

LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE MODULE

FIFTH EDITION FANTASY #1

GLITTERDOOM



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#1: GLITTERDOOM

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Glitterdoom is an adventure designed for use with the 5th edition of the first fantasy roleplaying game. It is intended for 4-6 3rd level characters and can be completed in a single session. During the course of this scenario, the party accompanies a dwarven explorer dedicated to reclaiming an old dwarven

mine from the foul creatures dwelling within. The horrid residents of the forgotten gold mine are cursed dwarves, turned into a pitiful state due to their own greed and a divine curse known as the *glitterdoom*. This adventure also introduces a new dwarven sub-race and a new background for use in your 5th edition campaign.

BACKGROUND



The Steelhand Clan worked the high mountains for many centuries, excavating rich deposits of gold and iron to fashion magnificent smithy work and jewelry. The Steelhands were a small clan, and their minuscule numbers meant they had to work veins of gold and iron far removed from one another, bringing the mines' yields back to their small central hall. To protect both these far-flung mines and the dwarves who worked them, the Steelhands built defensive complexes atop each, using these redoubts as barracks for workers, storage for ore, and other mundane purposes.

The Knuckle was one of these holdfasts, positioned above a gold seam that snaked through the earth far away from the Steelhand Hall. It was one of the loneliest mines in the mountains, a place worked largely by young dwarves seeking to establish themselves within the clan hierarchy and willing to endure a long separation from their kin to do so. This solitude and their drive to earn their fortunes would prove to be a disastrous combination.

The Knuckle's gold vein was of modest yield, but as the miners followed the seam deeper into the earth, they uncovered another, much richer gold vein. The discovery of this unprecedented deposit of lustrous ore inflamed the miners' natural dwarven proclivity for avarice, manifesting in a rare form of psychosis known as *aurbrek* or "gold madness." The bane of dwarvenkind, this insanity gripped the miners, causing them to covet the gold above all else—even to the point of forsaking friendships and clan ties. The *aurbrek* manifested in either of two ways amongst the miners: an all-consuming mania to extract as much of the metal as possible, or a murderous urge to slay one's comrades so as to keep the gleaming ore for oneself.

Even the mine's resident priest, a cleric devoted to the dwarven god of secrets under the mountain and untapped riches, proved susceptible to the madness. Forsaking his deity for a darker god of old, the cleric—now known as Greedyguts—called down evil powers to smite his fellows and claim the mine's gold for himself. This divine curse, known as the *glitterdoom*, fell upon the miners, transforming them into hellish forms according to how the *aurbrek* afflicted them. In short order, the Knuckle was lost, drowned in a tide of blood and greed.

As the *glitterdoom* rampaged through the Knuckle, the dwarves back at Steelhand Hall faced their own catastrophe. A horde of goblins boiled up from its mountainous warrens seeking to reclaim the peaks for its own sly race. The horde descended upon Steelhand Hall and swiftly overwhelmed the small clan, slaying the dwarves to the last. With Steelhand Hall in goblin hands, there was no one left to retake the Knuckle and banish the curse that gripped it. In the following centuries, both Steelhand Hall and the mine have been forgotten, becoming yet another old dwarven hold lost to time and goblinkind.

Recently, however, a dwarf named Okkar Ironeyes has arrived in the mountains determined to discover the location of the Knuckle Mine and reclaim it for dwarvenkind. Following tattered maps and half-forgotten clues, Okkar searched the mountains for weeks before finally chancing upon the mine's holdfast. He broke open the long-sealed gates and found the horrors within have not faded with the passing centuries. Barely escaping with his life, Okkar now seeks assistance from bold adventurers to help drive out the denizens of the Knuckle and clean it of its lingering taint. Having heard tavern tales of the PCs' exploits, he approaches them with a generous offer: Help retake the Knuckle and a goodly portion of its ancient treasures is theirs for the taking.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Glitterdoom begins with Okkar Ironeyes approaching the party with his offer. The location in which Okkar and the party meet is left to the GM to determine. The dwarf may sidle up to them in their local tavern, knock boldly upon their inn room door, or approach them through other channels as befits the PCs' current whereabouts and situations. After introducing himself, he launches into his tale and proposition.

OKKAR'S STORY

Okkar explains he is a sojourner dwarf (see *Appendix A*), a member of that sub-race of displaced and nomadic dwarves searching for lost halls in the hills and mountains to settle and end their wanderings. Okkar has taken it upon himself of late to seek out Steelhand Hall, a dwarven stronghold believed to have been lost to orc or goblins some centuries ago. His quest led him to a mine known as the Knuckle, where Steelhand dwarves once pried gold from the ground. The Knuckle was lost around the same time as Steelhand Hall fell, and a few vague rumors of a terrible fate befalling the mine survived to the present day. Okkar hoped that clues to Steelhand Hall's whereabouts might exist inside the old mine.

Entering the Knuckle's upper level, Okkar was confronted by what appeared to be dwarven ghosts, their bodies encrusted with mineral deposits. Okkar tried to fend off their attacks, but the ghosts' touch drained his spirit and caused his flesh to temporarily become calcified. Outnumbered and facing certain death, Okkar fled the Knuckle. His flesh recovered after several days and he's now determined to return to the mine. However, he realizes he needs help in retaking the Knuckle from whatever accursed things dwell inside it.

Okkar's offer is straightforward: He wants the party to accompany him back to the Knuckle and help root out the horrors within, clearing it of evil and perhaps locating clues to the location of Steelhand Hall. In return for its assistance, the party is entitled to equal shares of whatever treasures lie within. Once the mine is cleared, Okkar also intends to evaluate the possibility of re-opening the Knuckle and calling upon fellow diaspora dwarves to work it.

If the party accepts his offer, he allows a few days if necessary to prepare, but wants to depart as quickly as possible. Should they refuse to aid the dwarf, the adventure is at an end. Okkar alone knows the location of the Knuckle and will not share it with the party.

OKKAR IRONEYES

Okkar Ironeyes is a male sojourner dwarf, 150 years of age. His skin is ruddy from the sun and wind, and bears numerous small scars and wrinkles. A hammer-shaped brand adorns his left cheek, which Okkar believes that, as a symbol of his deity, protects him in his journeys. His hair and beard are dark brown, speckled with dirty blond strands, and his eyes a clear amber color. Okkar can be stoic and sullen in general, but he grows more animated and enthusiastic when speaking of his search and the possibility of finding a permanent home for his people.

Okkar accompanies the party to the Knuckle as an NPC and is considered another PC when dividing XP. If reduced to 0 hit points, treat Okkar as a PC, allowing him to make death saving throws to survive and stabilize.

