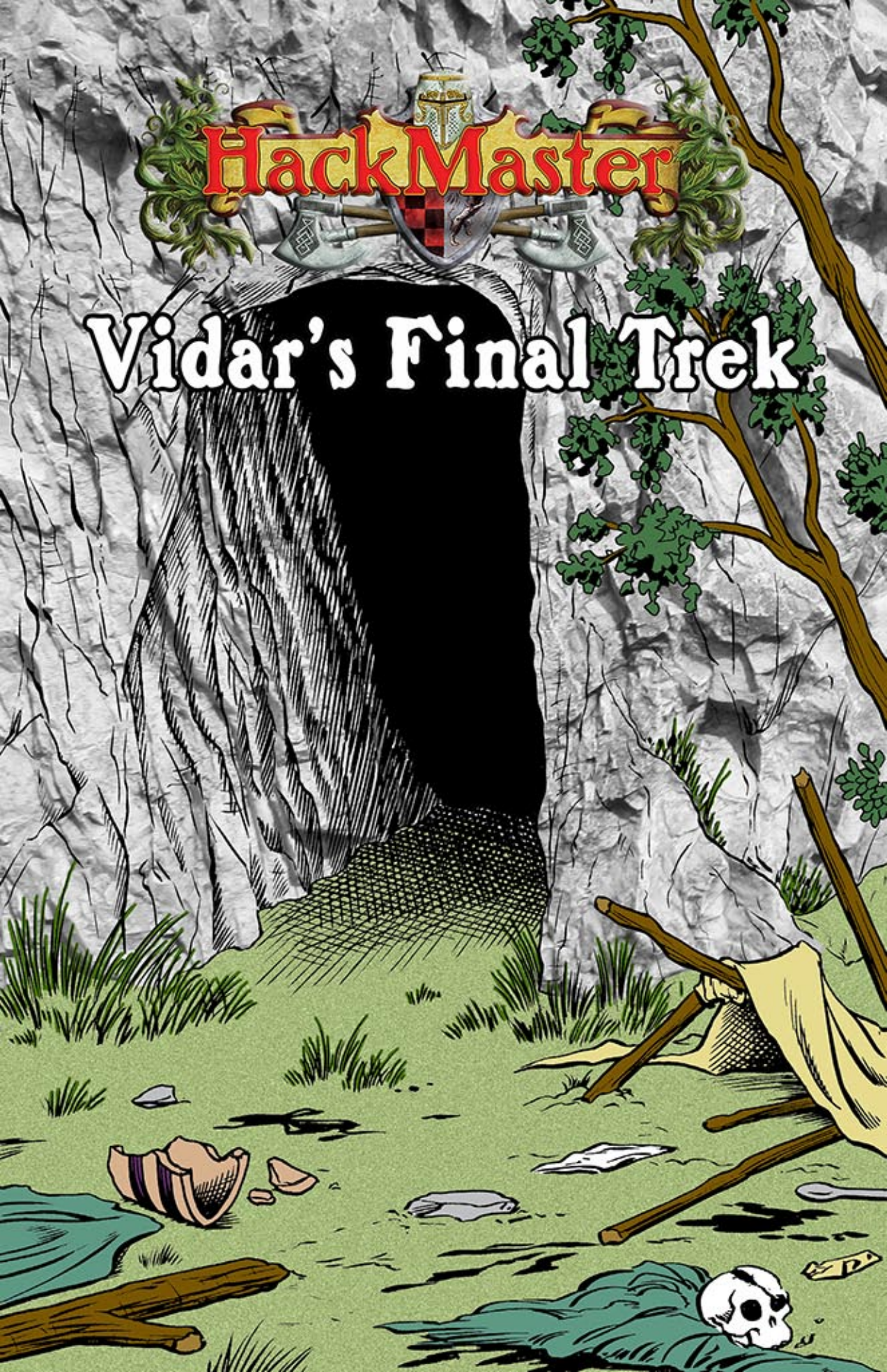


HackMaster



Vidar's Final Trek



Vidar's Final Trek

by George Fields

This is a short adventure in which the final fate of a mage and team of dwarven engineers is discovered. It is small enough to be completed in one session by a group of 8th-9th level characters.

This can be easily dropped into any campaign world and location by changing a few names to suit the setting.

BACKGROUND

Vidar's fascination with magic was only overshadowed by his love of maps and exploration. Anointed to Rostak, the Traveler at an early age, he grew up the privileged child of wealthy merchants in the city of Kaleta. As a boy, he spent countless hours pouring over maps, planning out a lifetime of travel through the Sovereign Lands.

