

A HEROIC TIER ADVENTURE

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

ENCOUNTERS™

KEEP ON THE BORDERLANDS

Chapter 3 of 5: A Season of Serpents



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 2ND LEVEL

Chris Sims

INTRODUCTION

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Encounters™ adventure for four to six 2nd-level characters

Welcome to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Encounters, an exciting official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS program. This adventure is a mini-campaign season designed to be played in one-encounter sessions once per week at your local Wizards Play Network location. Each week, players can earn in-game rewards for their characters and Renown Points toward special program-exclusive D&D® Encounters Cards that can be used in this and future seasons of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Encounters.

Preparing for Play

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Encounters play kit provides all you need to DM this adventure, including poster maps of encounter areas and a sheet of tokens for monsters, adventurers, and battlefield effects. Follow the steps below to prepare for play.

Before you DM your first session:

- ◆ Read the Introduction, Adventure Background, and Adventure Synopsis sections.
- ◆ Read **Session 9: The First Gauntlet** and **Encounter 3-9: Hammer and Nails**. If you are starting at another point, read the appropriate sections and what has come before.

At the table of your first session:

- ◆ Ensure each player has a character to play. Players may use one of the characters provided in the kit, or may create their own using the guidelines provided.
- ◆ Give each player a D&D Encounters Play Tracker. This sheet is found in the play kit, and it allows the players to track treasure, experience, and Renown Points earned for each play session.
- ◆ Get a session tracking sheet from the organizer. Record all the players' DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with your DCI/RPGA number. If you or any of the players don't have a DCI/RPGA number, ask the organizer for a membership card.

During the session:

- ◆ Each session is one encounter. Just DM the encounter assigned for that week's session. Typical playtime for one encounter is about 90 minutes to 2 hours.
- ◆ Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the game. As the DM, you can make some adjustments to the adventure (see the sidebar on page 2) to facilitate player fun.

At the end of your first session:

- ◆ Have the adventurers take a short rest if they want, but remind them to track their daily abilities. Healing surges used, daily powers expended, and other daily resources do not refresh in-between each session; only at the end of each chapter. Make sure your players track this information on their D&D Encounters Play Tracker.
- ◆ Turn in your session tracking sheet to the organizer. Make sure you've recorded all the DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with names and the play date.
- ◆ Report Renown Point totals earned for each player to the organizer. The organizer fills out the Renown Point Tracker for the location and tells you if any players have earned D&D Encounters Cards.
- ◆ Give out treasure. Make sure the players write down rewards on the D&D Encounters Play Tracker.
- ◆ Collect your special reward for providing your time as a DM to make the event happen. Your organizer has more details on this reward.

At the end of the final session of a chapter:

- ◆ The adventurers take an extended rest, regaining all of their healing surges, hit points, and daily powers. In addition, their action point total resets to 1.
- ◆ Once you've been the DM for a session, it's easy to prepare for your next session. Simply read over the session's material, and you're ready to go.

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CREATING A CHARACTER

Players are responsible for bringing their own characters to each play session. A player should bring a new 2nd-level character created using the rules found in the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game* boxed set, the *Heroes of the Fallen Lands™* supplement, or the *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms™* supplement.

If a player doesn't have a character or doesn't want to create one from scratch, several pre-generated characters are provided in the play kit. Get these from the organizer and offer a choice of one to each player that wants one.

At the end of each session, you award experience points, treasure, and Renown Points to each player. They'll track that information on their D&D Encounters Play Tracker and you'll report the Renown Points each player earned with the organizer.

Character Death: If a character dies during a session, the player has two choices. He or she can bring the same character back at the beginning of the next session with four fewer healing surges, or he or she can start a new 2nd-level character. If a character dies and has fewer than four healing surges remaining, that character loses all his or her remaining healing surges and can return next session but has hit points equaling only his or her bloodied value.

There is no other penalty for death except for the potential loss of renown for not surviving 12+ sessions without dying.

Advancement

At the end of each session, you award experience points when the characters complete encounters. Use this table below to award experience points for each session. Don't modify the amount of experience based on the number of characters.

EXPERIENCE POINT AWARDS

XP Description	XP/Character
Session 9	135 XP
Minor Quest: Recover Ralv's corpse	25 XP
Session 10	135 XP
Session 11	140 XP
Session 12	140 XP
Major Quest: Recover Ramthane's Treasure	125 XP

If the characters succeed at all the encounters and complete all quests, each should earn 700 XP by the end of Chapter 3.

Milestones: For every two encounters a character completes without taking an extended rest, the character reaches a milestone, gaining an action point.

A CHANGING GROUP

Since you can never tell who's going to show up to a *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* Encounters session from week to week, you might wind up with a different group of players. Some players might be starting in "mid-stream," some could have missed a session or two, and others might have played all the sessions with a different DM. That's fine. Catch up new players with a brief summary of what has come before, and make sure that returning players have marked off resources they spent (healing surges, daily powers, etc.) since their last extended rest.

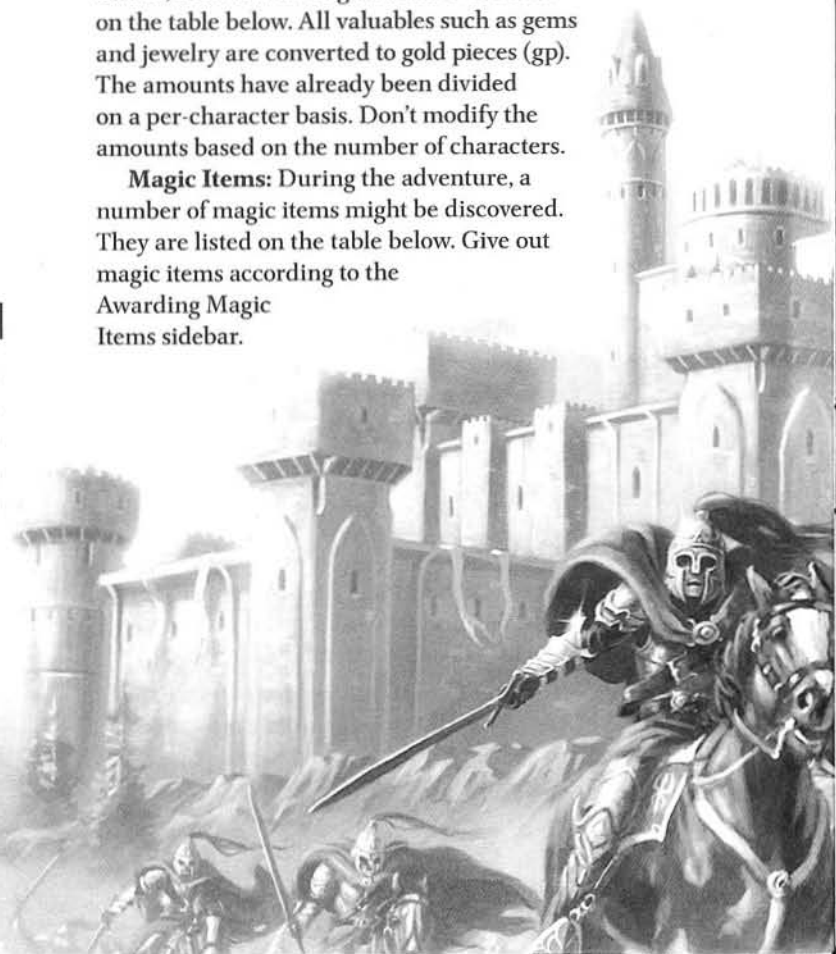
Majority Rules: If some element of the adventure plot hinges on the adventurers making a decision in a previous session, and the group is different during the current session, simply find out how the decision went down from the players. Go with the majority, and if it's an even split, side with the most positive result. For example, if three of five players' characters at your table rescued an NPC in a previous encounter and two didn't, the NPC is considered to be rescued for your session this week.

Treasure

As the characters progress through the mini-campaign, they have the opportunity to gain treasure in the form of gold pieces, valuables, and magic items. At the end of each session, determine if the players earned any treasure. Use the following rules to divide up treasure among the characters.

Gold and Valuables: If the adventurers earn it, each character gets a share as noted on the table below. All valuables such as gems and jewelry are converted to gold pieces (gp). The amounts have already been divided on a per-character basis. Don't modify the amounts based on the number of characters.

Magic Items: During the adventure, a number of magic items might be discovered. They are listed on the table below. Give out magic items according to the Awarding Magic Items sidebar.



TREASURE FOUND

Treasure	Location
1 herbal poultice each	Encounter 3-9
Potion of healing	Encounter 3-9
2 gp each	Encounter 3-9
5 gp each	Encounter 3-10
Common arm-slot magic item (level 2 or lower)	Encounter 3-11
Common magic weapon or implement (level 2 or lower)	Encounter 3-11
80 gp each	Encounter 3-12

When to Gear Up: Characters can buy equipment at the start of each chapter. If a character gains a magic item that has only level, rarity, and type described (for example, a common level 2 magic weapon), the player can select a magic item up to that level of the same type and rarity after the session is complete, before starting the next one.

Awarding Magic Items: When the characters find a nonconsumable magic item, the players decide who receives what. If this is impossible or difficult, you assign the new item to a character who has no nonconsumable magic items. If all the characters have a nonconsumable magic item, the character with the lowest-level nonconsumable magic item receives the new item.

If more than one character has no nonconsumable magic item, or two characters tie for the lowest-level magic item, those the players decide who receives the new item. If they can't decide, have each roll a d20 until one rolls higher than the other. That player receives the new item.

You can distribute consumable items in the same way if the players can't decide who takes such items. Just remember not to count these items as nonconsumable magic items.

Renown Points

One of the great rewards for playing in a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Encounters season is the accumulation of Renown Points (RPs), which are given out for accomplishments made by players during, and sometimes in-between, sessions. These Renown Points are tracked at the Wizards Play Network location, and reaching certain thresholds garners the player a tangible reward—a D&D Encounters Card.

Players can use these cards during the current DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Encounters season, subsequent seasons, or possibly both. Each card has all the information on how it works printed right on the card itself.

As the DM, it's your task to award Renown Points at the end of a session of play, just like you would award experience and treasure. Unlike experience and treasure though, Renown Point totals earned for each player must be reported to the organizer at the conclusion of the session when you turn in your session tracking sheet. The organizer can then tell you if any players have qualified for a card.

The Renown accomplishments, their frequency, and the point values of each are listed below.

RENOWN POINT AWARDS

Accomplishment	Frequency	RPs
Complete an encounter	Session	3
Hit a milestone	2/chapter	2
Moment of greatness	1/chapter	2
Create a D&D Essentials character	Season	5
Create a D&D Character Builder character	Season	5
Revive a dying adventurer ally	Season	1
Hit for 15+ damage against 1 enemy	Season	1
Kill 3 minions in 1 attack	Season	1
Take 50 enemy damage in 1 session	Season	1
Survive 12+ sessions without dying	Season	2
Complete all quests	Season	5

Moment of Greatness: This is a discretionary award given out by the DM or through party vote to a player for doing something inventive, daring, or just plain cool during a session of play.

