



Between Garrock and a Hard Place

Miners and farming communities around the Earthspur Mountains are being found deserted of townsfolk. If the hobgoblins settling into the area are responsible, what are their motivations?

A Two to Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

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ADVENTURE PRIMER

"There's a saying among prospectors: 'go out looking for one thing, and that's all you ever find.'"
Dwarven aphorism.

BACKGROUND

The Earthspur Mountains have always been known for their mineral riches, ripe for the taking by those brave enough to navigate the perilous surroundings. Small mining towns dot the lower foothills;

RHYOLITE is one of these normally unremarkable towns, its inhabitants held together by the hope of striking it rich with the discovery of a vein of gold or gem deposit.

Rumors from recent trading caravans note that some of these mining towns have been completely deserted by their inhabitants. Wolves, hobgoblins and much worse inhabit the Earthspur Mountains, so Zora Jeslee has put out a call for adventurers to discover the fate of the members of one of the mining towns. In fact, **SAVRUNG "THE LIBERATOR"**, a clever **HOBGOBLIN** warlord has been nonviolently (but not non-threateningly) recruiting miners and other townsfolk to relocate to **VANGLAS**, a new mining town located higher in the mountains. This new town is led by **GARROCK**, a **DAO** disguising itself as an earth genasi. His ability to easily travel through earth and stone makes finding minerals easy--which pleases the miners--while Garrock secretly searches for rarer things buried deeper in the mountains which will require a team of excavators to retrieve. The dao has positioned itself as the benefactor and protector of the townsfolk, creating a dependency which will over time indenture them to him, fulfilling the evil genie's insatiable appetite for enslaving "lesser" creatures. He kills the villagers without compunction when he finds them no longer useful.

EPISODES

The adventure's story is spread over three episodes that take approximately **two hours** to play. These episodes are introduced by a Call to Action Episode. The adventure also includes **two one-hour bonus episodes** that can be played if time permits. They are introduced at different points in the story: the first during **Episode 2** and the other during **Episode 3**.

If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the **Call to Action** once. However, if you plan to play them over several

sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play.

- **Episode 1: The Call to Action.** The characters are recruited to adventure; Zora Jeslee wishes to know if the rumors of missing townsfolk have affected the village she is financing. She directs them to Rhyolite and asks them to investigate. This is the **Call to Action**.
- **Episode 2: Lower Earthspur.** Investigating the disappearance of Rhyolite's townsfolk is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: Higher Earthspur.** Putting a stop to Garrock and his oppressive mining operation is **Story Objective B**.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

However, this adventure also includes two, 1-hour bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning additional **advancement and treasure checkpoints** in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure's appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: Bandits, Begone.** This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 6**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Dumathoin Deciphered.** This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 7**.

EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, play style and environment, this adventure takes approximately two-to-four hours to play.

HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

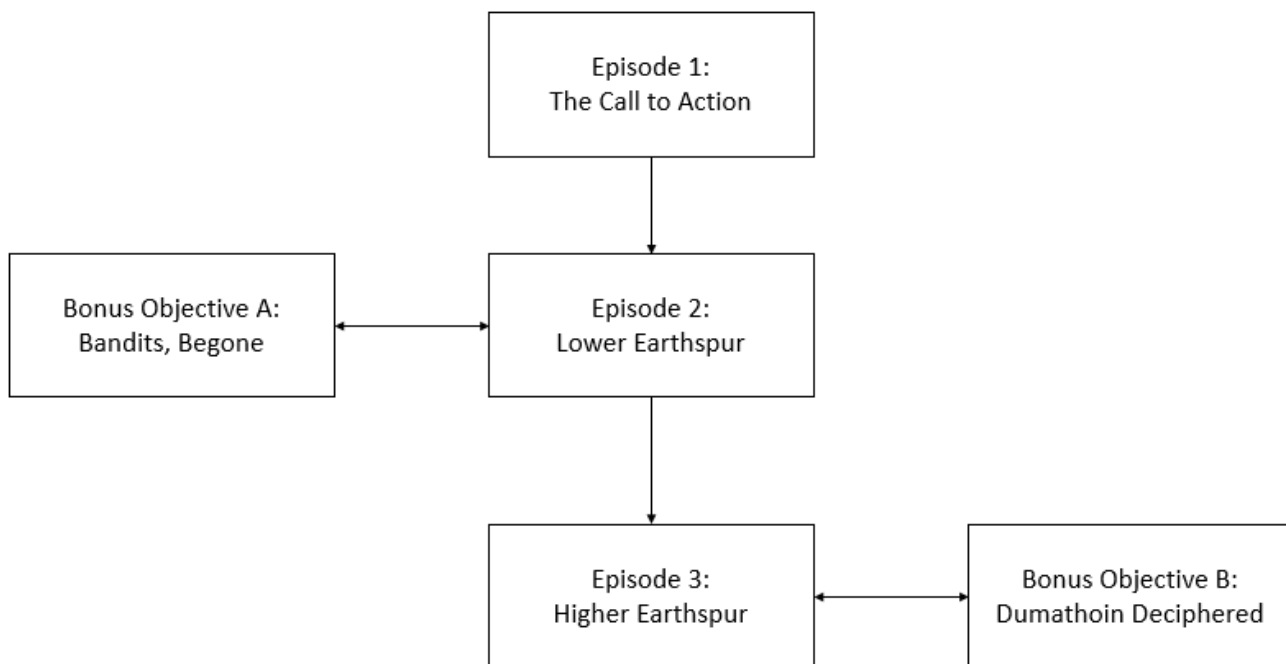
The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately **two hours**. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by utilizing the **bonus objectives**.

Story Objectives Only. To complete the both of the adventure's story objectives, the characters play in **Episodes 1 through 3** in order.

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by **one- or two- hours** by utilizing the bonus objectives provided in the appendices. One objective takes place during **Episode 2** while the other takes place during **Episode 3**. Each fleshes out the behavior and goals of the villain Garrock but aren't necessary for players to experience a complete adventure.

EPISODE FLOWCHART

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



EPISODE 1: THE CALL TO ACTION (CALL TO ACTION)

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

SCENE A. ZORA JESLEE'S VILLA

This scene takes place at Zora Jeslee's luxurious villa in Mulmaster. She is concerned with the rumors that a village she supports financially has been mysteriously abandoned.

- **I'm Here for the Glory.** Traveling merchant caravans from across the Moonsea region use Mulmaster as a hub. Rumors are swirling among the merchants that villages they've visited near the Earthspur Mountains are abandoned, completely deserted by the townsfolk.
- **I'm Here for the Goods.** Himmond is a well-known jeweler in Mulmaster. A new source of gems has been discovered, based on the frequency of yellow diamonds reaching the local markets. The most obvious location to extract gems is the Earthspur mines.

Both motives eventually lead the characters to Zora Jeslee who is willing to meet with them at her manor house on the eastern side of the city to discuss what she knows.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The dining hall is a square room 40 feet on each side. A large table dominates the center of the room and is stocked with many fine foods and drinks.

Lighting. The manor house is illuminated by candelabras enchanted with *continual flame*.

Food and Drink. Jeslee provides an indulgent meal for the party to eat while they discuss her mission. An entire roasted boar is the centerpiece of the buffet, and its aroma fills the house.

CREATURES/NPCs

Objectives/Goals. Zora Jeslee wants the adventurers to discover what would cause townsfolk to suddenly abandon their villages. She has a monetary interest in one of the villages known as Rhyolite, one of those rumored to be deserted.

Although Mulmaster is the city nearest the villages, this phenomenon is outside the jurisdiction of the city watch and the elite Hawks so she is recruiting a team of adventurers to investigate, and if something untoward has occurred, fix it.