After completing his arcane studies, Vidar set out to make his dreams come true. For nearly five decades, he traveled the length and breadth of the known world. He learned a dozen languages and customs but never stayed in one location for more than a few months before moving on to the next destination, always chasing the horizon.

As his twilight years approached, Vidar realized his days of wandering the lands of Tellene would eventually have to end. No matter how far he traveled, he knew that he could never escape the specter of old age. It was time to plan a location for his eternal rest while he was still able to travel. It was time for one last journey.

For the first time in many years, Vidar made his way back towards his familial home in Kaleta, crossing over the Kakidela Mountains. While he navigated the rocky pathways of the Katagas Rise, Vidar stumbled across a group of haggard dwarves and their families hiding in a small gully. Before Vidar could call out to the dwarves, he heard the thundering rhythm of hooves approaching from the south. Peering down the ridge, Vidar saw a group of horsemen advancing up the ridge. Glancing back towards

the dwarves, he met the eyes of a gray-bearded patriarch, rheumy and tired. The dwarf looked up at the old wizard, saying nothing but silently mouthing "please."

The horsemen were nearly upon him now and Vidar moved to the side of the trail to let them pass. The cavalry slowed to a canter as their captain noticed the old man. He brazenly rode up towards Vidar, not bothering to dismount.

"You there, grandfather, my men and I are searching for a band of dwarven cutthroats skulking in these hills. Help us and Duke Orilaras will richly reward you. Answer quickly, for time is of the essence."

Vidar controlled himself, not allowing his eyes to dart back towards the gully as he replied, "I've seen no cutthroats here, lord. An old pilgrim like me should be grateful to be free of such folk on the road." With a snort of derision, the captain and his men rode off to the west. Vidar waited until the cavalry was out of sight before he scurried down into the gully. The dwarves thanked him for assistance, revealing that they were refugees recently escaped from the siege of Karasta. Since fleeing their homeland, the dwarves had been living hand-to-mouth, hiding from the Doderans out to round them up and deport them back to a life of forced labor in Karasta.

Their story of hardship greatly moved Vidar. The wizard begged the dwarves to let him help them, but they insisted he had already done enough. The dwarves retreated deeper into the highlands and Vidar made his way to Kaleta, the plight of dwarves nagging at his conscience. After a sleepless night in his familial home, Vidar could stand it no longer. He purchased several stout mules and loaded them down with supplies. That very night, under cover of darkness, Vidar set off back into the mountains. It took him several days of fruitless searching before the dwarves made themselves known to

him. When they saw what Vidar had brought them, many were moved to tears. The mules were heavily laden with tools, food, medicine, cloth, and even toys for the few children among them. From then on, Vidar was welcome among the community of hidden dwarves and he made frequent expeditions to their camps. He used his considerable wealth to bring them whatever supplies they might need and warned them of approaching Doderan patrols, by way of hidden paths and trails. During these visits, he shared his faith in the traveler with them and encouraged them to make plans to leave the region and find a new home in a safer place abroad.

This relationship continued on for many months and Vidar forgot his desire to build his tomb, being far more concerned with the well being of his new friends. Though his own mortality was now far from his mind, the march of time continued on. During one of his expeditions, Vidar spotted a Doderan patrol heading towards the camp of his hidden friends. Ready to race to his allies' camp, Vidar took two steps before collapsing into the dusty trail, gasping for breath. Vidar did not know how much time had passed when he regained consciousness, but by the time he reached the dwarven campsite, a terrible melee had already taken place. The dwarves were bloodied and exhausted, but they had killed much of the cavalry patrol by luring them into a box canyon and raining down stones on their heads. Vidar realized that things could have gone much worse, no thanks to him. The dwarves would have to leave the region. Now that they had killed half a patrol, the Doderan military would be after their group with redoubled ferocity.

The dwarves asked Vidar to come with them to find a new home, but the old mage had to refuse. He revealed his sudden deterioration of health and told them he had to look to the construction of his tomb. The dwarves insisted that they would be the ones who would build their friend's final resting place. Vidar wept in gratitude and set to create his tomb's guardian as the dwarves made ready to hide deeper in the mountains during the construction. Vidar and a few of the dwarves gathered the corpses of the Doderan cavalry together and Vidar

stitched their bodies together into the shape of a huge humanoid creature. The body was hauled to the top of a tall mountain and after a bizarre ritual was laid down on a large, flat stone. A storm soon arose and a bolt of lightning struck the body. After the flash, it rose from its place as a flesh golem under Vidar's complete control. Now the corpses of the dwarves' enemies could serve forever as a guardian of their friend.

