

VASKIL VALLEY
**WRATH
OF THE
WYVERN
KINGS**

CREATED BY DMDAVE

A Fifth Edition Adventure



Credits

Story Creator & Lead Writer: Dave Hamrick
Writing Team: Ducke, Thomas Johnson, Benjamin Palmer, Max Wartelle, John K Webb
Rules Development: The Griffon Saddlebag, Dave Hamrick, Loot Tavern
World Building: Dave Hamrick
Loresmasters: Darion Nutter, Nathaniel Weinstein
Proofers: Jason Kivela, Martin Maenza, Jeff Maynor, Christian (Chrissy) Pfannmuller, Roger Pugh, Ben Richardson, Tyler Roark, Felix Stock, Chris Spradlin, Nathaniel Weinstein
Editors: Benjamin Gilyot, Laura Jordan
Roll20 Design: Roll20, Thomas Johnson, Laura Jordan
Art Director: Benjamin Gilyot
Graphic Design: Dave Hamrick

Layout Software: GMBinder
Cover Illustrator: Forrest Imel
Interior Illustrators: Rick Hershey, Matias Lazaro, Nacho Lazaro, Tithi Luadthong
Cartographers: Tom Cartos, Cze & Peku, DMDave, The DM Tool Chest, Limithron, Dyson Logos, Maps by Owen, Torchlight Press
Cartography Tools: DungeonDraft, Inkarnate, Watabou.itch.io
Producers: Jennifer Craig, Scott Craig
BroadSword Monthly Layouts: Scott Craig
Marketing: Adam Zlotnik
Executive Producer: Dave Hamrick
Special Thanks: Ennio Morricone, Griffon McCauley, all of our patrons, Wizards of the Coast



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Introduction

A chill wind rattles down the jagged cliffs of the Basilisk's Spine, sinking low into the dark trees and rugged hills of Vaskil Valley. There, an ancient race of elves, the Anorians, carve out a meager existence among the short-lived humans with whom they share this territory. Once a proud race of warriors from the Amber Forest beyond the mountains, the browbeaten Anorians cling to the history their conquerors hope to sweep away. Since their migration to this valley, the Anorians have traded in their wands for guns. They've relinquished their undead armies for cattle. And they've turned their anger into song.

West of the cold, white rapids of Vaskil River, the valley's original lycanthropic inhabitants, the Roe'dgope (werelynxes), stir. Dragons have seemingly returned to the valley, wyverns specifically. Upon these lesser dragons' backs ride dark-armored aberrations known only as Wyvern Kings. The Wyvern Kings have pushed the Roe'dgope from their ancestral lands, forcing them to enter the territory of their old rivals, the Anorians. Tensions are high.

Meanwhile, the true rulers of Vaskil Valley, the Mydon Princes of Presson's Enclave, pay little heed. Too interested

in their own lavish affairs and inconsequential qualms, these nobles care not for the troubles of the werelynxes, Anorians, or, frankly, anyone of less than noble blood within the valley. Even the Pressonian humans, who share the same ancestry as the Mydon Princes, are growing restless under the thumb of the nobles.

The civil unrest within the valley is like sparks on tinder and when the flames catch, the whole valley will burn. It's only a matter of time.

About This Book

Vaskil Valley: Wrath of the Wyvern Kings is a Fifth Edition adventure optimized for four to six characters. This book describes the monsters and villains who the heroes of the story—the player characters—must challenge to bring the adventure to its conclusion.

The book presents Vaskil Valley, a region in DMDave's Omeria campaign setting, as a full "sandbox" within which you can host a bevy of adventures and campaigns. The fundamental details of the setting are included in this book. However, we've left plenty of room for you to create your own

adventures, campaigns, villains, and epic battles.

Adventure Summary

A riveting mix of western and fantasy tropes, *Vaskil Valley: Wrath of the Wyvern Kings* sees a group of characters—native to the region or not—handle the threat of the newcomer Wyvern Kings and their detrimental presence.

The book's main plot deals with the Wyvern Kings themselves. During the first chapter, the characters learn of the Wyvern Kings and how they've affected Vaskil Valley and its people. As the adventure progresses, accumulated evidence leads to the true identity of the Wyvern Kings and how the characters can stop their constant attacks.

While working on the mystery of the Wyvern Kings, the characters also have the opportunity to complete additional side quests. Most of these side quests see the characters handle the side effects of the Wyvern Kings' presence in Vaskil Valley. They also offer the characters a chance to further build their experience and arsenal of magic items in preparation for their final confrontation with the Wyvern Kings (and the real threat of this adventure).

Running the Adventure

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic rule set from Wizards of the Coast ® on their website.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters, unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

Using the Maps

This book contains several interior maps used in the adventure. You can also get the full map pack from DMDave's Patreon preset for Virtual Tabletop (VTT) play. Unless stated or marked otherwise, the maps are positioned so that the north side of the map is at the top of the map and all grid squares equal five feet.

Omeria

Also known as the Long Continent, Omeria is the humanoid-dominant continent on the planet Casar. In the far north,

the Rasgax Highlanders protect the lower lands from the horrors that hide in the ice and snow. Central Omeria is divided by two great features: the Basilisk's Spine Mountains and the Three Great Wastelands: Desolation of Ditimaya, The Obsidian Plain, and The Wither. Major city-states cling to the coastlines in this region. To the far south, the Nation of Odonburg utilizes the innate magic of *emerald odonburgite* gems to enhance their technology.

Vaskil Valley, featured in this adventure, is located at the far northern edge of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. This hill-country valley is the primary home of the Anorian elves, an ancient race that once ruled the northern parts of Omeria. Now under the purview of the Pressonians of The Summer Land in the near south, these elves eke out a living within the valley's sweeping vistas, dense forests, and the surrounding impassable, snow-capped mountains.

Adventure Flow

The accompanying adventure flowchart visualizes the narrative flow of this adventure, which includes chapters that focus on places of interest (chapters 1 and 2) and chapters that focus on plot (chapters 3 and 4).

Chapter 1 introduces quests that prompt the characters to explore the town of Steeproost and its surrounding areas. Each of these quests should take no more than one or two sessions to complete.

Chapter 2 expands the characters' area of influence by offering new and exciting locations outside of Steeproost. This includes trips to the capital of Vaskil Valley, Imfe Caan Asaari (or Sorryville as it is called by non-Anorians). Like the quests in the first chapter, these quests are short and made to last no more than a session or two.

Chapter 3 thrusts the characters into the core plot of the adventure. The characters learn that around the same time the Wyvern Kings appeared, noble princesses from the city of Imfe Caan Asaari started to disappear. Using clues picked up in other quests, the characters find their way to the Wyvern Kings' base of operations high in the Basilisk's Spine Mountains.

Chapter 4 pits the characters against the Wyvern Kings within an abandoned facility on top of Coddark Cliff. They learn from the Wyvern Kings' leader, the Orb, that the Wyvern Kings are actually the reanimated corpses of doppelgangers whose bodies were manufactured to act as "replacement bodies" for Pressonian nobles. Inevitably, the true villains—mercenaries directed by the Pressonians—arrive at the facility. The characters must join forces with the "Wyvern Kings" and put things right for the wronged doppelgangers.

Content Flexibility

The content in this book is designed to work both as a full campaign that will take characters from 1st level all the way to 6th level. However, you can run each of the quests within the book separate from the whole. You can also place this campaign into any setting of your choice. Simply find a mountainous region where a Spaghetti-western/fantasy hybrid would fit and insert it. Feel free to change the names

Adventure Flowchart

Chapter 1 - Starter Quests (1st-2nd Level)

Silent Knight

Fist Fights
with Werelynxes

Chapter 1 - Follow-up Quests (2nd-4th Level)

Cattle Rustin' Country

Caves of Silence

Harpy Murder

Ogre Baby's Rattle

Strange Lights

Stonehill Blues

Tomb of the Drake

Wyvern King Clues

Chapter 2 - Vaskii Valley Quests (4th-5th Level)

Alderth Keep

Black River Caverns

Brenovale Manor

Gaeleth's Temple

Imfe Caan Asaari

Mount Ashlar

Wyvern Caves

Chapters 3 & 4 - Finale (5th-7th Level)

Colddark Cliff

of the people, places, and things to better fit your world, too. Remember: it's your game!

Vaskil Valley Peculiarities

Vaskil Valley holds an interesting position within the lore of Omeria. A little over 1,000 years ago, the Anorian elves fought a bloody war against the paladins of Presson's Enclave in The Summer Land. After five years of battles, the Anorians lost when their dark god, Vapul, fell at Camor Hill in Northern Omeria. The Pressonians occupied the Anorian capital, Imfe Mythse Anore, and renamed it to Knotside. The Anorians were then given a choice: they could remain within the capital under the watchful eye of the Pressonians, or they could colonize the untamed valley north of The Summer Land, Vaskil Valley. Thousands of Anorians chose the latter and made the arduous trek through the Basilisk's Spine Mountains into the valley.

Below are some of the important rules regarding the Vaskil Valley satrapy and its governing body, Presson's Enclave. It also includes details specific to the Omeria campaign setting.

Pressonian Hierarchy

Vaskil Valley is a satrapy of Presson's Enclave and is a province of The Summer Land. Like the rest of The Summer Land's provinces, Vaskil Valley is under the purview of a Pressonian governor, referred to as a Mydon Prince or Princess. The ruling Mydon Prince of Vaskil Valley is Princess Elina Harrou-Tomydon. Working below Harrou-Tomydon are twenty-two more Mydon Princes, including one of this adventure's patrons, Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon of Steeproost.

The religious center of Presson's Enclave and the majority of The Summer Land is the White Pillar, whose Otari Monks teach the ways of the Four Generals, the oldest religion in all of Omeria. White Pillar monks also act as arbiters, although final judgments are always passed by Mydon Princes. However, Mydon Princes can only be judged by monks of the White Pillar, and only The Four Generals may judge the White Pillar. Thus, many consider the White Pillar the true power in The Summer Land.

The Mydon Princes oversee the Pressonian Abjurers, spellcasting knights loyal to Presson's Enclave and its Mydon Princes. Vaskil Valley has a curiously high number of Pressonian Abjurers, likely due to the large size of the non-human population. Most Abjurers spend their waking hours rooting out anything Presson's Enclave deems as an enemy of its way of life. Thus, these knights have a reputation for being authoritarian and ill-tempered, and often use their position of power to bully those below them.

Next within the hierarchy are the actual Pressonian people who live and work in Presson's Enclave. Most Vaskilish Pressonians are merchants, miners, and hunters who wish to live away from the busier cities in the south. The nobility of Presson's Enclave makes it a point to keep the Pressonian people at odds with the non-humans. An old Pressonian idiom states, "If you can convince the lowest Pressonian he's better than the best Anorian, he won't notice you're picking his pocket."

Finally, non-Pressonians are at the bottom of the Pressonian hierarchy. This includes humans from other parts of Omeria and non-humans like the Roe'dgope

(werelynxes), Brasugas (giants), and of course, the Anorian elves. Although non-Pressonian humans enjoy the same comforts as the Pressonian people, non-humans struggle to eke out a comfortable life in the valley. The werelynxes and giants stick to their own clans. Meanwhile, Anorians work hard to keep a low profile.

Anorian Elves

Nearly 60 percent of all Vaskilish residents are Anorian elves or of Anorian descent. This sub-race of elves is detailed further later in this chapter. This section presents some of the strict laws to which Anorian elves must adhere.

No Spellcasting. The Anorian elves of Vaskil Valley are forbidden by Pressonian law to become spellcasters. The severity of the punishment for breaking this law correlates directly with the power level of the magic used. As a rule of thumb, spells of 2nd level or lower result in imprisonment, and spells of 3rd level or higher are punishable by death. Spells that cause harm to a Pressonian or are within one of the three forbidden schools (see below) also result in capital punishment. Similarly, Anorians cannot use magic items, read *spell scrolls*, imbibe potions, or do any other activity that is considered magical. As such, many Anorians turn to the use of guns—weapons that their Pressonian lords consider primitive—to protect themselves.

Limited Religion. Anorians are not permitted to worship any god or otherworldly patron except for the Pressonian pantheon collectively known as The Four Generals. Worship of non-sanctioned gods results in imprisonment of no less than ten years. Furthermore, worship of the demon Vapul is punishable by death.

Other Races of Vaskil Valley

Three more non-human races dominate Vaskil Valley alongside the Anorians. Those races are the Roe'dgope (werelynxes), the inaks, and the subterranean drakes.

Anorian elves live east of the Vaskil River whereas the Roe'dgope live west of it. Until recently, the Roe'dgope kept to themselves. However, the presence of the mysterious Wyvern Kings has pushed them from their lands into Anorian lands. The two ancient races do not tolerate each other's presence as the Roe'dgope have always viewed the Anorians as trespassers in their lands.

Inaks are strange undead creatures cobbled from random bones and boiled, black leather. They live in holes, vertical shafts, and other difficult-to-reach areas below the Valley. Subterranean drakes, distant relatives of the chromatic dragons who once ruled the mountains also live below the valley. Inaks and subterranean drakes have an uneasy alliance in the caverns below the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Although all Vaskilish denizens are aware of these alien cultures, the inaks and drakes are rarely seen above ground.

There are also a few smaller factions such as the four-armed ogres called Brasugas, and the griffon-riding tribes of Kuzhuk.

Forbidden Spell Schools

The spell schools of conjuration, enchantment, and transmutation are illegal in The Summer Land and, by extension, Vaskil Valley. This includes casting simple cantrips such as *mage hand* and *prestidigitation*, and using or selling magic items, scrolls, texts, and components related to these three schools. Some special visitors to The Summer

Land and Vaskil Valley are granted permissions to cast from these spell schools, but these permissions are rare and exorbitantly expensive.

Firearms

Firearms play a large role in this adventure, as many Anorian elves use them in lieu of magic. To use firearms, a character must have proficiency in firearms. At your discretion, characters native to Vaskil Valley who have proficiency in martial weapons may have proficiency in firearms as well. Otherwise, they must train to use firearms or gain a feat which grants them access to the weapon category. However, they may not start with a firearm unless they take the optional rule for starting gold versus starting equipment and purchase one outright.

The Firearms table below details the four most common types of firearms available in Vaskil Valley. Firearms use special ammunition, all of which are detailed after the firearms table and some of them have the blast or reload properties described below.

Blast. A weapon with the blast property deals one additional die of its damage to targets within 5 feet of the firearm's user.

Reload. A limited number of shots can be made with a weapon that has the reload property. A character must then reload it using an action or a bonus action (the character's choice).

Pronunciation Guide

The Pronunciations table on the next page shows how to pronounce many of the non-English names that appear in this adventure.

Character Creation

Before you start this adventure, consider spending the first session of your game helping your players understand the world of Omeria and Vaskil Valley. Are the characters from Vaskil Valley? If so, where do they stand within the valley's tenuous hierarchy? And if they're not from the valley, what brings them to Vaskil Valley? What do they think of the valley and its many peculiarities?

This section details backgrounds that fit into Vaskil Valley as well as a new elven sub-race and monk sub-class.

Character Backgrounds

If one or more players are having trouble tying their backgrounds to Vaskil Valley, below are some suggestions on how those backgrounds can tie perfectly to this adventure setting.

Acolyte. You hope to bring your love of your god or ideals to (the heathens of) Vaskil Valley.

Charlatan. Vaskil Valley is a region rife with downtrodden folks who make the perfect marks for your cons. Especially those Mydon Princes!

Criminal. You are formerly a member of the Ruby Riders, but were released from the group due to a conflict of interest with the gang's leader, Minoas.

Entertainer. Taznarchi bards are known as the greatest musicians in all Omeria—you hope to learn from them.

Folk Hero. Vaskil Valley's got a lot of monsters; and you've won a few fights with 'em, earning you a reputation.

Guild Artisan. Vaskil Valley's monster population has put a hurting on trade and crafting in the region. While others of your ilk flee, you see opportunity.

Hermit. Quiet, somewhat lawless, and far away from the populated cities of the south and west, Vaskil Valley is the perfect spot for you to lay low.

Noble. You're a Pressonian noble—perhaps even a Mydon Prince—who's been tasked with helping Princess Elina Harrou-Tomydon get the region under control. Resenting your presence, she's sent you into the field.

Outlander. You're a member of the Vaskil Warriorbrood, an elite group of desperados and vigilantes that work outside of the law.

Sage. You came to Vaskil Valley following the trail of a golem specialist who disappeared in the valley some seventy years ago. The specialist's name was Lyric Atomcotda.

Sailor. Supposedly, Poison Waters in Vaskil Valley has some of the best fishing around—despite the fact that the lake was literally filled with poison at one point. You're here to see if the legends are true.

Soldier. You strive to be a Pressonian Abjurer, one of the elite magic knights that patrol The Summer Land and keep it safe from threats.

Urchin. You grew up poor on the streets of Imfe Caan Asaari. As such, you've developed a strong dislike for nobles, especially Mydon Princes.

Firearms

| Firearm | Cost | Damage | Weight | Properties |
|----------|--------|---------------|--------|--|
| Pistol | 100 gp | 1d10 piercing | 3 lb. | Ammunition (range 30/90), loading |
| Revolver | 350 gp | 2d8 piercing | 3 lb. | Ammunition (range 40/120), reload (6 shots) |
| Rifle | 650 gp | 2d10 piercing | 8 lb. | Ammunition (80/240), reload (5 shots), two-handed |
| Shotgun | 750 gp | 2d8 piercing | 7 lb. | Ammunition (range 30/90), blast (+1d8), reload (2 shots), two-handed |

Ammunition

| Ammunition Type | Cost | Weight |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Pistol or Revolver Bullets (20) | 5 gp | 1 lb. |
| Rifle Rounds (20) | 10 gp | 1 lb. |
| Shotgun Shells (20) | 15 gp | 1 1/2 lb. |

Vaskil Valley Pronunciation Guide

| Name | Pronunciation | Description |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Anorian | AH-nor-ee-an | An elven sub-race native to Northern Omeria. |
| Brasuga | BRAH-sue-gah | A race of large, four-armed giants native to Vaskil Valley. |
| Chibougue Track | CHEE-boag | Sometimes called the Steeproost Trail, this long road connects Steeproost to Imfe Caan Asaari. |
| Crisavor | CREH-sah-vor | A Kuzhuk elder. |
| Elina Harrou-Tomydon | eh-LEE-na ha-ROO toe-MY-dawn | The Mydon Prince (female) who presides over Vaskil Valley and Imfe Caan Asaari. |
| Flora Stamide-Tomydon | FLOOR-ah stah-MEED toe-MY-dawn | A young Mydon Princess from Imfe Caan Asaari. |
| Gaeleth's Temple | GAY-leth | The temple featured in the Gaeleth's Temple adventure. |
| Imfe Caan Asaari | IMV CAHN AH-sah-ree | The capital of Vaskil Valley. |
| Imfe Mythse Anore | IMV MYTHZ AH-nor | The Anorian elves' city which fell over 1,000 years ago. |
| Inak | EE-nock | Sentient skeletal undead that live below the Basilsik's Spine Mountains. |
| Kuzhuk | KOO-suk | A tribe of griffon-riding humans who live in the Basilisk's Spine Mountains |
| Lesharo | LAY-shar-oh | A roe'dgope tribesman exiled to Steeproost. |
| Lyric Atomcotda | LEER-ik ah-TOME-cote-da | The scientist responsible for creating the doppelganger princesses. |
| Meselle | MEH-zell | Leader of the harpies in the harpy murder quest. |
| Mona Mèyor | MO-nah MEH-yor | Steeeproost's Sheriff. |
| Mydon Prince | MY-dawn PRINZ | The title given to the descendants of the first king of The Summer Land. |
| Obadyr Manor | OH-ba-deer | The manor in which the quest Ogre Baby's Rattle is set. |
| Odzedoz | ODD-zeh-doz | A gang of pirate orcs that work as mercenaries throughout much of Omeria. |
| Omeria | OH-me-ree-uh | The humanoid-dominant continent of The Summer Land. |
| Orbea | or-BAY-uh | A city on the western coast of Omeria. |
| Presson's Enclave | PREH-sons ON-clave | The capital city of The Summer Land. |
| Roe'dgope | ROE-da-GO-pay | Dwarven werelynxes native to Vaskil Valley. |
| Rossgough Crag | ROZ-guh CRAG | A canyon that offers access to Colddark Cliff. |
| Sireen el-Halaby | seer-EEN el-HAL-la-bee | Captain of the Black Rose Clan in Imfe Caan Asaari. |
| Spiro Marelis-Tomydon | SPY-ro mar-EL-is toe-MY-dawn | The Mydon Prince who presides over the village of Steeproost. |
| Tella Harrou-Tomydon | TELL-ah ha-ROO toe-MY-dawn | The Orb's dead name; leader of the Wyvern Kings. |
| Tostrasz the Enormous | TOE-strahz | A gargantuan red dragon whose armies once laid waste to The Summer Land. |
| General Tuteus | TOO-tay-yus | The Pressonian god of winter and one of The Four Generals. |
| Vaskil Valley | VAH-skill VAH-lee | A small region at the northernmost end of The Summer Land |
| Vapul | VAH-pull | The demonic god of death and winter. |
| Zekiel Fulsom | ZAY-keel FULL-sum | A member of the Steeproost militia. |

Anorian Player Characters

Anorian elves play a large part in this campaign. Once a race of proud warriors who worshipped the demonic god of death and winter, Vapul, the Anorians now rely on their natural affinity to the forest and the land to survive under the rule of Presson's Enclave and its Mydon Princes.

If a player wishes to play an Anorian elf who is native to Presson's Enclave, be sure that they first understand the Anorians' relationship with the valley detailed above as it may greatly impact their character's class and background. For example, a player who wishes to play an Anorian wizard could never cast a spell in view of a Pressonian Abjurer as that's considered a capital crime in this campaign setting.

When a character decides on the subrace for an elf character, they can choose Anorian and use the following rules to create their character.

Anorian Traits

Anorians have the elf traits detailed in the Fifth Edition core rulebook for players plus the traits below.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Cold Resistance. You have resistance to cold damage.

Dead Tongue. Using gestures and sounds, you can communicate simple ideas with any undead even if it does not speak, such as a skeleton or zombie. Although you may communicate with an undead creature, you do not control it.

Monastic Tradition: Path of the Gunmage

Many Anorians who train in the art of the gun become gunmages. Perhaps the name mage is deceptive. After all, the Vaskil Warriorbrood are hardly mages. Certainly, magic flows through their veins, along their arm, into their trigger fingers, and through their fire arms. But this magic is not the magic of the cloistered wizards of Odonburg or the stalwart abjurers of Presson's Enclave.

Forbidden to use magic by their Pressonian masters, the Anorians were instead rewarded the pistol, a primitive weapon invented during the Year of Fire by the azers. But they accepted this gift and made it their own. Guns in hand, the Warriorbrood is a force to be reckoned with. Be thee damned if ye should stand in the path through which they ride.

At 3rd level, the monk gains the Monastic Tradition feature, which offers you the choice of a subclass. The following Path of the Gunmage option is available to you when making that choice.

Way of the Gun

3rd-level Path of the Gunmage feature

When you choose this tradition at 3rd level, your special martial arts training leads you to master the use of firearms (see the sidebar). You gain proficiency with firearms if you don't already have it and these weapons are monk weapons for you. You also gain the following benefits:

- You ignore the loading and reloading properties for firearms with which you are proficient.
- Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged attack rolls.
- You can draw or stow two one-handed firearms when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one.

Ki Aim

3rd-level Path of the Gunmage feature

Beginning at 3rd level, as a bonus action, you can double your proficiency bonus on the next ranged weapon attack you make using a firearm so long as you make the attack before the start of your next turn.

Bonus Proficiency

3rd-level Path of the Gunmage feature

Also at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in smith's tools or leatherworker's tools (your choice).

Quick Draw

6th-level Path of the Gunmage feature

At 6th level, during the first round of combat, on an initiative count equal to 20 plus your Dexterity modifier, you can spend 2 ki points to draw a one-handed firearm and make a single ranged attack with it. You can't use this feature when you are surprised.

Magic Bullets

6th-level Path of the Gunmage feature

Also at 6th level, your attacks with your firearms count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Bulletproof Monk

11th-level Path of the Gunmage feature

Once you reach 11th level, in combat, you get a special reaction that you can take once on every creature's turn, except your turn. You can use this special reaction only to use your Deflect Missiles feature, and you can't use it on the same turn that you take your normal reaction.

Rain of Bullets

17th-level Path of the Gunmage feature

At 17th level, you learn how to shower your enemies in a hail of gunfire few can avoid. As an action, you can spend 1 ki point to create a 30-foot cone of bullets. To do so, you must be wielding a firearm and it must be loaded. Each creature in the area must make a Dexterity saving throw against your ki save DC. A target takes the damage normal for your firearm on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a success. This attack expends only one piece of ammunition.





Chapter 1. Steeproost

A crow-eyed Anorian rancher escorts his flock of sheep into the town's muddy, open air market. Roe'dgope tribesmen linger at the outskirts of town, eager to pick a fight. The town's once-beloved sheriff catches whispers from three human women calling her a "Vapul worshipper." The friendly yet ineffectual governor of the town sighs at the latest problem the town faces. Meanwhile, despicable bandits, ravenous ankhegs, and the terrifying Wyvern Kings haunt the valley that surrounds the town.

The frontier town of Steeproost is one of the few permanent settlements in Vaskil Valley, having been around for more than seventy years. Like many of Steeproost's settlements, dragons laid waste to large portions of the village during the War of the Burning Plains. Thanks to its strategic location along the main road to Vaskil Valley's capital, Steeproost recovered.

Now, the village faces a whole mess of problems and once again finds itself at the precipice of total destruction.

Running This Chapter

This chapter introduces the players and their characters to the town of Steeproost and, by extension, Vaskil Valley and Omeria. Before starting the adventure, read the rest of this section and the "Steeproost Overview" that follows it.

Once the players have their characters and backgrounds sorted out, kick off the adventure by reading the boxed text in the "Welcome to Steeproost" section. Then, give the players a starting quest (either "Silent Knight" or "Fist Fights with Werelynxes"), or use one of the quests tied to Steeproost.

The Village of Steeproost

The village of Steeproost clings to the Poisonwood Forest like mud on a rancher's boot. It's a small place, marked by its strategic location along the Chibougue Track. Anorian elves comprise 60 percent of Steeproost's population. Humans come next, at 35 percent, with the remaining 5 percent divided among Brasugas, Roe'dgope, and other non-humans. Many of Vaskil Valley's small settlements have a similar racial composition.

Steeproost



Years back, Steeproost was a mining town destined for quick growth. Unfortunately, both of its mines fell into the clutches of dangerous creatures. Without heroes to help clear the mines, Steeproost's dreams of wealth faded overnight. The problems didn't stop there. The town's well-liked sheriff, a half-Anorian named Mona Mèyor, became the center of controversy after her sister raised an army of the undead and attacked an important city in the far west. With many Steeproosters rejecting her help, thereby hampering the sheriff, Steeproost quickly found itself beset on all sides by bandits, monsters, and, of course, the Wyvern Kings.

If someone doesn't come in and help clean up, Steeproost's likely to end up as another Vaskil Valley ghost town.

Steeproost Quick Facts

Population. 160

Leaders. Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon of Presson's Enclave acts as the local lord of Steeproost and its surrounding environment. Despite the mistrust many of Steeproost's elven citizens have for the Pressonian knight, Marelis is a fair and just ruler. The true Prince Spiro is a lawful good human **noble**. However, he's currently being portrayed by a **doppelganger** named Twist (learn why in Chapter 3 of this adventure). Prince Spiro/Twist relies heavily on Sheriff Mona Mèyor, a lawful good female half-Anorian **gunmage** (see Appendix D), a native to the area. She handles the people while he handles the Pressonians.

Militia. Steeproost can muster up a militia of thirty soldiers (use the **tribal warrior** stat block) and three **veterans**.

Overland Travel

Although much of Vaskil Valley is covered in lush forest, rocky hills, and rough waterways, there are a few well-traveled roads which the characters may take. On foot, it takes half a day to reach the large town of Imfe Caan Asaari. Although it isn't featured in this adventure's text, travel to The Summer Land capital of Presson's Enclave takes four days. Using mounts can reduce these travel times by as much as 50 percent.

Locations in Steeproost

The following locations marked on the map are those the characters are likely to visit while they linger in Steeproost.

The Broken Crossbow

Tavern, hotel, den of sin

The Broken Crossbow is a relatively recent addition to Steeproost. The tavern was built by a wealthy devilkin from the western Omerian coast named Vows at Sunrise. Much to the chagrin of Steeproost's Prince, Vows runs the Broken Crossbow as a den of sin. Unbeknownst to the folks of Steeproost, Vows' real name is Prayer in the Morning. Two years ago, Prayer faked her death following a terrorist attack in the city of Orbea and fled to Vaskil Valley where she now hides from debt-collectors. Prayer is a lawful evil devilkin **assassin**.

Working the bar is a plump, mustachioed gnome named Bem. Bem is a friendly soul, but doesn't care much for confrontation and will quickly tuck his proverbial tail between his legs and run at the first sign of trouble.

The Crossbow is a modest establishment, costing 5 sp per night at the inn. Meals cost an additional 3 sp, and stabling costs 5 sp per mount per day (which includes feed). Characters seeking opportunities to gamble or pit fight during their downtime can find both activities here at the Crossbow. Also, the tavern works well as a place to carouse with the lower-class folks of Steeproost.

Finally, The Broken Crossbow is the best place for the characters to gather rumors. For each hour a character spends in The Crossbow, have them roll a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. They gain a +1 to the check for every 1 gp they spend, representing drinks they purchase and palms they grease. On a success, they learn one rumor about Steeproost and Vaskil Valley, as shown on the Steeproost Rumors table below.

Black Market Magic. The sale of magic items is frowned upon in areas outside of Imfe Caan Asaari. And the sale of magic items related to the schools of conjuration, enchantment, and transmutation is illegal and punishable by a minimum 20-year sentence in Sorryville's dungeons. Having said that, characters who earn favor with Vows at Sunrise by completing one or more tasks may learn about Vows' side hustle as a black market magic item dealer. Vows can acquire most uncommon magic items, scrolls, and other goods for the characters, but sells them at 120% their normal price. She sells illegal items with a 300% markup. Very little will get her to back down from these prices. She also carries *potions of healing* which she will gladly sell at their normal

price of 50 gp. For the most part, *potions of healing* aren't illegal in Vaskil Valley unless they're in Anorian hands.

Steeproost Rumors

d12 Rumor

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | "Wasn't too long ago when the Mydon Princes up in Sorryville were stressin' about a couple girls gone missin'. They posted signs all over the valley. Then, just like that, they stopped. Never heard whether or not they found the girls. Weird part is, their parents started to lay low." |
| 2 | "Sheriff ain't makin' many friends these days, 'specially since her sister started causin' a ruckus west o'the Basilisk Spine Mountains. Likely she needs some help." |
| 3 | "Magic items? Can't hardly get your hands on those here. But I heard if you— <i>ahem</i> —"look to the Sunrise", you might find one or two items to your likin'. But you ain't heard that from me, partner." |
| 4 | "Used to be the Valley was just for us locals. Now word's gettin' round that the Black Rose Clan from Greatwell's set up shop in Sorryville. Wonder what interest they got here?" |
| 5 | "Ever since them Wyvern Kings tossed the werelynxes out of their clanholds, those dwarves been stirrin' the pot here in Steeproost. Watch out for 'em. They're liable to pick a fight with ya." |
| 6 | "There used to be two big ol' mines here in Steeproost. Unfortunately, both of them closed up. One on the account'a giant spiders and the other got gobbled up by ankhegs. I'm willin' to bet that if those mines got cleared the town would owe whoever did it a debt of gratitude." |
| 7 | "Them Wyvern Kings ain't the only one who take to the skies. The griffon kings of Kuzhuk been here longer than both the werelynxes and Anorians combined. Since the Wyvern Kings started shaking things up, they're lookin' for folks to help them with a few tasks." |
| 8 | "There's been a whole lot of orcs and goblins floodin' the Valley lately. More than normal. While they ain't messin' with folks, it sure is strange that they're starting to move into these parts." |
| 9 | "A bunch of damn harpies been assaulting folks in the Poisonwood. Recently, a gang of adventurers like yourselves went in there to try and flush 'em out. Ain't heard from 'em since." |
| 10 | "If you're lookin' for good work, Talindra, a cattle rancher from here, is always lookin' for hands to help her on the trail. The pay is good, but it ain't exactly safe work, if you catch my drift." |

Temple of Tuteus

Shrine to the God of Winter, General Tuteus

Since worship of any gods beyond The Four Generals is considered illegal in the satrapy, for many Anorians, Tuteus acts as a proxy for the ancient Anorian God, Vapul. The shrine is managed by a blind lawful evil Anorian **priest** named Wehlnet Desprae. Wehlnet is also the leader of a cult of Vapul that acts in the area.

Prince's Office

Central government building

Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon manages his region from the small office he shares with Mona Mèyor at the west end of town. The building is little more than a couple of desks and a small jail to toss the town drunk into.

It's likely that the Prince and Sheriff take note of the characters the moment they enter town. If the characters don't interact with either of these two important Steeproosters in the starting quests, one or both will go out of their way to introduce themselves to the characters. See the section below on "Steeproost's Quest-Givers."

The Sad Bear

General store and trading post

Virtually all the equipment included in the Fifth Edition handbook for characters can be found in Steeproost's general store and trading post, The Sad Bear. The store gets its name from the stuffed bear that stands out on its porch—the bear looks like it's frowning thanks to a piss-poor taxidermy job.

A 650-year-old Anorian named Gallows runs the Bear. Having remembered the stories of how the Pressonians treated his parents and grandparents during the Great Relocation, Gallows doesn't care much for humans. However, he does like gold. Thus, he'll put aside his prejudices so long as there's money to be made.

Steeproost's Quest-Givers

As the characters explore Steeproost, they will encounter various NPCs who may offer the characters quests. The characters are under no obligation to complete every quest that they are presented, especially if it doesn't interest them or suit their skills. However, completing quests helps the characters become more powerful.

Listed below are the three main quest-givers in Steeproost.

Mona Mèyor

Steeproost's sheriff

Mona Mèyor acts as Steeproost's no-nonsense sheriff. As a half-Anorian, she has a great relationship with Steeproost's large Anorian population. However, her relationship with the humans of Steeproost and Vaskil Valley has recently taken a hit. Although Prince Spiro has protected her from Pressonian Abjurers and other inquisitors, she's had to rely on adventurers to accomplish tasks around Steeproost.

Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon

Steeproost's governing Mydon Prince

Spiro is the rare exception to Pressonian Princes—as in, he's not a total pompous ass (probably because he's secretly a doppelganger). Despite his friendly nature and willingness to do what's right by his people, the Anorian population of Steeproost views Prince Spiro as weak. Making matters worse, the humans of Steeproost see Spiro as an "elf lover" who puts the concerns of the Anorians above those of his own race. As such, Prince Spiro relies on Sheriff Mèyor to accomplish tasks he cannot.

Vows at Sunrise (Prayer in the Morning)

Owner of The Broken Crossbow

A relative newcomer in Steeproost, Vows at Sunrise—whose real name is Prayer in the Morning—has her ear to the ground of all the happenings in and around Steeproost. Vows hires help when she doesn't want to get her hands, or the hands of her lackeys, dirty.

Random Encounters in Steeproost

Steeproost is a busy village. Even without random encounters, there's plenty to do. But if the characters spend enough time hanging out in the village, a few random incidents can help bring the experience of the village to life—and also drop a few hints regarding the adventure's greater mystery.

