged javelin +6 (1d3 plus poison)

Special Attacks small centipede poison (injury, DC 11, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex), sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat If the Dark Talon detects the PCs' entrance he stages an ambush, ordering two of the kobolds to hide in the cauldron elevator while he slinks into the shadowed alcove by the entrance. He orders the other two kobolds to hold their positions, luring the party into their trap.

During Combat They flank whenever possible.

Morale Dark talons fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12,
Cha 10

Base Atk +2; Grp -2

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (flying talon), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +6, Climb +5, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Escape Artist +8, Hide +11, Jump +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Profession (miner) +3, Search +2, Spot +6, Use Rope +7 (+9 bonds).

Languages Draconic

SQ light sensitivity, trapfinding

Combat Gear 2 doses small centipede poison

Other Gear dagger, flying talon, 2 javelins, studded leather armor

KOBOLD WARRIORS (4) CR 1/4

hp 4 each; MM 161



TACTICS

During Combat The kobolds leap out of the cauldron to attack.

Morale If the dark talon hunter falls, or more than two of their number are slain, the kobolds flee.

Trap: The kobolds purposefully rigged this elevator to malfunction if too much weight is placed inside. The elevator operates safely with less than 600 pounds in it, easily allowing the transport of a few kobolds and a prisoner, but an armed and armored party of adventurers is likely to cause the elevator to plummet to the bottom of the old refuse pit 30 feet below, dealing 3d6 points of damage to anyone inside. A DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check or a DC 20 Search check reveals the weight limit. A DC 20 Reflex save allows a PC to jump clear as the chains give way and land safely in area 19. If the trap is detected the PCs may use the elevator in smaller groups or climb down (DC 15 Climb check).

ELEVATOR TRAP CR 3

Type mechanical; **Search** DC 20 or Knowledge (architecture and engineering) DC 15; **Disable Device** DC —

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect fall 30 ft. (3d6 points of damage); DC 20 Reflex negates

Area 18. Smoking Tunnels (EL 3)

Unlike the rest of this level, this area features rough stone and undressed rock reminiscent of a mine shaft. The tunnels divide and rejoin several times, making it difficult to maintain a sense of direction. Compounding this confusion, thick acrid smoke fills these tunnels, making it difficult to see anything beyond a few feet.

These rough-hewn tunnels lead to a great forge-filled hall where the monks used to toil day and night crafting steel. Smoke from these forges travels to a great chimney spout high up on Droskar's Crag, but the chimneys are thick with soot, and a great deal of this smoke ends up filling these tunnels. All creatures in the tunnels have concealment.



Creature: The forge spurned in area 19 keeps a hellhound here to maul trespassers.

HELLHOUND
hp 22; MM 151

CR 3

TACTICS

Before Combat If the hellhound detects the PCs it stalks them, concealing itself until it can catch them in its breath before charging into melee.

Morale The hellhound fights to the death.

Area 19. Foundry of Souls (EL 5)

A loud crackling sound fills the room. The smoke that pours from it is blistering hot and lit with a strange orange light. A massive forge responsible for the hellish atmosphere takes up the entire far wall of the cavern. Between the forge and the entrance stands a massive anvil, and nearby rest hammers, prongs, and other blacksmithing tools. A faint whimpering sound is almost lost in the roar that comes from the forge.

An undead monstrosity left here by Dro-skar's wrath has kept the fire in his foundry burning for centuries. The smoke is even thicker here, making it difficult to see anything beyond 5 feet.

Creatures: Jurin Kreed, the young scion of Falcon Hollow's most powerful family, is sequestered here by an evil undead dwarf called a forge spurned. The forge spurned is hard at work at the anvil beating a new link for its soul-forged chain. When the link is complete the creature plans to suck Jurin's soul into it, adding the boy to his gruesome menagerie. If interrupted, the forge spurned flies into a smoldering rage and levels its hatred at the party.


FORGE SPURNED CR 5
hp 40; See Appendix 2

Development: Jurin is staggered from smoke inhalation and barely alive. He is at 0 hit points at present, but if he is not removed from the smoke he slips into negatives. If Jurin comes to he is disoriented and threatens the party, warning them that his father will hunt them down if anything happens to him. When he realizes the PCs mean him no harm, his anger immediately fades and is replaced by gratitude, and he promises them a great reward from his father when they return to Falcon's Hollow. For all his feigned arrogance and cruelty, Jurin proves a steadfast friend and refuses to leave the ruins without all of his companions safely at his side.

A fissure opens into a crevasse within the stalagmite cave (area 23). Navigating the crevasse requires a DC 15 Climb check for a Small or smaller creature. A Medium creature must squeeze to fit through the crevasse, increasing the Climb DC to 20.

PART FOUR: CROWN OF THE KOBOLD KING

The race is on to save the last of the five wayward children as the PCs descend to level 2. The party faces a horde of yapping kobolds, vicious traps, and other foul denizens in these cramped warrens and mining shafts. Deep in the caves the Kobold King Merlokrep sits on his Crawling Throne and sharpens his mighty axe. Beyond, a young boy cowers in terror as Jekkajak performs a gruesome "practice run" of his sacrifice on the unfortunate Tyran Moonsliver. If the PCs dally too long, Hollin is next in line for the blood-drenched altar.



Designer Notes

KOBOLD BATTLE ROYALE!

The kobolds have set up the devious ambushes noted on this level, but if the PCs circumvent them, the kobolds double back to harry them later. The shriekers in area 29 see to this, and the sounds of battle anywhere past the Chokepoint and Intersection Ambushes draw the kobolds stationed there to the fray. This whole level might turn into a running fight or even one mass battle with kobolds descending on the party in waves. I call this the "Night of the Million Jillion Bad Guys" encounter, and it can be a lot of fun. If the PCs are weakened by a wave, give them a quick round or two to down potions and heal up as they hear the next wave of kobolds and slurks closing in on them.

Level Two: Kobold Warrens

On level two, masonry gives way to rough-carved tunnels with low ceilings and gaping caves full of jutting stalagmites below and looming stalactites above. The passageways between most areas here, while comfortable for kobolds, are tight quarters for Medium creatures, and several access ways require Medium PCs to squeeze.

Area 20. Refuse Pit (EL 5)

The shaft drops down into a large, mostly square chamber. A doorway opens in one wall, while two other walls have been broken through from the outside. Cramped, narrow tunnels beckon from beyond the breached walls.

Creatures: Two bloodscales await the party here, mounted on the backs of disgusting toadlike monstrosities called slurks. As soon as anyone descends the shaft they attack.

BLOODSCALE KOBOLDS (2) CR 2
hp 13 each; See area 12

SLURKS (2) CR 2
hp 13 each; See Appendix 2

Area 21. Storage

This dour stone chamber is filled with empty crates and splintered barrels. Stone rafters criss-cross the ceiling above.

