



CHAPTER 1: TROUBLE IN KNOTSIDE

Something's wrong with the people of Knotside. A few weeks ago, a popular new liquor called Red Claw showed up in the city's many taverns. Anyone that took even a sip of this spirit immediately wanted another taste. At first, these desires were nothing more than cravings. But soon, those cravings grew to obsession. Then obsession turned to violence. Now, the city of Knotside faces collapse as the red-eyed Red Claw addicts stalk the streets, desperate for more.

Unknown to the citizens of Knotside, Red Claw is the invention of a wicked red dragon that calls itself Tuckerthranx the Agitator. Only through stopping the dragon and his kobold minions will the town of Knotside be free of this booze-fueled curse.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

Clash at Kobold Cauldron is a challenging location-based adventure for four 10th-level adventurers. The adventure starts in the Royal City of Knotside and leads the characters to the Red Claw distillery where they will encounter Tuckerthranx, an adult red dragon, and his wily horde of kobolds.

While many of the encounters in the adventure are built for four 10th-level adventurers, a few are significantly more difficult, especially Tuckerthranx himself. Characters with resistance or immunity to fire damage will excel in the distillery, as will characters armed with area of effect spells. Small, light characters will also have little trouble in the Cauldron.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Knotside, for the most part, is a calm city filled with lawful citizens. Of course, being such a prosperous and thriving community, it is often the target for mischief, political subterfuge, and the occasional attack from rabble-rousers, firebrands, and evil-doers. One such evil-doer recently moved into Drakescale Peak, a mountain 25 miles to the north of Knotside—an adult red dragon named Tuckerthranx the Agitator.

Tuckerthranx (or just "Tucker" for short) stands apart from his other red-scaled brethren. Driven by an insatiable desire to grow his already-stout treasure hoard, Tucker often puts his mind and cleverness before his ego and arrogance. Knowing that attacking a city as large and well-guarded as Knotside would be pure folly, Tucker instead turned his machinations towards entrepreneurialism. With the help of

THE NAVAL CITY OF KNOTSIDE

To learn more about Knotside, you can check out [Cze and Peku's City Maps Patreon](#) that details the city, its inhabitants, and important locations therein. If you choose not to run the adventure in or near Knotside, you can use any medium or larger lawful or lawful good city near a mountain range.

a plucky kobold sorcerer/brewer named Boeger, Tucker created a tasty, alcoholic beverage named, appropriately, Red Claw.

Boeger's Red Claw wasn't just a delicious, anise-flavored spirit. It also contained a special ingredient: *dark magic*. Any creature that drank the liquor immediately desired more. At first, the liquor's effect was subtle. Hardly anyone in Knotside noticed that they were becoming addicted to the stuff. But after a couple shots, drinkers would do anything to get another taste. Knotsiders were tossing gold, jewels, gems, anything they could to get more barrels from the dragon's delivery men.

Eventually, riots broke out as the town turned towards chaos. Half of Knotside's militia tried to temper the issue and control the ravenous population. The other half were just as affected, rendered useless by their own craving for the Claw.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters' first introduction to Red Claw and its effects occurs while they are traveling just outside of Knotside, either returning from an adventure or headed to the city itself.

Just a mile or two outside of the city, read or paraphrase the following:

In the middle of the road stands a group of eight unarmored men and women. Each is holding a club in his or her hands and they're looking your way. But that's not the most troubling thing. They all have glowing red eyes and their stomachs appear unnaturally distended—almost like massive beer-guts hanging over their respective belts.

"Give us your booze money!" one of them shouts. The rest of the mob nods in agreement, then raises its clubs and approaches.

The group is made up of eight **commoners** and they are all heavily addicted to Red Claw. They've been attacking passersby, robbing them of their coins and jewelry so they can purchase more from Tucker's goons.

The commoners are easily broken, fleeing if even one of them is killed. Although possessed by their desire for more Red Claw liquor, they aren't totally suicidal.

Regardless if the characters kill the group or not, eventually the Knotside militia rides up to investigate. While the situation might look bad to a normal group of soldiers (especially if the characters killed the commoners), these militiamen already realize what's happened.

The militia is made of six **guards** riding on **war horses** led by a **veteran** named Kollias. Kollias hails the characters and asks if they need any assistance. He then explains what's happening in Knotside.