While the majority of dwarves went into deeper hiding until the tomb was completed, a team of fifteen laborers and artisans traveled with Vidar to a cave he had discovered some years ago during his journeys and began work on the tomb. With the help of the flesh golem's powerful musculature, work progressed swiftly and the cave was quickly excavated. Several weeks passed, and they were able to complete a false tomb to throw off would-be looters. The false tomb was built with a secret door in the back wall that led into the actual tomb.

However, the stress of constantly micro-managing the work of the golem began taking its toll on Vidar. Over the weeks, the old wizard swiftly withered away, shedding weight and losing much of his hair. It wasn't long before he was confined to his cot in the mining camp. His final order to the golem was to stand guard in the false tomb and attack anyone who was not a member of the construction team or Vidar himself. That night as the moon rose, Vidar quietly passed away in his sleep.


As the dwarves mourned the passing of their friend, jealous eyes looked on from the tree line. Orkin Scouts from a group known as the Snakehead Band had spotted the dwarves at work only a few days before. The Snakehead Band, a small tribe of about 20 orcs and three ogres, had robbed and pillaged their way down into the Katagas Rise from the northern mountains. The Snakehead Band was in need of a raiding base and knew that dwarves at work meant a well-excavated cave. With no delay, the Snakehead Band set upon the grieving dwarves and slew them to the last. The brutes ravenously devoured the dwarves and the corpse of Vidar and from then on, the Snakehead band ruled the tomb—except for one chamber.

In the rush to loot the camp and tomb following the defeat of the dwarves, the orcs swarmed through the cave trying to steal whatever they could. One orc rushed ahead of his fellows into the golem's chamber and promptly flew out of the room, his chest collapsed from the force of the flesh golem's mighty punch. The other orcs recoiled from the passage into the room, but the three hulking ogres smirked at the weakness of the lesser creatures and rushed in headlong brandishing their stout clubs. The golem shrugged off the ogres' powerful blows, knocking one of them to the ground with a single, massive fist. When a second ogre was dealt a terrible injury, the two brutes retreated as quickly as they could from the unconquerable foe. The golem then turned on the ogre gasping for breath on the tomb floor and stove its head in. The band retreated from the cave, but the golem gave no chase. The Snakehead Band realized the monster must be confined somehow to its room and learned to avoid the golem's tomb.

Four months have passed since the assault on Vidar's Tomb.


ADVENTURE HOOKS

1. The dwarves of the Katagas Rise are worried about the return of their brethren. There has been no word from them in three months and by best estimates, the construction should be finished already. The dwarves are eager to leave the Katagas Rise and are looking for someone to search for their menfolk. They have an approximate location of where the tomb is and will share it with the party. If the PCs are in the Katagas Rise, the dwarves, having grown increasingly desperate, will approach them. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

 You hear the telltale sound of falling scree before you see them. High on the ridge, a ragtag dozen of stout figures stand holding picks and shovels in their dust caked hands. One of the figures cups her hands to yell down to you in a resonating baritone, "friend or foe?"

If the PCs answer friend and they will be waved up to the ridge and meet the dwarven

refugees. When the PCs get closer to the group of dwarves, it will become apparent that this is no collection of warriors. Many of the dwarves are gray bearded, some are children, and all of them appear hungry, tired, and dirty. The dwarven woman who hailed the PCs will introduce herself in a gruff voice as they ascend:

 I am called Zedda. It is good to meet trustworthy folk during these dark days, if you are true to your declaration. I will be frank, we are loath to ask for help from lowlanders, but we find ourselves in need of assistance. Many of our folk have gone missing while excavating a cave to the north. There has been no word from them in three months and we fear the worst. I would travel to the cave myself if I could but we have many gray beards and children amongst our number and we must soon leave these hills. Please, for the sake of decency and of family, I implore you to help us discover the fate of our brothers. We are destitute and have nothing we can offer you as a reward except our gratitude.

If the PCs agree, then the dwarf will describe the route to cave and set them on a hidden mountain trail that leads to the cave mouth. The dwarves will freely answer any questions the PCs might have. It will take a day of marching to reach the cave.

The PCs can bring closure to the dwarves by simply reporting their deaths or by bringing back Rorak's Rucksack (see Area 7: The False Tomb)

2. Four days ago, the village of L'Mindu was attacked by the Snakehead Band. Two ogres smashed down the town's gate and orcs poured in behind them. During the short battle, the orcs managed to carry off nine people and quite a bit of livestock. The villagers killed four of the orkin invaders, but not before losing twenty-four of their own people (mostly non-combatants) in the melee. Many of the survivors of the attack report that the apparent leader of the raid carried a shield painted with the face of a screeching, snake-haired woman.