Creature: This area was once the home to a family of chokers lurking among the old crates and boxes stowed in this dank chamber. When the kobolds rose up from the warrens below, war broke out between these two groups of monsters. After a week fraught with casualties on both sides, the kobolds won out, slaying all of the chokers but one, who fled to the shadowy rafters above, licking his envenomed wounds. The choker, named Skiiirrrssh, weakened from blood loss and tainted with poison, slipped from the rafters an hour ago. Now the poor creature lies between some boxes, barely alive, a kobold's barbed spear still stuck in his back.

SKIIIRRRSSH THE CHOKER CR 2
hp 16 (currently 0); MM 34

Development: Skiiirrrssh gurgles pathetically if approached, unable to defend himself. If any of the party members take pity on the choker and make a DC 15 Heal check to remove the barbed spear, the thing looks on them with confused, grateful eyes, and drags itself into the corner to rest. If the party helps the choker, it should show up in a later battle to return the favor, suddenly appearing and lashing out from above at a kobold about to strike one of the PCs.

22. Mines (EL 4)

The cramped passageways open to a large cavern filled with rocky overhangs and jutting boulders.

The large boulders offer a lot of cover for anyone who wants to take advantage of them.

Creatures: Merlokrep's cruel mining foreman, Lekmek, works a gaggle of slaves to death here in search of "shiny good good" for Vreggma. Sadly, gold is not on the menu in these glum mines, whose walls are riddled instead with veins of iron ore. Vreggma's displeasure at the lack of gold is the source of many headaches for Merlokrep, who in turn takes out his frustrations on Lekmek. The foreman vents this mounting aggravation through harsh beatings administered to his digger-slaves on an hourly basis.

Lekmek is short for a kobold, with spindly little chicken legs that contrast bizarrely with his tremendously muscled upper body. His broad shoulders and thick python-like arms are perched precariously on his wobbly little stick-legs. His face is squat and mean. His snout is stunted as if pushed in by a shovel. PCs familiar with Boss Teedum back in town are disturbed by Lekmek's striking resemblance to the ugly human. The foreman turns his frustration on the PCs if they venture here and orders the slaves to attack with their picks as he wades into melee with his hammer.

LEKMEK CR 3

Male kobold expert 2/fighter 2

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15

(+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 28 (2d6+4 and 2d10+4)

Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +4

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk heavy pick +5 (1d4+7/x4)

TACTICS

During Combat Lekmek wields his pick two handed using Power Attack for 2 points (already figured in).

Morale Lekmek is too ornery to flee.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 14

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +1

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (heavy pick)

Skills Appraise +2, Climb +5, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +9, Jump +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2, Profession (miner) +3, Search +1, Survival +3.

Languages Draconic

SQ light sensitivity

Gear masterwork heavy pick, masterwork studded leather, steel mining helmet

KOBOLD SLAVES (6) CR 1/4

hp 2 each; MM 161

These slaves have no armor (AC 13) and wield light picks (1d3–1/x4)

TACTICS

Morale The typically meek slaves fight like devils against the PCs, their fear of Lekmek's wrath overriding their usually potent self-preservation instincts. If he falls, however, they flee in abject terror.

Area 23. Stalagmite Cave (EL 5)

The floor of this yawning cavern is filled with gigantic stalagmites, some standing six feet in height.

A crevasse in this room opens into floor of the foundry of souls (area 19). Navigating the crevasse requires a DC 15 Climb check for a Small or smaller creature. A Medium creature must squeeze to fit through the crevasse, increasing the Climb DC to 20.

Creatures: A gargoyle named Reglos makes his home here among the stalagmites. The gargoyle shrouds himself with his stony wings, appearing to be just another pointed piece of stone jutting from the cave floor. In addition, a dire bat lives in the shadows above and swoops down to attack the PCs. As soon as the bat engages the party (it has long ago learned its fangs cannot pierce the gargoyle's hide), Reglos spreads his wings wide and leaps into the fray with relish. The evil gargoyle takes great pleasure savaging the party members.

DIRE BAT CR 2

hp 30; MM 62

REGLOS THE GARGOYLE CR 4

hp 37; MM 113

TACTICS

Morale Reglos flees if he is reduced to fewer than 10 hp.

Area 24. Chokepoint Ambush (EL 5)

This tight, high-ceilinged corridor is flanked on both sides by tall ridges, eight feet above the corridor's rocky ground.

Creatures: Two elite dark talon hunters are perched on the ridges above here. One of these evil little kobolds lurks on each side of the corridor. As the party navigates the tight passage, the dark talons swing their flying talons down at the PCs.

DARK TALON HUNTERS (2) CR 3

hp 14 each; see area 17

TACTICS

Before Combat The dark talons attempt to hide from the PCs to achieve surprise, they take 10 on their Hide checks for a result of 21.

During Combat The dark talons conduct sneak attacks from their ledges for as long as any characters remain flat-footed. As long as they remain on those ledges they receive cover from attacks below and higher ground (+1 on attack rolls) against anyone in the corridor.

Morale The dark talons fight to the death.

Area 25. Intersection Ambush (EL 7)

The narrow tunnel opens out in to a long cave, with openings in the north, south, and east walls.

This branching intersection conceals three small but deep alcoves set into its walls (as noted on the map), making it the perfect place to stage a lethal ambush against large bumbling pink-skinned humans and pointy-eared elf types.

Creatures: Merlokrep's Captain of His Highness's Royal Kill-stabbing Bloodscales, a tall kobold named Grugakrug, leads a band of dark talon hunters in a daring assault against the party here. One dark talon hunter hides in each of the three alcoves, while Grugakrug, mounted on his trusty slurk, hides in the western corridor. When the PCs reach the intersection the kobolds spring their ambush.



GRUGAKRUG BLOODSCALE KOBOLD CR 2
hp 13; See area 12

TACTICS

During Combat The slurk-mounted bloodscale hops wall to wall down the corridors and careens into anyone standing.

Morale Grugakrug fights until slain in order to defend the hatchery (area 26) from the overly tall invading butchers.

DARK TALON HUNTERS (3) CR 3
hp 14 each; see area 17

TACTICS

Before Combat The dark talons attempt to hide from the PCs to achieve surprise. They take 10 on their Hide checks for a result of 21.

During Combat The dark talons conduct sneak attacks from their ledges for as long as any characters remain flat-footed. They then use

their flying talons to make trip and disarm attacks, hoping to make the PCs more vulnerable to the mounted bloodscale.

Morale The dark talons fight to the death.

SLURK

hp 13; See Appendix 2

CR 2

Development: If the PCs avoid this area by taking the branch of passage leading directly to the Kennel (area 27), the kobolds here rush to area 29 if they hear the shriekers there or rush to area 30 if they hear the sounds of battle echoing through the warrens.