OKKAR IRONEYES

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful good

AC: 17 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points: 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Strength +4, Constitution +4

Skills: Athletics +4, Survival +3

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 11

Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Goblin

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Gear: traveler's clothing, explorer's kit, two crossbow bolt cases, 40 bolts, 2 flasks of oil, *potion of healing*

ACTIONS

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

Light Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

THE KNUCKLE MINE



The Knuckle gets its name from the protruding knob of rock in which the holdfast was constructed. The upper level serves as a defensible redoubt and living quarters, while the actual mine is located beneath this section.

GENERAL FEATURES

Conditions: The Knuckle hasn't been disturbed for centuries, and most surfaces bear a thick carpet of dust. Occasional drafts blowing up from the mine do move the dust about some, so the layers of grime are uneven within the Knuckle. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check notices that tracks appear throughout the upper level of the Knuckle, often disappearing into solid rock. These trails are made by both Greedyguts and the stoneghosts and lead no place in particular.

Ceilings: Unless otherwise noted, rooms and passages in the Knuckle have ceilings of flat, worked stone measuring 8' in height.

Light: The Knuckle's upper level is unlit. Torch sconces line the walls every 30' on the upper level, holding burnt-out brands that exhausted their fuel long ago. The mine is dark with the exception of the altar candles in area 2-1. There are no torch sconces on the lower level.

Doors: The doors of the Knuckle are fashioned from stone with recessed handles carved into their stony faces. Cunningly designed counterweights are hidden within the walls adjacent to each door, making them as easy to open as wooden portals. Each is unlocked except where noted otherwise.

Resting in the Knuckle: Stoneghosts are attracted by living creatures in the Knuckle if they remain in one place too long. As a result, any party attempting to complete a short rest inside the Knuckle finds itself attacked by 1d6 stoneghosts (see area 1-1), disrupting the rest. PCs can take a short rest outside of the Knuckle without incident.

THE KNUCKLE

The Knuckle is located in a cleft of a knobby stone outcropping atop a mountain less than a week's journey from the party's current location. The exact distance and the location of the Knuckle, as well as additional challenges the party and Okkar might face on their journey, are left

to the GM to determine. Once the PCs reach the mountain and party climbs the slope, read the following:

The tall trees fall away as you emerge from the high tree line. Before you is a slope of broken shale, fallen scree, and struggling scrub pines tenaciously clinging to the windswept peak. The mountain's face juts abruptly outward, forming a knobby, knuckle-like protrusion of stone. A deep crack in the stone holds a pair of large, intricately carved doors. A 10' wide stairway of long, broad stairs ascends to the doors. Flanking the stairway and doors in the angled rock walls are the dark, narrow apertures of loopholes.

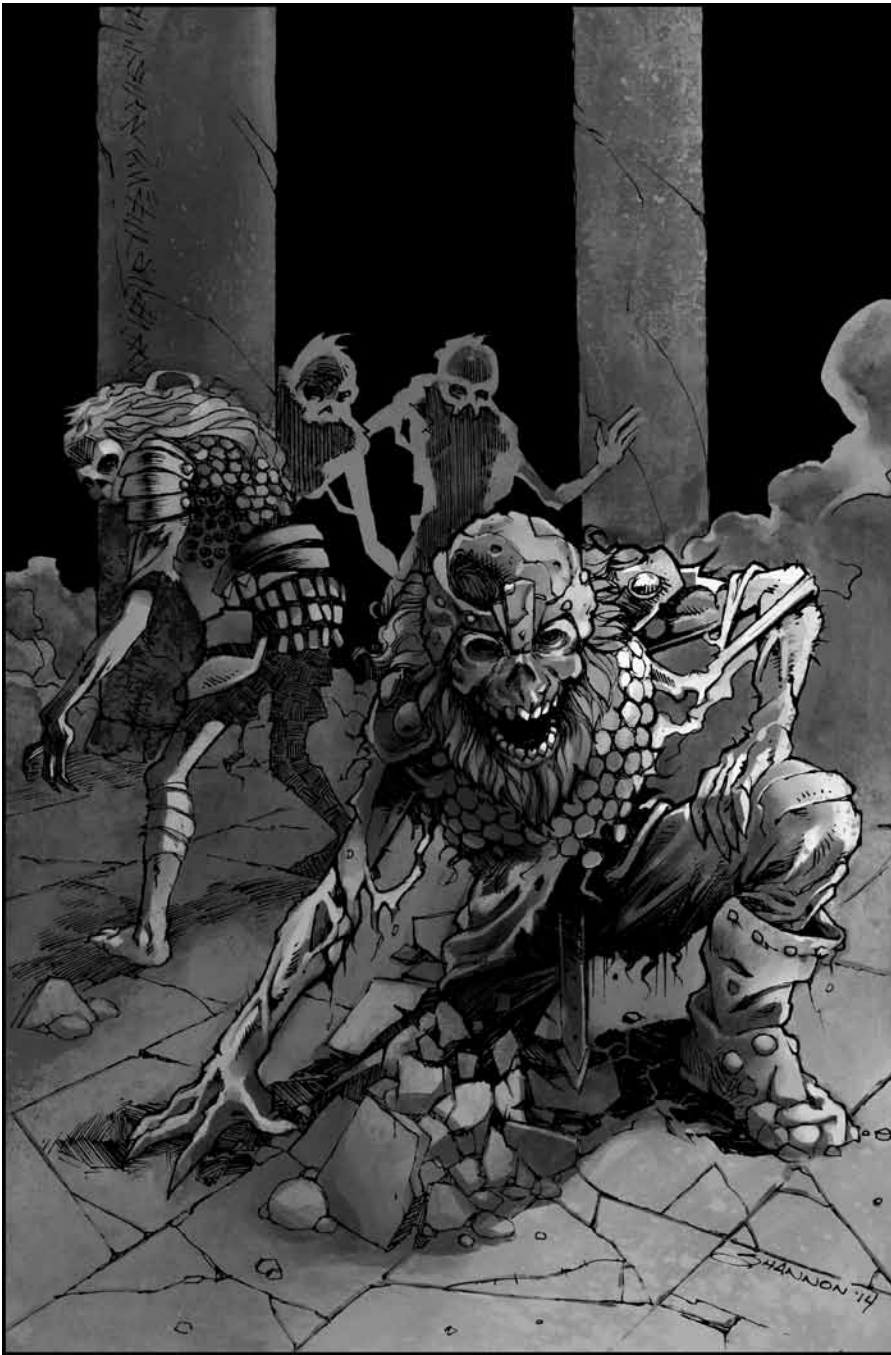
The steps on the stairs are low and broad, designed to accommodate the mule trains that brought supplies to the Knuckle and carried ore away. The loopholes on either side of the stairs are located 15' above the ground. A PC can climb the stone wall to peer in with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check or by being boosted up by his comrades. The loopholes lead to areas 1-3 and 1-8, which appear empty and dark (the stoneghosts in 1-8 are melded into the stone when the PC first arrive and are not visible through the loopholes).