Renown Rewards

When a player earns 20 RPs, he or she earns the first D&D Encounters Card, called the Delver Reward. This is awarded to the player immediately following the session in which it is earned. The second award is called the Adventurer Reward, and a player qualifies for the reward by obtaining 100 Renown Points in the season.

The final award is given out at the conclusion of the season. At the end of the season, a number of D&D Encounters Cards are distributed among those who qualify for the reward. If more players qualify for the reward than the number of cards available, the organizer will determine how they will be distributed.

This adventure is the third of five chapters for *Keep on the Borderlands: A Season of Serpents*. The later adventures will be available separately as the season progresses. Check with your organizer upon completion of this adventure to receive the next adventure. These introductory pages provide background information to aid you in running the storyline.

Keep on the Borderlands

Legends claim that dwarf-built Restwell Keep has been the fortress of a hobgoblin king, the home of an infamous bandit lord, a linchpin garrison of fallen Nerath, and the lair of a dragon. Indeed, the keep has been all these and more. At present, it is a faint but steady light struggling against a growing darkness. Its intrepid inhabitants are in constant danger from within and without.

Government: Not long ago, the keep was a freewheeling place with lax law enforcement. Lord Peridin Drysdale, paladin of Erathis, recently took command. More than a few residents, accustomed to the old regime, resent the paladin's adamant push toward order and morality. As a result, Drysdale's authority is weak in the outer bailey.

Defense: Mercenary guards watch the barracks, as well as the towers and gate of the outer bailey. Kendon Longstrider, a 60-year-old human veteran, is in charge. Drysdale's soldiers patrol the keep proper and the inner bailey. The lord has mandated that capable individuals serve as militia if the need arises.

Room and Board: The gruff, greedy Nerrin Silverhand runs the seamy Travelers Inn on Fountain Square. A private room (four occupants) runs 1 gp per night; a spot in the common room costs 1 sp. Nerrin serves neither food nor drink. Such provisions can be purchased from cheerful Mother Aran of The Stumbling Giant, a fine tavern also on Fountain Square.

Temple: The local chapel (along the inner bailey wall) is open for worship of all accepted deities, but Avandra is esteemed above others. Chendera, the striking half-elf caretaker and priestess, is a devotee of the luck goddess. She spends much of her time mingling with folks in The Stumbling Giant.

Other Services: Local farmers and traveling merchants set up stands from time to time in the keep's Fountain Square. Regular establishments include a trader, a bank, a smithy, a jeweler, and a mage's guildhouse.

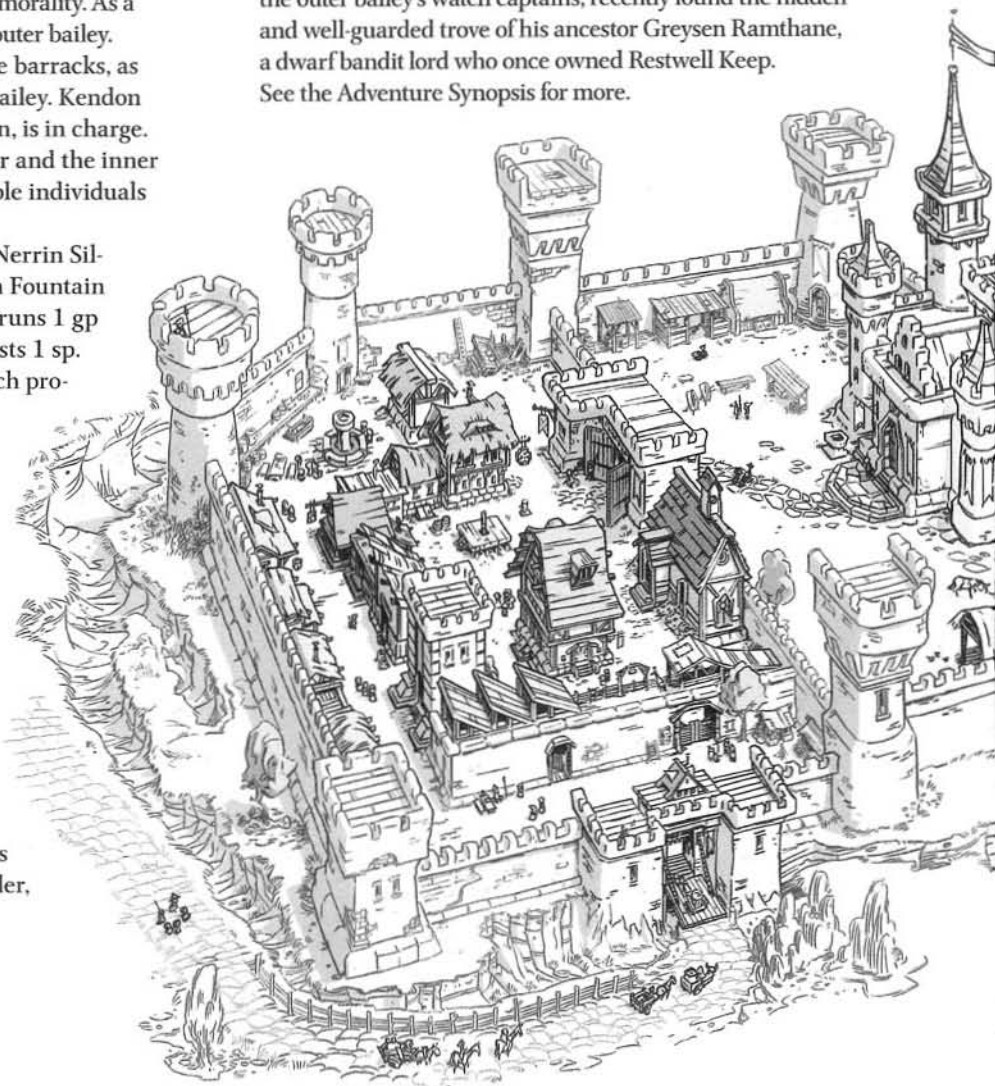
Serpent in the Fold

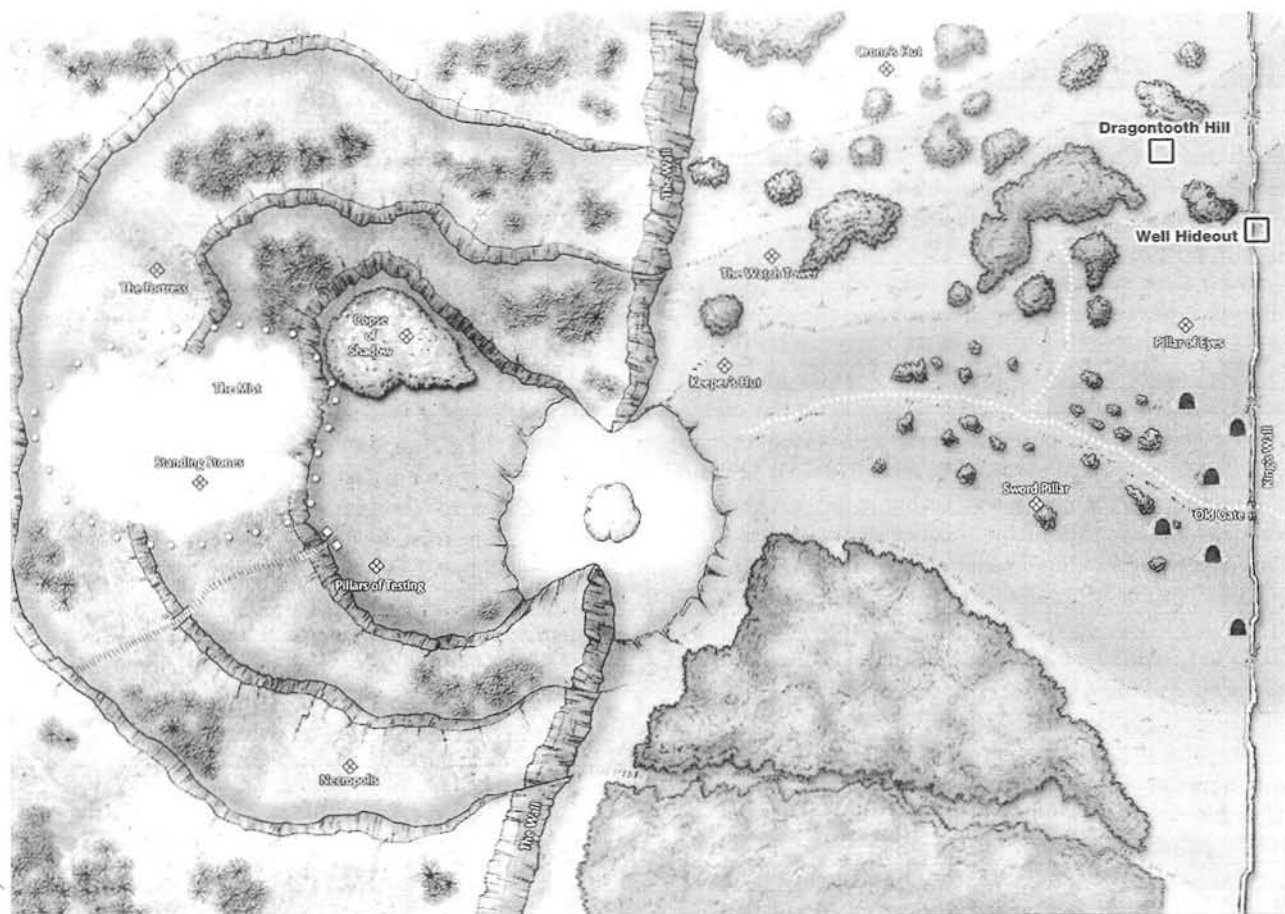
Benwick plays the part of a jolly, friar who worships Avandra, Ioun, and Sehanine. In truth, he and his acolytes are servants of the evil deity of poison, Zehir. Benwick has grand plans of turning the keep into a citadel for the snake god's faithful. He's courting the local lizardfolk for his plot.

Most of the folks in the outer bailey speak well of Benwick, a subtle, entertaining critic of Drysdale's rule. He cheerfully feeds rumors that the paladin intends to impose Erathis worship and launch forays that might rile denizens of the nearby Chaos Scar, a valley infested with evil monsters.

Recent Events: Benwick used the adventurers to ruin Ferdinand Ronnik, the banker in the keep, by linking Ronnik to a Tiamat cult that threatened Benwick's hold over a local tribe of lizardfolk. This chapter assumes that Benwick, through the adventurers, was successful in removing Ferdinand Ronnik as an obstacle. The characters also recovered a jewel—the *Serpent's Eye*—from Ronnik and gave it to Benwick.

Benwick now has more room to sway the lizardfolk against the keep and into the service of Zehir, whom he secretly reveres. But first, the friar needs to wrap up another matter concerning his ally Gorn Hammerfall. Gorn, one of the outer bailey's watch captains, recently found the hidden and well-guarded trove of his ancestor Greysen Ramthane, a dwarf bandit lord who once owned Restwell Keep. See the Adventure Synopsis for more.





The Chaos Scar

Although the Chaos Scar does not figure prominently in this chapter, the following information is included for your benefit.

For eons, an evil comet roamed the space between worlds, seeking a place to touch down and wreak havoc. It settled on this world.

