



BENEATH THE RUINS OF
FIRESTONE KEEP

M.T. BLACK

INTRODUCTION

Beneath the Ruins of Firestone Keep is a Dungeons & Dragons adventure designed to be completed in about 3–6 hours of play.

The combat encounters have been calculated to present a tough challenge to four characters of 1st level—that is, APL (average party level) is 1. Information is supplied in the text explaining how to scale the encounters to APL 2 or APL 3.

Not every loose end is tied up in the following text, nor every possible reaction accounted for. Be ready to improvise, and do so with confidence! Unless stated otherwise, assume NPCs have the stats of a commoner.

The adventure comprises 4 chapters.

- **CHAPTER 1—LORD BLACKMOOR:** The party are hired by Lord Alberich Blackmoor to rescue his son, Willet.
- **CHAPTER 2—THE EAST TRAIL:** The party journey along the old East Trail, facing dangerous obstacles.
- **CHAPTER 3—BENEATH THE RUINS:** The party delve beneath the ruins of Firestone Keep, encountering fearsome enemies and ancient magic.
- **CHAPTER 4—A FAMILY AFFAIR:** The party must fight for their lives as the truth about Willet’s abduction is revealed.

CREDITS & LEGALS

Design • Dave Zajac, GM Lent & M.T. Black

Cartography • Dyson Logos

Layout • Liz Courts

Proofing

Ken Carcas, Nathan Miller, Jeff C. Stevens

Cover Artist • Dean Spencer

Illustrations

Claudio Casini, Gary Dupuis, Jacob Blackmon

Playtesting • Lynn Ly, Chris Davis, Damian Rosen, Daniel “Strongaxe” Johnson, and Benjamin “Badass Jam” Knight, William Z. Cohen, Danial Norton, Maria Meike Monet, Ian Christiansen (of the Tabletop RPG One Shot Facebook Group), Liam Christie, Jim Loyd, EM Hardesty, Genesis Padua, Jem Raymundo, Alexandria Rull, Eros Herzensbrecher, Marc Darvil, Katherine Wright, Aaron Woollett, Luca Stevenson, Shaun Cox, Wayne Bruce, Shava, Marcus Demonspawn, Paladin of the Light, Ravi Werngold, Hefty The DM

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CHAPTER 1: LORD BLACKMOOR

The adventure opens with our heroes arriving at the mansion of Lord Alberich Blackmoor, which lies on the outskirts of the village of Nettleton. The PCs are responding to a plea for assistance from Lord Blackmoor, whose son Willet has been kidnapped. Blackmoor desperately needs someone to mount a rescue mission.

When the PCs reach the mansion, read or paraphrase the following:

The hour is early when you arrive at the Blackmoor mansion. A dry and aged butler leads you from the entrance to a stone meeting chamber. When you enter the room, you see an obese man in his middle years pacing behind a large oak table. Sweat beads on his balding head. Behind him stands a slender woman clad in leather armor. Despite being much thinner, she bears a conspicuous resemblance to the man.

When he sees you, he motions with his pudgy hand and says, "I am Lord Alberich Blackmoor, and this is my sister, Zoreene. Please—come and sit down. Thank you for arriving so quickly. We don't have much time. I fear that every hour that passes brings my dear Willet closer to his death."

Between them, **Lord Blackmoor** and **Zoreene** relay the following information:

- Willet is 10 years old, and he is Blackmoor's only remaining child and heir (his eldest son and wife died in a tragic fire when Willet was just a baby).
- Near dusk the previous day, Willet was playing by the creek that runs through the grounds near the back of the estate. Two guards accompanied him.
- When the group did not return for dinner, the butler went searching for them. He found both guards slain and the boy missing.
- Dagger thrusts and sling stones killed the guards, though one man was also badly burned.
- Lord Blackmoor's twin sister **Zoreene** (who is commander of the guard) investigated the area, and she found kobold tracks a short distance from the creek. The tracks followed the creek to the east for nearly a mile before disappearing.
- Lord Blackmoor immediately hired a local tracker, **Rowan Quickford**, to follow the tracks. He has not returned.
- In the past, kobolds have stolen livestock to sacrifice to their god, **Kurtulmak**, on summer solstice. Willet's kidnapping marks the first time they have ever taken a person. The solstice is tomorrow.
- The kobolds are believed to lair in the ruins of Firestone Keep, an ancient and abandoned fortress several miles east of the village.
- The old East Trail leads to the keep. It winds through a thick forest and rocky hills, making it accessible only on foot.

- Zoreene can lead the party to the trail, but Lord Blackmoor will not permit her to accompany them any further (“No, dear sister, your adventuring days are behind you”).
- There are only six remaining guards on the estate (as well as Zoreene)—none can be spared to accompany the adventurers.
- Lord Blackmoor is willing to pay **200gp** for the safe return of his son. (Anyone observing Zoreene when Blackmoor mentions the sum will see her wince slightly—as she often does when her brother spends money.)

If the PCs accept Lord Blackmoor’s proposal, he asks that they leave immediately and return as soon as they have found Willet.

The party may wish to inspect the abduction site. Blackmoor will be a little impatient with this request, but will accede. At the site, the kobold tracks are clearly visible. A **DC 15 Perception** check will reveal fragments of glass around the site (these are from one of the kobold bombs, described in **CHAPTER 3**).

LORD ALBERICH BLACKMOOR

Lord Alberich Blackmoor is a bald man nearing fifty years of age. Decades of overeating, spirits, and pipe-weed have left him in poor health. He sweats constantly and wheezes and coughs when exerting himself.

Alberich made his fortune the old-fashioned way—he inherited it. His father was a successful wool merchant in Waterdeep, who invested his profits wisely and amassed considerable wealth. The courtesy title of Lord came along with the estate, which Alberich purchased from a destitute noble. It carries no formal authority over the nearby village of Nettleton, which is governed by a Sheriff.

