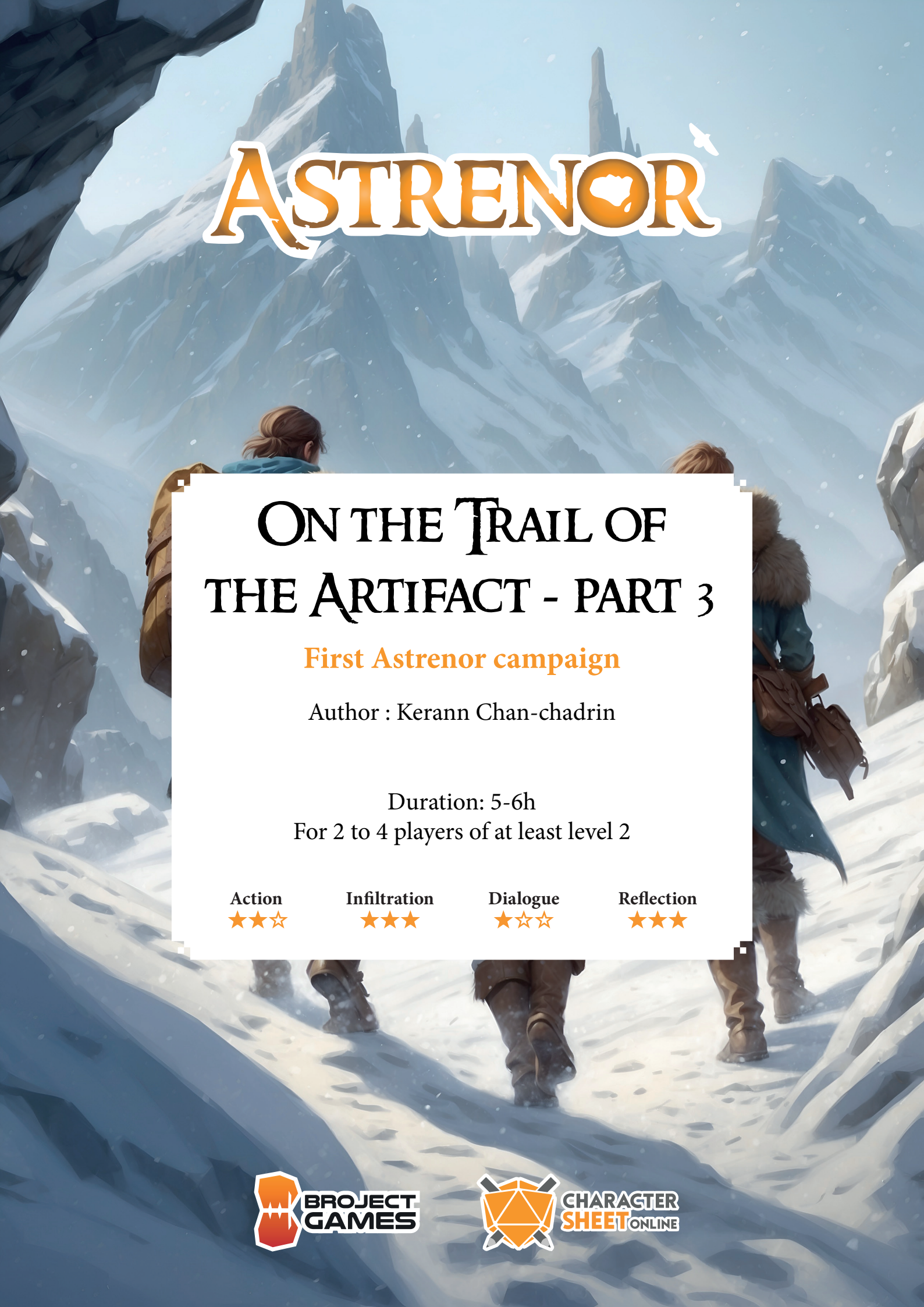

On the Trail of the Artifact - Part 3

First Astrenor campaign

Author : Kerann Chan-chadrin

Duration: 5-6h
For 2 to 4 players of at least level 2

Action	Infiltration	Dialogue	Reflection
★★☆	★★★	★☆☆	★★★

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Synopsis

In this scenario, the players will need to travel to the kingdom of Drukh to meet King Guldrak, the current possessor of the Klodenn artifact. The king is located in Wolforge, the kingdom's capital, situated at the summit of Mount Gigantic, the highest mountain in Rautha. They will be accompanied on their ascent by the famous Oriel, who is tasked with bringing this mysterious artifact back to the Alliance by any means necessary.

This is the third part of the campaign «On the Trail of the Artifact.» Therefore, it is essential to have played parts 1 and 2* before starting this scenario.

**Scenario 2 is optional and can be skipped by playing only the final part.*

Context

The invasion of Rautha by Asgure was launched four days ago. While the Alliance feared a massive influx of reinforcements from the empire of Korimdor, this did not occur: the attack was successfully contained. Asgure's troops have been pushed back to Kingshill Landing, their landing site, and the last survivors hiding within this fortress are currently being taken prisoner by the Alliance.

For the civilian population, this swift victory is undeniable proof of the technological and military gap that now separates Asgure's troops from the armies of the Rautha Alliance. Some even believe that it is high time for Rautha to take advantage of its superiority to strike the empire of Korimdor and destroy their enemy at the root. However, the government of the Republic of Rautha perceives a much more pessimistic message: the confirmation of a suicide mission. Indeed, after interrogating the prisoners of war, the Alliance has learned that these soldiers are not true warriors trained by Asgure. These poor souls mostly come from the region of Quaz, located in the northwest of Asgure. They were driven to fight by the promise of a reward for their families in exchange for their service. It is now clear to the Alliance that this attack was nothing more than a diversion to allow Galarond to steal the artifact that was in Klodenn. Understanding the importance of this object but ignorant of its real power, Oriel is sent on a mission by the President of the Republic of Rautha, Panorius, to retrieve this artifact as quickly as possible.

In other kingdoms, rumors of this swift victory have galvanized the inhabitants. Some are considering enlisting in the Alliance army, while others are taking the opportunity to do business. This is the case of the kingdom of Drukh, which is taking advantage of this new demand to run its capital's forges at full capacity.

A LONG AND PERILOUS JOURNEY

Around 7 PM, the PCs meet Oriel in front of Carleon Castle, freshly returned from the Alliance headquarters in Castle City. They give their report and share all the information they obtained from King Toric: he knows nothing of the artifact's nature and claims to have sold it to King Guldrak of Drukh for a modest sum.

Once Oriel has this information, she begins preparing an expedition to Wolforge. She then asks the PCs to assist her in her mission. The order comes from President Panorius himself, so the PCs have no choice but to accept. If they ask her questions about the mission, Oriel informs them that the president wants the artifact analyzed by the Alliance scholars to ensure it poses no threat to Rautha. This mission is top secret: no one must know that the Alliance is seeking this artifact.

Reaching Wolforge from Carleon on horseback takes about three days. However, at this time of year, ascending Mount Gigantic on horseback is impossible. They will need to climb the mountain on foot. Fortunately, Oriel knows a small village at the foot of the mountain named Hagdan, where the adventurers can leave their steeds and obtain the necessary gear for their journey to the capital.

Before setting off, the PCs can make some purchases in Carleon to prepare for the journey. Oriel covers the travel, lodging, and food expenses up to Hagdan. Just before leaving, she hires a messenger at Carleon's west stable to deliver a letter to the Alliance headquarters. If the PCs ask her about the letter's contents, she says she wants to inform President Panorius that she is heading to Drukh to meet King Guldrak.

The journey to Hagdan is tiring and strenuous, with temperatures growing increasingly frigid as the PCs approach Gigantic. Gradually, the greenery of the paths gives way to muddy tracks covered in snow. Finally, after two days of travel, they glimpse the snowy village of Hagdan.

The map of Hagdan is available in the Appendix.

The PCs can warm up in one of the town's inns (POI 5) and enjoy a proper night's sleep.

Regman the Traveler's shop (POI 8) is known for supplying all the necessary gear for mountain climbing, regardless of the time of year. If the PCs ask where to buy warm clothing or hiking gear, the inhabitants of Hagdan will automatically direct them to Regman's shop.

Hagdan

Small town located at the foot of Gigantic Mountain. Its inhabitants mainly rely on tourism generated by their stables and inns, which welcome travelers before their grand ascent.

POI* = Point of Interest. They are indicated on city maps

Regman

Regman is an eccentric dwarf in his fifties. A former adventurer, he has since become a merchant of mountain equipment. His shop is filled with unusual gear, and he gives enthusiastic recommendations with a quirky sense of humor.

Gigantic

The highest mountain in Rautha, towering at 5,000 meters above sea level. At the heart of this mountain lies the capital of Wolforge. At the summit, only the visible face of the city is present.

