



MARK OF HEROES

FINDING THE WAY

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## INTRODUCTION

This adventure is optimized for 3rd-level characters. This means that it's designed and balanced for a group of four to five 3rd-level characters. If your group deviates from this size and strength, each encounter features a section titled "Scaling the Encounter" so that you, the Dungeon Master (DM), can create a more balanced encounter. If there are only four of five PCs of the same level it is easy to use this section: just use the level entry that corresponds with the PCs' level (the optimized entry is given in the main adventure text). For groups of mixed levels and groups with six PCs, determine the average level of the PCs, and add increase that average by one for groups of six PCs. Treat that level as the groups level. That said, as DM you have discretion when it comes to fitting the challenges of the adventure. If the PCs are having too hard or too easy of a time, feel free to increase or decrease the level of challenge. The goal is to challenge the PCs, and entertain the players, not to overwhelm or even underwhelm them. The most enjoyable D&D games are ones where failure and character death are possible, but success and reward are attainable through daring and smart play.

This adventure has been designed to be part of the RPGA DUNGEON & DRAGONS: CAMPAIGNS—MARK OF HEROES program. Like all DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS adventures, it's recommended that parties undertaking its challenges have at least one arcane spellcaster, a divine spellcaster (preferably a cleric), a strong warrior, and a rogue. Parties missing these valuable adventuring components may find *Finding the Way* very challenging, and the percentages of character death higher. Please warn the players of this before play starts. DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS allow players to "take one for the team;" that is to play a fastplay wizard, fighter, rogue, or cleric in place of one of their characters, and gain experience point for their character. If the group lacks one of these vital four classes, suggest to your players to take advantage of this option.

## RPGA-SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or as part of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS retail program. To play *Finding the Way* as part of the MARK OF HEROES campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in EBERRON—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table DM (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a few things. First, it allows the PCs participating in play to accumulate experience points (XP) and gold pieces (gp) to advance their MARK OF HEROES characters. Second, it allows the RPGA to track and record what character did during the adventure, and future adventures a written with what the majority of player did in mind—in this way characters' action shape the future of the campaign. Lastly, player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth four (4) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA sanctioned play on August 15, 2005.

To learn more about the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS: MARK OF HEROES character creation and development, RPGA event sanctioning, and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS, visit the RPGA website at [www.rpga.com](http://www.rpga.com).

## PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

### DUNGEONS & DRAGONS MINIATURES

To run this adventure it's recommend you have the following miniatures:

**From the Harbinger™ set:**

8 Orc Warriors (75/80)

**From the Dragoneye™ set:**

2 Orc Druid (57/50) to represent Gelvuk.

**From the Giants of Legend™ set:**

2 Stone Golems (04/72) to represent the dwarf ancestral guardians.

**From the Deathknell™ set:**

2 Orc Savages (57/60) to represent orc champions.

**From the Angelfire™ set:**

1 Dwarf Wizard (4/60) to represent Glankas Korari.

## PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, and the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. It is also a good idea to have a copy of the *RPGA Extend Psionics Handbook Primer*, a PDF document that you can find on the RPGA website ([www.rpga.com](http://www.rpga.com)) as it is possible that some character playing in this adventure will be kalashtar utilizing the psionics rules.

This adventure uses a creature found in the *Fiend Folio*—the blood hawk. If for some reason you don't have a copy of that book, the statistic blocks give enough information for you to run this creature.

Throughout this adventure, *italics* provide player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in a section directly after each encounter, or can be found in the *Monster Manual*.

Attached to this adventure, you'll find a special RPGA Table Tracking sheet tailored for this adventure. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The following adventure background includes an origin story for the dwarves and historical elements that may or may not be true.

*"As anyone of intelligence knows, the common races arose from the ashes of battle between the great dragons, Khyber, Eberron, and Siberys. Most claim Eberron as their progenitor, for Siberys created only the "lesser" dragons and Khyber created fiends. Some dwarves claim Eberron as their creator as well, while others foolishly believe Kol Korran and Onatar forged us from stone. However, I believe dwarves have a different ancestry, as evidenced by various records and artifacts both from other races and from the ancient dwarves themselves.*

*"Dwarves are, in fact, children of Khyber reformed by Eberron for the purpose of holding back their fiendish cousins in the regions below! They were built for battle in the cramped regions of the underworld, with eyes that can pierce the darkest cavern and an inborn sense for crafting the weapons needed to battle their evil kin. Alas, this purpose was ultimately doomed to failure as the vile spawn of Khyber slowly wore away at their ancient bastions. In time, the dwarven people were driven from their homelands by the onrushing horde, pushed closer and closer to the surface as the fiends of the deep fought for release. At last, their strength expended, the dwarves were cast out of the depths of Khyber into the freezing lands of the north, into the lands we now call the Frostfell, and there were they left to a death of freezing starvation.*

*"Ah, but we dwarves are made of stouter stuff than even demons can fathom! The dwarves gathered together in their*

*newfound home, no doubt carving strongholds of ice to protect them from the predators of those frigid lands. Having never visited the surface before, dwarves likely thought the entire world to be just as inhospitable as the Frostfell. However, they still cast about for a means of escape from this freezing land and eventually their bravest explorers discovered the warmer lands to the south.*

*"And so they must have made a great migration, moving the entirety of dwarven civilization from their wintry northern strongholds across the Bitter Sea to the southern lands, and eventually to the Ironroot Mountains where we live to this day. It was this migration that brought Lord Kordran Mror and the thirteen clans to build a new kingdom beneath the mountains before Mror banished the twelve to the surface yet again. Alas, that second banishment drove our ancestors to warfare among themselves, their ancient glory and strength forgotten. But our people left an enduring legacy, a map to find their ancient home should they need to return. And my family protects the key to that map to this very day..."*

So went the tale that Glankas Korari told the Diggers' Union when he first approached the group to assist him in unraveling the mystery of the dwarves' ancient origins.

The key Glankas mentions is the *Rod of Korari*—a 12-inch long, 1-inch diameter magical bar of lodestone carved with three wedge-shaped symbols. This ancient relic has been passed down through the Korari family of Clan Laranak for centuries, and they maintain to this day that the rod was entrusted to their keeping in the early days of the dwarven migration to Khorvaire as a key to leading the dwarves back to their homeland should the need arise. The knowledge of how to use the rod, however, was unfortunately lost millennia ago during the barbaric years after Lord Mror cast the dwarves out of his kingdom.

This knowledge, however, may soon be regained, as exploration of an abandoned site of power in the Hoarfrost Mountains uncovered a strange, perfectly square stone marked with the exact same wedge-shaped symbols as the *Rod of Korari*. Glankas, a member of the Aurum's Copper Concord, quickly secured rights to the site and began searching for allies to uncover what he assumes is his family legacy while also keeping other prying eyes (especially rival dwarven families) from beating him to what he calls the "discovery of a lifetime for any dwarf."

It didn't take long for him to call upon the Diggers' Union for help. Not only is the union renown and respected for their treasure hunting skills, Glankas was sure that he could secure their services cheaply.

For the last year the Diggers' Union and the Banking Guild of House Kundarak have been in conflict over the reparation of debts incurred by the union during the course of the Last War. The conflict came to a head in early in the year when the Banking Guild froze the union accounts and ended any and all negotiations with the organization. The Digger's Union is beginning to feel the crunch of the Kundarak shunning, and is eager to reopen negotiations with the Banking Guild.

While Glankas is not a blood member of House Kunderak, his daughter has married into the house. He is sure that through his daughter and his connections with the Aurum, he can get the house to reopen negotiations with the Diggers' Union; as long as the union aids him in finding his families' legacy—the secret of the *Rod of Korari*.

The union, at this point absolutely desperate to get House Kunderak back at the bargaining table, eagerly signed on to the Glankas expeditions sending young and so far very successful initiates to aid the dwarf in finding his birthright (the PCs). They have also paid half the cost for an expensive House Lyrandar airship to aid Glankas in his mission. Now the PCs find themselves flying from Krona Peak over Mirror Lake, bound for a lonely peak in the Hoarfrost Mountains as Glankas relates his view of dwarven history.

### *Rod of Korari and Waystones*



The *Rod of Korari* is a unique magic item, possessed by Clan Korari for centuries. The rod is made of pure magnetite—called loadstone by some—crafted with a small bulb on one end. It radiates moderate divination magic. On the rod's shaft is etched with the following runes:



Anyone who can read Dwarven recognizes the runes as dwarf, ew, and hergos; ancient dwarven symbols for dwarf, hammer, and travel.

The rod is a magical compass that, after a dwarf strikes the corresponding *waystone*, attunes itself to the next *waystone* in the series. Once the *Rod of Korari* is attuned, it floats in mid air, its bulb pointing in the direction of the next *waystone*, and continues to do so until it is attuned by the another *waystone*, spinning and turning as need be to always indicate the true direction of the *waystone*. When attuned, the rod can still be grabbed or stored, and doing so stops it from pointing toward the next *waystone*, but when the rod is again dropped, it doesn't hit the ground, rather again floats aloft in midair, its bulb again pointing in the direction of the next *waystone*.

Through the course of the adventure, the PCs find *waystone* after *waystone* with the rod's help, and, if successful, find a special portal that Glankas Korari believes leads to the homeland of the dwarves.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure starts with the PCs traveling via airship from the dwarven capital of Krona Peak to a site in the Hoarfrost Mountains. The trip is not long, but provides an opportunity

for the PCs to interact with one another (for those that are not already acquainted) and also to talk with Glankas. The dwarf has a very particular view of dwarven history, and arrogantly ignores other views. Glankas also happens to be a member of the Aurum, though that group has no designs on this particular endeavor, some PCs may find his association with the nefarious organization troublesome.

After this initial bit of roleplaying, the PCs arrive at the Tempus Mount, a flat-topped mountain plagued by foul weather. Atop that peak is one of three *waystones* the PCs are likely to encounter during the adventure.

The party must investigate the stone, likely comparing it to the *Rod of Korari* (which Glankas carries), to discover its purpose. After defeating the stone's guardian, the PCs discover (with the help of Glankas, if necessary) that when rod is struck hard against the strange stone the rod points to a new location, like a magical compass. The group must follow this magical it to the next site.

Following the *Rod of Korari* to the north brings the airship over a small village of orcs. These orcs revere a creature they call the Ice Bear that lives in a series of ice caverns in the mountains. If the PCs approach the orcs with care and caution, they have may open a dialogue with the creatures. The orc tribe warns explorers away from the area, telling them to be careful of angering the Ice Bear. The *Rod of Korari*, however, points directly to the creature's lair. Investigation finds the creature, a werewolf, has turned the chamber housing the stone into a tomb for his parents. The PCs must either defeat the creature, or use stealth or diplomacy to gain access to the second stone. Striking this stone produces a similar result to the first, with the rod again pointing to the square and to a place to the north and east.

The rod leads northeast, along the shores of the Bitter Sea, to a point of stone jutting out at the northernmost part of the continent. There the PCs find that the chamber holding the stone has crumbled, falling into the cold water. The PCs must find a way to access the sometimes-submerged stone, while fending off a murder of blood hawks roosting around the *waystone's* resting place. After attuning the rod, the PCs find their destination lies across the cold waters of the Bitter Sea.

After a trip over the cold and dangerous sea, the PCs find the final destination of the *Rod of Korari*: an ancient dwarven temple set in the side of a lonely mountain island. Powerful ancient guardians protect the entrance to this temple. If they are able to gain entrance, the PCs find the interior covered in runes detailing a powerful magic, one that could possibly transport hundreds of people instantaneously to some far-flung location—presumably the ancient homeland of the dwarves. With this information in hand and considerable time needed to study the findings, the PCs return to Krona Peak, hailed as discovering a possible link to the ancient history of the dwarves, and gaining a valuable ally motivated to end the Banking Guild sanctions against the Diggers' Union.

Successful PCs, who are 3<sup>rd</sup>-level or higher, are also elevated to the rank of Journeyer in the union.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

**Divinations and Dragonmarks:** Parties that include 3<sup>rd</sup>-level spellcaster classes with certain spells or characters with specific dragonmark spell-like abilities may have magical resources to aid in information gathering. The following may be used as guidelines for adjudicating such magic.

Spells such as *augury* should be adjudicated by the DM based on knowledge of future encounters described in the adventure. As such, it is important that the DM read this adventure thoroughly before play begins.

*Locate object* could prove to be a very useful spell, especially when trying to locate the submerged third stone. After seeing the first rune-marked stone, characters can clearly visualize a similar object with the specificity and accuracy needed for *locate object* to work.

A final divination sometimes overlooked by parties is *detect thoughts*. Utilization of this spell long enough to scan the surface thoughts of an opponent or NPC may reveal the creature's basic desires. In this case, the caster becomes aware of what might be useful as a bribe for the creature during Diplomacy or what might serve to Intimidate the opponent, possibly providing a circumstance bonus to such checks (at the DMs discretion, but no more than a +2 bonus). It might also reveal hazards in the area, or useful bits of information needed to locate treasure.

**Survival in the Frigid North:** Exploring the northern reaches of Khorvaire requires some preparation against the hazards of the environment. Characters that leave the airship for long periods of time and do not carry supplies with them may find themselves without food or water. In this climate, Medium characters need at least a gallon of fluids and about a pound of decent food per day to avoid starvation. (Small characters need half as much.) A successful Survival check (DC 10 for the character with Survival, plus 2 for each additional person) recovers enough fresh water and food to stave off starvation. The airship is stocked with enough supplies for a three-month journey with all crew and passengers.

A character can go without water for 1 day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each hour (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

A character can go without food for 3 days, in growing discomfort. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each day (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Characters who have taken nonlethal damage from lack of food or water are fatigued. Nonlethal damage from thirst or starvation cannot be recovered until the character gets food or water, as needed—not even magic that restores hit points heals this damage.

In addition to needing food and water, characters must take care to protect themselves from the frigid weather in the Hoarfrost Mountains and along the Bitter Sea. During the day, temperatures range between 10° and 40° Fahrenheit (roll 1d4 each day), with temperatures dropping by 10 to 20

(1d2) degrees colder at night. As the Diggers' Union knows the possible dangers of this area, the characters all have the opportunity to buy cold weather outfits before the start of the adventure for a reduced rate of 5 gp (though some may choose not to do so) and will even supply potions of *endure elements* for a reduced cost of 50 gp each.