Area 26. Hatchery (EL 1/2)

Plaintive mewling cries emanate from this warm, damp chamber. A low wall of stone

divides this cave into two partitions. One half of the cave contains several rows of large eggs half buried in sand. The other half contains a dozen infant kobolds, scrapping and playing with each other in the darkness.

Creatures: Mekapa, the tribe's midwife, a rotund little female who oversees the incubation and hatching of the tribal youth, stands between the PCs and the eggs. She is unarmed but steadfast, putting herself between the young and danger without hesitation. She attempts to parley with the party (though she only speaks Draconic) and appeals to their sense of decency. She begs them to leave the eggs unmolested. If they do so, Mekapa thanks them profusely and gladly offers them information about Merlokrep

(she never liked the stupid king anyways) and Jekkajak (the old shaman brings nothing but trouble to the tribe).

MEKAPA CR 1/4
hp 4; MM 161
Mekapa wears no armor (AC 13) and is unarmed.

Area 27. Slurk Kennel (EL 6)

The walls and floor of this chamber are covered with a semi-transparent slippery gray slime that resembles mucous. Two narrow tunnels lead south out of this cave, while a flight of steps leads up to the north.

The walls of this cavern are covered in the foul-smelling crusty slime secreted by slurks, and the floor here is slick with their nasty belly grease. The floor is slippery, forcing anyone moving through here to make a DC 12 Balance check or fall prone.

Creatures: Kapmek, the Honored Slurk-Wrangler of the Truescale tribe, spends most of his time here with his goo-slick charges. Kapmek, a green-scaled kobold with an overly long snout and swathed in black leather armor, is mounted on slurk-back. Another slurk also roves about the slimy cave here. It still has the corpse of a bloodscale kobold stuck to its back. The bloodscale was brained when the slurk hopped a little too high while traversing the tunnels and crushed the kobold's skull against the ceiling. Kapmek and his slurks leap to attack the PCs if they enter this chamber. If the party avoids the kennel, Kapmek leads his slurks into any fray he hears break out in area 30, or if he hears the shriekers in area 29.

KAPMEK CR 4
Male kobold ranger 4
LE Small humanoid (reptilian)
Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16
(+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)
hp 27 (4d8+4)

Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk hand axe +4 (1d3)

Ranged +1 light crossbow +7 (1d8+1 plus poison)

Special Attack: Medium monstrous spider venom (injury, DC 14, 1d4 Str/1d4 Str), favored enemy +2 (humanoid [human])

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)
1st—charm animal (DC 12)

TACTICS

During Combat Keeps his distance on slurkback and pelts foes with shots from his crossbow.

Morale Kapmek flees if reduced to 5 or fewer hp, unless his slurk is slain, in which case he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14

Base Atk +4; Grp +0

Feats Endurance, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Rapid Shot, Track

Skills Climb +4, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Handle Animal +7, Hide +9, Jump +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Listen +7, Profession (miner) +3, Ride +9, Search +2, Spot +7.

Languages Draconic

SQ light sensitivity, wild empathy +6


Combat Gear 2 doses of Medium monstrous spider venom **Other Gear** masterwork handaxe, +1 studded leather, +1 light crossbow, 10 bolts.

SLURKS (2) CR 2
hp 13 each; See Appendix 2

Area 28. Forsaken Tunnel (EL 6)

The tunnel ahead is blocked by a massive cave-in. Near the stone rubble the corpses of two kobolds lie stretched out on the floor,

Designer Notes



THE FORSAKEN TUNNEL

This tunnel leads down to further adventures. For now, it is probably best to assume the PCs cannot pass, though future GameMastery Modules will detail the evil threats and adventure awaiting the PCs beyond this Forsaken Tunnel.

seemingly uninjured and yet stone-cold dead. Angular letters on the wall above the heads of the dead kobolds spell out an inscription.

This lonely stretch of corridor leads to the now-sealed cave descending to level 3 of these dungeons. The kobolds splattered graffiti in rhyming Draconic here to warn members of their tribe: “Darky-dark below, and whispers soft and low. Evil lurks, its lipless mouth smirks. Do not go! Only death below!”

Creature: Three shadows float here in the dark, observing the entrance to lower levels for their evil master. One of the shadows is responsible for the two kobold corpses (whose souls have now been twisted into the other two shadows floating here). If the PCs approach the caved-in section, these incorporeal undead foes emerge from the walls to attack.

SHADOWS (3) CR 3
hp 19 each; MM 221

Area 29. Shrieker Tunnel (EL 3)

This craggy zigzagging passageway seems to be the main thoroughfare of the kobolds, but actually they avoid it, preferring to use the connecting corridor between area 30 and 27 instead.

Creatures: This narrow corridor is home to a pair of shrieker fungi whose keening wail warns kobolds in area 30 and Merlokrep and his myrmidons in the throne room (area 31).

SHRIEKERS (2) CR 1
hp 11 each; MM 112

Area 30. Kobold Den (EL 5)

This roomy cavern is filled with dirty straw nests, scraps of weapons, armor, other junk, and the discarded remains of the kobold tribe's meals.

Most of the kobolds live here, sleeping among the rocky boulders and fighting over the comfortable niches against the walls.

Creatures: Twelve kobolds await the PCs here, along with two bloodscale commanders. The horde of reptilian monsters charges the PCs when they enter.

BLOODSCALE KOBOLDS (2)**CR 2**

hp 13 each; see area 12

TACTICS

During Combat The bloodscales rally the kobold warriors and yell for help. Depending on how the PCs traveled through the warren, help might arrive from areas 24, 25, or 27 in 2d4 rounds.

Morale The bloodscales fight to the death.

KOBOLD WARRIORS (12)**CR 1/4**

hp 4 each; MM 161

TACTICS

Morale The kobolds put up a stiff fight, emboldened by the knowledge that there is nowhere left to run. Nevertheless, if fewer than five kobolds remain, they flee, hoping to make it to the surface and scatter into the surrounding woodlands.

Area 31. Throne of the Kobold King (EL 7)

Here stands the Crawling Throne of Merlokrep. The Kobold King's throne is crafted from the corpse of a monstrous centipede. The massive vermin is propped up against the wall here on a dais of stone blocks, its legs curling in around any who sit upon it like leveled arm rests.

Creatures: Merlokrep, first of his name, Dragon King of the Truescale Tribe sits here honing the edge of his bloody axe ("Man-feller"). He is flanked by his two most fearsome warriors, Myrmidons of the Truescale that are themselves clad in gilded armor, clutching their shortspears at attention.

