

DON'T BREAK YOUR PICK

AN ADVENTURE MODULE FROM THE GM'S SECRET STASH



Quickphix Presents

A Tier 1 to 2 one-shot adventure for
the world's greatest roleplaying game



Don't Break Your Pick

An Adventure Module from the GM's Secret Stash



Presented by Quickphix

Don't Break Your Pick

A 4 - 5 Hour Adventure for 4th to 5th Level Characters

CREDITS:

Written and illustrated by Mauro Gotsch

Cover by Jacek Malczewski (Public Domain)

Editing and Feedback by the Quickphix TTRPG Club



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Eberron, the dragon ampersand, Ravnica and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild. The maps in the appendix were created with www.dungeonfog.com and commercially licensed by Verein Quickphix (all rights reserved). All other original material in this work is copyright 2019 by Verein Quickphix and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

©2019 Wizards of the Coast LLC, POBox707, Renton, WA98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB111ET, UK.

*The centuries will burn rich loads
With which we groaned,
Whose warmth shall lull their dreaming lids,
While songs are crooned.
But they will not dream of us poor lads,
Left in the ground.*

Summary

Far up in the cold North, nestled between two giant mountains, lies a mining city called Dandery. It can be seen from miles away by the steam, light and noise it produces day and night. Dandery's mines contain a huge quantity of coal, silver, indium, zinc and lead. Since the mines are worked on non-stop and the working conditions are horrible, the town is in constant need of new miners. People seeking their fortune from all over the region come to Dandery, but only a few of them ever leave. Cave-ins, gas-pockets, explosions and the immense heat thanks to the active hydrothermal system of the mountains make mining in Dandery probably the most dangerous job in the world. However, recently the miners have encountered a new hazard: tiny winged creatures attacking the miners and stealing ore. They seem to appear out of nowhere and have caused several fatalities already. However, since this is a hazard that could potentially be dealt with, the mining guild has offered a reward to anyone who can find the nest of these flying devils and exterminate them. So far, not many parties have been brave or dumb enough to try.

In this 4- to 5-hour adventure, a party of 4th to 5th level characters will be tasked with delving into the deepest depths of Dandery's mines. In addition to the natural hazards they must also fight-off the mysterious winged creatures and figure out where they came from. Is the party strong-willed enough or will they, as the miners say, "break their pick"?

Welcome to Dandery

Upon arriving in Dandery, the party will notice the job flyer for locating the "Tunnel Devil's Nest". Since the mining guild can't have random strangers just wandering into their mines, the flyer tells them to register at their headquarters and be assigned a guide.

The Mining Guild

The headquarter of the mining guild is located on the upper level of Dandery, overlooking the many mine-shafts and shabby houses below. Upon entering the party is greeted by an old woman in dirty blue overalls. She introduces herself as Martha Uthrinne – head of the mining guild. Without wasting any time, she hands them a contract to sign and calls into a back room for someone to fetch "Old Ganri".

Proper Preparation

Martha informs the party with her raspy voice, that the reward will be given to anyone of them still alive after the expedition to find the nest has been successful. However, only if the person in question can prove having found and destroyed the source of the tunnel devils. Maps to the location, a large number of devil corpses or the word of their guide Ganri will count as prove.

In your Campaign:

All the mining hazards named in this campaign are real and only slightly exaggerated. If you take out the magical monsters from the story and substitute them with rats or mad men, this story could take place in any RPG. To adjust the difficulty of a fight, just play around with the number of monsters mentioned.



Ganri Edeto (male mountain dwarf)

The party's guide is an almost annoyingly optimistic, muscular dwarf. He's been mining in Dandery his entire life, which either suggests that he's incredibly talented or just lucky.

Ability Scores

AC: 19 / HP: 64 / Speed 25 / Passive Perception: 10

STR: 20 (+5) / DEX: 12 (+1) / CON: 18 (+4)

INT: 8 (-1) / WIS: 10 (+0) / CHA: 8 (-1)

Traits

Old Miner: Ganri knows the mines like his back pocket. He has advantage on perception and investigation checks relating to the mine in any way.