An unprotected character in cold weather (below 40° F) must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, + 1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (for more information on the Survival skill, see page 83 of the *Player's Handbook*). Characters wearing cold weather outfits gain a +5 circumstance bonus to these saves, and characters under the influence of an *endure elements* spell or similar effect are totally protected for the length of the duration.

In conditions of severe cold or exposure (below 0° F), an unprotected character must make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check), taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on each failed save. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (as above). Characters wearing cold weather outfits or under the influence of an *endure elements* spell or similar effect need only check once per hour for severe cold and exposure damage.

A character who takes any nonlethal damage from cold or exposure is beset by frostbite or hypothermia (treat as fatigued). These penalties end when the character recovers the nonlethal damage taken from the cold and exposure. Finally, characters that wander beyond the general area they first enter from the airship risk getting lost. The character in the lead must make a Survival check (DC 15 in Forest areas, DC 12 in Mountains.) every hour to see if he becomes lost. See the Getting Lost section of Wilderness Adventures on pages 86 and 87 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details about adjudicating this situation.

**Raising the Dead:** At this point the PCs may have gained enough renown, and hopefully enough gold and experience, to come back from the dead. Like many things that involve XP and gp cost, raise dead and other spells work differently in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS. If a PC dies, and his or her companions are able to bring the body back to a temple with clerics powerful enough to cast *raise dead* within 11 days after the time of death, a character can be raised (assuming the soul is willing). This incurs a 1,100-gp debt, which may be divided up between the characters played during the session. This debt is forever subtracted from the equipment value of the characters, and reported in the "GP Debt" field of the Session Tracking sheet. Additionally, the character that came back from the dead has its experience points reduced. The amount of experience points reduced is dependent on the current character level (see the table below) of the PC raised. Record the proper amount on the "XP Drain" field of the Session Tracking sheet. These two costs are the only costs for the raise dead (even for 1st-level characters), and overrides the rules for the spell found in the *Player's Handbook*. When a

character is brought back from the dead it is not recorded as a character death (so don't mark "Y" on the Session Tracking). Just record the gold debt and experience drain.

### Experience Point Drain for Raised Characters

Character Level	XP Drain
1st and 2nd	1,000 XP
3rd	1,500 XP
4th	2,000 XP
5th	2,500 XP

## PROLOGUE: A VITAL MISSION

The PCs are once again summoned to Grea Tower in Wroat. This time it's not Matron Martra who calls upon them; it is Patron Zuzrin Tellun, an imposing elf rumored to be a member of the Conclave of Masters, the body that ultimately governs the Diggers' Union.

Coming to the Hall of Messengers at the appointed time, the PCs have no trouble finding Tellun's expeditious messenger homunculus standing upon the center perch of the waiting area. It is larger, more ornate, and seemingly more aware than other expeditious messengers the PCs have likely encountered—a beautifully peace of arcane artistry. It notices the PCs as soon as they enter the chamber, and even calls out to them by name.

*"This way initiates, my master eagerly awaits your arrival."*

It leads the PCs beyond the Pillar of Aureon and toward one of the booths.

Inside the booth, the PCs are greeted by a tall, handsome elf dressed in goldthread embossed robes. The elf moves with grace and conducts himself as a cultured gentleman, seeming distracted, aloof, and arrogant at times.

He motions for the PCs to sit, and offers wine, pouring it by his own hand. Connoisseurs of wine (Appraise DC 15), notice it is a fine, subtle, and expensive vintage from the Bluevine region of Aundair. He accepts any complements on his choice of vintage with feint humility, but ignores any slight against it. He does not even grace requests for ale, beer, mead, or stronger spirits with a reply.

Zuzrin sates his thirst with a few sips, and gets straight to the business at hand.

*An important client has requested the union's service. Unlike many of our clients, this one not only wants you to know his identity, he wants to accompany you on the mission.*

*His name is Glankas Korari, and he is a relatively minor, but still very wealthy, merchant lord from the dwarven hold of Mror. What makes him even more important is what he could accomplish for the union.*

*For almost a year the union's accounts held by House Kundarak's Banking Guild have been frozen. What started as a minor squabble over the repayment of debts the union accrued during the Last War has turned into a major incident due to*

*some...let's say, diplomatic foibles? Now the Banking Guild refuses to treat with us at all, and that is causing financial difficulties.*

*Needless to say, the union is very interested in seeing an end to our...disagreement...with the Banking Guild. Korari has ties to House Kundarak, as he has just married his daughter off to someone favored in that house, and is willing to broker a deal if we do him a favor.*

*This dwarf merchant lord has a peculiar view of dwarf history, and is on a mission to prove it correct. While I am afraid his mission will ultimately provide fruitless, we must help him try. Your task is to aid Korari in his mission, help him succeed if all possible, and if not, put forward an effort so flawless that he'll realize the futility of his ultimate goal, but still hold to his part of the bargain to aid in our disputes with Kundarak. It is imperative that no matter the outcome of the mission, you treat Korari with respect so to put a good face on the Diggers' Union.*

*For success in your effort, your compensation will be considerable, and you'll earn the rank of Journeyer within the union. Failure may just ruin us all.*

The PCs may have questions about the particulars of the mission, but Zuzrin tells them they should wait and talk to the client.

*"I have my doubts, and I would prefer not poison you with my pessimism. We trust you to find solutions."*

If the PCs ask why they have been chosen for the mission, Zuzrin explains that they come highly recommended from Matron Martra. They have displayed skill and ingenuity in past missions, and while the union hopes such successes are due to talent and enterprise, it'll make due with luck, as long as it holds out.

This explanation may ring hollow to new characters, or characters who have accomplished few missions for Matron Martra. To that Zuzrin only comments his desire that choosing those characters for this task was not some sort of clerical error. Zuzrin Tellun does tell the PCs that the Mror Holds can be very cold. The PCs are given the opportunity to buy cold weather outfits from the union for a reduced rate of 5 gp an outfit. The union even supplies potions of *endure elements* for a reduced cost of 50 gp each.

Further illustrating the importance of the mission, the PCs find that the Diggers' Union and Glankas Korari have hired the services of a House Lyrandar airship—the *Stormdrake*. The PCs board the airship in Sharn, taking it all the way to Krona Peak (an 8-day journey, with a stops in Flamekeep and Korth), where they pick up the client, Glankas Korari. It is that point the adventure really begins

## PART ONE: THE *STORMDRAKE*

A half-elf dragonmarked captain named Aielous captains the Stormdrake. The airship looks much like a standard sailing vessel, although a ring of elemental fire circling the vessel replaces the mast and sails at mid-ship. The vessel has storage and crew space below deck, with a large cabin and sleeping quarters for 10 passengers above and toward the rear of the ship. The captain's quarters are opposite the cabin, directly below the helm.

While the PCs get on the airship in Sharn, the adventure

really starts as the airship travels from Krona Peak to the Tempus Mount. It is in Krona Peak that the Stormdrake picks up the dwarf client.

Once aboard, Glankas engages various characters in conversation, gauging their knowledge of dwarven history, their past exploits or adventures, and the particular skills the character brings to this endeavor. As the entire flight takes roughly 20 hours due to some rough weather, there is ample time for conversation. The ship leaves in early morning, just as the sun is rising in the east.

### Glankas Korari

Glankas Korari is a typical Mror dwarf in many respects—more apt to use intimidation than diplomacy (even though he's a skilled diplomat when he needs to be) and very proud of his racial heritage.

While lawful, Glankas is evil. He holds a deep-rooted prejudice of orcs and even half-orcs, and while he will not openly begrudge those characters in service of his important mission, he does not treat them as equals. In fact, secretly, he sees only other dwarves as equals, which isn't always a good thing, as he always wonders if dwarves among the PCs are spies for other clans, and is even rather aloof with those PCs.

In short, while Glankas deals with the PCs with a façade of respect, and sometimes even warmth, he really sees them as employees, and expendable ones at that. His true goal is to prove his historical theories, and, of course, survive the ordeal.

Characters that persecute Glankas based solely on his alignment quickly find themselves dismissed by the dwarf and heading back to the Diggers' Union with a lost contract.

Already affluent due to his family holdings, membership in the Aurum has served to bring the dwarf even more wealth, and now he has married his daughter into the powerful House Kunderak. This has, however, made him accustomed to a softer life, and he has a fondness for the finer things in life.

A natural coward, he shuns combat if he can get others to fight for him—and he sees the PCs as hirelings for that task. While he accompanies the PCs on their venture, this attitude will pose its own challenges throughout the adventure.

Glankas wears fashionable clothing that compliments his well-kept black hair and eyes. A single streak of white hair splits the center of his beard. Glankas is an accomplished scholar in his own right, although he allows his racial and family pride to cloud his view of historical facts.



#### GLANKAS KORARI CR 4

Male dwarf aristocrat 5

LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

**Int** -1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen -1, Spot -1.

**Aura** Faint law and evil

**Languages** Common, Dwarven; Gnome

**AC** 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13

**hp** 27 (5 HD)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5; +2 bonus on saves against spells and spell-like abilities and poisons.

**Spd** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Atk** Masterwork shortsword +4 melee (1d6/19-20)

**Atk** Options +1 bonus on attack rolls against orcs and goblinoids, +4 dodge bonus to AC against creatures of the giant type.

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

**Abilities** Str 11, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 12

**Feats** Iron Will, Negotiator

**Skills** Appraise +5 (+7 related to stone or metal), Diplomacy +16, Decipher Script +6, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +6, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Search +1 (+3 for finding secret doors and similar compartments, +2 to notice unusual stonework, or +5 to notice stone secret doors and similar compartments), Sense Motive +6, Survival -1 (+1 from getting lost or avoiding hazards)

**Possessions** Studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, noble's outfit, 8 copper rings (worth 10 cp each), magnifying glass, cartographer's kit, 5 *potions of endure elements*, identification papers, traveling papers, 45 pp.

*As the airship cuts through the crisp northern air, thin tendrils of steam trail from the ring of elemental fire surrounding the vessel. About three or four hours after leaving the dwarven capital of Krona Peak the vessel is sailing smoothly over a large body of water the dwarves call Mirror Lake. Captain Aielous and his crew busily man various stations of the ship, with Aielous issuing commands from the helm. While they work, your dwarven patron, Glankas Korari, makes himself comfortable in the observation cabin, which is warm, dry, and comfortably lined with cushioned benches. He pours himself a glass of wine, offering more to everyone present, and then eyes each person in the room carefully before stating, “So, tell me what you know of my people and our history, and what talents you bring to this group.”*

Glankas has a very specific (not necessarily accurate, but he believes it to be so) view regarding dwarven history, based on his own studies and extrapolations. Given enough interest (and enough time) he recounts his view, as presented in the adventure background, to the PCs. Of the information he presents, it is a fairly well-known fact (at least among historians and bards) that the dwarves of the Mror Holds lived in a state of barbarism prior to the rise of House Kundarak nearly a millennia ago (Knowledge (history) check DC 15; bardic knowledge check DC 10; dwarves and citizens of the Mror Holds receive a +5 circumstance bonus on either check). That the dwarves likely migrated from the Frostfell to their home in the Ironroot Mountains some 12,000 years ago is less well known (Knowledge (history) check DC 25; bardic knowledge check DC 20), but supported by the fact that no dwarven artifacts or civilizations have ever been found in Khorvaire outside of that area.

The rest of Glankas’s story is largely conjecture, based on obscure dwarven records and religious texts that few scholars have access to, and even fewer credit as reliable. Any character that challenges his theory is regarded as ignorant of dwarven history and Glankas lords over such persons the fact that he has access to records that “common folk” cannot hope to ever see. As evidence of this secret knowledge, he produces the *Rod of Korari* from a pouch at his belt. At this time he does not let any characters touch or examine the rod.

In addition to conversations about history, Glankas is interested in knowing the capabilities of each character. He is little impressed by overt shows of physical prowess or “barbaric” folks such as rangers, barbarians, and druids but readily takes to spellcasters and those of a more scholarly bent while also favoring those of apparent wealth or nobility.

**Development:** Some characters may recognize that Glankas is a member of the Aurum due to the copper rings he wears on his fingers (a Mror dwarf may do so with an Intelligence check (DC 10) while anyone may do so with a Knowledge (nobility) or bardic knowledge check (DC 15). While he is indeed a member of the Copper Concord, the Aurum has no current designs on this particular endeavor (at least none of which Glankas is aware). Glankas does know that the Aurum has some shady dealings with nobles and wealthy merchants throughout Khorvaire, but as a lower level functionary he has no specific knowledge of these plans.

If pressed about the Aurum, Glankas insists that they are simply a group of like-minded folk interested in the history of the continent.

Characters with bardic knowledge or ranks of Knowledge (local) might know more about the organization. Characters who succeeded the above check, know the information for DC 15.

**DC 15:** A society of wealthy dwarves students of history, the Aurum finds expeditions searching for historical relics and documents. Members of the organization wear plain rings of copper, silver, gold or platinum on all eight fingers. The ring’s metal signifies their rank in the organization. The copper conclave—the signified by the wearing of copper rings—is the lowest ranking conclave.

**DC 25:** The organization is older than the Last War and the dwarves’ declaration of independence. But with the end of the Last War the group’s reach has extended out of the Mror Hold. The rites and rituals of the group—as well, some say, their true purposes—are closely guarded secrets.

**DC 35:** It is whispered by some that the group sponsors crime lords in various cities, and that their true goal is to uncover the past only to affect the future.

### **Stormdrake and its Crew**

The ship’s captain is dragonmarked half-elf named Aielous, and his first mate is an unmarked member of House Lyrandar named Ledrin.