Assuming the villagers are missing but alive, Jeslee is interested in knowing where they are and how they got there. If they have been killed, she wishes for the perpetrator to be punished harshly.

She is willing to loan the adventurers cheap but reliable mounts (horses or ponies) to expedite their travel but expects these be returned or paid for after the adventure concludes.

What Do They Know? Zora Jeslee has the hearsay of traders but no real leads on what may or may not have happened. Rhyolite was mentioned as one of the abandoned towns, so her concern is real, split between her potential lost investment as much as the lives of the laborers.

Bandits have always preyed on individuals travelling to or from Mulmaster, but any type of disappearance on this scale is beyond the capabilities of simple thugs. She has also heard about the influx of gems entering the city and can't be sure the two events are related, but it seems too well timed to be purely coincidental.

The caravanners don't have much concrete information to offer if asked; they noticed no obvious signs of battle and the buildings were still in good condition, but they didn't spend time investigating the disappearances.

CALL TO ACTION

Zora Jeslee has asked the characters to venture to Rhyolite, a mining town 80 miles outside Mulmaster and discover what has happened to the townsfolk who live there.

Proceed to **Episode 2**.

EPISODE 2: LOWER EARTHSPUR (STORY OBJECTIVE A)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

THE EARTHSPUR MOUNTAINS

In this episode, the characters investigate the disappearance of Rhyolite's townsfolk. It leads them to a hobgoblin fortification overseen by Savrung the Liberator, a hobgoblin warlord.

PREREQUISITES

The characters must have spoken with Zora Jeslee before beginning this episode.

STORY OBJECTIVE A

Discovering where the townsfolk from Rhyolite are now and how they got there is **Story Objective A**.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

Finding the nearby bandits' hideout and removing them as a threat to the local populace is **Bonus Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The hilly terrain that forms the base of the Earthspur Mountains is expansive, covering hundreds of square miles. Streams and forests break up rolling hills that lead up into the craggy white-capped mountains.

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the scenes in this chapter at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark.

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU MEDDLING ADVENTURERS!

By the time the characters are involved in the plot, Garrock has set up and executed the bulk of his plan. Unearthing "secrets" buried within the Earthspur Mountains requires manual labor, which Garrock believes is below his station as a genie. His plan was executed in two steps: First, he bribed the local banditry to harass the townsfolk, making them feel unsafe in their current situation. Second, a force of hobgoblins would be dispatched to convince these townsfolk that Garrock's settlement--higher in the mountains, away from the bandit threat--was better for their continued existence.

Fear is a powerful motivator, and most accepted the hobgoblins' offer to be escorted to Garrock, providing him a steady supply of laborers to dig deeper into the mountain.

SCENE A. OUTSIDE RHYOLITE

Rhyolite, a mining town capable of sustaining thirty adults, appears to be empty. No activity can be seen inside the town.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Less than fifty buildings make up the town. The town square is an elevated speaking platform in the center of town.

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the town at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark.

OUTSIDE TOWN

Adventurers who take the time to inspect the area outside town can find clues to help their investigation. Rain has muddied the ground in this region, making gathering exact counts of who has traveled where difficult. Anyone who takes the time to look notices a large number of people moved away to the northwest. Gaining more knowledge than that should require successful checks or expending resources. The DCs for success are noted in parenthesis:

COMBAT

There is no real opportunity for the combat pillar in this scene.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

EXPLORATION

The rain makes gaining specific details players expect to get from “a good roll” much harder than they might expect. The traffic of thirty people heading in the same direction is obvious though and noticing this requires only that they spend some time looking.

SOCIAL

There is no real opportunity for the social pillar in this scene.

- (12) The tracks of hand-pulled carts can be followed leaving the town.
- (15) There are no signs of struggle/combat from any of the walkers.
- (20) Around two dozen creatures **[DM NOTE: these were Savrung and his hobgoblins]** entered town and left with the mass of townsfolk to the northwest.

BUT THE TRACKS LEAD THIS WAY!

It is possible that the party could gather all the clues under “Outside Town” and decide to follow the townsfolk’s trail to the northeast without going inside Rhyolite. That is fine—they will gain none of the knowledge from Scene B (Inside Rhyolite) but should still encounter the bandits in Scene C (Bandits!) before making their way to Scene D (Fort Ironshield).

This may lead the party to believe that the hobgoblins have taken the townsfolk as prisoners, which is in fact not the case.

SCENE B. INSIDE RHYOLITE

Residential structures encircle the “town center” featuring services such as a blacksmith and herbalist. Every building appears empty; doors are locked and the town is eerily silent.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Less than twenty buildings make up the town. The town square is an elevated speaking platform in the center of town.

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the town at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

The only remaining inhabitant in town is Brok a middle-aged human male with wide shoulders and unruly brown hair. He can be found in the town square during the day and will converse with a friendly party.

Objectives/Goals. Brok wishes to be addressed as “Mayor Brok “. Not using the honorific makes him less inclined to share the information the party seeks. He will offer the party the hospitalities of a one-man town as best he can, hustling between responsibilities such as barkeep, shopkeep and barber to keep up with the adventurers.

What Does He Know? Brok knows what happened to the rest of the residents and will share it with the adventurers if they show the proper respect he believes is due to the mayor of a frontier town such as Rhyolite. He mentions that the entire town up and left “headin’ that way” when they heard about richer

prospects higher in the mountains. The increase in bandit attacks recently made choosing to move even easier. Everyone else loaded up their belongings and headed off to the northwest two tenday ago.

Why Didn’t He Go? Brok is acutely aware that one person cannot run a town, but he had hoped more townsfolk would stay. He also “doesn’t like bullies” and didn’t feel safe leaving; plus the towns stores of food and supplies should last him quite a while alone.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Given they take the time to speak with Brok he may be inclined to share more than what is mentioned above. Each requires an act of kindness towards him, a purchase at any of the establishments he runs, or a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. A party leaning towards exploration can find the same information in notes or journals, gated behind success of the types of checks the party wishes to make (Investigation, Thieves’ Tools, etc.).

- A band of hobgoblins bullied the town into leaving. Although they never drew their weapons, their words were threatening enough to cow the town. (“He was suggesting everybody leave, but wasn’t really suggesting, if you know what I mean.”)
- The hobgoblin leader, Savrung, promised safer and more lucrative mining in a different village but didn’t say its name or where it was.
- The reason the towns supplies will sustain Brok so long are because the villagers left in a hurry with only the supplies they could throw into baskets and small carts.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

There is no real opportunity for combat in this scene. Brok is incapable of defending himself from a well-armed party such as the adventurers.

EXPLORATION

Given they make the successful checks in the “Outside Town” section, it is possible for the party to gather enough clues to follow the villagers’ to Fort Ironshield without entering Rhyolite. They will have gained nothing from the “Extra Information” section.

SOCIAL

Brok will share the information in the “Extra Information” section if the party succeed on a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) group check.

SCENE C. BANDITS!

Bandits, expecting no resistance from the remaining townsfolk have come to pillage whatever has been left behind. This encounter can happen during the investigation of Rhyolite or anywhere in the surrounding area.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

Bandits are threatening the safety of the villages in this region. Finding and dismantling their operation is **Bonus Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. This encounter can happen inside Rhyolite or the area nearby. A description of Rhyolite is given above, otherwise the hills of the terrain allow the bandits to approach the party without being noticed.

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the town at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

The raiding party is led by Treklaz, a female **Orc Blade of Ilneval**. The rest are 3 **veterans** and 3 **bandit captains**, all humans and half-orcs. Each decorates their armor with crimson red paint.