Since his father’s death many years ago, Alberich has done little to add to the family fortune. He is a kind and generous man, though he has never had to work an honest day in his life.

Alberich knows that Zoreene disapproves of his excessive spending and it is a point of contention between them, but he is otherwise very devoted to her.

Alberich dotes on his only son, Willet, who is rather spoiled. The lad’s disappearance has left him in a state of high anxiety.

CHAPTER 2: THE EAST TRAIL

Zoreene leads the party to the old East Trail and then reluctantly leaves them. She says little along the way, and a **DC 15 Insight** check reveals her to be anxious and agitated.

The trail itself is heavily overgrown, and traverses a thick wood that is home to various unfriendly creatures.

Bandit Strike

After the party has travelled about two miles, a group of bandits attack from the woods. Read the following:

Thickets of alder trees riddled with deadfalls and patches of briar have made travel slower than expected. As you pick your way through the difficult terrain, you hear the unmistakable twang of a crossbow, and a bolt slams into a nearby tree, narrowly missing you.

Two bandits and their thug leader (named Galen) have set an ambush—the stray bolt described above is fired when the party are 30' away. PCs with a **passive Perception of 11** or lower are surprised by the ambush and unable to act during the first round of combat.

The trees in the area are large enough to provide cover, and the denseness of the briars makes the entire area difficult terrain. The bandits flee once they are reduced to half their number, and will surrender and beg for their lives if they cannot run.

For APL 2 there are four bandits.

For APL 3, there are six bandits.

Treasure

The bandits carry 5gp each. Their thug leader carries 20gp and a *potion of climbing*.

WHAT THE BANDITS KNOW

If any of the regular bandits are captured, they have little information to share. They live near Nettleton and usually practice their thievery on the High Road. They don't know anything specific about the kobolds.

The bandit leader, Galen, knows more. If the PCs interrogate him by making a **DC 15 Intimidation** check, he admits he was hired two days ago to ambush any adventurers travelling on this path. The transaction took place in a dark laneway, and his employer wore a heavy cloak and spoke in a breathy, raspy voice.

Wild Vines

After a few more miles, the trail reaches a clearing at the foot of the hill. Read the following:

The forest and trail come to a sudden stop.

About 50 feet ahead of you is a steep hill covered in wild, untamed grape vines.

Toward the top, you can make out the ruins of a large stone keep.

Several kobold trails wind through the grape vines, leading toward the keep, and if the PCs search the area, they have no trouble finding them. If the PCs take the

time to examine the grape vines along the way, they notice that many have been stripped of their fruit. The kobolds have been using the grapes to ferment wine.

Traps

The kobolds are crafty and have built a pit trap on each trail to thwart any creatures that approach the keep. Each trap consists of grass, weeds, and leaves, cleverly scattered over thin branches that collapse under 30 or more pounds of weight. A PC actively searching for traps will spot it with a **DC 13 Perception** check. PCs with a **passive Perception of 13** or higher automatically spot the trap.

A creature that triggers the trap can attempt a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid falling in. On a failed save, the creature falls **10 feet** to the dirt floor of the pit, suffering **1d6 bludgeoning damage** and landing prone.

In addition, the kobolds have planted a **violet fungus** at the bottom of each pit, which will immediately attack anything that falls in.

The Lookout

As the PCs approach the keep, read the following:

Firestone Keep might have once been an imposing fortress. What remains of it now, however, is little more than collapsing walls and piles of rubble—all overgrown by trees, vines, and weeds.

If any PC has a **passive Perception of 15** or higher, read the following as well:

As you scan the toppled stones, you spy a small reptilian creature peering at you from

a clump of tall grass. When you make eye contact, the tiny creature yelps in fright and dives toward the overgrowth and debris.

The kobold is about 200' away—too far for the PCs to catch. Quick-thinking PCs will have the chance to make a single ranged attack before the kobold disappears. If the creature escapes, it will return to the guard room at **LOCATION 9**, below.

If the PCs search, they will see numerous kobold tracks amongst the ruins, as well as the tracks of a large animal. A **DC 15 Nature** check will reveal the animal tracks to be those of a **giant weasel**.

The Entrance

Even a cursory search of the ruins will find the stone stairway leading down to **LOCATION 1** (no roll required). If the PCs search the area thoroughly, on a **DC 15 Perception** check they will locate the entrance to **LOCATION 9**—branches and leaves cover it.

CHAPTER 3: BENEATH THE RUINS

The remains of Firestone Keep are home to a small clan of kobolds. Their leader, **Rhorluk**, is a kobold acolyte of modest power. They inhabit the crypts below the ruins of the keep, having driven out the former inhabitants (a family of lizardfolk) some years ago.

The kobolds have not managed to secure complete control of the crypts, however. There is dark magic at work in some areas, which they have chosen to avoid. In addition, there is a mysterious creature, which they call *the lurker*, that sneaks through the corridors and occasionally snatches their eggs and young.

Light

Kobolds generally have no need for light, and there is no interior illumination in the crypts unless noted. PCs without torches, lanterns, or another source of light are considered *blinded* unless they have *darkvision*.

Sound

The sound of the water falling from the aqueduct (**LOCATION 16**) reverberates throughout the ruins. The sound is faint in **LOCATIONS 1-8**, but in **LOCATIONS 9-19** it is so loud that creatures suffer *disadvantage* on all *Perception* checks that depend on hearing.

Features

The crypts are carved from the hill's hard flint bedrock. Some areas are raw and unworked, but others have been polished and carved with scenes in bas-relief. On the map, areas that have borders shown with straight lines have been finished and polished, and the areas with rough or inconsistent lines are bare rock.

Resting

The party may easily retreat to the surface to rest in safety. However, they only have time for one long rest before the summer solstice occurs and Willet is sacrificed.