Aielous is a tall and handsome half-elf. He is charismatic, natural leader. He spends much of his time dealing with the rigors of airship sailing, but is both polite and courteous to the PCs and to Glankas, although as the adventure wears on, he will become increasingly frustrated with the dwarf’s lack of tact, and arrogant attitude. At the same time Aielous is not afraid to tell either the PCs or their dwarf employer no when he needs to. He does will not steer his ship into harms way, and will not engage it in any combat the PCs encounter, saying simply “that is beyond the scope of our agreement,” and ending discussion abruptly there, leaving Ledrin to calm the frustrations of his passengers.

PCs might remember Ledrin from *EMH-2 Pirate’s Bounty and the Isle of Fire*. In that adventure he served as first mate for the House Lyrandar naval vessel *Contentment*, and was made acting captain after ship’s master, Stev Rud’ie, died during a pirate assault. After successfully limping the *Contentment* to the port of Newthron, Q’Barr, Ledrin was given his current assignment—a definite promotion.

PC who interacted with Ledrin in the earlier adventure notice the half-elf has changed in the weeks since their last meeting. More confident and at ease with command, he has lost his airs of superiority, and interacts with the crew as trusted companions rather than treating them like servants. A least mark of his house manifested on his cheek—in the very same place that Stev Rud’ie wore his mark. He tells the PCs that it manifested shortly after the *Contentment* arrived in Newthron, adding that the stress of that adventure must have triggered its appearance.

Ledrin welcomes familiar adventures like dear friends,


**CAPTAIN AIELOUS CR 3**

Male half-elf expert 4

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

**Int** +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +7

**Aura** Faint chaos and good

**Languages** Common, Elven; Dwarven

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13

**hp** 18 (4 HD)

**Immune** sleep

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5; +2 bonus against enchantment spells and effects.

**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Atk** Masterwork light mace +4 melee (1d6) or Masterwork light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20)

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

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

**Feats** Great Fortitude, Least Dragonmark (Mark of Storm)

**Skills** Balance +8, Craft (carpentry) +8, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4, Listen +2, Profession (sailor) +8, Search +2, Spot +7

**Possessions** +1 *leather*, masterwork buckler, masterwork light mace, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*, 8 *potions of spider climb*, 50 gp, identification papers, traveling papers.


**FIRST MATE LEDRIN CR 2**

Male half-elf aristocrat 2/expert 1

NG Medium humanoid (elf)

**Int** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +7

**Aura** Faint good

**Languages** Common, Elven; Draconic

**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

**hp** 15 (3 HD)

**Immune** sleep

**Fort** -1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6; +2 bonus against enchantment spells and effects.

**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Atk** +1 *longsword* +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20) or Masterwork light crossbow +3 ranged (1d8/19-20)

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

**Abilities** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

**Feats** Agile, Least Dragonmark (Mark of Storm)

**Skills** Balance +4, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +2, Profession (sailor) +5, Search +2, Spot +7.

**Possessions** masterwork leather, masterwork buckler, +1 *longsword*, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, 30 gp, identification papers, traveling papers.

**HOUSE LYRANDAR CREWPERSON CR ½**

Mix male and female half-elf expert 1

NG Medium humanoid (elf)

**Int** +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

**Aura** Faint chaos and good

**Languages** Common, Elven

**AC** 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13

**hp** 5 (1 HD)

**Immune** sleep

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1; +2 bonus against enchantment spells and effects.

**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Atk** club +1 melee (1d6+1) or light crossbow +1 ranged (1d8/19-20)

**Base Atk** +0; Grp +1

**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 9

**Feats** Skill Focus (profession [sailor])

**Skills** Balance +5, Climb +5, Diplomacy +1, Gather Information +1, Jump +5, Listen +0, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +6, Spot +0, Use Rope +5.

**Possessions** leather armor, buckler, club, light crossbow, 20 bolts, cold weather outfit, 5 gp, identification papers, traveling papers.



commenting on how it is a pleasure to travel with them again. Throughout the adventure, the first mate goes out of his way to aid the PCs—even if their last meeting ended badly, allowing bygones to be bygones. Even as that is the case, smart adventurers who absconded with the Isle of Fire’s treasure without informing Ledrin would do well not telling him now. It would immediately sour his mood toward them, though he really can’t do anything about it. Not yet anyhow. If this occurs give the PCs the “Disfavor of Ledrin” story object.

Along with the captain and the first mate, 15 House Lyrandar half-elves crew the *Stormdrake*.

Captain Aielous and First Mate Ledrin use their dragonmark spell-like ability (*endure elements*) to render themselves immune to the temperature extremes encountered while flying this far north. The rest of the crew, all lacking such benefit, alternate shifts above and below deck and wear cold weather outfits to diminish the adverse effects of the weather. At any given time five crewmen work the top deck, five more work below, and the remaining five sleep and eat.

Passengers are encouraged to stay in their quarters or the heated observation deck during most of the flight, but those that insist on staying out on the deck are subject to the effects of cold weather (see “Survival in the Frigid North” in the “Troubleshooting” section above).

Aielous has eight potions of *spider climb* that he uses if necessary to make emergency repairs to remote parts of the vessel. He also has a potion of *fly* that is reserved for extreme emergencies (should someone fall overboard, for instance, or if the vessel sank for some reason). These potions are for emergency and he does give them to the PCs or Glankas unless forced.

In the event that a party is foolish enough to kill or incapacitate either Captain Aielous or First Mate Ledrin, or otherwise render them incapable of manning the helm of the airship, someone must take control of the bound fire elemental to move the airship or alter its course. A character with a Mark of House Lyrandar can use his dragonmark to control the elemental using the *wheel of wind and water* at the helm of the vessel. Characters without this dragonmark must win an opposed Charisma check against the elemental (the elemental has a Charisma modifier of +0). If the elemental wins the opposed check, it either continues with the current course of movement or brings the vehicle to an immediate stop, according to its whim. If the character wins the opposed check, the vessel moves as the character intends.

A character at the helm of the *Stormdrake* that successfully controls the airship can telepathically command the bound elemental to move the vessel forward or backward, turn the vessel, speed it up, slow it down, or stop. An airship can also move upward, move downward, or hover. The *Stormdrake* has a fly speed of roughly twenty miles per hour (poor maneuverability).

Characters that pursue this unfortunate course of actions also gain the “Disfavor of Ledrin” story object.

## PART TWO: ANCIENT WINDS AND WORDS

While traveling via the *Stormdrake* significantly reduces the travel time from the dwarven capital of Krona Peaks to the Hoarfrost Mountains, the 300+ mile trip still takes much of the day thanks to some weather troubles encounter once the *Stormdrake* draws closer to the Tempus Mount.

Finally the *Stormdrake* approaches the turbulent Tempus Mount. The following read-aloud text assumes that the PCs traveled with First Mate Ledrin before in *EMH-2 Pirate’s Bounty and the Isle of Fire*. If this is not the case, adjust the text accordingly.

*The deeper the Stormdrake flies into the Hoarfrost Mountains the fiercer the weather becomes. Strong winds rattle the airship, and the House Lyrandar crew steps up to the challenge, quickly repairing damage caused by the increasing turbulence.*

*First mate Ledrin comes into the observation area. Though the half-elf boy is obviously rattled by the chaos around him, he puts on a brave face.*

*“There always seems to be trouble when we travel together. I am beginning to think I’m bad luck,” he says, half-smiling. “The captain has asked me to escort you to the lower decks until these winds have subsided.”*

*Before you can get a word in edgewise, Glankas voices his contempt for that course of action.*

*“Nonsense, boy. We dwarves aren’t rattled so easy, and I’ve no doubt my companions have been through worse. We are almost to the Tempus Mount, according to my calculations, and these winds aren’t going to subside.”*

Ledrin puts up some feeble arguments, but is no match for the stubborn dwarf. Before any discussion becomes too heated, allow the PCs to make a Spot check (DC 15) success sees the following.

*You notice that the Stormdrake is approaching a flat-topped mountain. The rocky mount has a steep stairway climbing up its sides—it seems you are approaching the Tempus Mount. By the blowing clouds, snow, and ice, you can tell the weather grows steadily worse around the peak.*

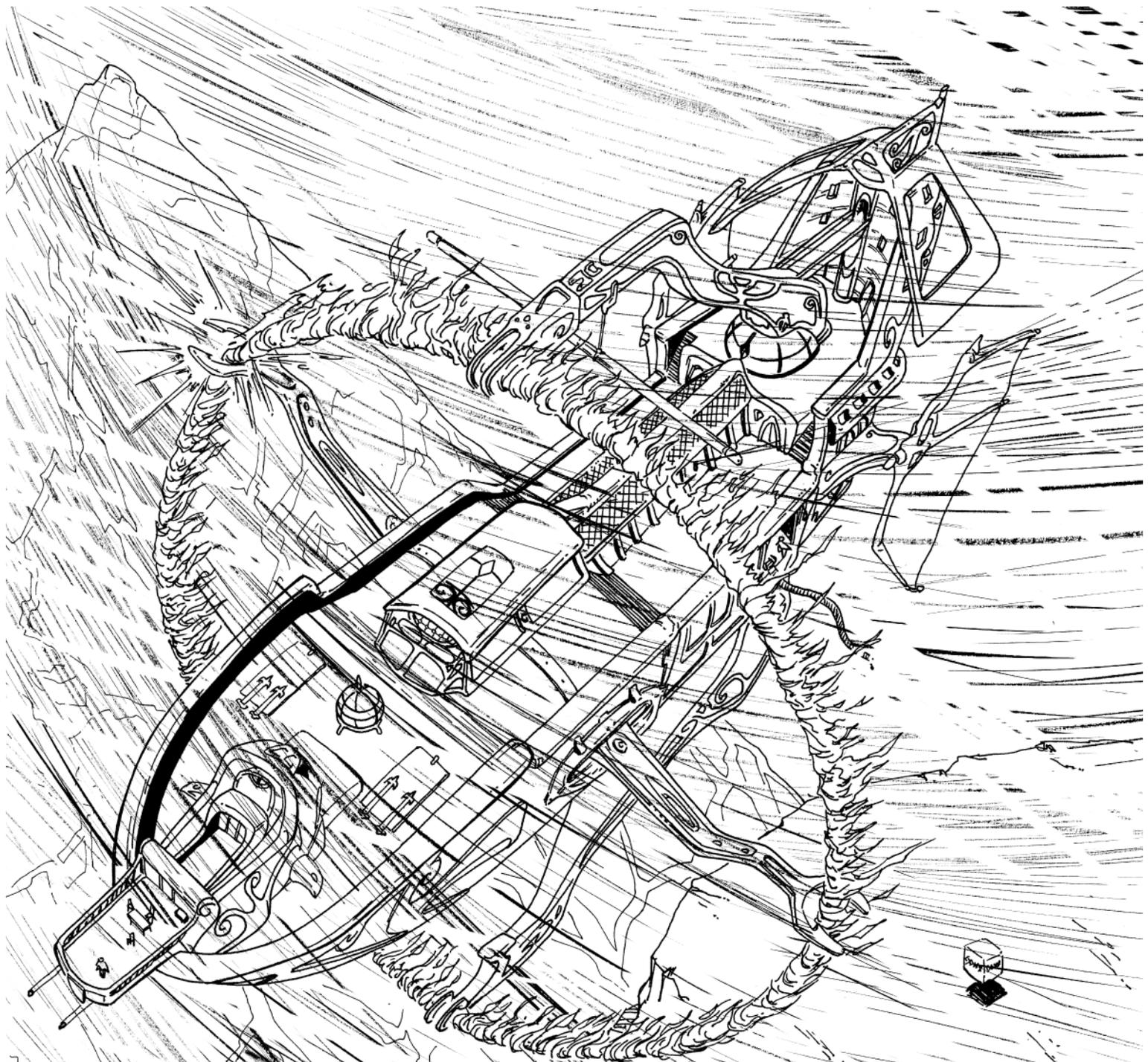
If none of the PCs spot the Tempus Mount, a crewman opens the door to the observation chamber, heralding the airship’s approach to the mountain.

Use “Illustration 1” to help describe this scene.

As the *Stormdrake* passes, the PCs spot a large stone block atop the mountain. A DC 20 Spot check notices that the block seems to be floating above the ground.

Captain Aielous attempts to steer the *Stormdrake* toward the peak, but is rebuffed every time. He finally tells the PCs and Glankas the following.

*“I can’t get you atop the mount. The winds are fierce, and I fear they are unnatural or even supernatural. I can get you there,” he*



points to a flat area on the mountain's southern face, at the start of the carved stair that scales the Tempus Mount. "I hope you don't mind climbing those stairs," he ads with a wry grin.

The Glankas and the PCs must descend a rope ladder to the ground (50-foot rope ladder, 2 in. thick, 4 hit points per strand, burst DC 26 Strength check, Climb check, DC 5; a climber's kit provides no bonus to the Climb check) as there is obviously no dock at which to disembark. Captain Aielous kicks the ladder over the side of the airship after bringing the vessel within 30 feet of the ground. The captain simply smiles at any protest (which Glankas offers vehemently, stating that "persons of his position shouldn't have to scurry down ropes"). The captain does offer assurance that the ladder is sturdy enough to bear any of his passengers. He gives the PCs an alchemist flare, a rod that looks similar to a sunrod, and tells them the following.

*I'll pilot the Stormdrake to a safe point, but still within view of the southern slope. When you are ready for us to get you, strike this. It creates a bright flare and a whiff of glowing purple smoke. Well come and extract you. Good luck, and keep warm.*

#### Top of the Tempus Mount

Once on the ground, the climb up the stairs of the Tempus Mount begins. It takes an hour of climbing the stairs to reach the summit. The going is exhausting and cold (10°F) causing those without the protection of endure elements to succeed at a

Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and become fatigued until the damage is healed. Before he starts climbing the stairs, Glankas drinks one of his potions of *endure elements*.