Objectives/Goals. The bandits expect to loot another abandoned town. Treklaz oversees this gang through fear so she will not back down from a challenge or insult.

What Does She Know? This is not the first town Treklaz has raided recently, but it is the first with armed defenders. She mentions they are part of the Red Scale Gang led by Mavedosk (a **Half-Red**

Dragon Veteran found in **Bonus Objective A**) and that crossing them is a deadly proposition. All raiders know the location of their hideout in a cave ten miles away; the mangy horses they ride are tied up to some trees nearby.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

This adventure does not put the party in an urgent time crunch, so this is likely the only combat they will have before taking a long rest. The difficulty of this combat is tuned to this assumption.

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Replace all **veterans** and **bandit captains** with **thugs** given maximum hit points (50).
- **Weak:** Replace the 3 **veterans** with 2 **Orc Claws of Luthic**.
- **Strong:** Add 1 **veteran** and 1 **Orc Claw of Luthic**.
- **Very Strong:** Add 3 **veterans** and 1 **Blade of Ilneval**.

COMBAT ADJUSTMENT: GRUUMSH LOVES SLAUGHTER!

In this encounter the **Orc Blade of Ilneval** *Ilneval's Command* Action is meant to be usable on any of their allies and not limited to orcs. Any additional **Orc Claws of Luthic** or **Orc Blades of Ilneval** added to this encounter can be humans, half-orcs or orcs (no change to the stat block necessary).

The last one or two bandits turn cowardly, offering the party the location of their hideout and a pledge to make honest wages if allowed to leave with their lives. One carries a crudely made map with directions back to their cave as well. This give the adventurers the opportunity the pursue **Bonus Objective A (Bandits, Begone)** found in **Appendix 6**.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The bandits aren't easily frightened and won't back down from a challenge. They came to fight and steal from the village.

EXPLORATION

If the adventurers are exploring town when the bandits arrive they can attempt to hide from the bandits with a successful group Dexterity (Stealth) check against DC 13.

SOCIAL

A successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) can get any survivors to mention the deadfall traps set up in the bandits' cave.

SCENE D. FORT IRONSHIELD

Hours of travel later, the townsfolk's trail eventually leads into a fortification built into the mountainside. Surrounded by strategic trenches and palisade walls, it is imposing. Guards keep watch from secure towers at the perimeter of the fort. A handful of farms surround the fort and are being worked by hobgoblins.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Goblinoid War Camp on page 51 of *Volo's Guide to Monsters* is a good representation of the layout of this camp. It features sturdily built palisade walls, a large training yard, an armory and command center.

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the camp at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark.

Lookouts. Trees have been felled within 200 feet of the camp making a stealthy approach impossible. Hobgoblins on watch duty make it clear that anyone approaching has been spotted and request they head towards the main gates to speak with the guards there. Any who do not comply are given one warning before the entire might of the camp is rallied.

WE DON'T PARLEY WITH EVIL

The adventure is written assuming the characters are willing to socially engage with the hobgoblins. A party that refuses will have a much harder time discovering Vanglas and Garrock. If this appears to be the case, try focusing on the "softer" side of the hobgoblins—there are women and children in camp and no slaves. The hobgoblins want to live here, not necessarily enslave and conquer the local population as the party may suspect. A party which insists on ignoring the hobgoblins can discover Vanglas after 3d6+3 days but more commoners have been worked to death in Vanglas' mines.

CREATURES/NPCs

Dozens of hobgoblins serve as lookouts while others manufacture weapons and armor. There is a clear chain of command, with Savrung the Liberator (a **champion**) at the top; the adventurers are directed to him.

Objectives/Goals. The hobgoblins have been ordered not to escalate hostilities with outsiders. Savrung is being compensated well by Garrock for "encouraging" the local populace to relocate to Vanglas. They are setting up their fortified camp to serve as a waypoint between the towns high in the mountains and the cities near the Moonsea. This is not altruistic; they will be enacting a tax on all goods and persons who pass through their camp. He believes this is a small burden for the populace to bear in exchange for the hobgoblins to bring security to such a lawless frontier.

What Does He Know? Savrung knows where the townsfolk went: to a mining village higher in the Earthspur Mountains called Vanglas. Its leader is an earth genasi known as Garrock [**DM NOTE: this is Garrock's disguised form—Savrung does not know he is a dao.**] His forthright attitude with this information may seem suspicious, but a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check notes he is not sharing all he knows. A DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) prompts him to share his suspicions with the group: Garrock seems motivated to extract more than just gems out of the ground. Garrock seemed to be looking for something specific but never mentioned what that was.

Bringing the Camp to Life. If there is time to spare in this episode, the party can spend some time in camp. Suggested moments are described in "Playing the Pillars" below.

At the conclusion of this scene, the party should know that the townsfolk of Rhyolite have relocated to Vanglas, another mining town. This is **Story Objective A**. Proceed to Episode 3.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

Four hobgoblins are practicing archery and invite the characters to a friendly competition. Four ranges are set up with ACs of 10/14/18/24 worth 1/3/5/8 "points". Each participant takes three shots. These hobgoblins have +5 to hit with their longbows.

EXPLORATION

A falconer is training a new clutch of falcons to hunt small prey. The party can assist in the training with Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Animal Handling, Survival) checks of 12 or higher.

SOCIAL

Hobgoblins love two things: combat and telling stories of their exploits in combat. A few veterans are drinking devilfire whiskey and exchanging war stories. Any who impress them with a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidate, Persuasion or Performance) check earn their respect.

EPISODE 3: HIGHER EARTHSPUR (STORY OBJECTIVE B)

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

VANGLAS

In this episode, the adventurers have reached Vanglas, the new safe haven opened by the earth genasi Garrock. The townsfolk (including many from Rhyolite) say they are happy but something doesn't seem quite right. In truth they are now isolated high in the mountains, trapped by Garrock's oversight of trade and logistics and his ability to discover new veins of gems and minerals.

PREREQUISITES

The characters must have discovered Vanglas (this is the conclusion of Episode 2) before beginning this episode.

STORY OBJECTIVE B

Putting a stop to Garrock and his oppressive mining operation is **Story Objective B**.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

Uncovering the secrets within an ancient dwarven temple is **Bonus Objective B**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the town at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark. The mine is naturally dark but there is plenty of artificial light from lanterns illuminating the area.

AN EARTH GENASI DIVINER?

The party will meet Garrock in this episode. He uses the *disguise self* ability noted under "Disguises" header of **Variant: Genie Powers** on page 144 of the *Monster Manual* to appear as a male earth genasi. His uncanny ability to direct the miners towards new riches is because he spends so much of his time earth gliding through the mountain seeking an entrance to the temple of Dumathoin described in **Bonus Objective B**.

SCENE A. VANGLAS

The air up here is noticeably thinner than at lower elevations. Nearby mountain tops are snow-covered regardless of the season and the view can easily be described as picturesque. Vanglas itself looks like any other mining town in the region with sturdy buildings and workers on their way to and from the nearby mines.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Less than thirty buildings make up the town. The entrance to the mine is past all the buildings, carved into the mountain.

Lighting. The adventurers can interact with the town at a time of their choosing. This adventure assumes during the day with plenty of light but descriptions may have to be adjusted if it is dark.

Sounds. The rhythmic tap-tapping of picks in the mine can be heard at any time of day.

CREATURES/NPCS

The villagers of Vanglas are well-intentioned folk, brought up here to this isolated mining town through the machinations of Garrock. They believe he is an earth genasi diviner due to his uncanny knack for directing the miners towards riches in the mine.