Here is the equipment Regman sells:

- Warm Clothing: 10 gp
- Pair of Crampons: 4 gp
- Pair of Ice Axes: 2 gp
- Rations: 3 sp
- Waterskin (1L): 5 sp
- Tent (2 people): 10 gp
- Tent (4 people): 15 gp
- Tinderbox: 5 sp

After a good night's sleep and with their mountain gear in hand, the PCs and Oriel can begin their ascent to Wolforge.

Refer to the ascent plan of Gigantic below to describe the locations and possible paths, and trigger events based on the players' choices. This plan should not be disclosed to your players.

Gigantic ascent map



During their ascent, the PCs automatically lose 1 Energy Point (EP) every 30 minutes of walking. If their EP reaches 0, the PCs lose Hit Points (HP) instead of Energy Points. If the PCs are not wearing Warm Clothing, they also lose an additional 1 HP every hour.

The Pair of Crampons is essential for taking the orange paths. The PCs can follow these paths without them, but the journey will take three times longer.

The Pair of Ice Axes allows climbing the mountain walls represented

in red. PCs who wish to climb with the axes must also succeed in a standard difficulty Strength check (10). If they fail, they can try again, but each new attempt costs 1 EP. It is impossible to climb a wall without this equipment. However, a PC at the top can use a 10-meter rope to pull another PC up with them. To do so, they must succeed in a standard difficulty Strength check (10). In case of a critical failure, the ice axes or the rope break.

The snowfalls represented by the red arrows indicate the risk of PCs falling a few meters down. If a PC fails their Strength check while attempting to climb a wall above a snowfall area, they must succeed in a Dexterity check to avoid falling. If they fail, they follow the direction of the arrow, land a few meters lower, and lose 1 EP and 1d6 HP.

Finally, wild animals roam the mountain, represented by the wolf head symbol. If the PCs take a path occupied by these hostile animals, a battle with wolves ensues. There are as many wolves as there are PCs.

The Mountain Path Map and the Wolves' stat sheet are available in the Appendix.

The wolves

Wolves are discreet creatures, but during this time of year when the roads are less traveled and game is scarce, they do not hesitate to venture onto the various mountain paths in search of food.

The Meeting with the Mountain King

Upon reaching the summit of Mount Gigantic, the adventurers face imposing stone walls marking the visible part of Wolforge. Two guards monitor the city entrance from the ramparts. They call out to the group and ask them to identify themselves.

Oriel immediately steps forward and says:

«Greetings, inhabitants of Wolforge.
I am Oriel, Officer of the Alliance. These young recruits in training accompany me on my journey. We are here on business, at the request of President Panorius. As you know, Rautha has been attacked by Asgure. The president wishes to properly arm our new recruits in anticipation of another attack and also to consider retaliatory measures. I request, therefore, an exceptional audience with King Guldrak to establish a new trade agreement between the Kingdom of Drukh and the Alliance. This is a matter of Rautha's security.»

Wolforge

This city, deemed impregnable, harbors within it an underground town carved into the heart of the mountain. While the top, in the visible part of the city, is icy cold, the lower part of the town is constantly heated by the two large lava cauldrons that power Wolforge's immense underground forge.



King Guldrak

Sovereign of the kingdom of Drukh. Guldrak is a dwarf with an imposing visage, sporting a fiery red beard. He rules with an iron fist, commanding authority and respect. His strategic wisdom ensures the prosperity of his kingdom.



Gimdus

Advisor to King Guldrak. Gimdus is a relatively discreet dwarf in his forties. He sports a thick mustache that descends along his chin.

The guards, aware of Oriel's reputation, quickly open the gates and descend from the ramparts to welcome the adventurers. Meanwhile, Oriel discreetly reminds the PCs not to mention King Toric's artifact.

The map of Wolforge Outside is available in the Appendix.

After exchanging a few pleasantries with Oriel, one of the guards takes the enormous elevator (POI 8) to inform the king of the Alliance representatives' arrival. The other guard continues to chat with Oriel. The PCs can explore Wolforge Outside, but the elevator is off-limits to foreigners without a pass or a local guard escort.

After about twenty minutes, the guard who went to notify the king returns and informs Oriel that King Guldrak is ready to receive them immediately. Once the PCs and Oriel are gathered, they are escorted by the guards to Wolforge Castle. To reach it, they take the enormous elevator at the city center, beginning a long descent into the mountain, where the true city of Wolforge is located.

This gigantic lift functions through an ingenious mechanism of pulleys and robust steel chains, capable of supporting fifty armored men. After descending a tunnel about fifty meters, barely lit, the adventurers see beneath their feet an immense cavity in the heart of the mountain. From the elevator, the PCs get a bird's eye view of the singular city of Wolforge, also known as the «Impenetrable Fortress of Rautha.»

The map of Wolforge Inside is available in the Appendix.

As the cabin descends, the cold gives way to a gentle warmth maintained by gigantic lava cauldrons, making warm clothing unnecessary. After a long five-minute descent, the elevator finally reaches its destination. The adventurers are led to the castle, where King Guldrak awaits them.

They cross a bridge just above the lava cauldrons and arrive at the castle. Guards open the doors leading to the throne room: an imposing hall supported by a dozen massive pillars and decorated with legendary weapons. King Guldrak sits at the far end of the room. A man seated to his right whispers something in his ear.

The adventurers are greeted by the king while still a few meters from the throne:
«So this is the famous Oriel, the mysterious Officer of the Alliance coming to do business with your good King Guldrak. They say you single-handedly massacred thirty soldiers of Asgure. Very impressive! Come closer, so I can shake your hand.»

Oriel always wears a mask in public; the king does not know she is a woman.

Oriel complies. The dwarven king's handshake is vigorous, but she manages to keep her composure. She then steps back and begins the negotiations, justifying her presence in Wolforge. After a few minutes,

a lightly dressed young girl suddenly bursts into the throne room, exclaiming:
«Dad, Dad! Is it true that Oriel of the Alliance is here to...»
She stops abruptly, staring at Oriel, causing an awkward silence.

If the PCs observe the man to the king's right, they will notice he is staring at the young girl and blushing at her attire. A Perception check of hard difficulty (15) can be requested from the PCs if they are not particularly attentive to obtain this information.

The king finally breaks the silence after clearing his throat:
«Ahem... Let me introduce my daughter, Tisry. Princess of the Kingdom of Drukh and apple of my eye. My daughter is one of your biggest fans, Oriel, and caught up in the excitement of your visit, I imagine she didn't see that we were already in an audience. But be that as it may, you must have had a long journey to get here. Climbing Mount Gigantic at this time of year cannot have been easy, you must be exhausted. My daughter, who seems to have some free time, will escort you to one of our best inns. We will resume negotiations tomorrow, once you are well-rested. You are my guests for tonight, my daughter will settle your bill at the inn. Return tomorrow at 10 o'clock to the castle so we can do business. In the meantime, rest well, and enjoy the charm of our city.»

The adventurers are escorted by Tisry out of the castle. The young woman is very intimidated by Oriel and barely dares to look at her. On the way, Tisry praises the architecture of Wolforge's buildings as well as the engineering and blacksmithing of the mountain people.

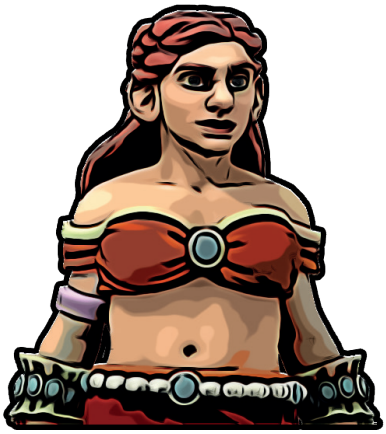
If the PCs ask her about the man next to the king, she will say he is «Gimdus,» her father's advisor and the kingdom's treasurer. A difficult Perception check (15) will reveal that the young woman blushes when mentioning the treasurer's name. If the PCs ask her about her relationship with Gimdus, Tisry will be particularly embarrassed and vague in her response, indicating that they have known each other for a long time and that he is a good family friend.

Arriving at the inn «The Confiding Star» (POI 13), Elisa, the innkeeper, greets Tisry before abruptly stopping:
«Ah princess, you're back! It's been a while! I'll reserve a suite for two, as usua...»

Noticing the presence of the adventurers accompanying Tisry, the innkeeper catches herself and continues her sentence as if nothing had happened:
«... like the time when some friends of your father wanted to experience the grand luxury of Wolforge's best inns... Isn't that right?»

Blushing from the awkward situation, Tisry quickly reserves several rooms for Oriel and her companions, then leaves the inn wishing them a pleasant stay in the capital.

Elisa, the innkeeper, hands over a key for Oriel's room and another for the PCs. A difficult Perception check (15) (or standard (10) if the



Tisry

Young princess of the kingdom, daughter of King Guldrak. Tisry admires the legends of the alliance, especially Oriel, whose latest exploits are starting to circulate. This young dwarf with magnificent red hair has a knack for attracting attention to herself.