Merlokrep is a physical paragon of kobolds, and his imposing powerhouse frame belies the usual assumptions about

his pathetic reptilian race. The king's one good eye peers from his skull with a fierce aspect, smoldering with rage at the party's intrusion. Merlokrep's skill at arms is unparalleled among his tribe, and he wields "Man-feller" in an impressive display. He's had plenty of practice slaughtering insolent malcontents among his tribe (murdering his eighteen siblings was no mean feat either) and is eager to wet his axe in the PCs' blood. His regal snout is pierced with a gold nose-ring and his well-groomed ears are also adorned with gold studs. He wears a jeweled skull over his left eye. If the PCs make it this far,

Merlokrep hails them as he rises from his throne and offers them an honored place as Great Sacrifices to the Crown, offering to feast them before ripping them open and pulling out their hearts. He is genuinely shocked if the PCs turn him down, but his incredulousness gives way to towering rage in an instant as he orders his myrmidons to attack.

MERLOKREP, THE KOBOLD KING**CR 6**

Male kobold fighter 2/sorcerer 4

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18

(+4 armor, +3 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 43 (3d10+6 plus 3d4+6 plus 3)

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +7

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 human bane battleaxe +7 (1d6+11)

Spells Known (CL 5th)

2nd (4/day, 1 left)—bull's strength

1st (6/day, 5 left)—mage armor, magic missile, sleep (DC 14)

0 (6/day)—dancing lights, daze (DC 12), detect magic, detect poison, light

TACTICS

Before Combat Merlokrep casts *bull's strength* on himself and his bloodscales and *mage armor* on himself.

During Combat Merlokrep casts *sleep* first then *magic missile* as long as his bloodscales tie up PCs. He wields "Man-feller" two-handed in melee and uses Power Attack for 2 points (already figured in). He targets humans with his axe if possible.

Morale Merlokrep fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 19, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 15

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Feats Alertness (as long as Blip is within arm's reach), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Climb +6, Concentration +5, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Hide +7, Intimidate +7, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2

Languages Common, Draconic



SQ light sensitivity, summon familiar (toad named Blip)

Gear "Man-feller" +1 human bane battleaxe, Crown of the Kobold King, oversized red and gold satin cloak with a crude painting of a gold dragon on the back, 2 gold lip rings (10 gp), 4 gold earrings (10 gp each)

BASE STATISTICS

AC 17; **Str** 15, **Melee** +1 human bane battleaxe +5 (1d8+8), **Grp** +2, **Skills** Climb +4, **Jump** +4

BLOODSCALE KOBOLDS (2) CR 2

hp 13 each; see area 12 (except as follows)
Melee shortspear +4 (1d3+2 plus poison) or flying talon +4 (1d3+2 plus poison); **Ranged** javelin +3 (1d3+2)

TACTICS

During Combat The bloodscales hurl their javelins, then attempt to take up flanking positions with their king and use trip and disarm attacks to good effect.

Morale The bloodscales fight to the death.

Development: If taken alive, Merlokrep snarls and spits his own blood at the party, promising a doom on their pink-skinned people. "You may have defeated us Truescales, but something even more powerful waits in the deep-deep. The darkness will come for your people just at it did ours. Your end is written man-things. You are already dead."

Treasure: With Merlokrep dead, the mighty *Crown of the Kobold King* is the party's to claim.

CROWN OF THE KOBOLD KING

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 12th
Slot helmet; **Price** 15,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

Merlokrep's crown is as old as his tribe, and the burnished bronze heirloom has passed from king to king for centuries. The blood rite mumbled by Jekkajak might or might not exist, but even without this ceremony the crown invests its wearer with power. Wearing the crown grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma and a +2 natural armor bonus. You are immune to the frightful presence ability of all dragons. If you are a sorcerer you cast spells at +1 caster level.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin*, *eagle's splendor*; **Cost** 7,500 gp, 600 XP

Area 32. King's Quarters (EL 4)

This cozy chamber is heated by bricks of old mold-ridden incense. A tousled wolf-skin bed lies in one corner of the room, a stone table piled high with poorly crafted necklaces, rings and bracelets of gold in another. Several chunks of polished obsidian are stacked haphazardly on one wall here as well, forming a bizarre half-mirror.

Creature: Vreggma is the consort of Merlokrep and a particularly stunning female kobold with shiny blue scales. Her grief over her king's demise is short-lived, and she immediately attempts the coquettish seduction of a party member, hoping to be spared. If the PCs rebuff her advances or attempt to appropriate her collection of shiny good-good, she flies into a spitting rage that belies her sweet veneer and attacks viciously.

VREGGMA CR 2

hp 13 each; see area 12 (as bloodscale except as follows)

AC 13 (no armor); **Melee** +1 dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20); **Cha** 16

TACTICS

Morale Vreggma fights until slain.

Treasure: Vreggma's collection consists of eight bracelets (20 gp each), three necklaces (50 gp each), six rings (10 gp each), and a tiara (80 gp), all gold.

Area 33. Sacrifice Chamber (EL 7)

A gruesome bloodstained altar sits at the center of this otherwise unadorned chamber.

Creatures: Jekkajak, shaman of the Truescales, dodders here attempting to recall the proper protocol for his sacrificial rites. When he hears the battle break out in the throne room, he decides to hurriedly try a practice run on Tyran Moonsliver and orders his two bloodscale minions to tie the half-elf to the altar. Hollin cowers in the northwest corner here, his pale freckly skin several shades whiter than usual as he slumps against the wall in shock.

Jekkajak is a walking corpse of a kobold, whose withered old white scales are stretched tight over bone. His puny skeletal snout contains a lone tooth and constantly

dribbles drool. His milky eyes focus intermittently on his surroundings.

The PCs enter just as Jekkajak tears poor Tyran Moonsliver's heart from his chest with the *Heartripper Blade*. He holds the heart aloft as it bursts into flames and cackles madly before ordering his myrmidons to attack.

JEKKAJAK CR 5

Male kobold sorcerer 5

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +8, **Spot** +5

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 16

(+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 20 (5d4+5)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +2 flaming burst dagger +5 (1d4+2/19–20 plus 1d6 fire plus flaming burst)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Spells Known (CL 5th):

2nd (5/day, 3 left)—*bull's strength*, *summon swarm*

1st (7/day, 6 left)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *color spray* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*

0 (6/day)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *prestidigitation*, *mending*



Designer Notes

SACRIFICE SHOWDOWN

To increase the urgency of the final battle with Jekkajak in the Sacrifice Chamber

have the shaman attempting to sacrifice young Hollin as the PCs battle his myrmidons. This is also a good choice if the PCs are severely weakened by the time they reach here and are in no condition to face the full force of the shaman's sorcerous power. Consider having him alternate every round with hurling a spell and preparing Hollin (dragging the comatose boy to the altar, tying him down, and so on.).

TACTICS

Before Combat Jekkajak casts *bull's strength* on his myrmidons and *mage armor* on himself.