The cold is the only real threat until the PCs reach the peak of the Tempus Mount. When they reach the top, they see the following:

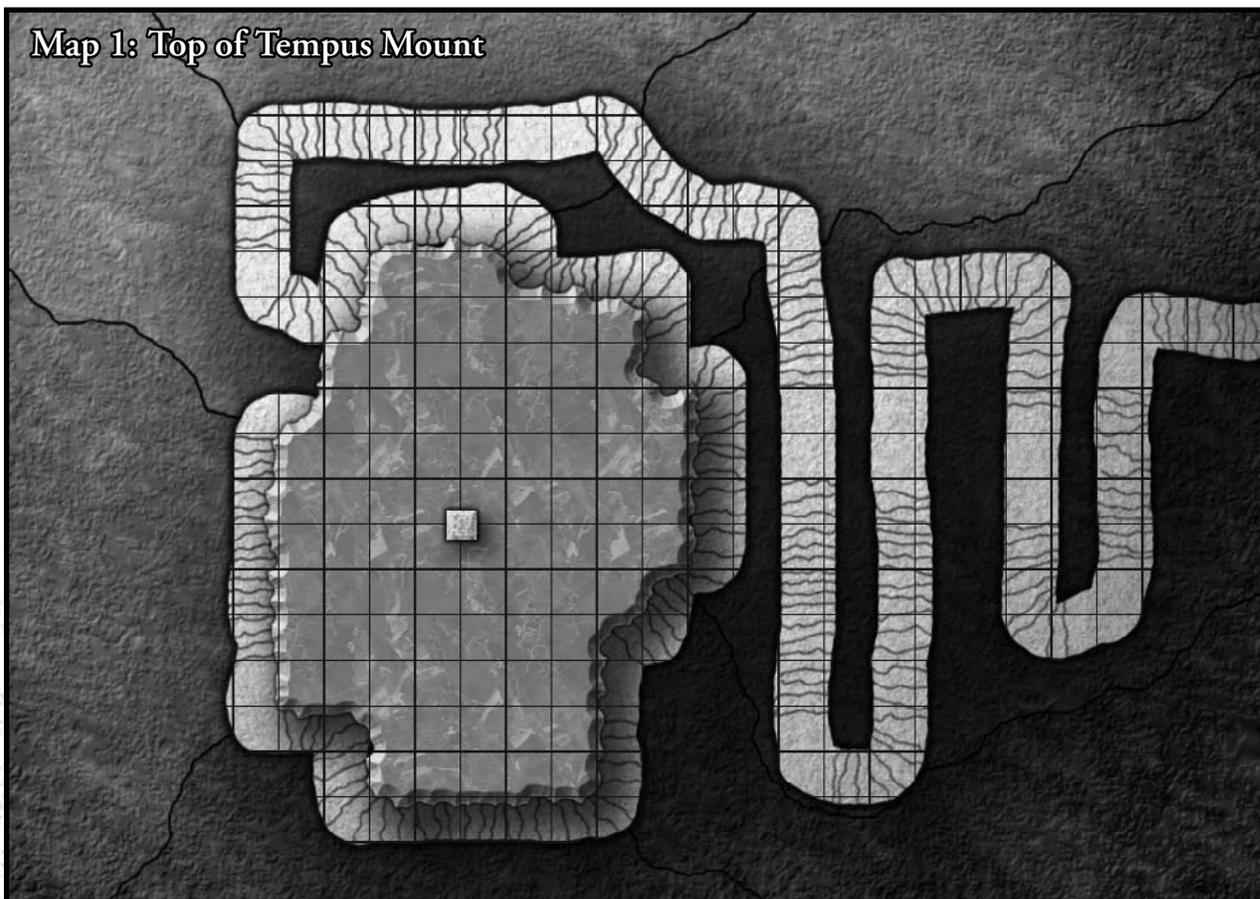
*The top of the Tempus Mount is entirely flat. Snow and ice blow upon its surface, giving it a glistening sheen, like the surface of a frozen lake. It's so smooth that it almost looks like a giant cut off the mountain's peak with a single swipe of a massive, keen blade. At its center a large block of granite floats 8 feet above the ground. Most of its sides are engraved with a series of four golden glowing runes.*

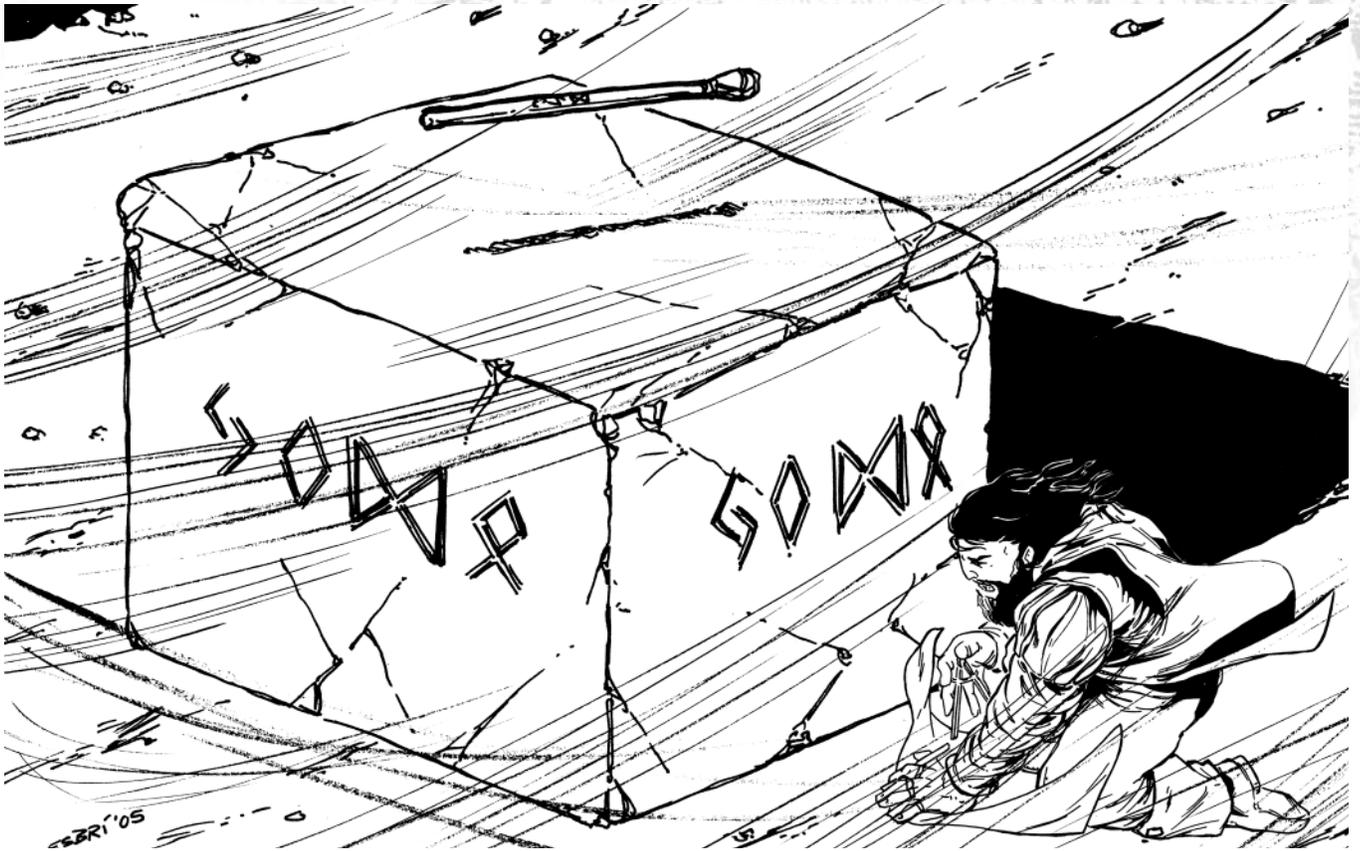
Glankas confirms that the granite block is the *waystone* he seeks. If the PCs hesitate in their approach he even tells them the meaning of the dwarven letters on the stone (as can other characters who speak Dwarven), see "Development" below. Though he was hesitant to do so before, he even produces the *Rod of Korari* and points out the similarities between the runes on the rod and the *waystone*.

Once the PCs step upon the flat mountain peak, the guardian of the *waystone* is awakened and attacks.

**Creature:** Bound here long ago by the dwarves who placed this *waystone*, the air elemental is bitter at his entrapment, and lashes out at any who enter. It knows his

Map 1: Top of Tempus Mount





knows that the only real release from its entrapment is death, but it's not willing to go alone. Neither it nor Glankas knows that striking the *Rod of Korari* against the *waystone* frees it from imprisonment (see below).

**Large Air Elemental:** hp 60; see *Monster Manual* pages 95–98.

**Tactics:** When the air elemental coalesces from the winds that swirl about the Tempus Mount it issues the following warning in a harsh raspy voice:

*Flee or perish in my turbulence!*

And attacks with its mighty fists. The elemental does not use its whirlwind ability, preferring the straightforward tactic of beating its opponents with its slam attack. It does not attack Glankas, intrinsically recognizing him as an heir of Korari. The magic of the binding does not allow such an assault, but the PCs are fair game.

If the PCs leave the mount's flat top, the elemental ceases its attack, and does not follow the PCs, as its binding only allows it to attack those atop the mountain.

**Glankas's Response:** Upon hearing the air elemental's warning, Glankas turns tails and runs, instructing the PCs to "Kill the creature!" A natural coward, it takes some effort to get Glankas to cooperate, but either a successful Intimidate check (DC 14), or a bard inspiring courage does it. If the PCs can't overcome the dwarf's cowardice in those ways, they have to physically force Glankas back or defeat the air elemental to get

him to cooperate.

**Terrain and Objects:** The mountaintop is slippery, which increases the DC of Balance and Tumble checks by 5. The *waystone* floats 10 feet in the air until the air elemental is defeated or Glankas or a dwarf PC strikes the *Rod of Korari* on one of the rune-engraved sides (the runes are on every side except for the top and bottom sides of the cube). Because of the stone's altitude, a PC has to physically or magically boost a dwarf up to the stone. Physical boosts require the aid of a Medium size PC and is a full-round action that provokes attack of opportunity against the character boosting and the creature being lifted.

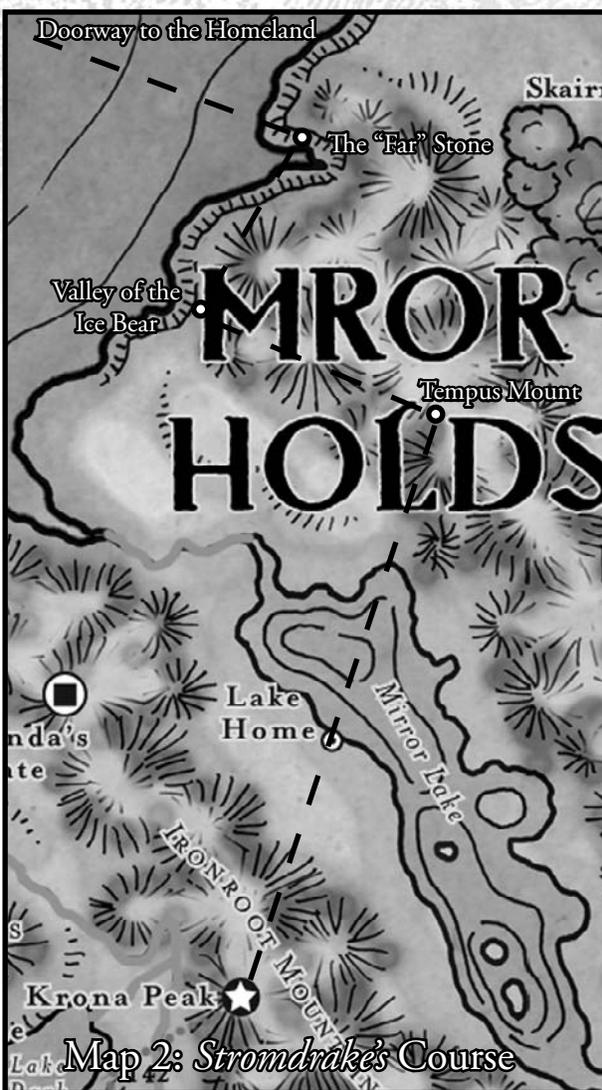
When the stone falls to the ground, any creature under the stone must succeed a DC 13 Reflex save or take 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage but is not pinned by the stone's fall.

**Development:** If the Glankas or another dwarf (or someone successfully emulating a member of the dwarven race with the Use Magic Device skill—DC 25) strikes the *Rod of Korari* against the *waystone* and the elemental is still alive, its binding is broken, and it quickly flees, elated at its freedom.

This action also causes the *waystone* to fall (see above) and the *Rod of Korari* to fly from the hand of its wielder, and float above the *waystone*, its end pointing in the direction of the next *waystone*—this time off to some distant valley.

Glankas is ecstatic about this turn of events, and takes a map and cartography tools from his backpack. He frantically begins to calculate possible destinations the rod may be pointing to.

Use "Illustration 2" to help describe this scene.



The PCs must investigate the stone, likely comparing it to the *Rod of Korari* (which Glankas carries), to discover its purpose. While the dwarf would not allow anyone to inspect the rod aboard the *Stormdrake*, he offers the item for inspection now. As is clear to anyone doing even a cursory comparison, the markings on the rod and the square of stone are largely identical. Understanding the markings, however, takes knowledge of the Dwarven language.

If asked, Glankas tells the PCs that the four runes are “dwar”, “dormark”, “hergos”, and “dru”. “Dwar” is the rune for “dwarf”, “dormark” is the rune for “anvil”, “hergos” is the rune for travel, which Glankas explains could, and probably does, mean “waystone” in the current context. He further explains that “dru” is a phonetic character, part of various words related to home, structures, or settlements. PCs who can read Dwarven, or gain knowledge of the runes via *comprehend languages* or by successfully Decipher Script (DC 25) can also provide this information.

The runes look like this:



With the *Rod of Korari* attuned to the next *waystone*, the PCs have little problem (other than weathering the cold of the mountaintop on their trip back down) calling for the *Stormdrake* with the alchemist flare, and proceeding to the next *waystone* in the Valley of the Ice Bear, below.

#### Scaling the Encounter

**2<sup>nd</sup>-level Characters:** The air elemental is a Medium air elemental (hp 35; see *Monster Manual* pages 95 – 98).

**4<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** The air elemental is not freed when the *Rod of Korari* is struck upon the *waystone*. It continues to fight until dead.