The Confiding Star

The Confiding Star is a charming inn located in the upscale quarters of the city. It is renowned for being a refuge for many lovers. Unfortunately, this once highly sought-after place suffers from gossip spread by the owner, which has driven away couples wishing to remain discreet.

players are attentive to the innkeeper's physical expressions) can reveal the discomfort in her smile, likely caused by her clumsiness with Tisry.

If the PCs question Elisa about Tisry's visits, she will describe the princess as a person very close to the people who often visits the capital's merchants. She will not admit that Tisry has stayed at her inn unless the PCs try to bribe her with a few gold pieces. For 5 gp, Elisa will admit that the princess has visited her inn several times, accompanied by a hooded man who wanted to remain discreet. For 10 gp, she will reveal that the man accompanying her sported a strange brown horseshoe-shaped mustache. Elisa will only disclose this information if the PCs promise to keep it secret.

Once they have their room keys, Oriel goes straight to bed to be in good shape for the next day and advises the PCs to do the same. However, the PCs have free time: they can wander around the city for a few more hours if they succeed in a Constitution check to resist fatigue. The difficulty of this check depends on how long it took the adventurers to climb Gigantic:

- Easy (5) for an ascent of 7 hours or less
- Standard (10) for an ascent between 7:30 and 9 hours
- Difficult (15) for an ascent of 9:30 or more

If the PCs manage to stay awake, they can shop in Wolforge and enjoy advantageous prices on weapons and armor, which are 10% cheaper here.

If the PCs visit other inns, they can, by succeeding in a standard Perception check (10), recognize Gimdus leaving one called «The Burrow» (POI 14). He is too far to be called out to: if the PCs try to pursue him, he will pull on his hood and disappear into the crowd. They can, however, learn by bribing or threatening (-1 morale point) the receptionist at The Burrow that Gimdus has reserved a room for tomorrow at 2 PM.

After several hours of wandering the streets of Wolforge, the PCs will be exhausted and will need to return to The Confiding Star inn. The rooms are spacious and the beds very comfortable. With the day's hike, the PCs are sure to sleep soundly.

Prices of Weapons and Armor

The most legendary weapons and armor of Rautha were forged here, in the forges of Wolforge. Distributing all this equipment outside the capital poses a certain challenge. That's why the prices here are much more advantageous than anywhere else.

The Day of Negotiations

The PCs are abruptly awakened by Oriel, who is frantically knocking on their door. It's 9:50 AM, and they have a meeting with the king in 10 minutes. Undoubtedly, the exhausting previous day and the comfort of the inn's beds did not help them wake up earlier.

After a rejuvenating night, the PCs regain 7 HP.

The adventurers hastily prepare and arrive a few minutes late at the entrance of Wolforge's castle. Oriel presents herself to the guards, mentioning the scheduled appointment with the king. The guards open the passage and lead the group to King Guldrak, who awaits them in the throne room. Upon arrival, Oriel is gently scolded by the king, his accusatory finger pointing at her tardiness. She steps forward, apologizes, and compliments the inn Princess Tisry selected for them before immediately starting the negotiations.

Gimdus, still by the king's side, listens attentively without interrupting. King Guldrak ignores the PCs, conversing solely with Oriel. If any PC tries to interject, Gimdus will admonish them, insisting the king has no time for young Alliance recruits. The negotiations last about half an hour, culminating in a contract worth hundreds of thousands of gold pieces.

To celebrate this new trade agreement between the Alliance and the kingdom of Drukh, the king proposes a grand feast at his castle.

Oriel thanks the king for the invitation and celebrates the good relations between the Alliance and the kingdom of Drukh. She takes this moment to mention the secondary purpose of their visit:
"Oh, yes! Forgive me for prolonging this audience, but during my last trip to Carleon, King Toric entrusted me with a request if I happened to visit Wolforge. I nearly forgot. Apparently, King Toric sold you a cherished family trinket. He regrets selling it and would very much like it back. Of course, he is willing to reimburse you for the price you paid and even add a little extra for your trouble. Do you think that's possible?"

At these words, King Guldrak chuckles:
"Ha ha, that Toric. There's no one else like him! Tell him I'm willing to return his trinket for 10,000 gold pieces. I've grown attached to it myself, and it fits well in my collection."

Oriel did not expect such a sum; she thought she could repurchase it for a few hundred gold pieces.

Maintaining her composed demeanor, Oriel affirms she will convey the message to King Toric but would like to see the object to confirm its condition. King Guldrak agrees and orders his advisor to fetch the blue artifact from his vault.

During Gimdus's absence, Oriel and the king exchange pleasantries.

This is an opportunity for the PCs to speak with the king if they wish.

If the PCs ask about Gimdus:
The king will describe him as his most trusted advisor. The two have been friends for a long time, and the king fully trusts him to manage the kingdom's wealth.

If the PCs ask about Princess Tisry:
The king will say his daughter is the greatest gift his late wife, Queen Nesryn, left him. She died from a strange illness shortly after Tisry was born.

If the PCs suggest a possible relationship between Tisry and Gimdus:
The king will laugh heartily:
"You can't be serious? My daughter. My sweet, innocent girl… She's not of age for such things! And Gimdus, that old rascal, he's nearly my age. Where did you get such an idea? Gimdus, my faithful advisor… He would never do such a thing."

After about ten minutes, Gimdus returns with the artifact in his hands. The object measures about 40 centimeters in height and 30 centimeters in width. It is covered with strange symbols reminiscent of those found in the Temple of Klodenn.

The Klodenn Artifact
Strange oval-shaped object, adorned with gilding, resembling nothing known. It is partially covered with symbols similar to those found in the temple of Klodenn. Its dimensions are 40 cm in height by 30 cm in width, and it weighs approximately 4 kg.

Show the players the image of the artifact from Klodenn available in the Appendix.

Oriel and the PCs can inspect the artifact and note its unique nature.

If the adventurers pay attention to Gimdus's face, they can notice a faint red mark on his left cheek with a standard difficulty Perception check (difficulty 10). If they aren't particularly observant, a difficult Perception check (difficulty 15) can be requested to obtain this information.

Oriel thanks the king for allowing them to see the object and assures him she will inform King Toric that it is in perfect condition.

The audience with King Guldrak concludes. The adventurers are invited to leave the castle while preparations for the feast commence, scheduled to start around 6 PM. In the meantime, the king invites them to enjoy the charm of Wolforge.

Leaving the throne room, the group encounters Princess Tisry in the castle's entrance hall. She warmly greets them and asks if they had a pleasant night. She seems to be waiting for someone. If the PCs invite her to go out, she will politely decline, claiming she already has plans.

If the PCs closely observe the princess's face, they will notice she is slightly made up and wearing lipstick.

Outside the castle, Oriel asks the PCs to follow her into a deserted alley in the capital. Once out of sight, Oriel addresses her companions:

"What bad luck! I thought I could buy back the artifact myself, but I didn't expect such a high sum! That old goat must know what it represents! President Panorius ordered us to retrieve this artifact by any means necessary and as quickly as possible. I think we have no choice but to plan to steal it from the king. Do you have any ideas?"

Normally, the PCs should understand that to access King Guldrak's treasure, they must go through his advisor Gimdus. Fortunately for them, there is a way to pressure him. Gimdus has an affair with Princess Tisry, which would be highly frowned upon by the king if revealed.

If the PCs have the right reasoning, they should propose a plan to Oriel to follow Gimdus once he leaves the castle and threaten to expose his secret if he does not help them steal the artifact.

If they don't come to this conclusion, Oriel can suggest the mission herself.

While the PCs tail Gimdus, Oriel will find a way to exit Wolforge without attracting attention. The PCs and Oriel have about 6 hours to complete their mission and meet back in front of the castle before the feast starts.

If the PCs are hesitant about threatening Gimdus or stealing from King Guldrak, Oriel will convince them that it is for Rautha's security. She might add:
"King Guldrak is a smart man; I'm sure he knows what this artifact represents. Yet, he is still willing to trade it for a small fortune. Imagine if infiltrated enemies managed to gather the sum before we return. We can't leave this thing here any longer, no matter what it represents."

A Secret Affair

Oriel departs to find another exit from Wolforge, leaving the PCs to handle Gimdus. The adventurers are free to roam Wolforge, but access to the castle is prohibited while the preparations for the feast are underway.

If the PCs wait outside the castle until 1:00 PM, they will see Princess Tisry leaving alone. If they follow her discreetly, she will lead them to the Burrow Inn (POI 14). Thirty minutes later, Gimdus will join her, having just left the castle. The PCs will need to succeed in a standard difficulty Dexterity check (difficulty 10) to follow one of them discreetly. If Gimdus or Tisry feel watched, they will hasten their pace to the inn. The PCs will then need to pass another standard difficulty Dexterity check (difficulty 10) to avoid losing track.

If the PCs enter the inn, they will be ushered out by the receptionist, who will inform them that the establishment is closed.