During Combat Jekkajak casts *summon swarm* to thicken the ranks and concentrates on it as long as it seems effective. He follows that with *magic missile*, and if a dangerous fighter-type is present he casts *cause fear*.

Morale Jekkajak fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 16

Base Atk +2; **Grp** -2

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge

Skills Alertness (as long as Furr-furr is within arm's reach), Bluff +6, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +5

Languages Common, Draconic

HEARTRIPPER BLADE

Aura moderate conjuration, divination, and evocation; **CL** 10th

Slot weapon; **Price** 11,302 gp

DESCRIPTION

This +1 *dagger* is granted baleful powers when used in bloody sacrifice. Whenever used to deliver a coup de grace, the *Heartripper Blade* pulls the victim's still-beating heart free from his body. You may then consume the heart to gain any of the following abilities.

You may eat the heart to gain a simultaneous *remove disease*, *restoration*, and *cure serious wounds* effect.

You may utter a command word and cause the heart to burst into flames, after which the Blade becomes a +2 *flaming burst dagger* for 1 hour. This consumes the heart.

You may speak a blasphemous second command word to cause the heart to boil and smoke. Breathing in the smoke gives you glimpses of the future or far off places and objects, granting you the ability to use *divination* or *scrying*. This consumes the heart.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor; *flame blade*, *keen edge*, *restoration*, *scrying*;
Cost 5,802 gp, 440 XP



SQ light sensitivity, summon familiar (bat named Furr-furr)

Gear *Heartripper Blade*, *cloak of resistance* +2, thick woolen red robes and sandals, and an emerald cloak clasp (100 gp)

BLOODSCALE KOBOLDS (2) **CR 2**

hp 13 each; see area 12 (except as follows)

Melee shortspear +4 (1d3+2 plus poison) or flying talon +4 (1d3+2 plus poison); **Ranged** javelin +3 (1d3+2)

TACTICS

During Combat The bloodscales place themselves between Jekkajak and the PCs, and they try to keep the PCs off him as long as possible.

Morale The bloodscales fight to the death.

Development: Hollin stays catatonic even after his freakish reptilian captors are slain. The boy must be picked up and carried off. He comes to after a few hours but remains withdrawn and never really recovers from the horrors of his capture.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The children saved and the dangerous kobold king slain, the PCs return as heroes to Falcon's Hollow. Their newfound notoriety instantly makes them players on the political scene in the town. They might find themselves recruited by any of the town's influential persons to support their claims on the lumber within the vale, or if the

CAMPAIGN SEED: RETURN OF THE CHILDREN

The children recovered by the PCs are no doubt greatly affected by their experiences in the ruins and they might generate further complications or adventures for the PCs even after their return to Falcon's Hollow. Additionally, their parents might prove important allies or adversaries later. Here are a few ideas:

Mikra Jabbs: Mikra's father Colbrin is overjoyed at his beloved son's return and shows his gratitude any way he can (meat is on the house for the PCs at his butcher shop from here on out). Mikra seems to recover quickly from his harrowing experience and soon begins to exhibit magical abilities (the boy is a natural sorcerer and his exposure to magic in the ruins awakened his talent). Criminals and other sinister individuals (like Thuldrin Creed) might seek to use the youth for his potent arcane abilities.

Kimi Eavewalker: Kimi's mother Kitani becomes obsessed with one of the PCs who saved her daughter and attempts to begin a relationship with him. She is a beautiful and charming raven-haired half-elf well practiced in seduction. Kimi, originally grateful to her saviors, grows resentful of her mother's betrayal of her wandering ranger father. Kimi shifts from protector of the meek to an anger-filled young girl. She begins to commit petty thefts and is soon secretly involved in violent crime. She might even eventually become a nemesis of the PCs. Additionally, her father Idris returns, outraged at his wife's betrayal and eager to avenge his dishonor.

Jurin Creed: Jurin returns to Falcon's Hollow to continue the battle for his soul. Thuldrin rewards the PCs for their help, showering them with gold. Afterward, though, the Gavel continues to encourage his son to follow in his footsteps of arrogant evil and disregard for the well-being of others in pursuit of limitless profit. After witnessing the selfless acts of heroism perpetrated by the PCs, Jurin begins to lean toward the light and pursue a career as an adventurer, striving to do good in the world. If a PC takes an interest in the young boy and tries to shape his future toward goodness, Thuldrin is furious at this outsider's meddling with his family and no doubt seeks subtle retribution (although he goes about it carefully in order not to alienate his son).

Savram Vade: Savram turns from his study of necromancy when he gets back to Falcon's Hollow. His traumatic experience in the ossuary leaves emotional scars and a phobia for undead. Savram's father, Sharvaros, is disgusted with the boy and throws him out. The necromancer might even blame the party for his son's newfound distaste for undead and avenge himself on the PCs.

Hollin Hebbradan: Hollin's sister Ralla thanks the PCs profusely for their help but tries to distance herself from the adventurers for their own good. The owner of her pleasure den is a vicious headman of a brutal guild of murderers and sneakthieves named Kadran Bloodeye, who refuses to allow Ralla to befriend adventurer types and wannabe heroes. Kadran fears she might attract these nuisances to his cruel business and expose his exploitation of the downtrodden women of Falcon's Hollow. If the PCs investigate Ralla's situation they might find themselves in a deadly showdown with the flesh-peddler and his hired killers. Meanwhile, witnessing the brutal slaughter of Tyran at the hands of savage little monsters warps Hollin for all time. The boy seems to make a full recovery from his experiences, but secretly he is fraught with horrible flashbacks and terror-filled nightmares of blood and murder. In a couple of years, citizens of Falcon's Hollow begin to turn up murdered, their hearts carved from their bodies. Hollin, his mind finally broken under the strain of his trauma, becomes a deadly serial killer stalking the town's streets by night.



party preaches goodness or tries to help the downtrodden masses of the town, it draws the ire of Thuldrin Creed and the other evil lumber plutocrats.

In addition, the PCs' probing into the dungeons beneath Droskar's Crucible might rouse deeper evils slumbering in the dark. Shadowy servants of the horror trapped within might rise to the surface and spread like a contagion across the vale. The PCs themselves might opt to return to the ruins beneath the crucible, hoping to uncover greater mysteries and priceless treasures below the kobold warrens of Merlokrep. Boundless adventure awaits in the darkness for any brave enough to venture there.