Roll a d20 three times per day of game time, checking for encounters each morning, afternoon, and evening or night. An encounter occurs on a roll of 16 or higher. Roll a d20 and check the Steeproost Encounters table to determine what the characters encounter, or choose an encounter you like.

Welcome to Steeproost

When you are ready for the adventure to get underway, show the map of Steeproost to the characters and read the following boxed text aloud:

Built alongside the Chibougue Track, midway between the mouth of Vaskil Valley and the capital city of Imfe Caan Asaari, is the mining town of Steeproost. Most of the town's buildings are squat, one- or two-room domiciles built from lumber pulled from the surrounding Poisonwood Forest.

Most of Steeproost's residents are Anorians, the dark-haired, blue eyed, pale-skinned elves who ruled northern Omeria over one thousand years ago. In the three elven generations since then, they've become hard-working ranchers, farmers, and lumberjacks, eager to keep to themselves.

Presiding over the Anorians are Pressonians, humans

Steeproost Encounters

| d20 | Encounter |
|-------|---|
| 1 | The characters nearly run into a megamoo (see Appendix D) being led through town by a farmer (commoner). |
| 2 | A rowdy group of four Roe'dgope werelynxes walks past the characters. In Dwarven, they make rude remarks about the characters' appearance. |
| 3 | A merchant yells, "Stop! Thief!" as an Anorian boy (commoner) rushes past the characters. If the boy is caught, the grateful merchant offers a 10% discount on his wares. The merchant sells anything on the <i>PHB's</i> adventuring gear table that costs 10 gp or less. |
| 4 | A drunk human bandit captain and his three friends (bandits) are trying to pick a fight with an Anorian gunmage (see Appendix D). The gunmage is well beyond their fighting ability, but the characters would never know by the shabby way he dresses. |
| 5 | A beggar (commoner) tugs on one of the characters' arms and begs for coin. The beggar's body is distorted and strange—they have a rare, hereditary virus called drakeblood which gives their bodies dragon-like features. |
| 6 | The character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score spots someone looking at them from behind a building. When they go to find the person, they're gone. The lurker was a doppelganger spying on the characters. |
| 7 | A Taznarchi bard (commoner) sings a sad song about the fall of Imfe Mythse Anore. Humans who hear the song boo the man, commenting that if he doesn't stop, they'll have him arrested. |
| 8 | Prince Spiro (see page 13) walks past the characters while mumbling to himself. If stopped, he offers a friendly handshake and nod. |
| 9 | The character with the lowest passive Wisdom (Perception) score steps in a pile of horse poop. |
| 10 | Three bandits from the Ruby Riders gang ride into town. They try to stir up trouble with anyone they can, looking for a fight (including the characters). The bandits are all armed with revolvers (see page 7 for details). If the characters don't back down, one of the bandits challenges one of the characters to a duel (see below). |
| 11–20 | The characters meet an NPC with a starter quest or follow-up quest (see this chapter for details). |

Duels

Many of Vaskil Valley's outlaws and gunmages prefer to settle disputes with duels. Duels are perfectly legal in Vaskil Valley, too, put into place by the Pressonians so the Anorians would handle their own disputes without having to involve law enforcement. Duels have the following rules set in the law:

1. Both parties must agree to the duel before a witness, usually a member of town leadership or law enforcement.
2. Both parties may only use a non-magical ranged weapon during the duel. Guns are permitted.
3. Both parties must meet at a previously agreed upon time (usually dawn, high noon, or sundown). If one party fails to show up at the agreed upon time, the other party may seek vengeance any way they please without legal repercussions.
4. Both parties must stand at least 100 feet apart with a clear line of sight (no cover).
5. At the count of 3, both parties draw their weapons and fire once.

In game terms, both sides roll initiative as normal. Both duelists then may make a single weapon attack in initiative order. If both duelists survive or both duelists die, the duel is declared a draw, and the dispute remains unsettled. If one duelist kills the other, the surviving duelist is declared winner of the dispute.

Retributions by either side or their allies are illegal.

native to The Summer Land south of Vaskil Valley.

Although it's been more than a millennium since the Anorians controlled these lands, the Pressonians still remain suspicious of the Anorians and their activities.

On your way to Steeproost, you heard rumors that a new threat has appeared in the valley: the Wyvern Kings. These mysterious, wyvern-riding, full-plate-wearing warriors haunt the skies above Vaskil Valley. Already, there have been at least two disappearances linked to these dark riders. Furthermore, the presence of the Wyvern Kings has pushed the Roe'dgope, a species of dwarven werelynxes, from their homes to the west. Tensions are high as these refugees are forced to migrate into Anorian and Pressonian territories.

After the heroes have had a chance to wander around Steeproost, introduce one of the starting quests detailed below.

Starting Quests

When the characters first enter Steeproost, choose one of the two following quests to get the characters involved: “Silent Knight” or “Fist Fights with Werelynxes.” Both of these quests serve to introduce the characters to the town of Steeproost and its stakeholders.

Fist Fights with Werelynxes. Shortly after the characters enter the town of Steeproost, they’re drawn to the town’s local watering hole, The Broken Crossbow. As they get a feel for the saloon, a group of werelynxes enters the tavern and is drawn into a fight with the locals. See “Fist Fights with Werelynxes” for details.

Silent Knight. While walking around Steeproost, the characters encounter a farmer who claims that one of the Wyvern Kings crash-landed in the forest north of his property. The characters go to investigate and discover that the body has already been intercepted by members of the Black Rose Clan. See “Silent Knight” for details.

Follow-up Quests

After the characters complete one of the starting quests, one or more of the town’s leaders approaches the characters and asks them to help with the **Wyvern King Clues** quest (see the “Wyvern King Clues” section later in this chapter for details).

Additionally, the following three quests become available.

Cattle Rustlin’ Country. The characters are hired on a ranch and charged with protecting a large herd of cattle as they’re moved from Steeproost to the Kuzhuk. Yeehaw! Refer to the section “Cattle Rustlin’ Country” for details.

Tomb of the Drake. A week ago, a well-known Brasuga bard disappeared during an expedition in the hills. One of Steeproost’s quest givers offers the characters gold to find the missing giant. Refer to the section “Tomb of the Drake” for details.

Ogre Baby’s Rattle. A shipment of specialist equipment vanished en route to a nearby mine. The characters are hired to find the shipment. Refer to the section “Ogre Baby’s Rattle” for details.

After the characters complete one follow-up quest, another four follow-up quests become available.

Caves of Silence. A nest of giant spiders led by a phase spider forced a local mine to shut down. Desperate for it to reopen, the people of Steeproost ask the characters to step in and help. Refer to the section “Caves of Silence” for details.

Harpy Murder. Harpies keep ambushing travelers along the east road of Steeproost. The adventurers are tasked with clearing this menace from the surrounding forest.

Strange Lights. Reports of strange lights on the horizon may be tied to a recent disappearance. The characters are sent to an old, abandoned mine to investigate. Refer to the section “Strange Lights” for details.

Stonehill Blues. A group of bandits and ne’er-do-wells have set up a base in abandoned ruins outside of Steeproost. They’ve been causing trouble in the area. The characters are asked to put an end to their tyranny.

Vaskil Valley Quests

As the characters explore Vaskil Valley and accomplish quests, they will discover leads to additional quests. Many of these quests begin to unravel the mystery of the Wyvern Kings. Some offer ways for the characters to improve their arsenal before they confront the winged terrors, and all of them grant the characters opportunities for advancement. All of the additional quests presented in this adventure are detailed in “Chapter 2. Vaskil Valley.”

Character Advancement

Characters advance in level by completing quests in this chapter. Regardless of the number of characters in the party, the rate of advancement is as follows:

- Characters gain a level when they complete one of the two starting quests. At your discretion, they may complete both starting quests, gaining two levels as a result. However, completing a starting quest has no effect on characters of 3rd level or higher. (Chapter 1.)
- Characters gain a level each time they complete two follow-up quests and additional quests until they reach 5th level. After they reach 5th level, completing the follow-up quests and additional quests has no effect on their level. (Chapter 1 and 2.)
- Characters should reach 6th level once they enter The Colddark cliff and learn its secrets. (Chapter 3.)
- Characters reach 7th level after they repel the mercenaries in the final act of this adventure. (Chapter 4.)

Where are the Wyvern Kings?

The Wyvern Kings are a constant threat in this adventure. Although they are not inherently evil (see the section “Who are the Wyvern Kings?” in Chapter 4 for details), their presence disturbs many of Vaskil Valley’s citizens and remains a looming threat. The Random Encounter table in Chapter 2 presents opportunities for the characters to witness the Wyvern Kings in action.

Spies Among Us

During this adventure, the characters will meet many colorful and interesting characters. Then, later, in Chapter 3, the characters learn that many of the NPCs with whom they have been interacting are actually a gang of neutral-aligned doppelgangers who work with the Wyvern Kings—including one of the adventure’s major quest-givers, Prince Spiro.

Beyond Prince Spiro, who are these doppelgangers? Ultimately, that’s up to you. Because of the fluid nature of this adventure, the doppelgangers should be people that the characters—and their players—least suspect. Although this concept is covered in greater detail in Chapter 3, make sure to consider this while you go into the adventure and introduce new NPCs. Remember—if you plan on making an NPC a doppelganger and they get injured, die, or otherwise get knocked out of the plot, you’re free to change that fact. After all, the players won’t even know, will they?

Cattle Rustlin' Country

This follow-up quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 2. The characters are hired on as ranch hands and charged with protecting a large herd of cattle as they're moved from Steeproost to Kuzhuk. Yeehaw!

Background

The Steeproost Trail is a twenty-mile stretch of rolling grassland connecting the eponymous cattle town to the secluded home of the Kuzhuk griffon riders. Though the trail is the shortest drive in Vaskil Valley and replete with grazing land, it is not totally without danger. Local gangs of rustlers often lurk beyond the hills, waiting to ambush unsuspecting ranchers and steal their herds of cattle. As a result, ranchers tend to hire on extra hands in Steeproost en route to Kuzhuk, to better protect their investment. Those sellswords who discover they have a natural affinity for the shepherd's life often end up becoming professional ranchers themselves.

Talindra, a half-elf woman born and raised in Steeproost, is one such adventurer turned rancher; she found that life on the trail was routine enough to make a steady living, but dangerous enough to be exciting. She's currently nearing the end of her yearly cattle drive and hiring on extra swords in Steeproost for the final stretch to Kuzhuk.

Quest Hooks

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in the quest.

Hired Hands. Talindra comes across the characters and decides to hire them as sellswords. She's willing to pay 5 gp per day and 10 gp per 10 head of cattle that reach Kuzhuk unharmed.

Veiled Attackers. Sheriff Mona Mèyor is interested in planting guards within Talindra's cattle drive in order to capture one of the bandits alive. No one knows who's behind these attacks; extracting information from one of these rustlers would go a long way toward uncovering the culprit.

Big Game Hunters. Vicious crocs are infesting the river crossing to the west, and their rare skins would fetch a high price on the black market. Vows at Sunrise, the owner of The Broken Crossbow in Steeproost, is willing to pay 20 gp per hide.

Driving the Herd

The characters set out on The Steeproost Trail accompanied by Talindra and her hundred head herd of cattle. During encounters, creatures will interact with cattle in a couple of ways: bandits will attempt to rustle them off trail, while the crocodiles at the river crossing will attack them and attempt to drag them beneath the water.

Rule of Ten. For simplicity's sake, Talindra's herd is broken into 10 groups of 10, with each group worth 10 gp and 75 XP upon reaching Kuzhuk. For instance, if bandits rustled some cattle away during an encounter, the bandit takes 10 head of cattle—or one group—and the bandit is considered to have fled from the field of battle with their ill-gotten gains.

Refer to The Steeproost Trail Encounters section for more information on these types of interactions.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the Steeproost Trail has the following features.

Size and Dimensions. The Steeproost Trail is approximately 20 miles long. Each encounter includes a complementary battle map for ease of reference (at the back of the book), though you can defer to your imagination instead if you'd like.

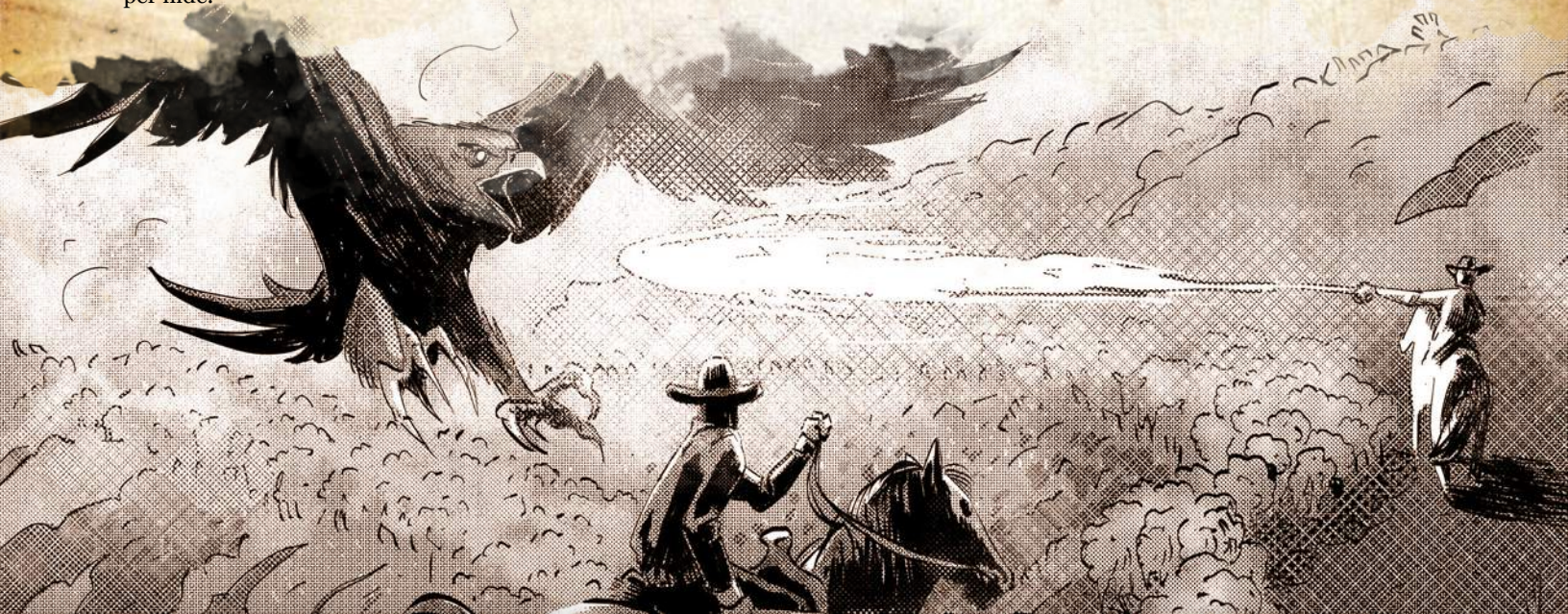
Illumination. Illumination varies from encounter to encounter; refer to The Steeproost Trail Encounters section for more information.

The Steeproost Trail Encounters

The following encounters take place as the characters traverse The Steeproost Trail. Each combat encounter section has a dedicated battle map. You can refer to the maps for this quest to see where each encounter takes place:

Scouting Raid Encounter

Not long after setting forth from Steeproost, three rustlers (**bandits** with proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival) riding three **draft horses** will appear on a nearby ridge and probe the train's defenses. The battle begins with Talindra's



herd set in a straight line heading west, with the characters spread amongst them to maintain order. Talindra (**bandit** with proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival) drives the chuck wagon at the back of the herd; she may be called upon to participate in the battle if things look dire for the characters.

Bait and Switch. The rustlers will attempt to distract the characters as they move cattle off trail. At the beginning of combat, choose a rustler to be the designated mover and set their initiative at 15. The mover will always attempt to move into contact with a group of cattle farthest from the characters (i.e. will not participate in the fighting). Upon making contact, the rustler must then succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to move the cattle up to their maximum movement speed (30 ft.) away from the train. If the designated rustler ever succeeds on two consecutive Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks on the same group of cattle, they take off with that part of the herd and flee the field of battle. The other two rustlers will attempt to draw the characters away from one side of the train to engage them; once a group of cattle has been secured *or* one of the rustlers dies, the others flee the field of battle.

Treasure: Glass Dice. If one of the rustlers dies, the characters can find a pair of painted glass dice (25 gp) on their corpse. Each slain rustler carries a rabbit skin pouch containing 25 sp.

Wyvern Corpse

Later the first day, the cattle train comes across an unusual sight: the desiccated corpse of a wyvern. With the recent fear of the Wyvern Kings hanging over the heads of the people of Vaskil Valley, Talindra commands everyone to be cautious.

If the characters search the wyvern, they immediately discover that it has a ruined saddle attached to it. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check reveals that the saddle is the same as those used by the Wyvern Kings. Once the saddle is discovered, a character who succeeds on an active or passive DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check sees a black object covered in dust approximately 20 feet from the wyvern's corpse. Upon closer examination, they discover that it's a helmet, exactly like those worn by the Wyvern Kings.

This unusual, jagged, black helmet lacks holes of any sort—not even eye holes! Furthermore, the inside is designed so that it looks like it fits over a cylinder rather than a person's head.

Beyond the helmet and wyvern's corpse, there's nothing else of interest here.

Flooded River Crossing Encounter

The following day, Talindra's cattle train must cross the Vaskil River. However, a sudden storm descends upon the area, slowing the train's progress and causing the river crossing to swell.

Development: Storm. While the pouring rain and fog last, set all creatures' vision to a maximum of 15 feet (regardless of their type of vision). Additionally, all creatures' movement is set at 15 feet. due to the mud fields surrounding the river.

Croc Attack! The encounter begins with Talindra's herd set in a straight line heading west, with at least two groups situated in the ford itself. The characters begin the encounter spread amongst the cattle to maintain order. Talindra drives the chuck wagon at the back of the herd; she may be called upon to participate in the battle if things look dire for the characters. The three **crocodiles** begin the encounter hidden beneath the water, requiring a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot. They immediately attack any cattle attempting to cross. Successful attacks on the cattle will cause them to panic, scatter, and drown; a group is considered lost if a croc makes two consecutive successful attacks on the same group.

Treasure: Croc Skin. A character with leatherworker's tools can spend two hours and use them to skin a crocodile by performing a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) or a DC 13 Wisdom (Nature) check. Talindra's chuck wagon contains leatherworker's tools if no one is currently carrying them. On a success, the character successfully harvests the crocodile's hide. Each hide is worth 20 gp and weighs approximately 50 pounds. A failed check results in a tattered hide worth 5 gp that weighs 25 pounds.

Night Raid Encounter

The storm passes, night falls, and Talindra decides to pitch camp in a secluded copse of trees. Out in the dark, the rustlers plot their final assault.

Night Attack. The encounter begins with Talindra's herd spread out and asleep near her chuck wagon. The six rustlers (**bandits** with proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival) and their six **draft horses** begin at the edge of the tree line, surrounding the camp. Two of the rustlers will dismount and attempt to sneak into the camp by moonlight to subdue the character on watch (make Stealth checks for the rustlers). Once discovered, the other four rustlers will charge in on their horses. As before, designate one of the rustlers to be the group's "mover" and set their initiative to 15. If over half of the rustlers are killed, the others will attempt to flee the field of battle.

Treasure: Gray Bag of Tricks. If one or more of the rustlers die, the characters can find a *gray bag of tricks* on one of their corpses. Each slain rustler carries a rabbit skin pouch containing 25 sp.

Concluding the Quest

Upon reaching Kuzhuk, Talindra will perform the final head count and pay the characters what's promised: 10 gp per 10 cattle. If at least eight groups of cattle survived the trail, Talindra will pay the characters an additional 100 gp for a job well done.

Caves of Silence

This follow-up quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. An abandoned mine needs to be cleared of a nest of monsters so the town can reopen it and the miners can get back to work. The party should be prepared for some difficult battles with the spiders inside the mine.

Background

A phase spider and a nest of giant spiders have turned an abandoned mine just south of the town of Steeproost into their home, killing any who would try to take it back. Using the unique properties of a rare mineral that absorbs sound, the giant arachnids lie silently in wait for their meals to come to them. For years they have filled their bellies with the blood of victims foolish enough to enter their lair, their screams silenced, unheard, once they do.

Many of the citizens in Steeproost depended on the resources that the mine provided. Its loss had a big impact on the local economy, and they are desperate to get it back up and running once more. Many attempts have been made over the years and while they have all failed up to this point, they are still hopeful that it can be done.

About the Gretsard Iron Mine

The Gretsard Iron Mine was a major source of work and income for Steeproost until it was shut down five years ago. A small earthquake cracked open a massive sinkhole inside of the mine and before repairs could begin, it became home to a nest of nasty creatures that quickly took control of the entire complex.

The townsfolk tried hiring experts over the years to try to clear out the mines but whoever went down into that sinkhole was never heard from again. This is mostly because of a special mineral that absorbs sound called Red Ruthrophilite that was exposed when that part of the mine collapsed during the earthquake. Whenever someone entered the sinkhole, they would be ambushed by the monsters living below and the mineral would absorb any sound they would make.

Quest Hooks

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in the quest.

The Quiet Legend. Old Man Tillius loves to weave a tall tale down at the Broken Crossbow as long as you keep his flagon full. Last night he told the story of a local legend of the bottomless sinkhole in the “Caves of Silence” and how no one who has entered has ever been heard from again. He believes there is a treasure hidden below and an unspeakable monster must be guarding it.

Feed the Families. Vienill Faertath comes from a long line of farmers but broke the tradition when he went to work in the Gretsard Iron Mine almost a decade ago. After the mine collapsed and shut down, his family, like many others, were desperate to find any work they could to make ends meet. On the verge of destitution, Vienill and the other former miners reach out to the adventurers in hopes they will

clear the mine so they can get back to work.

The Money Pit. With any investment, there is always the risk of losing everything. Lyzina Gretsard learned this the hard way five years ago when she lost it all with the collapse of her family’s iron mine. It was the start of a string of failed investments, but it is now her last chance to restore her family name to prominence. She’s offering a reward of 50 gp per adventurer if they can clear the “Caves of Silence” of all the current inhabitants.

The Caves of Silence

The entrance to the mine can be reached by traveling just two hours south of Steeproost. The adventurers will follow a path through the forest and into the foothills where they’ll come across the abandoned mining camp just outside the entrance.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the caves have the following features.

Ceilings. The ceiling height of the mine varies from 8 feet in the side tunnels to 15 feet in the main tunnels. Excavated rooms are made of rough stone supported by thick wooden beams.

Floors and Walls. The floors of the mine are hard packed earth and stone smoothed from travel over time. Most of the rough stone walls are held in place by supports but some have collapsed into piles of rubble.

Webbed Tunnels. There are many sections of the mines that are covered in webbing from the arachnid inhabitants. They are considered difficult terrain and each creature that starts its turn in the webs or that enters them during its turn must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by the webs. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing so with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Each 5-foot cube of giant webs has AC 10, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage. The webs are flammable and any 5-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, dealing 5 (2d4) fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the fire.

Illumination. There are no light sources in the mine.

1 - Mine Entrance

When the characters approach the mine for the first time, read or paraphrase the following:

The trek on the path through the woodlands ends abruptly at a clearing at the base of the foothills. A few scattered planks and bits of rusted metal are all that remain of what was once a thriving mining camp. The broken remains of tracks still lie twisted and snapped from the strength of the earthquake years ago. They lead into the gaping maw of the mine’s mouth, disappearing down into the silent darkness.

Caves of Silence

1 square = 5 feet



Sitting on a piece of broken machinery staring into that black pit is an old Anorian man wearing a dusty leather coat that hangs to his knees, a red kerchief around his neck, and his chin on his knuckles. His brow is so deeply furrowed in thought, it's as if it is holding up the weight of the world by itself.

The Anorian will be surprised at the sight of the adventurers and will introduce himself as Veldrin Godeth, of Imfe Caan Asaari. He will explain that he sits here looking to gather the courage to enter the mine and retrieve a lost family heirloom, a silver signet ring, from a family member who went missing in the mine. He will promise a great reward if the adventurers would do it in his stead and return it to his family home in Imfe Caan Asaari.

Veldrin is actually the **ghost** of a miner who was killed in the collapse five years ago; it is his own remains that lie at the bottom of the collapsed shaft (**area 5**). The adventurers can determine his spectral nature with a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check.

2 - Main Tunnel

The main tunnel slopes downward deeper into the earth the further it travels. Discarded mining gear litters the corners, rusting away or collapsing into heaps of debris. A thick layer of dirt and fallen rock covers everything; some of the wooden supports have completely deteriorated and walls have crumbled down.

The largest section of the mine tunnel (near **area 4**) has collapsed and is closed off completely; it will require heavy work over a period of days to dig out the tunnel.

Trap: Weakened Tunnel. The mine is still unstable, especially the closer to the collapsed shaft one goes. The tunnel leading to **area 5** is so weak that anyone putting more than five pounds of pressure on that tunnel's floor causes a 5-foot-wide and 10-foot-deep sinkhole to appear. An adventurer avoids falling into the collapsed floor with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check; a failed check results in 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Treasure: A Heavy Load. There are 200 pounds of iron ore worth 100 sp sitting in a mining cart.

3 - Darkmantle Lair

In the oldest part of the mine, the sturdy tunnel supports remain mostly intact. Discarded stacks of old planks and other equipment lie in haphazard piles along one wall. Thick strands of webbing cover the individual mining tunnels jutting out from the main tunnel.

Encounter: A Mantle of Darkness. Four **darkmantles** live here in the side tunnels. They will use their Darkness Aura ability to ambush the party from above.

Hazard: Webbed Tunnels. Thick, sticky webbing covers the four individual tunnels (see "General Features").

4 - Webbed Cave

Thick webbing covers this entire section of the mine. Barely visible bundles of wrapped objects and corpses, as well as barrels and crates, poke out between the web strands as well.

Encounter: Ambush. An **ettercap**, a **giant spider**, and two **giant wolf spiders** nest in the corners of this cave. As soon as anything touches the webs, they will all move to attack. The giant spider and giant wolf spiders will engage the party with a direct attack, drawing them into the cave, while the ettercap will attempt to scuttle behind them and hit them with its Web action.

Hazard: Webbed Cave. This entire area is covered in thick, sticky webbing (see "General Features").

Treasure: Corpse Cocoons. There are a total of three corpses cocooned deep in the webbing. Two of the corpses are miners with a combined total of 17 sp and 24 cp on them. The third corpse can be found crammed into a crevice in the ceiling with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. This one is of a former adventurer with 10 gp and two *potions of healing* in a satchel. A small journal in the satchel tells the short-lived story of his life from fisherman to mercenary whose crew took a job to clear out Gretsard mine over two years ago.

5 - Collapsed Shaft

There's a slight sense of vertigo that can be felt the closer one gets to the edge. The feeling is faint and fleeting, but noticeable.

The bottom of the mining tunnel suddenly drops down into a stygian pit of pitch-black darkness. The mining track's rails project over this pit, twisted and reaching towards the other side but unable to span the width. Its partner rails sit on the other side of the expanse, reaching towards them but unable to touch.

The pit itself is broader than it is wide with the bottom indiscernible. Small flecks of red crystal are embedded in the walls.

The pit is 50 feet deep with webbing strung between the walls that begin halfway down. Touching the webs will alert the guardians of the pit.

Hazard: Muffled Sounds. The crystal in the walls is Red Ruthrophilite and any creature within 5 feet of the walls of the pit will be under the effects of its sound absorption attribute (see sidebar) as if holding one ounce of the mineral.

Encounter: The Silent Killers. A **giant spider** and three **giant wolf spiders** nest at the bottom of the shaft in **area 6**. Their Web Sense ability will alert them once a creature moves halfway down the tunnel and they will all climb up to attack them.

6 - Silenced Cave

The bottom of the pit ends in a small cave covered in old webs with a southern path leading down and into **area 7**. Bits of splintered wood and bent metal from the fallen mining track lay scattered across the ground. They lie mixed with the broken skeletons and equipment of the miners and would-be heroes who have fallen to their deaths over the last few years.

Red Ruthrophilite

This crystalline mineral has the unique property to absorb sounds a creature makes based on how much it holds.

With one ounce held, the crystal suppresses sounds made by the holder, granting them a +4 bonus on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. The holder will also have a 20% (+10% per additional ounce held) chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components or using abilities that require audible components.

A *silence* spell cast while using one ounce of this mineral as a material component will negate the need for concentration to maintain the spell and will double its duration to 20 minutes.

Hazard: Silenced. The Red Ruthrophilite crystals in the walls are noticeably bigger in this section of the shaft, creating an effect identical to that of the *silence* spell in the entire room.

Treasure: The Heirloom. The skeletal remains of Veldrin Godeth lie here tucked into a corner of the room where he fell and broke his neck. A silver signet ring (5 gp) with an ornately carved capital letter “G” upon it is still attached to one of his finger bones.

7 - Spider Nest

This large cavern is almost completely covered in webbing. The ceiling is 30 feet high and covered in stalactites that thrust down into the cavern with webbing strung between them all. The Red Ruthrophilite crystals are much smaller in the walls here to the point of having no effect unless the walls are specifically touched. Dozens of cocooned bodies are hung like so many sides of beef from the ceiling and in the massive webs.

Hazard: Webbed Cavern. Webs cover most of the cavern (see “General Features”).

Encounter: It’s Just a Phase. The **phase spider** and **giant spider** in the home nest will coordinate their attacks. The giant spider will use its Web ability to entangle weaker opponents while the phase spider will attack the strongest. The phase spider prefers to use its Ethereal Jaunt ability to “blink” behind an opponent and then use its Bite action.

Treasure: The Spider Hoard. After cutting down all the corpses and looting them, the hoard contains 280 cp, 112 sp, 42 gp, three *potions of healing*, and a set of *chain mail of the spider* (see Appendix C).

Concluding the Quest

If characters succeed in clearing the mine, they will not find Veldrin Godeth because his spirit has moved on. If they seek him out in Imfe Caan Asaari, whoever they ask will look at them oddly and then point them in the direction of the Godeth family home, a middle-class dwelling not too far from the Dragonwatch Inn. There they will meet Veldrin’s widow Belardara and their son, Veldrin, who was named for his father. She will tearfully thank them for returning the signet ring, explaining how it was lost when her husband died in the mine’s collapse five years ago. She will give the adventurers 5 gp each and a hearty dinner as a thank you.

Since the mine was a huge part of Steeproost’s economy, word spreads quick about the heroes’ accomplishment. Within a few months, the mine reopens and Steeproost once again becomes an important center of trade in Vaskil. Everyone in town—Anorian and human alike—treat the adventurers like celebrities.

If the adventurers failed to clear out the mine, their bodies will never be found as the spiders wrap them up tightly in their cocoons and feast on them. Eventually, the town will forget about the mine as the forest to the south of town becomes increasingly dangerous, and the giant spider population blooms over the years. Growing ever larger, the spider threat eventually comes knocking at Steeproost’s very door.

Adventure Hook Resolution

Resolve the quest hooks presented at the beginning of this quest as follows:

The Quiet Legend. After clearing the mine and returning to Steeproost, the locals at the Broken Crossbow are eager to hear the tale, buying round after round of ale. Old Man Tillius will sit quietly in a corner grumbling at not being the center of attention but absorbing every word for his future renditions of the legend of the “Caves of Silence”.

Feed the Families. The mining families will shower the characters with praise and take them to the Broken Crossbow where they will eat, sing, and dance in their honor; the party’s cups will overflow, and their bellies will be filled. The families will pay for their food and lodging for the next week.

The Money Pit. Lyzina Gretsard will honor her word and pay the adventurers what was promised. She will promise to reach out to them if she’s ever in need of help clearing out monsters again. Once she announces to the town that the mine will reopen, the former miners rejoice with the adventurers in the Broken Crossbow.



Fist Fights with Werelynxes

This starting quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. Soon after the characters arrive in the town of Steeproost, they find themselves in the popular watering hole, The Broken Crossbow. There, they get caught in the middle of a fight between Anorian gunmages and dwarven werelynxes.

Background

A few months ago, the Wyvern Kings pushed the Roe'dgope people from their homes at the western side of the valley. Many of these Roe'dgope refugees were welcomed into the communities of Vaskil Valley, including Steeproost. However, tensions are high. Ever since the Anorians were forcibly relocated to the valley a millennium ago, the Roe'dgope have seen the elves as trespassers on their ancestral lands. Ironically, the Anorians see the Roe'dgope as trespassers on their side of the valley.

Lesharo, a Roe'dgope warrior, and his three friends, Hassun, Bishalani, and Helki, haven't adjusted to their current predicament. Relatively young (they're all around ninety years old), these hot heads have already caused trouble a few times since coming to Steeproost. The tensions between Lesharo's people and the Anorians of Steeproost are about to reach a head, which will likely result in bloodshed unless someone gets involved.

Quest Hook

The characters can get involved with this starter quest the first time they set foot in The Broken Crossbow. If they're new to town, they likely entered the Crossbow to find work, take a break, or even grab a room for the night. No matter the outcome of this starter quest, the tavern's owner, Vows at Sunrise, sees potential in the adventurers, as does the town's sheriff, Mona Mèyor. This ultimately leads to more quests for the party.

Welcome to The Broken Crossbow

The first time the characters enter The Broken Crossbow, read the following:

Rough wooden floors, dimly lit tables, rough-and-tumble ranch hands drinking shots of dark liquor at the bar—this place screams “frontier.” A lean, red-skinned devilkin woman with shoulder-length black hair pulled back into a bun beneath a wide-brimmed black hat leans against a wooden beam in front of this tavern. “Howdy,” she says. “Welcome to The Broken Crossbow.”

Review the section on The Broken Crossbow earlier in this chapter.

After the characters have had a chance to settle into The Crossbow, they witness a gang of tribal warriors enter the saloon—Roe'dgope. Almost immediately, everyone stops talking and turns their heads.

Four musclebound dwarves wearing little more than trousers and moccasins push past the tavern's swinging doors. White warpaint covers their beardless faces and bare chests. Everyone else in the bar immediately clams up and stares. After a beat, the four saunter to an empty spot at the bar and take a seat.

The mustachioed bartender slinks over and asks (with a touch of fear in his voice), “What will it be, fellas?” The clear leader of the dwarves, a dark-eyed man with long black hair says something in the dwarven tongue to his companions, then grunts, “Water.” The bartender nods with a weak smile and grabs four glasses.

Give the characters a chance to ask around about the dwarves. By speaking with the tavern's patrons, they can learn the details included in this quest's backstory.

After a few minutes, an Anorian **gunmage** (see Appendix D) named Whip approaches the Roe'dgope.

While the dwarves sip from their glasses of water and speak among themselves, a tall, black-haired elven man with twin revolvers at his hips approaches the tribesmen. “Say, Bim,” says the elf to the bartender. “I thought you had a policy about letting animals into the bar?” The elf then turns and smirks, staring directly at the lead dwarf.

The bartender clears his throat, “Now, Whip... don't you go causin' no trouble—”

Whip throws Bim the bartender a look that instantly silences him. He then turns his attention back to the dwarves.

“What's wrong? Cat got your tongue? But I guess... you're the cat, huh?”

At this point, it's clear that Whip is looking to pick a fight with the Roe'dgope. Before the characters can get involved, he ups his ante by grabbing one of the dwarves' glasses and then proceeds to dump its contents on Lesharo's head.