The doors bear skillful geometric carvings that are aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Both doors are closed, and Okkar reveals he left them open when he fled the place after his initial foray into the Knuckle. He also tells the party that he encountered the strange dwarven ghosts in the hall just beyond the front doors and that they should be wary. Okkar can describe area 1-1 but has no other knowledge of the layout or contents of the Knuckle.

AREA 1-1—MULE TRAIN LOADING

ZONE: *Several thick pillars support the ceiling of this chamber, hewn from the mountain stone. Both floor and ceiling are flat and level, worn smooth by dwarven skill and prolonged use. Two closed doors, one large and one smaller, stand in the east and west walls. Scattered piles of aged bones, some quite large, are strewn about the room in haphazard fashion and intermixed with rotted leather scraps.*

Four **stoneghosts** dwell in this area. Two are merged with the indicated pillars using their *stonewalk* ability, while the other two are lurking beneath the stone floor. They attack once at least half the party has entered the chamber. The two in the floor rise up from beneath to block the party's retreat, possibly surprising the PCs from behind, while the other stoneghosts emerge from the pillars and rush the party. During the battle, the undead use their *stonewalk* ability to slip back into the surrounding stone and emerge



STONEGHOSTS (4)

Medium undead, chaotic evil

AC: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 45 (6d8+18)

Speed: 30'

STR	DEX	CON
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)
INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills: Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities: radiant, thunder.

Damage Resistances: cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons.

Damage Immunities: necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities: paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 11

Languages: Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stonewalk: A stoneghost can move through solid rock and earth with no penalty to speed and leaving no sign of its passage. A stoneghost cannot carry other creatures or objects through the stone while *stonewalking*.

Trapped: Stoneghosts cannot leave the confines of the Knuckle's upper level due to the *glitterdoom* curse.

ACTIONS

Calcifying Touch: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer one exhaustion level as his flesh becomes calcified and desiccated. Exhaustion levels are healed normally.

Stoneghosts appear as calcified mountain dwarves still dressed in the work clothes they wore in life. Veins of iron pyrite run through their flesh and speckle their dead, gray eyes. Stoneghosts are the cursed forms of those dwarves who slew their comrades, transformed into undead creatures by the effects of the glitterdoom curse.

in a new location, keeping the party uncertain as to where the next attack will originate.

The bones are a mix of the dwarves and mule bones, identified as such with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Even a casual inspection of the bones reveals that dwarven skeletons appear to have died by violence at one another's hands. The leather scraps are the decaying remains of pack saddles, saddle bags, work clothes, and other mundane equipment.

The western door is slightly ajar and pushes open easily. The eastern door is locked and requires either the correct key (see areas 1-6 and 2-1) or a DC 15 Dexterity check to open. It can be bashed open with a DC 20 Strength check.

AREA 1-2—WESTERN CORRIDOR: *A closed door stands at the north end of the north-south corridor. To the south, a mound of fallen stone slabs partially blocks the passageway. A large cavity is present in the ceiling directly above the pile. Beyond the fallen mass, the corridor ends in another closed door. A raised portcullis protrudes from a narrow gap in the ceiling a short distance in front of the southern door.*

The fallen rubble is the result of a defensive trap originally intended to combat invaders if the mine was overrun. When the gold madness swept the Knuckle, some of the miners used it against their comrades, dropping the rigged stone blocks from the overhead cavity onto their fellows. Inspecting the rubble and succeeding at a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a skeletal hand protruding from the debris. A DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check identifies it as a dwarven hand. The rest of the smashed corpse is buried in the rubble with six other equally decayed dwarven bodies. They have nothing of value.

The southern door has two loopholes inserted in its face, placed side by side. They are currently closed, a pair of metal shutters sealing them shut. The portcullis can be dropped from area 1-3 by pulling the lever located there. If it falls, it blocks off access to and from area 1-3 until raised by throwing the lever again or physically lifting the gate with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

AREA 1-3—WESTERN GUARD POST: *The longest wall of this roughly trapezoidal room is pierced by a trio of loopholes. Dry-rotted furnishings—a simple table surrounded by chairs, a bench, and barrels—are spaced about the room, dusty and disused. Empty racks on the west wall once held weapons or other devices, and a pair of iron levers, one raised, the other lowered, protrudes from the wall beside the room's door. A pair of metal-shuttered loopholes pierces the door's face allowing defenders to fire into the hall beyond.*

This room no longer holds anything of value or interest. Any creature firing from the loopholes at either the stairway leading to the mine's entrance or into the corridor outside has three-quarters cover.

The levers operate the trap and portcullis in area 1-2. The thrown lever dropped the falling slab trap and has no effect if lifted back into the place. The other lever raises and lowers the portcullis in area 1-2.

AREA 1-4—MINERS' BARRACKS: *Numerous wooden double bunks are arranged in rows along the walls of this large room. Overturned footlockers and shredded, rotting clothes are strewn about the room as if hastily and angrily searched through. A table, its surface stained with old blood, rests*

near the entrance and a pair of closed doors stands at the back of the room. A row of privacy screens fashioned from metal panels divides the room in two. Ancient skeletons, all showing the signs of violent death, lie in random order about the room.

There are a total of 40 bunks in this room which served as a shared barracks for miners of both sexes. The rusting metal screens gave a measure of privacy to the workers. When the curse struck, this room was ransacked by the afflicted, each believing their comrade has secret stashes of gold stowed away. Violence erupted and blood was spilled. The 12 skeletons and bloodstains are all that remain of that horrific violence.

The closed doors lead to empty lavatories — dusty, disused, and still faintly malodorous.

A search of the footlockers and clothing produces five battered but functional lanterns (no oil in their reservoirs), a pair of shovels, seven miner's picks, multiple pairs of boots (dwarven size), and a flask of potent, rare dwarven brandy (25 gp value). A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check also uncovers a small ruby overlooked in the looting. It is worth 50 gp.

AREA 1-5—MESS HALL: *A PC with a passive Perception of 12+ or who actively listens at the closed door to this room and makes a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check hears the sound of sliding furniture, as if someone was slowly moving tables and chairs around. This is the giant greed grub crawling about the room.*

This chamber was once a mess hall but it is now simply a mess. The long trestle tables and benches where the dwarves once dined are spread helter-skelter about the space and many lie overturned. Broken crockery and flattened eating utensils are scattered about the floor. The walls here gleam in the darkness, as each bears numerous thin, twisting veins of shining gold. Your eyes are drawn away from the blazing gold, however, by a tremendous and sickeningly pale grub-like thing that slithers amongst the furniture, its eyeless face sinuously waving in the dark.

The creature is a **giant greed grub** grown large in the mine by feeding on its brethren. It has slithered up the well in the kitchen area, looking for food. The PCs will do nicely. In addition to its normal attacks, the giant greed grub can lash out with its tail to slap furniture at a single PC as a ranged attack.