Wandering Monsters

The lizardfolk shaman in **LOCATION 7A** occasionally wanders around the crypts. You may wish to set up the encounter by having the party hear the occasional soft footfall either behind or before them.

Random Names

Some of the tombs and ossuaries have names inscribed on them:

d20	First Name	Family Name
1	Alf	Brawnfist
2	Ana	Fleetdew
3	Arannis	Frostfoot
4	Beth	Gladbank
5	Bethys	Gladlaw
6	Blath	Greatmoor
7	Braman	Grimhearth
8	Celestine	Grimlaw
9	Evenn	Ironsong
10	Fyn	Longborn
11	Gedd	Nightlaw
12	Geth	Stormborn
13	Gothar	Lacklaw
14	Lise	Newsky
15	Malark	Boldlink
16	Orevel	Farstreet
17	Parth	Goldshield
18	Rarstag	Nightbank
19	Tordek	Greyhearth
20	Westra	Hornwall

Random Epitaphs

Some of the tombs and ossuaries also have epitaphs:

d20 Random Epitaph

- 1 'Til memory fades & life departs, you live forever in our hearts
- 2 A friend to many and sadly missed
- 3 Always in our hearts
- 4 Ever remembered, ever loved
- 5 Fondly loved and deeply mourned
- 6 Generous of spirit and a friend to many
- 7 In loving memory of [name]
- 8 Laughed often, loved much
- 9 Love's last gift, remembrance
- 10 Modest and gentle of heart
- 11 Of generous heart... And of beautiful spirit
- 12 Remembered with love
- 13 Rest is thine and sweet remembrance ours
- 14 Their love will last an eternity
- 15 This was no ordinary life. This was a life well-lived and well-loved, a life that will be deeply missed.
- 16 Time cannot steal the treasures that we carry in our hearts
- 17 We have loved you in life. Let us not forget you in death
- 18 What we keep in memory is ours unchanged forever
- 19 Words of kindness, deeds of love
- 20 Your beautiful spirit lifted our hearts

Random Trinkets

The tombs and ossuaries often contain small, worthless trinkets:

d20 Random Trinket

- 1 A belt buckle
- 2 A bootlace entwined with gold thread
- 3 A decorative leather stud
- 4 A dented sheriff's badge
- 5 A floating glass orb that follows you around and makes whirring sounds
- 6 A glass globe of swirling green goop
- 7 A harmless stage dagger with retracting blade and blood-compartment
- 8 A measuring tape, marked in ink at 23 inches
- 9 A pair of badly worn hairdressing scissors
- 10 A penny whistle that plays the same note no matter which holes are covered
- 11 A portfolio of pressed flowers
- 12 A preserved basilisk eye
- 13 A puzzle box holding 10 fingernail clippings
- 14 A smoking pipe carved from granite
- 15 A tiny bubble level that is calibrated incorrectly
- 16 A vial of scented oil
- 17 A wax hand shaped to hold a large cup
- 18 One piece of unknown paper currency with no obvious denomination
- 19 Six useless wooden tokens
- 20 Two false fingernails painted with mysterious symbols

1. Main Entry

Read the following:

A narrow stone stairway leads down from the ruins above. As you descend, natural light is replaced by impenetrable darkness. The smell of old dust and mold battles with the pungent stench of decaying flesh. At the bottom of the stairs, the passage curves back and forth snakelike, having been roughly hewn from gray and tan stone.

Everything is quiet save the distant sound of running water. Deep shelves have been carved into the passage walls at chest height. These alcoves are filled with old bones and decaying clothes. You notice ahead that one of the shelf openings is covered with a dark, hard mud.

The pockmarked, hard-packed mud covers a giant wasps' nest in the ossuary. Two **giant wasps** are within, and will attack if the nest is touched or disturbed in any way.

For APL 2, there are three **giant wasps** present.

For APL 3, there are four **giant wasps** present.

Treasure

If the wasps are defeated, a search of the ossuary reveals seven pieces of citrine worth **10gp** each.



2. Vaults

Read the following:

The crypt is quieter here—the sound of rushing water is barely audible. On the western wall are two vault doors, both made from a sandy-colored stone and carved with simple patterns. One of the doors is firmly shut, but the other one is slightly ajar.

Open Vault

Beyond the open door is a closed, plain stone coffin. Due to the stench of the corpse within, any creature that begins its turn inside the vault must succeed on a

DC 8 Constitution saving throw or be *poisoned* until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench for 24 hours.

If the lid is levered open, the party will discover a **swarm of scarab beetles** eating the corpse—they will attack any creature in the vault.

The corpse has been partly consumed. A **DC 13 Medicine** check will identify it as that of a female half-elf. There is no inscription anywhere.

Treasure

Interred with the body are 7 ancient limestone urns worth a total of **3gp**. These were used to store the viscera of the body in the coffin, though there is now only a mucky residue left. There is also a clay statue of a forgotten religious figure, worth **7gp**.

Closed Vault

The door to the closed vault is stuck but can be forced open easily—no ability check required. The stone coffin in this room is ornate, though close examination will show it is covered in obscene bas-relief carvings.

An inscription on the coffin reads:

Helcer Grimwand

The wind is my breath,

The darkness my soul,

The earth my embrace,

Await my return.

Helcer was a sage and advisor to the Ironsong family (see **LOCATION 8**). He also happened to be a necromancer of no small ability, and it was his experiments (hundreds of years ago) that have led to

SWARM OF SCARAB BEETLES

Use the statistics for a **swarm of insects**.

For APL 2 there are two **swarms**.

For APL 3, there are three **swarms**.

the unusually high level of necromantic activity within these crypts.

Trap

The coffin is armed with a poison needle trap. A successful **DC 15 Perception** check will reveal the trap, and a successful **DC 15 Thieves Tools** check will disarm it.