Objectives/Goals. Some villagers feel like something is off about life up here in Vanglass but haven't pieced together what that is yet. They are mostly just happy to feel safer up here than the lower elevations.

Villagers. The villagers here are mostly humans who labor as miners (use the **commoner** stat block). Below is a list of sample NPCs the party can come across with a short description to help bring the character to life. Feel free to create your own as well. Each villager can provide one rumor, noted in the next section.

- “Brawny” Brady. Male human, mid 20’s. His chest hair is a tangled mess peeking out from the collar of his shirt.
- Shem Wicker. Male human, 50’s. His left eye is clearly a false eye from “an old war injury” he suffered earlier in life.
- Mintella “Mint” Tinderfoot. Female halfling, 50’s. She doesn’t work the mine but is an apt apothecary. Greets everyone three times (e.g. “Hi, good morning—how are you?”).
- Alamma. Female human, 30’s. She always has her pet ferret named Rascal with her.

Rumors. As the party explores Vanglas they can interact with NPCs as noted above in the Villagers section. Each has heard a rumor about the town, chosen from the list below.

- My family headed up from the town of Rhyolite which was being threatened by bandits. (TRUE)
- There’s some kind of Dwarven temple down in the deepest mine. Everyone’s too scared to enter though. (TRUE)
- The rock up here must be less stable than other rock I’ve worked. Way too many cave-ins... (FALSE: Garrock kills the miners who excavate the temple to keep its presence a secret.)
- Garrock is so in tune with the earth that he can smell gemstones. We’ll all be rich! (PARTLY TRUE)
- I heard the dark dwarves are upset we’re digging into earth they claim as their own. (FALSE)
- Maybe the air is too thin, but a lot of the miners quit after just a tenday or two. (FALSE: They are killed or worked to death)
- The yellow diamonds only come from one specific tunnel. The guards check to make sure no one is pocketing them for themselves. (TRUE)

After learning more about the rumors the party should be more suspicious about Garrock and his motives. Proceed to Scene B when they enter the mine to investigate.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The townsfolk flee at the first sign of violence.

EXPLORATION

The villagers notify Garrock of characters who act suspiciously, such as failing Stealth checks or casting flashy spells.

SOCIAL

A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check can prompt a villager to provide another rumor from the list.

SCENE B. GUARDS?

After entering the mines and walking down the main corridor, a few guards stand lazily overseeing the flow of miners in and out of the mine where work is being focused. Smaller passages that terminate in worked veins of ore and gems shoot off from this corridor.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Mine tunnels are typically ten feet wide with ten foot ceilings.

Lighting. The mine is naturally dark but there is plenty of artificial light from lanterns illuminating the area

CREATURES/NPCs

General description of the creatures/NPCs involved in the scene. Mention anything about them that is out of the ordinary.

Objectives/Goals. Their instructions from Garrock are to keep “intruders out of the mine”. In this remote mining town this seems completely unnecessary but four **thugs** do their best to inspect the people and good coming into the mine. Typical miners are almost exclusively human so any “unusual” races will catch the guards’ attention such as tieflings, kenku or goblinoids.

What Do They Know? The guards on duty aren’t sure why Garrock wants a security presence. Today is just one in a long series of uneventful days as far as they’re concerned; if the adventurers put any effort into getting past they shouldn’t have too much trouble succeeding.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

No adjustment is necessary since the guards here are not meant to challenge any party.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The guards are no match for a party so instead attempt to raise an alarm if forced into combat. They scatter and flee, hoping to alert Garrock deeper in the mines.

EXPLORATION

Causing a disruption such as a minor cave-in can be accomplished with appropriate skill or tool checks against a DC of 14. This distraction affords the characters time to slip past the guards into the next scene.

SOCIAL

There are plenty of extra mining supplies (working clothes and tools) to provide the characters with disguises, offering advantage on any Deception checks made to pass the guards.

SCENE C. EXCAVATION

The sounds of labor echo loudest from this chamber. An earth genasi dressed in fine brown robes oversees the miners as they extract riches from the mine's walls.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The walls have been worked out to form a conical chamber roughly 60 feet in diameter at the top. There are three levels progressively stepped downwards with sloped walkways.

Lighting. The mine is naturally dark but there is plenty of artificial light from lanterns illuminating the area.

CREATURES/NPCs

Garrock the **dao** is here in his disguise as an earth genasi. One loyal **gargoyle** and one **earth elemental** are here as well, the elemental is hiding within the mine's rock walls until combat starts.

Objectives/Goals. Garrock won't humor any mortals (such as the adventurers) impeding his plans. He uses his *plane shift* only if severely weakened, and if he escapes he will spend all of his time plotting revenge against the characters.

What Does He Know? Garrock is currently being frustrated by the *hallow* warding elemental creatures from entering the abandoned dwarven temple to Dumathoin he has excavated in the bottom of this chamber. He doesn't trust any of the miners to have the intellect to solve the puzzles or the strength to fight the guardians waiting within, nor

does he wish to share its riches. He is willing to deceitfully bargain with the characters for a portion of the goods waiting inside the temple, hoping they are weakened enough to be overcome if they return.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Reduce Garrock's hit points to 150. Garrock can only use fist attacks with the multiattack action. Remove all **earth elementals**.
- **Weak:** remove the **earth elemental**.
- **Strong:** Replace the **gargoyle** with an **earth elemental**.
- **Very Strong:** Replace the **gargoyle** and **earth elemental** with 2 **earth elemental myrmidons**.

TREASURE & REWARDS

A newly discovered vein of yellow diamonds catch the eye of miners and characters alike. Garrock was channeling the essence of the plane of Earth into them but didn't complete the process. Each mined shard is powerful enough to serve as an *elemental gem*.

- **Elemental Gem (Yellow diamond).** This roughly cut yellow diamond is very dense and heavier than you would expect from its size. See **Appendix 9** for more details.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

Garrock and **earth elementals** can easily move through the earth to appear in advantageous spots after combat starts.

EXPLORATION

With no brakes applied, a mine cart (currently two at the top) descends at a rate of one level per round, reaching the bottom after three rounds. It provides half cover to its occupants and this movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

SOCIAL

The miners could be killed as collateral damage in area of effect spells. A DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check can arrest their panic long enough to cause them to flee out of the chamber and away from the danger.

Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

After taking care of Garrock there are some loose ends to tie up. Vanglas is an isolated town but seems to be rich in mineable resources. The characters may have a say in what happens to the town. As the quest giver, Zora Jeslee will be interested to know what happened to the citizens of Rhyolite and whether they stay or return. The hobgoblins are another plot thread to resolve; can they be trusted to keep peace in the region without becoming a greater threat to the people around the Moonsea?

ADVENTURE REWARDS

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint(s) and **1** treasure checkpoint(s) for each **story objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective A:** Discover where the townsfolk are being relocated to.
- **Story Objective B:** Put a stop to Garrock and his oppressive mining operation.

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint(s) and **1** treasure checkpoint(s) for each **bonus objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A:** Remove a bandit threat from the surrounding area.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Uncover the secrets within an ancient dwarven temple.

PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

Elemental Gem (Yellow diamond). This gem contains a mote of elemental energy. When you use an action to break the gem, an elemental is summoned as if you had cast the *conjure elemental* spell, and the gem's magic is lost. The type of gem determines the elemental summoned by the spell. This item is found on **Magic Item Table B** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

APPENDIX 1: LOCATIONS & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Mayor Brok (MAY or brock).** The only villager who didn't abandon Rhyolite after the hobgoblins suggested they leave, he now considers himself the (unanimously elected) mayor. Keeping an entire town running is difficult but he is doing his best.