They will need to wait about half an hour for Tisry to leave the inn and return to the castle. Gimdus will leave 15 minutes later and head towards the restaurants and bars in the southwest part of the city (POI 10 and 11).

Gimdus is tasked with hiring a chef, waiters, and dancers for the evening's festivities.

The inn has been privatized by Gimdus for part of the afternoon. No other guests are allowed in.

If the PCs confront Gimdus as he leaves the inn, they will have near-irrefutable proof to accuse him of having a relationship with the princess. It will be very easy to pressure him into cooperating in exchange for their silence.

If the PCs confront Gimdus as he leaves the castle, they will need sufficiently convincing evidence to pressure him. A standard difficulty Charisma check (difficulty 10) may be required to intimidate him if the evidence presented is too weak.

Once cornered, Gimdus will say:
"You're right, I've made a mistake… If the king finds out, I will lose his trust forever. Please, swear to me you won't tell him and I promise to help you."

After a few minutes of thinking, Gimdus will come up with a plan to help the PCs without implicating himself:

"Very well, I think I have a plan that could work for everyone. To avoid drawing suspicion to myself, it must happen during the feast tonight, while I am with the king. Before the feast begins, I will unlock the door to my quarters on the castle's first floor. You can then retrieve the key to

The Burrow
A small upscale inn in the city, the Burrow is only frequented by the nobility of the capital. Discretion and elegance reign supreme here. This refined haven has become the new favorite spot for former clients of The Confiding Star.

the treasure room. I will place it prominently on my desk: you will only need to take it and break a window to simulate a break-in. You can then use the key to open the treasure room in the castle's basement. You must be careful of the guards. If they see you entering or leaving the treasure room, even I won't be able to help you. Once you have the artifact, leave Wolforge as quickly as possible. I will handle diverting as many guards as possible to other parts of the castle. Does this plan suit you?"

The PCs are free to accept or reject Gimdus's plan. They can propose another plan, but Gimdus will refuse to get his hands dirty or take too many risks. He does not want to get into more trouble helping the PCs than by revealing his secret.

After agreeing on a plan with Gimdus, the PCs have a few hours before the evening's festivities begin. They can spend this time exploring the city and shopping.

Reminder: Weapons and armor are 10% cheaper in Wolforge.

At 6 PM, the PCs can meet Oriel in front of the castle, as agreed. She will be waiting to share her findings. Once the team is gathered, she will lead them to a nearby alley out of sight and ask for a report. She will then share her own discoveries: she knows how to leave Wolforge discreetly.

"Listen carefully… While sneaking around Wolforge's mines, I overheard two miners talking about a secret passage leading outside the city. This passage is located in the lower level of the mines, accessible from a room called the Slug Cavern. Unfortunately, at this time of year, the passage is completely flooded. However, some unscrupulous miners still use it to smuggle precious stones out of Wolforge. This seems like the perfect way to escape without drawing attention. I hope you're good swimmers."

After the information exchange, Oriel will entrust the heavy task of stealing the artifact to the PCs. She won't be able to help them: her absence might be noticed by the king and his guests. She suggests meeting the PCs at the mine once their mission is accomplished, to escape Wolforge together. However, if things get complicated, she suggests they rendezvous directly in the small village of Hagdan.

Time is running out, and the feast is about to begin. It would be unfortunate to keep King Guldrak waiting again.

A Perilous Heist

Summary of the Gimdus plan

The objective for the PCs is simple: take the key from Gimdus's office, open the treasure room, find and retrieve the artifact, exit the castle undetected, follow the galleries of the Wolforge mines until you find the secret flooded passage and finally, swim to the exit... Child's play.

It's past 6 PM, and guests are starting to make their way to the castle. The guards allow nobles and wealthy citizens from the capital to enter while screening out the poor trying to sneak into the event. The guests are directed by guards to the throne room, the venue for the feast. The room has been completely redecorated, with a dozen tables covered in red cloths and beautiful tapestries replacing the weapons on the walls. The atmosphere is much warmer and more festive. On-site, Guldrak invites Oriel to his table, while the PCs must find a place themselves if they wish to enjoy the feast.

PCs who enjoy the meal regain 10 HP.

Around 8 PM, the party is in full swing. All the guests have arrived. Dancers and acrobats entertain the crowd, and alcohol flows freely. Some guards can be seen with tankards in hand, enjoying the festivities as well. This is the perfect moment for the PCs to start their mission. As expected, Oriel cannot assist the PCs: she is sitting at the king's table, and he doesn't seem to let her out of his sight.

Show the players the Wolforge castle map from the PC side to help them navigate. Use the GM side Wolforge castle map to describe the locations and NPC encounters without revealing it to the players.

Gimdus's Office

Gimdus's quarters are located upstairs (see GM side Wolforge map).

If a guard sees a PC in one of the corridors leading to a castle staircase, he will stop them, saying they have no business there and that access to the upper and lower floors is strictly forbidden to guests. If the PCs refuse to comply, they will be forcibly escorted out of the castle. They must avoid physical confrontation to prevent a diplomatic incident that could jeopardize their mission.

If a servant sees a PC, they will say nothing unless they see the PC enter one of the castle rooms. In this case, the servant will immediately inform a guard that something suspicious is happening upstairs.

PCs can make Perception checks to detect the presence of guards or servants. The difficulty of this check can vary based on the distance between the PCs and NPCs.

Once in Gimdus's quarters, the PCs will notice the place has been left in disarray. Several clothes, books, and notes are strewn across the floor. The desk drawers and cupboards are all open.

This setup was prepared by Gimdus to simulate a burglary.

On the advisor's desk, as agreed, the PCs find a gold key placed inside an already open small wooden box.

If the PCs break one of the windows as planned, they risk alerting a servant present upstairs. The PCs can make a standard difficulty Perception check (difficulty 10) to hear approaching footsteps. They can escape through the window or set a trap for the servant to prevent them from alerting the guards. If the PCs choose to go through the window, they risk injury unless they use a rope (5 or 10 meters) to rappel down (2d4 blunt damage from a fall).

The Treasure Room

With the key in their possession, the PCs must head to the treasure room in the castle basement. The corridor leading to the staircase to the lower floor is guarded. The simplest route for the PCs is to go back through the throne room, where the feast is taking place, and discreetly use the door leading to the corridor. Fortunately, they can get help from Oriel and Gimdus to distract the king and the guards present.

Upon reaching the basement, the PCs will find a guard asleep at the end of the corridor, a tankard of mead in hand. The PCs can try to open the door without waking the guard by succeeding on a standard difficulty Dexterity check (difficulty 10). Alternatively, they can knock him out and/or gag him to prevent him from alerting others. If one or more PCs decide to eliminate the guard, they lose 2 morale points.

When the door opens, the PCs can behold the wealth of the Drukh kingdom: an immense room covered with piles of gold coins, and dozens of chests containing countless valuable items. Before them, two statues about 2 meters tall seem to guard the entrance to a secret room. Behind each statue is a small 50-centimeter-high pedestal. Above the door to the secret room is a golden plaque with a message inscribed.

Show your players the riddle for the secret room available in the Appendix.

Unbeknownst to them, approaching the plaque activates a mechanism giving them only a few minutes to solve the riddle before it triggers. A hard difficulty Perception check (difficulty 15) will allow a PC to hear the regular clicking produced by the mechanism.

The PCs have 3 minutes to realize they must turn the statues' heads towards each other to deactivate the mechanism and open the secret room door.

Only the statues' heads are movable; a joint at the neck can be discovered by closely examining the statues and succeeding on a standard difficulty Perception check (difficulty 10).

If they fail to solve the riddle within 3 minutes, the mechanism triggers, bringing the statues to life to attack the PCs. In this case, initiate combat between 2 golems and the PCs. The Treasure Room map and Golem stat blocks are available in the Appendix.

Castle guards

The castle guards wear thick chainmail and are mostly armed with halberds or swords. Since Wolforge is a nearly impregnable city, having never experienced a siege or invasion, the guards have taken the unfortunate habit of not taking their work seriously. They will not hesitate to drink heavily during the evening.

The statues

Two imposing statues of dwarves in armor on a much larger scale. According to the inscriptions at their feet, they represent the two founding brothers of Wolforge. Carved from solid brown rock, they are anchored to the ground by their weight.

Once the golems are defeated, the secret room door opens. Luckily, the festivities cover the sounds of the underground battle...

Secret Room

Inside the secret room are numerous relics and valuable items displayed on several shelves. At the back of the room, on a pedestal, the PCs recognize the Klodenn artifact, placed next to an old thick grimoire. Examining the book, the PCs will notice it is written in an ancient language with symbols similar to those found in Klodenn's buried temple. If a PC successfully makes an easy luck roll (difficulty 5), they will find a page depicting the artifact. It is evident that once deciphered, this book will reveal more about this mysterious object.

If the PCs decide to leave the secret room with more than one item, the two statues at the entrance of the room will animate and attack them. If they have already been defeated, nothing happens.

The Treasure Room map and Golem stat blocks are available in the Appendix.