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** Increase the air elemental’s hit points to 75. It is not freed when the *Rod of Korari* is struck upon the *waystone*, continuing to fight until it dies. It use its whirlwind ability in the fight.

## PART THREE: VALLEY OF THE ICE BEAR

Following the attuned *Rod of Korari* to the north takes the party along western edge of the Hoarfrost Mountains for over 150 miles (taking roughly 8 hours on the *Stormdrake*, and plenty of time for the PCs to rest). As the vessel approaches the northern edge of the mountains and a vast blue expanse (the Bitter Sea) stretches out before the ship, the rod begins to slowly spin, pointing back to the south. Below this location, viewers from the airship easily see a small, nomad village near a dense forest of conifers at the foot of the mountains. A trail leads away from the village into the mountains through a deep ravine, terminating at the southern slope of a ridge. The base of this ridgeline appears littered with boulders of various sizes.

While the rod clearly points toward the ridge, Captain Aielous refuses to disembark passengers closer than a mile or so from the trail terminus due to the height of the ravine and stiff winds blowing down the mountain slope. This puts the PCs roughly halfway between the ridge and the village. While it is cold in the valley, temperatures only drop below 40° F at night, or when the PCs approach the Ice Caves.

The party may choose to investigate the village first, in which case they find the place home to a few dozen orcs of the Jhorash'tar tribe.

Of the orcs in this region, Glankas says the following:

*“A ruthless and utterly savage race, more so than others of their kind” the dwarf tells you with open contempt. “It disturbs me that they camp so close to an important dwarven artifact. We may have to destroy their fetid den and cleanse this place of their stench.”*

He says this even if there are orcs or half-orcs among the PCs, adding simply and dismissively “present company is excluded, of course” if any of the PCs protest his harsh assessment. It is quiet



possible that some half-orcs among the PCs are descended from the Jhorash'tar tribes. If this pointed out, Glankas arrogantly waves such protests aside, adding only, "everyone has the power to rise above even the basest of beginnings; I commend you." His insincerity does not require a Sense Motive check to read.

Glankas is a supporter of Clan Mroranon's proposal to eliminate the Jhorash'tar orcs, which could hamper diplomacy with the local tribe (see below).

### What the PCs Might Know

Character with ranks of Knowledge (local) or orc and half-orc or Mror Hold dwarf characters can make an Intelligence check to see what they know about the Jhorash'tar orcs. Half-orc characters descended from Jhorash'tar orcs and Mror Hold dwarves gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

*DC 10:* Calling the Ironroot Mountains their traditional home, this particular group of orcs must have been moved to this far-flung location by Mror dwarf expansion. Like many orcs of Khorvaire, the Jhorash'tar live a nomadic—some would say barbaric—lifestyle, worshiping the spirits of nature in many forms and totems, and sometimes swearing religious fealty to the Dragon Below.

*DC 20:* Some in Mror Holds think the orcs should be exterminated, while a more progressive group push for recognition of the Jhorash'tar as part of the hold. Clan Korari sides with Clan Mroranon's stance that the Jhorash'tar should be eradicated.

*DC 30:* There has been some talk that a group of Jhorash'tar has settled in the northern Hoarfrost Mountains and worships a creature called the Ice Bear. These orcs may be part of that group.

### Jhorash'tar Village

The buildings are all simple, hide-covered structures dug into the ground for insulation, but still easy to uproot. This is a nomadic village. These orcs are primitive hunter-gathers, living off of hardy plants and native animals such as branta (large horselike beasts), great snow elk, and the occasional grizzly mastodon or tlalusk (huge six-legged beasts resembling a cross between a horned elephant and a horse). Generally peaceful but suspicious of outsiders (especially dwarves), they revere a creature they call the Ice Bear that lives in a series of ice caverns at the base of the ridge.

If the PCs decide to approach the village to learn more of the valley, Glankas protests.

*We can't trust them. They'll kill us on sight! I recommend we go in fighting, or we do not approach at all.*

If the PCs ignore the dwarf, and decide to approach anyway, he gives in to their demands, but warns them "I'm under your protection, and I'll hold you to that," with a sharp pointed jabs of his ringed fingers. If the PCs suggest that Glankas stay behind while the PCs talk to the orcs, he readily agrees.

The orcs' response to any approach based on its nature. If

the PCs move forward signaling they wish peaceful parley with the orcs, they are greeted with suspicion, but are met with a small delegation led by the village shaman, a female druid.

**Creatures:** The group comes out to meet the PCs interested in talking (use “Illustration 3 to help describe the group), while most of the other villagers seek refuge in the forest incase the talks turn hostile. Eight more orc warriors stay in the village either to defend it or come to the aid of their leaders if negotiations sour.

The group coming to meet the PCs starts out as indifferent. If there’re dwarves among the PCs, their attitude degenerates to unfriendly, indicated by verbose posturing and insults hurled to dwarves, but no overt violence...yet. Half-orcs among the group have no affect on their initial, but orcs among PCs counteract the affect of dwarfs among the group, but do not rise their attitude above indifferent.

**Gelvuk:** female orc druid 3; hp 18; see “Combat Statistics,” below.

**Orc Champions (2):** male orc barbarian 1: hp 13, 10; see “Combat Statistic,” below.

**Orc Warriors (3):** mix male and female orc War1: hp 7, 6, 4; AL N; see *Monster Manual* page 203.

**Development:** Assuming that the PCs peacefully come forward to treat with the orcs, a single Diplomacy skill check is needed to effect the Jhorash’tar’s reaction during the meeting. The orcs give the PC a full minute to hear the words of the group’s leader (and since they only listen to the “leader” no other character can assist in the Diplomacy check), and make their decision on how to deal with the outsiders based on those words.

Because of his prejudice toward the Jhorash’tar, Glankas refuses to parley with the orcs.

Feel free to give out as much as a +2 circumstance bonus to the check for good roleplaying, and up to a –2 penalty for bad or no roleplaying. As well, groups that open negotiations with a useful gift (and gold is useful to the Jhorash’tar) worth 40 gp or more grants a further +2 circumstance bonus to the check. Once the check is made, use the following guidelines to continue the encounter.

**Hostile:** The PCs really botched it. The orcs immediately attack, calling the other eight orcs from the village to join the assault (they take 1d4 rounds to get there). See tactics, below.

**Unfriendly:** The orcs are entirely uncooperative, and even attack the PCs if they make anything approaching an overt threat on the embassy, the village, or if the PCs tell the orcs they plan to enter the ravine in search for the *waystone*. The ravine is sacred to the orcs, and they don’t allow enemies entry unchecked. Even if the PCs don’t provoke the orcs, they gain no useful information from them.

**Indifferent:** If the orcs continue to act with indifference, they ask the PCs only to pursue their business in the valley without bothering the tribe. If the PCs tell the orcs they plan to enter the ravine, Gulvuk’s response is only “all of us choose to walk death’s path in the end,” but she refuses to explain her statement.

**Friendly:** The Jhorash’tar are impressed with the deference the PCs show Gulvuk. As long as the PCs stay

friendly, they talk openly with the PCs about their mission. If the PCs ask about the ravine, Gulvuk tells the PCs it is holy place to the tribe, and is the lair of the Ice Bear—the tribe’s totem spirit incarnate. Gulvuk assures the PCs that the creature is wise and wily, and if their task is correct the Ice Bear may even help them in their endeavors.

**Helpful:** As friendly, but Gulvuk gives the PCs a small stone, bear-shaped fetish. The amulet is not magical, but the druid claims that the Ice Bear will know the PCs are friends if they carry the fetish openly when they encounter the Ice Bear.

**Roleplaying Gulvuk and the Orcs:** The orc druid is rarely direct in her statements, and once her friendship is gained she interacts with the PCs in the distant and befuddled manner common to mystics. She has a tendency to speak in riddles and typically giving answers in the form of a parable or just a rambling tirade. For instance, if the PCs ask her for information about the Ice Bear, she responds thusly:

*Once the mountains breathed cold unto the valley. Their gusts were like thunder and most closed themselves to it fearing its strength. But one creature, a walker between worlds, a child of cruel nature and subtle wisdom heard its call and embraced it. We are only those who follow in the Ice Bear’s footsteps, as we were not worthy enough to heed the original call.*

Her ramblings come complete with much waving of her hands and shaking her winter snake familiar at the PCs. While the PCs may take this in stride, this manner frustrates Glankas (see below).

The orcs venerate Gulvuk, believing that her strange manner actually channels the Ice Bear. They treat any threat of violence against Gulvuk with threats of their own, and overt violence in kind.

**Roleplaying Glankas:** Glankas greets any successful talks with the orcs with verbal hostility. While he is too much of a coward to actually threaten the orcs, he readily voices the opinion that such talks are pointless, calling Gulvuk a “blabbering heathen.” A successful Intimidate check (DC 14) or Diplomacy check (DC 22) shuts him up, but if the PCs don’t successfully quiet the dwarf, and the talks go longer than a half an hour, Glankas says something that angers the orcs so much that their attitude shifts to hostile, and they attack.

**Tactics:** If talks break down, characters assail the orcs, or approach the village with obvious hostile intent find themselves in conflict with Gulvuk, her two champions and 11 orc warriors, which engage the PCs while the noncombatants flee into the forest. The orcs simply charge the assailants, hoping to delay them long enough for their kin to get away. After the noncombatants are out of sight and it is obvious that the orcs are ill matched for the PCs, the protect Gulvuk and flee as well.

Killing the druid causes the rest of the orcs to immediately flee.

**Treasure:** Should the PCs actually raid the village they find little of value. The tribe exists at a subsistence level, so there are no luxury items. The PCs can recover a number of branta hides worth roughly 50 gp. The rough tools the tribe uses are unlikely to bring a price at any market.

**Combat Statistics**

GELVUK

CR 3

Female orc druid 3

CN Medium humanoid (orc)

**Int** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1**Aura** Faint chaos**Languages** Common, Orc**AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12**hp** 18 (3 HD)**Fort** -1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6**Weaknesses** light sensitivity**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Atk** Masterwork sickle +5 melee (1d4+3) or

Javelin +3 ranged (1d6+3)

**Base Atk** +2; Grp +5**Combat Options** spontaneous *natures ally* casting; summoned creatures are augmented (+4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution)**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; 1d20+3 to overcome SR)**2nd**—*chill metal* (DC 13)**1st**—*entangle* (DC 12), *faerie fire*, *longstrider***0**—*detect magic*, *resistance*, *virtue***Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 12**Feats** Augmented Summoning, Spell Focus (conjuration)**Skills** Concentration +6, Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (nature) +6.**Possessions** +1 *leather armor*, masterwork sickle, 3 javelins, *potion of blur*, divine focus.

ZORMINK

CR --

Gelvuk's winter snake (small viper) animal companion

N Small animal (augmented)

**Int** +3; **Senses** scent; Listen +9, Spot +9**AC** 20, touch 17, flat-footed 14**hp** 12 (3 HD)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2; evasion**Spd** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.**Atk** Bite +7 melee (1d2-2 plus poison)**Base Atk** +2; Grp -6**Combat Options** link, share spells, tricks (attack, attack, guard)**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 12**Feats** Alertness, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +11, Listen +7, Spot +7.**Poison (Ex)**: Fort DC 11, 1d6 Con initial and secondary.

ORC CHAMPIONS (2)

CR 1

Male orc barbarians 1

CN Medium humanoid (orc)

**Int** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0**Aura** Faint chaos**Languages** Common, Orc (illiterate)**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13**hp** 13, 10 (3 HD)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0**Weaknesses** light sensitivity**Spd** 20 ft. (4 squares)**Atk** orc double axe +5 melee (1d8+6/x3)**Base Atk** +1; Grp +5**Combat Options** rage**Abilities** Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8**Feats** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (orc double axe)**Skills** Climb +5, Listen +4, Swim +2**Possessions** Hide armor, orc double axe**Rage (Ex)**: 1/day—hp 15, 12; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+9/x3, orc double axe); Fort +6, Will +2; Str 23, Con 18; Climb +7, Swim +4**Into the Ice Cave**

Eventually the PCs enter the ravine, quickly finding that the attuned *Rod of Korari* points toward a series of ice caves at the far end of the ravine. The temperature drops significantly as the PCs make their way up to the ravine toward the Ice Cave. In an around the cave, the temperature is a freezing 10° F. It takes two hours of hiking in this cold to reach the entrance of the Ice caves (prompting the appropriate Fortitude saves).

**Dungeon Features:** Unless otherwise noted, the Ice Caves have the following features.

**Walls:** The walls of the various caves and chambers in this area are formed from sandstone (varying in color including layers of red, brown, green, yellow, gray, and white) coated with two to three inches of ice (hardness 6, hp 540 per 3 ft. section, Climb DC 20 (base DC 15 + 5 due to slipperiness), break DC 30). Chambers vary in size from only a few feet square to 10 feet square. Occasionally chambers connect to one another, forming small passages and caverns

**Floors:** The floors of these chambers are littered with small chunks of ice, sand, and pebbles. While general movement is normal, the debris is enough to add 2 to the DC of Balance and Tumble checks. The DC for any Move Silently check is also increased by 2 as the fragments crunch underfoot.

**Illumination, Noise, Scent, and Temperature:** The cavern complex has no artificial lighting and so is pitch black in any place that does not have an opening to natural light sources. The only sound generally heard is the slight whistling of wind blowing down from the mountains through the various cracks and crevices.

The Ice Caves are the home to an albino werebear hermit (use “Illustration 4 to help describe the creature when it is encountered), the creature that the orcs call the Ice Bear. Not only is the place his home, it is also the tomb of his parents, two werebears that fled to the area to escape the Church of the Silver Flame.

As the PCs approach the Ice Caves read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The trail leads high into the mountains, well above the tree line, before terminating at the base of a large ridge. The base of the ridge, which is probably thirty or forty feet high and several hundred yards long, is littered with large boulders. Many of these rocks are stacked one on top of the other at odd angles, forming dozens of openings. Roughly thirty feet from the caves sits another block of rock, flat on top and about ten feet in diameter. It looks*

*as if the rock is buried into the hard-packed ground, with only the last several feet sticking above the earth.*

The lone rock lying away from the ridge is used by the orcs as an offering site for the Ice Bear.