Personality: *The small-town life is perfect for me—difficult but satisfying.*

Ideal: *I don't like bullies or anyone who tells others what to do.*

Bond: *Rhyolite is more than the people who live (or used to live) here.*

Flaw: *I don't know when to give up.*

- **Savrun "The Liberator" (SAV rung).** Savrun is a clever hobgoblin warlord. He knows that with a strong military you don't need to conquer a land to rule it. He has agreed to help Garrock because more people that live higher in the Earthspur Mountains means more demand for a safe passage through their mountainous home.

Personality: *Show me respect and you'll receive it in turn.*

Ideal: *Oppressive society is better than no society.*

Bond: *My hobgoblin brethren and I are unstoppable together.*

Flaw: *I can focus on the long game to the detriment of immediate needs.*

- **Garrock (GAR ock).** Garrock, a dao genie disguises himself as an earth genasi. His grand scheme is to make people across the frontier think they are freely choosing to relocate to the village he founded, Vanglas. In fact, he has been manipulating forces such as the local bandits and hobgoblins for his own benefit. After they are high in the mountains and isolated from anyone else, Garrock uses the townsfolk as indentured servants to mine deeper and deeper into the earth.

Personality: *My schemes will make me rich!*

Ideal: *It's easier to rule when the people think it was their decision.*

Bond: *Genie-kind deserve to rule mortals.*

Flaw: *I am obsessed with discovering long-lost knowledge.*

- **Mavedosk (May vuh dosk).** Ruthless leader of the Red Scale Gang. He keeps his power in the gang through toughness and intimidation; he believes any sign of weakness will leave him in a shallow grave.

Personality: *I take whatever I want. Who's going to stop me?*

Ideal: *Power is taken by the ones who want it the most.*

Bond: *The Red Scales will become the most ferocious gang of raiders across the Moonsea region.*

Flaw: *No surrender! No quarter!*

- **Rhyolite (RI oh lite).** Like other towns in the region, no one is exactly sure why the townsfolk all left Rhyolite. An investigation by the characters is what kicks off the adventure. Rhyolite is abandoned by all the townsfolk except Brok, who has elected himself mayor. Previously holding thirty or so people, he is the only one remaining when the characters arrive.

- **Vanglas (VANE glass).** Much higher in the Earthspur Mountains than Rhyolite, Vanglas is a mining town experiencing a surge in population and good fortune in its mines. These are both due to the actions of Garrock the disguised dao.

APPENDIX 2: CREATURE STATISTICS

ARCHER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +5

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Archer's Eye (3/Day). As a bonus action, the archer can add 1d10 to its next attack or damage roll with a longbow or shortbow.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

BANDIT CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

BARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (Chain Shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws DEX +4, WIS +3

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The bard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *mage hand*, *vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *healing word*, *heroism*, *sleep*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *shatter*

Song of Rest. The bard can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The bard can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Taunt (2/Day). The bard can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the bard, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the bard's next turn.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws STR +9, CON +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses Passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

DAO

Large elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 187 (15d10 + 105)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws INT +5, WIS +5, CHA +6

Condition Immunities Petrified

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Terran

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Earth Glide. The dao can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the dao doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Elemental Demise. If the dao dies, its body disintegrates into crystalline powder, leaving behind only equipment the dao was wearing or carrying.

Innate Spellcasting. The dao's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect evil and good, detect magic, stone shape*
3/day each: *passwall, move earth, tongues*
1/day each: *conjure elemental (earth elemental only), gaseous form, invisibility, phantasmal killer, plane shift, wall of stone*

Sure-Footed. The dao has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dao makes two fist attacks or two maul attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength check or be knocked prone.

EARTH ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Thunder

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Earth Glide. The elemental can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the dao doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Siege Monster. The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

EARTH ELEMENTAL MYRMIDON

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Vulnerabilities Thunder

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Earth Glide. The elemental can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the dao doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Siege Monster. The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The myrmidon makes two maul attacks.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Thunderous Strike (Recharge 6). The myrmidon makes one maul attack. If the attack hits, it deals an extra 16 (3d10) thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

HALF-RED DRAGON VETERAN

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances Fire

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The veteran exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

ORC BLADE OF ILNEVAL

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (Chain Mail, Shield)

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws WIS +3

Skills Insight +3, Intimidation +4, Perception +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Foe Smiter of Ilneval. The orc deals an extra die of damage when it hits with a longsword attack (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orc makes two melee attacks with its longsword or two ranged attacks with its javelins. If Ilneval's Command is available to use, the orc can use it after these attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage when used with two hands.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Ilneval's Command (Recharge 4–6). Up to three allied orcs within 120 feet of this orc that can hear it can use their reactions to each make one weapon attack.

ORC CLAW OF LUTHIS

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (Hide Armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2, Medicine +4, Survival +4

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Spellcasting. The orc is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The orc has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, guiding bolt*

2nd level (3 slots): *augury, warding bond*

3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse, create food and water*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orc makes two claw attacks, or four claw attacks if it has fewer than half of its hit points remaining.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

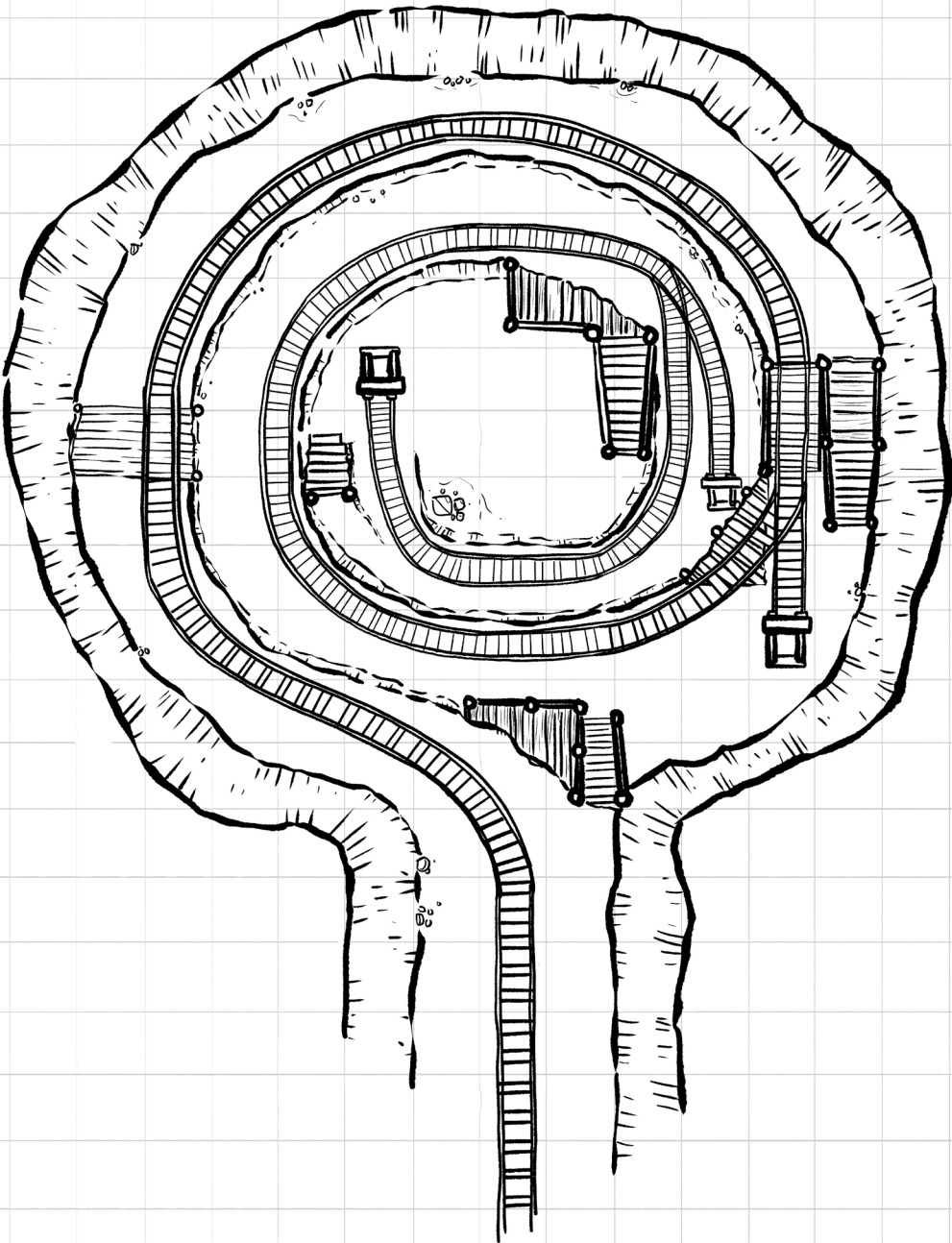
Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