When PCs arrive in L'Mindu, they will notice

that the gates have been broken down and many of the town elders approach the PCs asking them to take revenge on the orcs and to bring back physical proof of their deaths. Read or paraphrase the following aloud as the elders make their request:

🗨️ As you wend your way through the muddy streets of L'Mindu, a crowd begins together, muttering unintelligible gossip. The smell of spices and cooking meat is heavy in the air. From out of a dilapidated teahouse, three aging men come forward, dressed in simple, rustic garb. They smile widely at you, "Hail visitors, and welcome to L'Mindu. Your appearance here is surely a gift from the gods. But, where are our manners? Could we tempt you with a home cooked meal?" The men gesture to the teahouse invitingly.

If the PCs follow the elders to the teahouse, continue reading:

🗨️ The elders invite you to sit at a large, round table. From out of the kitchen, servers emerge shouldering platters of steaming pork cutlets, quail eggs, potato pancakes, and steamed buns.

The elders allow you to begin eating before they speak again, "A shadow has fallen over our village. Four days ago, a tribe of orcs swept down from the mountains, broke down our gates and killed many of our people. They were great beasts among them and their chief bore a shield emblazoned with a snake-headed woman. Nine of our people are still unaccounted for. We believe they have been taken into the mountains. The soldiers from Doderia are unwilling to help us—they're apparently too busy chasing down dwarven cutthroats to help the people they're paid to protect. Our village is poor, we have no wealth we can give to you, but please, hear our plea—grant us revenge for the deaths of our people. If you would do this for us, you will always have a home in L'Mindu.

If the PCs agree, continue reading:

🗨️ "The creatures came out of the northern hills. A hunter from our village was able to track them to a cave there. We believe this is where they lair. In the past, the soldiers of Doderia have assured us that they have ended threats to our village when nothing has been done. The people of this village are afraid. I am sorry to ask it, but could you bring back proof that you have slain these creatures? Some token of your victory so that we may set the hearts of the village at ease?"

The elders will give the PCs detailed directions to the cave in the hills and answer any other questions they might have. It will take a day of marching to reach the cave. PCs can provide "proof" of their triumph over the orcs in a multitude of ways, by bringing back Ulkar, the orc chieftain's medusa shield, by bringing back the orcs' ears or heads, or by the testimony of a rescued captive.

AREA 1: CAMP AND ENTRANCE

Encounter: 1-3 Lesser Orkin Wardawgs

🗨️ From the tree line, you spot the cave. The dusty ground around the cave mouth is littered with garbage, bones, and dried feces. A powerful reek pervades the area. It is especially strong near two small wooden structures about 20 yards distant. Near to the cave, a cadaver is tied to a birch tree.


The garbage around the cave mouth is mostly miscellaneous refuse from the orcs, but anyone with the Mining Skill will also notice a number of well-made excavation tools lying about—albeit rusted to uselessness. This is where the mage and dwarves made camp while working on the caverns. Traces of the campsite have been almost entirely destroyed by time and erosion.

The two small structures are outhouses the dwarves constructed for use during the excavation. One of the outhouses has had its roof and wall ripped off by the ogres for ease of use.

The entrance (and all other worked halls) are approximately 10' wide and 15' tall. Areas 3, 4,


and 5 have dim light emanating from their entrances during the night as candles are placed within. During the day, good light emanates 30 feet into the entrance with dim light going about 10 feet past the intersection. During night, dim moonlight will show the first 10 feet of the entrance. Rules for fighting in dim light are on page 280 of the Player's Handbook.

If the PCs take a closer look at the cadaver tied to the tree, read the following:

 The stripped corpse of a red-haired man is tied to this birch tree. His body has been shot multiple times with crossbow bolts and it appears that something has been eating his legs. Trees next to the birch are also sport bolts deeply embedded in their bark.

This is one of the villagers taken from L'Mindu. The orcs tied him to the tree to test out the crossbows they recently looted. However, none of the orcs are particularly deft with the complex weapons and most of their shots went wide (which explains the bolts sticking out of other trees). Wild animals have been scavenging the cadaver, hence the half-eaten legs.

AREA 2: INTERSECTION

 In the middle of this narrow passageway, a large dog-like creature sits idly gnawing on a large bone.

Five feet west of the intersection, an orkin wardawg is tied to a post in the floor. The rope will allow the dog to wander 15' in any direction. Chances are good (Listening 70%) that it will hear anyone entering the lair. Though the orkin wardawg would normally be sensitive to the unusual smell of intruding humans, the recent influx of human prisoners in the lair have inured it to the scent. When the new first arrived, the dawgs barked incessantly. Annoyed, the orcs and ogres beat the creatures mercilessly to stop their baying. As a result, the dawgs have been conditioned to keep silent if they smell humans. Other scents (such as those of a demi-human) will still set them off as will a visual confirmation of intruding PCs.