As the falling comet passed through the sky, milk curdled, livestock fell dead, and ill fortune flourished. The celestial body crashed into the Nentir Vale with deafening force, carving a valley-sized furrow in its wake. Red radiance lit the sky for a week. Thus, the Chaos Scar was born.

Over a mile long and several hundred feet deep, the Chaos Scar is an angry, blighted gash in the world. As the star carved its path through the earth, shards and fragments tore away until only its heart remained, embedded in an escarpment at the far end of its new home.

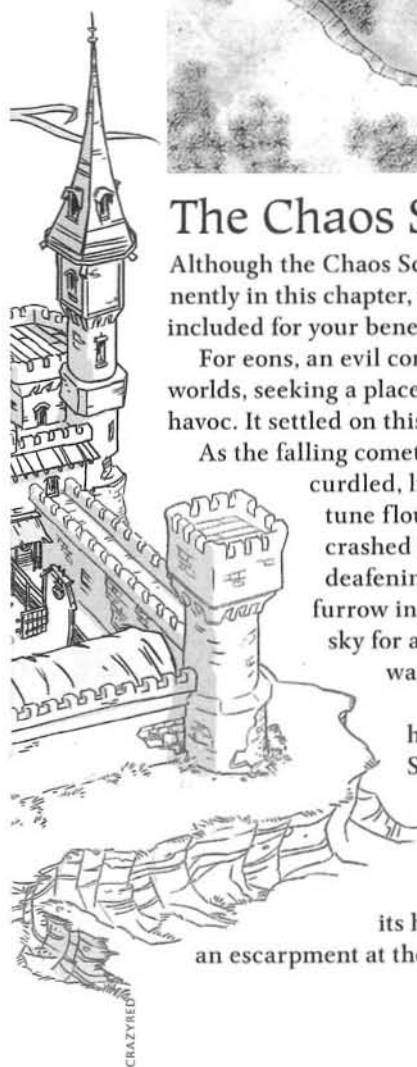
Patient beyond mortal comprehension, the malevolent remains began to sow seeds of wickedness, reaching out to those of a perverse and corruptible bent. Over the centuries, creatures of evil spirit have been drawn to this beacon.

The dark sentence spurs competition among the malefactors who carve out dominions within the valley's many caves. The weakest ones settle near the mouth of the valley and the plain beyond. The strongest villains lair closer to the comet's heart and in the fortress that now encloses the upper wall.

Rulers have tried to contain the threat of the Chaos Scar in the past, with little to no success. A long-forgotten king erected a wall across the valley's mouth. It still stands, partly in ruins, its gates open and unguarded.

The Chaos Scar is filled with malice, promising death to those who enter. It is riddled with caves both natural and tunneled by generations of monstrous denizens. The deeper one travels into the valley, the deadlier the foes lurking in its hollows.

Many adventurers have entered the Chaos Scar seeking wealth and glory. Few have returned. Those heroes that survive its depths weave dark stories of cults, inhuman tribes, and monsters working in blasphemous concert. Other explorers tell of monstrous creatures engaging in vicious, unrelenting warfare. All seekers agree that fatality is far more prevalent than fortune.



ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

With Benwick as their patron, the adventurers explore a dungeon complex under Restwell Keep rumored to contain the lost hoard of Greysen Ramthane, the dwarf bandit lord.

After their success in taking out Ferdinand Ronnik and recovering the *Serpent's Eye*, the characters can enjoy a little rest. Benwick has a use for them and the newly recovered jewel as soon as the characters are willing and able. The wicked friar has one more task for them before he plans to eliminate them and continue his evil plot to take over Restwell Keep.

Once again, the characters gather at Benwick's abode. He trusts them with another secret: A captain of the outer bailey's watch, Gorn Hammerfall, is a descendant of the notorious bandit lord Greysen Ramthane. Gorn took a soldiering job at Restwell Keep so he could spend his off hours searching for Ramthane's fabled treasure hidden under the keep. It turns out Gorn has been successful.

Benwick and Gorn fear that Lord Drysdale will confiscate any treasure recovered under the keep. They hatched a plan to claim it for Avandra and the Ramthane descendants. Gorn and Benwick proved too weak to confront the defenses of Greysen Ramthane's vault. Benwick, however, thinks he can use the *Serpent's Eye* to help the characters accomplish the task.

In this chapter, the characters descend into Ramthane's vault to defeat the defenses and recover the bandit lord's hidden trove. Greysen Ramthane was no slouch when it came to defending his wealth. After conquering the vault, the characters learn that Friar Benwick is not their friend.

Session 9: After meeting with Benwick and Gorn Hammerfall, the characters descend below the keep and explore Ramthane Delve during Gorn's watch. The door to the first gauntlet is already breached, but the threats within are as strong as ever. Greysen's constructs aim to pummel anyone who tries to approach, much less breach, the locked door leading to the second gauntlet. See Session 9: The First Gauntlet on page 8.

Session 10: The characters must pass through another guarded chamber and recover a crystal key needed to unlock Ramthane's vault. The constructs try to keep the key out of enemy hands and punish those who dare intrude here. See Session 10: The Second Gauntlet on page 10.

Session 11: Success in the second gauntlet allows the characters into Greysen Ramthane's treasure vault. When Nerath's forces killed the bandit lord and all his warriors, Greysen's greed brought him here, where he has endured the passing decades in a darkness as cold as that of his own heart and soul. Decades of hatred wait to be unleashed. See Session 11: The Vault on page 10.

Session 12: After claiming the treasures of the bandit lord, the adventurers encounter Benwick and Gorn at the entrance to Ramthane Delve. Once they split the treasure and the groups begin to part ways, Benwick betrays the party. Gorn, with the help of Benwick's cronies, aims to take all the rest of the treasure and kill the characters as Benwick flees with his share of the loot. After overcoming the betrayers, the characters interrogate one of Benwick's treacherous underlings to learn more about Benwick's master plan. This revelation sets up Chapter 4. See Session 12: Back to the Beginning on page 10.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTERS

Chapter 3 assumes you have a normal party of five 2nd-level characters and players familiar with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game at your table. Compare the party at your table to this assumption, using the following guidelines.

Weak Party: You have a weak party at your table if it consists of only four characters, or most or all of the players are new to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. If you have a weak party, remove one of the lowest level or least important non-minion monsters from the encounter. For instance, in Encounter 3-9 (level 2 encounter), you might subtract one iron hammerer.

Strong Party: You have a strong party at your table if it consists of six characters, or most or all of the players are veteran 4th-Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players who like added challenge. If you have a strong party, add one of the simplest non-minion monsters among those in the encounter whose level most closely matches the encounter level. For instance, in Encounter 3-9, you might add another iron hammerer.



CHAPTER 3: GREYSEN'S CACHE

The encounters of this chapter have the characters delving under the keep to recover the lost treasure of the dwarf bandit lord Greysen Ramthane.

ROLEPLAYING

Some of the adventure's sections call for roleplaying, and all of the encounters allow for it. A portion of the information in this book exists to help you roleplay with the players. You might prepare a list of names to use if players want to talk to creatures unexpectedly. As long as all the players are having fun, and it's not going to make the session too long, play it up and enjoy. Just make sure to include everyone.

Further, allow for cinematic maneuvers and clever strategies. Try to reward bold play and clever play. Let players use their characters' skills and powers. Encourage this sort of gaming by being prepared, and by using the monsters, NPCs, and scenarios boldly and cleverly yourself.

Session 9: First Gauntlet

The characters already trust Benwick from an alliance in earlier chapters. You should ask:

- ♦ **Who has played the earlier chapters?** If no one has, then you need ask no further questions. Tell the players a little about Benwick's positive, fake persona. Anyone who has played Chapters 1 and 2 should be asked the next question.
- ♦ **What happened to the *Serpent's Eye*?** If the majority gave the jewel to Benwick in Chapter 2, the friar has it. If the majority kept the gemstone, Benwick needs to ask them for it so he can work some magic on it for their benefit.

When everyone is set to play, read the following text.

*After some rest from your earlier heroics, you find yourself again at the comfortable apartment of your patron, Benwick. The friar summoned you here, suggesting he had another task for you and the *Serpent's Eye*, a jewel you helped recover. Benwick's acolytes, Venn and Jarell, serve you dinner. A red-haired dwarf who has an air of authority is also in attendance. Benwick introduces the dwarf as Gorn Hammerfall, a captain of the watch.*

Roleplaying the Scene

Give the players time to introduce their characters. They can roleplay as they like.

- ♦ Benwick is jolly and bright-eyed, given to smiling and laughing. His acolytes grin and react briefly if addressed, but they say little. They pose as wandering priests who revere Avandra, Ioun, and Sehanine.
- ♦ The friar doesn't like Lord Drysdale or the lord's seeming intent to make the keep a military bastion.
- ♦ Benwick considers most in the outer bailey friends or allies, especially Chendera.
- ♦ Gorn—dressed in fine, thick leather and armed with two hammers—is stern. He smiles little and speaks forthrightly. One noticeable quirk is his habit of raising one eyebrow while narrowing the opposite eye when he finds a subject questionable or disagreeable.

Quest for Ramthane's Treasure

Benwick gets to the point of the gathering whenever the players are ready. You can read the following text or roleplay the section.

"Friends, I am ashamed to burden you with another difficult task, but I believe you can succeed where others would fail.

"The esteemed captain here is the descendant of a dwarf who once occupied this keep. This ancestor was the bandit lord Greysen Ramthane.

"When Nerath's warriors overthrew Greysen, they found little of his ill-gotten loot. Tales say that Greysen hid his wealth somewhere in this keep."

Gorn interrupts, "Enough history, Benwick. You'll put us all to sleep. Anyway, turns out the stories are true. Took me years, but I found the bandit's cache.

"Thing is, it's too well guarded. Almost got myself skinned when I went in with a buddy of mine. Poor Ralv didn't even make it out."

"Benwick says you're made of stout stuff, and the rumor mill says the same. Benwick thinks we might make a deal."

Benwick takes up the conversation. "Yes. Gorn and I are concerned that Lord Drysdale might confiscate the treasure. Gorn deserves any dwarven relics as the rightful heir. As adventurers, you have more use for magic items than Gorn or me, so you can keep those. We were hoping you'd consider a friendly three-way split of any monetary wealth."

Gorn adds, "I'd also be much obliged if you could recover Ralv's body for me."

Benwick looks gravely at Gorn and lays a hand on the dwarf's shoulder. He looks at you and says, "I can also lend you the *Serpent's Eye*. I've activated some of its latent power, so it should aid your quest.

"So, will you accept?"

Here is some further information for discussion.

- ♦ Ralv was a human soldier. The attackers in the first room got him.
- ♦ Gorn describes the attackers in the first area as “metal constructs with hammers and pincers, and a trapped statue that swings a great flail. The hammers come out of the walls.”
- ♦ Discretion is required. No one else can know of Ramthane’s hidden vault yet.
- ♦ Benwick again gives each character one *herbal poultice* (see below) to aid in the job. For ease of porting the treasure, Benwick also offers a couple large backpacks for use carrying the treasure.
- ♦ Neither Gorn nor Benwick can offer any more pay for the job, and neither honestly knows whether any treasure is to be had in the delve. Gorn is sure that the underground vault is Ramthane’s, however, and he “smells gold” within.
- ♦ Gorn and Benwick meet the characters an hour before dawn, just outside The Stumbling Giant. Benwick plans to give the characters a magically active *Serpent’s Eye* (see below). He and Gorn can then escort the characters to the secret delve.