The giant greed grub has eight gold nuggets (25 gp value each) lodged in its crop and recoverable if the creature is cut open.

The “gold” veins in the walls are actually iron pyrite placed there as decoration by the dwarven miners and

left untouched by the greed grubs. A curtained-off area to the south contains a kitchen area with an oven, cabinets containing crockery and mold, and a 2 ½ ft. wide well leading 60 ft. down to a natural cistern within the mine below. Any creature descending the well discovers a network of mine tunnels (not detailed on the adventure map) that extend for miles. PCs exploring these lower tunnels encounter 2d6 greed grubs (see area 2-1) every 10 minutes until they flee or are slain.

There are six rusty knives in the kitchen which can be used as improvised daggers should the PCs lose their weapons to the giant greed grub's spittle. Improvised clubs can also be fashioned from table legs in the mess hall.

GIANT GREED GRUB

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

AC: 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 85 (10d10+30)

Speed: 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills: Perception +2

Damage Vulnerabilities: slashing.

Damage Resistances: cold; bludgeoning from non-magical weapons.

Senses: blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages: understands but cannot speak Dwarvish

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Semi-amorphous: The grub can move through a space sized for Tiny creatures or larger without squeezing.

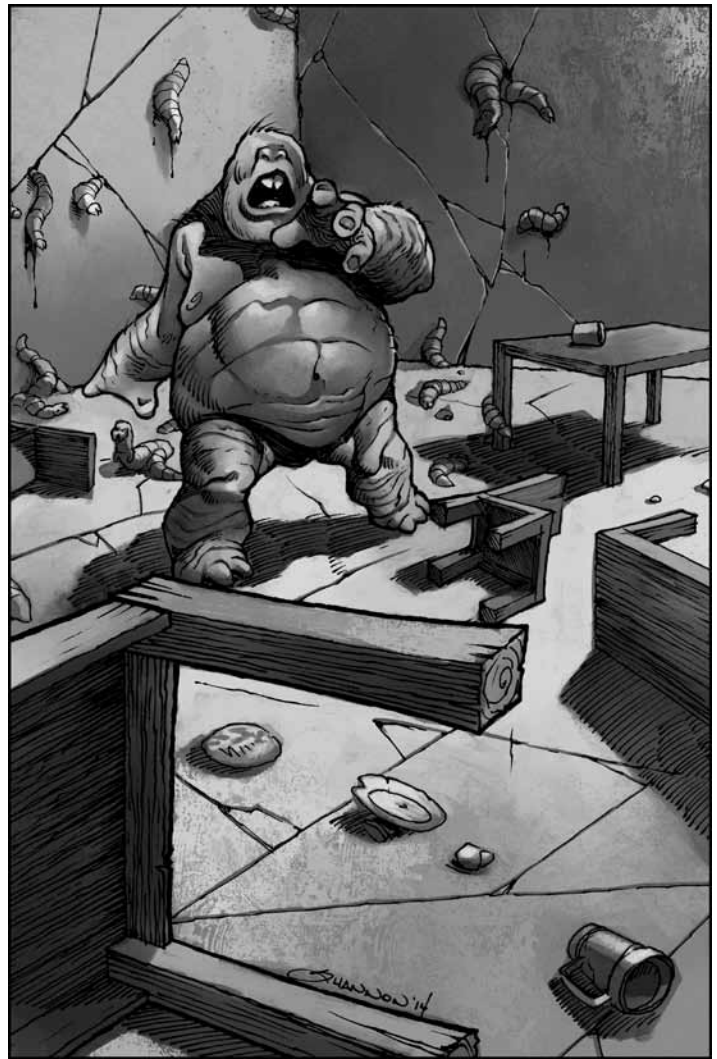
ACTIONS

Multiattack: The giant greed grub makes one bite or acidic spittle attack, and a tail slap attack.

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage

Acidic Spittle: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) acid damage, and the target must succeed in a DC 12 Dexterity save or have his armor (01-75 on a d%) or weapon (76-00 on a d%) dissolved. Wood or stone armor and weapons are unaffected.

Tail Slap: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6+5) bludgeoning damage.



Slapped Furniture. *Ranged Weapon Attack* +2 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed in a DC 10 Dexterity save or be knocked prone.

Giant greed grubs are larger versions of the cursed greed grubs that fill the mine beneath the Knuckle. Greed grubs are the glitterdoom cursed forms of those dwarves who maniacally mined the rich gold seam to acquire as much as they could. Resembling 10' long, bloated, segmented grubs, greed grubs prowl about on six stumpy legs. They lack eyes, but easily perceive enemies and objects nearby.

If an observer makes a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check when viewing a greed grub, he notices that the monster seems somehow dwarven, but exactly how is difficult to describe. Greed grubs, both normal and giant, once fed on raw gold ore, but they've stripped the lower mine bare of valuable ore. Nevertheless, they sometime retain gold nuggets within their crops and these precious leavings can be harvested if the creature is cut open.

AREA 1-6—MINE-MASTER'S

QUARTERS: *This small room contains a bed, a clothing trunk, and an open wardrobe, all of which bear signs of skillful construction by dwarven hands. The bed and wardrobe have been stripped of their contents and the floor is covered with torn bedding and clothing. The trunk is closed and appears untouched.*

The trunk is locked and bears a magical trap designed to deter thieves. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check made with disadvantage reveals a line of small glyphs carved along the base of the trunk. The entire trunk radiates conjuration magic if subjected to a *detect magic* spell. Picking the lock without the proper key (now long lost in the mine below) requires a DC 15 Dexterity check, but also triggers the trunk's trap. A small **earth elemental** appears the following round and attacks the thief and anyone coming to his assistance.

The trunk contains work clothes, a beard comb, a grooming kit, a large leather-bound ledger, a single key on a silver chain (10 gp value), and a wooden box. The key opens the locked door in area 1-1. The wooden box holds three *potions of healing* and two *potions of vigor restoration* (see sidebar). The ledger is written in Dwarvish and contains records of various deliveries and shipments arriving and departing from the Knuckle. A PC who can read Dwarvish and succeeds at a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers several landmarks mentioned in the records. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies the position of these landmarks and can use that knowledge to chart a path to the location of Steelhand Hall. Okkar is especially interested in learning its location and this information may lead to further adventures for the PCs (see *Concluding the Adventure* below).

The rest of the clothing and bedding is in tatters and of no value.

TRAP-CONJURED EARTH ELEMENTAL

Small elemental (earth), neutral

AC: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 27 (6d6+6)

Speed: 30'

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons

Damage Immunities: poison.

Condition Immunities: exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, and unconscious

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 10

Languages: Primordial (Terran)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Earth Glide: The elemental can move through stone, dirt, or any other sort of rock (except metal) with no penalty to speed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The elemental makes two fist attacks.