The water from the glass causes the dwarf's warpaint to run down his neck and chest. But that isn't what has

your attention—the dwarf’s eyes turn bright gold. He starts to emit a low growl, not unlike a mountain lion’s. Then, before your eyes, you watch the dwarf and his four companions transform into feline-humanoid hybrids. The elf takes a step back and draws both of his revolvers while four more elves dressed in a similar manner stand from a nearby table ready to back him up.

“War it is, boys!” shouts the elf.

Bar Fight

Whip and his four companions are Anorian **gunmages** and Lesharo and his three companions are **werelynxes** (the gunmages and werelynxes are detailed in Appendix D). The two groups break into a nasty bar fight. As lycanthropes, nonmagical attacks do little to harm Lesharo and his companions. However, Whip and his pals all have guns loaded with silver bullets. Whip’s a helluva shot, but his bullets aren’t made to kill, but to harm.

Similarly, the Roe’dgope don’t want to kill Whip or the other elves. They’re just looking to cut them up bad with their claws. None of the lycanthropes will apply their lycanthropic curse during the fight, as doing so would be considered a sin among their people.

After the fight continues for a few rounds—bottles thrown, chairs flying, people getting tossed through windows, etc.—Sheriff Mona Mèyor rushes into the bar. If the characters are still present and haven’t done anything to stop the fight, Mèyor yells, “Hey! You! Help me out with this lot, wouldja?” She then jumps into the fight to try and break things up.

The Anorians won’t use their guns on the characters, but they’re sure to throw fists and grapple. When making an attack with their fists, the gunmages have a +3 to hit and deal 1 bludgeoning damage. If the damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, the target falls unconscious but is stable.

If the characters fight with the Roe’dgope, the werelynxes use their claws, but won’t bite. And if their claw attacks

would reduce a character to 0 hit points, the werelynx instead makes a nonlethal blow, knocking the character unconscious.

Break It Up

The Anorians and Roe’dgope are pretty tough, relatively speaking, so once this fight has continued for three rounds, Vows at Sunrise, the tavern’s owner, grabs her shotgun from behind the bar and gives an ear-splitting whistle. Both the Anorians and Roe’dgope immediately turn to face her.

“All right, you idiots! I love a good bar fight as much as the next gal, but this is getting old pretty fast. The next person who throws a punch is going to get a face full of shotgun. And if you’re wondering, yes—there’s silver pellets in here.

“Now go on. Git!”

Unless the characters continue the fight, the Anorians grab their hats, guns, and other personal effects and exit (not without throwing a few dirty looks the dwarves’ way, of course). Lesharo and his companions follow, grumbling in their native tongue, “It’s not like we’re the ones who started this mess.”

Concluding the Quest

No matter how well the characters fared in the fight, they got to show off their stuff both to Sheriff Mona Mèyor and Vows at Sunrise. Both women see opportunity with the party—Mèyor thinks the characters can help her handle a few problems in and around Steeproost. Meanwhile, Vows thinks that they might be useful as new goons to help her with some of her tasks.

Finally, if the characters stay behind and help clean up the bar, Vows at Sunrise offers them free room and board for the next five days. “Least I can do,” she says.



Harpy Murder

Harpy Murder is a follow-up quest optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. The characters are asked to discover the fate of a missing adventuring party who were killed by a flock of vile harpies.

Background

Steeproost must work ceaselessly to protect itself against the threats which lurk in the wilderness. Luckily, many adventurers can be found in Vaskil Valley looking to test their mettle and earn fame and fortune in its forests, hills, and mountains. One such group of adventurers was recently contracted by the village of Steeproost to address the increasing harpy presence in the region. The harpies, led by one calling herself Meselle the Blooddrinker, have been ambushing travelers along the east road out of Steeproost, gleefully torturing and murdering their targets while occasionally sending survivors back to the village to tell their tales of the harpies' butchery. Pushed out of their nests further west by the advancing Wyvern Kings, Meselle and her flock have established themselves in an abandoned Kuzhuk outpost in the western range of mountains called the Belly of the Beast. Woefully underprepared, the adventuring party tasked with eliminating them was destroyed. Three of its members were swiftly murdered and the fourth was taken to the outpost for the harpies' extended enjoyment. Steeproost cannot tolerate this vile presence any longer—the second group of adventurers must not fail.

Quest Hook

While the characters are in Steeproost, they are approached by Sheriff Mona Mèyor. She offers that she has a dangerous task fit for only the most capable adventurers—one for which she is willing to pay very well. She explains that a new flock of harpies has made their presence known just outside the village of Steeproost, led by a particularly vicious harpy calling herself Meselle the Blooddrinker. The harpies have killed at least eight people that they know of and have sent occasional survivors back to the village to spread fear.

The last group of adventurers she sent to deal with the harpies has not returned. She knows the chances are slim, but one or more of them may still be alive. She offers the characters 100 gp each if they can eliminate the harpies, and her eternal gratitude if they happen to find and rescue any surviving adventurers. She further explains that Meselle and her flock are known to be roosting in an abandoned Kuzhuk outpost high in the Belly of the Beast mountain range.

The party is told to head east out of Steeproost using Mercenary's Road, then break north when they see Ram's Head Rock towards the mountains. She advises that the party must scale the mountains to reach the outpost, and should acquire climbing gear if they do not possess it already. Characters can procure climbing equipment such as rope and pitons from The Sad Bear general goods store in Steeproost. The Sad Bear also has two climber's kits available for sale at 40 gp per kit (prices are higher in Steeproost due to its remote location).

Setting Off

Ram's Head Rock is approximately ten miles east along Mercenary's Road from the village of Steeproost; travel on foot takes just over two hours. When the characters come within sight of the rock, read the following aloud:

A large boulder, over six feet tall and seven feet wide, rests just a dozen feet from the north side of the dirt road. Its shape vaguely resembles a ram's head, horns curling backwards tightly over its skull. Beyond the boulder, a much narrower, rocky path can be seen gently sloping upwards into the mountains beyond.

The path into the Belly of the Beast mountains is less forgiving than Mercenary's Road—the elevation changes sharply at points and loose rubble underfoot can make traction difficult at times. Sharp cliff faces line the path on both sides.

Encounter: Harpy Ambush. After about twenty minutes of northward travel, the party approaches a 10-foot-deep fissure running vertically along the mountain path. The mountain path itself is flanked by steep, mountainous cliffs on both sides. There are four **harpies** loyal to Meselle in the area, waiting to set a trap for the adventurers. Two harpies are perched 40 feet high atop the east cliffs, and two more harpies are perched 40 feet high atop the west cliffs. When the adventurers come within 30 feet of the fissure, the harpies attempt to surprise the characters with their Luring Song ability to lead the characters into the fissure. They then swoop down and attack, hoping to pile onto anyone that fell into the pit. Otherwise, they attempt to pick off vulnerable characters first. The harpies are bloodthirsty, though once there are only two harpies remaining, they attempt to flee if they have been reduced to half their hit points or lower.

Treasure: Fissure. Characters looking into the fissure can see humanoid remains in various states of decay; some entirely skeletal, others still full of rotting flesh. Characters who climb down into the fissure and make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check find that the bodies have been almost entirely picked clean of items, save for a ring still worn by one of the corpses—a *ring of animal influence*.

A Grisly Scene

After the ambush at the fissure, the party has another thirty minutes of travel along the mountain path until they reach the area of the harpies' lair. When they do, read aloud the following:

Around the corner of a narrow bend in the path, a grisly scene comes into view: the headless torso of a humanoid corpse has been impaled on a stake in the



Griffon Outpost

1 square = 5 feet



ground, and its entrails have been separated and hung from the stake and surrounding rock in long lines of viscera. In front of the impalement, various other decaying body parts have been arranged in an imprecise fractal pattern on the ground. Some two hundred feet in the stone above, a small cave mouth can be seen in the cliff face atop a ledge.

Courtesy of Meselle and her flock, the remains have been arranged at the base of their new lair in a display of power and sadistic and artistic expression. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine that the victims have been dead for a matter of days. It is unclear if dismemberment took place pre- or post-mortem.

Encounter: Scaling the Cliff Face. The party will have to scale the cliff face to reach the lair of Meselle and her flock. Climbing the cliff is not particularly difficult; it slopes gradually, with ledges of varying widths every few

dozen feet. Climbing to the harpy lair nestled within the cliff face requires three successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) checks. Failing a check by 5 or more causes the character to lose their grip and fall 40 feet to the ground or a ledge on the cliff face below them, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. Characters with a specialized climber's kit make these checks with advantage and cannot fall a distance greater than 25 feet from where they anchored themselves.

When the party reaches the ledge where the lair is located, read the following aloud:

Twenty feet away, a narrow cave mouth, five feet wide, extends into darkness within the cliff face. Bones, sun-bleached and picked dry, litter the ground outside the cave.

Griffon Outpost

The cave in the mountains is a former griffon rider outpost built by the Khuzuks. It was originally used as a secret rally point for raids in the valley before it was abandoned when the Khuzuks moved on to new territories.

General Features

Unless otherwise stated, its features are described as follows:

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. Ceilings and hallways are built from limestone and are 8 feet high. Like the ceilings, floors and walls are built from the same limestone carved from the surrounding mountain.

Doors. The wooden doors are rotting and beginning to separate from their hinges. They have AC 14 and 16 hit points. They are all unlocked.

Light. Dim light from the exterior sunlight filters in through to **area 1**. The other areas of the outpost are well-lit by wall-mounted torches.

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Griffon Rider Outpost.

1. Entry Cavern

The cave mouth narrows into a cramped passageway that extends for 10 feet before opening into a larger, natural cavern, 10 feet wide and 25 feet long. Scraps of wood, metal, and old bones litter the ground. The cavern transitions into a worked stone hallway that extends north. Near the north end of the cavern, two humanoid figures are hunched over a form on the ground.

Encounter: Giant Vultures. Two **giant vultures** are here, feasting on the carcass of one of the members of the original adventuring party. The vultures are defensive of their meal and attack immediately; though each vulture attempts to flee through the outpost entrance if reduced to half its hit points or fewer.

Carcass. The carcass belongs to a member of the original adventuring party, but it has been so consumed that only scraps of clothing and a partially intact skeleton stripped of most of its flesh remain.

2. Dust Mephits

This chamber is filled with six dusty wool sleeping bags. An empty fire pit is centered on the ground beneath a natural vent in the ceiling of the cavern. Bones and bits of dried viscera litter the room. A banner depicting a human griffon rider, faded and torn, hangs from a nail.

Encounter: Dust Mephits. Four **dust mephits** have been drawn to the outpost by the pain and death the harpies create. The dust mephits lurk in this chamber, hiding themselves in the sleeping bags. They try to cast *sleep* from the cover of their sleeping bags and then attack the characters. The mephits flee towards the outpost entrance once reduced by half their numbers.

3. Desecrated Shrine

A two-foot-tall, headless stone statue of a half-bird, half-humanoid figure is mounted on a plinth in this small alcove. The statue has been draped with entrails and is streaked with old blood.

Shrine to Vokdite. The shrine was originally built by the Khuzuks and depicts Vokdite, God of Winds and Fury. It has been defaced by the harpies. A character with a passive Perception of 12 or higher notices the head of the statue on the ground in the corner of the alcove. Removing the entrails from the statue or repairing it with *mending* grants the party the blessing of Vokdite. A strong breeze momentarily passes through the hallway, and each character is granted the benefits of the *bless* spell for one hour.

4. Meselle the Blood Drinker

Unless Meselle and the occupants of this room have already been alerted, characters approaching this room can hear shrieking laughter and sobbing pleading coming from beyond a closed door. Inside, broken crates and barrels are stacked against the walls. A rotting, circular wooden table is pushed up against the southeast corner of the room, beneath which are six fist-sized speckled eggs. Chairs lie broken and scattered across the floor, along with more bones and viscera. A half-clothed man is manacled to the west wall, his figure beaten and broken.

Encounter: Meselle the Blooddrinker. Meselle the Blooddrinker and two other **harpies** are in this room, gleefully torturing Filgus Comstock (NG human **bandit captain**), the last surviving member of the original adventuring party. Meselle and the other harpies immediately attack intruders, fighting viciously to the death. Meselle is a vicious matriarch, with hardened, leathery skin and a face decorated with the blood of her victims. She uses **harpy** statistics, with the following modifications:

- Her AC is 13.
- Her claws deal an additional 2 (1d4) slashing damage.
- She wields a serrated knife instead of a club, dealing 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage on a hit.

Treasure: Manacle Key. The key to the manacles hangs on a nail in the west wall of the room.

Filgus Comstock. Filgus is in bad shape and requires at least 5 points of healing or a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check before he can be stabilized enough to safely move. He wearily thanks the party for his rescue but is noticeably shaken by the death of his adventuring companions. He explains to the party that the harpies told him they would keep him alive for weeks if necessary, so that they could eventually feed pieces of him to their young when they hatched.

Concluding the Quest

If Filgus has been given medical attention by the party, he requires some assistance to make his way back down the cliff face. Going down is a bit easier than going up, and the party may descend the mountain and return to the village without issue. Filgus accompanies the characters back to Steeproost so that he may take time to fully recover from his experience.

Once Filgus recovers, he shares that the harpies told stories late at night of the Wyvern Kings. In one story, they mentioned that they managed to take down one of the Wyvern Kings along the Steeproost Trail west of the town. Although the Wyvern King got away, they managed to remove its helmet. That's all Filgus heard. The Wyvern King's downed wyvern and its helmet are detailed in the adventure "Cattle Rustlin' Country".

Ogre Baby's Rattle

This follow-up quest is optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. The adventurers must trace a missing package—a *mining boomstick*—to a fort overrun by ogres and retrieve said package. Unfortunately, an ogre baby has taken to using this boomstick as a rattle.

Background

Valarn Silvervein, an elven mining engineer, has ordered some specialist equipment via the Broken Crossbow tavern's owner, Vows at Sunrise. The exact contents of this order are a secret, but they're both very valuable and very dangerous. Vows is well-connected with the black market of the Vaskil Valley; using her connections in the town of Imfe Caan Asaari, she was able to fast-track this order. Unfortunately, it was due yesterday and hasn't shown up.

Quest Hooks

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in the quest.

Missing Mother. Alf and Tam's mother, Dana Baltor, a **gunmage** (see Appendix D), was supposed to return after escorting a merchant's caravan from Imfe Caan Asaari. They last saw her talking to the devilkin at the Broken Crossbow before she set off.

Strange Schematics. The party stumbles across some torn and mud-splattered designs amongst the wreckage of a cart, as well as an invoice for "Vows at Sunrise, Proprietor of the Broken Crossbow". It looks like some sort of large wand, named a *mining boomstick*.

Expedited Delivery. Vows at Sunrise is willing to pay good coin—500 gp—for the contents of the delivery. She does not care how it's done; she just wants it delivered and soon! She will give a 100 gp bonus if it is returned within the day.

Locating the Package

The party must find the ruined cart and then follow the tracks to Obadyr Manor. The ruined cart is about an hour's travel from Steeproost. Here's a few ways to get the party on the right track:

- Travelers arriving in Steeproost report signs of a skirmish down in the valley. There's a wrecked cart and large footprints leading off into the woods.
- Vows at Sunrise tells the party to follow the road down to the Chibougue Track and then follow it all the way to Asaari if necessary. They'll surely bump into the caravan then.
- The party can stumble across the wreckage as they travel through the valley.

Tracks. The tracks in the muddy ground are deep and easy to follow. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the footprints as belonging to ogres. A result of 16 or higher spots smaller, clawed footprints belonging to goblins.

After around an hour, the tracks lead to an old, cobbled path bordered by *goodberry* bushes (as revealed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check). It is too late in the season for goodberries. A DC 14 Intelligence (History) check recalls that Obadyr Manor, home to lady Obadyr, is famous for its *aged goodberry wine* (see Appendix C).

Obadyr Manor

The road to the manor approaches from the south, but paths through the surrounding forest allow it to be accessed from all sides. It is a large stone structure with a single tower in the southeast corner affording a view of the surrounding canopy. A cluster of wooden buildings straddles the road leading into the manor, which crosses a bridge over a moat. The 10-foot-deep moat extends all around the manor and is difficult terrain.

It's obvious a battle has recently taken place. Bodies, mostly humans, elves, and half-elves, are strewn amongst the wooden buildings. A single ogre lies face down in the mud, a shortsword wedged underneath a shoulder blade. A plume of smoke rises from somewhere on the manor's grounds.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the manor has the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings of the manor are around 15 feet high and made of arched stonework.

Walls. The 1-foot-thick walls are made of stone.

Floors. The floor varies between wood and stone; consult the map for details.

Doors. The doors are wooden (AC 15, 10 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage). If they are locked, a DC 12 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools is required to unlock them.

The following locations are keyed to the map of the manor.

1 - Stables

A wooden building large enough to stable half a dozen beasts stands to the east. The doors to north and south stand slightly ajar, the sickly-sweet smell of manure wafting on the wind.

Voices. Approaching from the south, the natter of many voices can be heard with a successful DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) check. The goblins are distracted eating a horse, giving the players advantage on any Stealth checks.

Encounter: Goblins. Six **goblins** feast on a dead, eviscerated horse. Their weapons are close at hand, and they will attack if they spot the party. When two or more goblins are slain, they try to retreat towards their allies in **area 4**.

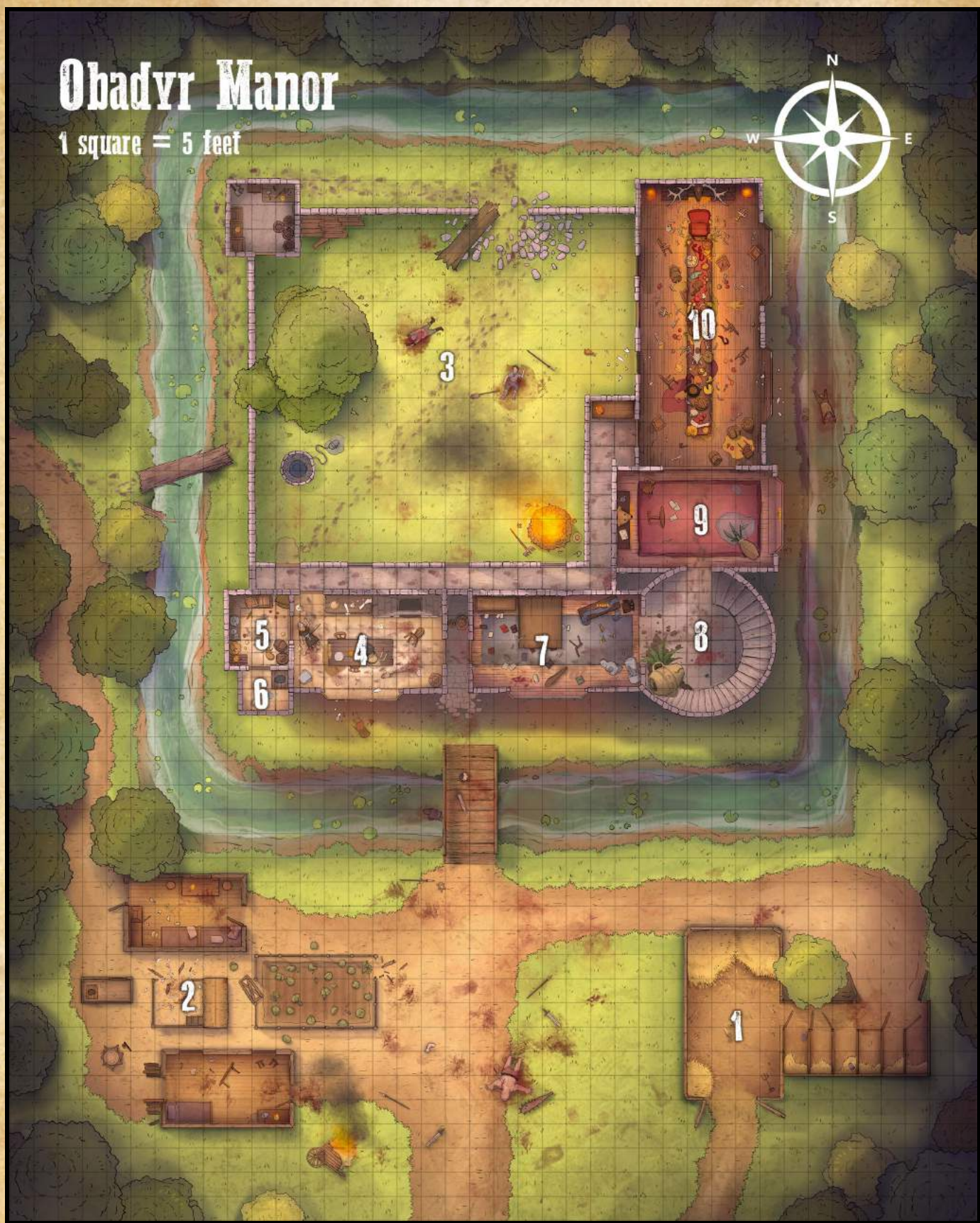
2 - Servant's Houses

This small group of buildings consists of two hovels, a chicken coop, a small cabbage patch, and an outhouse. There are signs of a struggle: fences and doors are broken, chicken feathers cover the coop, and the ground is stained with blood.

Treasure: Bed. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a *potion of healing* hidden under the mattress of the southern hovel.

Obadyr Manor

1 square = 5 feet



3 - Courtyard and Tower

In addition to the doors on the south and east side of this courtyard, a tree trunk appears to have been used as a battering ram to break down the northern wall. A pile of leaves smolders in the southeast corner, releasing a thick plume of smoke. A 20-foot-deep well stands in the southwest corner, with a large, ancient oak to its north. Two blood-soaked corpses—farmhands by their garb—lie still in the courtyard's center.

Encounter: Megamoo. A **megamoo** (see Appendix D), once the source of the manor's milk, is now garbed with trinkets of ogrish origin; they seem to have adopted it. If any harm is dealt to the megamoo, the **ogres in area 10** are alerted by its mooing and burst into the courtyard. If attacked, the megamoo tries to run away once it has fewer than 30 hp remaining.

Treasure: Tower. The door to the tower is locked. Within is a small room cluttered with winemaking equipment and several kegs of goodberry wine. On a high shelf is a single bottle of the good stuff—*aged goodberry wine* (see Appendix C).

The room is so precariously cluttered that anyone attempting to search in this room must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a failure, they set a cascade of tools tumbling to the floor and the ogres in **area 10** burst into the courtyard looking for trouble.

Neighbors. The ogres in the dining room (**area 10**) are distracted by their feast. So long as the players don't draw attention to themselves, the ogres remain unaware of their presence.

4 - Kitchen

A large table dominates the center of this busy room. A stone oven stands in the northeast corner, and a smashed window looks across the moat to the south. Three doors lead out from the room to north, east, and west. An elderly woman has been gutted and lies slumped by the table. The floor is slick with blood, presumably from her corpse.

Encounter: Goblins. One tempestuous **hobgoblin** and his entourage of four **goblins** feast upon the haunch of a horse. As soon as the hobgoblin is injured or a goblin is slain, the hobgoblin Disengages and runs to **area 7** to alert the ogre there. If any goblins escaped from the stables (**area 1**), they are in this room, and all the attackers hide and prepare attacks against the first character to enter the room.

Hazard: Blood. The slick floor of the room is difficult terrain. Any creature that takes the Dash action in the room must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or immediately fall prone.

Pamphlet. One of the goblins carries a crumpled piece of paper in its trousers. The paper is written in Orcish and reads, "Wanted: Mercenaries to Help with Trouble West of the Vaskil River. Will pay 50 gp per month per head, and triple if you have a flying mount. Plus, you get to keep any loot you find. If interested, meet at Rossgough Crag at sundown Thinir Suruk 2." Thinir Suruk 2 refers to a date on the Omerian calendar. The event happened nearly three months ago. The back of the letter is stamped with a skull being overtaken by a wave. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that it's The Crushing Wave, the banner used by the Odzedoz orcs. The Odzedoz orcs and their connection to the greater mystery at

the center of this adventure are detailed further in Chapter 3 of this module.

Window. Any creature attempting to pass through the window must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or take 3 (1d6) slashing damage from the broken glass.

5 - Pantry

A small, covered candle dimly lights this windowless room, which is crowded with shelves and storage containers. The fragrance of dried herbs and fresh blood from the room beyond perfumes the air. This larder looks to have been well stocked and hurriedly raided. The crates and sacks that line the room are all torn and broken open. Flour coats the floor and fills the room with a dusty haze.

Hazard: Flour. If a candle's housing is smashed, or any spell or magical effect that deals fire or lightning damage is cast from, through, or into this room, the flour in the air ignites. Each creature in the room must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

6 - Bathroom

The door to this room is barred shut from the inside. The vent high up in the room's wall does little to remove the smell of the latrine, nor shed any light.

Encounter: Vaquero. Dana Baltor, a feisty Anorian **gunmage** (see Appendix D) tasked with escorting the ambushed caravan, hides in the latrine's toilet. She prepares her pistol against the first creature to investigate the latrine. She immediately apologizes when she realizes that creature is not a goblin.

If the party tries to engage in conversation, Dana responds. She can be persuaded to accept that they're here to help on a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Realizing her job is on the line, she offers to help the party find the *mining boomstick* (see Appendix C).

7 - Reading Room

Books are sprawled across the floor of this large room. An ogre snores on a collapsed bookcase, its club a few feet away from its limp hand.

Encounter: Ogre. A character can attempt to sneak past the sleeping **ogre**. If awakened, it will look for its club, resorting to its fists if it can't find it. Once reduced to below half hp, it will Dash to the dining hall (**area 10**) to alert its chums.

Treasure: Bookcase. On a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a waxed tube containing a *spell scroll of stinking cloud* is found on top of a bookcase.

8 - Stairwell

A staircase rings three-quarters of this circular room, leading to a floor above. A variety of cloaks hang underneath the stairs along with crates of empty bottles and labels. A large, cracked porcelain plant pot obstructs the way up the stairs. When the party first enters the stairwell, an explosive 'boom' is heard from above.

Encounter: Marton Obadyr. Marton (noncombatant) is a precocious seven-year-old boy. He is hiding behind the cloaks, but can be spotted on a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check. He will follow the party if they offer to rescue him.



Treasure: Secret Store. Behind the secret door in the northwest of the room is a treasure room. Marton can open the door to this room. Otherwise, a creature can detect the secret door with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and the door can be opened with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. In here, mounted on the wall, is a *demented cultist's scimitar* (see Appendix C), as well as three locked chests, each containing 400 gp.

Trap: Chests. The chests are locked and trapped. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to perceive a poison needle trap on each chest. The only way to disarm the trap is to unlock the chest. The chests can be unlocked with their keys or with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools. On a failed check, a needle darts out dealing 7 (2d6) poison damage. The chest's keys can be found on the Obadyr corpses in **area 10**.

Obstacle: Plant Pot. The thick porcelain of the pot is cracked but intact. A creature that clammers over the pot must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity check. On a failure it falls over and smashes loudly, alerting the ogres in **area 10** who come to investigate.

9 - Lounge

Once a well-furnished room, the furniture is now wrecked, the windows are smashed, and the ambience is ruined. A magical fireplace in the east wall sheds warm, bright light over the interior of the lounge. A brown bear's head is mounted over the fireplace, its eyes seeming to follow the party around the room.

Talking Heads. The bear's head is enchanted to be a master conversationalist. If the party goes to open the door to the north, or if the party talks about the head, it talks back to them. It introduces itself as "Grufflg" and tells them about how the Obadyrs were enjoying a nice day when suddenly these brutes came in, smashed the place up, and ate them! It asks them to find Marton Obadyr, their son.

10 - Dining Room

A 40-foot-long dining table is befouled with an array of half-chewed humanoid limbs. A large fireplace roars with flames at the northern end, while a cool draft blows in through the broken windows on either side. The sweet scent of goodberry wine and malty aroma of ale mingles with the stomach-

churning stench of the three ogre-like beings gorging themselves on the spread before them.

Encounter: Ogres. One avaricious **ogre** and two **hobgoblins** are arranged at the northern end of the table, near the fire. They charge the intruders on sight. The ogre will never retreat. However, if it is slain, the hobgoblins will run away when they have been reduced to half their hit points or fewer.

Treasure: Obadyr Corpses. A ring of keys (for the front door and chests in **area 8's** secret store can be found in the pocket of an ornate coat that still covers what's left of a torso. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a diamond signet ring on a severed hand. The ring is worth 310 gp in total. The ring's diamonds, if removed, are worth 300 gp.

11 - Tower Room

A large glowing crystal in the center of this room lights the beds scattered around its periphery. A step-ladder leads up to a hatch to the roof. The sound of rattling can be heard from one such bed in which lies a huge baby, shaking what looks like an oversized *wand of fireballs*.

Encounter: Ogre Baby. If the **ogre baby** (see Appendix D) is attacked, it screams, alerting all ogres and hobgoblins in the manor, who arrive three rounds later. On its turn, the ogre baby shakes the rattle, firing thunderbolts at each creature in the room.

The players can attempt to take the *mining boomstick* (see Appendix C) from the baby in a variety of ways. Three successes of the same check are required to take the boomstick from the baby. If the party fails any three checks in a row, the baby begins crying (see above).

- Three successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) checks pry the *mining boomstick* from the baby's grasp.
- Three successful DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks to tickle the baby cause it to drop the *mining boomstick*.
- Three successful DC 13 Charisma (Performance) checks encourage the baby to throw the *mining boomstick*.
- Three successful DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks lull the baby to sleep.

Concluding the Quest

Here are some events that could take place after the quest concludes:

- Vows at Sunrise pays the party 500 gp, plus a bonus 100 gp if it is returned the same day the players agree to the task.
- The schematics can be copied and filled out if the *mining boomstick* is studied for 8 hours, and a character succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Arcana) check.
- If Dana is returned to her sons, she offers her services as a guide should the party need.
- If Dana and Marton are rescued, Dana takes pity on Marton and brings him to live with her and her sons.
- Vows at Sunrise says the *mining boomstick* now needs to be delivered to Valarn Silvervein at the Roe'dgopian Ruins, a couple of days from here. See the additional quest *War at the Werelynx's Warren* in Chapter 2 for more details.

Silent Knight

This starter quest is optimized for four characters of 1st level. The characters are sent to a farm south of Steeproost to learn why three Wyvern Kings just landed there.

Background

The Black Rose Clan is a criminal organization that operates in The Summer Land, primarily the city of Greatwell. Recently, they were hired by a family of wealthy, human nobles from Imfe Caan Asaari to set a trap for the Wyvern Kings. Their bait? The daughter of one of the nobles, Flora Stamide-Tomydon. Supposedly, the Wyvern Kings have been capturing the daughters of wealthy nobles all across Vaskil Valley. Led by a clever Black Rose heavy named Sireen el-Halaby, The Black Rose Clan set the girl up in an abandoned barn south of Vaskil Valley.

The trap worked, too—three Wyvern Kings tracked the girl to the farmhouse and landed on the property. Their presence didn't go unnoticed by the locals, though. Just next door, farmer Boyton Townby witnessed the Wyvern Kings' descent. Although Townby didn't see the Black Rose Clan's trap, the Wyvern Kings alone were enough to cause panic. Immediately, Townby rushed to Steeproost to grab the sheriff.

Quest Hook

The characters are in or around the town of Steeproost when they are nearly bowled over by Townby, a short human farmer (**commoner**) with too much hair on his arms and not nearly enough on his head. He's already out of breath and can barely get his words out:

"Wy... wy... wy..." says the balding farmer, trying to catch his breath. Finally, he spits it out, "Wyvern Kings!" He points a stubby finger to the south.

"I just saw three Wyvern Kings land at the ol' Vonker Farm. Place has been abandoned for years. I've got no idea what they're doing there. But you gotta do something!"

If the characters aren't yet familiar with the Wyvern Kings, share some of the backstory on how the Wyvern Kings' presence has disrupted the way of life for many of the folks in Vaskil Valley. Likely, the characters will recognize that approaching three wyvern-mounted knights directly is suicide. Townby assures the party that if they go carefully and scope it out and keep an eye on the Wyvern Kings, he'll fetch the Sheriff in the meantime. If the characters agree, he tells them to head down the small dirt path that leads south to his farm. Then, cross west over his pasture into the old Vonker farm.

Vonker Farm

From the looks of it, Vonker Farm hasn't been occupied

in years. The fields are overgrown, and the three large buildings on the properties all have broken windows and holes in their roofs. A thick copse of trees separates the Vonker and Townby farms. The trees and undergrowth are dense enough that the characters can easily hide while watching the fields.

Once they are in view of the Vonker property, read the following:

Three winged lizards the size of horses stand idly in a wildly overgrown pumpkin patch roughly 400 feet from you. The beasts all wear black leather saddles and bridles. Their long, scorpion-like tails whip unpredictably in the dull breeze. Just a few hundred feet ahead of them (and 500 feet away from you), a trio of heavily-armored humanoids carefully approach a neglected barn. Each warrior wields a wicked-looking trident. These must be the so-called Wyvern Kings.

Ask the characters what they want to do while they watch the **Wyvern Kings** (see Appendix D) approach the barn. Once the characters decide on their course of action, surprise them with this bit:

Just before you're able to put your plan into action, the doors to the barn fling open, catching the three Wyvern Kings by surprise. Six figures clad head-to-toe in all black charge the Wyvern Kings. Right away, one of the Kings falls to the ground, the victim of two well-placed sword strikes. The other two try to reclaim their ally, but it's easy to see that they're grossly outnumbered.

The characters can try to reach the battle and join in. However, the two standing Wyvern Kings recognize that they've been duped. Both retreat to their **wyverns** and take to the skies. The third riderless wyvern follows them. As they retreat, three of the six thugs hop on **giant vultures** and follow them. They all head west toward the mountains.

Black Rose Clan

The characters just witnessed members of the Black Rose Clan surprise the Wyvern Kings. The three remaining Black Rose Clan members are human **thugs**. They're dressed in all black to conceal their appearance. Their leader, Sireen el-Halaby, emerges from the barn, also masked. Sireen is a lawful evil Anorian elf **veteran**. Unless the characters happen to unmask them, none of them have any identifying marks or insignias.

The three thugs quickly bind the Wyvern King and pull it toward the barn. They hope to load it onto a horse-drawn wagon they've hidden inside.

Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception)

score of 13 or better notices that there is an extraordinarily attractive young noble woman standing in the barn, too. She wears a bright pink dress covered in embroidered lilies. A member of the Black Rose Clan (another human **thug**) asks her if she's okay, to which she nods yes. The girl's name is Flora Stamide-Tomydon, a Mydon Princess. If the characters are native to Vaskil Valley, they recognize her on a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check. Otherwise, they can describe the girl to a local to find out she is (Prince Marelis-Tomydon will know who she is right away).

The four thugs and Sireen work fast to secure the Wyvern King's body. If the characters approach, three of Black Rose thugs place themselves between the character and the Wyvern King. Meanwhile, Sireen and the fourth thug work to load its body onto their cart.

If the characters try to fight the thugs, Sireen barks orders, "No casualties. Last thing we need is a trail of dead heroes that points to us."

The thugs grab their maces and fight to cause nonlethal damage. During the fray, Sireen and the other thug escape with Flora on the wagon. The wagon moves at a rate of 120 feet per turn.

The thugs fight until they knock the characters unconscious. Once the wagon's had enough time to get away, they all flee in opposite directions.

It's possible that the characters will find a way to beat the three thugs and reach the cart. If they do, Sireen grabs her crossbow and attacks with intent to wound but not kill. She's okay with a few unconscious adventurers at the crime scene, but she still doesn't want to get caught.