Quests: By the end of this scene, the characters gain two quests. It is a minor quest to deliver Ralv’s body to Gorn. Recovering Ramthane’s treasure and escaping the dungeon is a major quest.

Herbal Poultice

Level 3 (Common)

This pungent bundle of specially prepared medicinal herbs aids the body’s natural recuperative ability.

Alchemical Item 30 gp

Power (Consumable ♦ Healing): Standard Action.

Use this power during a short rest. Choose a target for the herbal poultice, either you or an ally adjacent to you. At the end of the short rest, if the target spends a healing surge, he or she regains 2 extra hit points. The target can benefit from only one *herbal poultice* at a time.

Serpent’s Eye

Level 1 (Rare)

This spherical tiger’s-eye gem has Avandra’s symbol etched on one side and Zehir’s symbol etched on the other. It glows softly in its bronze holder, which is suspended from a bronze chain.

Wondrous Item 360 gp

Property: You and your allies within 5 squares of you gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against poison effects.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. You or one ally adjacent to you can make a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.

Power (Daily): Standard Action. You send a short message of no more than 25 words to Benwick, as long as he is within 1 mile of you. He can then respond with a message of up to 25 words.

Preparation

Shops are closed for the night by the time the characters take on the task. Gorn can provide some simple equipment (no more than 10 gp total) if the characters discover they must have something. They do have time to learn more about the task at hand.

Arcana DC 14: The creatures Gorn described sound like homunculi, guardian constructs that come in numerous forms and are very good at defending the objects, creatures, or areas they were designed to protect. The statue sounds more like a contraption than a creature.

Diplomacy DC 13: A character can talk with folks at The Stumbling Giant to learn that Gorn has a solid reputation but few friends. He keeps mostly his own company and is rarely seen when off duty. Some believe he has a personal project. Gorn’s current watch is nighttime.

DC 15: Mother Aran, the alehouse’s owner, reveals that Benwick’s suspicions of Lord Drysdale are misguided if well-intentioned. The lord is a follower of Erathis, but Mother Aran doesn’t believe he’s going to enforce Erathis worship or a military takeover of the keep.

History or Streetwise DC 13: Greysen Ramthane, a bandit lord, ran a gang out of the keep during the time of Nerath, the last great empire that fell about a century ago. A small army laid siege to the keep and killed all the bandits, but little treasure was recovered.

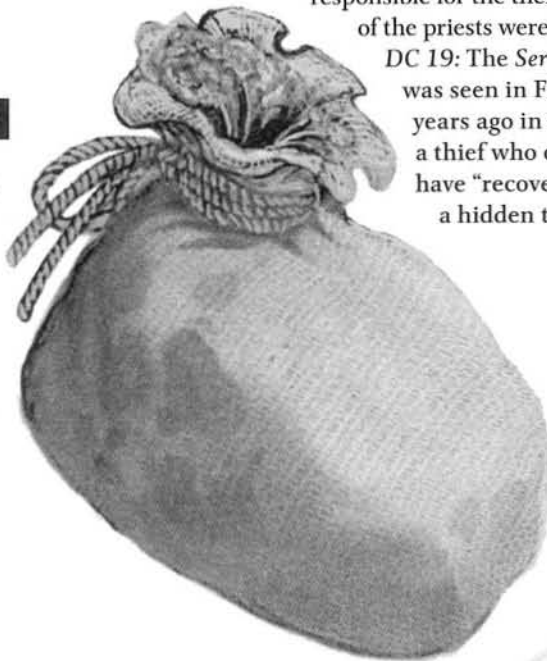
DC 16: The commander of the attacking force, a half-orc named Bertak, searched Restwell Keep for the bandits’ hoard but couldn’t find it. Many believe Ramthane hid the hoard under the keep.

Heal or Nature DC 12: The *herbal poultices* attest to Benwick’s herbalist skills.

History DC 12: The *Serpent’s Eye* was once stored in the Moonsong Temple of Fallcrest.

DC 15: The jewel was stolen from the temple nearly a century ago. Rumor has it that disciples of Zehir were responsible for the theft, since some of the priests were poisoned.

DC 19: The *Serpent’s Eye* was seen in Fallcrest a few years ago in the hands of a thief who claimed to have “recovered” it from a hidden temple.



Departure

Benwick and Gorn arrive on time. The friar gives the characters the magical *Serpent's Eye* and the backpacks as they travel. Describe the functions of the items to the players, and then describe the trip.

The keep is quiet at this early hour, the rain keeping most folks indoors. Benwick and Gorn lead the way to a tower on the south side of the castle, near the keep's Fountain Square. They descend into a dark basement. Gorn opens a secret staircase into a tunnel below the fortress's foundations. It opens into a small antechamber before great stone doors that are slightly open. A soft blue glow issues from between them, as does the slight smell of something dead.

"This is it, mates," says Gorn, "Go carefully. Last time, almost as soon as we entered the room, everything went crazy.

"I got to finish up my shift. If you recover Ralv's body, leave it near these outer doors, will you?"

Benwick adds, "I have a few brief errands to attend. Gorn and I will be close at hand when you return, so we can divide the treasure away from Drysdale's greedy eyes. Remember, you can use the *Serpent's Eye* to call me when you finish. Gods' speed, friends."

Set out the map and begin **Encounter 3-9: Hammers and Nails**, page 12.

Session 10: Second Gauntlet

Once the characters unlock and open the northern doors in Encounter 3-9, they can proceed through the doors into this area. This encounter is a straightforward battle against the chamber's guardians to acquire the crystal key needed to open the vault.

Set out the map and begin **Encounter 3-10: Keep Away**, page 14.

Session 11: The Vault

Using the iron key recovered from Encounter 3-9 and the crystal key recovered from Encounter 3-10, the characters unlock and open the final set of doors leading to the bandit lord's vault. Before they can claim Greysen Ramthane's treasure, they must defeat the specter of the bandit lord as well as several other undead guardians.

Set out the map and begin **Encounter 3-11: Frozen in the Past**, page 16.

Session 12: Back to the Beginning

Refresh the players' memories by recapping the end of the last session. The adventurers need to contact Benwick (if they wish) and return to the delve entrance. If the characters call Benwick using the *Serpent's Eye*, the friar responds as follows:

ENCOUNTER 3-10:
KEEP AWAY

ENCOUNTER 3-9:
HAMMERS AND NAILS

ENCOUNTER 3-12:
BETRAYAL REVEALED



ENCOUNTER 3-11: FROZEN IN THE PAST

*"We shall await you
in the first chamber. As
I said before, it's best to divide
the treasure there, where no one can
watch us and wonder where all the goods
came from. See you soon, friends."*

Whether the adventurers contact Benwick or not, the friar, his assistants Gordi and Sal, and Gorn Hammerfall await them in the room where Encounter 3-9 played out. Even if the players did not disable the flailer in the first encounter, it is deactivated. The panel containing its control mechanism is open and appears to have been disabled. Ralv's body has been moved near the entrance to the antechamber.

Gordi and Sal have empty sacks and lanterns. If the characters are suspicious of this group, Benwick apologizes for having forgotten to mention that he was bringing help. One way or another, he sets everyone at ease by moving to the business at hand.

Quickly play out the division of goods. Each of the three groups receives about 200 gp, and each character receives 40 gp. Once Benwick has his share, he asks for the *Serpent's Eye* so he can return it to Chendera, the city's priestess of Avandra. If the characters refuse to surrender it, he uses magic to seize it, instantly triggering Encounter 3-12: *Betrayal Revealed* (page 18).

If the characters willingly hand over the *Serpent's Eye*, read the following text.

Benwick smiles and gives you all a polite nod. "I must once again thank you for your hard work and bravery. We are in your debt."

As he finishes, you hear the sound of booted feet hastening down the stairs.

"Drysdale's men!" cries Benwick.

Gordi and Sal draw short swords and prepare themselves.

Benwick looks at them and says, "Stay your weapons. Let's hope it doesn't come to that."

Set out the map for **Encounter 3-12: Betrayal Revealed**, page 18. Have the players place their characters in the starting area. Place the other NPCs, as well. Find out whether the adventurers draw their weapons or not. Then go to the encounter.

Extended Rest

If the characters still draw breath after the betrayal, they probably need an extended rest. They also have the information they need to pursue Benwick. Perhaps they have a reason and the means to save Ferdinand Ronnik. The story continues and the extended rest occurs in Chapter 4 of *Keep on the Borderlands: A Season of Serpents*.

ENCOUNTER 3-9: HAMMERS AND NAILS

Encounter Level 2 (675 XP)

Setup

1 stone harrier (S)
3 iron hammerers (H)
Flailer statue (trap)

None of the monsters are apparent when the characters enter the room.

When the adventurers enter the area, read:

Centered in the chamber is a large stone statue of a dwarf wielding a flail in one hand. In the statue's other hand is an open loop that has a oversized iron key. Around the statue, the floor is cracked as if hit by a massive crushing force.

Dim blue light from glowing Dwarven runes along the walls also reveals a set of four alcoves carved in the east and west sides of the room. The walls adjacent to the alcoves look dangerous, for they bear intricate spiked carvings of stylized weapons and armor.

Passive Perception

DC 13: A crumpled form lies a few paces from the northern doors.

DC 20: The form is the body of an armored man, crushed and twisted in death.

Arcana

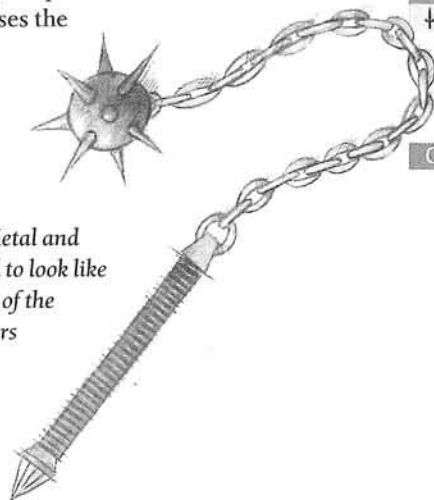
DC 13 (Detect Magic): The statue is strongly magical and seems capable of attacking.

DC 20: The runes and walls within the alcoves are weakly magical. Disturbing the statue or its area probably triggers something within the room.

Attempting to take the key, attempting to harm any part of the room, or entering a square within 3 squares of the flailer causes the room to activate.

When the room activates, read:

With a grinding sound, the central statue starts to rotate and swing its flail. Metal and stone humanoids fashioned to look like dwarves emerge from some of the alcoves. Three have hammers and pincers for hands, and one is a shorter figure with spears for hands.



- ♦ **The flailer statue** drives foes back toward the southern entry point and against the wall spikes. It favors attacking a creature possessing the key, and it does its best to keep intruders from reaching the north end of the room.
The flailer statue cannot make opportunity attacks.
- ♦ **The iron hammerers** attempt to grab and immobilize enemies and keep them within striking distance of the flailer statue.
- ♦ **The stone harrier** keeps enemies near the flailer, but it also tries to prevent anyone from taking the iron key, the harrier's guarded object, and using it to unlock the northern set of doors.