A normal search of the area (Search DC 10) finds the remains of many food offerings on the stone. A successful Knowledge (nature) or Survival check (DC 15) determines that the offering consisted of various plants (sages, bulbs, roots, berries, whitebark pine nuts) and the occasional bloodstain also indicates meat offerings.

The search also finds tracks of a massive, bearlike creature and that of a decent number of humanoid feet—likely orcs.

A ranger or other character with the Track feat might find more detailed information (Survival check DC 14). In this case, the character determines that the tracks are of a Large size creature. The toes fall close together and nearly in a straight line, with the toe pads generally touching each other and the smallest toe on the inside of the track. Impressions from fore claws are found far in front of the toes, indicating the claws are twice as long as the toe pads. The front tracks measure roughly 8 inches long and 9 inches wide while the hind tracks measure 16 inches long and 10 inches wide. The character also notes that the movement patterns of the tracks are very unusual when compared to normal animal tracks, more akin to an intelligent being.

Other than the many empty caves and the larger cave used by the Ice Bear as a den, the area is barren.

The use of the Investigate feat can yield a more interesting

find. A DC 10 check finds a small strip of ragged and aged blue cloak cloth, edged with silver caught on a jagged bit of ice. A further DC 25 check recognizes it as the vestments of a devotee of the Silver Flame. While the tracks of devotee are long blown into nothing, it gives the PCs a clearer clue of what they may face deeper in the Ice Caves.

### 1. Empty Caves

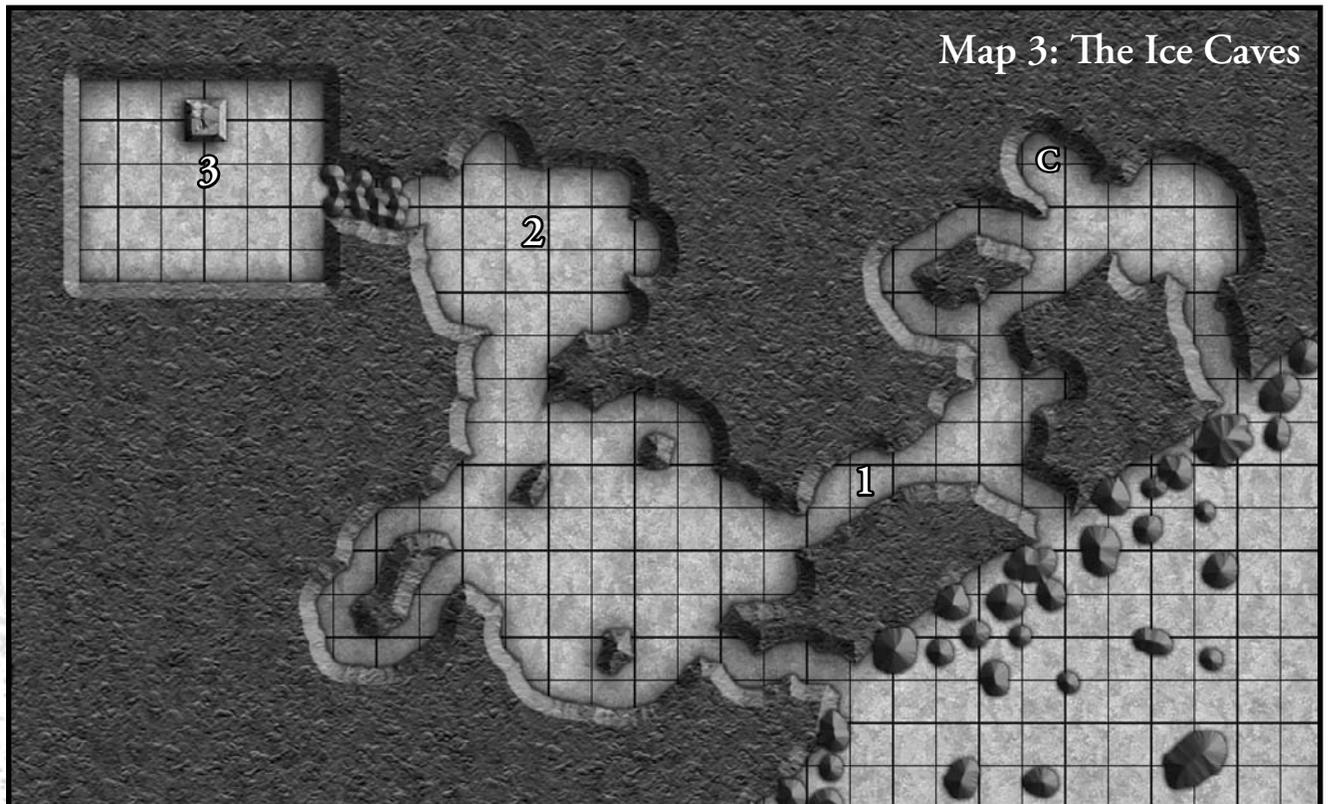
**Light:** Natural (from full daylight to total darkness; dependent on character location and time of day).

**Sound:** Wind blowing through the various chambers and crevices (automatic).

**Reaction:** To the sound of very loud noise—the Ice Bear from Area 2 emerges to investigate.

The Ice Caves are located along the southern slope of a ridge capped by 30 feet of fluvial channel sandstone in the northern Hoarfrost Mountains. Over the centuries, large blocks of sandstone detached from the ridge cap and toppled or slid down the slope, many coming to rest at various angles against other large blocks and creating dozens of void spaces and chambers.

Dripping water from melting snow seeps into these well-insulated chambers, where it freezes and remains frozen into late spring or summer. Even five months into the year there are 2 to 3 inches of ice on the floor of many of these chambers. This ice remains in some areas into late summer and, in some instances, year round. The insulation offered by the thick sandstone blocks and the restricted airflow due to the



Map 3: The Ice Caves

single main openings in the chambers is the reason that ice is preserved for weeks or months after it has melted everywhere else. A Knowledge (geography) check (DC 15) reveals all of the above information.

The Jhorash'tar orcs actually place butchered meat in the deeper caves to keep it preserved through the summer, leaving a portion for the Ice Bear as an offering to supplement their standard offering. In return, the Ice Bear protects these caves from animals and other predators trying to get in and help themselves to the meat.

**Treasure:** The party may scavenge through various caves and eventually find some of the meat the orcs store here. Here and there hand large shanks of branta (which provides a tight, light-hued nourishing meat for a good meal but little in the way of gold).

If the PCs search the eastern caves they may find (DC 15) the corpse of female human warrior (marked "C" on the map) wearing the regalia of a cleric of the Silver Flame. Frozen under a thick coating of ice, the corpse wears masterwork chain, is armed with a silvered masterwork mace, a now ruined longbow, and 10 +1 silvered arrows, which, surprisingly, have not been ruined by the ice. Chipping out the equipment makes a good amount of noise, and attracts the Ice Bear (see below). The remains are that of a zealous member of an order that continues to hunt down lycanthropes. The Ice Bear killed her, and left here miserable corpse to freeze in this relatively abandoned section of the caves.

**Development:** If for some reason the PCs decide camp at the base of the ridge or in the smaller caves overnight, they find the temperature here is much lower than previous nights—it drops well below the 0° F mark. They are subjected to severe cold exposure as described in Survival in the Frigid North in the Troubleshooting the Adventure section above. In addition, the Ice Bear is a nocturnal hunter and so is likely to come upon the encampment as it emerges. See the Cave of the Ice Bear for further information.

## 2: Cave of the Ice Bear (EL 5)

**Light:** Natural (from full daylight to total darkness; dependent on character location and time of day).

**Sound:** Wind blowing through the various chambers and crevices (automatic). During the day, sounds of heavy breathing and snoring (Listen check DC 10 from mouth of cave).

**Reaction:** To the sound of loud noise during the day—the Ice Bear at the rear of the cave is awakened and moves out of his den to investigate.

The largest chamber of the Ice Caves is currently home to the Ice Bear. Just beyond it is a passage that descends deeper into the mountain.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the cave. The description may change depending on light sources and tactics used by the party, not to mention if their activity in the rest of the Ice Caves roused the Ice Bear.



*A slight breeze, carrying the chill of winter despite the late season, blows from the entrance to this cave. The walls that form the entry open up slightly as they reach further into the cave. The ceiling and walls seem to be formed of solid ice, although veins of color are visible beneath the surface. A mixture of ice, sand, and pebbles crunches underfoot. The cavern is cold—not so cold as to be harmful, but uncomfortable for characters in light clothing. Toward the rear of the cavern lies a large mass of furs.*

Characters that make a Spot check (DC 15) can tell that the furs heave up and down regularly, in synch with the sounds of heavy breathing/snoring. As a native “monster” of this terrain and environment, the Ice Bear suffers no effects from even severe cold. However, temperatures on some nights (and even some days) in the high mountains can sometimes plunge below -20° F. The Ice Bear sleeps under a pile of furs and hide that grant even more protection against the cold, rendering him immune to temperature effects down to -50° F. These furs, however, also block out some sound and light, so he takes a -2 penalty to both his Spot and Listen checks while under the furs (in addition to the standard -10 penalty to Listen checks while sleeping).

The Ice Bear is almost solid white, though the tips of his fur are grayish in color, giving them a grizzled effect. The creature has a hump on the shoulders, a big head with a long muzzle and slightly dished profile to the face, and long claws on the front paws. The hump is actually a mass of muscle, which enables the bear to dig and use his paws as a striking force. Its claws, long and curved, are also white. He is a little over nine feet long and weighs over 1,100 pounds. Although a fierce predator when necessary, the Ice Bear is mostly nocturnal and mainly eats vegetation, insects, fish, and small mammals. While not opposed to the occasional snow elk, his fearsome-looking claws are used mainly to dig up roots and bulbs of plants as well as to excavate den sites. His favorite food is actually whitebark pine nuts. The Ice Bear can locate a cache of these nuts that a ground squirrel has stored for the winter with his excellent sense of smell. The orcs also gather these delicacies from the nearby forest and bring them with every offering.

**Creatures:** This werebear’s parents fled to the area over one hundred years ago, during the Silver Flame inquisition against lycanthropes. Though they taught him how to change his shape to that of a human, his parents largely raised him up to live as a hybrid, forsaking the civilization that had turned on them. As they forged a relationship of sorts with the local orcs, the Ice Bear knows the benefit of maintaining a good relationship with humanoids and so is not immediately hostile unless provoked (starts with attitude indifferent), unless anyone among the PCs wears openly wears the symbol of the Silver Flame—which puts him in a rage (attitude hostile). If the PCs carry the fetish given to them by Gulvuk, he sees them as friends (attitude friendly).

**The Ice Bear:** human Werebear (hybrid form): hp 54; AL N; *Monster Manual* 170.

**Tactics:** While fearsome in appearance and protective

of his home, the Ice Bear is not a violent creature. He generally tries to scare off any non-orcs, rearing up on his hind legs and then crashing his paws down on the ground (Intimidate check, +3 modifier versus Medium characters or +7 modifier versus Small characters). Any who provoke the Ice Bear get the business end of his greataxe (which he calls “Da” as it is the only memento he’s kept from his dead father).

Any opponents the Ice Bear is able to incapacitate are dragged into his den if left in the area. He then sits over the wounded person(s), waiting for them to awaken, but allows such captured opponents to flee. In the event that he is actually severely wounded (brought down to 15 hit points or fewer), the Ice Bear flees into the higher mountains through the twisting Ice Caves, taking bear form as soon as he’s safe. Following him requires a person to Track him (Survival check DC 14 at half speed, DC 19 at full speed, or DC 34 at double speed). If he escapes, the Ice Bear circles back around to the orc village and enlists their aid, both to heal his wounds (assuming the shaman still lives) and to ambush the party as it descends from the mountain.

**Development:** The Ice Bear is most active during the early morning and early evening hours, making the most use of his low-light vision. During the daytime he rests in his den. As such, the party may encounter him outside his den depending on when they come to the caves. He leaves to forage and hunt at dusk, returning with any findings after 2 or 3 hours, and then heads back out about 3 hours before sunrise to hunt some more before the sun climbs into the sky. Parties that camp in or near the caves during this time likely see the creature leave and return (he makes no attempt to hide).

With his keen sense of smell, the Ice Bear can detect any creatures that have walked around the area of the ridge, using this and his Tracking feat to search out any trespassers (Wisdom check, +0 modifier, DC 10+2 for every hour that has passed since the creature was at the location). He also detects opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell (60 feet if the opponent is upwind or 15 feet if downwind). Strong scents (if the party builds a fire, for instance) are detected at twice this range. When the Ice Bear detects a scent the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. He can take a move action to note the direction of the scent and can pinpoint the source’s location if he comes within 5 feet.

Most groups will have a difficult time at best defeating this creature given his high hit points, damage reduction, and powerful attacks (though certain fanatical members of the Church of the Silver Flame may see such as the only course of action). As such, stealth or diplomacy are much better options to gain access to the second stone. Careful individuals can easily sneak about to explore the empty caves, getting past the Ice Bear’s cave when it hunts. Better yet, groups that manage to befriend the Ice Bear and are honest about what they are looking for, find that he can be quite helpful. He tells them that the stone they seek is in his parents’ crypt. If the PCs give their word they will not disturb his parent’s eternal rest, he grants them access to the cave long

enough to attune the *Rod of Korari* to the next destination.

**Note On the Curse of Lycanthropy:** The Ice bear will not attack creatures with its bite, not wishing to spread its curse. If the PCs sunder or otherwise get rid of the greataxe, the Ice Bear flees from his cave. Under no circumstance should a PCs contract the curse of lycanthropy during this adventure.

### 3: Buried Chamber

**Light:** Total darkness.

**Auras:** Strong (*waystone*, DC 21 transmutation).

The original ridgeline was free of debris when the ancient dwarves first carved this chamber, but the subsequent falling rocks buried the tunnel entrance. This chamber is carved from sandstone (hardness 6, hp 540 per 3 ft. section, Climb DC 15, break DC 30). There are no braces supporting the tunnel or chamber, of course, but the construction is sound, and there is no danger of rockfall. The Ice Bear's parents originally chose this location as a home due to this sound construction.