"It started about a month ago. This group of monks rode into the city offering up barrels and bottles of this liquor called Red Claw. Only a few taverns bought it and the monks left. Right away, the Red Claw was a huge hit. Anyone who had a taste immediately started speaking its praises, claiming it was the best spirit they'd ever tasted. Then the monks came back a few days later, bringing more. Soon, everyone started drinking the stuff. But the more they drank, the more of it they wanted. The third time the monks came, they were mobbed. When that supply ran out, riots started. People had to have more. The fourth time, the monks came armed. And their prices went up. Way up.

"It didn't matter, of course. The people of our city were obsessed with the liquor. They were throwing all their gold, jewels, whatever they could get their hands on onto the monk's wagons just for a few bottles of the stuff. Those who couldn't get a taste turned violent.

"We've been trying to find the source of the liquor itself, but unfortunately what few men I have left are tied up quelling the riots. If you're adventurers—and it looks like you are—then I hope you can assist us in finding the source of the Red Claw liquor, and, in turn, a way to return our citizens' sanity."

In the way of a reward, Kollias doesn't have much to offer the characters at the moment. However, he promises that the city of Knotside—the *remarkably wealthy* city of Knotside—will be in their debt. He does mention that the Red Claw monks have hauled off massive piles of coins and gems from the Knotsiders. Were the characters to find it, they are free to keep one-quarter of it. "The people of Knotside will see it as a 'fee' for your services, I'm sure," he will assure the characters.

WHAT KOLLIAS KNOWS

At this point, the characters probably have a few questions for Kollias. Here is what he knows about Red Claw and its creators.

"HOW DOES RED CLAW AFFECT THE DRINKERS?"

Kollias notes that the Red Claw itself doesn't act like a poison or a disease, but instead has more in common with a curse. The available clergy in Knotside have been working to cast *remove curse* on the infected, but they are terribly overwhelmed. Some of the sages in town theorize that if they had the original ingredients that went into creating the Red Claw, they could devise a bulk cure for everyone in town.

"WHERE DID THE MONKS THAT DELIVERED THE RED CLAW GO?"

The last time the monks came into town, they were armed. What few commoners tried to go after them were picked off by flaming arrows shot by the caravan guards. Kollias sent a scout after the monks and believes they're hiding their distillery somewhere in the Basilisk's Spine mountain range.

"WHAT DID THE MONKS LOOK LIKE?"

Kollias and his men swear that some of the monks were dragonborn. Others were short, possibly halflings. They all wore thick robes with bandages wrapped around their arms and face. Mangy-looking giant weasels pulled their carts. The guards who came with them were heavily armed and organized, but also robed, wearing red dragon masks similar to the logo on the liquor bottles.

"WILL KOLLIAS HELP THE CHARACTERS FIND THE BREWERS?"

Currently, Kollias' men are tied up with the overwhelming unrest in Knotside. He doesn't have a single hand to spare. However, he does offer a map to the mountain range.

"HAVE YOU HIRED ANYONE ELSE FOR THIS JOB?"

So far, Kollias hasn't come across any other adventurers. What few adventurers were already in Knotside were affected by the liquor. He's lucky to have caught the characters outside of the city.

RESTING IN KNOTSIDE

If the characters opt to stay the night in Knotside despite the troubles, Kollias and his men escort them to the Venerable Swordsman, an inn on the south side of that city that remains mostly unaffected by the chaos. The majority of the shops, taverns, and other points of interest in Knotside are currently closed. Kollias, fearful for his city, urges the characters not to waste too much time. He can procure whatever they need in terms of arms, ammunition, and armor from the town's armory. He can also grant up to 4 *potions of healing* per character and any basic supplies they might require.

Should the characters dally too long, Kollias eventually grows impatient and seeks out another group to solve the issue.

THE BASILISK'S SPINE

Kollias' scout followed the brewers for about 20 miles before arriving at the foothills of the Basilisk's Spine. The Spine is a jagged collection of peaks, bluffs, and sheer cliffs, boldly facing the ocean to the east. An active volcano sits at the heart of it.

TUCKER'S REGIONAL EFFECTS

Tucker is a legendary **adult red dragon**. The region surrounding his volcanic lair in Drakescale Peak is warped by his innate magic. Within 6 miles, small earthquakes are common. Sulfur taints all water sources within 1 mile, and rocky fissures form portals to the Elemental Plane of Fire—it wouldn't be out of place for the characters to run into the odd **azer**, **fire elemental**, or **salamander** war party within the region.

Minion Resistances. Thanks to his magic, all of Tucker's kobolds and henchmen have resistance to fire damage.

TRACKING THE RED CLAW CARAVAN

Once the characters discover the spot where the scout last saw the monks, they will need to track the caravan's route

through the mountains. It's been a couple days since the caravan left, so tracking it isn't easy. A character must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom (Survival) check to follow the path in the dirt.