Concluding the Quest

Inevitably, Sheriff Mèyor learns about the ruckus at Vonker Farm. She will thoroughly question the characters about what happened:

- "What were the Wyvern Kings doing there?"
- "Who were the people that attacked the Wyvern Kings?"
- "What happened to the body of the fallen Wyvern King?"

And so on. Recognizing that the characters might be useful, Mèyor asks them to remain in Steeproost while she and Prince Spiro try to unravel the mystery. Later in the adventure, the characters learn the location of the Wyvern Kings' body and the reason why it was captured by the Black Rose Clan. See Chapter 2 for details.

Defeating the Thugs

While it's preferred that Sireen and the thugs escape with Flora and the Wyvern King's body, clever characters might still take them out, save Flora, and recover the body. The Wyvern King's armor is impossible to remove without using magic. The characters will need to deliver it to the nearest magic user, likely someone in Steeproost. Sheriff Mèyor and Prince Spiro offer to keep the body protected in the Prince's office by securing it in the jail. Spiro then sends a messenger to Princess Elina in Imfe Caan Asaari. The next night, someone sets the jailhouse on fire. Once the fire's extinguished, the body of the Wyvern King is gone.

If the characters capture any of the Black Rose members, none of them can be coaxed to talk unless forced to by magic. None of the thugs have any clue who hired them or why. All they knew was that they were supposed to use the girl, Flora Stamide-Tomydon as bait for the Wyvern Kings. They were only supposed to learn where the Wyvern Kings are hiding. When the Wyvern King fell, Sireen, their leader, changed the plan. None of them know why she was interested in the body. The thugs are all easily identified as members of Black Rose Clan thanks to the tattoos of black roses on their chests.

Sireen el-Halaby similarly won't talk unless forced to by magic. She only knows that they were hired to use the girl, Flora, as bait to find the Wyvern Kings' lair. They were hired through a third-party to keep their employer secret. However, she suspects that they were hired by one or more of the noble families of Imfe Caan Asaari. With that hunch, she hoped to capture the downed Wyvern King's body to learn why they were paid as well as they were for the job. "Trust me, with as much as they paid us for this gig, I'm willing to bet that body would be worth even more to them."

Flora knows very little about why she was used as bait for the Wyvern Kings. However, she believes it has something to do with the recent disappearance of six of her best friends. Two of them were supposedly abducted, while the other four supposedly went on safari to Odonburg. She was asked by her mother and father, Lambros and Lydia, to help the Black Rose Clan locate the Wyvern Kings' hideout. Eventually, Prince Spiro tasks a couple of militia members to escort the young girl back to her home in Imfe Caan Asaari. Although both he and Mèyor believe the entire situation is strange, he asks that the characters wait a bit before they follow up on any leads, warning that angering her family could harm Steeproost's overall wellbeing. Still, they share that they're very interested in learning more about the whole situation.



Strange Lights

This follow-up quest is designed for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Will-o'-wisps are luring people to their deaths at the mandibles of ankhegs in an old abandoned mine. The characters get involved when they notice the lights, or they're sent to investigate by one of Steeproost's quest-givers.

Background

The old Dustrock Mine used to be a profitable endeavor nestled in the hills just outside of Steeproost. A few years back, ankhegs burrowed up from deep underground and the mine had to be abandoned. Now, the ankhegs have built a nest within the twisting caves and passageways. Most folks stayed clear of the old mine and all was well. Recently, however, a pair of nasty and nefarious will-o'-wisps have been luring folks to their deaths in the belly of the mine. They use their unearthly glow to draw people in and then relish the carnage as the ankhegs drag them inside to be turned into dinner. At first it was just random travelers, but now Gregor Talleson, a member of the militia, has disappeared, and Sheriff Mèyor is worried. They've put out a reward of 100 gp for anyone who can bring back the missing man, dead or alive.

Quest Hooks

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in the quest.

Lights on the Horizon. While traveling around Steeproost, the characters notice the strange lights on the horizon and decide to investigate.

Just Another Job. Sheriff Mèyor (or possibly Vows at Sunrise) asks the characters to investigate the lights. One of Mèyor's close friends, a militia member named Gregor Talleson, vanished in the area.

Leaving Town

As the characters go to leave town, they're stopped by an Anorian **gunmage** (see Appendix D) named Whip. If the characters participated in the starter quest, "Fist Fights with Werelynxes", they may already recognize him. He tells the characters it's not safe to travel outside at night. Folks have been going missing. If pressed, he knows the following:

- Ankhegs have been a problem recently. They burst up from the ground and devour whatever they can get their grubby little mandibles on.
- The lights appeared a few weeks ago. They only show up at night and no one's been able to figure out the source.
- One of the town militia, a man named Gregor Talleson, went missing last night. Search parties went looking for him this morning but couldn't find anything. He has a distinct shield with a lion emblazoned on it; that's how the characters can recognize him.
- There are lights out on the horizon. They show up at night and vanish in the morning. Gregor was headed out to investigate them before his disappearance.

Travel Encounter: Ankheg

After the characters have traveled for a bit, read the following:

Turning off the main road, a dirt path leads further into the wilderness. In the distance, lights can be seen dancing on the horizon.

As the characters make their way down the dirt path, the surrounding landscape is noticeably barren and quiet. Suddenly, the ground shakes and rumbles, and a creature explodes out from beneath the surface.

Encounter: Ankheg. A lone **ankheg** attacks the characters. It's probably outmatched, but it's hungry, so it fights savagely. If it reaches 13 hit points or fewer, it flees off into the wilderness.

Travel Encounter: Wild Dogs

As the characters continue following the old dirt path further away from the main road and town, the terrain slowly transitions into larger and larger hills and brush. As they turn a bend, they find themselves face to face with a pack of wild dogs feeding on the remains of an ankheg's victim.

Encounter: Wild Dogs. There are eight **mastiffs** here. They're feral and hungry. They've been feeding on the remains of the ankheg's victims along the path, but now the characters look like a better meal. They fight until half of them have been downed, and then they flee into the hills.

Travel Encounter: Corpses on the Road

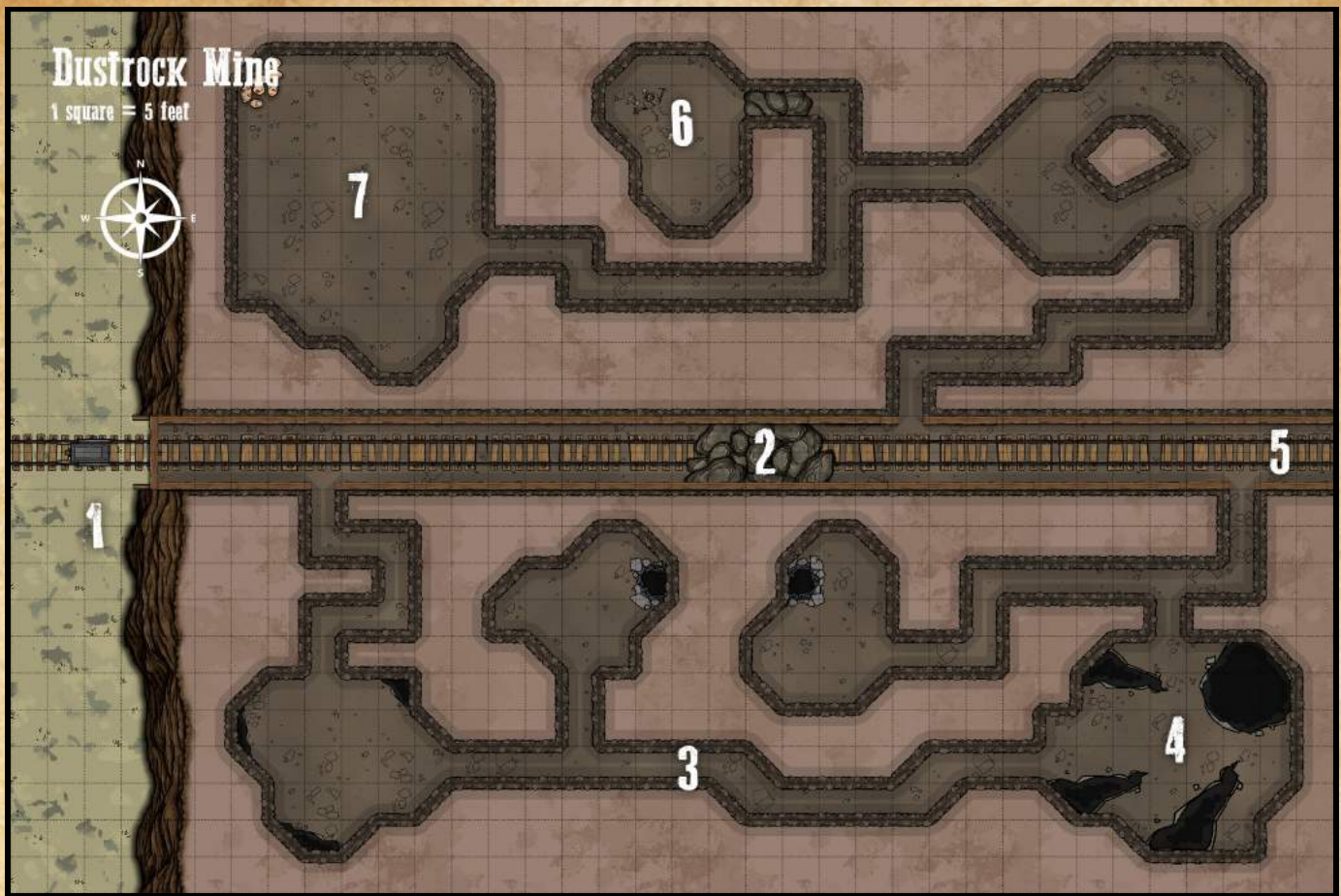
Further along the path, read:

The lights can be seen more clearly now, two phosphorescent orbs floating in front of what appears to be a cave entrance of some kind. Lying on the road ahead, you spot a corpse.

The corpse was actually a victim of the will-o'-wisps. They drained the life from this poor soul when he wouldn't enter the mine. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the man was killed by some kind of magical shock, followed by some sort of life draining ability. The man also has a distinct black rose tattoo on his chest (see Chapter 2 for details on the Black Rose Clan).

Dustrock Mine

The mine is full of dust and cobwebs. Aside from the wisps, ankhegs, and poor souls who are led here, no one really goes out this way anymore.



General Features

Unless specified otherwise, the mine has the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings are 10 feet high.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of packed dirt and the walls are made of dirt and stone.

Lighting. Once inside the mine, there is no light.

Unusual Features. The ankhegs, despite their size, can squeeze through the smaller tighter passageways. They move through them at half speed.

The following locations are keyed to the map of Dustrock Mine.

1. Entrance

The two orbs of light dance in front of you, as if they were beckoning you into the cave ahead.

Encounter: The Trap. The two **will-o'-wisps** are trying to lure the characters into the mine. Just inside in a tunnel on the southern side of the main tunnel is an **ankheg** waiting to strike. If the characters enter the tunnel, the ankheg attacks the closest one. The wisps only attack if the characters try to flee the tunnel. If reduced to 7 hit points or fewer, the wisps turn invisible and flee deeper into the mine to **area 7**. If the characters defeat the ankhegs in **area 7**, the wisps take advantage of their weakened state and attack them.

2. Collapsed Tunnel A.

This large tunnel once led deeper, but a cave-in has since rendered it a dead end.

The rocks here are large and heavy. Gravel and soil fill the remains of a tunnel. It would take a sizable workforce a week or so to clear the rubble and open the passage up once more. The wisps, if they flee, pass right through the rocks using their incorporeal movement to do so.

3. Small Tunnel

Trap: Unstable Roof. This tunnel is only 3 feet high and appears to be rather unstable. Every time someone tries to move through it, roll 1d4. On a roll of a 1, the center three squares of this tunnel collapse, burying the person or persons in those squares. A buried creature is blinded and restrained, has total cover against attacks, and begins to suffocate when it runs out of breath. Only a creature that is not trapped in the tunnel can clear away the collapse, using an action and a successful DC 12 Strength check to open up the 5-foot-deep section of tunnel closest to it. A creature in that space is no longer buried.

4. Burrowing Chamber

Four large holes can be seen in this room. There appear

to be small tunnels leading deeper underground, while one appears to be some kind of rubble-filled pit.

These are the original tunnels through which the ankhegs burrowed into the mine. The three smaller tunnels end about 15 feet down in loose earth, while the large one is about 10 feet deep and full of loose earth and rubble.

Encounter: Ambush. Two **ankhegs** are present in this room, one in the big pit and one in one of the three tunnels (choose at random). They wait for the characters to enter the room before attacking. They fight until reduced to 13 hit points or fewer, then they burrow underground and flee.

5. Collapsed Tunnel B

The tunnel here continues down another 30 feet before it ends in rubble and dirt. It appears the cave-in that caused the previous collapse affected this portion of the main tunnel as well.

The mine beyond this point has completely collapsed. There is no way to dig it out. Treat anything off this edge of the map as inaccessible.

6. Missing Miner

This chamber is sealed off by a pile of rocks and rubble. They can be cleared with eight hours of work by a party of four characters. Inside is the corpse of a long dead miner who was trapped inside when the tunnel collapsed behind him.

Treasure: Pick & Axe. The miner has a small pouch on him with 10 gems worth 15 gp each, as well as his trusty

mining pickaxe and his +1 *handaxe*.

7. Ankheg Lair

This large chamber contains a clutch of massive eggs sitting against the northwest wall. Nestled among them appears to be a corpse of a man with a large shield by his side.

The ankhegs laid their eggs in this chamber and protectively watch over them. The body near them is that of Gregor, the missing militiaman.

Encounter: Ankhegs. Two **ankhegs** are sleeping in this chamber. If they're awoken, they fight to the death to protect their eggs.

If the **will-o'-wisps** retreated here from earlier, they turn visible and attack the weakened characters once the characters defeat the ankhegs. With their source of amusement gone, they fight to the death.

Treasure: Brave Shield. The *Lionheart shield* (see Appendix C) is a magical item that Gregor inherited from his father. It will serve as proof that he fell at the hands of the ankhegs.

Concluding the Quest

With the **will-o'-wisps** dealt with, no one else will be drawn to the Durock Mine anymore. The ankhegs, having either been killed or driven away, will no longer plague this area. If the characters return with the shield to town and bring it to the Sheriff, she'll mourn the loss of her fellow militiaman, but she'll honor their claim to the reward. In addition, she'll insist they keep the shield as Gregor would've wanted someone brave to wield it in his stead (not to mention it's illegal for Anorians to use magic items).



Stonehill Blues

This follow-up quest is designed for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. A basilisk is prowling the ruins outside of town and must be destroyed.

Background

A small group of bandits and ne'er-do-wells had set up their base in some abandoned ruins outside of Steeproost. From there, they'd been raiding passing caravans and causing trouble for the locals. Recently, a giant basilisk dug its way into their underground base and set up a nest. This drove the bandits to the surface. Before long, one of the basilisk's hatchlings made its way to the surface as well, and now the bandits have been forced out again. Hoping to get someone else to deal with the problem, the bandits reported a basilisk sighting to the local militia, posing as concerned citizens. The militia then posted a 100 gp reward for whoever could slay the creature and bring back proof of its demise. The bandits' plan is to let some foolish adventurers deal with the basilisks; then they'll deal with the adventurers.

Quest Hooks

One of the town's quest-givers (see the section on Quest-Givers earlier in this chapter) asks the characters to take care of the local basilisk problem. If it's Mèyor or Prince Spiro who ask the characters to help, they offer the full reward. If it's Vows at Sunrise, she keeps the full reward a secret and offers only 50 gp (she'll keep the rest for herself). Once they agree to help, they tell them to speak with Zekiel Fulsom at the town barracks. He can give them more information about the basilisk.

Steeproost Barracks

When the characters approach the barracks for the first time, read the following:

This large two-story stone building is a bit imposing. A sign outside designates it as the local militia barracks. A lone guard stands outside the main entrance.

The militia stores its weapons and armor in the barracks, from which they plan out patrols and keep the townsfolk safe in case of an attack on Steeproost. There is a job board just outside the main door that holds information on current quests being offered in town.

The guard stationed outside the barracks is Zekiel Fulsom, a male human **veteran** with a deep scar running across his face. Despite the way he looks, he's actually quite pleasant to speak with and is always willing to discuss the comings and goings of town with travelers. If the characters press him regarding the current bounty on the basilisk, he knows the following:

- The creature supposedly moved into the area a few weeks ago.

- It was reported to the militia by a group of hunters who had been camping in that area.
- It's responsible for at least two missing caravans that never arrived in town.
- Basilisks are very dangerous due to their gaze which can turn a man to stone.
- It's supposedly holed up in the Stonehill ruins to the north of town in the forest.

If the characters ask for help from the local militia, Zekiel states that they can't go that far outside of town because it would leave the actual townsfolk vulnerable. With the Wyvern Kings still at large, Steeproost will need all the help it can get.

If the characters wish to negotiate for a higher reward, they can attempt a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If successful, the militia is willing to go as high as 125 gp. If they got this quest from Vows at Sunrise, they might learn here that Vows kept the full value of the reward to herself.

Travel Encounter: Bodies on the Road

After the characters travel along the road for a little bit, read:

As the road turns sharply, the wreck of a caravan wagon comes into view. Bodies, rotten from days exposed to the elements, lie scattered about.

The caravan was attacked a few days ago by the bandits who are getting restless waiting for someone to rid their camp of the basilisks. They recovered their arrows and made sure to cover their tracks so no one would immediately assume people did this, and instead, they'd blame it on the basilisk. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, however, can deduce that the mortal wounds were not caused by teeth or claws, but by man-made weapons.

Encounter: Wild Dogs. As the characters approach, a pack of six **wild dogs** are feasting on the remains of some of the corpses. They use the stat blocks of **mastiffs**. The dogs are starving and fight to the death.

Treasure: Secret Compartment. The wagon is well looted, another sign that the basilisk probably isn't responsible. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, however, locates a hidden compartment in the wagon with 15 gp, a *potion of healing*, and a vial of alchemist's fire.

Travel Encounter: Bandits in the Woods

As the forest gives way to a clearing, four men stand about a makeshift camp.

Encounter: Bandits. These are the two **bandits** and two **thugs** who survived the basilisk's arrival at their camp. They are pretending to be hunters and claim that they were in the ruins seeking shelter from a storm when the basilisk



arrived. It turned some of their friends to stone before they were able to escape to the surface. Once there, they made camp above the ruins for a week or so before a smaller basilisk found its way to the surface and drove them out once more. Now, they're waiting for someone to kill the creatures so they can go and recover their fallen comrades as well as their lost gear.

If the characters were able to deduce that the caravan that they came across was attacked by people, they might be suspicious of the bandit gang. If they press the bandits too far, they may simply decide to attack the characters in order to maintain their cover.

If the characters believe the bandits, then the bandits will be waiting for them when they leave the ruins. If they confirm that the basilisk inside is dead, the bandits will then attack them.

Either way, the bandits fight to the death as they have nowhere else to go and can't risk being exposed.

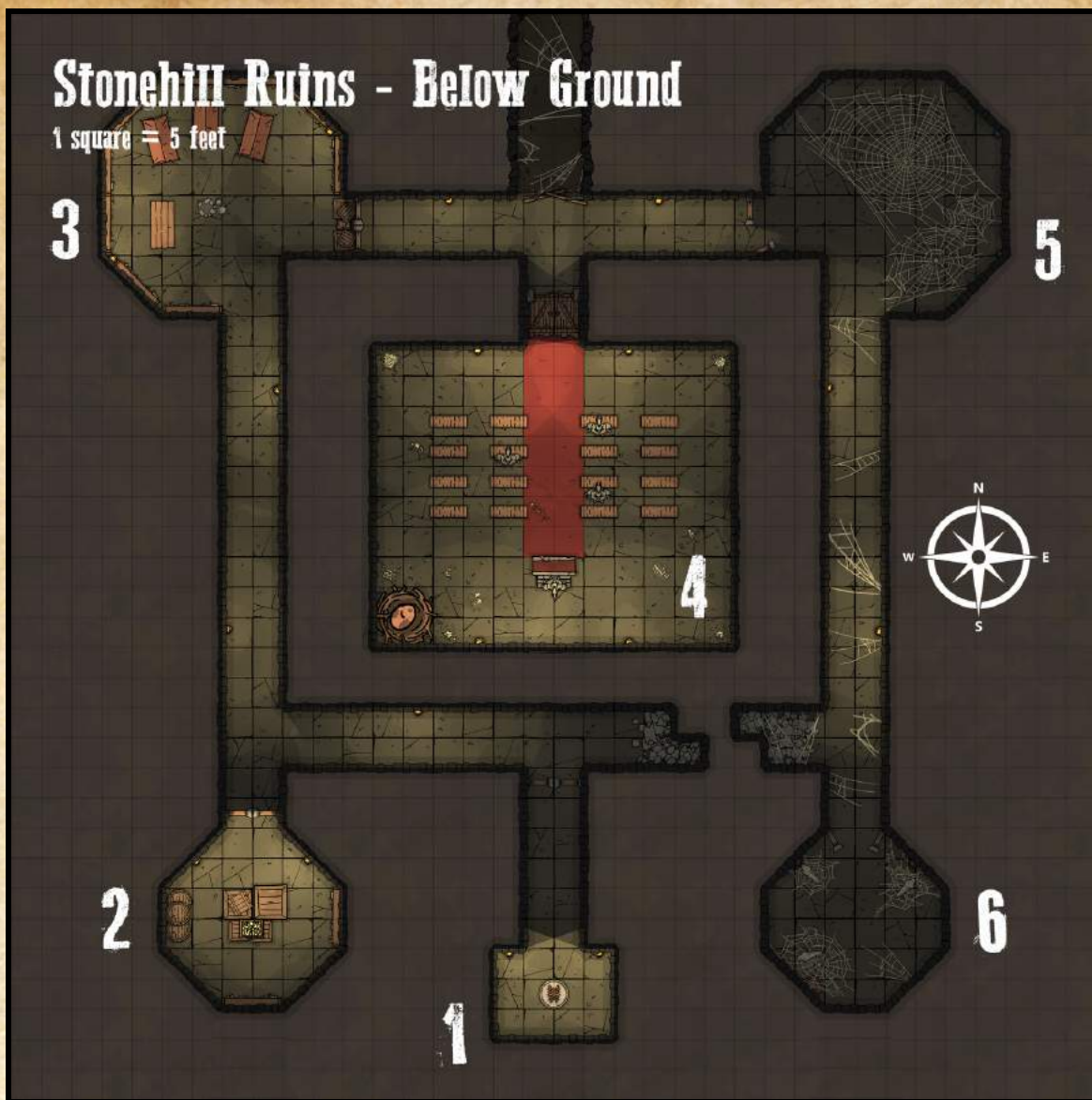
Stonehill Ruins - Above Ground

Once the characters reach Stonehill Ruins, read the following:

The remains of a large fort stand in a copse of trees. Though the roofs collapsed long ago, the 10-foot-high stone walls that form the skeleton of the building stand strong. Scattered about are what appear to be man-sized statues as well as some statues of horses in mid-gallop. A small camp surrounds an old, dried-up fountain.

Encounter: Basilisk. This is where the newly hatched **basilisk** currently resides. It's built a nest of its own in the center of the ruin and is currently pacing about this area. Although basilisks are known to be cowardly, they will fight to the death when near their nests. A monstrosity with animal-like Intelligence, the basilisk does not fight with tactics or skill, it merely tries to eat anything that gets close to it. If it manages to turn a creature to stone, it will then ignore them and attack other targets.

Treasure: Stolen Goods. There is a small chest near the tents at the northern edge of the ruins. It's locked and can be picked with a DC 12 Dexterity check with proficiency in



thieves' tools. Inside is a suit of *mithril scale mail*, 25 gp, 46 sp, 145 cp, and two *potions of healing*.

There is a small hatch near the basilisk's nest. Opening it reveals a ladder that leads down into a subterranean complex. This is the lower level of the ruins. Unlike the buildings above, this level has survived the ravages of time and the effects of mother nature.

Stonehill Ruins - Below Ground

The ruins' lower level is mostly intact, although one hallway has collapsed.

General Features

The entire complex shares the following features unless noted otherwise.

Ceilings. The ceilings are made of moldy stone and rise 10 feet above the floor.

Floors and Walls. The floors are made of cracked tiled stone while the walls are made of cobbled granite.

Doors. The doors are made of thick oak with metal banding.

Lighting. Small sconces line the walls each with a *continual flame* spell cast upon them.

Cobwebs. Cobwebs dominate one half of the complex. Anyone who tries to move through the webbing treats it as difficult terrain. The webs have AC 10; 5 hit points; vulnerability to fire damage; and immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Nature) check realizes these cobwebs are from giant spiders.

1. Entrance

A ladder leads down into a small stone chamber with a set of double doors at the northern end of the attached hallway.

The hatch from above leads to this area. The chamber and hallway appear to be well traveled and footprints can be seen in the dirt and dust on their floors.

2. Storage

This 30-foot octagonal chamber contains two bookshelves, assorted crates of foodstuffs, and a stack of barrels.

The crates contain enough rations to feed two dozen men for a week while the barrels contain potable water.

Treasure: Valuable Book. The bookshelves are mostly empty and devoid of anything of value. The eastern one, however, has an ornate book detailing the history of the region. To the right buyer it's worth 50 gp.

3. Main Camp

Three large tents dominate this space which appears to have once been a library of sorts. Large crates and barrels block a doorway to the east.

Encounter: Stone Skeletons. There are six **skeletons** in this room. They have AC 16 from the functional chain shirts they still wear. They attack mindlessly as soon as someone enters the room.

It takes fifteen minutes to unblock the doorway to the east. Once opened, it reveals a freshly dug passageway to the north and a broken-down set of double doors to the south.

4. Chapel

Rows of wooden benches flank either side of a once majestic carpet leading to an altar at the southern end of the room. In the southwest corner, a massive nest can be seen containing one giant egg. Scattered about the room are numerous humanoid statues, their grimacing faces locked in horror.

Encounter: The Alpha. Once the characters enter the room and inspect the nest, a **basilisk alpha** arrives having finished its monthly hunt on the surface for a meal. It attacks the characters as soon as it sees them. It uses the stat block of a regular **basilisk** with the following changes:

- Its size is Large.
- It has 78 hp.
- The DC of its Petrifying Gaze ability is 14.

The basilisk alpha is a tougher, larger, and more deadly specimen than the characters would have encountered before. It fights to the death to protect its nest just as its smaller kin did.

Treasure: Book of Healing. There is a magical *book of healing* (see Appendix C) on the altar.

Basilisk Egg. Basilisk eggs fetch up to 200 gp each to exotic animal trainers.

5. Northeast Chamber

This room looks as though it hasn't seen light or people in quite some time. Cobwebs hang from the ceiling and cover the majority of the chamber.

Cobwebs. Cobwebs cover this room (see "General Features").

Encounter: Spiders. There are three **giant spiders** in this room. They wait for someone to move into their webs before they attack.

6. Southeast Chamber

This small chamber is heavily covered in cobwebs. Despite this, a small chest can be seen against the southern wall.

Cobwebs. Cobwebs fill this room (see "General Features").

Encounter: Spiders. There are three **giant spiders** in this room. They wait for someone to reach the chest before they attack. The entire room is filled with cobwebs and is considered difficult terrain.

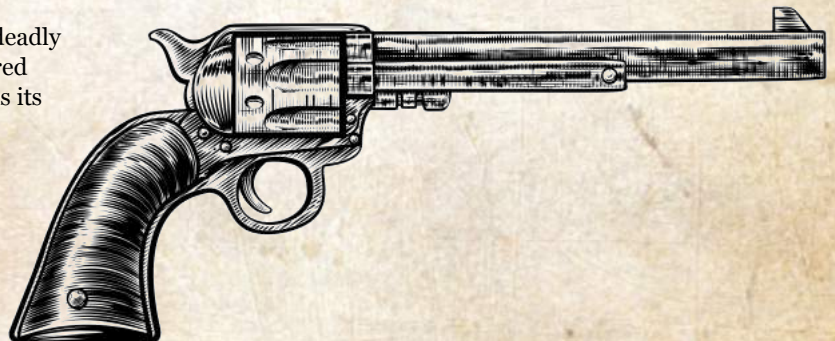
Treasure: Dusty Chest. This chest is locked. It can be picked with a DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It contains 100 gp and three *potions of healing*.

Optional Encounter: Leaving the Ruins

As the characters leave the ruins, they're met by the bandits if they didn't kill them earlier. They'll ask if the basilisks are both dead. If the characters say yes, the bandits will thank them and then attack them in order to keep anyone from finding out about their hideout. As before, they'll fight to the death.

Concluding the Quest

With the basilisks and the bandits dead, the Stonehill ruins will once again lie dormant—at least until some other pesky creatures move in. Sheriff Mona Mèyor and the Steeproost militia will pay the agreed upon reward, plus another 25 gp if the characters mention killing the bandits as well.



Tomb of the Drake

This follow-up quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. A four-armed celebrity bard is in big trouble, and the characters need to save him.

Background

The small but growing village of Steeproost hopes to secure its safety and prosperity in the Vaskil Valley, home to a wide variety of creatures and cultures. Among them are the Brasuga giants—small clans of four-armed, reasonably intelligent giants fond of anecdotes and adventure. Though small in number, their strength is considerable; the village of Steeproost would much rather forge alliances with the Brasugas than become enemies. Recently, an opportunity to forge such an alliance developed: a wandering Brasuga bard, looking for adventure, has gotten himself captured by a group of inaks, the mysterious faction of undead that lurk in the tunnels below the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Though the inaks are often happy to ignore the surface dwellers if left unbothered, they will not hesitate to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves in the form of wandering travelers who have ventured too deep into their territory. Unbeknownst to the surface dwellers, the inaks are forcing the Brasuga to perform for one of their juvenile subterranean drakes after he was overpowered by an inak scouting party, as they believe the drake is soothed by the melody of song. If the Brasuga can be rescued by adventurers on behalf of the village of Steeproost and returned safely to his clan, it would go a long way towards positive diplomatic relations between the two groups.

Quest Hooks

While the characters are in Steeproost, they are approached by Sheriff Mona Mèyor who quickly makes it clear to the adventurers that she is willing to compensate them handsomely for an urgent opportunity that has presented itself. She explains that a well-known Brasuga bard in the region named Argus had been chatting with travelers and getting opinions on his plan to make contact with the inaks below the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Having believed he had found a tunnel in the hills which leads to one of their lairs, he proudly announced his plan to all who would listen in the few days before his expedition. In the week since, he has not returned. Despite his reckless bravery, Mona believes that his rescue and return to the nearby Brasuga clan would establish the giants as allies to Steeproost. She offers the characters 75 gp each if they can find and rescue the Brasuga, or 50 gp each if they can confirm his demise. She directs them to the southern tip of the Vaskil River at the base of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains, where Argus had claimed to have found the tunnel.

Following the Trail

Once the characters set out from Steeproost, it is roughly a ten-hour trek (or about a day) from the village to where the Vaskil River flows downwards from the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Following the river towards the mountains

is easy enough and requires no Survival checks for navigation. For every two hours of travel, roll a d20. On a roll of 15 or higher, the party may have a random encounter from the following table:

Encounters in Vaskil Valley

d6 Encounter

- 1 Two **ankhegs** burst forth from a burrow beneath the ground and attack the party, fighting until they are destroyed.
- 2 The party is ambushed by four **bandits** and a **bandit captain** who demand they pay a toll for passage or forfeit their lives. The bandits flee if reduced by half their number.
- 3 **2d6+1 blood hawks** are feasting on the carcass of a bear. They attack only if provoked.
- 4 An owlbear cub wanders out from the brush in front of them. If the characters remain within 30 feet of the cub for more than five rounds, two adult **owlbears** emerge from the brush and attack. They do not pursue fleeing characters.
- 5 **2d6 wolves** stalk the party for an hour, assessing opportunities to strike. They eventually abandon the party.
- 6 A **giant eagle** swoops down from above to snatch a rat travelling across their path. It drops a gold ring fitted with a ruby gemstone worth 50 gp.

Once the characters reach the point where the river meets the mountains, a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check or at least one hour of searching is required to find the tunnel of which Argus the Brasuga spoke. When the characters find the tunnel, read aloud the following:

A large boulder partially obscures a 10-foot-by-10-foot cavern entrance. Giant-sized footsteps can be seen in the earth alongside two large divots that follow the tracks, their impressions much fainter. The slope of the cavern descends into darkness.

A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence or Wisdom (Investigation or Survival) check finds that the fresh earth and clay on the ground suggests that the tunnel has been recently dug, and that the divots following the giant footsteps were made by a wagon. The wagon tracks were left many days ago by inaks venturing to the surface to gather water from the Vaskil River for their subterranean drake wyrmling. The giant footsteps belong to Argus, who found the wagon tracks and correctly suspected that inaks could be found below. The tunnel descends into the branching caverns beneath the Basilisk's Spine Mountains where the inaks make their home amidst forgotten tombs and abandoned catacombs.

Finding the Inaks

The tunnel is indeed freshly-dug, having been created by the inaks just over a month ago. It connects into the much older branching cavern network below the mountains. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check can follow the tracks towards the old tomb where the inaks are keeping Argus captive. The party may repeat this check every half-hour.

Encounter: Ghouls. If the party fails two checks in a row, they stumble onto the remains of a previous adventuring party, now animated as four **ghouls** who fight until they are destroyed.

When the party has successfully traced the tracks back to the inaks' lair, read aloud the following:

The tracks begin to disappear as the softer, freshly disturbed earth gives way to hardened stone. Thirty feet ahead, a thick stone door bearing an intricate relief carving is set into the natural wall of the cavern and is flanked by two empty torch sconces. Beside the door is a wooden wagon covered in a canvas tarp.

The door bears a relief carving of a spider crawling out of a bejeweled chalice. The wagon is empty, holding only a single empty crate and some spare wood. The door is unlocked.

Tomb of the Drake

The inaks found a juvenile subterranean drake in a tomb formerly belonging to an ancient cult of Anorian Vapulites. Carved into the rock beneath the Basilisk's Spine Mountains almost a millennium ago, it has sat abandoned for centuries until its recent occupation by the subterranean drake and the inaks.

General Features

Unless otherwise stated, the tomb's features are described as follows:

Ceilings. Ceilings in the tomb's rooms and hallways are built from black stone and are 8 feet high.

Floors and Walls. Like the ceilings, floors and walls are built from the same black stone. Walls are 3 feet thick.

Doors. Doors are made of the same heavy stone. They have an AC of 16, 22 hp, and are immune to poison and psychic damage. All of the doors are unlocked.

Light. The tomb is shrouded in complete darkness.

Sound. The inaks are forcing Argus to perform a lullaby for their subterranean drake. The sounds of a lute and soft singing in the Giant tongue echo off the walls throughout the tomb, growing louder the closer the characters are to **area 5**.

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Tomb of the Drake.

1. Altar

An empty iron brazier stands on four clawed legs in the middle of this room. A stone altar draped in a faded and tattered banner lies against the north wall. To the south, a 6-foot-tall statue of a male Anorian in plate armor

holds a silver sword against his side. Hallways exit to the north, east, and west.

The banner is heavily aged, but closer inspection reveals the same image painted on it that was engraved in the door: a spider crawling out of a bejeweled chalice. Below the image are the words "House Welvoj".

Treasure: Sword. A silvered longsword with a gem-inlaid hilt has been slotted through the statue's fingers and can be withdrawn with ease. The inaks have little use for such a weapon, preferring to fight with smaller daggers. The sword is worth 125 gp.

2. Tomb of the Family

Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher approaching this room can hear scraping and shuffling sounds coming from within.