Once the PCs are within its sight, it will rush

forward to attack subject to the constraints of its leash, snarling, barking, and snapping its large jaws.

The other war dogs in area 5 will rush out to attack as well. They arrive after 10 seconds plus their initiative roll (d12) later.

1-3 Lesser Orkin Wardawgs: (122 EP ea): HP 42; Init 0; Spd 9; Atk +7; Dmg 4d4p+1 (bite); Def +3; DR 4; ToP: 14/8; Jog 20 ft/sec; Tenacity: Steady; Size M; Saves: P +7, M +5, D +7


AREA 3: ORC CHIEFTAIN

Encounter: Ulkar, Greater Orkin Wardawg

Potential Yield: +3 broadsword, ornate medusa shield (40sp), brass frog candle holder (30 sp), peppermint leaves in tin (20 sp), achiote paste in large clay bowl (10 sp), 1lb sack of coriander seeds (40 sp), silver fishscale bracer (200 sp), 2 white wolf pelts (20sp/each)

The orc chieftain, Ulkar, has taken this room as his personal chamber along with his two human slaves and his greater orkin wardawg. If the PCs have made it to this room without alerting the cave complex, read the following:



 A slightly rotund orc lounges on a large straw tick in the center of this chamber clutching a bowl of steaming soup. A hulking orkin wardawg sits obediently at his side, resting on the pelts of two white wolves and staring longingly at the bowl. A middle-aged matron in a flower patterned headscarf leans over a small cauldron, stirring intently with a distressed expression on her face. On her arm is a shiny silver bracer of some sort. Next to her a lean woman in her mid-thirties stares vacantly up at the ceiling. She sports a large, black bruise under her right eye.

The matronly woman is Asa, a captive taken during the raid of L'Mindu. After Ulkar captured her he discovered that she could cook meals using the food and spices stolen from the town. She has thus far been spared his carnal attentions, but works late into the night trying to prepare new meals to keep Ulkar satisfied. She uses old dwarven mess kits left over from the excavation team to do her cooking. Ulkar has grown fond of L'Mindu cuisine and is on track

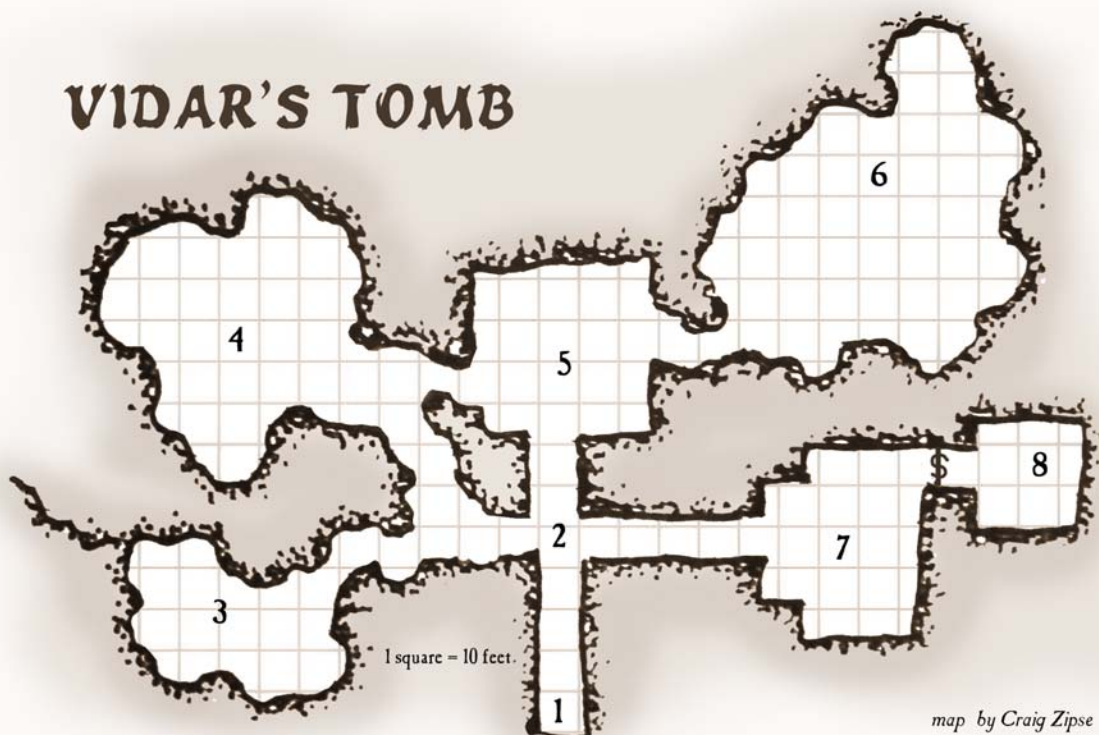
to put on some serious weight. The bracer on Asa's arm is a valuable piece of jewelry stolen by Ulkar in a past raid. He placed it on Asa's arm shortly after he tasted her cooking. Asa is absolutely terrified, but the other woman, Benali, is made of stern stuff and has thus far kept Asa from having a complete nervous breakdown.