Fist: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5', one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

A 3' tall, vaguely humanoid shape of stone appears with the sound of grinding stones next to you, swinging its oversized fists as it attacks.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

POTION OF VIGOR RESTORATION

Potion, uncommon

This electric blue potion restores energy and banishes fatigue, allowing workers to endure long hours of labor that would otherwise exhaust them. A person who samples the liquid feels energized and alert. Drinking it causes a burst of well-being and loss of fatigue in the drinker.

Property [Consumable]: As an action, you drink the potion and any existing exhaustion levels you have are reduced by two.

AREA 1-7—EASTERN CORRIDOR: *Beyond the locked door is a corridor running north-south. To the north are three doors: one at the end of the passage and two set in the east and west walls. Looking south you see the corridor ends in a fourth door bearing a pair of loopholes in its face. A raised portcullis protrudes from the ceiling a short distance in front of the door. The pale figure of a dwarf, its body encrusted with mineral deposits, stands near the southern door.*

The pale dwarf is a **stoneghost**, alerted by the sounds of battle in area 1-1. It attempts to lure the party into the trap that hangs overhead. If the party moves to confront it or attempts conversation, it flees to the south, passing through the door to area 1-8 with its *stonewalk* ability. Once there, it and its fellows watch through the door's loopholes. Two use Ready actions to spring both the trap and portcullis once two or more PCs have walked beneath the deadfall trap. The other two then fire their crossbows through the loopholes until the party has fled or is slain. If a PC reaches the door, they switch to spears and jab at the adventurer with these weapons through the loopholes.

Trap: The ceiling over a portion of the corridor is rigged to collapse. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the ceiling trap before it is sprung. The trap can only be disabled by using the lever in area 1-8, forcing the PCs to either run the gauntlet or use magic to protect themselves from the deadfall. Any creature within the deadfall's area of effect (as noted on the map) must succeed in a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage (6 or half damage on a successful save). The fallen rubble partially obstructs the corridor, and is treated as difficult terrain.

The portcullis blocks access to area 1-8's door. Opening it can be accomplished by throwing the lever in area 1-8 or by physically lifting the gate with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

Up to two of the stoneghosts in area 1-8 can fire through the loopholes in the southern door at once and have three-quarters cover while doing so.

AREA 1-8—EASTERN GUARD POST: Unless the PCs defeated the stoneghost in area 1-7 before it fled to this area, the door to this chamber is locked (DC 15 Dexterity check to open), its loopholes open and manned by crossbow-wielding undead.

This room is identical to area 1-3 with the exception of the four **stoneghosts** (three if the one in area 1-7 is slain before fleeing here).

There are four light crossbows, eight crossbow bolt



cases holding 20 bolts each, and six spears in this room. Weapons not being used by the stoneghosts hang on a rack on the eastern wall.

If the stoneghosts successfully used the trap and dropped portcullis in area 1-7 against the party, award the PCs an addition 450 XP for the increased difficulty of this encounter.

STONEGHOSTS (4)

Medium undead, chaotic evil

AC: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 45 (6d8+18)

Speed: 30'

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills: Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities: radiant, thunder.

Damage Resistances: cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons.

Damage Immunities: necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities: paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious.

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 11

Languages: Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stonewalk: A stoneghost can move through solid rock and earth with no penalty to speed and leaving no sign of its passage. A stoneghost cannot carry other creatures or objects through the stone while *stonewalking*.

Trapped: Stoneghosts cannot leave the confines of the Knuckle's upper level due to the *glitterdoom* curse.

ACTIONS

Light Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

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

Calcifying Touch: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer one exhaustion level as his flesh becomes calcified and desiccated. Exhaustion levels are healed normally.

AREA 1-9—STOREROOM: *The smell of rot and mildew assails your nose as you open the door to this cramped chamber. Barrels, crates, and other containers rest piled on the floor. Folded clothing and other textiles are on display on the shelves that line the walls. A carpet of thick dust blankets everything.*

This area held the perishable foodstuffs and other day-to-day supplies used by the miners. The barrels and crates hold flour, corn meal, pickled vegetables, smoked meat, and ale, now all spoiled and inedible. The blankets, spare work clothes, and other textiles piled on the shelves are now rotted rags.

A search of the shelves accompanied by a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers an iron-bound box. Inside the box are six vials of electric blue liquid packed in straw and cloth batting. These are *potions of vigor restoration*.

AREA 1-10—ORE VAULT: *The door to this room is of solid steel and shows signs of an unsuccessful attempt to break it down. Large gouges mar the burnished metal surface and the two solid-looking locks that secure the portal bear the signs of being attacked with tools. Despite the efforts, the door appears to have resisted, protecting whatever remains behind it from looters.*

The door is both mechanically and magically sealed. A pair of complex locks secures the door and each requires either the correct key (see area 2-1 below) or a DC 20 Dexterity check to pick. An *arcane lock* spell is also in effect on the door. Use of the proper key tem-

porarily bypasses the magical seal as well. If the party manages to get the door open, read the following:

Six large rusting iron bins stand in this chamber of plain, utilitarian stone. A half-dozen oversized and empty wheelbarrows lean against the walls. The iron bins contain heaps of dust-covered stone, but the faint glint of gold appears mixed in with the otherwise drab rock. The dusty floor is disturbed by footprints in places. A trail of footprints leads from the doorway, circling the bins, while other sets seem to materialize from the very walls and wind restlessly about the space.

Unprocessed ore from the mine below was stored here while waiting to be shipped back to Steelhand Hall for refining. Once a week, mule trains hauled the precious ore across mountain trails to the clan's central hall. When madness struck the Knuckle, the dwarves fought viciously to gain access to the gold within, but it was the cleric, Greedyguts, who ultimately acquired the vault's key. He has kept the ore secured in here, occasionally entering to gaze upon his bounty. The stoneghosts also periodically enter the place using their *stonewalk* power, but as they cannot carry out the unrefined ore while *stonewalking*, the riches remain a teasing hoard they're unable to claim.

There is a total of three tons of gold ore in the bins. If refined, a process that requires smelting equipment and two day's work, a total of 6,000 gp worth of pure gold is obtained. Okkar, as per his agreement, is willing to share the ore (or the refined gold) with the PCs, but lacks access to the proper equipment needed to process the stone. However, he does hint that Steelhand Hall does contain the necessary smelting tools and if the party was to assist him in investigating the lost citadel...