Inside, a 6-foot-tall statue stands in the middle of the room, depicting the form of a female Anorian motherly figure, her arms outstretched. In each of the four corners of the room is a sarcophagus, the lids pushed open on each one.

Encounter: Inaks. Three **inaks** (see Appendix D) have been looting the sarcophagi here for remains they can use to augment themselves. They attack the characters immediately, recognizing them as intruding surface dwellers. One inak, with the head of a cyclops skull, attempts to scale the ceiling and barrage the characters with *chill touch* while the others attack from the ground.

Treasure: Sarcophagi. The sarcophagi have been mostly stripped of remains and contain little else other than personal effects. One sarcophagus holds a leather pouch containing a single topaz worth 25 gp.

3. Cistern

A stone cistern rests in the middle of this room. Bones are piled against the north wall. The walls bear bas-reliefs depicting multiple aristocratic Anorians interlaid with the spider chalice icon of their cult.

The bones belong to the Anorians which were buried in this tomb. They have been removed from their resting places by the inaks who plan to use them for their own purposes.

Hazard: Cistern. The water in the cistern is foul and diseased. A character who drinks the water in the cistern must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours.

4. Tomb of the Servants

Three plain, unadorned sarcophagi fill this chamber; their lids have been pushed aside. The walls bear bas-reliefs depicting Anorians in acts of servitude to other Anorians. A portion of the southwest wall has collapsed entirely, opening into a much larger natural cavern of rock.

The sarcophagi in this room have been stripped of their contents.

5. Lair of the Drake

This expansive cavern of natural rock is littered with loose stone. To the south, a 10-foot-by-10-foot wooden cage holds a four-armed giant equipped with an appropriately-sized lute. A writhing canvas sack is suspended from the ceiling near the middle of the room by a fraying rope. Above, a large natural tunnel in the ceiling extends upwards into darkness.

Tomb of the Drake

1 square = 5 feet



Encounter: Subterranean Drake. Two **inaks** (see Appendix D) are here tending to the **subterranean drake wyrmling** while Argus the **Brasuga** (see Appendix D) performs a lullaby for the creature, which has been curled up and is drifting off to sleep. The inaks immediately attack the characters, and the drake follows their lead. Argus cheers the characters on, performing upbeat battle music in support. Once on each of his turns, Argus can provide the help action to any creature he can see within 30 feet. The inaks fight until they are destroyed. Once the drake has been reduced to half its hit points or fewer, it attempts to flee through the tunnel in the ceiling.

The subterranean drake wyrmling uses the **white dragon wyrmling** stat block, with the exception that it does not have a breath weapon, its bite attack does not deal additional cold damage, and does not have immunity to cold damage.

The sack hanging from the ceiling holds two swarms of rats that the inaks have been feeding to the wyrmling. If released from the bag, they rapidly disperse in all directions.

Treasure: Key. One of the inaks has a key on its person that unlocks the cage in this room.

Argus the Brasuga. The cage Argus is contained within is locked and can be opened with a DC 12 Dexterity check with proficiency in thieves' tools, a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, or with the key held by one of the two inaks in this room. Argus is overjoyed at his rescue and serenades his thanks to the characters. He explains that after following the inaks into the tunnels, he was ambushed by a larger inak force which attacked immediately and would not listen to his protests. After some initial confusion and worry that he would be killed, he understood that the inaks wanted him to play his music for their wyrmling. Argus explains that they should return to the surface soon, for more inaks may arrive

at any time.

6. South Hallway

This dark hallway extends to the south towards a thick stone door.

Trap: *Swinging Blades.* A pressure plate hidden in the floor of this hallway triggers scything blades to swing forth from narrow slits in the wall. If the pressure plate is activated, each creature in the hallway must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the pressure plate, which can then be carefully avoided. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check with proficiency in thieves' tools disables the trap. Failing this check by 5 or more activates the trap.

7. Tomb of the Matriarch

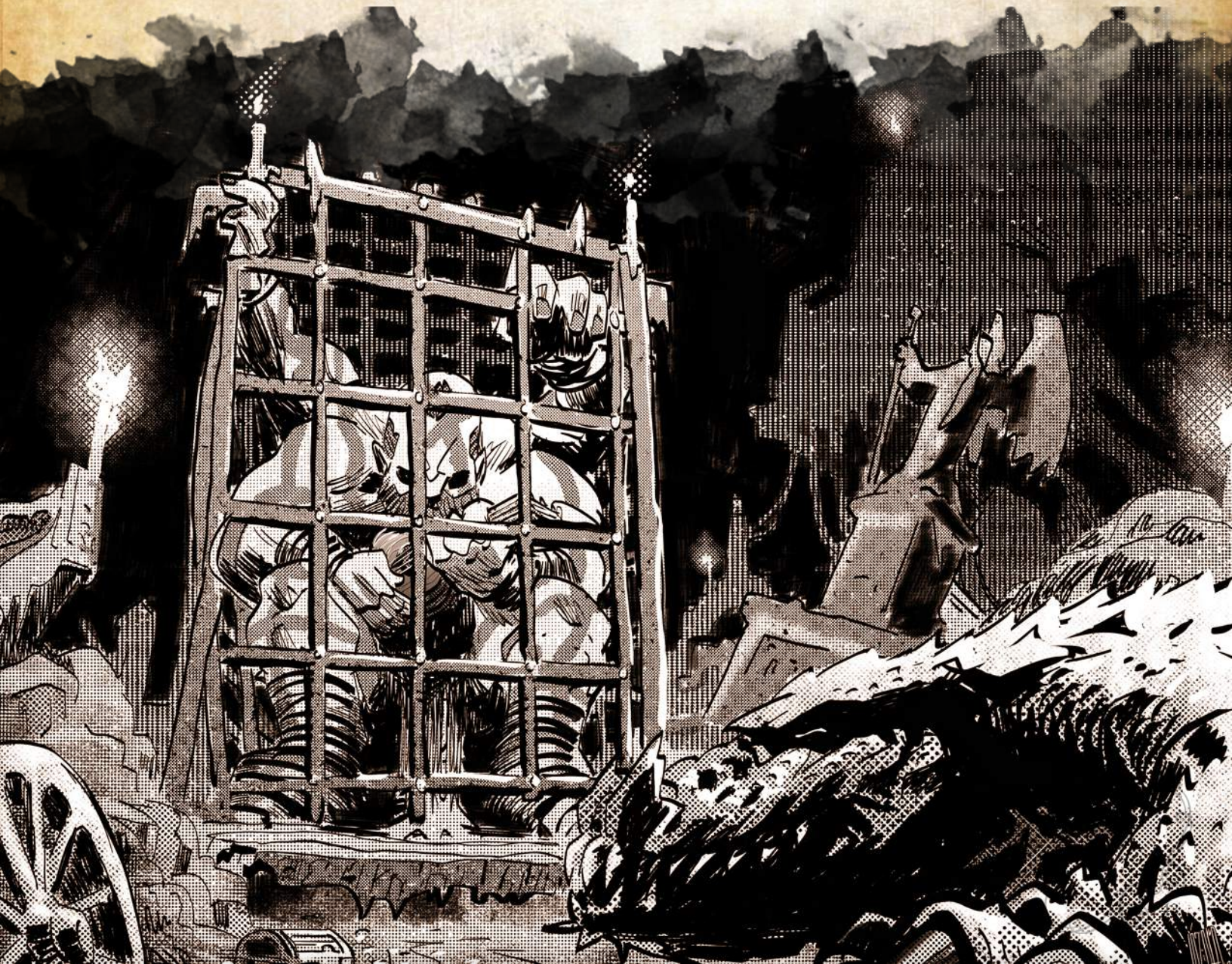
The door to this room is heavy but unlocked. Inside is an iron brazier on four clawed legs and an elaborately carved sarcophagus set into an alcove in the room's south wall. A bas-relief in the alcove above the sarcophagus depicts a female Anorian seated on a throne and draped in finery. An inscription below the relief reads, "Phyrolin Vrammyr".

Hazard: *Sarcophagus.* This tomb is protected by the remaining, fading magic of this forgotten Anorian cult. Opening the sarcophagus summons two **swarms of spiders** that crawl forth from the cracks in the stone and attack the characters, fighting until they are destroyed. Inside the sarcophagus are the skeletal remains of Phyrolin Vrammyr, draped in decaying finery and laid to rest beside a bejeweled chalice matching the appearance of the cult's icon. The chalice is worth 250 gp.

Concluding the Quest

If the characters have successfully rescued Argus, he follows them back to the surface before explaining that he will head off on his own to return to his clan, promising to tell them of his rescue at their hands. If the adventurers explain that they work on behalf of Steeproost, he assures them that the Brasugas will remember this act of generosity. Later, the adventurers may stumble upon Argus again during other travels in the Vaskil Valley.

Sheriff Mona Mèyor is pleased with their success, paying them the amount promised and explaining that she is very hopeful that this will do much to ensure that the Brasugas will ally themselves with Steeproost in future times of need.



Wyvern King Clues

The characters receive this quest shortly after they complete their first starter quest. Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon and Sheriff Mona Mèyor ask the characters to help them learn more about the Wyvern Kings.

Quest Hook

Shortly after the characters make their presence known in Steeproost, Sheriff Mona Mèyor and Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon formally introduce themselves to the characters and ask for their help. The characters may have already met one or the other during their first quest in Steeproost. Even if that's true, the pair make sure that the characters understand who they are and what they do in Steeproost—Prince Spiro is the town's presiding Mydon Prince and Mona maintains law and order.

The pair have a proposal for the characters:

The Sheriff cuts right down to brass tacks. "You probably know this already, but we've had a bit of a problem with mysterious wyvern-riding warriors dubbed 'The Wyvern Kings.'"

If the characters haven't seen one of the Wyvern Kings yet, Sheriff Mèyor describes what they look like and how they operate.

"Whatever these things are, they've got the people of Vaskil Valley spooked from here to Imfe Caan Asaari. We recognize that y'all might have some skills that could be of use here in the valley. I reckon if you have the time, we'd love if you could help us learn more about the Wyvern Kings."

Prince Spiro, the "noble-in-cowboy's-clothing" nods and takes over, "Right. Anything that you can bring us—whether it's just a rumor or an actual clue—we're willing to pay up to 10 gp for each discovery. So far, we've got no leads on who they are, where they're actually holed up, or what they want."

The pair will answer what they know about the Wyvern Kings—unfortunately very little. Mèyor does share that just before the Wyvern Kings showed up, two young noble girls, Mydon Princesses, went missing from Imfe Caan Asaari. However, they quickly reappeared not too long after their parents issued rewards for their return. Mèyor warns that the families have since "disappeared into their mansions" and aren't willing to talk to anyone, therefore, going to Imfe Caan Asaari to question them will likely be a waste of time.

Finding Clues

This quest plays out through all of the other quests.

Below is a list of potential clues the characters might discover while performing other quests:

- **Cattle Rustlin' Country.** The characters might discover the desiccated corpse of a downed wyvern and its rider's helmet. See this chapter for details.
- **Harpy Murder.** Filgus, the NPC the characters save from the harpies, overheard the harpies talking about a Wyvern King that they downed west of Steeproost. See this chapter for details.
- **Imfe Caan Asaari.** The characters find a map that leads to the Wyvern Kings' base of operations as well as the body of a dead Wyvern King. See Chapter 3 for details.
- **Ogre Baby's Rattle.** One of the goblins at Obadyr Manor carried a pamphlet issued by members of the Odzedoz orcs. Although the pamphlet doesn't mention the Wyvern Kings, the location mentioned in the text—Rossgough Crag—is in an area where the Wyvern Kings have been sighted a few times. See this chapter for details.
- **Silent Knight.** Three Wyvern Kings appear in this starter quest. Any information the characters can share with Mona and Spiro will be of great value to the pair. See this chapter for details.

Concluding the Quest

As the characters discover clues important to the whereabouts of the Wyvern Kings, Mèyor and the Prince do as they promised and pay gold for what they discover. Once the characters reach 5th level after completing a few of the additional quests detailed in the next chapter, Sheriff Mèyor and Prince Marelis-Tomydon have pieced together enough of the clues to guess the Wyvern King's location. See Chapter 3 for details.



Chapter 2. Vaskil Valley

Step beyond the fences of Steeproost pastures and Asaari orchards, and you enter the untamed wilderness that is Vaskil Valley. Seventy years ago, an army of dragons laid waste to most of The Summer Land, including Vaskil Valley. Over half of The Summer Land's population vanished in a matter of weeks, obliterated by the dragons' breath weapons. But the humans eventually prevailed, and most of the dragons were exiled from the entire continent of Omeria.

Still, the scars of the dragons' assault remain. Old Anorian villages and towns built following the Great Relocation lie in scorched ruins amid the young growth of the Poisonwood. Undead haunt the hills that slide down the Basilisk's Spine. Terrible creatures—some unseen since the Time of Titans—rise from their hideaways, fearless now that the great wyrms have fled. Vaskil Valley is not a safe place to travel alone.

Regardless, adventurers, fortune-seekers, and explorers still come to Vaskil Valley hoping to find something that the Anorians and Pressonians have missed amid the ruins, primordial forests, and foreboding foothills.

Running This Chapter

This chapter takes the adventure outside of the town of Steeproost and deeper into Vaskil Valley. Following leads gathered from other quests or rumors heard in town, the adventurers will start to unravel more of the mystery at the heart of this adventure. These quest locations are scattered across Vaskil Valley, as shown on the map included in this chapter. Also marked on this map is the location of Colddark Cliff detailed in chapters 3 and 4.

Character Advancement

Although this chapter is designed for characters of 4th level or higher, some of its random encounters and locations are more dangerous than others. The characters might need to run away and regroup, or take short or long rests between encounters if they hope to survive.

Vaskil Valley Rumors

d20 Rumor

| | |
|-------|--|
| 1-4 | "Not too long ago, a bunch of folks dressed in all black were poking around Vonker farm. Word has it they snatched up the body of one of those Wyvern Kings. Supposedly, they took the body back to a secret location up in Sorryville (Imfe Caan Asaari). No tellin' what they figured out with that thing's body." (See Imfe Caan Asaari for details.) |
| 5-7 | "There's a huge keep a bit up the trail built by a woman named Irene Alderth. It was a pretty good place for a while until a basilisk came in and turned all the occupants to stone. Now it's just a breeding ground for cockatrices." (see Alderth Keep for details.) |
| 8-10 | "The Kuzhuk people train to ride griffons at an early age, starting as early as seven. Because of their broad view of the valley, the Kuzhuk know more about this region than most other people who live here. If you're looking for valuable information, you might head up that way and speak with their elder, Crisavor." (See Black River Caverns and Gaeleth's Temple for details.) |
| 11-14 | "The Ruby Riders are causing all sorts of trouble around Steeproost. Word has it that they're holin' up in a spot called Brenovale Manor. You'd be doin' the people of Vaskil Valley a heckuva favor if you took care 'em." (See Brenovale Manor for details.) |
| 15-17 | "Word around the campfire is that Vows at Sunrise, the owner of The Broken Crossbow, just had one of her folks captured by a gang of werelynxes in at Mount Ashlar. I know she's lookin' for some help in this matter." (See Mount Ashlar for details.) |
| 18-20 | "Vows at Sunrise has been working alongside another devilkin woman who's going around trying to collect wyvern poison. There's a series of caverns in the west she hopes to secure some of their venom. You might speak with Vows at Sunrise about the gig." (See Wyvern Caves for details.) |

In this chapter, you decide how quickly the characters advance in level. Consider the following recommendations:

- The characters gain a level after spending two or three game sessions exploring Vaskil Valley.
- The characters gain a level for completing one or two of the quests described in this chapter.
- The characters gain a level if they accomplish an extraordinary feat, such as securing the stolen Wyvern King's body from the Black Rose Warehouse, or recovering the long-lost hammer Kingsbane.

Once the characters reach 7th level, they should no longer gain levels by exploring locations or surviving random encounters in this chapter. Instead, direct them to the final two chapters of this adventure.

Vaskil Valley Rumors

Once the characters achieve 3rd level, they've earned enough reputation among the Steeproosters that the folks there will share rumors they've heard about the region. When the characters are ready to explore Vaskil Valley beyond Steeproost, use the Vaskil Valley Rumors table to draw them further into the story.

You can either choose which rumors to share with the players, or you can ask each player to roll once on the table. Let the players decide which tales they want to investigate.

Vaskil Valley Quests

Instead of drawing the players into the quests using the rumors table, you can use any or all of the following quests to entice characters into exploring the locations described in this chapter. Some of the adventures detailed in this chapter naturally follow some of the starter and follow-up quests detailed in Chapter 1, so those might be a good place for them to start as well.

Attack! The Warehouse

Imfe Caan Asaari quest

Sheriff Mona Mèyor of Steeproost has been following rumors that the Black Rose Clan of Greatwell recently came into possession of important information regarding the Wyvern Kings. However, nobody's quite sure what it is. After cashing in on a few favors from her allies up north, she learned that whatever-it-is the Black Rose Clan knows or has, they're keeping locked away in a warehouse in Imfe Caan Asaari.

Mèyor cajoles the characters into scoping out the warehouse. She warns them that it's probably heavily guarded, so they should at least take a few days to learn what they can about the location before they try to break into it. If the characters return with valuable information, she will pay them 100 gp.

This quest also ties directly into the "Silent Knight" quest detailed in Chapter 1.

The Bandit and the Bride

Brenovale Manor quest

A young half-Anorian boy, Zaert (non-combatant) rushes up to the adventurers, begging them to come quickly, because bandits attacked his uncle's ranch last night. If the characters agree, they find the home smoldering from recently extinguished flames and the owner, Taznar Arabarn, wounded and being tended to by his farmhands. Arabarn begs the characters to follow the bandits' trail and rescue his wife. The tracks made by the Ruby Riders after they raided the Arabarn Ranch are very clear and head south into the valley.

The characters may also become involved if Mona Mèyor first speaks with the half-Anorian boy.

Griffon Riders

Black River Caverns quest

An investigation by Sheriff Mèyor of Steeproost has revealed the source of the cattle raids in recent weeks: the Black River Caverns, where several orcs have set up camp. Talindra, a cattle rancher in Steeproost, has raised 500 gp with a coalition of other ranchers to destroy the orcs and bring back the head of their leader, Basher Yurub. If the characters previously completed the Cattle Rustlin' Quest for Talindra, she approaches them directly.

Kingsbane

Gaeleth's Temple quest

The characters should receive this quest if they successfully completed the Griffon Rider's quest mentioned above. However, if they didn't succeed—or didn't want to get involved with the Kuzhuk griffon riders in the first place—here is another quest hook that leads to this location: An archaeologist and historian named Harbak wants to track down Gaeleth's Temple and investigate its mysterious demise. He's hiring on adventurers to aid him in this endeavor. If griffons aren't an option, Harbak has a handy hot air balloon. Giddy up!

Petrified at Alderth Keep

Alderth Keep quest

The occupants of Alderth Keep were petrified long ago, trapping their minds, bodies, and souls on the material plane to slowly wither away to the elements. The faithful of the Temple of Tuteus in Steeproost are willing to pay 50 gp for each petrified soul that can be brought back to them to look after until somebody with *greater restoration* can free them.

Additionally, a displaced werelynx clan is in need of a place to settle. A tiefling woman named Bask in the Winter Sun is offering five vials of antitoxin for anybody that can make Alderth Keep safely habitable. The characters will get this hook if they complete the quest "Wyvern Wrangling" detailed in this chapter.

War at Werelynx Warren

Mount Ashlar Ruins quest

Prince Spiro Marelis-Tomydon, keen to maintain peaceful relations with his Roe'dgopian neighbors, has posted notices asking for a group of respectable, law-abiding citizens to act as his deputies in resolving the conflict at Mount Ashlar. He requests a full report from the chief engineer, Valarn Silvervein.

At the same time, Vows at Sunrise, proprietor of the Broken Crossbow in Steeproost, needs one package delivered and a second picked up from Silvervein, currently at Mount Ashlar. She offers 1000 gp for the return of this package "Unopened. Or else!". You're free to use one hook or both to entice the characters into this quest.

Wyvern Wrangling

Wyvern Caves quest

Vows at Sunrise is aware of the threat posed by the Wyvern Kings and sees an opportunity to both help the townsfolk and further cement her station in Steeproost. She wants

the characters to seek out a druid named Bask in the Winter Sun and bring her to Steeproost. If the characters have a reputation of being charitable, Vows at Sunrise appeals to them by emphasizing how access to wyvern antitoxin may help keep townsfolk alive. Otherwise, she offers 300 gp for bringing Bask in the Winter Sun to Steeproost.

If the characters express interest in taking up the quest, she can provide the following additional information:

- A **druid** named Bask in the Winter Sun is working with some of the werelynx tribes to help relocate them.
- Bask in the Winter Sun is a bald, red-skinned devilkin woman in her thirties with piercing yellow eyes.
- Bask in the Winter Sun is an expert at handling dangerous creatures and crafting antitoxins.

Wilderness Encounters

After the Great Chromatics were banished from Vaskil Valley seventy years ago, all sorts of dangerous creatures have come out of hiding. Thus, travel through Vaskil Valley can be dangerous, especially for those who aren't prepared.

While the party explores Vaskil Valley, they might come upon friendly, indifferent, or hostile creatures in the wild. Some encounters put the characters into dangerous combat situations. Others might be roleplaying encounters, solvable with a friendly wave and "how do you do?"

You be the judge of if, and when, these random encounters should occur. Try not to use too many, though, as frequent stops along the way to a quest location grows old after a while. No more than one or two per session is advised.

If you aren't sure how often to schedule random encounters in a 24-hour period, you can leave it to chance by rolling a d8 and consulting the Number of Wilderness Encounters table below.

Number of Wilderness Encounters

| d8 | Number of Encounters |
|-----|---|
| 1 | One encounter in the morning (dawn to noon) |
| 2 | One encounter in the afternoon (noon to dusk) |
| 3 | One encounter in the evening (dusk to midnight) |
| 4 | One encounter at night (midnight to dawn) |
| 5-6 | Two encounters; roll a d4 on this table to determine when each encounter occurs |
| 7-8 | No random encounter |

Running Wilderness Encounters

Once you know when your random encounters will occur, reference the Random Wilderness Encounters table below to determine the nature of the encounter. These encounters are designed to drive home the fact that here are some dangerous creatures in the Valley. The table's Difficulty column offers insight into the challenge each encounter represents, assuming the characters are of 4th, 5th, or 6th level. Be sure to telegraph deadly encounters so that the characters have plenty of opportunity to avoid the encounter if they choose. Easy encounters might surprise them at first but delight them once they reach a swift victory.

Vaskil Valley

| d% Day | d% Night | Encounter | Difficulty |
|--------|----------|--|------------|
| 01-02 | 01-02 | 1 ankheg | Medium |
| 03-04 | 03-04 | 1d4 + 1 bandits and 1 bandit captain | Medium |
| 05-06 | — | 1 basilisk | Easy |
| 07-08 | — | 1d4 black bears | Easy |
| — | 05 | 1 black horn* | Medium |
| 09-10 | — | 2d6 + 1 blood hawks | Medium |
| 11 | 06 | 1d2 brasugas* | Medium |
| 12 | — | 1 brown bear | Easy |
| 13 | 07 | 1 bulette | Medium |
| 14 | 08 | 1d4 dire wolves | Medium |
| 16 | 09 | 1 doppelganger | Easy |
| — | 10 | 1 ettin | Medium |
| 17 | — | 1 ewoska* | Easy |
| — | 11 | 1 forest octopus* | Easy |
| — | 12 | 1 ghost | Medium |
| — | 13-14 | 1d4 ghouls | Medium |
| — | 15-16 | 1d3 giant badgers | Easy |
| 18 | — | 1 giant eagle | Easy |
| 19-20 | 17-18 | 1 giant poisonous snake | Easy |
| — | 19-26 | 2d6 giant rats | Easy |
| 21-22 | — | 1 griffon | Easy |
| 23 | — | 1d3 harpies | Easy |
| 24 | 27 | 1 hill giant | Medium |
| 25 | — | 1 megamoo* | Easy |
| 26-38 | 28-37 | Militia** | Varies |
| 39-40 | 38-39 | 1 mountain lion (panther) | Easy |
| 41-42 | 40-41 | NPC party** | Varies |
| 43-55 | 42-51 | 1d2 ogres | Medium |
| 56 | 52 | 1 owlbear | Easy |
| 57-58 | 53-54 | 1 poisonous snake or 1 swarm of poisonous snakes | Easy |
| 59 | — | 1 Pressonian Abjurer* | Medium |
| 60 | 55 | 1d6 + 2 skeletons | Varies |
| — | 56 | 1d2 specters | Easy |
| 61-63 | 57-58 | Tribal warriors* | Medium |
| 64-79 | 59-68 | Vaqueros* | Varies |
| 80 | 69 | 1 werebear | Medium |
| 81 | 70 | 1 wereboar | Medium |
| 82-83 | 71-72 | Werelynxes** | Varies |
| — | 73-74 | 1d4 wererats | Varies |
| — | 75-83 | 1d3 werewolves | Varies |
| — | 84-85 | 1d4 will-o-wisps | Medium |
| 84-92 | 86-95 | 2d6 wolves | Easy |
| 93-00 | 96-00 | Wyvern King** | Medium |

Encounters marked with an asterisk feature monsters detailed in Appendix D. Encounters with two asterisks are described below.

Militia

A patrol of 3d8 **guards** on **riding horses** led by a **veteran** on a **warhorse** ride up on the characters. Roll 2d4 to determine the militia's attitude, then, roll 1d6 to determine the militia's disposition.

NPC Party

Another adventuring party makes their way through the valley hoping to find adventure. The party consists of 1 **knight**, 1 **mage**, 1 **scout**, and 1 **spy**. Roll 3d4 to determine the party's attitude, then, roll 1d6 to determine the party's disposition.

Tribal Warriors

The characters come across a group of 2d6 **tribal warriors** led by a **berserker**. When the characters meet them, roll a d6 to determine the group's attitude, then roll 1d6 to determine the group's disposition.

Vaqueros

A patrol of 1d4 + 1 **gunmages** (see Appendix D) riding **riding horses** approach the characters. Roll 2d4 to determine the gunmages' attitude. The gunmages have no special disposition.

Werelynxes

A tribe of 2d4 Roe'dgope **werelynxes** (see Appendix D) are hunting in the wilderness. When they appear, roll a d6 to determine the group's attitude, then, roll 1d6 to determine the group's disposition.

Wyvern King

A lone Wyvern King riding a wyvern seemingly soars overhead. Roll a d6. On a result of 6, it is actually a **Wyvern King** (see Appendix D) riding a **wyvern**. Otherwise, it's a disguised **orc** riding a **giant vulture**. Regardless of the rider's identity, the creature will not fight unless provoked.

NPC Attitude

| Result | Attitude |
|--------|-------------|
| 1-2 | Hostile |
| 3-7 | Indifferent |
| 8-12 | Friendly |

NPC Disposition

| Result | Disposition |
|--------|------------------------|
| 1 | Fleeing |
| 2 | Injured |
| 3 | Trading |
| 4-6 | No special disposition |

Fleeing

The NPCs are on the run from a creature more dangerous than they are. Reroll on the Random Encounter table to determine what type of creature they are running from or choose an appropriate encounter. Hostile groups will command the characters to help them, whereas indifferent and friendly groups will plead or offer to pay the characters to help them.

Injured

Roll percentile dice. The result reveals the percentage of the NPC party that has only 20% of its hit points remaining. The party approaches the characters begging or demanding for help.

Trading

The NPCs offer to trade goods or valuable information with the characters. Hostile NPCs give little choice in the matter, whereas friendly or indifferent NPCs try to be more persuasive.



Vaskil Valley

1 hex = 3 miles



Vaskil River

Imfe Caan Asaari

Colddark Cliff

Rossgough Crag

Wyvern Caverns

Baslisk's Spine Mountains

Gaeleth's Temple

Alderth Keep

Chibougue Track

Steeproost

Baslisk's Spine Mountains

Black River Caverns

Kuzhuk

Brenovale Manor

Mount Ashlar

Alderth Keep

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. The characters are tasked with clearing out hostile creatures from the location so that it is safe for potential rehabilitation.

Background

Alderth Keep was once the esteemed home of Irene Alderth, a human woman. She accrued considerable wealth as a merchant before commissioning Alderth Keep, where she intended to retire. Unfortunately, at some point during the keep's history, it was besieged by a basilisk which petrified the occupants and has lived at the estate since. After the attack, the keep fell into ruin. The basilisk's presence has scared off most nearby wildlife, except for the uncowed cockatrices.

Alderth Keep

Alderth Keep is a single-story stone building fortified by 10-foot-thick stone walls and two towers.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations at Alderth Keep have the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings are 12 feet high.

Floors and walls. The floors and walls are made of stone.

Doors. The doors are made of wood and have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. None of the doors in this building are locked.

Light. Dim light filters into the first floor of Alderth Keep through the numerous cracks in the walls and roofing, suffusing the building. The cellar is dimly lit by a massive hole on the first floor, but the adjoined caves are dark.

Climate. Cold, dry winds run through Alderth Keep.

Petrified Creatures. Basilisks have petrified several creatures in and around the keep. The petrified creatures retain their statistics and have the Petrified condition.

Approaching the Keep

When the characters get within one mile of Alderth Keep, read the following:

A stone path leads up a hill to the ruins of a once-noble keep in the distance. Birds passing above steer around the keep, avoiding it, and the nearby fields are devoid of activity.

1 - Bailey

A cobblestone pathway leads through crumbling, 10-foot-thick fortifications up to the entrance of a single-story manor. There are two towers along the north

wall of the battlements and the remains of a stable on the eastern side of the pathway. Petrified creatures are scattered around the field.

Encounter: Animated Armor. There are two suits of **animated armor** and two **flying swords** guarding the entrance to the keep. The suits of animated armor attempt to ask trespassers to state their names; however, they have deteriorated to the point that they sound like grinding metal. They allow anybody that identifies themselves as a member of the Alderth family to enter. Characters that attempt to enter without declaring themselves members of the Alderth family are prevented from entering, by lethal force if necessary. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check reveals that estates sometimes used magical defenses to only allow expected guests and family, announced by name, to enter.

1a: West Tower. Six **cockatrices** roam in the field around the west tower. The cockatrices attack any character that gets within 20 feet of the west tower.

1b: Stables. There is a petrified **commoner** standing near the cobblestone path, a petrified **commoner** in the stables, and a petrified **riding horse** rearing in the stables.

1c: Well. Behind the main building there is a well that descends 30 feet into an underwater cavern. Six **cockatrices** roam around the well, attacking on-sight. Two of the cockatrices are playing on the rim of the well; if either is Surprised, one of them panics and knocks the other into the well. Additionally, there is a petrified **commoner** braced against the door to **area 5**.

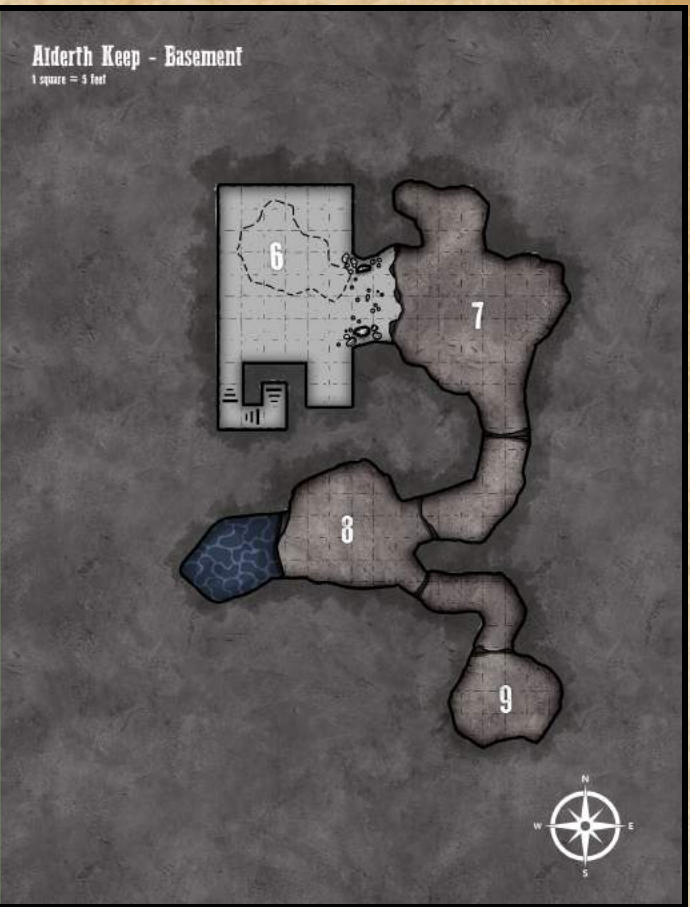
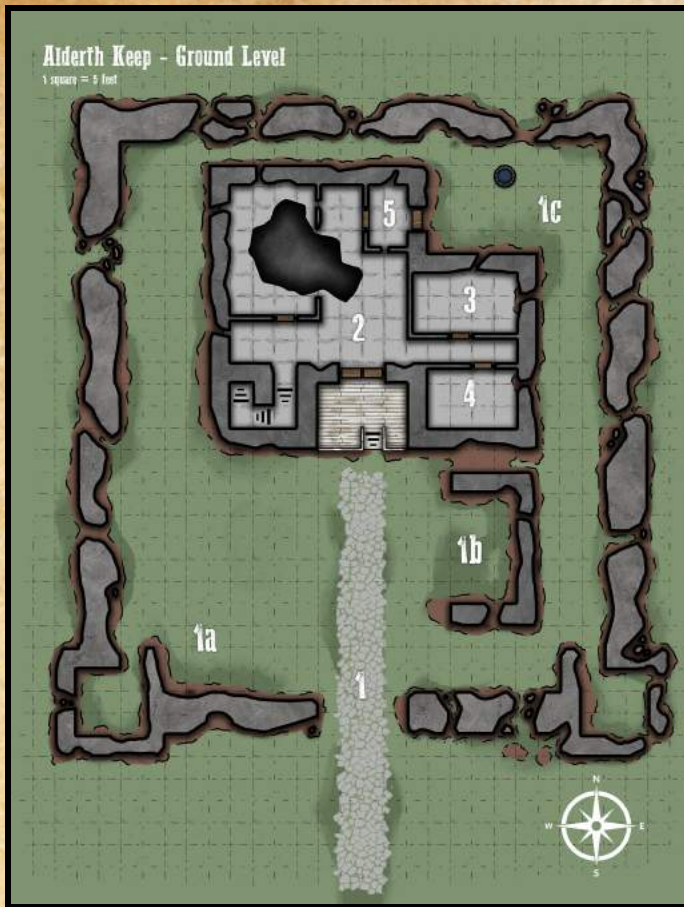
2 - Main Hall

The doors of Alderth Keep open to a 20-foot-long-by-25-foot-wide hall with 12-foot-high ceilings. Hallways flank the main hall to the east and west. The floor to the northeast connecting to another room has collapsed, leaving a rough 20-foot-diameter hole into the cellar. A staircase to the west spirals downward.

Encounter: Stirges. There are ten **stirges** hanging from the ceiling. During the day, the stirges are asleep. Characters who are moving quietly and succeed on individual DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) checks do not disturb them; however, they wake up if the characters begin fighting in any other room on this floor.

3 - Library

Broken, rotting bookcases line the north, east, and west walls of this 25-foot-long-by-15-foot-wide room.



A single armchair is pushed up against the bookshelf along the eastern wall. The petrified body of a human woman is shattered on the floor next to the armchair.