Benali is a cart driver captured by the orcs a month ago. She has not been as lucky as Asa and has been terribly abused by her captor. She is a hard woman, however, and continues to believe in the possibility of escape.

Ulkar wields a +3 broadsword he found in a tomb looted by the orcs last year and carries an ornate shield painted with the head of a screeching medusa. The broadsword's pommel is shaped to resemble a serpent's head. Around the room there are valuable spices from L'Mindu and a tin of peppermint leaves in the corner. Ulkar took one whiff of the peppermint and tossed it away in disgust.

To the left of the entrance to this rough chamber, a candle set in an unusual candleholder shaped like a frog dimly illuminates the surroundings. The orkin wardawg's senses are overwhelmed by the powerful aromas of Asa's

VIDAR'S TOMB



cooking and it will not be able to smell approaching PCs.

If the Ulkar and his dawg are defeated and the women rescued, Asa will rip the silver bracer from her arm and throw it at Ulkar's corpse before breaking down into tears. Benali will comfort her and the women will do their best to follow the instructions of their rescuers.


Ulkar: (170 EP): HP 48; Init +3; Spd 9; Atk +9; Dmg 2d6p+d3p+8 (+3 broadsword); Def +5; DR 7; ToP save: 8; Jog 10 ft/sec; Tenacity: Brave; Size M; Saves: P +7, M +5, D +6

Greater Orkin Wardawg: (350 EP ea): HP 64; Init 1; Spd 7; Atk +9; Dmg 4d4p+5 (bite); Def +5; DR 5; ToP Save: 9; Jog 20 ft/sec; Tenacity: Steady; Size L; Saves: P +9, M +7, D +9

Asa and Benali: (non-combatants)

AREA 4: ORC COMMON ROOM

Encounter: 14 orcs, 4 female orcs, 1 severely injured orc

 A single candle illuminates this chamber. Over a dozen orcs squat in grimy candlelight, throwing dice, shoving one another, and abusing their female slaves.

The remaining orcs (14 male warriors and 4 breeders) of the tribe use this as their sleeping chamber and common room. There is nothing of value here. Many of these orcs sport minor injuries from the raid and several have been bitten on the hands and legs by the wardawgs in area 5 as they tried to steal food.

Sitting against the back wall of the cavern is a severely wounded orc. During the raid on L'Mindu, the town blacksmith shattered the bones of the orc's left arm with a hammer before being killed himself. The orc managed to hobble his way back to the cavern, but a long road to recovery ahead of him if he doesn't starve first (as he can no longer effectively fight the other orcs for rations). He is unable to fight and will retreat at the first sign of combat.

A candle to the right of this 20' wide entrance hall reveals a roughly circular room about 70' across. Skins and leaves litter the floor here and serve as beds. A shallow cooking pit is in the northern area surrounded by food scraps and

grease stains.

14 Orcs: (34 EP ea): HP 25 each; Init +5; Spd 9; Atk +3; Dmg 2d8p+2 (scimitar); Def +2 (*med. shields*); DR 3; ToP: 10/6; Jog 15 ft/sec; Tenacity: Steady; Size M; Saves: P +4, M +1, D +3


4 orc females: (non-combatants)

1 severely injured orc: (non-combatant)

AREA 5: STORAGE AND TREASURE

Encounter: 0-2 Lesser orkin wardawgs

Potential Yield: Box of 50 candles, 6 goats (1 sp/each), dairy cow (10sp), 7 light crossbows (125 sp altogether if sold), 68 quarrels

 Barrels, sacks, and crates are all pushed up against the back wall here. The ground is strewn with bones, some whole, others broken open and laying splintered on the ground. Six goats and large dairy cow are leashed to the wall, munching on a pile of grass.

This area is where Ulkar stores all the spoils of the raids and the Snakehead Band's food supplies. Ulkar has set his lesser orkin wardawgs to watch over the food supplies so that the other orcs don't steal it all the first chance they get. The wardawgs may not be here if they were alerted when the PCs entered Area 2. This room is littered with bones, which the wardawgs break open to get at the marrow inside.