The central statue is blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 13) and a mechanical trap that has a magical power source. Closer inspection (Perception DC 13) allows one to detect the stone access panel to its inner workings. Access to the internal magical and mechanical elements is necessary to disable the device. Otherwise, the statue must be smashed to disable it.

Stealing the Iron Key: A character adjacent to the statue can make a DC 20 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Thievery check to snatch the key from the statue.

Flailer Statue Level 2 Trap

Object

XP 125

Detect Perception DC 13 (access panel)
HP 40

Initiative +5

AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will –

Immune necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions;
Resist 5 to all damage

STANDARD ACTIONS

↓ Flail ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage, and the flailer slides the target up to 3 squares.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

↓ No Escape ♦ At-Will

Attack: An enemy within 3 squares of the flailer attacks one of the flailer's allies.

Effect (Immediate Reaction): The flailer uses flail against the triggering enemy.

COUNTERMEASURES (after the access panel has been detected)

- ♦ **Disable:** Thievery DC 13 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character must be adjacent to the flailer. *Success:* The character achieves one of three successes necessary to disable the statue. *Failure (DC 7 or less):* The flailer attacks the character as a free action.
- ♦ **Disable:** Arcana DC 13 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character must be within 5 squares of the flailer. *Success:* The character achieves one of three successes necessary to disable the statue. *Failure (DC 7 or less):* The flailer uses a free action to attack a random adventurer within 3 squares of it.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light.

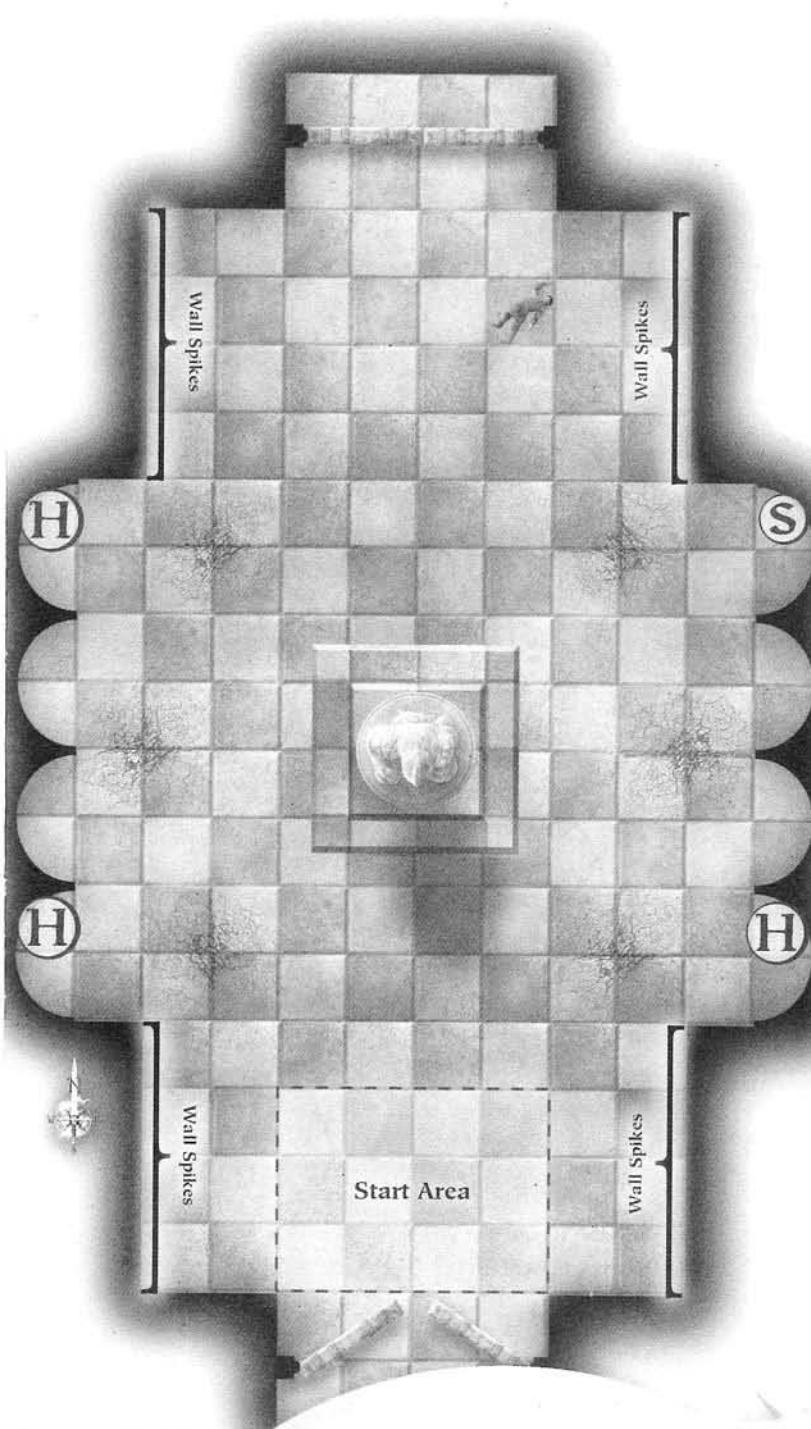
Ceiling Height: 15 feet.

Corpse: Near the northern doors lie the remains of Ralv, a brawny human soldier who was hammered to death. He has ruined armor, a broken shield, a mace, a *potion of healing*, and 2 gp per character. Securing his body for Gorn Hammerfall completes a minor quest.

Cracked Flooring: These squares are difficult terrain.

Northern Doors: These iron-banded stone doors are locked (Thievery DC 23 to pick the lock, Athletics DC 25 to force them open). The iron key unlocks them.

Wall Spikes: The spikes attack anyone and anything forced against any wall in the room.



Wall Spikes

Terrain

Trigger: A creature is pushed or slid into a square adjacent to the wall.

Attack: Melee 1 (triggering creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: The target takes 5 damage and stops moving.

Stone Harrier (S)

Level 4 Controller

Small natural animate (construct, homunculus)

XP 175

HP 46; Bloodied 23

Initiative +4

AC 18, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15

Perception +8

Speed 6

Darkvision

Immune disease, poison

TRAITS

Guard Object

The stone harrier deals 1d8 extra damage to any creature carrying the key (see "Stealing the Iron Key").

STANDARD ACTIONS

④ Stab ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

✱ Harrying Stone ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Skills Acrobatics +9

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 15 (+4)

Wis 12 (+3)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 5 (-1)

Cha 8 (+1)

Alignment unaligned

Languages –

3 Iron Hammerers (H)

Level 2 Soldier

Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)

XP 125 each

HP 39; Bloodied 19

Initiative +5

AC 18, Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 13

Perception +2

Speed 6

Darkvision

Immune disease, poison

STANDARD ACTIONS

④ Hammer ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage, or 1d10 + 7 against a creature the hammerer is grabbing.

Effect: The target is slowed until the end of the iron hammerer's next turn.

④ Pincer ♦ At-Will

Requirement: The hammerer must have no target grabbed.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13).

MOVE ACTIONS

↓ Containment ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the hammerer); +4 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The hammerer shifts up to 3 squares, pulling the target with it to a square adjacent to it.

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 15 (+3)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 5 (-2)

Cha 8 (+0)

Alignment unaligned

Languages –

ENCOUNTER 3-10: KEEP AWAY

Encounter Level 2 (675 XP)

Setup

- 1 clay scout (C)
- 3 stonefist defenders (S)
- 1 arbalester (A)

None of the monsters are apparent when the characters enter the room.

When the party enters the area, read:

This chamber contains a shallow pool in its center. A blue glow issues from the water, shedding dim light over the room. Something sparkles in the pool's far end.

Dwarven runes, similar to those in the last room, line the wall around the ledge. Two staircases ascend to the ledge.

At the far side of the room, you can see the top of another pair of stone doors.

Perception (from the entry)

DC 13: The sparkling shape is an object in the pool.

DC 20: The object is a crystal key.

Arcana

DC 20 (Detect Magic): The pool exudes a faint magical aura. Disturbing the pool might trigger a magical effect. The runes on the ledge are also faintly magical, although their sole function is to provide light.

Disturbing the pool or attempting to harm any part of the room or disable the doors' lock causes the room to activate. The clay scout starts out hidden unless someone spots it.

When the room activates, read:

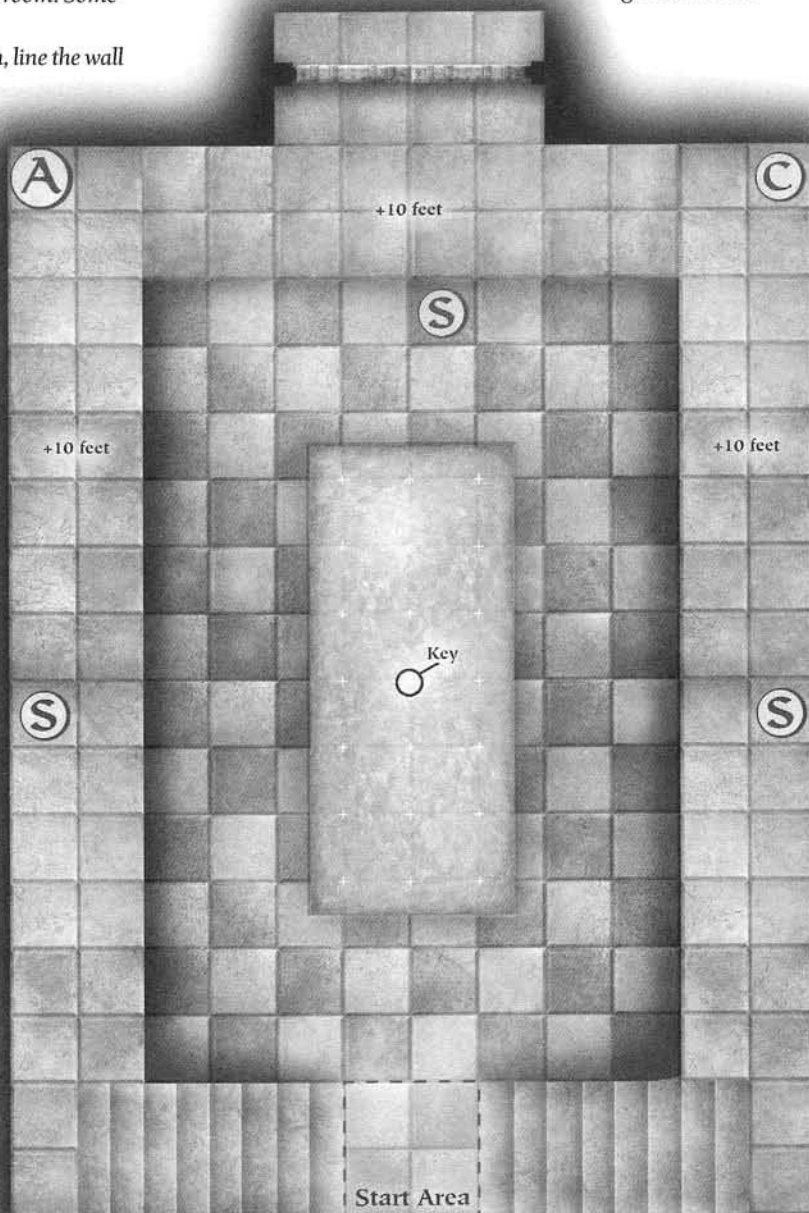
Figures emerge from the walls. Three are stone humanoids fashioned to look like dwarf warriors with spiked fists. Another, upon the far ledge, looks like an oversized crossbow with legs.