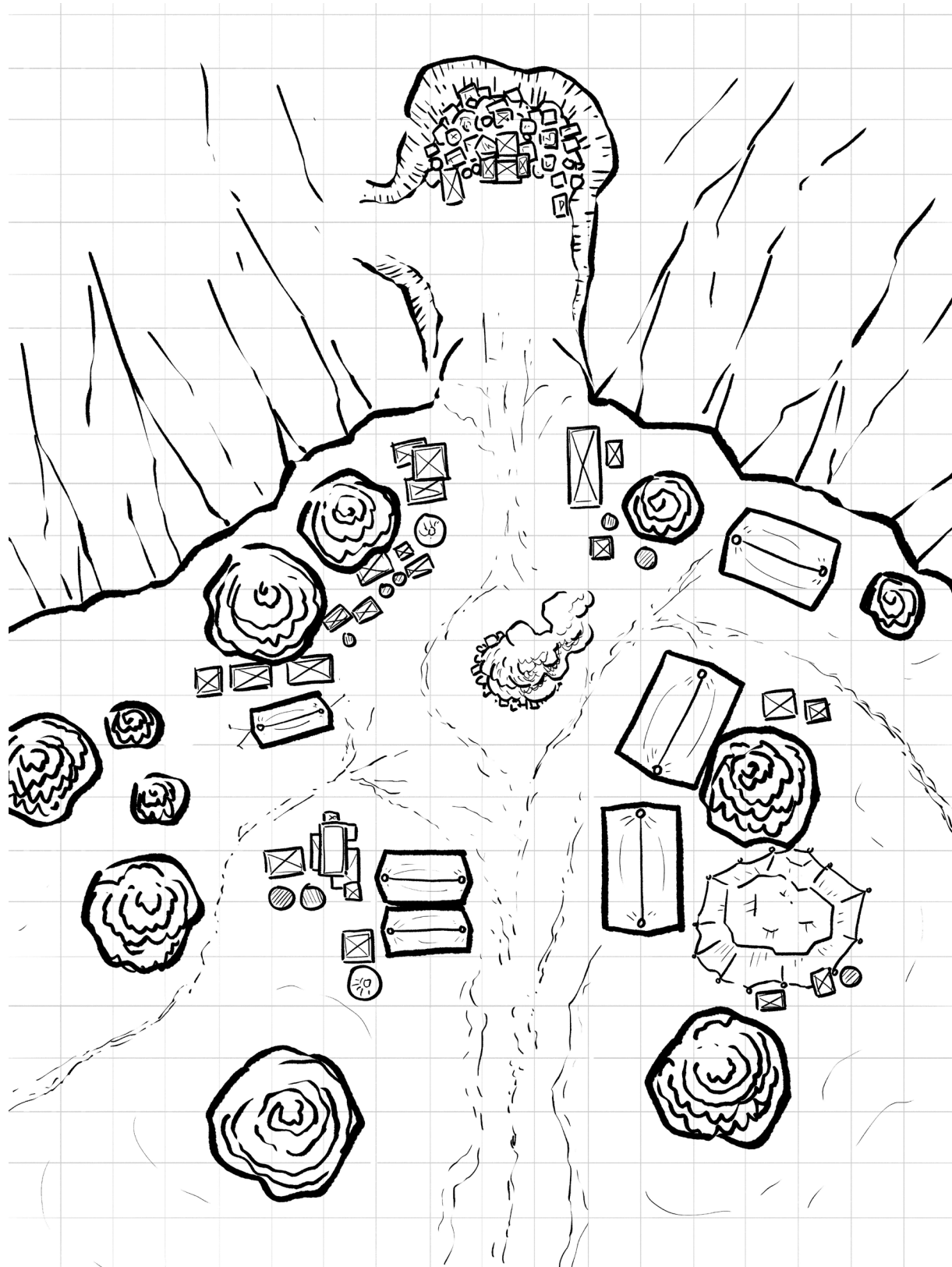
Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