Among the food supplies are also 7 light crossbows stolen from several small Doderan patrols that the orcs were able to overwhelm and kill in the past few months. The crossbows hang from pegs on the walls and 68 quarrels are piled haphazardly beneath them. A small crate of candles was also stolen from L'Mindu and is stamped with the insignia of the town's candle-maker. The wardawgs here are trained well enough to be left to guard the 6 goats and dairy cow here as well. Anyone with Animal Husbandry will notice that the dairy cow is in desperate need of milking. The cow will die on the trek down the mountain unless it is first milked.


0-2 Lesser Orkin Wardawgs: (122 EP ea): HP 42; Init 0; Spd 9; Atk +7; Dmg 4d4p+1 (bite); Def

+3; DR 4; ToP: 14/8; Jog 20 ft/sec; Tenacity: Steady; Size M; Saves: P +7, M +5, D +7

AREA 6: OGRES' CHAMBER

Encounter: 2 ogres

Potential Yield: Boots of The Traveler, Brown Bear Pelt (worn by ogre, 80sp), Vidar's robes

 This large cavern is choked with acrid smoke. Through the haze you can make out two huge figures busily tending to what look like human bodies hanging from the ceiling. The rank stench of the place is almost overwhelming.

This was the final room that was excavated before the ogres and orcs attacked. It was to be a shrine to the Traveler. Because of its large size,



the ogres have taken this as their sleeping chamber. This large room reeks of body odor, offal, and burning fat. The ogres claimed the majority of the captives as booty following the raid and since then they have been hard at work gutting, draining, and carving up their prizes. Human bodies hang from hooks on the ceiling, dripping blood into clay bowls and vats. All of their feet are missing—chopped off at the ankle. The ogres are in the process of smoking the internal organs of the humans and the entire room is clouded in a foul haze. GMs may choose to use the Smoke Inhalation rules here as detailed in the GameMaster's Guide, pg. 77.

In the northwest corner of the room, there is a pile of discarded clothes and boots from the ogres' previous victims. The ogres have a particular dislike for the taste of feet, and discard them, with shoes and boots still on, into this pile. In this heap are the clothes and hats once worn by the dwarven excavators as well as Vidar's robes. The clothes are all tattered, ripped, and stained with blood. Amongst the pile of shoes and boots are Vidar's Boots of the Traveler. PCs with Appraisal: Textiles will notice immediately that these boots are of a higher quality than the others.


One of the ogres is wearing a large brown bear pelt as a cape. This pelt has been well cleaned and could fetch 80sp.

2 Ogres: (242 EP ea): HP 56; Init +4; Spd 8; Atk +5; Dmg 2d10p+6 (huge club); Def -1; DR 4; ToP Save: 9; Jog 15 ft/sec; Tenacity: Steady; Size H; Saves: P +8, M +2, D +4

AREA 7: THE FAKE TOMB.

Encounter: 1 flesh golem

Potential Yield: Rucksack of dwarven letters/journal, costume jewelry (5sp/ea)

 This room is totally dark. Your light source casts eerie, dancing shadows onto the walls, half carved, half raw stone. In the center of the room, towering over an angular, white sarcophagus is a macabre figure of prodigious size. This 8-foot horror stands nude in the center of the room and appears as if he is an amalgamation of different bodies stitched into a larger whole. In the center of its chest, a large metallic star glimmers in the dark.

A light source will be needed to see into this dark chamber. The creature standing in the center is the flesh golem created by Vidar, still standing watch over the false chamber as per its final instructions. On the ground near the south wall of the chamber is the semi-mummified corpse of the ogre slain during the initial conquest of the cave. Its body is mostly collapsed, its face totally obliterated by the golem's powerful fists. The silver star in the center of the golem's chest is a symbol of the Traveler.

This room is a false tomb created to throw off any would-be looters and keep the real tomb safe. Centered against the back wall of the chamber is an angular, white sarcophagus which contains a nearly mummified body. Crossing over the threshold into the tomb will cause the golem to activate. Its final command was to slay any being in the room who is neither a dwarf working on the excavation or Vidar himself. The golem will take one second to identify the interloper and then rush to the attack as per its initiative (use a d6). The golem will try to pummel opponents into paste with its massive fists, but will not pursue any opponent who has left the chamber.

Any PC who wears the vestments of a follower or priest of The Traveler or Vidar's robes (laying in a pile in the ogres' room) will not be attacked by the golem and may move about the room freely, but cannot command the golem.

The walls of this room are covered in chalk drawings that would have eventually been carved into bas-reliefs. The drawings depict holy stories of the traveler and a wall-sized map of Tellene with the travelling routes Vidar took during his life. The room also contains a few sawhorses and one wall has a ten-foot high scaffold where work had begun on a bas-relief.