If the trap is triggered, the room is filled with *malice gas*: anyone in the room must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or be *poisoned* for 1 hour. The poisoned creature is also blinded.

Treasure

Inside the coffin is another ancient corpse, but this one is wearing an ornate necklace with a mithril pendant. The necklace is an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

Cradled in the arms of the corpse is a statuette made of ebony. A **DC 15 Religion** check will reveal that it depicts **Shar, Mistress of the Night**. The object is warm to the touch.

Undead creatures will not attack anyone holding the statuette, preferring to seek another target. The effect is limited to a single person (if multiple people touch the statuette, there is no effect at all). The effect also

only works on undead within this crypt system, due to its close connection with Helcer and his magic. Once the statuette is removed from the crypt, it becomes an ordinary religious object, worth about **20gp**.

3. THE BROKEN MAN

Read the following:

A creature crawls out of an alcove toward you—as though clawing its way out of a nightmare. Dry, parchment-like skin is stretched over its skeletal features, while its lower body is a crushed mass of bloody gore.

The thing lets out an inhuman cry and comes at you with bared teeth and wide, wild eyes.

Despite its appearance, this creature is not undead—it's actually **Rowan Quickford**, a tracker from Nettleton, hired by Lord Blackmoor to find his son. Rowan was smashed by the trap in **location 6** (see below), and has been hiding out ever since.

Rowan is badly injured and mad with pain. His legs and lower body are destroyed, and can only be restored by powerful healing magic. A *cure* spell will stop the bleeding and the pain, but his legs will still be useless. A *heal* spell is required to enable him to walk again.

If ignored, Rowan will crawl slowly after the party, begging for help. If not given magical aid, he will perish within the hour.

Treasure

Rowan has nothing of value on his person, but he does have information. He consulted an oracle before setting

out, and was told, “That which you seek lies in a hidden place near flowing water.” He will happily share this information if the party aids him.

4. OILY ANARCHY

Read the following:

Most of the ossuaries here are empty; their former contents are scattered all over the floor. One shelf, however, appears to be undisturbed. The cracked and yellowed bones are covered in a thick layer of oil. Amidst the mess, you can make out a silvery gleam.

The bones are covered by a **gray ooze**—this creature slowly crawls from ossuary to ossuary, sucking the remaining marrow from the old bones. A successful **DC 15 Perception** check allows a PC to identify the creature.

For APL 2, there are two **gray oozes**.

For APL 3, there are three **gray oozes**.

Treasure

The glint comes from a large platinum coin, minted with the profile of an unknown ruler and marked with an ancient script. To the right collector, the coin is worth up to **50gp**.

5. ZOMBIE RATS

Read the following:

A foul odor assaults your nostrils as you move through the passage, and the rough-hewn walls seem to only reflect and reinforce

the stench. A moment later, a large pack of rats comes scurrying into view. As they get closer, you see that torn flesh hangs from their bodies in strips, exposing internal organs made dark and putrid with rot. Their eyes glare at you with diseased mania, and they snap at you with jaws full of broken teeth.

These rats are undead zombies that scurry and chitter through the blackness, with unending hunger and unthinking hatred for living creatures.

6. TUNNEL TROUBLE

Read the following:

The rough walls of the passage are interrupted by panels of smooth, cut stone that form a short tunnel roughly ten feet long. Fresh blood is spattered around the top, bottom, and lower sides of this strange construction.

Trap

This is the **trap** that caught Rowan Quickford, and the blood is his (see **LOCATION 3**, above). Stepping on a pressure plate causes a massive stone slab to pound down upon whatever poor creature stands there. The trap automatically resets after being triggered.

The trap can be detected with a successful **DC 15 Perception** check. Any character weighing more than 40 pounds who steps upon the pressure plate must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or take **2d10**

ZOMBIE RAT SWARM

Use the same statistics as a normal swarm of rats, except remove the **keen smell** trait, and replace it with the following:

Undead Stench. Any creature that begins its turn in the same square as the swarm of zombie rats must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or be *poisoned* until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench for 24 hours.

bludgeoning damage as the slab slams down. On a successful save they avoid any harm.

If detected, the trap can be easily avoided by hopping over the pressure plate.

7. THE GREYBORN VAULTS

Read the following:

The walls in this hallway have been covered in a veneer of copper-colored bricks. Five vaults are set into the walls here, though the stone doors that once sealed the chambers were wrenched open long ago.

Bones and scraps of clothing are scattered all over the floors of the vaults and hallway.

These vaults are the burial chambers of an important noble family from years past. Most of the valuables interred with the corpses are long gone, but a few interesting trinkets remain.

Following is a description of each vault—you can assign them to the five vaults on the map as you wish.

7A. Lord Greyborn

Read the following:

The large sarcophagus that fills this small vault seems undisturbed, though its stone is now chipped and discolored. An effigy carved into the lid portrays a lean, full-bearded man, his hands drawn to his chest and clasping the hilt of a large sword that lays upon his body.

As you watch, the stone eyes flick open and the effigy roars, "Who dares impede the slumber of Lord Greyborn? Come further and you will partake of my rest, willing or no!" The stone creature sits up, staring at you with dead eyes and readying its sword.

The effigy is an illusion, set up by the Greyborn family to scare off intruders. The image stares balefully toward the doorway for a full minute, then disappears. It returns to the resting position after an hour.

The sarcophagus is currently used as a hiding place by **Flicktongue**, a **lizardfolk** shaman. Flicktongue is the last survivor from the clan of lizardfolk who lived in the crypts before the kobolds arrived. She keeps some small valuables in the sarcophagus along with bits of food and items that are nonmagical but ritually important to her former clan. Flicktongue sneaks around the tunnels and likes to steal kobold eggs from the hatchery. Though she was the clan's spiritual leader, she is not a spellcaster.