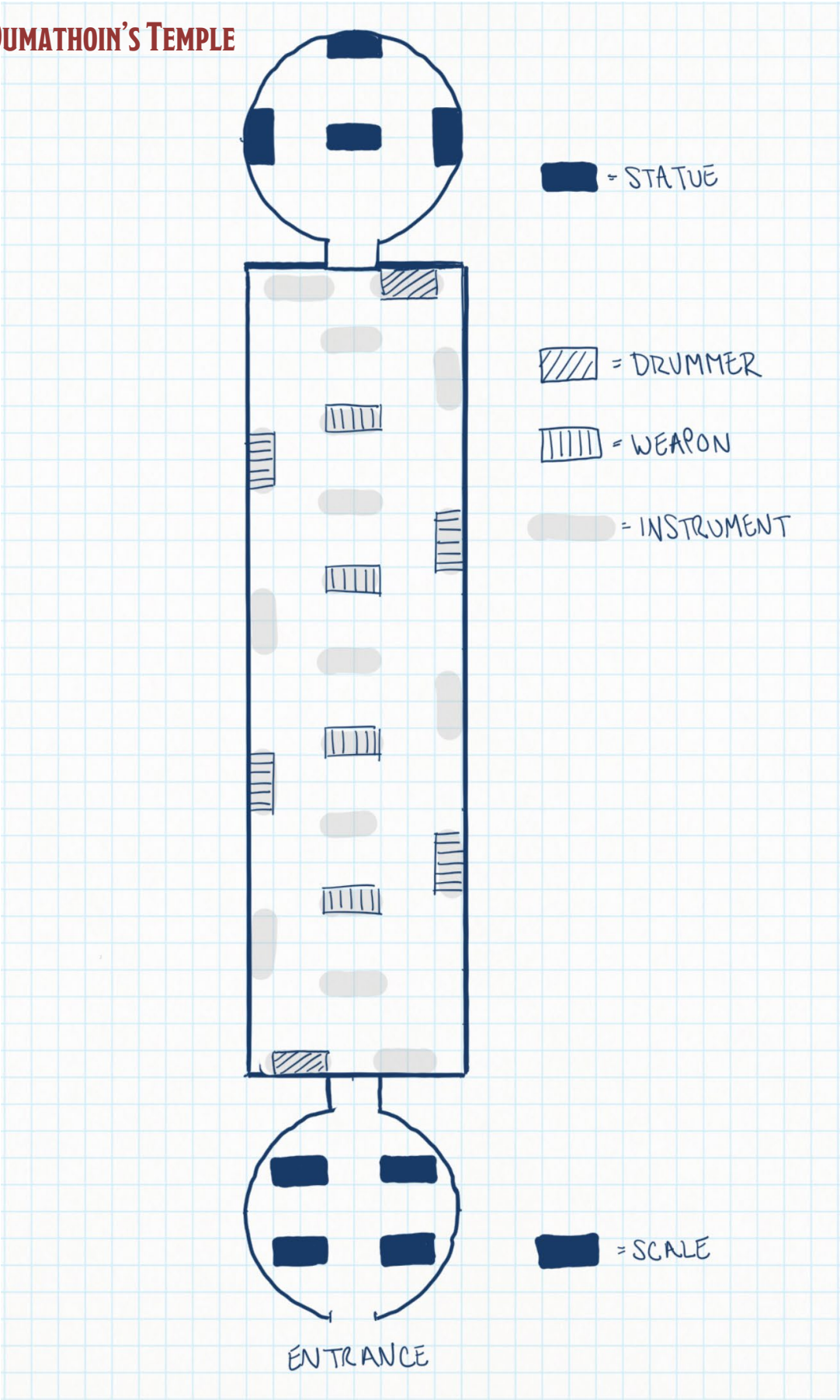
APPENDIX 3: MAP OF THE MINES



APPENDIX 4: MAP OF THE BANDIT CAMP



APPENDIX 5: MAP OF DUMATHOIN'S TEMPLE



APPENDIX 6: BANDITS, BEGONE (BONUS OBJECTIVE A.)

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

SCENE A. SING US A SONG

The bandits that intended to pillage Rhyolite in Episode 2, Scene C reveal the location of their hideout. This scene takes place outside their hideout as the adventurers survey the surroundings. Stacks of looted goods litter the ground around their camp. At the center is a shallow cave which members of the gang enter and exit infrequently. A map of the surroundings is provided in **Appendix 4: Map of the Bandit Camp**.

CREATURES/NPCs

All the members of the Red Scale Gang decorate their clothing and armor with crimson paint. Currently 2 **bandit captains**, 2 **archers** and 2 **orc Claws of Luthic** are here in good spirits. Plundering from abandoned towns is much easier and safer than ambushing traveling merchants.

Objectives/Goals. Their goal is to enjoy the pilfered food and drink from their most recent theft. A female elf bard was kidnapped along the road as well. They boisterously encourage her to sing songs for them.

What Do They Know? The gang members here mention that Mavedosk also loves good music, offering the characters an opportunity to get close to him without alerting the suspicions of everyone in camp.

COMBAT

If combat breaks out, one of the bandits will grapple their hostage and use her to improve their AC by 2 as they retreat towards the cave and reinforcements.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

EXPLORATION

Looted goods are stacked into various piles around the camp, providing spots to stealthily approach. A DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) gives a character the opportunity to stealthily approach the bandits. A second check evades them long enough to reach the cave in Scene B.

SOCIAL

There are few enough members of the Red Scale Gang that it takes more than just putting on a uniform to fool the bandits. A group DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check can keep this group of drunk guards from sounding an alarm.

The Bard. Mistriel is a high elf bard (use the **bard** stat block) taken by these Red Scale bandits. She is grateful for rescue but has little to offer in return other than her eternal gratitude. She will ask the characters for their names so she may compose a song as thanks.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

This adventure does not put the party in an urgent time crunch, so the difficulty of this bonus objective is tuned to the assumption the party is at full strength and will long rest after this objective.

- **Very Weak:** Replace both **bandit captains** with 2 **thugs** given maximum hit points (50) and remove both **archers**.
- **Weak:** Remove both **archers**.
- **Strong:** Add 1 **Orc Blade of Ilneval**.
- **Very Strong:** Replace both **bandit captains** with **veterans** and add 2 **Orc Blades of Ilneval**.

COMBAT ADJUSTMENT: GRUUMSH LOVES SLAUGHTER!

In this encounter the **Orc Blades of Ilneval Ilneval's Command Action** is meant to be usable on any of their allies and not limited to orcs. Any **Orc Claws of Luthic** or **Orc Blades of Ilneval** in this encounter can be humans, half-orcs or orcs (no change to the stat block necessary).

SCENE B. MAVEDOSK

The assembled bandits offer praise to their leader. Nearly seven feet tall and covered in red scales, Mavedosk stands near the back of the cave, surrounded by their ill-gotten gains, giving a rousing speech of how the presence of Red Scale Gang members is causing dozens—nay hundreds—of people, to flee as fast as they can from the countryside.

CREATURES/NPCs

Mavedosk, a **Half-Red Dragon Veteran** promises more of the same success the Red Scales have had recently to the assembled gang of 1 **enchanter** and 4 **bandit captains**.

Objectives/Goals. Encouraged by his rousing speech, all bandits present fight to the death.

What Does He Know? Mavedosk is in a mutually beneficial arrangement with Garrock. The bandits are supposed to harass local villages enough that the townsfolk are convinced to leave. After the town is empty, Mavedosk and his gang are free to loot what they want. Where the villagers are going, he doesn't know or care, but admits it probably has something to do with his arrangement with Garrock.

Deadfall Traps. There are two deadfall traps set up inside the cave. They are controlled by a crude pulley system to drop rocks when the ropes are untied or cut. The rocks fall in a ten-foot square area, requiring anyone underneath to make a DC 12

Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success. All the bandits know where the controls and triggered areas are and will use them against their enemies.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

This adventure does not put the party in an urgent time crunch, so the difficulty of this bonus objective is tuned to the assumption the party is at full strength and will long rest after this objective.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **enchanter** and replace all 4 **bandit captains** with 4 **thugs** given maximum hit points (50).
- **Weak:** Remove the **enchanter**.
- **Strong:** Replace the **enchanter** with a **Warlock of the Great Old One** and replace 2 **bandit captains** with 2 **veterans**.
- **Very Strong:** Replace the **enchanter** with a **Warlock of the Great Old One** and replace all 4 **bandit captains** with 4 **veterans** and add 2 **Orc Blades of Ilneval**.

COMBAT ADJUSTMENT: GRUUMSH LOVES SLAUGHTER!

In this encounter the **Orc Blade of Ilneval** *Ilneval's Command* Action is meant to be usable on any of their allies and not limited to orcs. Any **Orc Claws of Luthic** or **Orc Blades of Ilneval** in this encounter can be humans, half-orcs or orcs (no change to the stat block necessary).

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

Two more enemies (**thugs** or **bandit captains**) arrive during the third round of combat from a side passage.

EXPLORATION

A clever or stealthy party could turn the deadfall traps against the bandits, sowing chaos within their cave.

SOCIAL

A party impersonating Red Scale members or musicians could gain the benefits of a surprise round or divide this large group of enemies up into smaller ones.

APPENDIX 7: DUMATHOIN DECIPHERED (BONUS OBJECTIVE B.)

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

SCENE A. ENTRANCE CHAMBER

At the bottom of the mined chamber where Garrock was located is an opening of worked stone, different from the natural rock of the rest of the chamber. The stones are old and well-made; the work of dwarves long ago. A map of the temple is provided in

Appendix 5: Map of Dumathoin's Temple.

The entire temple is under the effects of a permanent *hallow* spell, preventing elementals, fiends and undead from entering.

It's a Puzzle! The first room of worked stone is an entrance chamber into the temple of Dumathoin, Dwarven god of buried secrets. It is a circular room 40 feet in diameter. Four twelve foot tall statues of dwarves each hold a set of scales in their left hand. Each statue has a numeral prominently carved into the chest piece of its armor; the numbers are "0", "1", "2" and "3".