Tip: PCs can take multiple items out one at a time, making several trips to avoid triggering the statues.

With the artifact in hand, the PCs must discreetly leave the castle and head to the mines, where the only secret passage leading out of Wolforge is located.

The old grimoire

Strange book, of mysterious appearance, seeming to come from an ancient unknown civilization. Its writing is similar to that discovered in the temple of Klodenn. The cover of the book is adorned with complex and captivating motifs, giving the impression of revealing the secrets of a distant past. Inside, there are illustrations depicting the artifact.

A Hasty Escape

Leaving the castle is not difficult: the PCs can either wait for Oriel directly at the entrance of the mines or return briefly to the throne room.

In the latter case, the PCs can discreetly inform Oriel that the mission is accomplished. However, since she is occupied by the king, Oriel will not be able to leave without arousing suspicion. She will suggest that the adventurers wait for her at the mines until the party ends.

The PCs should not linger at the party for too long. If someone discovers traces of their presence and they have no alibi, being strangers, they will quickly be held responsible.

Once outside the castle, the PCs can move freely in the streets of Wolforge.

At the Mine Entrance
At the mine entrance, two guards are chatting and ensuring that miners do not leave with any precious stones. They are not particularly attentive to people entering the mine. However, they might find it strange if individuals are waiting at the entrance. The PCs can move further into the mines or stay at a safe distance from the guards to avoid attracting attention.

After a few minutes of waiting, the PCs suddenly hear an alarm ringing throughout Wolforge. The guards, previously relaxed, become much more alert. If they are near the PCs, they will order them to stop immediately. In case of flight, they will pursue them without hesitation.

If the PCs are already inside the mine, they must have been seen by the guards at the entrance. The guards will start searching for them upon hearing the alarm.

If the PCs stayed at a distance, they will need to quickly enter the mines as city guards are on their trail.

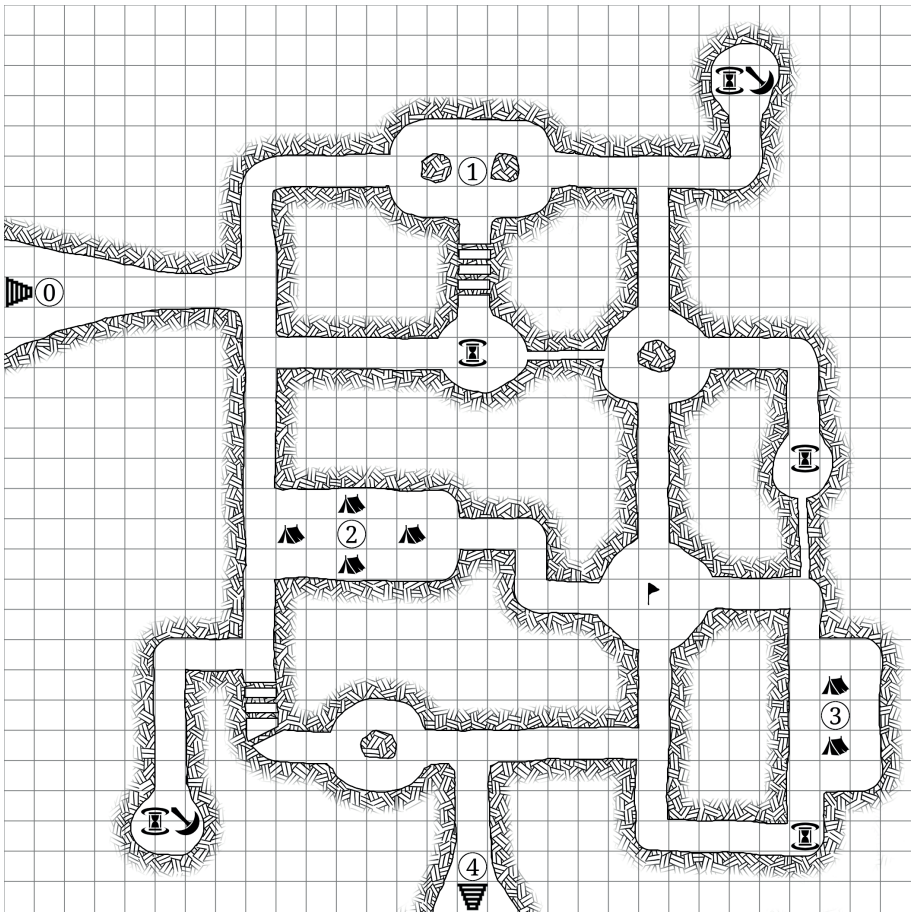
Whatever happens, the PCs must quickly flee from Wolforge before things escalate. They can no longer afford to wait for Oriel: they must descend into the mines and find the passage leading outside the city as quickly as possible. If they are too slow, they risk being caught by the pursuing guards.

Refer to the Mine map provided below to describe the locations, possible paths, and trigger events based on player choices.

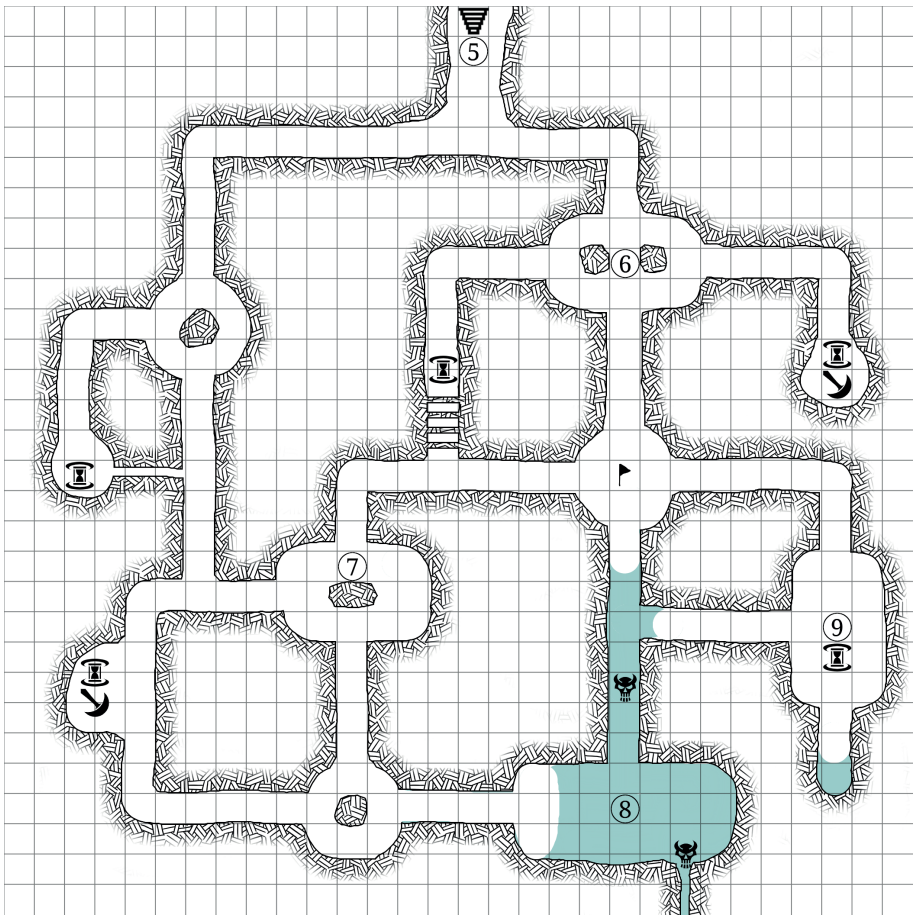
Legend

0: Mine entrance
1: Earthworm Portico
2: The great chamber
3: Mole Chamber
4: Access to the lower floor
5: Access to the upper floor
6: The corridor
7: The chapel
8: Slug Cavern
9: The bathroom

Mine - upper floor



Mine - lower floor



Map Symbols and Events

Hourglass: Indicates locations where PCs risk losing time. If PCs backtrack at two hourglasses, they will be caught by the guards and forced into combat. The first time, they will face 2 guards, then 3, 4, 5, etc., each time they backtrack twice.

Pickaxe: Indicates the presence of miners. A standard difficulty Perception check (difficulty 10) allows hearing the sound of pickaxes striking stone up to about fifty meters away (10 squares maximum). If a miner encounters a PC, they will not seek confrontation but may alert the guards. A luck roll can help determine the miner's behavior. If guards are alerted, they will close in dangerously on the PCs and can catch them at the slightest mistake.

Tent: Indicates locations where miners sleep or rest. PCs must all succeed in an easy Dexterity check (difficulty 5) to avoid disturbing the miners. If they fail, the miners will alert the guards.

Flag: Indicates locations with directional signs displaying the names of rooms on the current level.