The entrance of this chamber is closed off with large rocks, placed here by the Ice Bear. It takes some 4 hours of digging to get through the rocks, while it takes only two hours if the Ice Bear helps the PCs.

**Treasure:** The Ice Bear used this chamber as a tomb for his parents due to their fondness for occasionally visiting the place. Characters find the skeletons of two humans lying in the far corner of the chamber, one beside the other. The Ice Bear brought the few items the pair had maintained from their days in dwarven society, of specific note are a masterwork longsword (worth 315 gp) that lies across the skeleton of his father and a repeating heavy crossbow (worth 400 gp) that rests in his mother's skeletal hands. If the party was led to the chamber by the Ice Bear, he does not allow these items to be removed from the tomb.

**Development:** Having determined the purpose of the rod at the first stone, the PCs should have no difficulty using the item at this second site. When the rod is struck against the stone, it again points in the direction of the next destination.

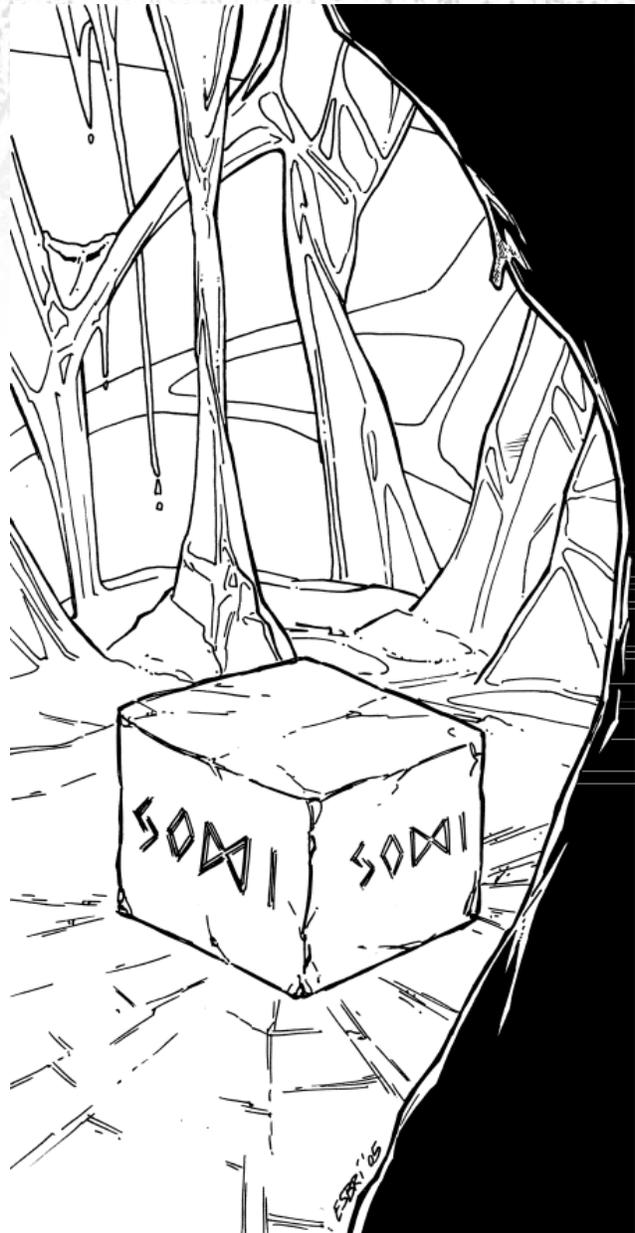
Any investigation of the stone square, however, reveals one difference between this chamber and the first. While the runes for “dwar,” “domark,” and “hergos” are present, the fourth symbol is different. It is another phonetic symbol pronounced “ka” in Dwarven. Glankas confirms that it is the next part of the word homeland. There is only one more syllable left, so either the next *waystone* is the last, or there is a longer phrase involved in the puzzle of the *waystones*.

The runes look like this:



## PART FOUR: THE “FAR” STONE

The rod now points to the northeast, along the shores of the Bitter Sea, to a point of stone jutting out at the northernmost part of Khorvaire. The roughly 100 mile trip takes the *Stormdrake* about 5 hours, with the vessel breaking past the last



of the Hoarfrost Mountains an hour or so. It skirts along the coastline for a time before heading out over open sea for the last part of the journey, and then continues until it reaches an eroded cliff face.

*It seems at first as if the Rod of Korari will continue pointing out across the Bitter Sea, but as the Stormdrake leaves the coast and heads out across the open water, the rod spins back around, pointing toward the rocky cliffs. It has never radically changed directions like this before, and Glankas looks nervous when it does. “Something must be interfering with its magic or the magic of the next waystone,” he suggests.*

Glankas is right. The resting place of the next *waystone* eroded over a century ago, and the stone was swept into the Bitter Sea. Only very recently did the powerful currents of sea



move the *waystone* toward land, tumbling it into a sea cave hidden in the recesses of a nearby sea cliff. While this causes the *Rod of Korari* to act erratically at times, it still leads the PCs to the next *waystone*.

As the PCs approach the rough cliffs they note a cluster of flying gray creatures roosting atop it. As the PCs approach, it becomes apparent that the creatures are large birds (size Small, about the size of the largest of bald eagles). If a PC can observe the birds in more detail (using a spyglass, for instance—Captain Aielous loans one his if asked) a DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check determines that they are not normal birds while a DC 11 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that they are blood hawks, fierce, carnivorous predators that joyfully hunt creatures in their territory even when they are sated. There are scores of these creatures inhabiting various nests in the area.

*“I’ve heard stories of these creatures, they are called blood hawks”*

*the first mate Ledrin says. “You had better hope you find the next stone fast, because those birds will harry you the entire way.”*

Use “Illustration 5” to help describe the blood hawks.

Scouting the area, Capatin Aielous finds a site south of the spot the *Rod of Korari* seems to be pointing to. He can get close enough to land, but worries that it might attract the attention of the blood hawk flock. Still, with little coaxing he is able to bring the ship down close enough to a ravine that winds down to the *waystone* spot, which sits in a carved out cove just below a group of blood hawk nests.

### Below the Nests

The blood hawks seem hesitant to attack anything as large and fiery as the Stormdrake, and its protection shields the PCs from attack as they travel the length of the ravine. As the PCs reach a larger cove area, their hesitation subsides. When the PCs enter the area detailed on “Map 4: “Far” Stone Cove”, the hawks see their presence as a threat and an opportunity to wreak a little mayhem. A small group begins the assault; with their numbers increasing the longer the PCs take to activate the *waystone*.

**Creatures:** The encounter starts with a trio flying down from their nests upon the cliff (any point is fine, the nests are scattered all over the cliffs looking down on the cove) and attacking the PCs. Every round another blood hawk joins the fray. No more than 8 blood hawks attack at any given time, but the birds have an almost endless ability to replenish their numbers. Once all the PCs leave the area detailed on the map, the blood hawks cease their assault.

Blood Hawks (variable, no more than 8 at a time): hp 5 each; see “Combat Statistics,” below.

**Tactics:** The blood hawks attack almost anything living until slain themselves; once under the influence of blood lust, a blood hawk does not flee. The birds prefer the taste of human flesh to all others and tend to single out humans if confronted with a racially diverse group. The flock generally swarms one opponent if possible, trying to use their wounding ability to quickly bring down larger prey.

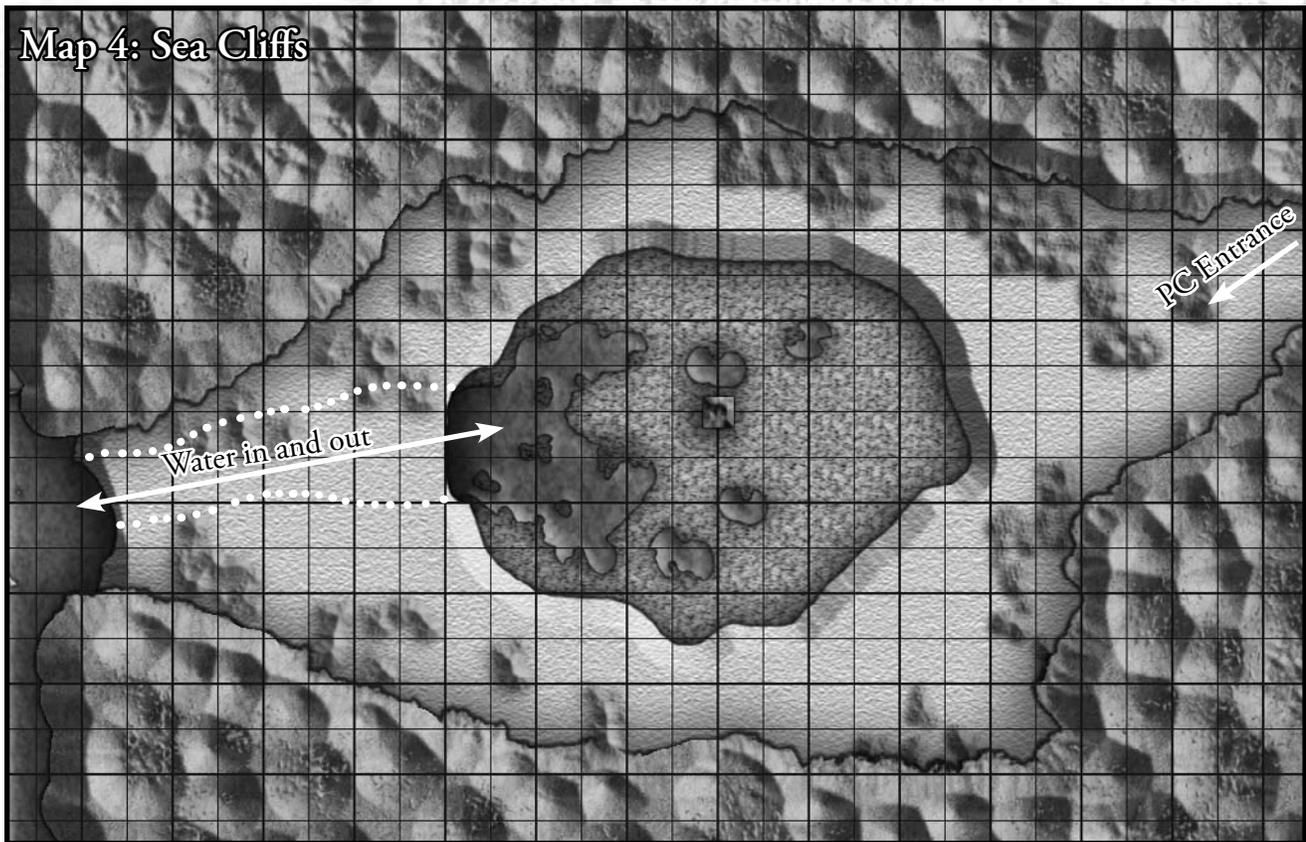
**Extracting the Stone:** As if the blood hawk murder wasn’t enough of a problem, activating the stone is not easy. In the cove is a 20-foot deep recess (Climb DC 15) connected to a sea cave. Waves pound water from the Bitter Sea in and out of the recess at fairly regular intervals. When the PCs approach close enough to look down into the recess, start with round 1, below. The actions below occur at the 10 count on the initiative order.

**Round 1:** Waves are crashing in partially submerging the recess with about three feet of water. The PCs can easily spot the *waystone* at the bottom of the recess. A creature can wade through the water, but it counts as difficult terrain.

**Round 2:** Waves churn in water in at an alarming rate, totally submerging the recess (up to the 20-foot level). Creatures in the recess must swim (rough water, Swim DC 15) to move within the recess.

**Round 3:** The Water quickly gets sucked out the recess. Creatures without a swim speed must succeed a DC 25 Swim check or be pulled out to the Bitter Sea. The process of pulling

## Map 4: Sea Cliffs



the creature though the sea cave does 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage and then the creature is swept away into the Bitter Sea until help arrives (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 92)

**Round 4 and 5:** The recess is relatively dry and stable.

Creatures can move normally, but the eroded and wet ground adds 2 to the DC of Balance and Tumble checks.

**Round 6:** Same as “Round 1” and then the cycle repeats.

Like the other *waystones*, a dwarf must strike the *Rod of Korari* to get the rod to point to the next destination. If Glankas is the only dwarf among the group, this could be hard going, as the PCs must get the cowardly dwarf down into the recess. As before, a successful Intimidate check (DC 14) shakes him to action, as will a bard’s ability to inspire courage. Without these, the PCs may have to find a way to force the dwarf down, or bring the *waystone* to him. The waystone is a 5-foot square chunk of granite weighing 2,500 lbs.

**Development:** The ruins on the stone look like this:



As Glankas suspects, the last syllable completes the dwarven word for homeland, “Drukafar.” He is guardedly pleased with this, as it may mean that his expedition is about to reach its final destination.

When the PCs have attuned the rod, it points out into the Bitter Sea. From the cliffs, it is a 15 hour trip to the doorway they and Glankas ultimately seek. Proceed to “Part Five: Doorway to the Homeland.”

### Scaling the Encounter

**2<sup>nd</sup>-level Characters:** Only two blood hawks start the attack, and only six of the creatures attack at any one time.

**4<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** After the initial three blood hawks attack, two venture down every round thereafter.

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** Four blood hawks descend for the initial attack, and three venture down every round thereafter. No more than 12 blood hawks attack the PCs at any given time.

### Combat Statistics

**BLOOD HAWK** CR 1/2  
 N Small magical beasts  
**Int** +3; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2 (+10 in daylight)  
**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13  
**hp** 5 (1 HD)  
**Fort** +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1  
**Spd** 10 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average)  
**Atk** 2 claws melee +5 (1d3+1) and Bite melee +0 (1d4)  
**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** -2  
**Special Atk** Wounding  
**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7  
**Feats** Weapon Finesse  
**Skills** Hide +5, Listen +2, Search -3, Spot +2 (+10 in daylight)

**Wounding (Ex):** A wound resulting from a blood hawk’s claw or bite attack bleeds for an additional 1 point of damage per round thereafter. Multiple wounds from such attacks result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped only by a Heal check (DC 15) or the application of any *cure* spell or other healing spell (*heal*, *healing circle*, or the like).