One stone tablet rests on each side of every scale for a total of eight tablets. Each tablet also clearly has a number etched into it. The numbers on these tablets and which scale they can be found on (see the "Starting Position") is provided in **Appendix 8:**

Player Handout 1.

The Rules. A tablet with a larger number must be placed on the left side of the scale than the number on the right [16,3 is a valid combination to try while 10,15 is not]. The magic of the tablets and scales causes a repulsion between tablets and scale if a larger number is placed to the right of a smaller number.

While the correct numbers are resting on the balance, the scales glow with a warm light. This puzzle has only a single solution, noted below.

COMBAT

There is no real opportunity for the combat pillar in this scene.

EXPLORATION

There is no real opportunity for the exploration pillar in this scene. This is meant to challenge the players more than the characters. A successful DC 10 Intelligence check could be used to provide clues if necessary.

SOCIAL

There is no real opportunity for the social pillar in this scene.

Modulo. Solving the puzzle revolves around the modulo (also known as the remainder) of the two numbers placed on the balance. For example, the modulo of:

10/5 is **0** (2 with a remainder of **0**),

10/4 is **2** (2 with a remainder of **2**) and

10/3 is **1** (3 with a remainder of **1**).

The Solution. The numbered tablets must be placed in such a way as to create the correct modulo on each set of scales at the same time.

The answer is:

	Left	Right
Scale 0	10	2
Scale 1	16	5
Scale 2	8	3
Scale 3	15	4

When solved, a hidden door with a hallway to the Hall of Heroes appears to the north.

Hints. If the players become stuck, a series of hints may be able to help them understand how to solve the puzzle.

- Both the numbers on the scales and tablets are significant to solving the puzzle.
- The division of the numbers on the scale is key to finding the answer.
- All tablets can be moved, including the 10 and 5 on the "0 scale".

PLAYING THE PILLARS

SCENE B. DRUMS IN THE DEEP

The next room is a massive gathering hall. It is 150 feet long and 40 feet wide.

Twelve foot tall statues of dwarves with various tools and armaments are spaced equally the length of the room. Eight carry hammers and axes while others various musical instruments and mining tools. At each end of the room a statue stands adjacent to a large stone drum.

Rock Music. When the characters enter the room, the arms of the drummers raise and strike the stone drum beside them, filling the room with thunderous reverberations. The beat (and volume) quickly increases, filling the room with painfully deafening pounding. At the same time the heavy stone doors to and from the room slam shut.

Rock and Roll. As the drummers drum, the statues with weapons begin to whirl them in deadly arcs, threatening to injure any who get too close. They also begin to roll around the room on wheels in unpredictable configurations. **Two** statues are active and attack during the first round; **two** more activate each round until a total of **eight** have been activated in the fourth round.

It's a Trap! The different statues here act as a complex trap described in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. The trap's elements and initiative they act on are described below.

Initiative 20: The drums pound loudly, forcing all who can hear them to make a DC 14 Constitution save or take 22 (4d10) thunder damage and are deafened until the end of their next turn. Those with successful saves take half damage and are not deafened. Dwarves are immune to this thunder damage but not the deafness side effect.

Initiative 10: The drummers strike their drums in unison, creating a powerful shockwave. This forces all characters in the room to make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. This is strong enough to cause characters secured to the walls (e.g. those with climb speeds or under the effects of the *spider climb* spell) to fall back to the ground if they fail their saving throws.

Initiative 0: The statues with weapons swing their weapons, striking at characters on the ground in this

room. Each statue attacks with a +6 bonus and deals 14 (4d6) slashing or bludgeoning damage on a hit. The number of attacks that can be made depends upon the number of active statues. Regardless of where they are in relation to the statues, any character can only be targeted once per round. Who is attacked can be determined randomly or at the discretion of the DM.

Countermeasures: There are two major elements the characters have to deal with in this room, the drummers and the statues with weapons. All statues have an AC of 14 and 50 hit points and can be destroyed like any object. Both types of statues have moving parts that can be disabled with thieves' tools. It takes two successful checks versus a DC of 12 to render one statue inert and statues work at full strength until disabled. Each type of statue has unique ways its effects can be disabled as well:

Drummers: If a drum is targeted with a silence spell it cannot deal thunder damage. When one drum is silenced, the number of dice rolled for thunder damage is reduced by half. While both are silenced no Constitution saving throw for damage or deafness is necessary.

Weapons: A character who uses their action to attempt a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check can cause one statue to strike another, dealing 14 (4d6) damage. At least two statues must be active for this to work.

The Doors. If the party rushes through the room to the far side, the exit door can be lifted with two DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks. The elements of the trap which were not disabled reset when there are no living creatures in the room. They would have to be dealt with on the way back out.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** There is only one drumming statue and it deals 11 (2d10) thunder damage. Weapon statues deal 10 (3d6) damage. The DC for all aspects of the trap is 12.
- **Very Strong:** Weapon statues attack with +8 and deal 18 (4d8) damage. Each character can be targeted twice if enough statues have been activated.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

There is no real opportunity for the combat pillar in this scene.

EXPLORATION

The statues magically detect the presence of living creatures, so it is impossible to sneak past them.

SOCIAL

There is no real opportunity for the social pillar in this scene.

SCENE C. RIDDLE ME THIS

The final room in Dumathoin's temple is a cluttered mess. Hundreds of different type of weapons, armor and tools are just some of the items that can be seen overflowing from the crates and barrels stacked above eye level in this room. Four twelve foot tall statues of dwarves are here, this time each displays a large stone tablet.

It's a Riddle! Written on each statue's tablet is a riddle the players must solve. To answer a riddle, the answer (e.g. "an axe") must be displayed before the statue. The correct answer will cause the tablet to illuminate, indicating success. The characters can provide their own item as the answer or find one in the clutter of the room. Any items found in the room fall apart if taken from the temple.

First Riddle.

I can have one head or two. It always has a beard.

Answer: an axe.

Second Riddle.

There are many different kinds. Once it's been picked it is useless.

Answer: a lock.

Third Riddle.

A little gives you courage.

A lot gives you strength.

Too much gives you a headache.

Answer: alcohol.

Fourth Riddle.

An iron roof with glass windows, but not a house.

When fed it can guide your way.

Answer: a lantern.

Success! After the four riddles have been answered correctly, the mouths of the statues are animated by a *magic mouth* spell to recite the following "Dumathoin is proud. Your reward is well earned." The stone altar in the center of the room is magically covered in gold and gems that the characters are free to take as their reward for completing Dumathoin's challenges.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

There is no real opportunity for the combat pillar in this scene.

EXPLORATION

There is no real opportunity for the exploration pillar in this scene. This is meant to challenge the players more than the characters. A successful DC 10 Intelligence check could be used to provide clues if necessary.

SOCIAL

There is no real opportunity for the social pillar in this scene.

APPENDIX 8: PLAYER HANDOUT 1



10

5



8

3



16

15



4

2

APPENDIX 9: MAGIC ITEM

Characters **completing the adventure** unlock this magic item.

ELEMENTAL GEM (YELLOW DIAMOND) (TABLE B)

Wondrous item, uncommon

This gem contains a mote of elemental energy. When you use an action to break the gem, an elemental is summoned as if you had cast the *conjure elemental* spell, and the gem's magic is lost. The type of gem determines the elemental summoned by the spell. This item is found on **Magic Item Table B** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX 10: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide

documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than		Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent		Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than		Average
5 characters, APL less than		Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent		Average
5 characters, APL greater than		Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than		Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent		Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than		Very strong