Skull: Indicates locations where PCs risk drowning. PCs must succeed in an easy Constitution check (difficulty 5) each time they pass a skull to avoid drowning. If a character drowns, their HP instantly drops to 0, and their inert body is carried by the current to the exit. If a drowned PC is not quickly treated (Divine Praise or First Aid Kit), they die permanently. Count -2 HP for each minute spent unconscious. Reminder: If a character's HP drops below their maximum value in negative, they die permanently.

Narrow Passage: PCs must succeed in a standard Dexterity check (difficulty 10) to navigate these passages without losing time. After 2 consecutive failures, they will be caught by the guards.

Vertical Passage (Hatched Passage on the map): PCs must succeed in a standard Strength check (difficulty 10) to descend or ascend a vertical passage without risk of injury. They lose 1d6 HP each time they fail.

The Mine map and the Guard stat blocks are available in the appendix.

Flooded Secret Passage
Arriving at the flooded secret passage, the PCs are swept away by the current and propelled out of Wolforge. They fall several meters and land in one of the rivers flowing along the mountain.

The miners

The miners of Wolforge are poorly paid workers who are at the bottom of the social ladder. They can do their work both day and night. Some of them have found a way to earn extra income by smuggling jewels out of the mine through a secret passage that is unknown to the guards. If they encounter the PCs, the miners will have no interest in fighting them. They will simply prefer to call the guards so as not to be accused of complicity or negligence.



Zico

A Reptilian in his thirties, Zico never walks without a cigar in his mouth. He claims to be a member of the Alliance, but his moody and violent nature makes him difficult to trust.

Elven warriors

Elven warriors combine grace, agility, and combat expertise. Their slender features and finely crafted weapons reflect their martial skill. They are renowned for their tactical acumen and unwavering dedication.

An Unexpected Twist

Shivering from the cold, the PCs must quickly warm up and don their warmest clothes. Even though this shortcut has saved them valuable time, they still have one or two hours of walking ahead to reach the village of Hagdan.

After a few minutes of walking, the PCs will encounter a man named Zico. He is accompanied by several men and claims to be an officer of the Alliance. He bears the Alliance's crest and says he has come to rescue Oriel and the adventurers accompanying her. According to him, he was tasked by President Panorius to escort the adventurers who went on a mission to Wolforge back to Castle City.

Few people climb Gigantic at this time of year, and the unusual profile of the PC group suggests they are not locals. Zico will quickly deduce that they are the adventurers accompanying Oriel. He will insist heavily that the PCs join them on the way to Castle City.

Following Zico

Zico and his men lead the PCs to Hagdan, where a carriage supposed to take them to Castle City is waiting. On the way, Zico will inquire about Oriel. He doesn't seem worried about her, claiming she has gotten out of much tougher situations.

Zico is aware of the artifact's existence. He will try to ask subtle questions to get a look into the PCs' bag, such as:
"Did you manage to do some shopping in Wolforge? I'm curious to see what you're bringing back with you…"

Upon reaching the village of Hagdan, Zico takes the PCs to the north stable (POI 6) where his carriage is located. Once inside the vehicle, the group will immediately head toward Castle City.

Unfortunately, as soon as they leave the village of Hagdan, they are ambushed by a dozen elven warriors. The horses pulling the carriage are each shot with an arrow, throwing all passengers to the ground. Zico's men don't even have time to get up; they are executed by the attackers. Zico miraculously manages to escape while the PCs are captured. If they struggle, they will be knocked out immediately.

The PCs are tied up and thrown into another carriage driven by one of the elves. If they ask questions, their captor will simply say that the King of Epheria wants to speak with them.

Confronting Zico

If the PCs refuse to follow Zico, he will become threatening and will not hesitate to use force.

The map of the Mountain Path and the stat blocks for Zico and his companions are available in the Appendix. The number of Zico's companions is equal to the number of PCs. Randomly select archetypes (Warrior, Mage, or Rogue) for each of Zico's henchmen.

The combat continues until only one PC is left standing or Zico drops below 5 HP.

As the fight seems to be nearing its end, a group of about ten elven warriors emerges to rescue the PCs. They finish off Zico's henchmen and attempt to do the same to him, but he miraculously escapes, vowing to find the PCs and take his revenge.

Once Zico and his gang are routed, the elves approach the PCs, claiming they want to heal them. Trusting them and exhausted from the fight, the PCs instinctively lower their guard and are then knocked out.

They wake up a few minutes later in a moving carriage, their feet and hands tied. Inside, two elven soldiers are watching the PCs. One of them says:
"Finally awake? I hope you enjoy long rides, newbies. We still have a long way to go to Aethel."

Conclusion

The PCs find themselves in a delicate situation: they are tied up and forcefully taken to Aethel, the capital of the kingdom of Epheria, to meet King Lurius. They are unaware of what they are being accused of, and their captors seem uncommunicative. Their weapons and personal belongings have been taken from them. As for the artifact, it has been carefully placed in a sturdy wooden chest at the back of the carriage.

Several questions race through the adventurers' minds. Who are these people? How do they know about them? What could the King of Epheria want from them? What fate awaits them? All these questions will only be answered at the end of their long journey.

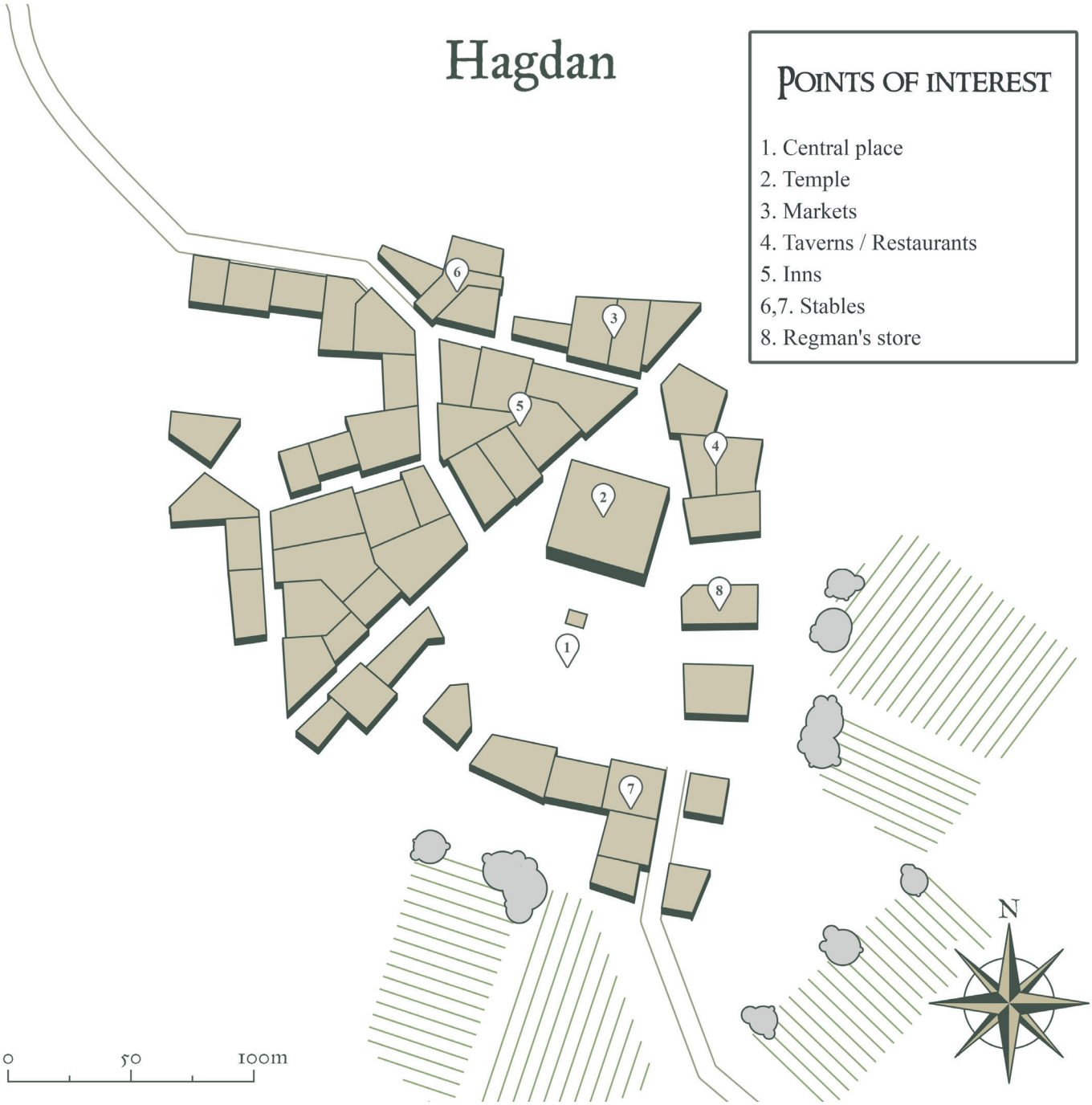
Rewards

Here is the list of end-of-scenario rewards available, depending on the objectives reached:

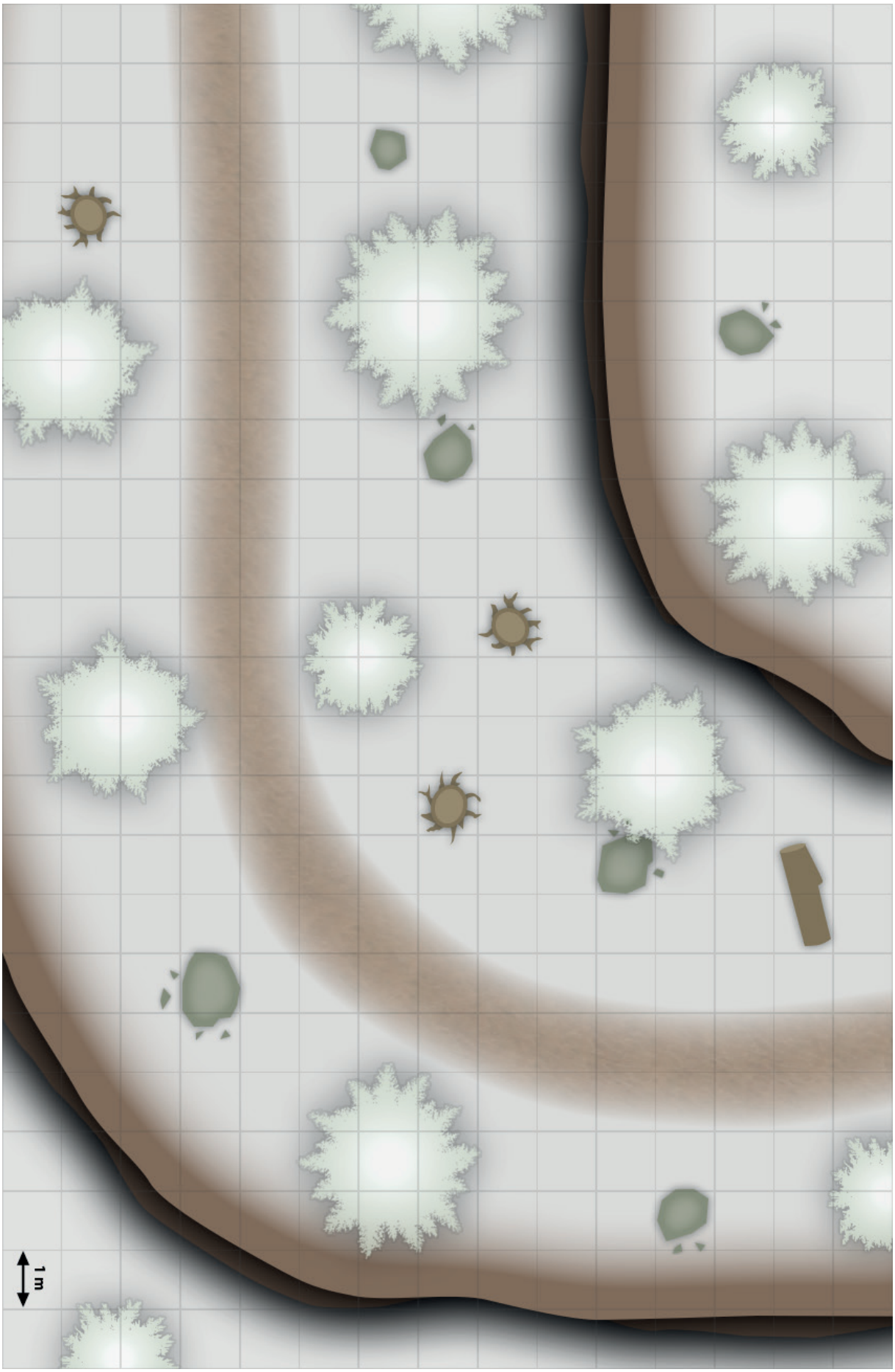
Goals	Rewards
Take on Zico and get him down to 5 HP or less	120 experience points
Not fighting the guards	1 morale point + 100 experience points
Stolen artifact	150 experience points
Stolen gold	-1 morale point
Solve the riddle of the treasure room	100 experience points
Defeating the golems	80 experience points
Climb Gigantic in 7 hours or less	50 experience points
Climb Gigantic in 9 hours or less	50 experience points
Climb Gigantic in 11 hours or less	50 experience points
Complete the scenario	90 gold coins