APPENDIX 1: FALCON'S HOLLOW

Here follows further information on Falcon's Hollow to give you a few more options to play with whenever the party is knocking about town. Falcon's Hollow makes an excellent base of operations for a party of PCs seeking adventure in Darkmoon Vale and the dungeons beneath Droskar's Crag. In addition, the schemes of crooked politicians, lumber tycoons, and flesh-peddling crime bosses in Falcon's Hollow offer a breadth of opportunities for conflict and action. The party might become embroiled in local politics as this fledgling settlement grows and factions arise that seek a formal government in hopes of throwing off the crushing yoke of the Lumber Consortium. Additionally the party might become involved in religious struggles between various sects devoted to all manner of strange deities, some merely against the grain of common theocracy, others downright evil and bent on corrupting the souls of the simple folk who call Falcon's Hollow home. Finally, crime is one of the largest sources of revenue in town and gangs of organized thugs engage in every illicit activity imaginable. Good PCs residing in Falcon's Hollow won't go long without rubbing these syndicates the wrong way, and they might get swept up in street wars with local criminals before they even have the

Falcon's Hollow

1. The Cutyard
2. Lumber Warehouse
3. Paper Mill
4. Low Market
5. High Market
6. Ferry Dock
7. Jak'a'napes
8. Hollow Tribunal
9. The Sitting Duck
10. Darkmoon Lumber HQ
11. Church
12. Kreed Manor
13. Vade's Tower
14. Roots and Remedies
15. The Rouge Lady
16. The Goose 'n' Gander



chance to venture into the vale and seek their fortunes.

Powers That Be

The organizations listed here represent a few of the influential factions in Falcon's Hollow.

Blackblood Covenant: This secretive congregation of Falconers who bow to Urgathoa, the Pallid Princess, gather to worship under a cabal of disease-ridden priests. Many of the most high-ranking clergy members hide in plain sight as leprosy beggars by day. By night, they lead dark rites to the Pale Princess of Pestilence in remote groves outside of town. The covenant's ultimate motive and plans remain shrouded in mystery, but it most likely does not have healthy intentions toward the populace of Falcon's Hollow.

Church of Iomedae: With all the down-trodden to preach to in Falcon's Hollow, missionaries of Iomedae, Goddess of Valor

and Justice, have established a foothold in town. Many other religious sects who fled here to escape the Church of Light's persecution resent Iomedae's followers. Tensions run high between congregations, often resulting in less-than-holy brawls on the muddy thoroughfares of Worship Way.

Lumber Consortium: This powerful collection of unscrupulous tycoons and magnates of the lumber trade controls most of the tree-felling camps (commonly called cutyards) in the area around the vale. Those lumberjacks who refuse to affiliate with the consortium (and agree to its horrendously exploitative labor and pay practices) are often muscled out of business or simply disappear. The consortium employs three hundred jacks and nearly half that many sellswords, thugs, and mercenaries to protect the cutyards from monsters as well as to intimidate competitors.

Redrock Guild: This organized criminal syndicate poses as a business club and moneylenders union, but most Falconers know its members constitute some of the vilest flesh-peddlers, sneakthieves, and murderers in town. The current leader is a fearsome half-orc named Kadran Bloodeye, whose penchant for flaying his enemies alive in the basement of his pleasure establishment, called the Rouge Lady Inn, is well known.

Places of Note

Important locales in Falcon's Hollow town limits are listed here.

Goose'n'Gander: The local general store in Falcon's Hollow is run by the only gnome resident, Brickasnurd Hildrinsocks, who sells everything from standard amenities such as grain, lamp oil, ink, and mining supplies, to such rare oddities as alchemist's fire, antitoxin, a petrified pseudo-dragon, and taxidermy nixies (all the rage this season).

Hollow Tribunal: This is where the diminutive halfling Magistrate Vamros Harg dispenses merchant licenses, stamps mining and lumber claims, and passes judgment on criminal and civil cases. Most Falconers enjoy the irony of the Hollow Tribunal's name, since the justice meted out there is rarely equitable. The fact that Harg is firmly in Gavel Thuldryn's pocket is well known, but it is rarely uttered in public by those who value their lives.

Jak'a'Napes: This leaning ramshackle inn located next to the town's stables offers lodgings and food to the many travelers who pass through Falcon's Hollow. The owner, a rotund red-faced human named Jak Crimmy, with a single wisp of bright red hair on his otherwise bald head, is a retired bard who sports an easy smile. Jak's cinnamon-crustured flapjacks are legendary in town, as is his skill at juggling frying pans and his astonishing marksmanship with a heavy crossbow (Jak is a man of many talents).

Quinn's Carnival: Half-elf shadowdancer Namdrin Quinn led a band of veteran adventurers who used to venture into the vale with frequency. After a particularly dangerous quest claimed the life of Namdrin's wife, Tess, the half-elf ended his career and established this carnival of wonders on the edge of town. Quinn and his companions wow crowds with feats of skill and magic by night, but rumor has it that after the tents close Namdrin and his merry band entreat with dark fey, whose anger mounts at the constant lumbering incursions into the vale. Some say the shadowdancer spies for the vengeful fey, who plan retribution and murder.

The Rouge Lady: The silk-veiled parlors in the back of this burlesque and gambling hall doubles as an illegal brothel. Kabran Bloodeye owns this illicit pleasure den, where the unfortunate Ralla peddles her charms to earn enough copper for her and Hollin to survive.

The Sitting Duck: Located a little too close for many folks' comfort to the town palisade, the Duck is the local hot spot for adventurers, explorers, and other rascalions looking for excitement. The tavern serves a potent local brew of fermented darkwood leaf that can floor an ogre in a few tankards. Raucous games of "knivesies" and "mig-a-mug-tug" (two danger-

ous local recreational activities both with a high rate of maiming) often rage late into the night. Many adventurers share tales of Darkmoon Vale, Droskar's Crag, and other surrounding locations for the price of a mug of ale.

WHO'S WHO

A few more details on some of the noted community members mentioned above are included here.

Sheriff Deldrin Baleson: Deldrin used to be a poor lumberjack toiling in the cutyards under Gavel Thuldryn Kreed's oppressive thumb. One day he refused to pay an "axe tax" on a lumberaxe he had already bought and paid for. Boss Teedum tried to take Deldrin's axe, and the half-elf smashed Teedum's face with the flat of it. As one of the few locals to stand up to Teedum and Kreed, he was elected Sheriff the following week. Now he carries the same axe around on his shoulder to remind Kreed and Boss Teedum he is not afraid of them. Deldrin is tall for a half-elf, towering over most humans, and his well-muscled, imposing form is further enhanced by his sharp gold-flecked eyes.

Kabran Bloodeye: Kabran is a short-statured half-orc with blood-red eyes. He lost his nose as punishment for numerous criminal activities in a large city far from the hollow. He wears a bronze nosepiece over the ugly crater left in the center of his face that whistles disturbingly as he breathes and leaks blood and mucus (which Kabran dabs away with a crimson handkerchief).