AREA 1-11—DEFILED CHAPEL: *A dais topped with a shattered idol occupies the far end of this room. The idol appears to have once been a massive stone hammer, but the head is now broken off and lies in pieces beside the still-upright shaft. Standing before the dais is a small, three-tiered fountain. Liquid gold streams from the fountain, flowing down each of its three levels before filling the fountain's shallow basin. Another door stands in the western wall to the north of this chamber's entrance.*

The fountain is magical and radiates a transmutation aura. The gold within is liquid, but not molten, and does not emit heat. It is cool to the touch, but imparts a curse if not handled by worshippers of Grarr. Any non-believer of Grarr who interacts with the gold (touching it, attempting to contain it in a vessel, etc.) must succeed in a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be petrified. While petrified, the victim resembles a statue and, as a

side-effect, weeps tears of molten gold each day. The total value of the golden tears is 3d6 gp per day of weeping. The golden tears are not magical and may be safely collected.

AREA 1-11A—PRIEST’S QUARTERS: *This plain room contains a bed, a wardrobe, and a writing table, all of which are covered by an undisturbed blanket of dust. On the table beneath the grime are a candle in a pewter dish and a scroll of beaten metal.*

Once Greedyguts’ room, the heretical undead priest hasn’t returned since he called down the *glitterdoom*. The scroll is written in dwarvish runes inscribed on the rolled metal sheet and chronicles the events that led to the downfall of the Knuckle. Written by the priest, known as Averages before he abandoned his faith and embraced Graar, the dwarven god of misers and misery, it tells of the discovery of the gold vein, the descent into *aurbreck* by the miners, and his calling down the *glitterdoom* to possess the gold. Averages finishes his tale by declaring his intent to move down into the mine and transform it into a cathedral worthy of his new god.

The wardrobe holds only tattered religious raiment and there is nothing else of interest or value in this area.

AREA 1-12—MINE ENTRANCE: *A tremendous derrick and winch dominate this large, 20’ high-ceilinged chamber. Suspended from the derrick is a huge iron bucket measuring 20’ in diameter. A section of the bucket’s side is hinged and stands open, allowing easy entrance and egress. Beneath the dangling bucket is an open shaft some 25’ wide. A slight draught blows from the hole, carrying with it the mephitic smell of minerals and the subterranean world.*

The bucket and winch system lowered workers into the mine and carried ore out for storage in the vault (area 1-10). The bucket measures 20’ in diameter and 8’ in height, and can be entered via either the 10’ wide hinged doorway in the bucket’s side or by climbing in through the bucket’s open top. A pair of dual winch cranks, one on the derrick’s winch and one inside the bucket, raises and lowers the pail at a rate of 10’ per round. The mine shaft leads 20’ down before opening in the ceiling of area 2-1 below (40’ total length of descent). Operating the bucket automatically alerts Greedyguts that intruders are inside the mine and he prepares for battle.



THE LOWER MINE

The lower level of the Knuckle is comprised of the actual gold mine, a snaking network of tunnels that thread their way under the mountain. Ironically, the great gold vein that brought about the events of the mine’s fall is now long gone, consumed by the hundreds of greed grub descendants of the original cursed miners that now inhabit the mine. In all likelihood, the party will not venture into the mine proper, but if this occurs, the GM must rely on his own creativity to detail what they encounter within them—aside from the numerous and ravenous greed grubs!

AREA 2-1—THE KNUCKLE MINE: *A great space has been hewn from the mountain rock, forming a cathedral of stone under the ground. The ceiling hangs 20’ above a rocky floor inscribed with dwarvish runes and religious symbols. A quartet of iron poles serve as guides to the ore bucket, keeping it on track as it descends to the mine floor. In the eastern wall of the cavern, the wide adit of a mine tunnel disappears into darkness. Near the mine’s entrance stands a blocky stone altar adorned with flickering candles.*

A DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the runes as prayers dedicated to an obscure and evil dwarven deity, Grarr, the god of misers and misery. The altar is fashioned from plain stone, but its surface is

stained with viscous fluids. These are the various body fluids of the greed grubs that Greedyguts occasionally sacrifices to Grarr atop the altar. The candles are red in color and of plain tallow.

The undead cleric, **Greedyguts**, uses this space as his main temple. If the party descends into this area via the mine bucket, Greedyguts becomes aware of their presence and prepares for battle. He hides in the darkness beyond the altar's candlelight before using *thaumaturgy* to create the sound of an ominous voice whispering, "Come down and play in the darkness with us" 30' away from his location (this does not reveal his position).

If the party continues to descend, Greedyguts smashes the winch crank located at the bottom of the bucket lift, causing the giant pail to plummet the 20' to the mine floor. All characters in the bucket must succeed at a DC 10 Constitution check or suffer 7 (2d6) damage and be knocked prone (3 (1d6) damage and remain standing on a successful save). Greedyguts then casts *sacred flame* and *spiritual weapon*, while summoning three **greed grubs** that lurk just beyond the mine's entrance. They rush to attack, while Greedyguts falls back (disengaging if necessary) and continues to use his spells to attack the party or aid his greed grub minions as necessary.

Two rounds after combat begins, the horde of greed grubs that dwells deeper in the mine is attracted by the sounds of battle. Read the following:

As the fray rages about you, you hear an unsettling noise echoing out of the mine entrance: The sound of thundering feet and grotesque sloshing, as if hundreds of foul, grub-like things are moving in your direction, intent on feeding.

The first of the horde arrives two rounds later, emerging from the tunnel at the rate of 1d4 each round. The PCs will likely be overwhelmed unless something is done.

Any PC with a passive Perception of 12 or better or who succeeds in a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check while examining the entrance to the mine notices the wooden supports around the adit appear old and precarious. If none of the PCs notices this fact and Okkar is present, the dwarf shouts out, "The supports! Destroy the supports!" while pointing frantically at the mine entrance.

The mine supports are AC 10 and have 15 hp. They automatically fail all saving throws. If reduced to 0 hp, the mine entrance collapses, triggering a cave-in that runs down the length of the long mine tunnel, burying both the encroaching horde of greed grubs and the mine itself under tons of fallen rock. The force of the collapse ripples through area 2-1, forcing all within to make a DC 12 Dexterity save or be knocked prone. If Greedyguts is still alive, he howls in rage and attacks the PCs in a blind fury, gaining +1 to hit and damage and fighting until destroyed.

When Greedyguts is destroyed, the candles on the altar are snuffed out and the altar shatters, revealing a hollow space within. There is a sensation as if a mighty storm has passed, leaving the air once again pure and free from menace. With Greedyguts' death, the last lingering traces of the *glitterdoom* vanish, disappearing with Grarr's servant from the Knuckle.

PCs inspecting the broken altar discover a score of large gold nuggets, cut from sacrificed greed grubs by Greedyguts and stored here. Each is worth 25 gp.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

+1 PICK OF PROSPECTING

Weapon (war pick), rare

This weapon resembles a finely made war pick with a gleaming blue sapphire set at the point where the head and shaft meet. When wielded in battle, the war pick feels preternaturally light and agile, but this does nothing to reduce its ability to cause grievous injury. The pick also has the power to locate undiscovered mineral wealth when in the hands of a dwarf.