There is nothing of value in this room.

4 - Office

A chair and desk are pushed against the western wall of this 20-foot-long-by-15-foot-wide room. A worn, red rug decorates the floor.

Encounter: Rug of Smothering. There is one **rug of smothering** on the floor. If a creature enters this room alone, it attempts to smother them. If the characters escape or do not enter the room, the rug waits until the characters have left this floor to relocate to the main hall's entrance.

5 - Mudroom

This room has some shelves with old clothes and shoes picked at by moths.

Jammed Door. The door in the eastern wall is jammed shut from the outside by a petrified **commoner** that was bracing the door. Forcing the door open from the inside

requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, which opens the door and shatters the petrified commoner on a success.

6 - Cellar

This 30-foot-long-by-40-foot-wide cellar is filled with crates and old wine barrels, concealing three petrified men. Dim light coming through a massive hole in the ceiling provides some visibility, revealing a broken wall to the east that plunges into darkness.

Petrified Men. There are three petrified **commoners** hiding behind wine barrels and crates in this room.

Nook. A nook along the southern wall contains a lever. When the lever is pulled, the loose stones that once composed the collapsed wall (see below) move into the cave one foot and then slide south out of the way.

Collapsed wall. The collapsed wall used to function as a hidden doorway to the caverns beyond. The wall was enchanted with transmutation magic to slide open to the caverns when the lever in the nook (see above) is pulled. The magic persists in the shattered stones.

7 - Cavern Entrance

This cave is completely dark. Characters that shine a light from the edge of the room see a pair of wispy blue eyes and the glint of a metal blade reflect the light back. There is a tunnel to the south that leads further into the cave.

Encounter: Basilisk. There is one **basilisk** in this room. It has a +1 *shortsword* embedded in its hide. The basilisk fears adventurers after having a sword jammed into its hide and prefers to be left alone. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can slowly approach the basilisk without it attacking them. Otherwise, the basilisk does not attack until the characters cross the collapsed wall and enter the darkness. Removing the shortsword from the creature requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, and on a success, the basilisk stops attacking the characters (unless provoked) and fondly regards the character who removed the weapon. It only gives chase into the dimly lit cellar if its prey is attacking it from afar or is on death's doorstep; otherwise, it prefers to remain shrouded in darkness.

8 - Basilisk Nest

This dark, 30-foot-wide chamber features a large nest made of stone chunks and two petrified ankhegs. There is a pool of slow-moving water to the west and a tunnel to the southeast.

Nest. The nest is composed of fragments of petrified woodland creatures, a horse, and two human men.

Ankhegs. There are two petrified **ankhegs** in this room.

9 - Treasure Room

This dark room contains a single chest placed in the center of the room.

Treasure: Chest. The exterior of the chest is coated in a sticky, glue-like substance. The chest is not locked and contains 1700 cp, 800 sp, 83 gp, a bolt of fine cloth (25 gp), a rabbit foot talisman (25 gp), a pair of iron dice (25 gp), and a *gem of brightness* with 40 charges remaining.

Trap: Conjure Elemental. The bottom of the chest is marked with a *glyph of warding*, which casts *conjure elemental (earth)* when the chest is opened. To find the *glyph of warding*, a character must first overturn the chest with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check due to the sticky glue.

Concluding the Quest

At the end of the quest, the characters have explored Alderth Keep, learned what happened to its occupants, and neutralized the threats that make the keep uninhabitable. The Temple of Tuteus in Steeproost pays the characters 50 gp for each petrified commoner brought to them and offers prayers for those that the characters were unable to bring.



Black River Caverns

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. The characters must travel west to the Black River Caverns and contend with an ogre warlord who's been stealing griffons from the Kuzhuk griffon riders.

Background

The mountain enclave of Kuzhuk is home to the Vaskil Valley griffon riders, a proud people whose heritage and culture extend beyond living memory. Their skill as winged warriors is legendary amongst the kingdoms of The Summer Land, though few are old enough to remember the last time they took to the skies for war.

Central to Kuzhuk culture is the raising and training of griffons. As early as the age of seven, a young rider is paired with a griffon chick and charged with its protection and development. As a result, the bond between a griffon and its paired rider is unbreakable. Common folklore suggests that one can sense distress in the other, though they may be miles apart.

A few days ago, a rider named Anridan and his griffon companion, Wildhammer, were ambushed by a band of orcs led by Basher Yurub. Anridan, overwhelmed, could do nothing but watch as the four-armed ogre and his orc lackeys netted Wildhammer and forced him into an iron cage. Though grievously wounded, Anridan survived long enough to return home and warn his fellow Kuzhuk of the orc threat.

Crisavor, a Kuzhuk elder, is determined to seek out the orcs and Basher Yurub to exact revenge. However, their numbers are few, and the loss of Wildhammer has dealt a serious blow to their striking capability. Crisavor has put out an open call to go west and slay the beasts. Those who succeed in ridding the land of Basher Yurub and his band of thugs will find an eternal home within the enclave of the griffon riders.

Orc Camp Encounter

As the characters approach The Black River Caverns, they come across a small encampment of griffon-thieves: three **orcs** led by a single orc **berserker** (treat each creature as having proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival). They're currently in the middle of eating a freshly cooked adolescent griffon.

Illumination. The Orc Camp Encounter takes place during the day.

Flash Flood. At the beginning of the second round of combat, a fierce rainstorm will descend upon the area without warning, dumping massive amounts of rain and causing the caverns to flood. The flooding will begin in **area 4** (Anridan's Plight) and rise at a rate of one foot per hour. After one hour, Anridan will drown. After four hours, Basher Yurub and his orc lackeys will be forced to evacuate; they will leave the griffons behind to drown.

Chained Cage. The orc camp has two cages: one on its southwest side and one on its northeast side. The northeast cage is chained shut; the berserker has the key to the padlock. Alternatively, the lock can be picked by succeeding

on a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. An adult **griffon** thrashes about inside, trying desperately to break free. Once the cage is unlocked, the griffon will become hostile to the characters unless someone succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. If the characters are forced to battle the griffon, it will flee toward Kuzhuk after two rounds of combat.

Bloody Cage. The southwest cage is open and contains a bloody section of the butchered adolescent griffon currently being eaten by the orcs. A baby griffon chick mewls sadly beneath the dismembered corpse of its mother. While inspecting the camp, have the characters perform a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate the source of the crying. Any character that succeeds finds the baby griffon chick.

Treasure: Iron Orb and Gold. The orc berserker has an iron orb (25 gp), a leather pouch containing 100 sp, and a skeleton key that can unlock the chained cage in the camp as well as the cages in **area 5** (Griffon Holding Pen). The other orcs collectively have 200 cp between them.

The Black River Caverns

The Black River Caverns lie approximately three miles west of Kuzhuk and are so-called due to a mysterious black ichor that's found in the dried riverbed. So long as the seasonal rains aren't too heavy, the caverns along the river are habitable year-round; that being said, fierce storms are prone to form over the mountain ridges without warning. As a result, many unfortunate souls have been lost to flash flooding. Caution is advised.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the caverns have the following features:

Size and Dimensions. The cavern ceiling is 10 feet high unless specified otherwise. The cavern descends into the earth at a gentle incline and terminates 30 feet below surface level at its deepest point.

Illumination. While in the caverns, treat each area as having no light unless specified otherwise.

Slick Surface. The cavern floor is slick with moss and causes the characters' footing to occasionally slip. Characters who attempt to move farther than 10 feet during a combat round must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

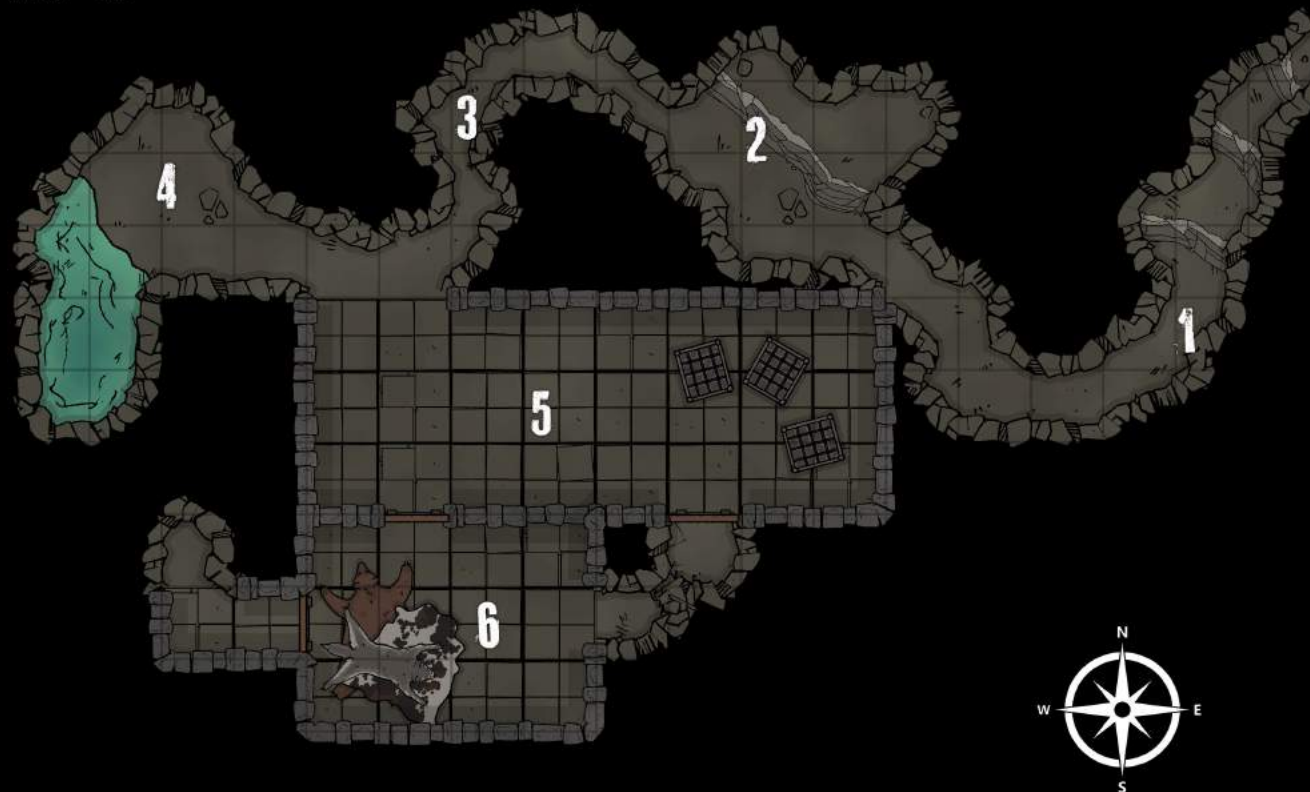
1 - Cavern Entrance

The cavern hall descends into the earth at a gentle incline; rainwater trickles down from the entrance and slickens the stony floor.

Treasure: Hidden Stash. A six-foot-deep, three-foot-wide divot is dug out of the hall's northern side. A character with a passive Perception of 12 or more notices the sound of rainwater dripping into a low space somewhere. Any character that succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Investigation) check locates the divot hidden by a pile of rocks. Searching the divot reveals a leather pouch containing 30 sp, a rabbit fur ribbon (25 gp), and a silver cloth talisman (25 gp). A piece

Black River Caverns

1 square = 5 feet



of vellum is attached to the pouch: drawn in charcoal is a very angry orc face next to a large X symbol. The X is underlined three times.

2 - Trapped Passage

A ledge on the passage's north side leads to a small alcove. A piece of wood is staked to the cavern wall next to the ledge: drawn in charcoal is an even angrier orc face next to a snake symbol. The snake is underlined four times.

Trap: Snake and Insect Trap. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the copper tripwire covered in charcoal installed along the ledge. The trap is activated when a creature attempts to move past the tripwire without having first detected its presence. When activated, a goatskin bag filled with twenty pounds of dead snakes and insects is released onto the creature's head. Only a single **poisonous snake** remains alive. If the creature makes a lot of noise after the trap is activated, Anridan in **area 4** (Anridan's Plight) will begin to cry louder for help. Additionally, have the orc **berserkers** in **area 5** (Griffon Holding Pen) perform a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they leave to investigate the noises.

Treasure: Hidden Stash. At the back of this alcove is a conspicuous pile of rocks covering a small hole. A character that searches the small hole finds a leather pouch containing 40 sp, two *potions of greater healing*, and a *necklace of adaptation*. Another vellum note is attached to the pouch,

but this time there are words accompanying the angry orc drawing. It reads as follows:

"Basher Yurub big meanie to Gonk, Gonk no like! If no bash Basher, den what? Gonk hide goodies, and when de rains come, Gonk keep breathing and Basher drown! Wish necklace was bigger for Gonk's big head. I draw sign to keep de other orcs out of Gonk's goodies! Gonk good thinker."

3 - Empty Passage

The cavern hall descends deeper into the earth.

Cries for Help. Anridan in **area 4** (Anridan's Plight) can be heard calling for help from the western passage.

Animal Smell and Illumination. An awful stench emanates from **area 5** (Griffon Holding Pen), and the flicker of firelight can be seen against the curve of the cavern wall. Any character that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check hears the mewling of griffon chicks and orcs talking amongst themselves in **area 5** (Griffon Holding Pen).

4 - Anridan's Plight

A gentle incline terminates in a pool of water, where Anridan (**tribal warrior** with proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival) is chained face-down to the cavern floor; it is taking every ounce of his strength to keep his head above water and cry for help.

Flooding. If over one hour has gone by since the flash flood rainstorm began, then Anridan is drowning and is unconscious (or dead, at GM's discretion).

Freeing Anridan. The chains binding the Kuzhuk griffon rider are staked to the cavern floor, though the rainwater has loosened the stakes. There are four stakes total: two binding Anridan's wrists and two binding his ankles. Any character that succeeds on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check can rip out a stake. If any stakes remain once all the characters have attempted this Strength check, then the remaining stakes are considered stuck and must be removed by a character spending 30 minutes using carpenter's or smith's tools. Once free, Anridan falls unconscious (if he wasn't already).

5 - Griffon Holding Pen

Basher Yurub's crew is stashing their stolen griffons in cages here. The conditions are horrendous: the cavern floor is covered in a thick layer of hay and animal excrement, and the animals are kept chained in darkness.

Illumination. Torch sconces provide dim light throughout the area.

Cages. There are three large-sized cages pushed against the northern wall of this room. They are all locked and require a key held by the orc berserkers, who function as Yurub's lieutenants. Alternatively, each lock can be picked by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The left cage contains an emaciated and unconscious adolescent **griffon**. The center cage contains Wildhammer, Anridan's personal **griffon**. Wildhammer, once free, will ignore everything else to seek out Anridan and carry him back to Kuzhuk. If Anridan dies in the rising flood, Wildhammer will refuse to leave the caverns, choosing instead to perish with its former master. The right cage has two healthy adolescent wild **griffons**. Their first instinct is to ignore everything else and escape the caverns.

Encounter: Gonk and Friend. There are two orc **berserkers** with proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival in charge of this area. One of them, Gonk, has been stashing items across the caverns in the event of a flood; she plans on abandoning Yurub and the whole operation. If the characters are aware of her plan, she can be convinced to

turn against Yurub with a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Regardless, upon reaching half her hit points, Gonk will flee the area and attempt to recover her two stashes in **areas 1** and **2** (Cavern Entrance and Trapped Passage), then flee the caverns entirely. Both berserkers hold keys to the griffon cages.

Stone Door. A stone door separates **areas 5** and **6**.

6 - Basher Yurub's Bash Pad

Basher Yurub's bash pad is clean and dry in comparison to the rest of The Black River Caverns. Basher is currently passed out on an ogre-sized pile of furs; over a dozen empty bottles of wine are scattered about the room.

Illumination. Torch sconces provide dim light throughout the area.

Encounter: Basher Yurub and Pet Wyvern.

Yurub's pet **wyvern wyrmling** (see Appendix D) will make a bite attack against Basher Yurub (male **Brasuga**, see Appendix D) to wake him up once the stone door opens. Additionally, Yurub is quite hungover: while exposed to bright light, he has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Treasure: Talisman and Furs. A careful search of Basher Yurub's bash pad turns up a bloody electrum cloth talisman (25 gp), a small bag of incense (25 gp), and a goatskin pouch containing a small assortment of gems collectively worth 10 gp. Additionally, any character that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Investigation) check discovers that the pile of furs isn't all garbage: at the bottom of the pile is a fancy (if smelly) rug that weighs 20 pounds and is worth 50 gp.

Concluding the Quest

If Anridan is returned safely to Kuzhuk, Crisavor will thank the characters for their brave actions. He then shares with them the secrets of a magic hammer rumored to be hidden within the mountains, Kingsbane. See the Gaeleth's Temple quest for details. Crisavor suggests that the weapon will help the characters against the Wyvern Kings.

Finally, if Gonk escapes the caverns alive, she finds gainful employment in a Vaskil Valley animal sanctuary after 2d8 days of wandering.

Rewards

If the characters were after the bounty on Basher Yurub, they may present his head either to the sheriff's office or Talindra (both in Steeproost) to collect their 500 gp.



Brenovale Manor

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. The characters must track down a gang of bandits called the Ruby Riders who've been causing a ruckus outside of Steeproost. The characters can receive this quest by hearing a rumor about the gang in town or by getting the "Bandit and the Bride" quest detailed earlier in this chapter.

Background

A gang of bandit marauders, the Ruby Riders, recently attacked the Arabarn Ranch just outside of the town of Steeproost. The half-Anorian owner of the ranch, Taznar Arabarn, was viciously assaulted in the attack, and Violeta, his Pressonian wife of only a few weeks, was abducted. The Riders have left the local area, headed back to their fort with their captive in tow.

Unbeknownst to Taznar, Violeta and the bandit leader, Minoas, were once young lovers many years ago. Minoas sought his fortune outside of Steeproost, intending to come back and wed Violeta. However, the years passed, and he never returned. Eventually, Violeta's family lost most of their livelihood when the Gretsard Iron Mine shut down years ago and she was pushed into marrying Taznar to save her family from destitution.

About the Ruby Riders

Minoas Vassiadis left Steeproost as a young man with a heart full of hope and love. After arriving in Greatwell and joining the town guard, he slowly became disillusioned with life and he stopped reaching out to Violeta back home. Constant struggles with the criminal elements in town eventually led him and other guards to accept bribes and overlook illegal activities. After their corruption was discovered, Minoas and the other guards were forced to flee the city just ahead of the hangman's noose.

Forced into a life of banditry to make ends meet, Minoas formed the Ruby Riders with his trusted circle of former guardsmen by his side. After a few years and picking up a handful of others, Minoas led them north to Vaskil Valley where they happened upon a small, fortified manor home used by some noble family as a summer hunting lodge. After killing and disposing of the former inhabitants, Minoas eventually decided to head home to Steeproost and seek out his former love.

Tracking the Bandits

The tracks made by the Ruby Riders after they raided the Arabarn Ranch are very clear and head south into the valley. The further out from the town they get, the fainter they become and require a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to follow the tracks with a failure resulting in an additional 1d4 hours of travel time added.

The bandit hideout is a half days' travel to the south near Lake Avondover. One random encounter from the Vaskil Valley Random Encounter Table will occur per day. Eventually, they will follow the tracks all the way to a large

stone manor home just off the shore of the nearby lake.

The Brenovale Manor

The Manor is a small stone castle built of granite stone blocks quarried from the nearby mountains. The Pressonian family built this manor with their ill-gotten gains from smuggling illegal goods in Greatwell. It was built as a secluded hideaway and a hunting lodge where they could worship the god Vapul in secret. Its remote location and sturdy walls make it an extremely defensible position for the Ruby Riders.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, areas of the manor have the following features:

Ceilings. The manor's ceilings are all 10 feet high and constructed of treated oaken planks.

Floors and Walls. The 2-foot-thick walls of the manor are made of worked stone and mortar. The floors are smooth stone tile, carpet, or oaken planks. The carpeted areas will grant advantage to any Stealth checks.

Doors. The doors of the manor are made of heavy oak banded in iron and hung on iron hinges. Unless otherwise noted, they have an AC of 15 and 20 hp. Any mechanically locked doors will require a successful DC 15 Strength check to force open or a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to unlock.

Illumination. The manor is well lit by both torches and sunlight through windows in the second and third stories.

The Ruby Riders. While no longer guardsmen, the Ruby Riders still carry themselves with a militia's bearing while they operate. This includes a common uniform of red-dyed wool and leather that gives them their name. Ruby Rider Scouts replaced their standard-issue bows with pistols. Pistols deal 5 (1d10) piercing damage with a range of 30 feet and must be reloaded after every shot by taking a bonus action. The scouts carry twenty rounds of ammunition each.

The following locations are keyed to the map of Brenovale Manor.

1 - Manor Entrance

When the characters approach the entrance, read the following:

Standing just off the shores of a glistening blue-green lake sits a tall stone manor overlooking the waters. A lone structure standing amongst a few trees, the walls look to be fortified with thick granite. Just up a short flight of stone steps is a large set of heavy double doors overlooking a small landing. A few guards seem to be playing dice, lounging in the sun, and are otherwise completely oblivious to their surroundings.

Encounter: Little Red Riders. There are two **thugs** and a **scout** stationed at the front of the manor that are not



paying attention to their duties. If approached directly, they are overly confident in their skills and will confront the party, asking them their business before deciding to just kill them and take their “nice-looking gear”. Once one of them is killed, the others will bolt into the manor to get assistance. One will head towards the kitchen and the other to the mess hall.

2 - Entrance Hall

The main doors to the Hall are unlocked and swing open easily and quietly. A small fireplace casts a warm and welcoming light into a large room filled with tables and seating. Oddly empty of people, this room is full of tapestries and paintings depicting various hunting scenes, and a large ornate rug sits on the floor. There is an extremely faint foul odor in the air, barely noticeable by most people. Any creature with a more acute sense of smell than human or half-elf can make a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check; on a success, they clearly recognize the smell of rotting corpses.

Trap: Murder Hole. The slight discoloration on the stone tiles from where the rug in this room was originally moved can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone walking over the rug will fall 10 feet into a basement through an open trapdoor, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and landing prone. They also will be hit with the stench of the half dozen corpses shoved into a corner of the otherwise empty 10-by-10-foot room.

There was a cleverly hidden trap door leading to a small underground panic room when the Ruby Riders first came to the manor. The manor staff hid there in fear until the Riders broke through the hidden door and slaughtered them all. Leaving their bodies below, they hastily covered the hole with the ornate rug that decorated the room.

3 - Storage Room

Crates and barrels stuffed with supplies of all sorts line the walls and shelves of this room. There appear to be enough victuals stored here to last an entire year or more for a large group if rationed properly.

Secret: A Noble Clue. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal a common noble crest stamped on the side of every barrel and crate. The crest can be determined with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check to belong to the Brenovale family who reside in Imfe Caan Asaari.

4 - Kitchen

The sweet smells of cooked meat and spices slip through the cracks of the kitchen door. The clang of banging pots and pans mix with the voices of two people who are arguing in hushed tones.

A wave of heat from the large metal stove will pour out of the doorway once opened. There are two Riders here cooking and arguing with each other.

Encounter: Not Just a Chef. The **bandit captain** and **bandit** in this room are unarmored (AC 13 and AC 11, respectively) but they still have their weapons readily at hand.

Treasure: Not Just a Knife. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will show that one of the cooking knives has a more ornately carved handle than the others and is a +1 *dagger*. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover two *potions of healing* buried in the back of a cupboard.

5 - Lounge

Two luxurious and comfortably cushioned couches sit on either side of this small area. More tapestries depicting hunting scenes are on the walls above the lounging couches.

Treasure: History Book. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover a leatherbound book tucked behind one of the couches entitled “A History of the Brenovale Family.” This rare edition would be worth at least 10 gp to a collector.

6 - Mess Hall

Mounted on the walls are the stuffed heads and rigid snarls of wolves, bears, a mountain lion, and even an ankheg. Tables and benches have been pushed along each of the far walls to create an opening in the center of the room upon which a large bearskin lies spread across the floor, its fur matted from dirty boots repeatedly walking across it.

Encounter: A Dog and His Riders. A **mastiff** lounges next to the **veteran** and **bandit** who are eating here. Unless the party is moving stealthily, the mastiff will warn the two Riders of the strange-smelling adventurers entering the room.



7 - Lower Stairwell

The wooden staircase spiraling up the tower is just wide enough for a single person to walk up at a time, forcing anyone going up and down at the same time to shift to allow the other to pass. This will force the party to move in single file when moving up or down the stairs.

8 - Middle Stairwell

The central part of the staircase opens onto a broad wooden platform before leading further upwards. There are two doors at the corners of the platform. Inset in the door to **area 11** is a barred window, through which stacks of weapons can be seen. The door is secured by an iron padlock. The door to **area 9** stands slightly ajar with sunlight pouring through the open crack from the other side.

9 - Hallway

Trap: Bucket. The door to this area is unlocked but there is a bucket of soapy water set up on the top of the door that is ready to fall upon whoever opens it. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check will catch sight of the edge of the bucket on the top of the door. On a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, a character can open the door and remove the bucket. A failed check results in the bucket falling on the character. They take 1 bludgeoning damage and become blinded for 1 minute from the soapy water. If the bucket falls, the noise alerts the creatures in **area 12**.

This hallway is accented by a thick and luxurious yellow carpet, with a long black rug oveltop running the length of the hall. Sunlight streams through a pair of clear glass windows, filling the hall with light. Decorative suits of plate mail armor sit on stands in two corners of the room.

10 - Chapel

The locked door to this room is made of solid iron and can be unlocked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check by someone proficient using thieves' tools. The key to the door is held by Minoas in **area 15**.

Sunlight pours through a large stain-glass window casting multi-colored streams into every corner of this small room. A few wooden pews sit in neat rows before a stone altar bearing engraved runes and sigils. A bright red runner lies across the altar bearing symbols stitched in gold thread.

Altar. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check will reveal that this altar is dedicated to the god Vapul, whom it is illegal to worship.

Charm of the Hunter Anyone who touches the altar will feel a wind pick up around them, hear the pounding of hoofbeats on earth, and smell the verdant humidity of a forest after rainfall. They will gain the ability to cast *locate animals or plants* as an action and can do this twice before the charm fades away.

No one else will hear, feel, or smell anything and the ability can only be given once per charge of the altar. The altar can be charged by sacrificing a kill from a recent hunt upon it to Vapul. The altar weighs 2000 pounds and if removed from the chapel, loses its powers.

11 - Armory

The door to this room is locked (see "General Features") and the key to the padlock is held by Minoas in **area 15**. Racks of common armor and martial weaponry line the walls and tables of this room, all with the Ruby Riders marks and colors.

Trapped Treasure: Barbaric Armor. A chest containing a set of *grim leather armor* (see Appendix C) is locked and protected by a poison needle trap. The modified lock holding the needle can be discovered with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed by someone proficient with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity Check. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap. The victim takes 1 piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Inside the chest is a set of leather armor adorned with teeth and dried bits of leathery flesh hanging from leather straps. Parts of the armor are covered in stretched human skin stitched onto the armor like a covering.



12 - Barracks

A series of bunk beds and personal lockers line the walls of this room. The furniture here is plainer than the rest of the manor's appointments. The walls of the barracks are bare and undecorated.

Encounter: You Got Punk'd. The two Ruby Rider **thugs** in this room placed the heavy bucket of water as a prank in **area 9** for one of the other Riders and if it is triggered, they will jump out into the hallway and gain surprise on the adventurers. When they realize there are intruders, they will shout the alarm to the two **scouts** also in this room.

Treasure: Personal Effects. Searching through the lockers will net a total of 23 gp, 42 sp, 78 cp, and a small garnet (10 gp). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover a false bottom in one chest containing a gem-encrusted silver locket (25 gp) with a miniature portrait of a woman inside.

13 - Upper Stairwell

The upper stairwell ends on a wooden platform with a wooden door and an iron door. Sunlight can be seen coming through the cracks of the wooden door and there is a blue rune glowing brightly on the center of the iron door.

14 - Office

The iron door to this room is engraved with a permanent *arcane lock* spell. It can be suppressed with the spoken password "Jager" or with the key held by the **veteran** in **area 16**. Otherwise, it will take a successful DC 25 Dexterity check by someone proficient with thieves' tools to open.

A luxurious black plush rug edged with elaborate gold trim covers this room from wall to wall. Bookshelves full of leather-bound tomes sit against the walls along with a mahogany desk topped with paperwork and scrolls. At the far end of the room are a pair of clay pots with small purple flowers planted in them, their simplicity very out of place in comparison to the rest of the room.

Trap: Alarm Wire. A thin wire is tied between the edges of the opposing bookshelves. It can be detected with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Triggering or cutting the wire will cause an alarm bell to ring, alerting Minoas in **area 15**.

Treasure: Wyvern King Missive. Searching the desk will uncover a series of missives between Minoas and a mysterious benefactor discussing an alliance: trading weapons and gold in exchange for personnel and support in destabilizing the region.

15 - Leader's Quarters

Sunlight streams through the high windows of this bedroom, filling it with light. The lush green carpet and dark wood furniture give the impression of being deep in a forest. A large black bearskin decorates the floor next to a very large and impressive bed.

Encounter: The Bandit and The Bride. If Minoas (neutral evil human **gladiator**) hears the alarm from **area 14**, he will rush there while Violeta (neutral human **commoner**) hides in the room. Otherwise, they will both be found here together, and she rushes into a closet while he prepares for battle. Throughout the course of the fight, he will growl that they will "never take his love away from him."

Once Minoas is reduced to 20 hp or fewer, Violeta will either rush from the room or spring from the closet in tears and beg them to stop fighting. She stands between the adventurers and Minoas' widespread arms and begs them to please spare her love.

Violeta will tell their story: she only married Taznar for the promise of comfort for her family, but Minoas was her one true love. The adventurers will need to decide how they wish to proceed.

If Violeta's story fails to dissuade the characters from apprehending or killing Minoas, Minoas sweetens the pot—if the characters allow him and Violeta to leave together, he will tell them what he knows about the Wyvern Kings.

"I reckon about three months ago, I got a letter from some folks asking me and the riders to join up with some other mercenaries over at Rossgough Crag. We went to go see what it was all about. There was a whole mess of folks from all over. Even Odzedoz orcs. They were recruiting folks to dress up like those Wyvern Riders and ride around on winged mounts."

Minoas doesn't know why they wanted to the mercenaries to do this, but by his reckoning, most of the Wyvern Kings

that have been terrorizing western Vaskil Valley aren't the true Wyvern Kings at all—but imposters. He can offer directions to Rossgough Crag (see Chapter 3 for details).

Treasure: Keys. The keys to **area 10** and **area 11** can be found on Minoas.

16 - Aerie

The battlements on top of the manor home are open to the blue skies, giving a spectacular view over the nearby lake and the surrounding rolling hills. There is a large pile of straw shaped into a massive nest at the far end of the battlements with some scaffolding to the side.

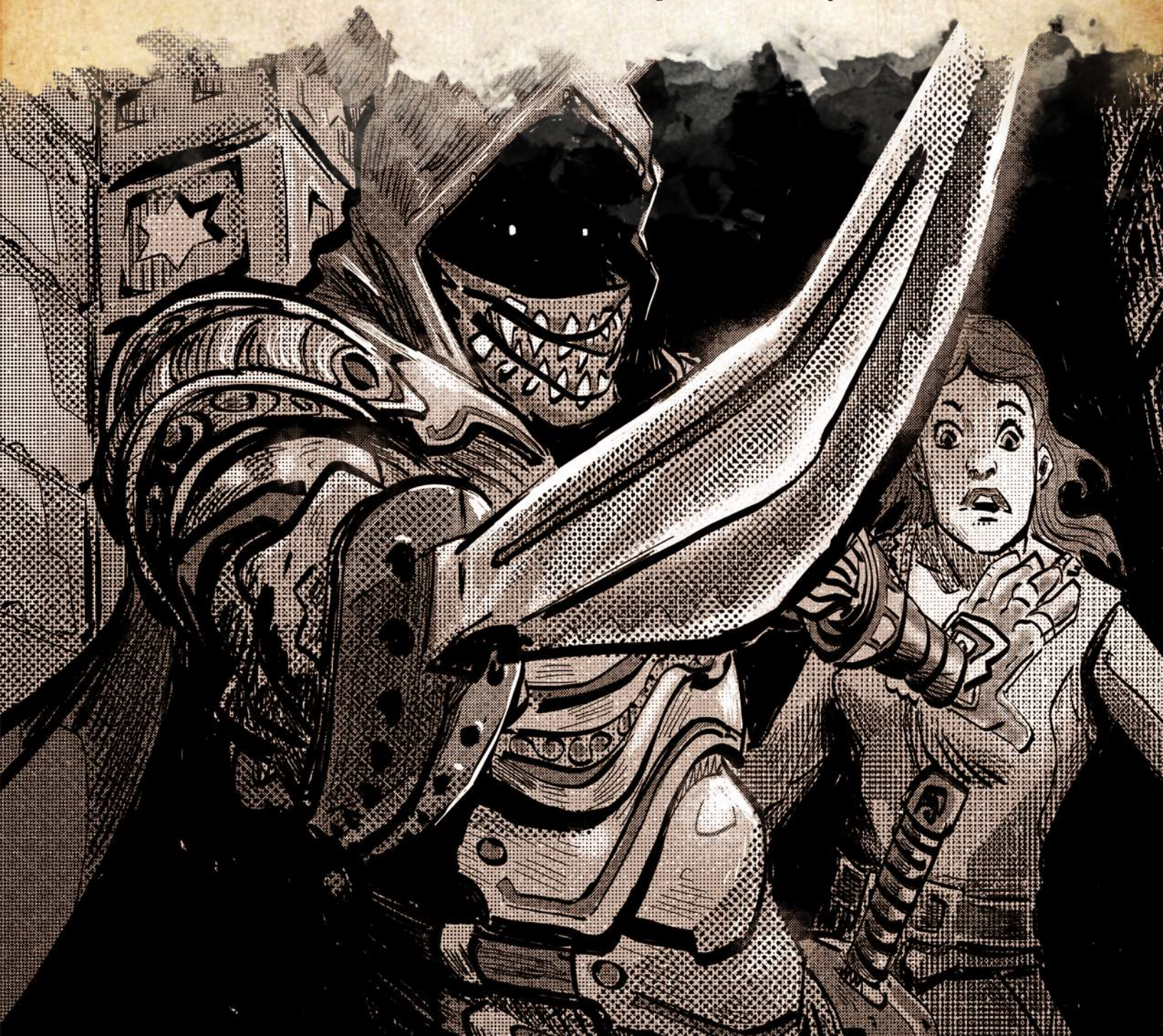
Encounter: High Flyer. A veteran is here with the Riders' trained **ewoska** (see Appendix D).

Treasure: Arcane Key. The veteran has an engraved key that will unlock the door to **area 14**.

Concluding the Quest

Violeta will become inconsolable if Minoas is killed. She will morosely leave with the party back to Steeproost. Taznar will thank the adventurers profusely but his reunion with Violeta is tepid at best. Sheriff Mona Mèyor will gladly pay the reward of 400 gp. Later, adventurers may discover that Violeta abandons Taznar and leaves Steeproost with the declared intention of rebuilding the Ruby Riders and seeks revenge on those who killed her true love. If Violeta meets the adventurers again, she will treat them as hated enemies.

If they let Minoas live and spare his life or the adventurers fail to defeat him, he will work to rebuild the Ruby Riders and continue his dream of gaining wealth and power. He and his men continue to ravage the countryside, Violeta by his side. If they survived, the adventurers may even come up against him sometime in the future. They will not receive any of the promised rewards and there is only disappointment waiting for them back in Steeproost.