Passive Perception

DC 20: A small winged creature, like a tiny devil, crawls out of a small hole in the wall.

Tactics

- ◆ The clay scout attacks the one who has the key and takes the key if that character falls unconscious. It prefers to fly over the pool, forcing characters to chase it through the difficult terrain (and potentially recharge the arbalester's attack).
- ◆ Stonefist defenders use their great speed and tumble to move where they need to be. They pursue the person who has the crystal key if doing so isn't too challenging or punishing.
- ◆ The arbalester stays on the ledge, targeting those in the pool, which is its guarded area.



Clay Scout (C)	Level 2 Lurker
Small natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 125
HP 31; Bloodied 15	Initiative +7
AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15	Perception +6
Speed 6, fly 3	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
TRAITS	
Guard Object	
The clay scout gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against creatures adjacent to or carrying the crystal key.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Bite (poison) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
➤ Mind Touch (psychic) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +5 vs. Will	
Hit: 1d10 + 4 psychic damage, and the target cannot see the clay scout (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
↩ Redirect ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy makes a melee or a ranged attack against the scout.	
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 10 (triggering enemy); +4 vs. Will	
Hit: The target instead attacks a creature adjacent to the scout of the scout's choice.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 16 (+4)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light.

Ceiling Height: 20 feet (10 feet above the ledge).

Crystal Key: This key along with the iron key from the previous encounter unlocks the northern doors. The key is worth 5 gp per character.

Ledge Walls: These walls are 10 feet high.

Climbing the walls requires 2 squares of movement and a DC 13 Athletics check. Failure ends the character's movement.

Hopping down from the ledge can be done as part of a move action if a character succeeds on a DC 15 Acrobatics check. Failure causes the character to fall, take 1d10 damage, and fall prone.

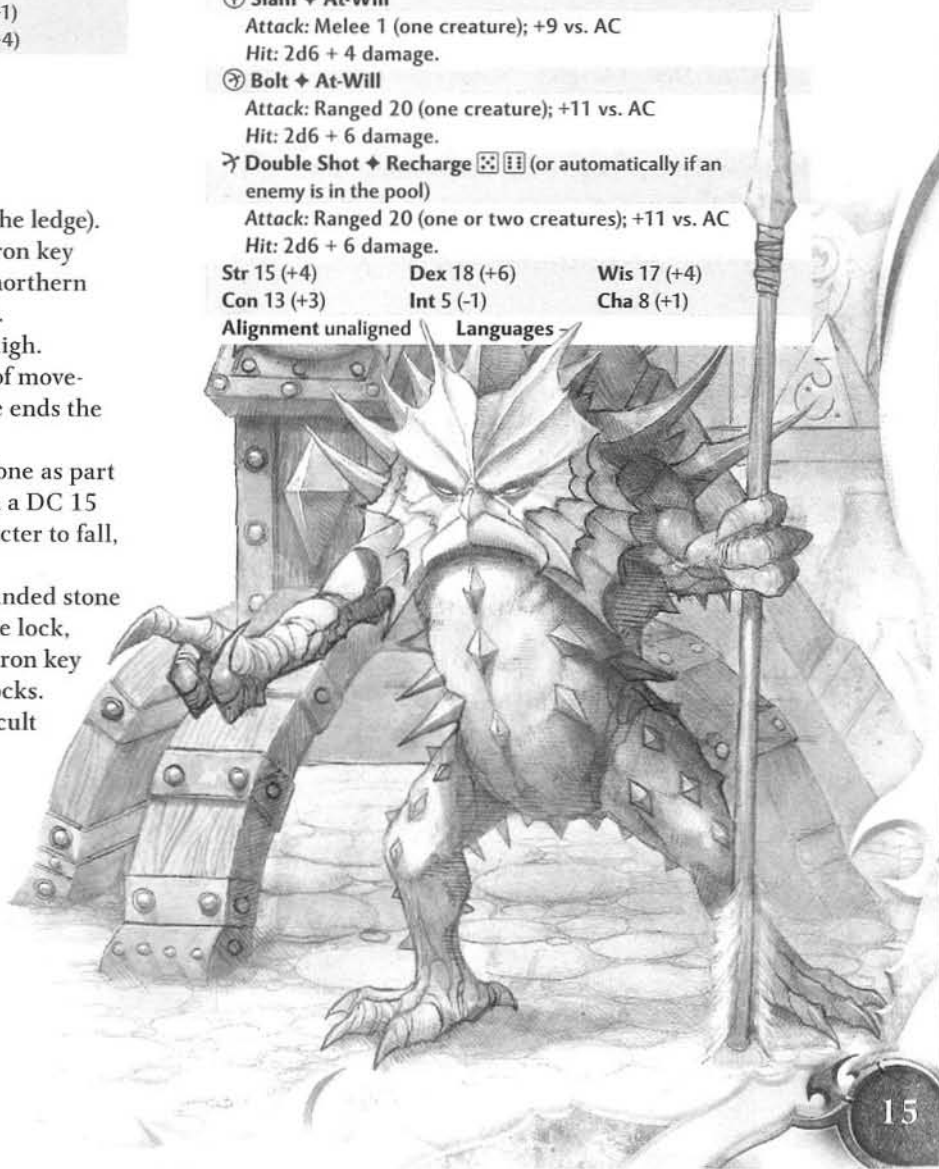
Northern Doors: Each of these iron-banded stone doors is locked (Thievery DC 23 to pick the lock, Athletics DC 25 to force them open). The iron key and the crystal key each open one of the locks.

Pool: The pool is 3 feet deep and is difficult terrain.

Stairs: The stairs are difficult terrain when ascending them.

3 Stonefist Defenders (S)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Small natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 125 each
HP 38; Bloodied 19	Initiative +6
AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15	Perception +4
Speed 8	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Spiked Fist ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 4 damage plus 1d6 extra damage if the target has the crystal key.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tumble ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The stonefist defender shifts 3 squares.	
Skills Acrobatics +9	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 17 (+4)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 11 (+1) Cha 7 (-1)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

Arbalester (A)	Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 175
HP 43; Bloodied 21	Initiative +6
AC 18, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 16	Perception +4
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Slam ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.	
② Bolt ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.	
➤ Double Shot ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞ (or automatically if an enemy is in the pool)	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one or two creatures); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.	
Str 15 (+4)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 17 (+4)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 5 (-1) Cha 8 (+1)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	



ENCOUNTER 3-11: FROZEN IN THE PAST

Encounter Level 2 (702 XP)

Setup

Greysen Ramthane's specter

2 botched witherlings (W)

4+ witherling motes (M)

None of the monsters are apparent when the characters enter the room.

When the party enters the area, read:

Luminous blue runes adorn the floor and walls of this large chamber. They surround four thick pillars and a wide, shallow pit. At the base of each pillar is what looks like a shattered statue. Dried bones fill most of the pit.

Alcoves line the east and west walls of this chamber. Deeper in the room are two large stone boxes, coffins perhaps. Another pit of bones sits between them. Beyond the bones is a pile of scattered rubble.

Arcana

DC 20 (Detect Magic): *The runes have weak, residual magic but no longer function.*

Have the player place their characters on the battlemat and allow them to explore the room. When a character comes within 2 squares of the southern treasure box, Greysen Ramthane's specter appears.

When Greysen appears, read:

A gust of cold wind blows through the chamber, stirring dust and chilling the air. Just beyond the farthest stone box, dim light coalesces into the spectral form of a dwarf dressed in scale armor.

"So, ye've taken me life and me home, Bertak, and now ye've come for me treasure?" he says.

Blood starts to pour from spots in his armor, and his face contorts in rage.

"Ye'll never take me treasure! Never!"

If the characters try to talk, see "Roleplaying Greysen." Otherwise, battle starts. The witherlings are hidden and have combat advantage against any character that has a passive Perception below 16.

When the witherlings emerge, read:

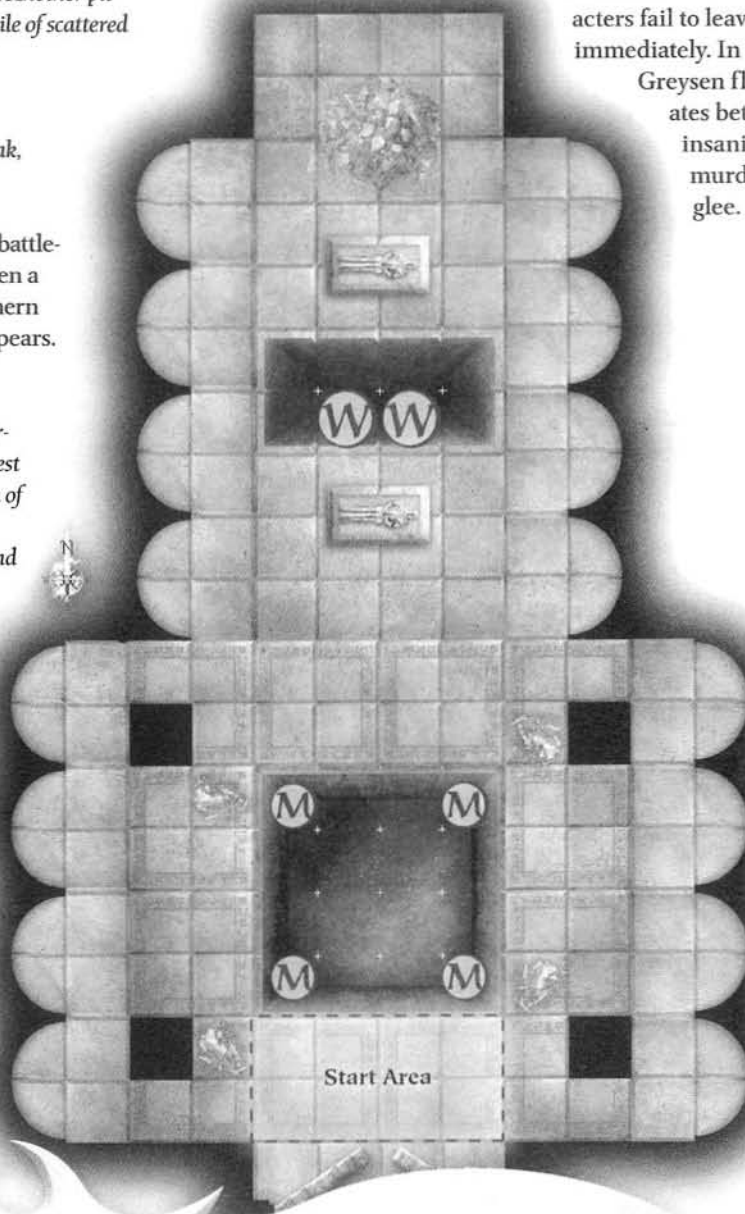
Bones from the pit clatter together, forming skeletal creatures with oversized arms that end in vicious clawed hands.