Property: You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with this weapon.

When used by a dwarf, the pick can produce an effect similar to the 4th-level spell *locate creature*. However, instead of a living creature, the pick detects the direction of a single type of unworked precious metal or gemstone (silver, gold, sapphires, etc.) chosen by the wielder. The owner senses the direction of the chosen type if within 1,000 ft. of his present location. Worked or fashioned metals or gems (gold coins, silver chalices, cut diamonds, etc.) are not detected by the pick. This power may be used once a day and lasts for 1 hour.

GREEDYGUTS

Medium undead, chaotic evil

AC: 15 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points: 50 (5d8+10)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws: Wisdom +5, Charisma +1

Skills: Perception +5, Stealth +2

Damage Resistances: cold, fire; piercing from non-magical weapons.

Damage Immunities: necrotic, poison.

Condition Immunities: paralyzed, poisoned, and unconscious.

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 15

Languages: Common, Dwarvish

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Special equipment: +1 *pick of prospecting*, unholy symbol of Grarr (a wizened dwarven hand grasping to possess), ring holding the keys to the locked doors in areas 1-1 and 1-10.

Spellcasting: Greedyguts is a 5th-level spellcaster who uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). Greedyguts has the following spells prepared from the cleric's spell list:

- Cantrips (at will): *light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st Level (4 slots): *command**, *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt**, *inflict wounds*, *shield of faith*
- 2nd Level (3 slots): *aid*, *darkness**, *hold person*, *silence**, *spiritual weapon*
- 3rd Level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *speak with dead**, *spirit guardians**

*denotes a domain spell

ACTIONS

+1 Pick of Prospecting: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Greedyguts is a pale, gaunt male dwarf of indeterminable years. His flesh, hair, and beard are gray with age and dust, and he dresses in tattered robes over rusted chainmail. His eyes are burning gold in color and his voice is tinged with madness and greed.

GREED GRUBS (3)

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

AC: 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 22 (3d8+9)

Speed: 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances: cold; bludgeoning from non-magical weapons

Damage Vulnerabilities: slashing

Skills: Perception +2

Senses: blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages: understands but cannot speak Dwarvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Semi-amorphous: The grub can move through a space sized for Tiny creatures or larger without squeezing.

ACTIONS

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

Acidic Spittle: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) acid damage, and the target must succeed in a DC 11 Dexterity save or have his armor (01-75 on a d%) or weapon (76-00 on a d%) damaged. Damaged weapons and armor suffer a -1 penalty to either attack and damage rolls or base AC each time they are damaged. If the acid damage reduces the target's base AC to 10 or less, the armor is destroyed. If the penalty reduces a weapon's damage result to 0 or less, the weapon is destroyed. Wood or stone armor and weapons are unaffected.

Greedy grubs are smaller version of their giant counterparts, measuring only 6' in length.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once Greedyguts is destroyed and the mine most likely sealed under tons of fallen rubble, Okkar is satisfied that the Knuckle has been cleansed of its curse. He laments the loss of the mine, but stoically accepts the loss with a shrug. “Perhaps it’s for the best. Some secrets under the earth are best kept in the dark, forever,” he sighs. With Greedyguts’ death, the party can claim the key to area 1-10 and its share of the ore within it as its reward.

If the party or Okkar discovered the ledger in area 1-6 and discerned the location of Steelhand Hall, Okkar is overjoyed and gratefully rewards the PCs with the entire contents of the ore vault plus any incidental treasure they’ve accumulated. He solemnly thanks them for their assistance and for helping unearth the possible site of Steelhand Hall. If the party is willing, he’d be grateful for their assistance in exploring the fallen dwarven hall. What awaits the daring heroes in the ancient hall is left

to the GM to detail, but smelting equipment to refine the gold from the ore vault is most certainly there—along with monstrous inhabitants to defend it!

If Okkar perished during the party’s exploration of the Knuckle, the PCs are left with not only a sizeable amount of potential wealth in the form of unrefined ore, but also the potential location of a vanished dwarven hall. They may decide to investigate further or sell the information and ore to other interested parties. PCs who decide to seek out Okkar’s fellow sojourner dwarves earn a warm welcome and potential allies if they reveal the site of the Knuckle and/or Steelhand Hall to the wandering clan.

No matter how things play out, the party may walk away from the Knuckle having learned an object lesson about the perils of greed and a newfound respect for the things that dwell in the darkness beneath the earth.

APPENDIX A: NEW SUB-RACE

SOJOURNER DWARF

Over the millennia, uncounted dwarven halls have fallen to invaders, their occupants driven from their clan holdings and into an enduring diaspora. These are the sojourner dwarves, endlessly seeking new homes or striving to regain their ancestral holdings from the dark forces that drove them out. Their centuries of wandering have made them unique amongst their more settled cousins, the hill and mountain dwarves. Sojourner dwarves seldom settle in one place for long, wandering the wilds both atop and

below the soaring mountain peaks their ancestors once called home. The vagabond existence of the sojourner dwarf sharpens his mind and teaches him to best find his way in the wilds.

Ability Score Increase: Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Trailblazer: Whenever you make a Wisdom (Survival) checks pertaining to navigation or to avoid becoming lost, you are considered proficient in the Survival skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal bonus.

APPENDIX B: NEW BACKGROUND

Sojourner dwarves like Okkar Ironeyes are likely to be born on the road, refugees of either a recent or ancient event that resulted in the loss of their homeland. The following background can be used by PCs who lived a similar existence prior to their adventuring careers.

REFUGEE

You have lost your home due to some natural disaster, act of war, magical cataclysm, or other form of widespread destruction. Forced to flee your home, you’ve spent a good portion of your life on the road looking for a new community that would accept you. As a result, you’ve learned to endure the hardships of a nomadic

existence, traveling from place to place and earning a meager living to survive. Your dream of one day settling down for good has been long deferred, but you persevere, hoping to find acceptance somewhere—even if it means using force to stake your claim on a new home.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools, vehicles (land)

Equipment: A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a small wood axe, a two-person tent, a belt pouch containing 10 gp, a set of common clothes, and a token reminder of your former home (a pressed flower, a stone from your house, a tiny painting, etc.)

FEATURE: FAR-FLUNG FRIENDS

The disaster that drove you from your home also affected your family, friends, and other members of your homeland, village, or clan. These fellow refugees dispersed across the landscape, taking up residence in numerous settlements both near and far, and they are always willing to extend a helping hand to another refugee in need of assistance. In communities that are now home to your kith and kin, you can count on housing, food, free advice, and other assistance so long as it doesn't threaten the lives and well-being of those lending you aid. Your GM will decide whether or not a particular community has fellow refugees amongst its population.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

A refugee has led a hard existence. Between the loss of his home and the constant travails of uncertain life on the road, the refugee seldom knows stability and kindness. This means that most refugees either cling close to the few people they can trust or they eschew all others, preferring to rely on the only one they feel will never let them down in a tight spot: themselves.