## PART FIVE: DOORWAY TO THE HOMELAND

Following the *Rod of Korari* to its final destination places the *Stormdrake* over a small, barren island—really more a mountaintop jutting up from the sea. From the air, an ancient structure is visible—two massive statues flanking a large doorway leading into the side of the mountain. In front of the doors and statues is a large stone platform jutting out over the Bitter Sea.

Show the players “Illustration 6” to help describe this scene.

As the *Stormdrake* approaches, the captain gives the following advice.

*That platform is of sufficient height and reach, that I think I can pilot the Stormdrake close enough for you to safely leap to the landing,” Captain Aielous yells over the howling gale. “But with these winds, I don’t want to hover too close for long, so you’re on your own until you signal me to return.*

He then gives the PCs another alchemist flare, and instructs them to ignite it when they are ready for extraction.

Some minutes later the *Stormdrake* approaches the stone platform, close enough for the PCs to leap across with no danger of falling into the cold and turbulent sea churning a straight 70-foot drop below the platform.

### Doorway of the Ancients

Stone double doors—each roughly ten feet wide—are set into the side of a sheer rock wall and almost look like they’ve been carved from stone of the mountainside. The doors are decorated with carved pictographs of dwarven achievements and with runes very similar to those etched on the *Rod of Korari* and the *waystones* discovered thus far. Between the two doors is an embossed square of stone. The stone is obviously a kind of seal, decorated with another set of golden-glowing runes. Flanking the door are two large statues of dwarves; each holds a maul in front of it.

Use “Illustration 7” to show the players what the runes on the door block look like. These ruins are a culmination of the three phonic runes found on the *waystones*. As Glankas may have pointed out, they combine to create the word “drukarfar” meaning “homeland.”

The runes look like this:



When Glankas or another dwarf speaks the “drukarfar” and strikes the *Rod of Korari* against the double doors, the dwarf statues come alive, their eyes glowing with an icy-blue radiance.

*Stone grinds upon stone as the statues of the dwarven warriors raise their mauls.*

*“Only the worthy pass. With our passage to Daanvi the homeland becomes open to you, and no sooner,” they rumble in unison, their voices combine to a deep baritone that makes the ground rumble beneath your feet.*

If any character touches the statues or the door before a dwarf can speak “drukarfar” and strike the rod against the door, the guardians warning is more severe, but their response is the same.

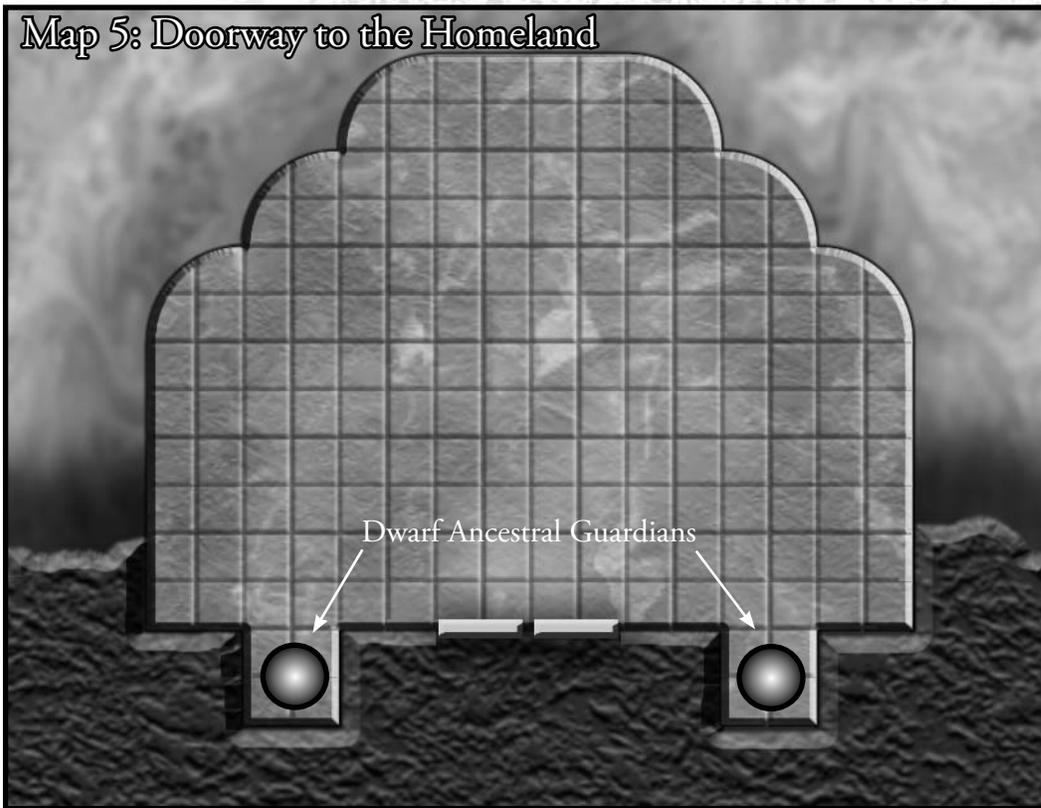
*The statues rumble loudly, making the ground shake with their deep booming anger, in unison they shout: “Defilers! Enemies of the dwarves! Death and utter destruction is the price for your presumption!”*

**Creatures:** The doors’ protectors are dwarf ancestral guardians, native outsider akin to the more powerful dwarf ancestors, tasked with defending holy sites important to the



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## Map 5: Doorway to the Homeland



dwarven race. Driven and relentless, they fulfill their purpose at all costs, and their task is to kill or drive off all who wish to pass through the doors they guard. Only the death of both opens the doors.

Still, their link to dwarves is strong, and the guardians are loath to attack dwarves. They do not attack a dwarf until after the dwarf attacks one of them.

**Dwarf Ancestral Guardian:** hp 34, 34; see “Combat Statistics”, below.

**Tactics:** One of the guardians starts the fight by advancing to an advantageous position and takes the sharp and audible intake of breath that begins its breath of freezing slow ability, while the other advances to strike an opponent with a powerful maul strike, attacking the strongest-looking warrior if possible. On the second round, the guardians swap tactics, with the second guardian breathing in, which should now warn the PCs of what’s to come. Creatures unfortunate enough to fail the save for both cones are effectively paralyzed for the overlapping durations.

**Development:** Once both of the guardians are defeated, the stone block seal breaks in half, the runes’ auras go dark, and the huge double doors open

*The massive doors slowly swing outward without a sound. Motes of dust drift slowly downward, disturbed by the opening, as light pours into the chamber. Beyond the entrance, a huge, circular room with a domed ceiling stretches into the rock of the island. The entire chamber—probably one hundred feet in diameter—is dominated by a huge circle of runes imbedded in the floor. More runes line the walls, covering almost every visible surface.*

the spell used to create the smaller *waystones* (a successful Spellcraft check [DC 26] or *read magic* reveals this information). The remainder of writings details a much more powerful magic, one that could transport hundreds of people instantaneously. The exact details for this magic—the creation of a *rune circle* specifically—are beyond the scope of this adventure and require weeks of study by Glankas and other scholars to fully understand.

### Scaling the Encounter

**2<sup>nd</sup>-level Characters (EL 4):** Only one of the guardians activates, the other had passed on to Daanvi during its centuries wait at the doorway.

**4<sup>th</sup>-level Characters (EL 7):** The guardians are advanced to 6 HD (hp 51, 51); see Combat Statistics below)

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters (EL 8):** There are three advanced guardians (hp 51, 51, 51). The third stands on the far end of the landing facing the door, at about the place the PCs leap off the *Stormdrake*.

The runes covering the lower section of the wall detail

## Combat Statistics

### DWARF ANCESTRAL GUARDIAN

CR 4

LN Large outsider (lawful, native)

**Int** -1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9.

**Aura** Moderate law

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**AC** 18, touch 8, flat-footed 19

**hp** 34 (4 HD); **DR** 5/magic

**Immune** Cold

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

**Spd** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Atk** Masterwork maul melee +6 (1d10+10/x3)\*

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +13

**Atk Option** Cleave, Power Attack (\*Includes adjustments for Power Attack feat)

**Special Atk** Breath of freezing slow

**Abilities** Str 20, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12

**Feats** Cleave, Power Attack

**Skills** Concentration +11, Climb +12, Jump +12, Listen +9, Spot +9

**Possessions** Masterwork maul

**Breath of Freezing Slow (Su):** Once a day, as a full-round action that starts with a sharp and audible intake of breath, a dwarf ancestral guardians can breathe a 30-foot cone of frost and ice that does 3d6 points of cold damage and may *slow* (as the spell for a duration of 4 rounds) those caught in its blast. Those succeeding a DC 16 save only take half damage and are not *slowed*. If a creature fails two or more saves against this effect, and the durations overlap, it is paralyzed for as long as there are at least two overlapping durations. The saving throw is Constitution based.

### DWARF ANCESTRAL GUARDIAN (ADVANCED) CR 5

LN Large outsider (lawful, native)

**Int** -1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11.

**Aura** Strong law

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**AC** 18, touch 8, flat-footed 19

**hp** 51 (6 HD); **DR** 5/magic

**Immune** Cold

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

**Spd** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Atk** Masterwork maul melee +8 (1d10+14/x3)\*

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +15

**Atk Option** Cleave, Power Attack (\*Includes adjustments for Power Attack feat)

**Special Atk** Breath of freezing slow

**Abilities** Str 20, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12

**Feats** Cleave, Greater Cleave, Power Attack

**Skills** Concentration +13, Climb +14, Jump +14, Listen +11, Spot +11

**Possessions** Masterwork maul

**Breath of Freezing Slow (Su):** Once a day, as a full-round action that starts with a sharp and audible intake of breath, a dwarf ancestral guardians can breathe a 30-foot cone of frost and ice that does 3d6 points of cold damage and may *slow* (as the spell for a duration of 6 rounds) those caught in its blast. Those succeeding a DC 17 save only take half damage and are not *slowed*. If a creature fails two or more saves against this effect, and the durations overlap, it is paralyzed for as long as there are at least two overlapping durations. The saving throw is Constitution based.

## CONCLUSION

Once the doorway is open, Glankas is further convinced that his particular view of dwarven history is the correct one. He is so entirely pleased with the outcome, he overlooks any past squabbles he's had with the PCs, and promises to use his connections to restart talks between the Diggers' Union and the Banking Guild of House Kundarak. Glankas, and indeed the entire Korari family, are very appreciative of the party's success.

After mapping and documenting his find, Glankas suggests that they board the *Stormdrake* and return to Krona Peak. There he treats the PCs to a banquet, and offers his hospitality until they are ready to leave. He even pays for the services of the House Sivis Speakers Guild so that the PCs can communicate their success with the union. No soon after the PCs are instructed to stay in Krona Peak, enjoy Glankas's hospitality, and Patron Zuzrin Tellun and an embassy of the union will soon join them.

Within a week, the important patron arrives at Krona Peak to begin negotiations with the Banking Guild, and hopefully to oversee the opening of a chapter house for the Diggers' Union in Mror's capital. In a small ad hoc ceremony, Zuzrin presents the PCs with the badge of a journeyer, and accepts them into the higher order of the Diggers' Union. Give each player a copy of the "Journeyer of the Diggers' Union" story object.

## ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS (of which MARK OF HEROES is part of) tracks character progress digitally. At the adventure's end, you report what the characters did, by answering a number of questions. The answers to those questions are tallied, and determine not only what happens in the campaign, but also the experience points (XP) and gold piece (gp) value increase each character gains.

At the end of this adventure, you'll find the RPGA Session Tracking form, tailored for this adventure. On the section titled "Adventure Questions" fill in the bubble that corresponds to the best answer for the questions below.

Many times the questions ask whether or not the PCs defeated an encounter. Defeating doesn't necessarily mean killing all enemies, but many times such an event suffices as defeating an encounter. Sometimes PCs merely bypass an encounter. Through luck or circumstance a group of PCs can avoid encounters unscathed. Does bypassing an encounter earn the XP that defeating it would? No. The reward for getting past an encounter without actually interacting with it is having extra resources to bear in the next encounter. Where is the line? You are going to have to make that decision, because you are the DM.

For traps, PCs get experience points just for encountering them, whether or not they have been disabled.

Sometimes the PCs' actions don't really fit the actions of a particular adventure question perfectly. This especially happens

when you play the adventure using the “Scaling the Encounter” options. In these cases find the answer that best fits the spirit of their results.

**1. Did the PCs defeat the air elemental guarding the first *waystone*?**

- a. Yes. They figured out how to attune the *Rod of Korari*, which releases the guardian.
- b. Yes. They defeated the air elemental in combat, and figured out how to attune the rod at their leisure.
- c. No. The *waystone*'s guardian defeated them.

**2. How did the PCs discover the second *waystone*?**

- a. They slew the orcs and the Ice Bear, and then found the *waystone*.
- b. They didn't. They never made it that far.
- c. They bypassed the orcs, and went into the cave, where they killed the Ice Bear.
- d. They bypassed the orcs, went into the cave and successfully negotiated entrance into the buried chamber.
- e. They slew the orcs, went into the cave and successfully negotiated entrance into the buried chamber.
- f. They negotiated with the orcs, went into the cave and successfully negotiated entrance into the buried chamber.
- g. They negotiated with the orcs, went into the cave, and slew the Ice Bear.

**3. How long did it take the PCs to attune the rod with the third *waystone*?**

- a. They never made it this far.
- b. It only took them one cycle of waves.
- c. It took them two cycles of waves.
- d. It took them three or more cycles of waves.

**4. Did the PCs defeat the dwarf ancestral guardians and open the doors to the rune circle chamber?**

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

**5. Rate the group's roleplaying.**

- a. Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters the interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
- b. Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging character that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
- c. Okay. There was some roleplaying.
- d. None. They treated the adventure only as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