Gaeleth's Temple

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. After helping the Kuzhuk Griffon riders in the Vaskil Valley quest "Griffon Riders" (see Black River Caverns earlier in this chapter), the characters take to the skies to scour the Basilisk's Spine Mountains for Gaeleth's Temple. Supposedly, it is a fabled holy site said to contain the *Kingsbane*, a weapon of great power.

Background

Gaeleth was once king of Vaskil Valley, whose skills in combat and griffon riding were unparalleled; his legendary abilities have yet to be surpassed by any Kuzhuk rider since. His ferocity was matched only by his griffon companion, Pyroeis (the Wandering Star), whose unique snow-white feathering made her difficult to spot in the open sky.

When Gaeleth passed away, a temple was built into the Basilisk's Spine Mountains to house his remains. Pyroeis was laid to rest within the temple as well. In addition, Gaeleth's enchanted hammer, *Kataigida*, occupied a place of import within the chief attendant's study.

Several acolytes and warriors lived within the temple in peace for a decade, during which time they set about expanding their home by digging deep into the mountain. Unfortunately for them, they unwittingly provoked an ancient subterranean drake called Bondura, and she tasked her goblin horde with overrunning the temple and slaying everyone therein.

The battle lasted for less than a day, so great were the goblins' numbers, and Gaeleth's Temple ran red with the griffon riders' blood. The elders of Kuzhuk determined it impossible to reclaim, having lost a score of riders and griffons in the initial invasion. The temple was magically sealed and soon fell out of common memory.

With the rise of the Wyvern Kings, Crisavor (Crisavor originally appeared in the quest "Griffon Riders" detailed earlier in this chapter and is currently the leader of Kuzhuk) has decided to launch an expedition to the Basilisk's Spine Mountains in search of Gaeleth's final resting place, and the enchanted hammer known now as *Kingsbane*. If the weapon is as powerful as the legends suggest, then they must find it before the Wyvern Kings or anyone else does.

Gaeleth's Temple

The lost mountain temple of Gaeleth has been sealed for over a century. Foul creatures roam its halls, and the bones of the fallen have been made the foundation of the wyrm Bondura's throne.

If the characters are set upon unsealing the temple and ridding it of Bondura's presence, Crisavor will happily supply griffon riders for transportation.

General Features

The following are features common to all areas within Gaeleth's Temple.

Size and Dimensions. Treat the temple ceilings as being 20 feet high unless specified otherwise. The connecting

goblin caverns (**areas 10, 11, and 12**) have 8-foot-high ceilings.

Illumination. Treat every area as having no light unless specified otherwise.

Architecture. Gaeleth's Temple is constructed of stone and copper. Intricate bas reliefs are carved into the stone, though some are incomplete.

1 - The Antechamber

An open-air landing zone awaits those who arrive at Gaeleth's Temple via griffon, and a narrow hallway leads to an antechamber of stone and copper. The room was never finished: half of a bas relief is carved into the wall, various tools litter the ground, and a headless stone statue of a Kuzhuk warrior looms over the space.

Unfinished Bas Relief. Any character with proficiency may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check to decipher the unfinished bas relief. On a success, they realize that it's a warning meant to dissuade people from unsealing the temple. One image seems to be prominent: a mouth filled with razor sharp teeth.

Sealed Entrance. At the center of this antechamber is an altar of corroded iron, which serves as the seal to the temple below. Four glowing runes (a blood drop, a sun, a sword, and a shield) dance along its surface. They each point to one of the four alcoves attached to this room (**areas 2, 3, 4, and 5**). Overcoming a challenge in one of the rooms causes its corresponding rune to disappear.

Encounter: Statue Guardian. Once the challenges in these adjoining rooms are overcome, a beam of light emanates from the altar and strikes the chest of the headless stone statue (treat it like a **flesh golem**, except it loses the Aversion to Fire trait), animating it and causing it to attack the intruders. Once the statue is defeated, the altar crumbles into dust and reveals a spiral stone staircase to the temple below. Alternatively, if *dispel magic* is cast on the arcane altar against a spell of 7th level or higher, the seal is broken without waking the statue guardian, and the altar turns to dust.

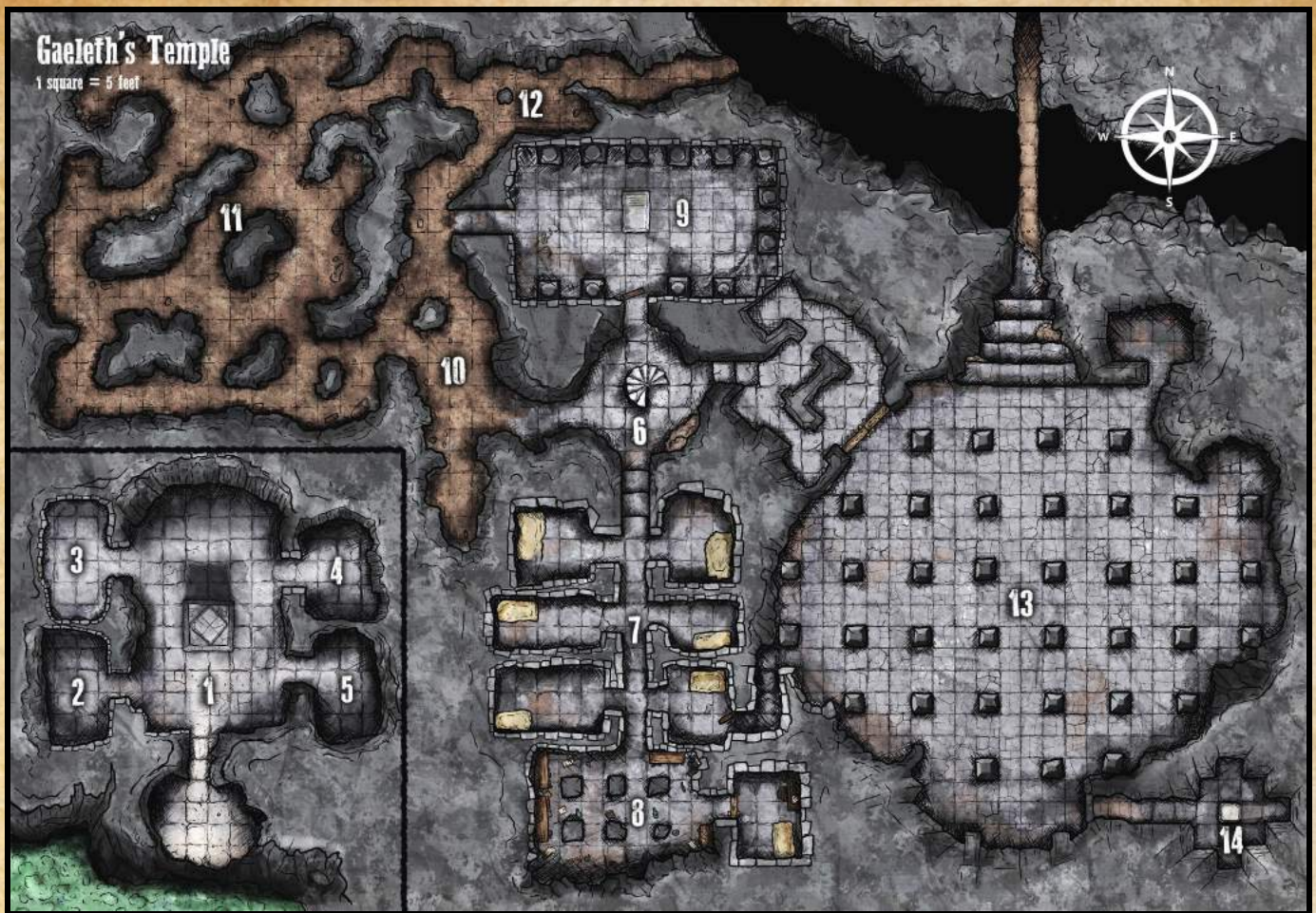
Treasure: Orb of Quartz and Other Metals. Once the statue guardian is defeated, it too crumbles to dust. A character that searches its dust pile finds a medium-sized orb of quartz (50 gp), still warm from the altar's animating magics. Additionally, the antechamber is lined with precious metals (mainly copper and steel) collectively worth 200 sp. The materials, if stripped, weigh 50 pounds total.

2 - Bottom Left Seal

Within this alcove is a stone statue of a human woman holding a silver goblet. A relief sculpture carved into the exposed rock behind her head prominently features the altar's blood rune.

Dried Blood. Inspecting the silver goblet reveals traces of dried blood.

Blood Rune Bas Relief. Any character with proficiency may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check to decipher the unfinished bas relief. On a success, they deduce that the images are asking for a sacrifice



of blood: just as the Kuzhuk attendants gave blood, so too must those who wish to unseal Gaeleth's Temple.

Bloodletting. Once a character spills blood in the silver goblet, the altar's blood rune dissipates, and an audible clicking sound echoes through the antechamber.

Treasure: Enchanted Goblet. The stone statue holds an enchanted silver goblet worth 100 gp.

3 - Top Left Seal

Within this alcove is a stone pillar measuring four feet high. Inset into the pillar's center is a large chunk of quartz. A close inspection of the quartz reveals runic carvings resembling the sun rune on the altar. Behind the pillar is another bas relief: the altar's sun rune is featured prominently.

Mirrors & Illumination. Four mirrors are arranged around the alcove, and a shaft of sunlight shines down on the pillar's top. Treat this room as having bright light.

Scorch Marks. Scorch marks mar the edges of the inset quartz.

Sun Rune Bas Relief. Any character with proficiency may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check to decipher the unfinished panel. On a success, they conclude that whatever creatures invaded Gaeleth's Temple did so from under the mountain. Sunlight seems to cause them pain.

Light Redirection. The mirrors must be arranged in such a way that the light beam resembles the layout of the antechamber itself (with the quartz being the "center"). Any

character may attempt a DC 13 Intelligence (investigation) check to realize that one of the mirrors is turned at the wrong angle; once this is fixed and the other mirrors are arranged correctly, the sun shaft is successfully redirected to the chunk of quartz. The altar's sun rune dissipates, and an audible clicking sound echoes through the antechamber. The quartz glows with a palpable heat that scorches its stone cradle.

Treasure: Enchanted Quartz. The stone pillar holds an enchanted chunk of quartz worth 100 gp.

4 - Top Right Seal

Within this alcove is a statue of a Kuzhuk warrior holding a seemingly ordinary longsword. Behind the statue another relief sculpture prominently features the altar's sword rune.

Sword Rune Bas Relief Any character with proficiency may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check to decipher the unfinished bas relief. On a success, they gather that the Kuzhuk once wielded blades of pure light, and that such a weapon would be a great boon to whoever dares to break the temple's seal.

Take Up the Blade. The blade slips out of the statue's hands with ease. Once removed, the altar's sword rune dissipates, and an audible clicking sound echoes through the antechamber.

Treasure: Enchanted +1 Longsword. The statue's hands grip a +1 longsword. The blade has been enchanted to shed bright gold light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet when in total darkness.

5 - Bottom Right Seal

Within this alcove is a large statue of Pyroeis, Gaeleth's griffon companion. Clutched in her stone talons is a bronze round shield. Behind the statue another relief sculpture prominently features the altar's claw rune.

Claw Rune Bas Relief. Any character with proficiency may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check to decipher the unfinished bas relief. On a success, they recognize the series of carvings as a funeral procession: Kuzhuk riders weeping for their fallen griffon comrades.

Pyroeis' Riddle. The griffon statue has eyes of quartz that begin to glow whenever an intelligent creature moves into the alcove. It will begin to speak telepathically to that creature, a riddle: "I am the brief firelight, the fulfillment of wishes, and that by which mortals travel. What am I?" Answer: a shooting star. Once a creature in the alcove thinks or says the answer out loud, the altar's claw rune dissipates, and an audible clicking sound echoes through the antechamber.

Treasure: Ancient Kuzhuk Shield and Enchanted Quartz. Clutched in Pyroeis' stone talons is a bronze round shield worth 50 gp. Additionally, the statue's eyes are small pieces of enchanted quartz worth 25 gp each.

6 - Gaeleth's Temple Entrance

This area is only accessible via the spiral stone staircase connected to **area 1**. There are four paths out of this area: the north corridor leads to **area 9**, the west corridor leads to **area 10**, the south corridor leads to **area 7**, and the east corridor leads to **area 13**.

Skeleton Warning. The desiccated bones of a griffon are suspended from the ceiling via rusted chains, a grim warning to intruders.

7 - Anchorite Cells

Before Bondura's invasion, this area served as the living quarters for the temple's anchorites.

Anchorite Cells. There are six cells total: three on the left and three on the right. They each contain a single straw mattress. Bondura's horde ransacked this area long ago and left the rooms in disarray. Some of the beds contain skeletons and small, empty vials clutched in their hands: anchorites who chose death over goblin defilement.

Treasure: Miscellaneous Refuse. A character who chooses to investigate the cells may perform a DC 13 Wisdom (Investigation) check. On a success, they find 10 sp worth of scattered jewels and precious metals amidst the refuse.

Hidden Door. The southeast cell contains a waist-high door that once served as a secret passageway between the anchorite cells and **area 13**. The door is ajar, allowing medium-sized creatures to crawl through.

8 - Priest's Refuge

This room once served as the personal library and study for the chief attendant. The furnishings and shelves have been toppled, torn, and broken, and the floor is covered in vellum pages, books, glass, and bones.

Bedroom. There is an *arcane locked* wooden door on the east side of the room, behind which lies the chief attendant's personal quarters. The door can only be opened by performing a DC 23 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a

DC 23 Strength (Athletics) check. The lock can also be dispelled by use of *dispel magic* or similar effects. Within the room, the chief attendant's skeleton lies clothed on a bed of straw. An empty vial is clutched in his right hand.

Treasure: Ancient Texts. Any character with proficiency in Arcana, Religion, or History may search the area for intact texts. Doing so reveals four books of interest collectively worth 100 gp. If the character can search the chief attendant's bedroom, they find three additional books together worth 75 gp.

9 - Last Stand

This area is where the Kuzhuk griffon riders made their last stand against Bondura's goblin horde.

Ancient Door. A great wooden door separates **area 9** from **area 6**; the door itself is slightly ajar. The wood is pockmarked from weapon blows and riddled with dozens of arrows.

Encounter: Giant Spiders. The room is covered in a sticky web created by two **giant spiders**. The bodies of several goblins are cocooned within the room.

Battle Site. Amidst the spiders' web is evidence of a great battle: dozens of goblinoid, human, and griffon skeletons lie scattered around the room, centered on a stone sarcophagus. A chipped copper statue of Pyroeis, Gaeleth's griffon, is brazed to the head of the sarcophagus.

Treasure: Statue & Iron Skull. The copper statue is worth 30 gp. Additionally, an inspection of the sarcophagus reveals the remains of Pyroeis herself: her skull has been coated in iron, preserving her features. The iron skull weighs thirty pounds and is worth 100 gp.

10 - Cavern Entrance

This area marks the end of Gaeleth's Temple and the beginning of the wild mountain tunnels.

Trap: Net. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the four pressure plates at the choke points between this area and **areas 6, 9, 11, and 12**. The trap activates when 50 pounds or more is placed onto a pressure plate, whereupon a net descends from the cavern ceiling to scoop up the creature and contain them. If any of the pressure plates are triggered, Bondura's goblin horde in **area 11** will emerge to investigate the disturbance.

11 - Goblin Town

These winding tunnels are the home of Bondura's goblin horde. Their "town" is really a collection of holes dug into the cavern walls.

Bones. The cavern floor is littered with desiccated and gnawed-on bones, both human and goblinoid alike.

Encounter: Goblin Horde. Seven **goblins** will emerge from their crevices to attack any intruders. If over half of them are defeated, they will attempt to escape to **area 12** to gather reinforcements. Certain events in other parts of Gaeleth's Temple may draw their attention as well.

Treasure: Goblin Holes. Characters may perform DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) checks as they move about the goblin tunnels to search the crevices for treasure. Most searches turn up nothing of value, as Bondura has claimed everything in her personal hoard in **area 13**. A character finds a *ring of resistance (acid)* stashed away if they succeed on either check.

12 - Cavern's End

The caverns wind into darkness and terminate in a series of small crevices.

Encounter: Goblin Horde. Six goblins will emerge from their crevices to attack any intruders. If over half of them are defeated, they will flee through the crevices and disappear. Certain events in other parts of Gaeleth's Temple may draw their attention as well.

13 - The Great Hall

The Great Hall is the largest area of Gaeleth's Temple, and where Bondura sleeps on her plundered wealth.

Wooden Door. Great wooden double doors separate this area from **area 6**. The doors are stuck and can only be opened by succeeding on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, or by breaking the door down using weapons or tools. Breaking the door down will attract the attention of Bondura's goblin horde in **area 11** and wake up Bondura.

Size and Dimensions. The ceilings in this room are 60 feet high. Great stone pillars line the hall. To the north is a bridge suspended over a dark abyss: a remnant of an unfinished construction project.

Encounter: Bondura. Bondura (**subterranean drake**, see Appendix D) sleeps soundly at the center of the area. She will awaken after any non-goblinoid creature enters the room, then attack the intruder.

Hidden Door. There is a hidden stone door at the southeast corner of this room, discovered once a character succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Investigation) check. The door leads to **area 14**.

Treasure: Bondura's Hoard. Bondura sleeps on a modest pile of plundered treasure. Her hoard consists of the following:

- 100 gp, 300 sp, and 1000 cp
- A polished stone ring worth 25 gp
- An electrum cloth ribbon worth 25 gp
- A *spell scroll* of *detect magic*
- 20 spears
- 20 sets of hide armor

14 - Dais of the Kingsbane

The door connecting this area to **area 13** is hidden. A stone dais rests at the room's center, atop which lies the *Kingsbane*.

A human skeleton, dressed in frayed and bloodied robes, leans against the base of the dais: this is the acolyte who shepherded the hammer away from Bondura's hoard during their assault.

Treasure: The Kingsbane. Characters who discover this room may claim *Kataigida, the Kingsbane* (see Appendix C).

Concluding the Quest

If the characters successfully destroy Bondura and drive out her goblin horde, Crisavor thanks them for reclaiming the Kuzhuk temple.

Upon inspecting the *Kingsbane* itself, Crisavor expresses disappointment that it's not exactly the conflict-ending weapon promised in the legends and allows the characters to keep the weapon as a show of thanks.

If the characters are forced to flee from Gaeleth's Temple, a gang of ores called the Odzedoz (see Chapter 3 for details) will arrive after 1d6 days, clear out the ruins, and claim the *Kingsbane* for themselves.



Imfe Caan Asaari

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four players with an average party level (APL) of 5. After learning that the Black Rose Clan possesses important information regarding the Wyvern Kings, the characters must break into their warehouse in Imfe Caan Asaari to find out what it is.

This quest takes place in the town of Imfe Caan Asaari and includes details of the town, described below.

Background

Earlier in this adventure, the Black Rose Clan of Greatwell ambushed a trio of Wyvern Kings at a farm south of the village of Steeproost (see the starter quest “Silent Knight” in Chapter 1 for details). Two of the Wyvern Kings escaped, but the Black Rose Clan downed the third. Although securing a Wyvern King’s body wasn’t part of their plan, the leader of the operation, Sireen el-Halaby, viewed it as a boon. Quickly, she pulled the body onto a wagon and fled the scene. Now, she holds the body of the Wyvern King in a warehouse in Vaskil Valley’s capital, Imfe Caan Asaari. Having removed its armor to observe what lies beneath, the Black Rose Clan knows the Wyvern King’s secret. Now, they just need to decide what to do with that information—and who’s willing to pay the most for it.

Imfe Caan Asaari

When the Anorians were expelled from Northern Omeria and pushed into the Valley (an event known as “The Great Relocation”), they took the ruins of an ancient green dragon who’d died after challenging the Valley’s red dragon ruler, Tostrasz. The town grew fast around the ruins, as the area was relatively devoid of dangers thanks to the green dragon’s previous occupancy. The Anorians named their new home Imfe Caan Asaari, which, in the elven tongue, means “City of the Fallen Ones.” Many have nicknamed the city “Sorryville.”

Like Steeproost, Anorians comprise the majority of Imfe Caan Asaari’s population followed closely by Pressonian humans. Times are hard for Anorians under the rule of the Pressonians. While tensions subsided some in the late tenth century, they swiftly returned after the War of the Burning Plains. Anorians have an old adage, which when translated into Common says, “If a Pressonian’s horse breaks its leg, they’ll shoot the nearest Anorian before they shoot the horse.”

Overall, Imfe Caan Asaari is an unhappy, dismal place. The poisonous effects of the long dead green dragon Avok still lingers in the air, stinging the eyes of travelers unaccustomed to the weather. Anorians and Pressonians rarely speak to one another in the streets, and the presence of the Abjurers keeps everyone—elf and human alike—on their toes. To make matters worse, Imfe Caan Asaari is currently ruled by perhaps its most tyrannical ruler yet, Princess Elina Harrou-Tomydon, a crude, self-centered woman whose negligence has made poor Sorryville even more sorry during her thirty-year reign.

Imfe Caan Asaari Quick Facts

Population. 3500

Leaders. Princess Elina Harrou-Tomydon (lawful evil human **knight**) is a feared and hated tyrant who intentionally neglects her duties in Imfe Caan Asaari. Whenever problems break out, she is slow to respond, if she responds at all. Sometimes, she fails to respond out of spite for the people of Imfe Caan Asaari, particularly the Anorians whom she loathes. The town’s military is led by Vassiliki Scafeli, a laughably inept leader and soldier (lawful neutral human **guard**) who earned the position thanks to wife, who is a cousin of Harrou-Tomydon.

Militia. Imfe Caan Asaari can muster up to 350 soldiers (use the **guard** stat block) and 50 **knights**, most of whom are Pressonian. When the need arises, they can also muster an additional 150 Anorian militia fighters (use the **tribal warrior** stat block).

Overland Travel

Chibougue Track (chay-BOAG track), the most important road in all of Vaskil Valley, passes through Imfe Caan Asaari before it tapers off by the coast in the cold northern part of the valley. Regularly patrolled by Pressonian knights and Anorian militia, the road is relatively safe, but bandits aren’t totally absent. Travel to Steeproost takes half a day. It takes five days to reach The Summer Land’s capital, Presson’s Enclave.

Locations in Imfe Caan Asaari

The following locations marked on the map are those likely the characters are to encounter while they linger in Imfe Caan Asaari.

Avok’s Remains

Bones of an ancient green dragon

When the Anorian exiles settled Vaskil Valley, they built their home in the ruins of an ancient Dragonroost. There, they found the charred remains of the ancient green dragon, Avok, whose bones had fused with the stones. Instead of removing Avok’s remains, they left them there, and built a “park” around it. For a time, Avok’s Remains were revered by a cult of dragon-worshippers. Avok’s Remains are the inspiration for the town’s dragon skull heraldry.

Castle Harrou-Tomydon

Fortress of the town’s leader

Princess Elina Harrou-Tomydon (lawful evil human **knight**), the town’s leader, lives in a large castle atop a hill. The castle was built from the remains of one of the towers of Avok’s Dragonroost. The charred stones at its southern side stand as a reminder of the fury of Tostrasz the Enormous, whose inferno breath destroyed Avok a few years before the Anorians arrived in the valley and the dragons were driven out of Omeria.

Imfe Caan Asaari



The castle is mostly off-limits for all but important Pressonian nobility who venture north to Imfe Caan Asaari. Wealthy Pressonians see Imfe Caan Asaari as a “wild land” in which they can vacation, hunt, and get a feel for the “old world.” They’re nearly as detached from reality as the Princess herself.

Dragonwatch Inn

Tavern and inn

Appropriately stationed south of Avok’s Remains, the Dragonwatch is Imfe Caan Asaari’s first choice for travelers and adventurers entering the valley. The inn is owned by Erthinyon Freviir, a half-Anorian, who recognizes that adventurers have few choices this far north. Thus,

the prices are high, even by Pressonian standards. Inn and tavern owners who’ve tried to compete with Freviir on price often find themselves at odds with Freviir’s thuggish brothers.

Steel Thunder

Arms dealer

It’s illegal for Anorians in Vaskil Valley to own a magic wand or spellbook. To defend themselves against the monstrosities that lurk in the Poisonwood and Basilisk’s Spine, the people of Imfe Caan Asaari instead resort to using “old tech” in the form of smokepowder weapons such as revolvers, pistols, and rifles. The most popular place to buy such arms in Imfe Caan Asaari is Steel Thunder, a smithy in Little Anore. Steel

Thunder's owner, Darergruki Cavestone, (neutral good dwarf **veteran**) sells his guns at reasonable rates to most non-humans. Like many of the non-humans who live and work in Imfe Caan Asaari, Cavestone hates humans, particularly Pressonians.

Temple of the Four Generals

Shrine of the Four Generals (gods of The Summer Land)

Nearly all Pressonians worship the Four Generals and, whether they like it or not, the non-humans of Imfe Caan Asaari must do the same. The Anore-Asaarians have turned to General Tuteus, the Winter General, for their worship. Some even treat the General as a proxy for the ancient Anorian god, Vapul, who the Pressonians defeated at the Battle of Camor Hill during the Time of Triumphs.

Black Rose Clan Warehouse

If the characters charge headfirst into the warehouse, they're doomed to fail. El-Halaby employs more than enough bandits, thugs, and other tough NPCs to handle a low-level party. Even if the characters get past the first line of defenses, El-Halaby knows better than to endanger the goals of the Clan. If she feels that the Clan won't win the fight, she will flee through the secret exit in the basement, taking the artifact with her.

The characters might want to spend a few nights scoping out the place to get a feel for its defenses. If the characters choose to go this route, offer the Casing the Warehouse downtime activity detailed below.

Casing the Warehouse

The rules work similar to the downtime activities presented in other Fifth Edition rules supplements.

Resources. One or more characters must spend at least one workweek (five days) of effort plus 50 gp in associated costs. Spending more money increases the chance for successful reconnaissance.

Resolution. The characters involved make four checks: Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), and the players' choice of Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion). One character can make all four checks, or the characters can split the checks among themselves. For every 50 gp spent beyond the first, the characters may add +1 to the result of each check (to a maximum of +5). The DC for each of the checks is 5 + 2d10; generate a separate DC for each one. Consult the Casing the Warehouse results. Information gained from successful results is cumulative.

Complications. Of course, casing a joint isn't the easiest thing in the world. Not to mention that the Black Rose Clan is a well-trained group of mercenaries and criminals. A result of 0 successes automatically triggers a complication, but at your discretion, you might have a complication happen even with a success. Choose or roll on the table below for a complication.

Casing the Warehouse

Successes Result

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 0 successes | The characters learn nothing useful and trigger a complication. |
| 1 success | The characters learn that there are six guards who guard the exterior of the building. |
| 2 successes | The characters learn that there are twenty members of the Black Rose Clan who keep watch over the warehouse day and night. |
| 3 successes | The characters learn that the eastern entrance is guarded by a guard who spends his mornings drinking his earnings at a local tavern. It's rumored he's easy-to-bribe. There is also an entrance to the basement which is rumored to be unguarded at the rear of the building. |
| 4 successes | The characters learn that the item they seek is kept in the warehouse's secret basement. However, the Clan's leader, Captain el-Halaby, is the only one who has a key into the basement. |

Casing the Warehouse Complications

d6 Complication

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | In addition to the information provided above, there is a false piece of information that the characters learn. This may have been planted by the Black Rose Clan, or even one of the characters' rivals. |
| 2 | A source of information for the characters uses their knowledge of the characters' plot to earn entry into the Black Rose Clan. The Black Rose Clan is ready for the characters when they arrive. |
| 3 | A source was a greedy information broker, who blackmails the characters, asking for 200 gp lest they reveal the characters' plot. |
| 4 | The Black Rose Clan catches wind of the characters' plot. |
| 5 | The characters' attempts to gather information about the Black Rose Clan's warehouse attract the attention of the local authorities. A Pressonian abjurer (see Appendix D) tails them. |
| 6 | The characters learn that the Black Rose Clan intends to evacuate the area twenty-four hours after they learn this information. If they don't act now, the body will be lost forever. |

Roll Call

Most of this quest involves sneaking past—or just straight up killing—the bandits that guard the warehouse. The bandits know better than to pick a fight they can't win. The moment they notice trouble, they rush to alert everyone else in the warehouse. Below is a list of all the members of the Black Rose Clan guarding the warehouse and the areas they are located in.

Black Rose Clan Roll Call

Area Black Rose Clan Members

| | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1a | 1 scout |
| 1b | 2 bandits |
| 1d | 1 bandit and 1 bandit captain |
| 1e | 1 scout |
| 2a | 2 bandits |
| 2b | 4 bandits |
| 3 | 2 bandits and 1 berserker |
| 4a | 1 thug |
| 5 | 1 bandit |
| 6 | 1 spy and 1 veteran |

Here Comes the Heat!

The Black Rose Clan isn't above calling on the town guards if they get the feeling the characters aren't associated with law enforcement. One or more of the bandits will flee and call out to the local guards, who are all Pressonians. Because most of the Clan's illegal goods are kept hidden in the basement—and they have a few of the guards on their payroll—the Clan has nothing to fear from a surprise inspection by the local magistrate. After the Clan calls the guards, six **guards** led by a **veteran** appear in 1d4 + 2 minutes (30 - 60 rounds). A few minutes after that, a **Pressonian abjurer** (see Appendix D) arrives.

Treasure in the Warehouse

It goes without saying that the warehouse holds plenty of valuables ripe for the looting. Instead of exhaustively listing each and every mundane item the warehouse's myriad of shelves holds, assume that the entirety of the warehouse holds 20,000 pounds worth of mundane trade goods. On average, 1 pound of trade goods is worth 1 gp.

Excluding Sireen and Mu'sab, who have their own treasure, all of the warehouse's guards carry gold pieces equal to 1d6 times their CR (minimum of 1 gp).

Where's the Body? Although Sireen and Mu'sab won't willingly give up the location of the Wyvern King's body, the rest of her crew aren't above being bribed and/or threatened into coughing up its location. As the body is pretty well-hidden, this is the best method for the characters to uncover its hidden location. Otherwise, they may not be able to find it before the city guards show up.

Locations in the Warehouse

The following locations are tied to the map of the warehouse.

1 - Outside

The warehouse sits in the relatively quiet dock district of Imfe Caan Asaari surrounded by buildings of similar size, shape, and purpose. Excluding the secret exit in the basement (**area 8**), there are five main entrances to the warehouse from the outside. All of them are guarded.

1a - Western Door. This door is guarded by a single **scout**.

1b - Rear Doors. These double doors are guarded by a pair of **bandits**.

1c - Basement Access. A large pair of horizontal, steel double doors offer access to the basement. Although it is unguarded, the doors are chained and locked from the inside. The doors have AC 16, 20 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. They can be broken open with a successful DC 22 Strength (Athletics) check. Destroying the doors or breaking them open is noisy and likely to alert the guards to the characters' presence.

1d - Rear Gate. A large gate protects the entry to the warehouse's loading dock. One of the Black Rose Clan's lieutenants, an arrogant neutral evil human **bandit captain** named Atonis Moraitides stands watch here along with a single **bandit**.

1e - Loading Area. The street side of the entry is watched by a lone **scout**. A Black Rose heavy named Snatril "Snat" Barbedbuckle (lawful evil male dwarf **thug**) keeps an eye on the scout from the shadowy recesses of the loading area (**area 4a**).

2 - Main Floor

The main floor is a veritable labyrinth of shelves and goods. A mezzanine surrounds the lower floor along with a catwalk that spans the entire room.

2a - Lower Floor. Three **bandits** watch the lower floor. The Black Rose Clan members in **area 3** can be called on relatively easily if there is trouble here or upstairs.

2b - Mezzanine and Catwalk. Four more **bandits** keep a watch from upstairs. There is also a fifth **bandit** in **area 5** that can be called if there's trouble.

2c - Stairs to Basement. This stairway connects the basement to the ground floor.

3 - Breakroom

Black Rose Clan members who are taking a rest relax here. There are two **bandits** in the breakroom, along with the Aspaethan warrior Meshindi (neutral evil female human **berserker**). If trouble breaks out in **areas 2** or **4**, this is the first group that responds.

4 - Loading Dock

Mundane deliveries are accepted through this large loading dock.

4a - Crane. The street-facing side of the loading dock is exposed to the outside, however, a series of steel posts prevents wagons from entering the warehouse proper via this side. A large loading crane makes quick work of loading and unloading shipments. A single **thug** named Snatril "Snat" Barbedbuckle (lawful evil male dwarf) sits in the shadows behind the crane eating raw onions. Snatril doesn't believe in hygiene, so he smells quite terrible.

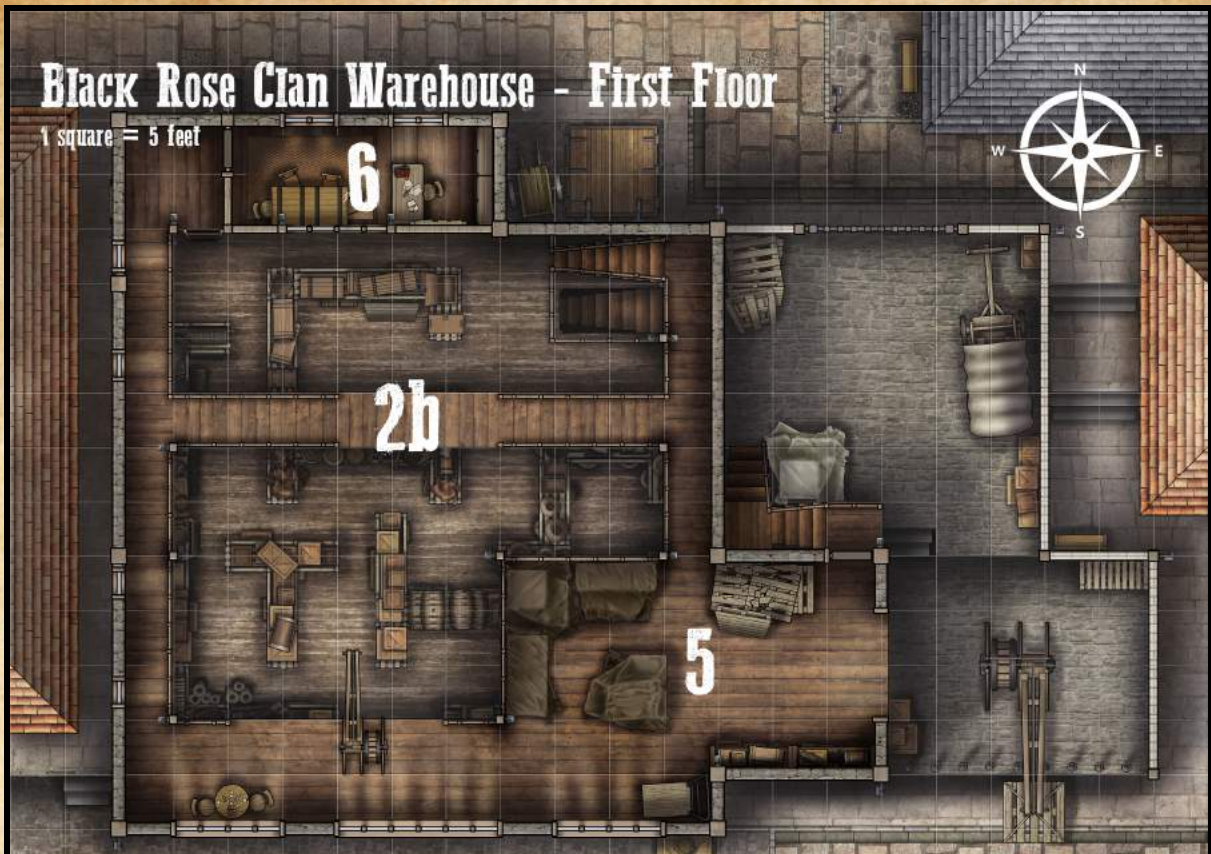
4b - Wagon. The rear of the warehouse is where the Clan stores its wagon. The area is dark. There are no Clan members here. Characters who saw the Black Rose Clan ambush the Wyvern Kings in the Silent Knight quest recognize that the wagon is the same one the Clan used to escape with the Wyvern King's body.