Magistrate Vamros Harg: Harg is bought and paid for, but the halfling wishes he wasn't. The little magistrate was a failed barrister in a large city far away before coming to Falcon's Hollow. Kreed propped him up with the understanding he'd tear the little lawmaker down at the first sign of disobedience. Vamros doesn't dare oppose Kreed directly, but every chance he gets he nudges cases away from Kreed's greedy eye and tries to give people a fair shake. The little halfling is ashamed of his own cowardice, but if a group of hardy adventurers supported him in opposing Thuldryn Kreed, Harg might just step up to the challenge and start doling out true justice. Harg is an attractive young halfling fond of finery whose romantic interests run toward his own gender.

Boss Payden "Pay Day" Teedum: Payden, the pug-faced, mash-nosed human thug licking at Kreed's boots, has a big bone to pick with Deldrin. The only reason he hasn't tried to break the sheriff's neck is that Kreed fears turning Deldrin into a martyr for other Falconers to rally around. "Pay Day" gets his name from the way he doles out "dues" to anyone who fails to follow "Mista Kreed's" commands fast enough.

Sharvaros Vade: This odd hermit lives in a small shack just outside of the town proper, only a stone's throw from the local cemetery. Most know Vade is a strange man but few are aware of his expertise at necromancy. Vade conducts vile experiments on corpses unearthed from the graveyard in the deep gloom of night, forcing his son to assist him. Vade is bony and thin, with gray eyes and an unkempt black beard.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

Forge Spurned

The choking odor of smelted steel tinged with burnt hair and flesh wafts on a foul wind. The jangling of heavy chains echoes ominously. A hulking dwarf wrapped in heavy steel links approaches. Its face, hands, and body are riddled with glowing hot hooks and half-melted razor wire. Black smoke rises from its smoldering beard, framing its freakishly contorted face in ashy darkness. The tormented thing hefts a black iron hammer and as it charges the chains draping its form spring to life like metal serpents.

FORGE SPURNED	CR 5
NE Medium undead (fire)	
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8	
DEFENSE	
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor)	
hp 39 (6d12); fast healing 5	
Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7; +2 vs. spells	
Immune fire, undead traits	
OFFENSE	
Spd 20 ft.	
Melee mwk adamantite warhammer +8 (1d8+6) and soul chain +10 (2d4+10 plus 1d6 fire)	
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with soul chain)	
Special Attacks burning barbs, forge breath, soul chain.	



TACTICS

During Combat The forge spurned unleashes its forge breath on a group of enemies, then uses Improved Sunder to destroy dangerous weapons with its hammer while targeting foes with its soul chain. It tries to drag off foes if possible to *soul bind* them into the chain.

Morale Forge spurned are not mindless and they will burn forever if sent back to the Black Forge without the requisite number of souls required to appease Droskar. Forge spurned flee if threatened with overwhelming odds or if they can drag off a dead or unconscious foe.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 18, Dex 10, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Appraise +5 (+7 blacksmithing), Climb +10, (+12 ropes), Craft (blacksmithing) +10, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Listen +8, Spot +8, Use Rope +5.

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ eternal damnation, soul chain, undead traits

Gear masterwork adamantine hammer

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burning Barbs (Su) As part of its penance, a forge spurned's body is riddled with burning hot hooks and barbed steel wire, searing its flesh for all eternity. The scorching wounds these barbs inflict on the forge spurned constantly heal so it

might suffer them anew each moment. Anyone grappling a forge spurned or striking it with an unarmed or natural attack takes 1d6 points of fire damage and 1d6 points of piercing damage from the barbs.

Forge Breath (Su) A forge spurned may exhale a cloud of stinging soot, ash, and glowing embers as a standard action either in a 30-foot cone or a 20-foot-radius spread centered on the forge spurned. It persists for 1d4 rounds. Any living creature in the area is blinded by burning cinders and takes 1d6 points of fire damage per round of exposure (DC 13 Reflex save negates blindness but not damage). Anyone in the thick smoky cloud benefits from



concealment as well. The forge spurned may not breathe again until it fills its flaccid undead lungs with its bellows (a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity).

Soul Chain (Su) Cursed to forge a chain of souls to appease its dark god, a forge spurned toils endlessly, searching high and low for fresh victims to bind in hot steel links. Each link of the chain shows the shadowy visage of its trapped soul, its face twisted in a silent scream of horror. The soul chain wraps around a forge spurned's burning body, granting it a +2 armor bonus per ten soul links in the chain. The chain also attacks once per round independently of its forge spurned master (using its master's melee attack bonus). The soul chain is treated as a *flaming spiked chain* with an enhancement bonus equal to +1 per ten soul links (the forge spurned may command the chain to not deal fire damage if it wishes, thus allowing the soul chain to drag captives to its forge alive). This forge spurned's chain has 30 links.

Any slain victim may be soul bound into the chain (as per *soul bind*), but this

necessitates a day of work at a forge or similar environ and requires a DC 20 Craft (blacksmithing) check. If the check fails, the dead soul escapes. If the victim is alive during the binding process the check DC is only 15 and may be reattempted the following day if it fails. Anyone may claim a felled forge spurned's chain, and it will serve its new master willingly, although the wielder must make a DC 20 Will save each sundown or be hideously transformed into a forge spurned, damned to continue collecting souls for the dread Master of the Dark Furnace.

Eternal Damnation (Su) As long as its chain remains, a forge spurned cannot be truly destroyed. A slain forge spurned rises again at full hit points on the next sundown unless its chain is broken (hardness 8, hp 25, Break DC 20). If a forge spurned's chain is sundered, it is instantly slain (even if it has not yet been reduced to 0 hp), never to rise again. When a forge spurned's chain is destroyed the souls bound within are released at long last.

When a dwarven worshiper of Droskar perishes, he is brought before his divine lord and judged. If the Master of the Dark Furnace finds him unworthy he is pierced with burning barbs and returned to the world as an undead terror on an accursed errand to gather souls for Droskar's Furnace. The penance varies depending on how displeased the master is with his' subject. Lesser offenders need only capture ten or twenty souls to appease Droskar. Others are condemned to spend several lifetimes gathering hundreds of souls to earn a reprieve from their fiery torment. Most of these accursed cast offs are dwarven smiths, warriors, or clanlords who failed to please the Master of the Dark Furnace in life. They are consumed with their need to forge their soul chains and prey upon any creature they feel they can easily best. If a forge spurned is felled and its chain taken by another, it seethes in dark fury. A forge spurned stops at nothing to retrieve its chain, lest it be forced to forge another, extending its period of burning torment.

Forge spurned often haunt their former homes, skulking in darkened dwarven halls or among the ruins of their people's past glory. They prefer to remain below the earth where their malevolent soul forging goes unnoticed by others. Forge spurned often lair near magma vents, lakes of lava, or other hot environs that facilitate their sinister toil.

Slurk

The splash of thick liquid heralds this disgusting creature's sloppy approach. This oozy abomination resembles a pale, slime-slick toad, its back dripping thick mucus-like secretions as it effortlessly hops back and forth, spattering secretions as it comes. The creature's huge walrus-like tusks drag along the ground.