Flicktongue knows the crypts well, having lived here for many years. If the party befriends her, she can tell them about the location of the kobold tribe, and warn them against entering the Ironsong Tomb (**location 8**). She also knows about the secret door to **location 15A**, and will willingly share that information.

Treasure

The sarcophagus currently contains a thin blanket, some scattered bones from an unidentifiable animal, a large tiger eye gem worth **20gp**, and a crude wooden carving of a snake coiled around a skull. These are Flicktongue's only possessions, and she will be very upset if the party takes them—she will flee and then stalk the party, looking for an opportunity for revenge.

7B. Oskar Greyborn

There is an open stone coffin in this room with the corpse missing. An inscription reads:

Oskar Greyborn

Weep not for me dear friends but mark
Ye all must lose the vital spark
Whether by sudden death or slow
For time will march and all must go

There is nothing of value here.

7C. Mari Greyborn

There is a closed stone coffin here. The inscription reads:

Mari Greyborn

Had death whose harvest is each hour
But stopped to view this lovely flower

In pity, he'd turn'd his scythe away
And left her till another day
But ruthless he mowed on, alas
And she fell with'ring, like the grass

Inside the coffin are a jumble of old bones and rags.

Treasure

In the corner of the vault is a rusty iron bracelet and an old hand mirror with many cracks. The bracelet is worthless. A casual glance at the mirror suggests it is too cracked to reflect anything accurately. A *detect magic* or *identify* spell will reveal the truth—it is a badly damaged *mirror of scrying*, which functions like a *crystal ball*.

The cracks mean that any scrying images will be distorted and difficult to make out—but it will provide *some* useful information.

After one use, the mirror will crack even further. After two uses, the mirror will shatter completely and become worthless.

7D. Gorstag Greyborn

There is a closed stone coffin here. The inscription reads:

Gorstag Greyborn

The wise, the sober and the brave
Must try the cold and silent grave

There is naught but an old scrap of paper inside the coffin. Writing on the note says, "Subject #4 removed to lab."

7E. Jessika Greyborn

There is a closed stone coffin here. The inscription reads:

Jessika Greyborn

Time was I stood where you do now
And viewed the dead as you do me
Ere long you'll lie as low as I
And others stand and look on thee

Inside the coffin are a jumble of old bones and rags.

Treasure

Near the coffin is a small stone box, 8" x 4" x 2". There are no visible seams on the box, and it is quite badly chipped. If the box is shaken, a rattling sound comes from within.

The following inscription is on one side, in a flowing script—

My double points in one by iron bound,
I struggle with winds, fight with seas
profound,

I search the waters and I bite the ground.

If anyone says the word "anchor" while touching the box, one side will flip open. Inside is an emerald studded bracelet (worth 40gp) and a *Wand of Secrets*.

Jessika was a minor wizard, and this is her magic jewelry box. She had several, and so inscribed riddles on the surface to remind her of the opening words.

8. THE IRONSONG TOMB

Read the following:

The air is cold inside this large tomb, much colder than elsewhere in the crypts. The

walls and floor are made of dressed stone and are strangely clean—there is none of the dust and detritus found in the tunnels. Several vault doors line the walls, and there is a large tapestry hanging from the east wall, showing a fierce armoured woman battling goblins.

But your attention is drawn to the enormous sarcophagus that dominates the center of the room. It is carved from pale marble and is gilt all over with gold and silver.

The chamber is eerily silent—as silent as despair.

The sarcophagus is sealed, but can be opened by a successful **DC 17 Athletics** check. Once it is opened, a **shadow** emerges from the tapestry. This is the remains of **Fiera Ironsong**, the last great lord of Firestone Keep. Fiera lets out a piercing shriek and the doors of the vaults swing open, revealing her honor guard: a group of two **skeletons**. They all attack.

For APL 2, there are four **skeletons**.

For APL 3, there are seven **skeletons**.

Treasure

The corpse in the sarcophagus—the body of Fiera Ironsong—is wearing her ancient armor and holding her ancestral weapon. Upon her brow is a fine gold circlet, worth **80gp**.

The armor is a suit of *mithral scale mail*.

The weapon is a *magical glaive +1* known as the *Ironsong*. It is constructed from a single piece of



shimmering metal and has a brilliant orange gemstone mounted above the blade (the eponymous Firestone). Any creature wielding the Ironsong has advantage on **Intimidation** checks. In addition, the sound of melodic, ringing notes fill the air when the glaive is wielded in battle.

The circlet, mail and glaive are all inscribed with the runes for “IS” in *Iokbaric* script. A PC making a **DC 15 History** or **Arcana** check will be able to interpret these runes.

9. HIDDEN ENTRY

A secondary entry to the crypts, this portal is well hidden behind several bushes.

Stone stairs descend into darkness. While you do not know what lies below, you are sure from the nearby tracks that many creatures travel to and from this area.

Five **kobolds** occupy the guardroom near the stairs (this number includes the *lookout* discussed in chapter 2).

Tactics

If the lookout returned safely, the kobolds will be in a high state of alert for at least an hour afterwards, ready to ambush anyone who enters their guardroom. If the PCs pass the guardroom without entering, the kobolds will spring out and ambush them from behind.

If the PCs managed to kill the lookout, the kobolds will be lazing in the guardroom, eating, sleeping, and talking. The PCs will have an excellent chance of surprising them.

For APL 2, there are seven **kobolds**.

For APL 3, there are ten **kobolds**.

Treasure

The kobolds carry **30sp** between them and several lumps of dry meat. There are several skins of a surprisingly good sour wine in the guardroom.

A **DC 15 Perception** check will uncover a small silver statue of Tiamat, worth **20gp**. It is very well hidden amongst some rags, as the owner knows that the kobold leader considers worship of Tiamat to be heresy.