Muscle memory: Ganri has advantage on any saving throws against the mine's natural hazards (from a non-living source, e.g. cave-ins).

Short-sighted: Ganri has disadvantage on ranged attacks and on sight-related perception checks.

Actions

Pickaxe (+7 to hit), melee attack, reach 5ft., one target. 1d6+5 damage.

Pin Down: Ganri throws himself at a non-flying creature of medium or small size. The creature must succeed in a DC 15 Dexterity or Strength saving throw or be grappled and prone.

The Right Equipment

Upon meeting you, Ganri will look at the party and suggest more fitting gear to venture into the mines. It is up to the party if they want to get the following items:

- A helmet
- At least three independent, non-flammable light sources
- Shorter weapons (they won't be able to swing two-handed or large weapons around.)
- Protection goggles
- A mask for filtering out some of the sand or smoke.

- Earplugs
- Other gear, which is usually available in a dungeoneers pack.

Ganri informs them, that Dandery has a lot of general stores, where such gear can be acquired. After all the preparations are done, he leads the party to a mine entry far down in the bowels of Dandery.

Entering Shaft 323

Apparently, most of the "Tunnel Devils" were sighted near Shaft 323 – one of the more surface level shafts according to Ganris. It follows a particularly high-grade argentite (Ag₂S) vein. Outside the shaft the party notices grinding equipment for the ore as well as many barrels containing a strong base (a sodium cyanide solution, highly toxic). All of this is related to them by an excited Ganri. Some miners are working on extracting silver from the ore. There's also a bunch of thugs waiting for them. They are part of a local crime syndicate, making good money "protecting" the different miners from the tunnel devils and "searching" for the cause themselves. At first, they'll try to convince the party verbally, that they aren't equipped for the job. If the party won't leave, they will attack.

Mine Thugs (male mountain dwarfs)

Short, muscular and vicious in a fight. They can be identified by their scarred hands – a result of their favourite weapon: throwing poison-powders. All of them started out as miners and switched their vocation to thug-for-hire, after realising the pay was slightly higher.

Ability Scores

AC: 15 / HP: 35 / Speed 25 / Challenge Rating: 1

STR: 17 (+3) / DEX: 12 (+1) / CON: 17 (+3)

INT: 8 (-1) / WIS: 10 (+0) / CHA: 8 (-1)

Traits

Strong Arms: These thugs have advantage on grappling checks.

Thick Skin: Since they've been working a lot with the solutions and poisons used to extract silver, they've developed a resistance against poison and acid.

Actions

Cudgel (+5 to hit), melee attack, reach 5ft., one target. 1d6+3 damage.

Throw Poison (x2): The thugs all carry little packs of a poisonous powder (usually used to extract silver) which reacts violently when it comes into contact with water, creating a 15-ft. circle of poisonous gas around the water source. Touching or inhaling the powder or the gas it produces deals 3d8 poison damage, half as much on a successful DC 13 CON save. The resulting water solution of the powder is highly basic, dealing 1d6 acid damage to anyone that comes into contact with it.

Entering the Mine

Whether the party kills the thugs or routes them, Ganri will suggest entering the tunnel immediately, or more of them might come back later. He reasons, if they come back triumphant, nobody will dare to lay a finger on them. He grabs a minecart full of silver ore as "bait" for the flying devils and proceeds to lead the party single file down the shaft. He notes, that from here on out, the "tunnel devils" might attack them at any time. He also warns them, about doing any of the following things:

- Don't use fire-based attacks for fear of reducing oxygen or igniting gas pockets.
- Don't use any breathable poisons, as they will linger in the poorly ventilated air.
- Use force magic only if it can be targeted or risk causing a cave-in
- Don't make a lot of noise (thunder damage) without warning the other people present first. Otherwise, it might deafen them all.
- Be careful when using earth magic or risk causing a cave in.

Hot Encounters in Darkness

Along the way the party will encounter many miners, working on side tunnels. The main shaft is steaming hot and their light-sources do little to cut through the dusty and steamy air. Short or light party members might be required to do Constitution saves due to them being affected more easily by the poor air-quality. On a failed save, they'll gain one level of exhaustion.