D8 Personality Trait

- 1 I readily share what little I have with others in need.
- 2 I refuse to quit, no matter how difficult things may seem.
- 3 Despite the troubles I've experienced, I have a deep love for traveling the open road and the new experiences such a journey entails.
- 4 I've collected a number of choice words from different dialects during my journeys and constantly pepper my speech with them.
- 5 I hate not knowing where I am and collect maps and other scraps of travel lore whenever possible.
- 6 I strive to learn new things whenever I can, for you never know when a bit of knowledge or skill might mean the difference between life and death.

7 I have little time for laughter or frivolity. Survival is a serious matter.

8 I've had few companions on the road and tend to talk to myself and/or my mount to keep me company.

D6 Ideal

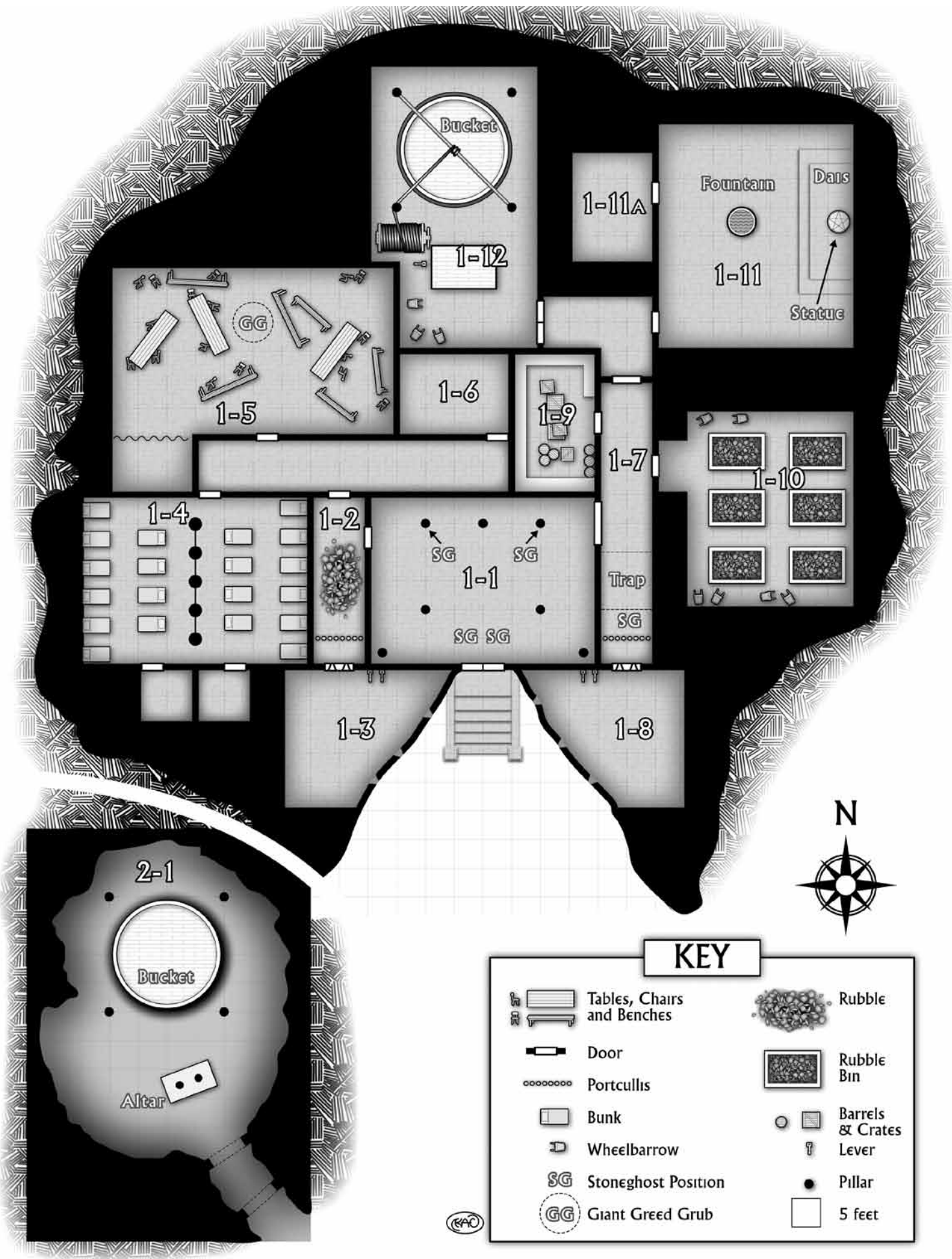
- 1 Cooperation. You are only as strong as the weakest amongst you and must stand ready to assist others when they falter. (Good)
- 2 Stability. There is no greater aspiration in life than to possess a home or other place where one is safe and secure. (Lawful)
- 3 Self-Reliance. The ability to provide for oneself liberates you from the need to rely on others. (Chaotic)
- 4 Vigilance. One must constantly be on the lookout for danger or difficulty, and swift to intercede before it comes to fruition. (Neutral)
- 5 Might. If someone is not strong enough to hold what is theirs, you have every right to take it for your own. (Evil)
- 6 Faith. Trust in the gods to guide you through hardships and they shall eventually put you where they intend for you to be. (Any)

D6 Bond

- 1 Survival requires cooperation and I am dedicated to those I share the road with.
- 2 I harbor an intense hatred for those people or forces responsible for the destruction of my home.
- 3 Although separated by disaster and distance, my people remain dear to me and I will do anything to aid them.
- 4 A kindly soul helped me when I most needed assistance and I've vowed to return the favor whenever possible.
- 5 I am devoted to preserving the history, culture, and customs of my lost homeland.
- 6 I strive to one day return to my former home and see it rise from the ashes.

D6 Flaw

- 1 Having been bitterly disappointed in the past, I'm reluctant to trust others.
- 2 I am prone to looking out for myself first and foremost.
- 3 I am easily swayed by someone with a hard luck story.
- 4 I had a role—either willingly or unwittingly—in the catastrophe that displaced my loved ones and I must hide my shameful secret.
- 5 I hoard every resource I can, be it money, magic, or food, for fear I might find myself lacking when I most need these things.
- 6 I have no respect for those who lead a life of luxury and leisure, untested by the hardships of life.



KEY

	Tables, Chairs and Benches		Rubble
	Door		Rubble Bin
	Portcullis		Barrels & Crates
	Bunk		Lever
	Wheelbarrow		Pillar
	Stoneghost Position		5 feet
	Giant Greed Grub		

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