Roleplaying Greysen

The characters have a chance to speak to Greysen. Questions about Bertak's identity or statements about not having killed Greysen give the insane specter pause. He's willing to talk, identifying Bertak (see page 9), himself, and the bones of his victims, as long as the characters come no closer to the "treasure boxes."

The characters can keep Greysen talking with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. If they do, Greysen begins rambling about his most treasured possession, claiming "Bertak will never find it hidden in the column." With this piece of information, the characters can search the room's columns and recover *gauntlets of blood* (level 4). See *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*, page 350.

Eventually, he demands the characters leave him to his "private hell." He attacks if the characters fail to leave immediately. In battle, Greysen fluctuates between insanity and murderous glee.



4 Witherling Motes (M)	Level 3 Minion Brute
Small natural animate (undead)	XP 38 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +5
AC 15, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 12	Perception -1
Speed 8, climb 6	Low-light vision

TRAITS

Pack Attack

The witherling's melee attacks deal 2 extra damage against any enemy that has two or more of the witherling's allies adjacent to it.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Claw ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 6 damage.

Str 7 (-1)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 7 (-1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 9 (+0)
Alignment evil	Languages —	

Tactics

- ◆ Greysen turns invisible so he can safely move to a position where he can use *bone barrage* to hurl multiple foes into the bone pits. He then alternates between going invisible and using *double attack*.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light.

Ceiling Height: 10 feet.

Bone Pits: The pits are difficult terrain. A creature pushed, pulled, or slid into a pit falls prone.

Debris: These squares are difficult terrain.

Destroyed Statue: The northern rubble was once a statue of Greysen. It's now difficult terrain.

Pillars: These squares are blocking terrain.

Runes: The runes on the floor chronicle Greysen Ramthane's dastardly exploits. Older runes written in Goblin recount similarly despicable deeds perpetrated by a hobgoblin named Grim Eye. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 History check knows that Grim Eye was the original ruler of Restwell Keep.

Treasure Boxes: These coffinlike boxes have fierce hobgoblin warriors carved on them. They store Ramthane's loot. The squares are difficult terrain.

The treasure boxes contain monetary wealth totaling about 600 gp. The characters must wait until they reach Gorn and Benwick to split it.

The characters can also recover a common level 2 arm-slot magic item (player's choice) and a common level 2 magic weapon or implement (player's choice). Neither item is a dwarven heirloom.



Greysen Ramthane's Specter	Level 3 Elite Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid, specter (undead)	XP 350

HP 54; Bloodied 27	Initiative +8
AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 16	Perception +5
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	Darkvision
Resist 10 cold, 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	

TRAITS

Insubstantial

Greysen takes half damage from any damage source, except those that deal force or radiant damage. Whenever Greysen takes radiant damage, he loses this trait until the start of his next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Bonechilling Touch (cold, necrotic) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 + 4 cold damage, or 2d6 + 4 cold damage if the target couldn't see Greysen when he attacked. In addition, the target takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

⚔ Double Attack ♦ At-Will

Effect: Greysen uses *bonechilling touch* twice, making each attack against a different target.

Invisibility ♦ At-Will

Effect: Greysen becomes invisible until he attacks or until the end of his next turn.

⚔ Bone Barrage ♦ Recharge [E]

Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, or 3d6 + 4 if the target couldn't see Greysen when he attacked. In addition, Greysen slides the target up to 2 squares.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Howl for the Dead ♦ Encounter

Trigger: Greysen is first bloodied.

Effect (No Action): Four witherling motes appear, each in an unoccupied square within 5 squares of Greysen. These witherlings act on an initiative count of 10.

Skills Stealth +9

Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 8 (+0)	Cha 17 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Dwarven

2 Botched Witherlings (W)	Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 100 each

HP 30; Bloodied 15	Initiative +5
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 8, climb 6	Low-light vision

TRAITS

Pack Attack

The witherling's melee attacks deal 2 extra damage against any enemy that has two or more of the witherling's allies adjacent to it.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Claw ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

⚔ Double Attack ♦ At-Will

Requirement: The witherling must be bloodied.

Effect: The witherling uses *claw* twice.

MINOR ACTIONS

Blood Dance ♦ At-Will

Requirement: The witherling must be bloodied.

Effect: The witherling shifts 2 squares.

Str 9 (-1)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 9 (-1)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 5 (-3)	Cha 10 (+0)
Alignment evil	Languages —	

ENCOUNTER 3-12: BETRAYAL REVEALED

Encounter Level 3 (700 XP)

Setup

Benwick (B)

Gorn Hammerfall (G)

Gordi and Sal, doppelganger sneaks (D)

Venn and Jarell, snaketongue initiates (S)

2 spitting cobras (see Tactics)

Remind the players of the room's description. Then, when the characters are set up, read:

Benwick turns to you and gives a serpentine smile. "I've enjoyed our time together, but now it's time for you to die." He looks at Gorn. "As agreed, help kill them and you can have their share."

As Benwick finishes, he raises the Serpent's Eye and disappears in a flash of sickly green light.

Sal, Gordi, and Gorn turn on you and attack.

The characters grant combat advantage during the first round. If any adventurer made a DC 20 Insight check before Benwick's betrayal, that character does not grant combat advantage.

Tactics

The group tries to finish off the characters so Benwick can proceed with his plans. When an adventurer delivers the killing blow to one of the bad guys, that bad guy offers to reveal Benwick's plan. The character can choose to knock that person unconscious rather than killing him or her.

- ♦ **The snaketongue initiates** emerge at the chamber's entrance on an initiative count of 10. Each one then uses a standard action to throw a dark pellet up to 5 squares to a square that is not adjacent to an enemy. A spitting cobra appears where each pellet lands. The cobras act immediately after the initiates, using *blinding spittle*.
- ♦ **Gorn** lays into the toughest character, using *double attack* to knock someone prone. Once Gorn is bloodied, a character that uses a standard action to make an Intimidate check (DC 20) can force him into surrendering. He cannot be persuaded to help the characters fight against the cultists.
- ♦ **The doppelgangers**, Gordi and Sal, separate to tangle up at least one enemy each. If they cannot acquire combat advantage with *shapeshifter feint*, they maneuver to do so.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light.

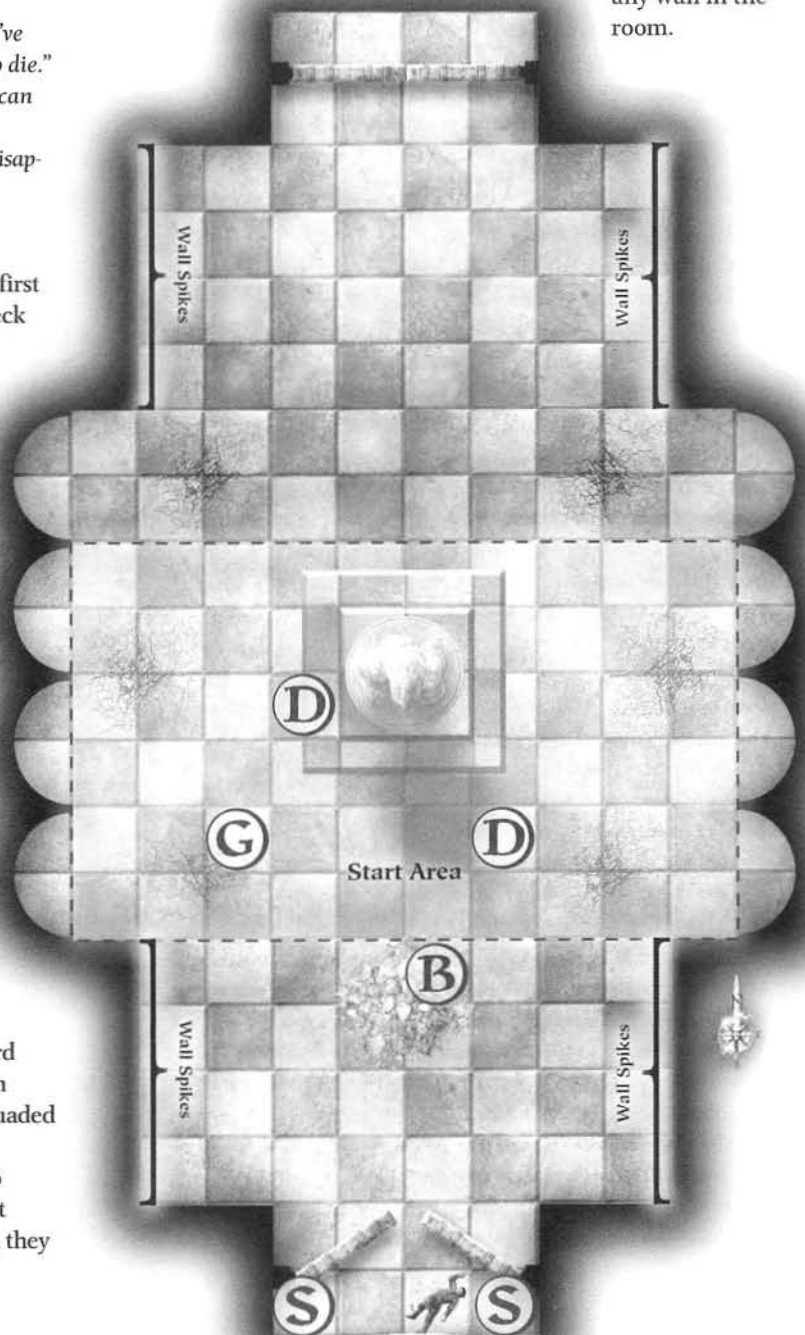
Ceiling Height: 15 feet.

Cracked Flooring: Squares of smashed cobbles are difficult terrain.

Debris: These remains of destroyed homunculi are difficult terrain.

Flailer Statue: This 12-foot statue is blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 13).

Wall Spikes: The spikes attack anyone and anything forced against any wall in the room.



Wall Spikes

Terrain

Trigger: A creature is pushed or slid into a square adjacent to the wall.

Attack: Melee 1 (triggering creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: The target takes 5 damage and stops moving.

Conclusion

Treasure: After defeating Gorn, the characters can take his portion of the treasure, meaning each receives an additional 40 gp, for a total of 80 gp this session.

Prisoners: If the adventurers capture one of Benwick's goons, he or she will reveal Benwick's plan if the characters promise to spare him or her.

The captured doppelgangers can expose Benwick's plot to frame Ferdinand Ronnik and eliminate the cult of Tiamat. If Ronnik is still alive, the characters have an opportunity to save him from Drysdale's justice and the noose.

Any one of the bad guys can reveal that Benwick is using the treasure and the *Serpent's Eye* to bribe a pair of black dragon siblings named Vermastyx and Yulbraxis. The dragons rule a tribe of lizardfolk in the swamps to the southwest, on the edge of the Chaos Scar. A prisoner can describe standing stones lining the old path to the location and tell the characters that it is near a river.