5 - Mezzanine

While this area doesn't have a great view of the lower level, it does make for a good "last stand" location for Black Rose Clan members—or potentially the characters. A ledge

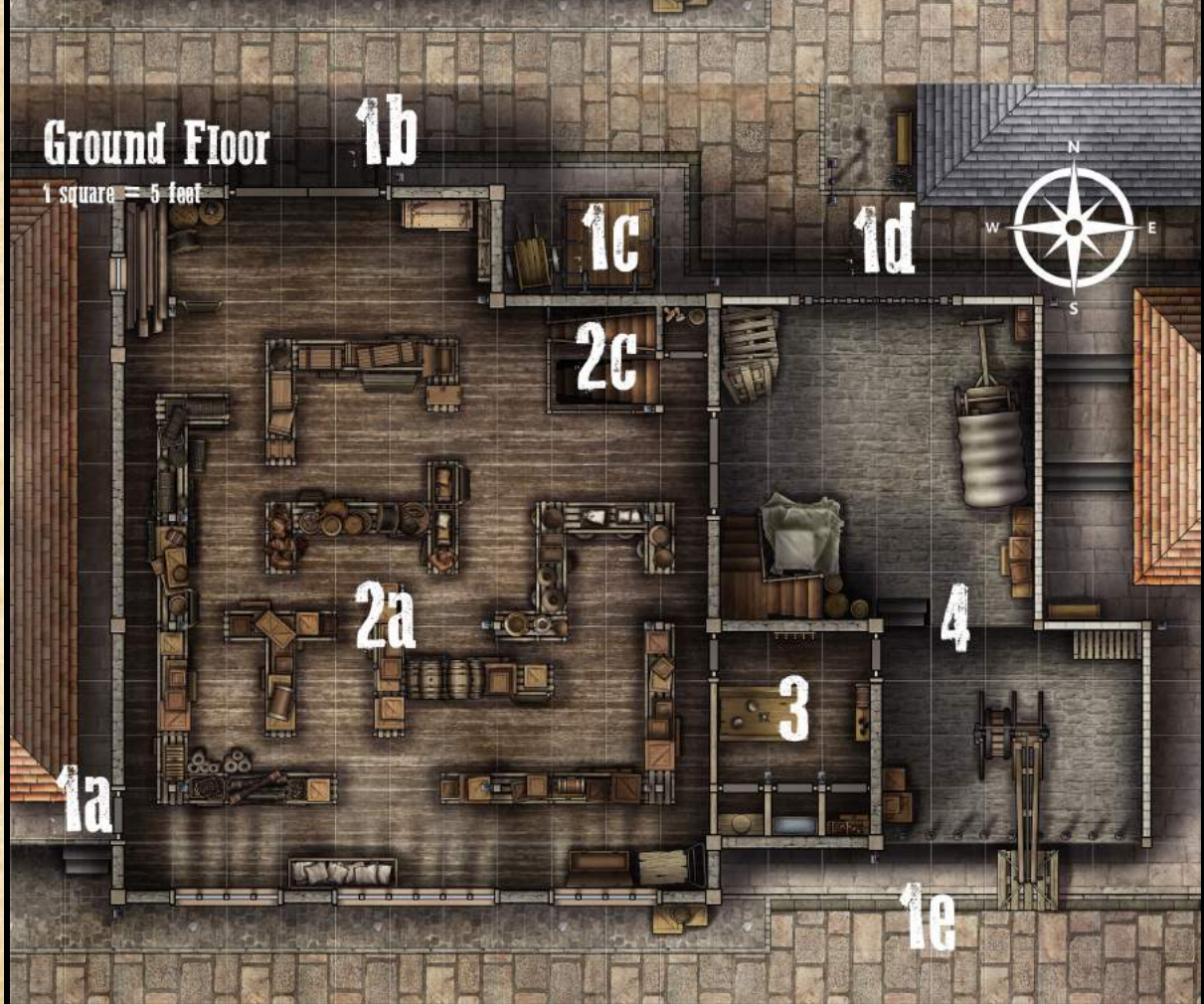
Black Rose Clan Warehouse - First Floor

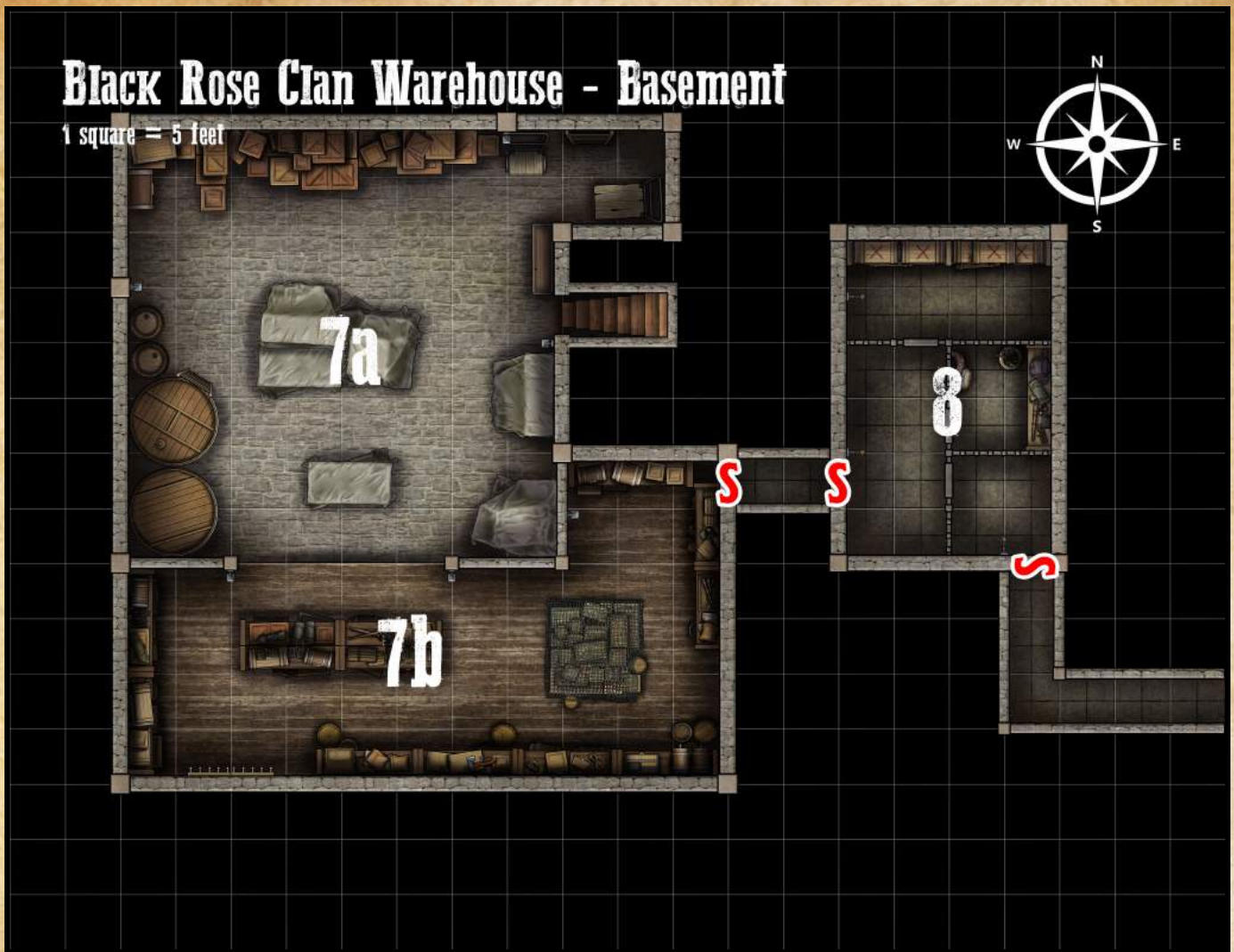
1 square = 5 feet



Ground Floor

1 square = 5 feet





at the east end of this area allows a clear view of the loading dock below. There is one **bandit** here.

6 - Manager's Office

Sireen el-Halaby (lawful evil female Anorian elf **veteran**) works from this office. She is joined by her trusted second-in-command and company assassin Mu'sab al-Uddin (lawful evil male human **spy**).

Treasure. Both Sireen and Mu'sab carry keys to the locked doors in the basement. Additionally, Sireen keeps a locked chest behind her desk that holds 200 gp. Sireen's crossbow is of exceptional quality, and fetches 250 gp. As "law-abiding citizens," neither one of them carries or uses magic items.

Map. If the characters search the papers in the office, they discover a recently drawn map. The map details Rossgough Crag and its surroundings. When Sireen's flying-vulture mounted warriors chased the Wyvern Kings from Vonker Farm, they discovered their hideout on Colddark Cliff. That location is marked on this map.

7 - Basement Storage

Slow-turning merchandise and tools clutter this basement.

7a - Storage. Valuable goods with slower sales are kept in this part of the warehouse. There are also two large water

tubs.

7b - Workshop. The shelves of this half of the basement hold tools used for maintenance. A secret door in the northeastern corner of this section of the basement can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The door connects this area to **area 8**. Both this door and the second door 10 feet beyond it are locked. Sireen and Mu'sab (**area 6**) both have keys. To pick the lock, a character needs to make a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. The door can be broken down with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. Both doors are sturdy, reinforced doors, with AC 17, 25 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

8 - Safe Room

Smuggled goods and other valuables yet to be fenced are kept locked in this safe room. The goods are divided into three cages. The northernmost cage contains smuggled goods. The center cage contains magic weapons and armor, many of which are illegal in Vaskil Valley. And the southernmost cage contains the body of the fallen Wyvern King. All three cages are locked. Sireen and Mu'sab (**area 6**) both have keys. To pick a lock, a character must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools. A door can be broken down with a successful DC 22 Strength (Athletics) check. The cage doors have AC 19, 18 hp, resistance to

piercing damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Secret Door. A character who inspects the southern wall of the southernmost cage and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that pulling the torch on the wall reveals a secret door. This secret door offers an exit to Imfe Caan Asaari's sewer system. If things go badly for Sireen, she will flee through this exit.

Treasure. The contents of the smuggled goods are totally up to you and your campaign. Most of the goods will be difficult to sell, especially since they will be marked with the Black Rose Clan's invisible insignia. However, if the characters can find a way to sell the 1,600 pounds of smuggled goods, they will earn 50 gp per pound sold.

You can offer any magic items in the center cage you feel are appropriate, but assume that there are at least seven *+1 magic weapons*, fifty rounds of *+1 ammunition*, three *+1 shields*, and three *+1 suits of armor*. There are also 2d4 items from Magic Item Table A and 1d4 items from Magic Item Table B in the Fifth Edition guidebook for gamemasters.

The Wyvern King's Body. Sireen and her goons successfully removed the Wyvern King's helmet and parts of its armor. The Wyvern King lacks a head—or at least what one would normally consider a head. A steel cylinder, approximately six inches in diameter and set into a collar, emerges from the creature's shoulders where its head would be. Stranger still, its body is that of a young

female human. Dried, black blood from its wounds mar its skin. And in some places, its skin has turned gray and somewhat rubbery. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine or Nature) check (the character's choice) recognizes that the Wyvern King's true body has a lot in common with that of a doppelganger. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check can deduce that the cylinder acted as a control mechanism for the headless body.

Quest Conclusion

If the characters successfully reclaim the map in Sireen's office and the Wyvern King's body, they should return to their allies in Steeproost with these major clues. Of course, it's likely the Black Rose Clan will want to enact revenge on those who broke into their warehouse, especially if the characters killed Captain el-Halaby or ransacked the treasure trove in the basement. Unless the characters effectively cover their tracks, three days later, the Black Rose Clan sends a gang of ten **ninja** assassins (see Appendix D) to attack the characters wherever they are resting.

If the characters weren't able to recover the body or Sireen escaped with it, the Black Rose Clan smuggles the body out of the Valley and it becomes effectively lost. The characters and their allies will need to come up with a new plan to learn more about the Wyvern Kings.



Mount Ashlar

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. The adventurers must rescue a mining engineer who has important information. Silvered or magic weapons will prove a great boon on this quest.

Background

Valarn Silvervein, an elven mining engineer, has information for Vows at Sunrise. He has ordered some specialist equipment from her with which he plans to mine the precious metals beneath the Roe'dgopian ruins at Mount Ashlar. Once he can get the mine operational, he will hand over the information in a hand-written letter. Unfortunately, a group of Roe'dgopians (a.k.a. werelynxes) that used to live in these ruins—the Coldstone Clan—have taken Valarn as their hostage in an effort to stop the mining operations going ahead.

The ruins were created decades ago when the werelynx's own mining entered the domain of the Grand Duke—a subterranean drake. He caused a cataclysmic eruption that blew away part of the mountainside. Subsequently, he installed his daughter, Gargl, in the ruins with instructions to wreak havoc on the Coldstone Clan should they ever try to return to their ancestral home. The werelynxes now hold up the mining works out of fear that if Gargl is disturbed, she will execute her father's plan of retribution.

The Journey South

The journey to Mount Ashlar takes a three and a half days. It begins as a gentle incline following the Vaskil River, before a final, hard slog up above the snow line, towards the river's source. The route is obvious, having been cleared and reinforced for the passage of heavy wagons.

Encounters En Route. The first day, the party encounters a patrol of six **Anorian gunmages** (see Appendix D). They warn the party to be vigilant; werelynxes have been ambushing merchants and travellers.

On the third night, one **werelynx** and four **lynxes** (Medium **lions**) ambush the party as they rest. Having overhead news of a 'boomstick', the Coldstone Clan is ambushing all travelers that pass through the area. Their intent is to find and steal the *mining boomstick* (see Appendix D). The attackers will retreat if the werelynx is knocked unconscious or killed, or if more than half their number are reduced to below half their hit points or killed.

Roe'dgopian Ruins

The path to the ruins leads alongside a bright blue ice-cold stream at the base of steep, snow-covered slopes. The white peaks of the mountains thrust up on either side while a wicked wind whistles down past grey-white glaciers, carrying the occasional rumble of distant avalanches.

In a sheltered quarry is a score of mine workers, smoking and drinking hot tea as they hunch around braziers. Foreman Conak (lawful neutral male **deep gnome**) gruffly greets the party. He explains the situation to them:

- The ruins, with their unmined precious metals, are a mile upstream.
- They lose money each day they're not mining.
- Valarn has been trying to come to amicable trade terms with the Coldstone Clan for the past week.
- Their answer is a stubborn "No." They will let no-one mine in the ruins.
- During their last meeting, they kidnapped Valarn.
- They always seem to know when the miners are coming.
- In his opinion, the werelynxes should all be killed, though he knows Valarn wants an amicable solution.

In a side-valley a quarter-mile upstream, half the mountainside appears to have been blown away. A 200-foot-wide crater lays bare the rooms and caves that once comprised this underground city. A narrow pathway descends down the side of this crater to a more intact series of caves below.

General Features

The ruins are a mix of natural caves and carved rooms, all cut from the mountain stone.

Ceilings. The stone ceilings are about 8 feet high, a comfortable height for dwarves..

Walls. The 5-foot-thick, pockmarked walls are covered in hoarfrost.

Floors. The floor and pathway around the crater are chiselled into the bedrock.

Doors. The doors are stone (AC 17, 18 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage). They are unlocked unless otherwise stated. A locked door requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open it.

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Roe'dgopian Ruins.

1 - Watchroom

This natural cave is almost bifurcated with thick stalactites that reach to the floor. It is possible for a Medium creature to squeeze through them. On the east side are two notable features: a large, cracked mirror and a locked door.

1a - Side Room. This small room contains a bed, a small, recently-used stove, a new-looking hand mirror, and a periscope-like contraption that shines bright light on the opposite wall. Putting one's eye to the contraption, a creature can see that it affords a view of the entrance ramp. The viewing angle can be changed via an intuitive set of attached controls.

Secret Door. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the telltale signs of a secret door as well as some shallow carvings on the stone wall. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals Dwarvish script that reads, "We welcome friends with open arms; If light you bring, and warming charms". This check succeeds automatically if a

Mount Ashlar

1 square = 5 feet



rubbing is made of the wall. To open the door, it must be dealt fire damage while it is brightly lit. The mirrors can be used to redirect the daylight to shine on the door. This door leads to **areas 2** and **4a**.

2 - Corridor

This corridor descends further down into the mountain, eventually ending in what looks like a dead end. Torches line the walls, lighting everything brightly. A single door leads to the north, halfway down the corridor's length.

Encounter: Werelynx. When the party first turns the corner into the main section of the corridor (from either end), a **werelynx** (humanoid form, see Creature Information) immediately sprints away. The werelynx is young and will cower in fear, rather than try and fight. It has a key to the front door (between **area 4b** and the outside). If it escapes through this front door, it locks it behind itself, then clambers up the mountain using its climb speed and

isn't seen again.

Trap: Falling Rocks. Creatures that chase after the werelynx trigger a pressure plate, causing invisible rocks to fall. The chasers must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, with disadvantage unless they can see invisible objects. On a failure, a creature takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone and restrained. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and is not knocked prone or restrained. A creature that uses its action can make a DC 12 Strength check. A creature is freed after three such checks have succeeded.

On a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, a character remembers that Werelynx wizards were in the habit of creating invisible traps to protect their homes. If the pressure plate isn't triggered, it can be found with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed with a DC 14 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools. Clearing the rocks away takes a full thirty

minutes; invisible rocks are a pain.

Secret Doors. From the corridor between the doors, obvious levers can be used to open each secret door.

3 - Armory

This cluttered room is filled with ancient dwarven weapons and armor hung all around the walls. There are benches on which to sit, and what looks like oversized scratching posts for cats.

Encounter: Werelynxes. Two **werelynxes** (see Appendix D) are collecting weapons and supplies from the armory. If the trap is triggered in the corridor, or the party makes a lot of noise, the werelynxes prepare attacks with longbows and handaxes against the first non-Roe'dgopian creature to appear at the door. There is no means of retreat from the armory. However, the werelynxes will surrender if one of them is killed and the characters give them the option. If the characters do not investigate this room, the two werelynxes attack them later.

Treasure: Armory. The still-usable items remaining in the armory include three suits of scale mail and a breastplate (all sized for dwarves), 200 arrows, and a dozen handaxes.

4 - Entrance

The door between the entrance and the exterior is locked and reinforced (36 hit points). The entrance comprises three rooms: a tiny cloakroom (4b), a tiny office (4c), and a larger, booby-trapped hallway (4a).

4a - Hallway. The brightly-lit entrance hall is paved with large, black and white alternating flagstones. A desiccated corpse has been pushed to the side of one of the black tiles.

Trap: Tiles. If the same-colored tile is stepped on in succession (for example, character A steps on one black tile, then character B steps on another black one), all tiles of that color trigger, dealing 3 (1d6) damage to creatures standing on or above them. The damage type is necrotic for the black tiles and radiant for the white ones. The trap is disarmed when the door to the redoubt is opened.

4b - Cloakroom. The cloakroom is dark and the cloaks are all ragged and moth-eaten.

4c - Office. The office, though dark, has been recently used. A sheaf of parchment on the counter details the process to open a "secret vault in the redoubt, which is filled to the brim with goodberry wine, hardtack, and diamonds" in Dwarvish.

5 - Redoubt

The door to the redoubt (AC 22, 36 hp, immunity to cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant damage) is magically sealed and reinforced with a permanent *arcane lock* spell. A DC 25 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools is required to pick the lock, which has a hexagonal shape. It can be opened by the key in the drake's hoard.

Inside the redoubt, a spring feeds into a basin within the wall on the east face. To the west, a magical fire burns, shedding warm, bright light. A large mural depicting Roe'dgope mining diamonds, trading for wine, and smoking meat covers the southern wall. A gagged and bound half-elf (Valarn) sits in a corner.

Encounter: Werelynxes. Chief Swiftik (chaotic neutral **werelynx** with 80 hp, see Appendix D) of the Coldstone Clan, and two **lynxes** (treat as **lions**, except their size is Medium and they have 22 (4d8 + 4) hit points), Swilta and Riftik, guard the room. They will fight to the death.

Parley. If the party attempts to talk, Swiftik will explain that a drake has threatened to wipe out his clan if it is ever disturbed. The drake sleeps in a cave to the north. If it is killed, and if all its gold and silver is brought to them, he will consider allowing the mining to go ahead, with due compensation of course. He explains that Valarn didn't believe them, and was trying to buy them off for a paltry sum.

Secret: Vault. A DC 21 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the diamond, wine bottle, and smoking meat in the mural can be depressed. When all three are pressed simultaneously (they spring back if released), a vault in the south wall opens. Inside are empty bottles of wine and a little meat; evidently the Coldstones were close to the end of their stores. However, ten flawless diamonds, each worth 50 gp, can be found in a velvet-lined chest.

6 - Smithy

This room is the remains of an old smithy. A deep-throated forge is set into the east wall and rusty ingots of iron and steel litter the floor. A plaque below two hooks on the wall reads, "Blast & Slash". The item to which the plaque refers is gone, but a silhouette of less-weathered rock reveals the rough shape of a battleaxe.

Treasure: Forge. Inside the forge is a small box containing 28 pp.

7 - Fungus Farm

The floor of this dark, rough-carved room is divided into two. Green fungus grows on the north side and blue on the south. The room is magically warm and humid, completely at odds with the rest of this warren.

Hazard and Puzzle: Mushroom Farm. This once-nourishing mushroom farm has been corrupted by the subterranean drake (**area 9**). When a creature first enters a space containing the fungi on a turn, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Eating a mushroom automatically causes a creature to fail the saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. A creature is affected even if it holds its breath or doesn't need to breathe.

8 - Lab

This room is an alchemical workshop with workbenches covering the lengths of all the walls. The surfaces are precariously cluttered with glass paraphernalia holding multiple mysterious liquids stacked atop one another. A locked door leads to an empty bedroom to the west.

Hazard: Volatile Chemicals. Any creature searching through these phials must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check or send the chemicals crashing to the ground, resulting in a sulphurous explosion. For 10 minutes after this explosion, each creature that starts its turn in the room or moves into the room for the first time on a turn must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure it takes 7 (2d6) poison damage and 7 (2d6) acid damage, and is poisoned for 1 minute. On a success it takes half as much damage and is not poisoned.

Treasure: Chemicals. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a vial of alchemist's fire. A result of 18 or higher finds three vials.

9 - Drake's Lair

The southern door to this cave is locked. The floor descends to the east, with small cliffs rising 10 feet up to either side. The ceiling is some 20 feet above the floor. An acrid, sulphurous tang hangs in the air, which feels almost unhealthy to breathe. The room is dark, but any light catches the gleam of gold at the far end.

Encounter: Duchess Gargl. The **subterranean drake** Duchess Gargl (see Appendix D) reclines on top of her pile of treasure, appearing like a rocky shelf thanks to her Stone Camouflage trait. If the party has made a lot of noise (such as from an explosion, breaking a door, or a thunder spell), Gargl is ready for them, and clings to the roof.

She will pick the most squishy-looking target to surprise and bite. She uses her movement to climb above the party, or burrow around/underneath them, filling in the tunnels behind herself. She fights to the death for her hoard.

Treasure: Drake Hoard. This pile of gold and silver contains:

- 1,060 gp and 4,000 sp.
- Eight art pieces each worth 25 gp.
- A blunderbuss-battleaxe (*blast & slash*; see Appendix C).
- An ornate, hexagonal key (opens the door to the redoubt).

Concluding the Quest

If the party went for the parley option and returns the gold and silver to the Coldstones, the werelynxes come to an with Valarn; a 20 percent cut of all ore mined here. As

accord thanks for his rescue, Valarn imparts the following information to the party, giving them a handwritten letter containing the same information to take to Vows at Sunrise:

The letter Valarn hands you reads:

"Dear Vows,

I have a riddle for you: What is the difference between a Wveryn King, an orcish sellsword, and a missing Pressonian princess?

Answer: a lot less than you'd think. Look to Rossgough Crag."

Here are some additional conditional events that take place after the quest concludes:

- If the party attempts to deliver the letter to Vows at Sunrise at the Broken Crossbow in Steeproost, they are stopped along the way by four **Pressonian Abjurers** (see the Appendix). While they are lawful good, the Pressonian Abjurers believe that the characters are terrorists.
- If the party returns the letter to Vows at Sunrise, she has another task for the party (see the other Vaskil Valley quests for details).
- If the Coldstone Roe'dgope are killed, the rest of their clan begins raiding the Anorian settlements and must be dealt with.
- If Gargl is not killed, she begins hunting werelynxes throughout the valley, burrowing into their homes.



Wyvern Caves

This Vaskil Valley quest is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. The characters are asked to wrestle wyverns and extract venom from them to create antitoxins.

Background

The Silent Footsteps is a moderately-sized werelynx clan that has been displaced and forced to travel around the Vaskil Valley, doing their best to avoid conflict. The clan is proud of their long history and works diligently to get along peacefully with the people around them. Unfortunately, the ankhegs prolific in the Vaskil Valley have made life more difficult lately.

A devilkin druid woman native to the Vaskil Valley, named Bask in the Winter Sun, has been doing her best to help migrating werelynx clans find places they can co-exist peacefully in the valley. She has had some interactions with the people of Steeproost in the past and is fond of Vows at Sunrise.

Travel to the Encampment

If the characters agree to complete this quest, Vows at Sunrise points them in the direction they must travel—west-southwest across the Vaskil River, through the Basilisk's Spine Mountains, and into the plains. The werelynx encampment lies amid the plains.

Ankhegs

When the characters get within a couple miles of the encampment, they have an encounter with two **werelynxes** (see Appendix D) and three **ankhegs**. Read the following:

About sixty feet in the distance, a lynx is fighting three ankhegs. A fourth ankheg lies dead on the ground nearby, a body still locked in the grip of its mandibles.

The werelynx is reduced to 10 hit points from acid damage dealt by the ankhegs' bites and acid spray. After one round, the werelynx kills one of the ankhegs and backs off. Unless the characters intervene, the werelynx and the remaining ankhegs maintain a standoff for three rounds, after which the ankhegs kill her with their acid spray and burrow underground with the two bodies.

The werelynx is a woman named Eva. Held tightly in the mandibles of the dead ankheg is her traveling companion, a werelynx woman named Aspa, barely alive. The characters can heal the wounded werelynx or they can help carry her to the werelynx encampment.

Werelynx Encampment

The werelynx encampment consists of tents, both small and large. Normally, this would be fine, however the proliferation of ankhegs has made living on the open plains dangerous.

When the characters arrive at the encampment, read the following:

A smattering of roughly forty tents are collected on the lip of a hill in the distance. Many of the tents are covered in patchwork stitching—scars from ankheg attacks.

Bask in the Winter Sun. Bask in the Winter Sun, or "Bask" for short, is a thirty-year-old bald, red-skinned tiefling woman with piercing yellow eyes. She is tending to several werelynxes with minor acid wounds. If the characters brought wounded werelynxes to the camp, she rests the wounded on cots and provides a salve for their wounds.

If the characters communicate their mission, Bask in the Winter Sun is unwilling to leave the werelynxes until they have been relocated to somewhere safer. She is aware of an abandoned structure known as Alderth Keep built on a stone foundation that might provide shelter, but it will need to be investigated first (see "Alderth Keep"). Afterwards, Bask in the Winter Sun is willing to help the characters craft wyvern antitoxin and go to Steeproost with them.

Before the characters depart to collect wyvern poison, Bask in the Winter Sun procures lassos (see below) with which the characters can wrangle the wyverns.

Lassos. A lasso is a simple ranged weapon with the Thrown (range 15/30) property. A lasso has no effect on creatures that are formless, or creatures that are Huge or larger. A Large or smaller creature hit by a lasso is tethered to the character until it is freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 13 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. While lassoed, a creature cannot move away from the character, it has disadvantage on attacks against creatures other than you, attacks against the creature have advantage, and the creature has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.

Wyvern Caves

Wyverns tend to dwell in high-altitude caves in the Basilisk's Spine Mountains.

General Features

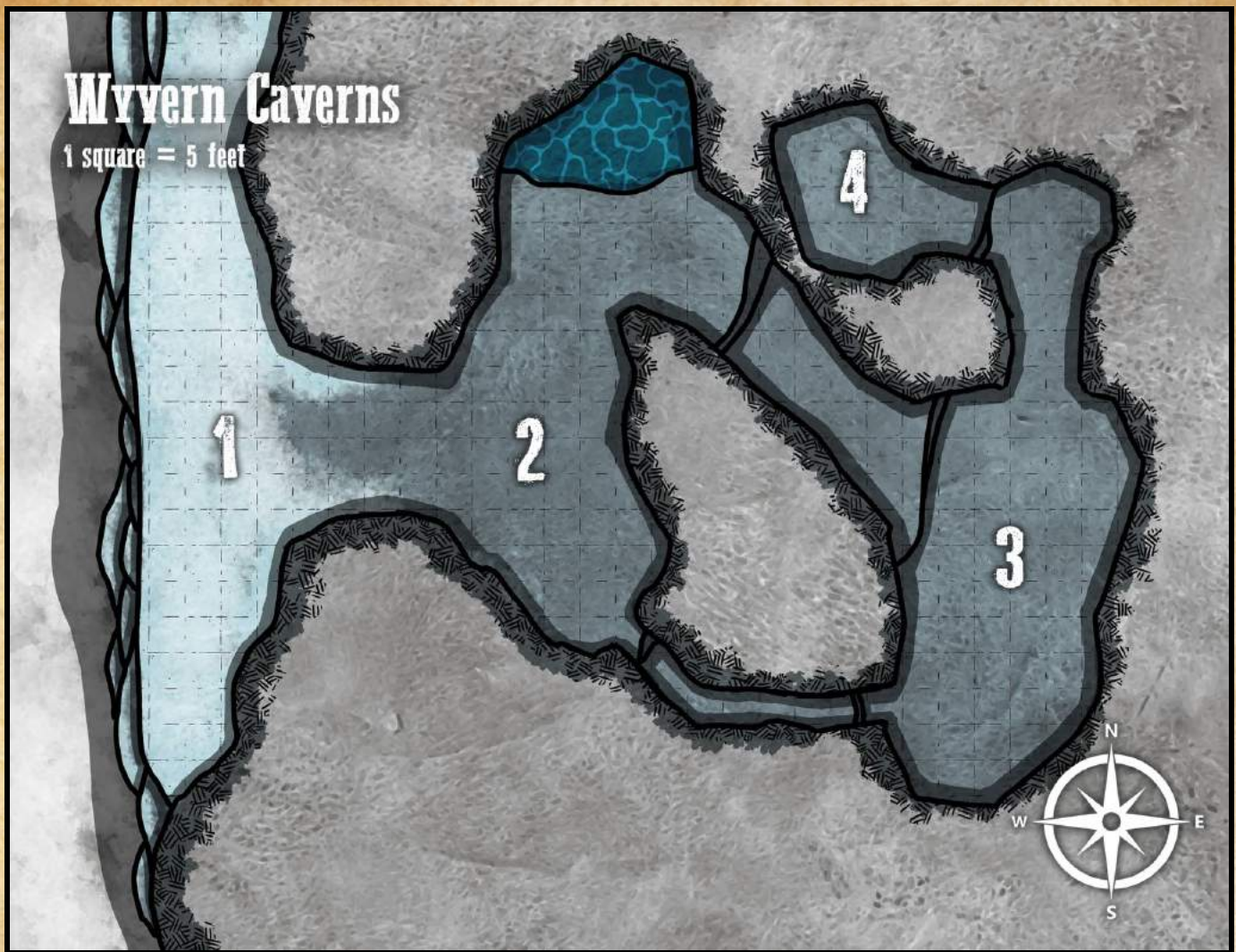
Unless otherwise noted, locations along the Wyvern Caves have the following features:

Ceilings. The natural stone ceilings are 14 feet tall.

Floors and Walls. The floors and walls are composed of natural stone.

Light. Ambient light from the entrance suffuses the interior of the cave with dim light.

Climate. Strong winds buffet the cliffside cave, chilling the interior and making it difficult to use ranged weapons on the outside. The attack rolls of ranged weapon attacks have disadvantage if the attacks pass in or out of the wind.



Extracting Wyvern Poison

Characters can extract poison from **wyvern wyrmlings** (see Appendix D) that are grappled, unconscious, or dead. To extract poison from a grappled or unconscious wyrmling, characters must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Nature) check. If the wyrmling is dead, they must spend 1d6 minutes coaxing the poison out and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check (a creature proficient with a poisoner's kit may use it with this check if the character lacks proficiency in Nature). On a successful check, the character harvests enough poison for a single dose. On a failed check, the character is unable to extract any poison. If the character fails the check by 5 or more, the character is subjected to the wyvern wyrmling's poison.

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Wyvern Caves.

1 - Ledge

The ledge faces west, overlooking the Basilisk's Spine Mountains and the plains. The werelynx encampment can be spotted with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Strong Winds. The ledge is buffeted by strong winds. Ranged weapon attacks are made at disadvantage.

2 - Entrance Chamber

This expansive chamber is barren except for scraps of leftover food. There is a narrow passage in the southeast corner, and a pool of water to the north that connects to a wide passage leading further into the cave.

Narrow Passage. A Small creature can traverse this passage unimpeded. A Medium creature may squeeze to move through the passage, reducing its movement by half. A Large or greater-sized creature cannot fit through this passage.

Pool of Water. The pool of water is safe to drink from.

3 - Wyvern Nest

This 55-foot-wide-by-30-foot-long chamber has fresh tree branches padding the stone floor along the northern wall. Two wyvern wyrmlings wrestle playfully while a third intently watches from nearby.

Encounter: Wyvern Wyrmlings. There are three **wyvern wyrmlings** (see Appendix D) playing. The wyrmlings are preoccupied with playing and fail to notice the characters unless they step into the room. The wyrmlings do not attack except in self-defense.

Characters that are especially loud risk waking the wyrmlings in **area 4**.

4 - Dead End

The floor of this 10-foot-radius stone chamber is completely covered in leaves and tree branches. Four wyvern wyrmlings are sleeping here.

Encounter: Wyvern Wyrmlings. There are four **wyvern wyrmlings** (see Appendix D) sleeping, which are Surprised if awoken by fighting. They don't attack except in self-defense.

Leaving the Wyvern Caves

As the characters are leaving the wyvern caves, two harpies approach, intercepting the characters in **area 2** of the wyvern caves.

Encounter: Harpies. After the characters finish exploring **area 3** and **area 4**, two **harpies** mosey into this room. They are curious about what the characters are doing. If the characters attack, the harpies attempt to lure characters off the ledge with their Luring Song; otherwise they are content to talk. Characters that fall off the ledge take 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage.

Concluding the Quest

At the end of the quest the characters have hopefully acquired some wyvern poison for Bask in the Winter Sun to craft antitoxins from and convinced her to come back to Steeproost with them.