A Miner Dispute

The party comes across two dwarfs arguing with each other and blocking the way. On the floor between them lies the corpse of a tunnel devil. The bigger one of the dwarfs is convinced the other is working together with the devils, since he saw him hand over a piece of silver ore to it. Afterwards, it tried to attack him. The truth is, that the smaller dwarf figured out the tunnel devils would leave him alone, if he gives them some ore. He doesn't want to admit that, because he stole the ore from the bigger dwarf's cart. Therefore, he'll say that he tried to hit the tunnel devil by throwing the ore.

If the party can't calm the fight, the bigger dwarf will try to kill the smaller one with his pick. Inspecting the corpse of the flying devil won't reveal much. The bigger dwarf clubbed it to death with his pick. It looks like a small furry man with batwings instead of arms and sharp teeth. It also seems to possess some magical capabilities.

Major Panic

The party will hear a scream and a lot of fast-moving feet running towards them. The party must duck aside or be trampled by the wave of panicked miners. All of them run, as if they'd seen the actual devil. One of them stumbles and is nearly trampled to death by the stampede.

If the party manages to catch one of the stampeding miners or if they save the fallen one, he'll tell them what happened: Apparently, a huge swarm of tunnel devils attacked them, but this time, they were accompanied by

a shadow, who managed to melt one of the miners with some sort of acid attack. Upon pressuring him, he'll tell them the shadow sort of looked like a dwarf with long hair and pale skin.

The Swarm

Once the party arrives at the scene of the panic, they'll immediately be greeted by a horrible stench. A big minecart is blocking the way (see Appendix I). On the other end of the tunnel, they can just make out a crouching silhouette (Silverman Scout—see below). Ganri will notice that something is wrong and warn the party. If the silhouette notices them, he'll throw something at the water barrels and flee, causing water to run towards the puddle. At this point 1.5 as many flying tunnel devils as players will burst forth from the overturned minecart. Roll for initiative.

The Tunnel Devils

Tiny, sharp fanged and toothed bat monstrosities. They're clearly used to a cave environment, due to their pale skin and blind little eyes. They're incredibly fast flyers, even while carrying something twice their own weight.

Ability Scores

AC: 14 / HP: 27 / Speed 30 / Challenge Rating: 1/2

STR: 10 (+0) / DEX: 16 (+3) / CON: 17 (+3)

INT: 13 (+1) / WIS: 9 (-1) / CHA: 16 (+3)

Traits

Crevice Flyers: The tunnel devils are used to utilize a cave environment to their advantage. They get a +7 on stealth checks and can use hide as a bonus action.

Flyby: The tunnel devils don't provoke an opportunity attack when they fly out of an enemy's reach.

Innate Spellcasting. The tunnel devils' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). They can innately cast the following spells:

At will: invisibility

3/day: darkness, Melf's acid arrow

Actions

Poison claws. Melee Weapon Damage: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against poison or take 1d2 Strength damage. The target must repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and it loses another 1d2 Strength for each failed saving throw. The effect ends when one of the saving throws succeeds or automatically after 4 rounds. All lost Strength returns after a long rest.

The Silverman Scout

The Silvermen are a dwarf like race, which have lived underground for hundreds of years. They speak a forgotten language which vaguely resembles dwarfish. It isn't clear what their intention is, but one thing is clear — they don't like people intruding into their mountains.

Ability Scores

AC: 18 / HP: 47 / Speed 30 / Challenge Rating: 2

STR: 11 (+0) / DEX: 18 (+4) / CON: 18 (+4)

INT: 11 (+0) / WIS: 5 (-3) / CHA: 14 (+2)

Traits

Dust skin: The Silvermen are immune to any Acid attacks. They have resistance against poison damage (from the outside).

Caveborn: The Silvermen can see in the dark and have the same climbing speed as their normal speed. Natural difficult terrain doesn't affect them.

Actions

Metal Spike. Melee Weapon Damage: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) poison damage.