SLURK

CR 2

N Medium magical beast

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 16

(+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 13 (2d10+2)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0

Defensive Abilities belly grease

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks back slime (+4 ranged touch), belly grease

TACTICS

During Combat Slurks Overrun or Bull Rush their foes first, or spray them with their back slime to hinder their actions, before they close to bite.

Morale Most slurks flee if reduced to less than 5 hp.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; Grp +4

Feats Improved Bull Rush^a, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun^b

Skills Balance +13, Climb +14, Jump +14

Languages None

SQ wall crawl

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Back Slime (Ex) Strange rough nodules on the slurk's back expel thick slime that hardens quickly after making contact with the air. A slurk can spray a blast of this slime at a target within 30 feet as an attack

action (requiring only a ranged touch attack). Anyone coated in the slime suffers hampered movement as it hardens into a chitinous crust and takes a –2 on all attack rolls, Reflex saves, and skill checks, and all his movement speeds are reduced by 10 feet. The slurk also coats anyone it successfully targets with a bull rush or overrun. Removing the slime is no mean feat, and can only be accomplished as a full-round action requiring a DC 15 Strength check to crack and slough it off. The Strength check is reduced to DC 10 if carving or digging implements are handy. The adhesive quality of the back slime also allows a rider to maintain his seat even without a saddle, and even when the slurk is upside down on the ceiling.

Belly Grease (Ex) The slurk's unnaturally slippery belly constantly exudes a greasy secretion. This viscous substance makes it very difficult to hold onto the beast, granting the slurk a +4 on attempts to escape a grapple. In addition, at will, a slurk may slide along a surface during its move to coat the ground with a *grease* effect that lasts for 5 rounds (as the spell, DC 12).

Wall Crawl (Ex) A slurk's suckerlike pseudopodic feet are designed to gain purchase even on surfaces coated with its belly grease. The slurk gains a +4 bonus on any saving throw or check to avoid being bull rushed, overrun, or otherwise forcibly moved. These suckerfeet also allow a slurk to traverse walls and ceilings as easily as it may hop and run on horizontal surfaces.

Skills A slurk has a +10 racial bonus on all Balance, Climb and Jump checks.

Long ago, dwarves dragged giant forest toads beneath the earth and altered their physiology with powerful magic in hopes of creating perfect underground beasts of burden and mounts. The slurk is the disgusting result of their aborted efforts. The creature's unappealing slime and foul-smelling reek caused the dwarves to drive them deeper below the ground, out of sight. Kobolds, on the other hand, are less selective and find the slurks to be useful pets.

Slurks lair underground in damp caverns where fungus and lichens (their food of choice) grow.

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Valeros
MALE HUMAN FIGHTER 2

ALIGN **NG** INIT +6 SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

14	STR
15	DEX
12	CON
13	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 18
AC 17
touch 12, flat-footed 15
Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1

OFFENSE

Melee mwk longsword +6 (1d8+2)
Melee mwk longsword +4 (1d8+2)
shortsword +2 (1d6+1)
Ranged shortbow +4 (1d6)

SKILLS

Climb	+3
Intimidate	+5
Ride	+7

FEATS

Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)



Combat Gear alchemist's fire (2), oil of magic weapon (2), potion of cure light wounds (2); Other Gear backpack, breastplate, masterwork longsword, rations (6), silk rope, silver dagger, shortbow with 20 arrows, shortsword, 67 gp



Seoni
FEMALE HUMAN SORCERER 2

ALIGN **LN** INIT +2 SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

8	STR
14	DEX
12	CON
10	INT
13	WIS
15	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 8
AC 12
touch 12, flat-footed 10
Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4

OFFENSE

Melee quarterstaff +0 (1d6-1)
Ranged mwk dagger +4 (1d4-1)
Spells Known (CL 2nd):
1st (5/day)—mage armor, magic missile
0 (6/day)—acid splash, detect magic, daze (DC 12), prestidigitation, read magic

SKILLS

Bluff	+4
Concentration	+8
Spellcraft	+2

FEATS

Dodge, Skill Focus (Concentration)



Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, tanglefoot bag, wand of sleep (25 charges); Other Gear backpack, everburning torch, masterwork dagger, quarterstaff, rations (4), 7 gp



Kyra
FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 2

ALIGN **NG** INIT -1 SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

13	STR
8	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
15	WIS
12	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 16
AC 16
touch 9, flat-footed 16
Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +7

OFFENSE

Melee scimitar +2 (1d6+1/18-20)
Ranged lt crossbow +0 (1d8/19-20)
Special Attacks greater turning 1/day, turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+3)
Spells Prepared (CL 2nd):
1st—bless, command (DC 13), cure light wounds*, shield of faith
0—detect magic, light (2), read magic
* domain spell (healing, sun)

SKILLS

Concentration	+7
Heal	+5
Knowledge (religion)	+3

FEATS

Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar)



Combat Gear holy water (3), scroll of sanctuary, wand of cure light wounds (25 charges); Other Gear backpack, chainmail, healer's kit, lt crossbow with 10 bolts, rations (6), scimitar, heavy steel shield, silver holy symbol (everburning torch), 12 gp



Merisiel
FEMALE ELF ROGUE 2

ALIGN **CN** INIT +3 SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

12	STR
17	DEX
12	CON
8	INT
13	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 11
AC 16
touch 13, flat-footed 13
Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1 (+2 vs enchantment)
Defensive Abilities evasion; immune sleep

OFFENSE

Melee mwk rapier +3 (1d6+1/18-20)
Ranged dagger +4 (1d4+1/19-20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

SKILLS

Balance	+7
Climb	+4
Disable Device	+4
Hide	+8
Jump	+5
Listen	+5
Move Silently	+8
Search	+4
Spot	+6
Tumble	+8

FEATS

Dodge



Combat Gear acid (2), elixir of sneaking, potion of cure light wounds, thunderstone; Other Gear backpack, daggers (6), grappling hook, hooded lantern, masterwork rapier, masterwork studded leather armor, oil (5), rations (3), silk rope, 21 gp

Sub-basement and Kobold Warrens (Level 2)



THE CROWN OF THE KOBOLD KING WILL BE ANOINTED IN BLOOD

Five children from the town of Falcon's Hollow have gone missing, dragged off into ruins underneath a cursed dwarven monastery. Soon they will be sacrificed to the crown, all to the glory of the twisted King of the Kobolds. If they are to be saved from this gruesome fate, brave heroes must follow their trail to the monastery and plumb the depths of its trap-laden and monster-infested halls.

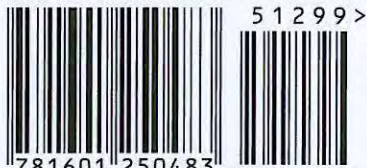
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