10. RHORLUK'S CHAMBER

The kobold leader occupies this room, along with some companions. If there is fighting at **LOCATION 9**, he will lock the eastern door and wait. Picking the lock requires a **DC 12 Thieves Tools** check. The doors can also be forced open with a **DC 16 Strength** check.

This large room appears to have been a chapel, but has now been converted into a bed chamber. An old and half-collapsed bed lies against the northern wall, covered with blankets and skins.

Other adornments include an enormous rug, several silk tapestries, and an ornate wooden chest. Bits of broken furniture and piles of trash are scattered throughout the room.

There is a stone altar at the western end, flanked by two large iron braziers, each full of smoldering coals.

Rhorluk the kobold leader is here, along with his pet **giant weasel**, and his bodyguard, **Kronk** the **orc**.

For APL 2, there are two **orcs** and three **giant weasels**.

For APL 3, there are two **orcs** and six **giant weasels**.

The name of the second orc is **Ushug**, and she is Kronk's mate.

Tactics

As soon as the adventurers enter the chamber, Kronk and the giant weasel will charge them.

Rhorluk (see below) will stand back, targeting obvious spellcasters with *ray of sickness* in the first round. After that, he will target the front line with *bane*. If he is forced into melee combat, he will use *inflict wounds* before drawing his weapon.

If Rhorluk is injured, he will lay hands on the altar to heal himself (see below).

Rhorluk also has two *smoke bombs* (see below). If things get desperate, he will throw the bombs down, and use the smoke to cover his escape.

Any giant weasels will fight to the death. If Rhorluk is killed or flees, Kronk (and Ushug) will also flee if the chance presents itself.

Altar Of Kurtulmak

This crudely shaped stone block is carved with strange religious symbols and is stained with old blood.

If Rhorluk lays his hands on the altar and mutters a short prayer, his health is fully restored. This takes his full action for one round.

If anyone else touches the altar, there is a muted green flash. The PC must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** save or take **1d6 radiant** damage.

Trap

Rhorluk's ornate wooden chest is locked and protected by a trap. If the box is opened without using the key (see below) or disarming the trap, a cloud of poisonous gas billows out and fills the area to a radius of 20'.

Any creature in that area must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** save or take **1d12 poison** damage and be *poisoned* for one hour. A creature that succeeds on the saving throw takes half damage and isn't *poisoned*.

A successful **DC 13 Perception** check will reveal the trap, and a successful **DC 13 Thieves Tools** check will disarm it. The lock can be picked with a **DC 13 Thieves Tools** check.

RHORLUK

Rhorluk is a priest of Kurtulmak, and is dressed in rather garish orange and green priest robes. He has the statistics of an **acolyte**, with the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *poison spray, thaumaturgy, vicious mockery*

1st Level (3 spell slots): *ray of sickness, bane, inflict wounds*

Treasure

Rhorluk has a wicked-looking ceremonial dagger in his belt, worth **20gp**.

The iron key to the treasure chest is on a leather thong around Rhorluk's neck. A similar thong around Kronk's neck holds the bronze key to his treasure chest (see **LOCATION 12**).



The chest contains the kobold hoard:

- 1700cp
- 1000sp
- 70gp
- A pewter belt (25gp)
- Several gems—3 x azurites, 2 x blue quartz, 1 x malachite (each worth 10gp)
- A spell scroll (guiding bolt)
- A potion of greater healing
- 3 x potion of healing

Anyone examining the walls of Rhorluk's chamber will note that there are various religious frescoes painted on them, though they are very faded. A **DC 13 Religion** check will determine that the chapel was dedicated to **Bane**, god of war.

11. WEASEL PEN

Read the following:

This long, narrow room has simple wooden gates blocking either entrance. The floor is covered with old straw and fresh bones.

The kobolds have turned this room into a pen for the five **giant weasels** they are domesticating. The gates are kept closed using ropes, so it is a simple matter to open them.

For APL 2, there are eight **giant weasels**.

For APL 3, there are eleven **giant weasels**.

Tactics

The weasels will stare hungrily at the party and begin slinking toward them, though they cannot pass the gate. If the party stand back and attempt to pick off

SMOKE BOMB

These objects are round, 3 inches wide, with a casing made of paper. On impact, a cloud of thick smoke is exuded to a 30' radius. All within the cloud are *heavily obscured*.

The cloud naturally disperses after 1 minute. A moderate wind can also disperse the smoke after 3 rounds, and a strong wind can do so after 1 round.

The ingenious kobold alchemist Vumkaxxu (**location 14**) created these bombs, using a secret blend of saltpeter, sugar, and wax. Each bomb has a fragile glass vial full of *alchemist's fire* embedded in the mixture, which fractures on impact and causes the bomb to ignite.

the weasels using ranged attacks, the weasels will throw themselves at the gate in a frenzy, breaking through it after a round.

Treasure

The room contains no monetary treasure, but a simple search will uncover an old book on weasel wrangling, written in draconic. An antiquarian in a large city would pay **5gp** for this book.

12. KRONK'S QUARTERS

An orc mercenary, Kronk, uses this room as his personal quarters. Kronk is in **LOCATION 10** when the adventurers enter the dungeon.

This room is clean and tidy. In one corner is a bed with a straw mattress and furs, in front of which sits a banded chest. The opposing corner holds a round table and two chairs. Along the wall by the bed stretches a well-equipped weapon rack.

Despite his orc heritage, Kronk is a particularly neat creature. He considers himself a master warrior and

spends considerable time in his quarters practicing with each of the weapons he owns.

Treasure

Kronk's banded chest is not trapped, but its quality lock requires a successful **DC 15 Thieves Tools** check to open. It can also be forced open with a successful **DC 17 Strength** check, but doing so destroys the potion inside. Kronk has the key on a leather thong around his neck.