Throwing acid (x2). Ranged Weapon Damage: +6 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d8 + 3) poison damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 CON saving throw or suffer an additional 2d8 of poison damage each turn, until the throw is successful.

Find the Silverman!

After the battle, the party can finally chase after the mysterious Silverman. However, the tunnel they've been following seemingly leads to a dead end. Searching the walls will reveal, that part of the wall has been hidden by a grey leather curtain, looking deceptively like the mine shaft surrounding it.

The Old Mine

Behind the curtain is another shaft, which looks like it was built by the dwarfs of Dandery. However, Ganri will mention that he's never seen this part of the mine on any of the official records. It leads straight into the hot centre of the mountain. If the party managed to beat the previous encounter without wasting much time, the scout will have laid a small ambush for them here. He'll use two flying devils to douse the party with water and then throw his acid at them, creating a 15ft poisonous fog cloud. Any player entering the cloud must succeed in a DC 15 CON saving throw or suffer 1d10 poison damage and be stunned. Afterwards he'll try to run away deeper into the mountain again.

Another Dead-End

Whether the party is chasing the Silverman or simply following the old mine shaft, they'll end up in a dead-end again. The Silverman prepared a little dart trap for them. It triggers as soon as someone touches the wall of the dead-end. All party members in the tunnel must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 2d8 of piercing damage.

This time, the secret way forward is found below a wooden board that has been camouflaged as the stony floor. The party can find this door because of the hot wind emanating from it.

The Shaman's Chamber

The hidden passage leads down a rickety ladder into another mineshaft. This one looks newer, and Ganri

reasons, that this must Shaft 347, which was abandoned after it proved to be too close to the mountains hydrothermal system. There's only one way to go: into the hot heart of the mountain.

After a few minutes of uneasy walking, they arrive at another ladder leading down. From downstairs, the party can hear rushing waters and chanting. Dropping down, the party is treated to a weird sight: A wild looking Silverman is sitting on a rock spire in the middle of some sort of acid lake (see Appendix II). He's surrounded by silver nuggets. There are also a third as many Silvermen scouts and flying devils as there are party members. They've been waiting for them. The shaman will laugh mockingly, say something in his incomprehensible language and order his scouts to attack.

The Silverman Shaman

A skinny but tough looking dwarfish figure. Great and weird magical power emanates from him. His deep, booming voice suggest, that he's someone of high status amongst the Silvermen. His unnaturally long arms are covered in a thin layer of silver-plating.

Ability Scores

AC: 15 / HP: 60 / Speed 30 / Challenge Rating: 4

STR: 9 (-1) / DEX: 14 (+2) / CON: 10 (+0)

INT: 11 (+0) / WIS: 5 (-3) / CHA: 18 (+4)

Traits

Dust skin. The Silvermen are immune to any Acid attacks. They have resistance against poison damage (from the outside).

Spellcasting. The Silverman Shaman is a 5th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, mage hand, message.

1st level (4 slots): sleep, shatter, chromatic orb (only poison or acid)

2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, spider climb

3rd level (2 slots): blink

Chaotic Defense. The Silverman Shaman can cast shield as a reaction when attacked by a ranged melee or magical attack. If he does so, roll on the wild magic table (PHB p.104).

Last Resort. If the Silverman Shaman's HP drop under 10 or to 0, he'll polymorph into a flying devil with 1 HP and gain a bonus dash action each turn to escape.

Actions

Staff. Melee Weapon Attack: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one 41/11 target. Hit: 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage.

Lair Action: On initiative count 15 (losing initiative ties), the Silverman Shaman takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The Shaman tosses a small silver ingot into the pool surrounding him, summoning two small flying devils with 5HP each (the other stats stay the same).
- The Shaman tosses a pack of poison into the pool surrounding him, which covers it in a poisonous fog cloud for two rounds. The cloud provides partial cover and any player entering the cloud must succeed in a DC 10 CON saving throw or suffer 1d10 poison damage.
- The Shaman takes one of the silver nuggets and fuses it with his skin. He regains a 1st level spellslot and the earth trembles a bit.