Finally, the prisoner reveals that Benwick and his allies intend to attack the keep.

Lord Drysdale must be warned!

Gorn Hammerfall (G)

Level 5 Brute

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

XP 200

HP 77; Bloodied 38

Initiative +2

AC 17, Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 17

Perception +3

Speed 5

Low-light vision

TRAITS

Stand the Ground

Gorn can move 1 square less than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Steady-Footed

Gorn can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Warhammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage.

⚡ Double Attack ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞ ☞

Effect: Gorn uses warhammer twice. If he hits the same target twice, the target falls prone.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Brutal Parry ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Trigger: An enemy misses Gorn with a melee attack.

Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, Gorn slides the target 1 square to a square adjacent to him, and the target falls prone.

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 12 (+2)

Wis 12 (+3)

Con 17 (+4)

Int 10 (+1)

Cha 12 (+2)

Alignment evil

Languages Common, Dwarven

Equipment hide armor, 2 warhammers

2 Doppelganger Sneaks (D)

Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)

XP 150 each

HP 45; Bloodied 22

Initiative +6

AC 17, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15

Perception +2

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage, or 2d6 + 6 if the doppelganger has combat advantage against the target.

MINOR ACTIONS

Change Shape (polymorph) ♦ At-Will

Effect: The doppelganger alters its physical form to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, the doppelganger must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 30 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

⚡ Shapeshifter Feint ♦ At-Will (1/round)

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target grants combat advantage to the doppelganger until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.

Skills Bluff +8, Insight +7, Stealth +9

Str 11 (+1)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 10 (+1)

Cha 15 (+3)

Alignment unaligned

Languages Common

Equipment short sword

2 Snaketongue Initiates (S)

Level 5 Minion Brute

Medium natural humanoid, human

XP 50 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +5

AC 17, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 16

Perception +4

Speed 6

Low-light vision

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Poisoned Dagger ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 5 damage, and the initiate makes a secondary attack against the target.

Secondary Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude

Hit: Ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Str 16 (+6)

Dex 14 (+5)

Wis 12 (+4)

Con 13 (+4)

Int 12 (+4)

Cha 14 (+5)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages Common, Draconic

Equipment leather armor, dagger

2 Spitting Cobras

Level 5 Minion Soldier

Small natural beast (reptile)

XP 50 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +8

AC 21, Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 17

Perception +4

Speed 6, climb 6

Low-light vision

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Bite (poison) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 6 poison damage, and the cobra marks the target until the end of the cobra's next turn.

☞ Blinding Spittle (poison) ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞ ☞

Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex

Hit: 6 poison damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Str 7 (+0)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 15 (+4)

Int 1 (-3)

Cha 10 (+2)

Alignment unaligned

Languages —



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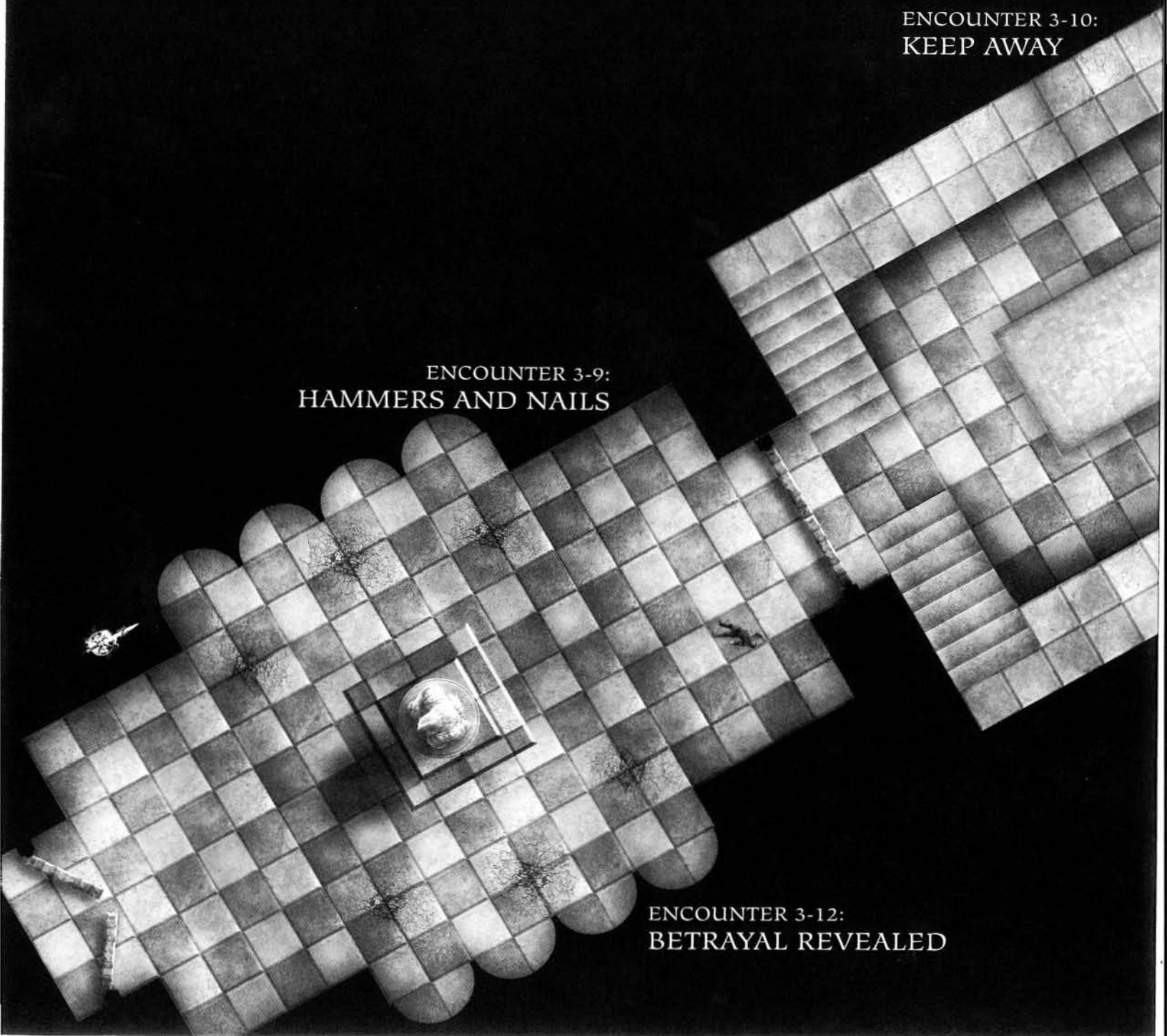
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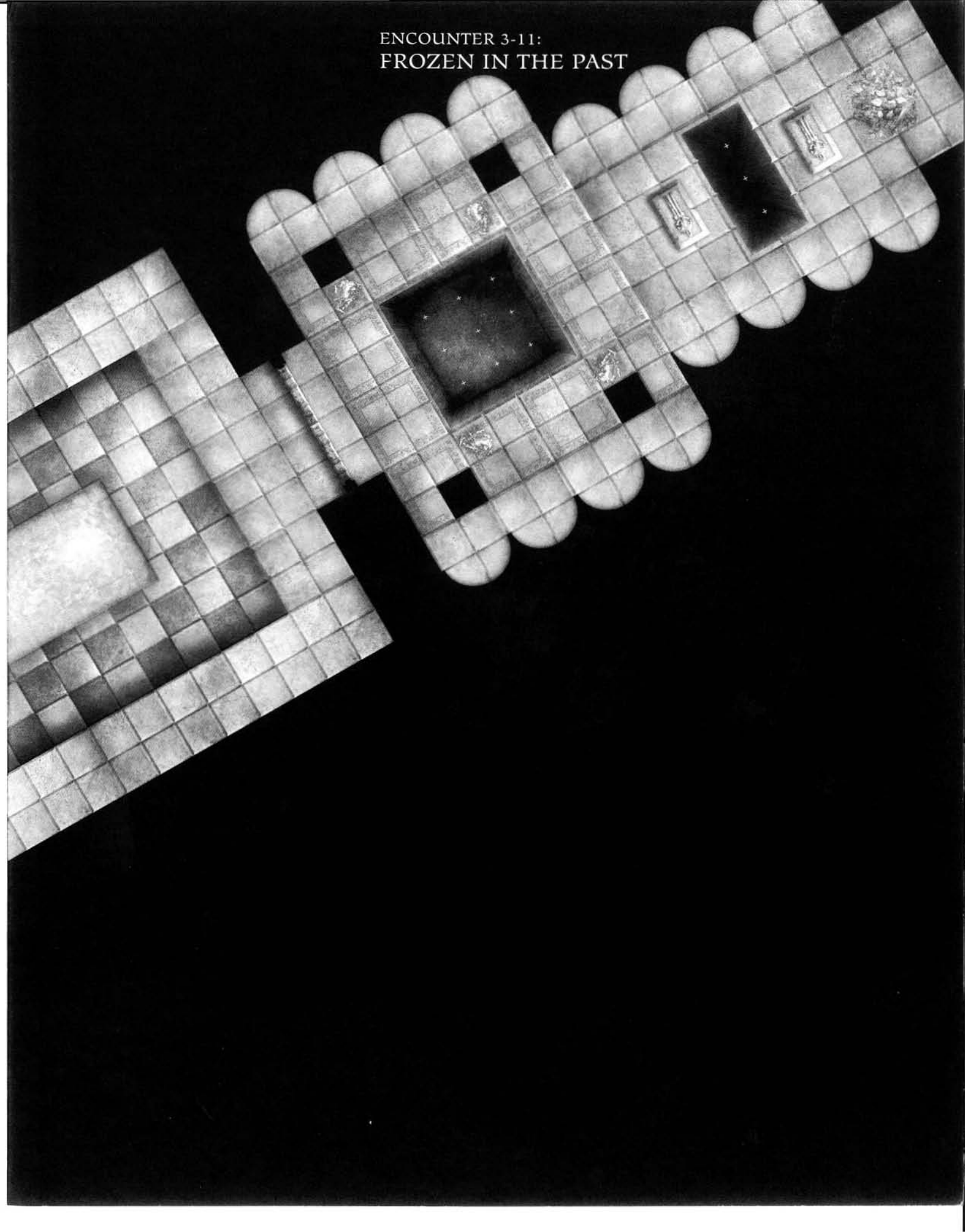
ENCOUNTER 3-10:
KEEP AWAY

ENCOUNTER 3-9:
HAMMERS AND NAILS

ENCOUNTER 3-12:
BETRAYAL REVEALED



ENCOUNTER 3-11:
FROZEN IN THE PAST



RECOVER_{THE} BANDIT LORD'S LOOT

A secret vault beneath the keep is rumored to contain a bandit lord's lost hoard. Gorn Hammerfall, the descendant of the bandit, along with your patron Benwick, have tasked you to recover this wealth before it is discovered by others, promising you a fair share of the take. Can you delve into the hold and recover the treasure before other forces learn of its existence?

Keep on the Borderlands: A Season of Serpents (Chapter 3) is designed for five characters of 2nd level and is the fall and winter 2010-11 season of the D&D Encounters™ official play program. This DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure includes a full-color battle map, ready-to-play encounters, and DM information on the D&D Encounters official play program.

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