If the characters have trouble finding the path, they can search the mountains themselves for clues. Each hour that they spend searching in the mountains, have them make a Wisdom (Survival) check with a DC equal to 25 minus 1 for each hour they spend searching for clues. Clues can include things like discarded corks from the liquor bottles, tracks in the dirt, a broken crate, or anything else that you feel is appropriate.

In addition, once per hour while the characters are searching, roll a d20. On a roll of 18-20, the characters run into a brewer caravan. Instead of rolling, you can opt to have the encounter occur whenever you feel necessary, especially if the characters haven't found any solid leads after a few hours of searching.

THE DELIVERY MEN

The characters come across the delivery men's caravan. They're set on returning to Knotside one last time to collect any remaining gold and merchandise they can. From there, they plan on targeting another city within a days' ride.

Knowing that Knotside is in dismay and the militia has caught on to their ploy, the brewers are even better prepared this time.

The caravan consists of three carts pulled by two **dire weasels** each (see the Appendix). Atop each cart is a massive hogshead barrel holding 79 gallons of Red Claw liquor. The barrels have an AC of 16 and 50 hit points, plus immunity to poison and psychic damage. Any hit on the barrel causes its contents to leak onto the dirt and rocks. The liquor is also flammable. If the cask takes fire damage, roll a d20. If the result on the d20 is less than the fire damage dealt, the cask erupts in a 20-foot radius explosion. Each creature in the area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. A flammable object in the area ignites if it isn't being worn or carried.

At the front of each cart is a **kobold** driver that's been instructed to stay seated even if they run into trouble. Should things turn bad, they are to return to base.

Leading the caravan are two cloaked **kobold wing sorcerers** each with two **ogre** bodyguards. It doesn't take long for the kobolds to figure out that the adventurers are there to stop their operation. They immediately attack. If they are reduced to half their numbers or fewer, the kobolds pile onto the carts and retreat. Fully loaded, the weasels have a movement speed of 20 feet, 40 feet if they Dash, so it should be easy to chase them. The kobolds aren't afraid to cut away the barrels to increase their speed. This gives the weasels their normal movement speed of 40 feet.

Once the characters defeat or drive off the brewers, the tracks they leave should be easy enough to follow to the Red Claw Distillery, requiring no further Wisdom (Survival) checks.



CHAPTER 2: RED CLAW DISTILLERY

The trail the brewers left behind leads to a blackened, dismal canyon littered with razor-sharp obsidian shards, dead trees, and lifeless ash. The temperature here is hot and dry, like standing in front of an oven, even during the winter.

When the characters get within 400 feet of the lair, read the following:

Thrusting from the earth like a colossal tooth stands a bleak, blackened volcano. A slow-moving, ropey lava flow surrounds the front of the volcano, blocking passage. The only way across the lava is lonely bridge flanked by a pair of obsidian gargoyles at the far side. Five twenty-foot high wooden towers manned by cloaked kobold guards protect a wide courtyard in front of the mountain. Just beyond those outposts, sticking out of the peak like a sore thumb is a ramshackle, wooden building built on stilts. From within you hear the bickering, laughing, cackling, wicked voices of kobolds.

A large, handpainted sign over the shack reads "KOBOLD KALDRUN" Judging by the primitive lettering and misspelling, it's likely the kobolds painted the sign themselves.

Getting close to the tavern is no easy task. The lava is particularly deadly. The entire flow is 30 feet across, making jumping over it difficult. A constant heat haze emanates from the constantly churning molten rock. Outside of teleporting directly into the courtyard, the only way for the characters to reach the other side of the lava flow is by flying or leaping over the lava... or by crossing the bridge.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, here are the most common features of the distillery and dragon's lair.

Extreme Heat. The temperatures within the distillery and caldera reach temperatures as high as 125° F, and even higher the closer the characters get to Tucker's caldera. Review the extreme heat rules in the *DMG* for details.

VARIANT: TUCKER'S SORCERER SPELLS

If there are more than 5 characters in the group or they are particularly experienced, you might consider giving Tucker sorcerer spells to compliment his attacks. Using this variant, Tucker's CR increases to 18 (20,000 XP).

Spellcasting. Tucker is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19). He can cast the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation*
1st-level (4 slots): *charm person, fog cloud, shield*
2nd-level (3 slots): *darkness, detect thoughts*
3rd-level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic*
4th-level (1 slot): *dimension door*

Tucker always reserves his 4th-level slot for *dimension door*.