Running the Final Encounter

The Shaman doesn't participate much in the fight apart from his lair actions. If he's not in immediate danger, he'll use his action to sing a weird incantation that echoes through the room and shakes the earth. He's trying to perform a ritual to break open the earth itself and create a passage to his homeland.

Once all his scouts are dead, he'll start casting offensive spells. However, he won't move from his rock until his last resort action triggers.

An Explosive Finale

The Shaman in his flying tunnel devil form will fly out the shaft. Whether the party chases him or not, he won't come far. He'll collapse back in the shaft 323, where the party will find his motionless body. Once he's approached, he'll cast one last spell, which crumbles a small rock on the wall behind him. For a while, nothing happens. Then the party will notice, that the dust in the air has sort of stop moving. If Ganri is still alive, he'll gasp "a gas pocket!". And with a dirty and hoarse laughter, the shaman will produce a spark with his finger.

Burn, Suffocate or Escape

The resulting blast throws the entire party to the floor and leaves them stunned. A huge fireball travels through the tunnel, smouldering the wooden carrier-beams. Then, a few seconds later, the wind rushes back into the tunnel, almost knocking the party down again. Immediately the entire tunnel is filled with thick, biting smoke.

Ganri coughs that they must escape immediately, because the miners will probably seal the exits to starve the fire of oxygen. Just as he says it, the party notices the air getting thinner. Depending on how badly damaged the party is from the fight, the GM can use the fire, the smoke and the lack of oxygen to deal the party additional Strength and Constitution damage. Maybe have some party members faint from lack of oxygen, having to be carried out by Ganri or someone else.

On their way out, they'll also find some other miners either unconscious or struggling to breathe.

Breach One Last Time

After a mad dash to the exit, they'll be stopped by a thick wooden barrier, placed there by the miners to starve the fire. Knocking and calling to the other side will only attract attention, if the party saved one of the miners at the earlier stampede. The miner they saved will try to break



down the barrier from the other side, while the other miners try to stop him.

However, the party will have to break through regardless. GMs should adjust the barrier's damage threshold based on the party's health.

Dandery? The way he sees it, there can only be one way to find out: digging deeper. Preferably, with some strong allies at his side.

Welcome Back!

The soot-covered party breaks through the barrier, to the amazement of the assembled miners. The ending from here on out depends on the following factors:

- Is Ganri still alive?
- Did they save any miners in the stampede?
- Did they save any miners in the fire?
- Did they bring physical proof they killed the Silverman or the tunnel devils?

If three of these can be answered with yes, then they'll be greeted with triumphant cheers and receive their full reward from a grinning Martha. The mining guild officials will thank them for the great service they've done to the town of Dandery and offer them a position as the guild's official watchmen. A bit further up, the party can just about make out some of the thugs from earlier, skulking in the shadows and watching them.

Reward

If the party can prove their successful battle with the Shaman, they'll receive the agreed upon sum of money from Martha. Maybe they also stole some of silver nuggets from the Shaman's hideout while they were down there?

What's next?

Ganri isn't particularly happy with the results of your joint expedition. It just left way too many questions open. Who were these Silvermen and what did the Shaman hope to accomplish? What was this magic, that could summon life from Silver? Could it be, that an entire civilisation of Silverman is living right under

Appendix I – First Encounter Map



Legend:

The entrance to the encounter map (left) is about 10ft. wide. The entire map is about 60ft. long.

The flying devils are hiding in the turned over mine cart. The barrels contain water for the workers. Touching the puddle that once was a mine worker causes 1d8 acid damage. Should the puddle come into contact with water, it'll create a 15ft poisonous fog cloud. Any player entering the cloud must succeed in a DC 15 CON saving throw or suffer 1d10 poison damage and be stunned.

Appendix II – Shaman's Chamber



Legend:

Between each of the stalagmites is a hidden falling trap, 20ft. deep (DC 18 Perception check). The Silverman Shaman is meditating on the rock in the acid lake. The map is about 30ft. wide and 50ft long.

The acid lake is about 5ft deep.

To adjust the difficulty, a pit trap can be placed next to each of the stones.