If the PCs open the sarcophagus, they will find a body shrouded in white linen. Under the shroud is the body of a man in his mid 30s, clean-shaven, fairly mus-

cular, and black-haired without a trace of gray. In life, this man was the cavalry officer who led the search for the dwarven refugees, killed during the dwarves' ambush several months ago. The cool, dry air of the cave has mostly preserved the body and it appears to be in the process of mummification. The corpse has a tattoo on its left arm which reads "Kill them all and let Galapiti sort them out" (Galapiti being the Kalamaran name for the Harvester of Souls).

Inside the folds of the shroud, there are several pieces of well-crafted costume jewelry and an elaborately carved, but totally mundane, staff. The jewelry includes three silver rings with 'gems' of blue, green, and red glass, a gold-colored amulet with a green "stone" in the center, and a golden diadem.

A successful Appraisal: Gems & Jewelry (Average) check will reveal these items as fakes, otherwise, they appear to be the genuine article. Because of the quality of the fake jewelry's craftsmanship, the fakes are worth 5 sp apiece.

Near the base of the scaffold, there is a small rucksack lying on its side. Inside, there is a journal written in dwarven and a collection of letters. During the



excavation of the caves, the dwarves sent a runner back to their families every two months to share updates on the project and to deliver letters to family members. The letters are all of a deeply personal nature and the journal is a personal account, detailing the reasons for the excavation of the cave. A diagram of the cave system shows that there is another room connected to this one (behind a secret door), but doesn't mention how to find or open it. These letters, if delivered to the dwarven refugees, can give them a sense of closure.


The back wall also hides a secret door that requires a Scrutiny check (Difficult) to find.

Flesh Golem: (1425 EP*): HP 70; Init +3; Spd 5; Atk +13; Dmg 3d12p (fists); Def +2; DR 18; ToP: n/a; Jog 15 ft/sec; Tenacity: Brave; Size L; Saves: P +13, M +13, D +13

*This will be only 712 if the golem is the sole opponent.

AREA 8: THE REAL TOMB

Potential Yield: Vidar's Atlas of Kalamar (250sp), Deed to Vidar's Kaleta townhouse

 Pushing open the hidden door, cool air from behind you rushes into the chamber. Inside the chamber is a second sarcophagus. Unlike the first, the sarcophagus' cover is half open, leaving the inside exposed. On the back wall is a life-sized portrait of an elderly gentleman with a flowing beard and elaborate robes.

This chamber is where Vidar planned to spend his eternal sleep. The image of Vidar on the wall looks nothing like the shrouded corpse in the other room's sarcophagus and is depicted wearing clothes identical to the robes in the ogres' rag pile.

The lid of the sarcophagus is open, revealing nothing inside. A false bottom can be discovered with a successful Scrutiny (Easy) check. The cavity in the bottom holds dozens of maps and writings bound together in a large collection from Vidar travels. Functionally, this atlas is equivalent of the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Campaign setting Atlas* (available at Kenzerco.com!) and is worth 250 sp. In between the pages is also a deed to Vidar's old townhouse in Kaleta.

CONCLUSION

By clearing out these caves, the threat posed by the Snakehead Band is totally eliminated. Depending on whether the PCs were sent on this adventure by the elders of L'Mindu or by the refugee dwarves, PCs can now return to either group and give them closure. If returning to L'Mindu, with proof, the elders will feed the PCs again, though the town is still somber. If Asa is with them, she will relate her story to the townsfolk and praise the name of the PCs. They will be welcome thereafter in L'Mindu as honored guests.

Simply bringing the news to the dwarves that their menfolk are dead will give a cold sort of closure, but returning with the letters and journal of the dwarven laborer will be a cathartic experience for the refugees. With the money and supplies given to them by Vidar, they will finally be able to begin their journey to a new home.

The cave itself, once cleared of the orcs and ogres, will remain eerily unoccupied as animals and other beasts refuse to lair there thanks to the presence of the flesh golem. If the flesh golem is killed, then by that winter it will become the home to a she-bear and her two cubs.

Potential Story Awards:

- Avoiding the Golem: **1,000 EP**
- Relating the fate of the dwarves to their relatives: **500 EP**
- Relating the of the dwarves and delivering the rucksack of letters: **1,000 EP**
- Taking revenge for the villagers of L'Mindu by killing/scattering the orcs and ogres: **200 EP**
- Killing/scattering the orcs and ogres and bringing back proof that they have been killed: **800 EP**
- Safely returning Benali and Asa to L'Mindu: **100EP/each**