16 - ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE

A *glyph of warding* hides on the ceiling of the corridor leading to the accountant's office. The *glyph* is nearly invisible, requiring a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) to notice it. When triggered, each creature within 20-feet of the *glyph* must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) cold damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

This small chamber looks to be an office of sorts. Sitting atop a small, child-sized desk are piles of neatly stacked coins. At the center is what-must-be a fire-proof ledger with scrawling in draconic.

All that is certainly impressive. However, what's more impressive is the fountain of molten gold at the south end of the cavern.

Encounter. If the characters have just fought Tucker and won, Tucker's business partner and accountant, Boeger is waiting for the characters to enter.

Boeger is a lawful evil **kobold wing sorcerer**. He uses his wings and *misty step* spell to keep plenty of distance while lobbing spells at the adventurers. Like Tucker, he's arrogant but isn't interested in dying. If the characters appear too much of a threat, he'll escape through the same magma tube.

Treasure. Thanks to the insane heat of Drakescale Peak, Tucker's hoard has turned to molten gold. If the characters can cool it down (with the use of a few well-placed cold damage spells) and carry it out, in all it's worth a total of 150,000 gp.

Safe. An iron safe weighing 600 lbs is bolted into the floor of a small alcove. Opening the safe requires a DC 18 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools. Inside the safe are Boeger's recipe ingredients to the Red Claw liquor. If the sages in Knotside get ahold of the ingredients, they can create a formula and rescue Knotside's inhabitants. Also in the safe is a set of *Red Claw regalia* (see the appendix).

17 - EAST GOLD FOUNTAIN BANK

A *glyph of warding* hides on the ceiling of the corridor leading into this chamber. The *glyph* is nearly invisible, requiring a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) to notice it. When triggered, each creature within 20-feet of the *glyph* must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) lightning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Molten gold pours out of the mouths of stone dragon heads into a fountain. You've never seen anything quite like it!

Treasure. Similar to the fountain in the accountant's office, the intense heat of Drakescale Peak has turned Tucker's hoard to molten gold. If the characters can cool it down (with the use of a few well-placed cold damage spells) and carry it all out, in all it's worth a total of 150,000 gp.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Should the characters defeat Tuckerthrax and his minions and return with the ingredients for the Red Claw liquor, the citizens of Knotside are cured in a manner of days and life slowly returns to normal.

If Tucker or Boeger escaped, they may rear their ugly heads again in future adventures, most likely as adversaries of the characters.

Since the amount of treasure Tucker kept in his lair is difficult to remove, the characters may request assistance from Kollias and his troops. As Kollias promised, he offers the characters 25% of the returned treasure (ideally as coins).

APPENDIX

PLAYER HANDOUT: AREA 8



CONTRIBUTORS

This collaboration was a freely made project between DMDave, Cze & Peku, Paper Forge, It's A DnD Monster Now, and The Griffon's Saddlebag. If you haven't already, consider becoming a patron to help support the passion and effort that goes into this work. Quality D&D content gets better when it's supported by people like you!

The adventure gets better with you!

Cze and Peku provide multiple map packs of unrivaled quality for their patrons each month. Patrons receive additional map variants that can transform the entire design of the environment! You can become a patron today and access additional variants of these very maps!

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The Griffon's Saddlebag creates daily homebrew items for your campaign that are illustrated, written, and balanced to look and feel like official content. Patrons receive instant access to the almost 300 existing items already made, as well as their art, cards, compendium entries, tables, and more.

DMDave wrote this adventure and writes content just like it, including feats, classes, races, and more daily for 5th edition! He is also the writer for Broadsword Monthly, a monthly print magazine loaded with new 5th edition content.

NEW RESOURCES

The adventure uses new assets created specifically for this adventure. You can find these assets below.

HIGH-RESOLUTION MAPS

The Red Claw Distillery Map was created by Cze and Peku and can be [downloaded for free](#).

NEW MONSTERS

Five new monsters appear in this adventure, each created by It'sADnDMonsterNow. Those monsters are the **booze server kobold**, **cask hauler kobold**, **dire weasel**, **kobold wing sorcerer**, and **molten ooze**. [The stat blocks can be downloaded for free](#).

In addition to the stat blocks, Paper Forge created miniatures for each of the monsters. [The miniatures can be downloaded for free](#).

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Three new magic items appear in the adventure, each created by The Griffon's Saddlebag. Those magic items are **Fire! Fire!**, the **Red Claw Regalia**, and **Talyard the Great's Wand of Power**. The details for each of these items plus artwork [can be downloaded for free](#).