The chest contains **57gp, 12sp, 30cp**, and a *potion of healing*. In addition, the weapon rack holds a longsword, a spear, a greatsword, a battleaxe, a flail, and a morningstar. All are in superb condition.

13. ALCHEMICAL TRAP

Read the following:

You have come to an intersection of two passages. One wall of the small chamber formed by the crisscrossing hallways is decorated with a bas relief carving—it depicts a hooded figure with its arms lifted in victory, as flames curl and rise in the background.

Trap

Three tripwires cross this intersection. A successful **DC 15 Perception** check is required to notice them. If the PCs enter the intersection without noticing the trap, they will trip the wires and glass jars filled with *alchemist's fire* will fall from a wooden shelf attached to the ceiling and explode.

ALCHEMIST'S FIRE

There are many different recipes for alchemist's fire across the realms. This highly effective formulation was devised by the kobold alchemist Vumkaxxu, and consists of a secret blend of quicklime, saltpeter, bitumen, sulphur, resin and pitch.

All creatures in the intersection must then make a successful **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failure, each target takes **1d4** fire damage at the start of each of their turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a **DC 10 Dexterity** check to extinguish the flames.

For APL 2, the damage is **1d4+2**. For APL 3, it is **2d4**.

A PC or an adjacent ally may use their action to extinguish the flames with no ability check required. The fire will burn until extinguished.

14. ALCHEMIST LAB

Read the following:

Along the wall to the right is a table of thick wood, covered in beakers, vials, bottles, braziers, pipes, and flasks, as well as charts and loose notes covered in strange symbols.

Along the wall to the left is a simple cot and a desk; before the desk is a large chair covered in soft velvet cushions.

Sitting in the chair is a small, bespectacled kobold holding a quill pen and a book.

He looks up in annoyance when the party enters, and snaps (in common), "What is it? Can't you see I'm busy?"

This is **Vumkaxxu**, a brilliant kobold alchemist. He lives and works in this small room, and in exchange for assisting the other kobolds with various amazing concoctions, he is left largely alone to pursue his studies.

He is highly eccentric and cares only about his work. He will express no concern about the activities of the party, as “politics” do not interest him. He speaks excellent common.

Tactics

Vumkaxxu will not fight, and if threatened will offer three flasks of *alchemist's fire* and two *healing potions* in exchange for his safety. He is unconcerned about the other kobolds in the lair.

If questioned, he will provide some vague information about the prisoner in a secret room, who is being kept for “some barbaric and superstitious ritual.” He can also provide general information about the number and disposition of the kobolds. He speaks impatiently and in clipped words; however, his main goal is to return to his studies.

Treasure

The laboratory contains six *smoke bombs* (see **LOCATION 10**), five flasks of *alchemist's fire* (see **LOCATION 13**), and three *potions of healing*.

Other potions and vials line the walls, mostly non-magical and medicinal. If the party needs a specific type of potion or oil, it may be found here at the DM's discretion.

15. STORAGE LARDER

Read the following:

A large butcher's block and cleaver occupy the center of this room. Crude sausages hang from the ceiling, and shelves filled with root vegetables, mushrooms, and other non-perishable food items fill the walls. Resting on the floor beneath the hanging racks are several large barrels. The scents within the room are strong and varied, but not rancid.

The kobolds use this room to cure meat and store other food. Aside from foodstuffs, the room contains nothing of value. The barrels contain fermenting sour wine.

A **DC 15 Perception** check reveals a secret door in the wall behind the shelves. This door leads to **LOCATION 15A**.

15A. Treasure Room

Read the following:

The secret door opens to a dark room that smells of stale air. Rows of empty shelves line the walls, and several smashed chests occupy one corner.

Near the center of the space, a brown-haired boy lies bound and naked on the stone floor. Aside from minor scrapes and bruises, he appears unharmed.

This secret room was once used to store the Ironsong family's most prized possessions, but any items of value were looted long ago.

While visibly shaken and dehydrated, the boy is coherent. He confirms he is Lord Blackmoor's son, Willet, and provides the PCs with the information below:

- He was playing near the creek with his Aunt Zoreene. She went back to the manor and a little while later he and his bodyguards were attacked by a small band of kobolds.
- Something struck him on the head and everything went black. When he awoke, he was locked in this room.
- He wants to know what happened to his bodyguards and Aunt Zoreene.
- A kobold wearing orange robes has come in the room several times to draw weird symbols on him with ink.
- All he wants to do is go home to his father.

Willet will follow any instructions given to him by the party, but will frequently ask, "when will we get home?"

16. AQUEDUCT

The roar of falling water is almost deafening in this room. Water enters from an opening in the east wall, flows through an "L" shaped channel, and exits through an opening in the north wall. A walkway along the channel allows easy access. A foul smell fills the air.

The sound of falling water comes from both openings in the walls; the water cascades off an ancient lock to the east, flows through the room, and then falls off a similar ledge once it leaves the room to the north.

The kobolds have been using the aqueduct as a latrine. Any creature that drinks the water must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or be *poisoned* for ten minutes. While poisoned, the creature is nauseous and retching.

Treasure

A **DC 12 Perception** check will find a pile of old bones and rags alongside a rusty dagger in one corner. This is all that remains of a would-be tomb robber. With her last breath, she inscribed the following on the stone floor—"Ware the Tapestry!" This refers to the tapestry in **LOCATION 8**.

17. NEST

The northern entry has been trapped (see below). The middle door in the west wall has been spiked closed, and requires a **DC 15 Strength** check to force open.

This long, wide room is decorated with elaborate mosaics and bas-reliefs. The scenes depicted seem overtly religious, and various gods are represented. Along the far wall are five vaults, their doors long gone.

Tattered rags and piles of dried grass line the floor. Small boxes and piles of detritus are scattered throughout the room.

This room was once used to perform the last religious rites and embalming of those about to be interred in a vault. It is now the main kobold nest.

There are eight regular **kobolds** here, alongside eight breeding kobolds who will not fight. There are also twelve infant kobolds, who also don't fight.

For APL 2, there are eleven **kobolds**.
For APL 3, there are sixteen **kobolds**.
You may also proportionally increase the number of breeding and infant kobolds.

Traps

There is a tripwire across the northern entrance, which can be spotted with a **DC 14 Perception** check. Above the entryway are a cluster of *smoke bombs* on a collapsing wooden shelf.

If the party triggers the trap, the bombs will drop and the whole northern part of the room will be enveloped in thick smoke for one minute.

Tactics

If the trap is triggered, three of the regular kobolds will quickly escort the breeders and infants out of the southern door and to the Hatchery (**LOCATION 18**).

The remainder of the kobolds will line the southern wall with slings ready and will attack the party as soon as they emerge from the smoke. The kobolds will have *advantage* on their initiative roll because of this.

Treasure

The boxes and small piles of rubbish contain the prized possessions of the crypt's inhabitants. The five vaults are filled with similar collections. Consult the **RANDOM TRINKETS** table above for examples.

With regards to real treasure, a search will reveal **150cp, 40sp, 10gp**, and seven corroded candlesticks. If polished, the candlesticks are revealed to be solid silver



and are worth **24gp** each. There are also a dozen skins full of sour wine.

A **DC 12 Perception** check will uncover a boy-sized pair of breeches and a shirt amongst the rubbish—these belonged to Willet.

18. HATCHERY

Along this rough-hewn hallway are seven alcoves; three on one side and four on the other. Broken eggshells litter the floor. In three of the alcoves lie small clutches of eggs that have yet to hatch. Two large fires burning in stubby iron drums ensure the whole area is very warm.

There are **four kobolds** here and two **giant weasels**. It is their job to guard the kobold eggs, and they are always highly alert.

It's possible that some kobolds from the Nest are also here (see **LOCATION 17**).

For APL 2, there are seven **kobolds** and three **giant weasels**.

For APL 3, there are ten **kobolds** and five **giant weasels**.

OIL OF VITRIOL

Vumkaxxu creates the oil of vitriol from salts known as “green vitriol,” which are found in iron mines. Creating this large acid pit has exhausted his supply of the substance.

Tactics

These warriors are the bravest and boldest in the tribe, and will fight to death.

Treasure

The kobolds have **50sp** between them. Some adventurers might also find a use for the kobold eggs; there are a total of 15 undamaged and still viable eggs in the hatchery. These may be sold to a slaver for **1gp** each.

19. ACID PIT

The kobolds have dug a pit in this intersection to deter a creature (who they call “the lurker”) from stealing their eggs. The pit is 12' deep and is about 20' long. It is uncovered.

In the bottom of the pit, to a depth of 2', is an acidic substance that Vumkaxxu calls “oil of vitriol.” If someone enters the oil, they take **1d6 acid** damage every round.

What the kobolds call “**the lurker**” is Flicktongue the lizardfolk, from **LOCATION 7A**.

CHAPTER 4: A FAMILY AFFAIR

The final encounter occurs as the PCs leave the dungeon:

As you make your way out of the crypts and into the ruins of Firestone Keep, a woman steps from behind a nearby crumbled wall. You recognize her as Lord Blackmoor's sister, Zoreene.

After a moment, a tight smile breaks through her usual grimace. "Well done," she says. "I never thought you would succeed. I have your gold here—hand over the child and you can be on your way."

If the party show any hesitation, her smile fades and she makes a signal. Men in leather armor then rise from behind crumbled foundations and level crossbows at the party. Zoreene will then demand the party hand over Willet.

Zoreene has the statistics of a **thug**, and she has three **bandits** with her.

For APL 2, there are eight **bandits** with her.

For APL 3, Zoreene has the statistics of a **bandit captain**, and there are six **bandits** with her.

HAND HIM OVER?

The party may comply with Zoreene's demand. If so, she will give them 100gp (all that she has) and tell them to go "far away." The party may later hear that both Willet and his father are dead, and that Zoreene now runs the estate as "Lady Blackmoor."

WILLET'S ABDUCTION

Lord Blackmoor's sister, Zoreene, orchestrated Willet's abduction. Zoreene approached the kobolds at Firestone Keep and offered to help them seize the child for their ritual. They eagerly accepted her offer.

Zoreene thinks her brother is a fool who will soon impoverish them all. She expects him to die soon due to his gluttonous habits—her plan eliminates his only heir and moves her one step closer to inheriting the family fortune.

Tactics

When the combat begins, Zoreene rushes behind a ruined wall. She and the rest of her forces will then fire on the PCs from *half cover*. They are spread out in a semi-circle, and begin combat roughly 40' from the party.

There is no guarantee Willet will survive the fight. To add a complication, the DM may decide that a stray crossbow bolt strikes him. The PCs can attempt to stabilize him if he is dying or heal him using potions or spells.

Treasure

Zoreene fights with a **+1 rapier**. She also carries a hedgewood crossbow of exquisite quality (worth **100gp**). The bandits carry **5gp** each. Her purse contains **100gp**.

Conclusion

If the PCs manage to save Willet, Lord Blackmoor joyfully pays them the agreed amount. He is shocked by the actions of his sister, but the entire ordeal forces him to evaluate his life choices. For Willet's sake, he eventually gives up spirits and starts taking better care of himself.

If the PCs fail to save Willet, Lord Blackmoor is devastated by his loss and by his sister's betrayal. He pays them anyway and asks them to let him grieve in peace. Months later, the PCs hear that Lord Blackmoor has taken his own life, bringing a sad end to a troubled existence.

MAP: FIRESTONE KEEP