Appendix

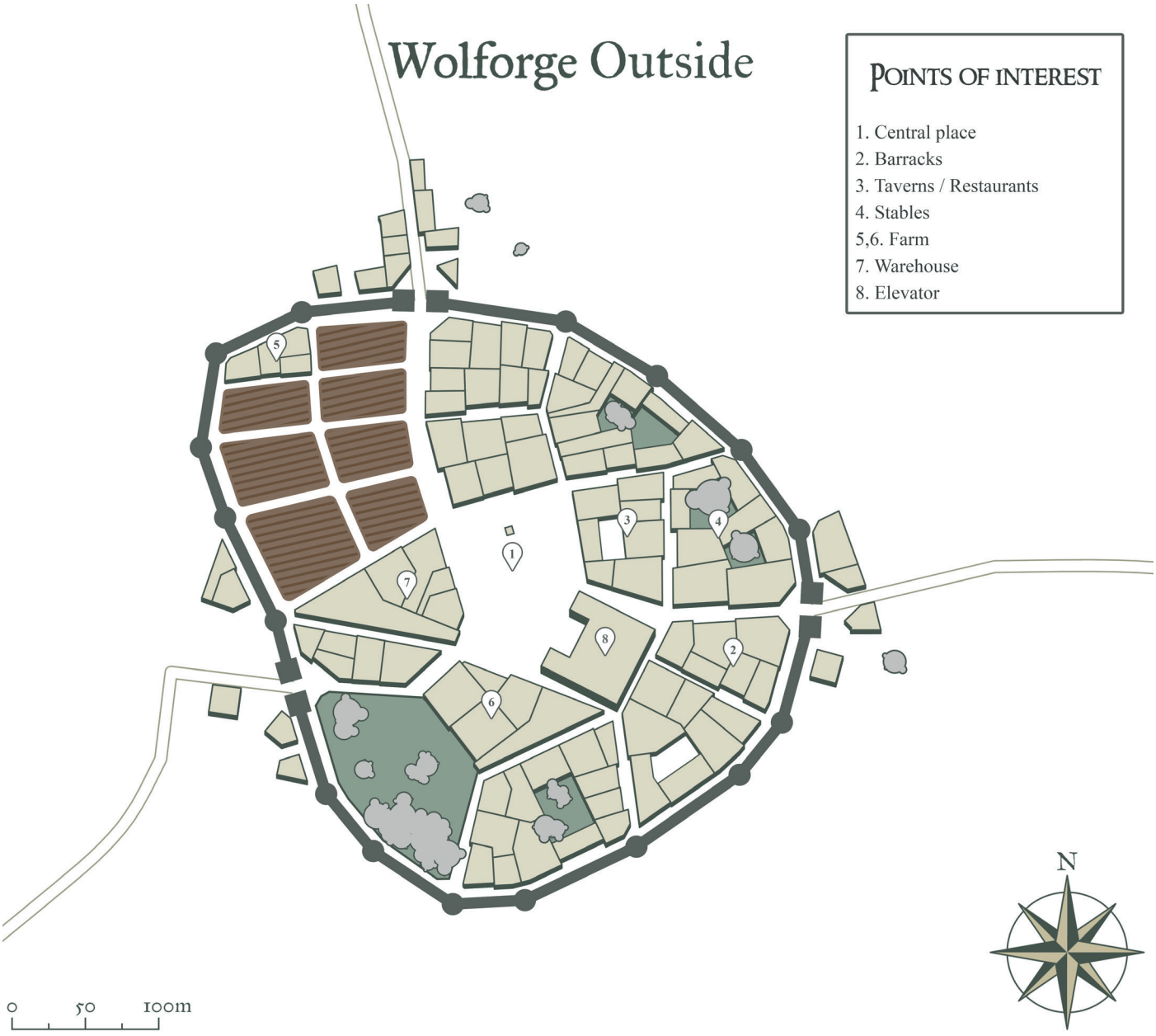
Map of Hagdan



Mountain trail



Map of Wolforge Outside



Map of Wolforge Inside

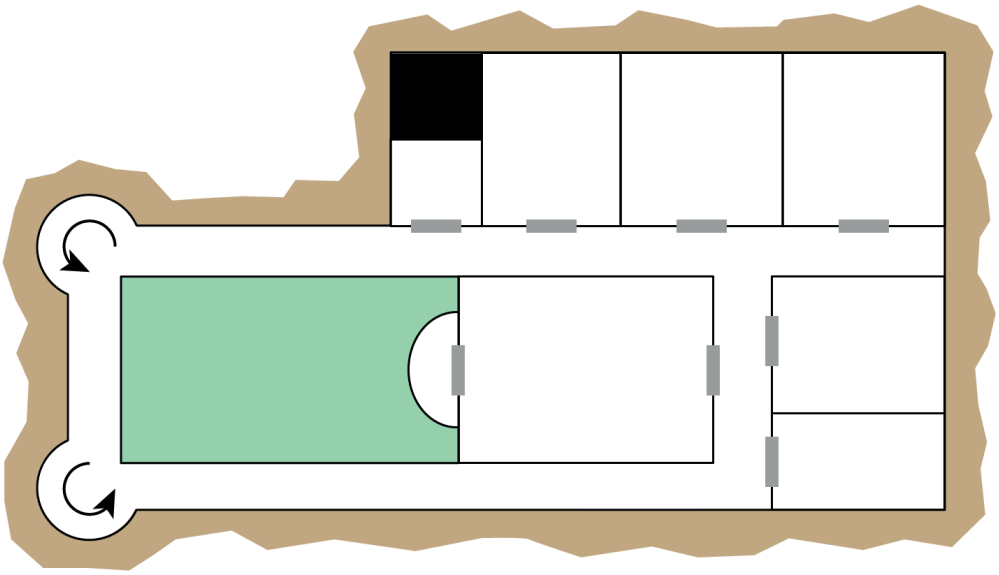


Klodenn Artifact

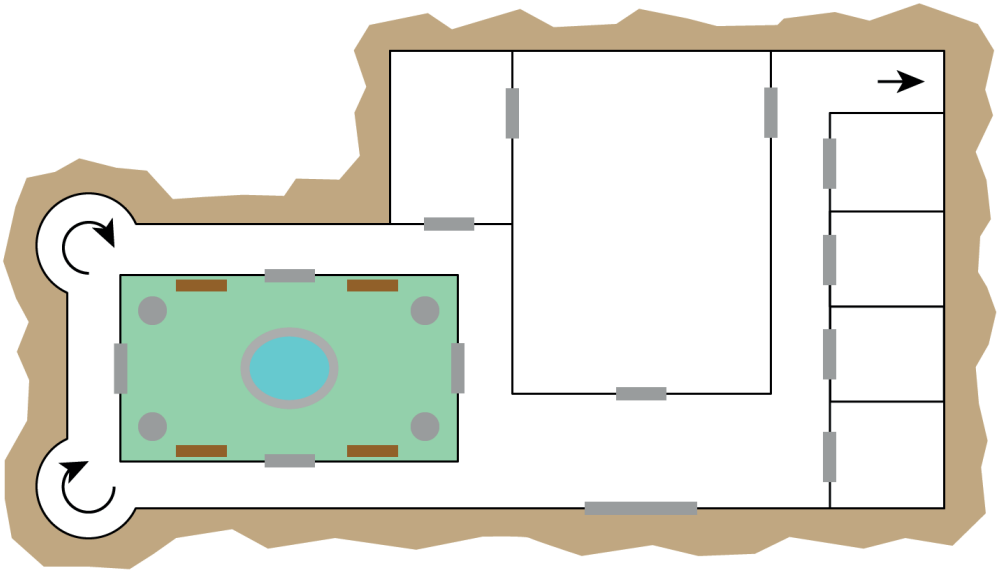


Plan of Wolforge castle PC side

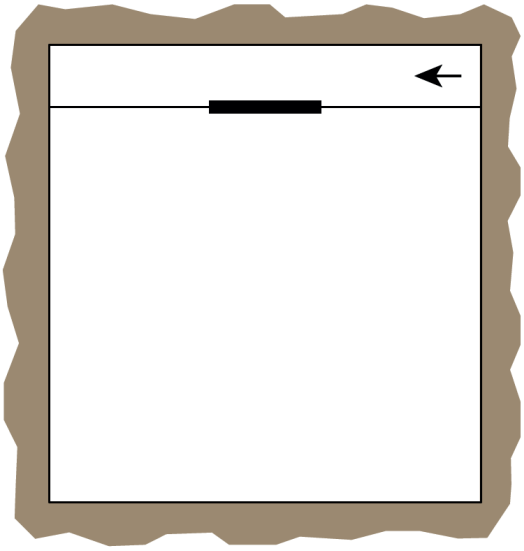
Second floor



First floor

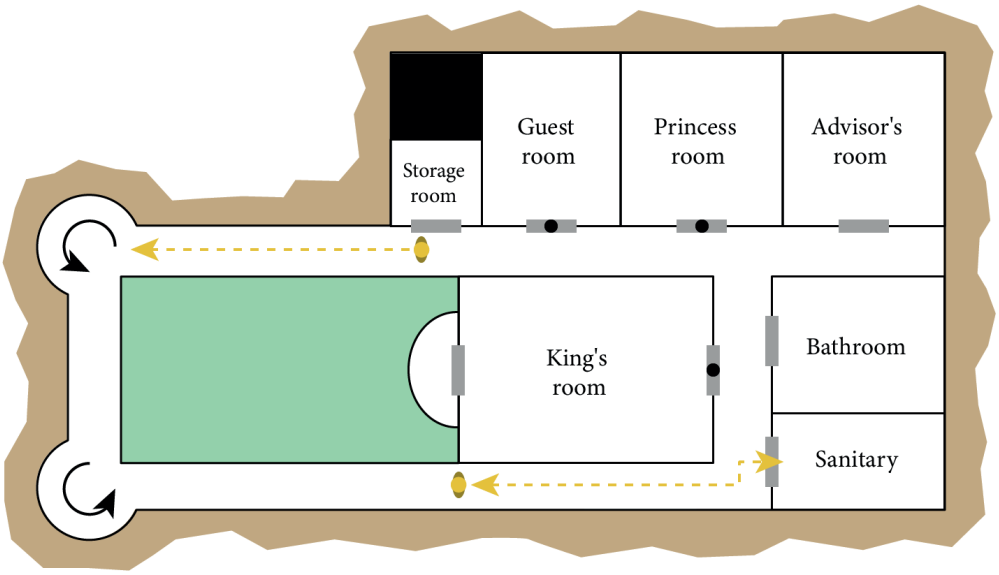


Basement

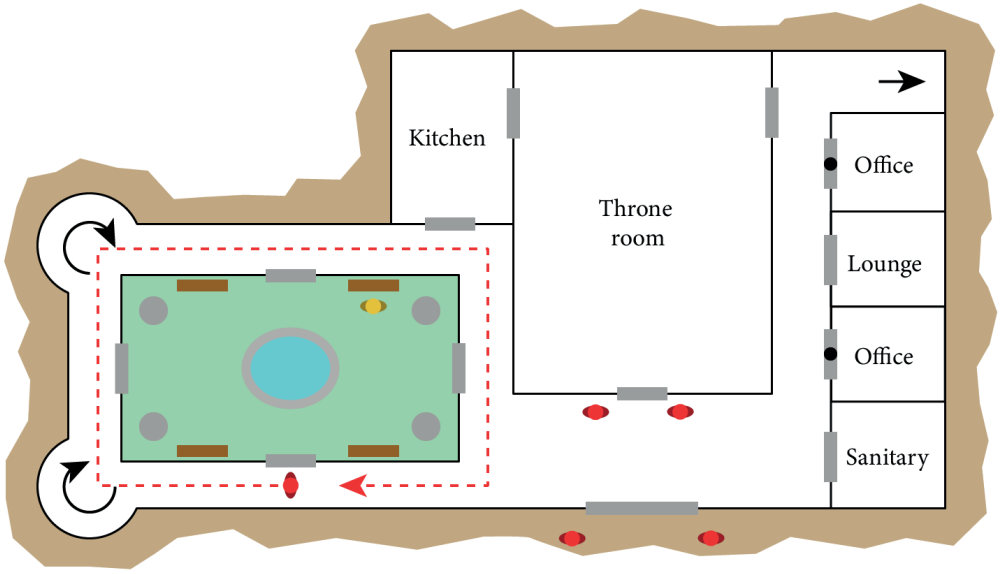


Plan of Wolforge castle GM side

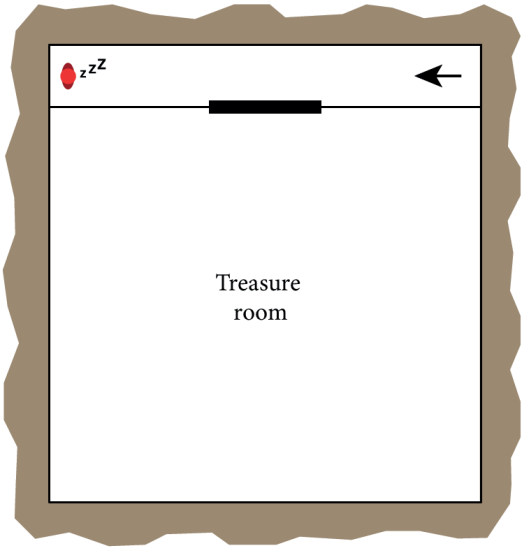
Second floor



First floor



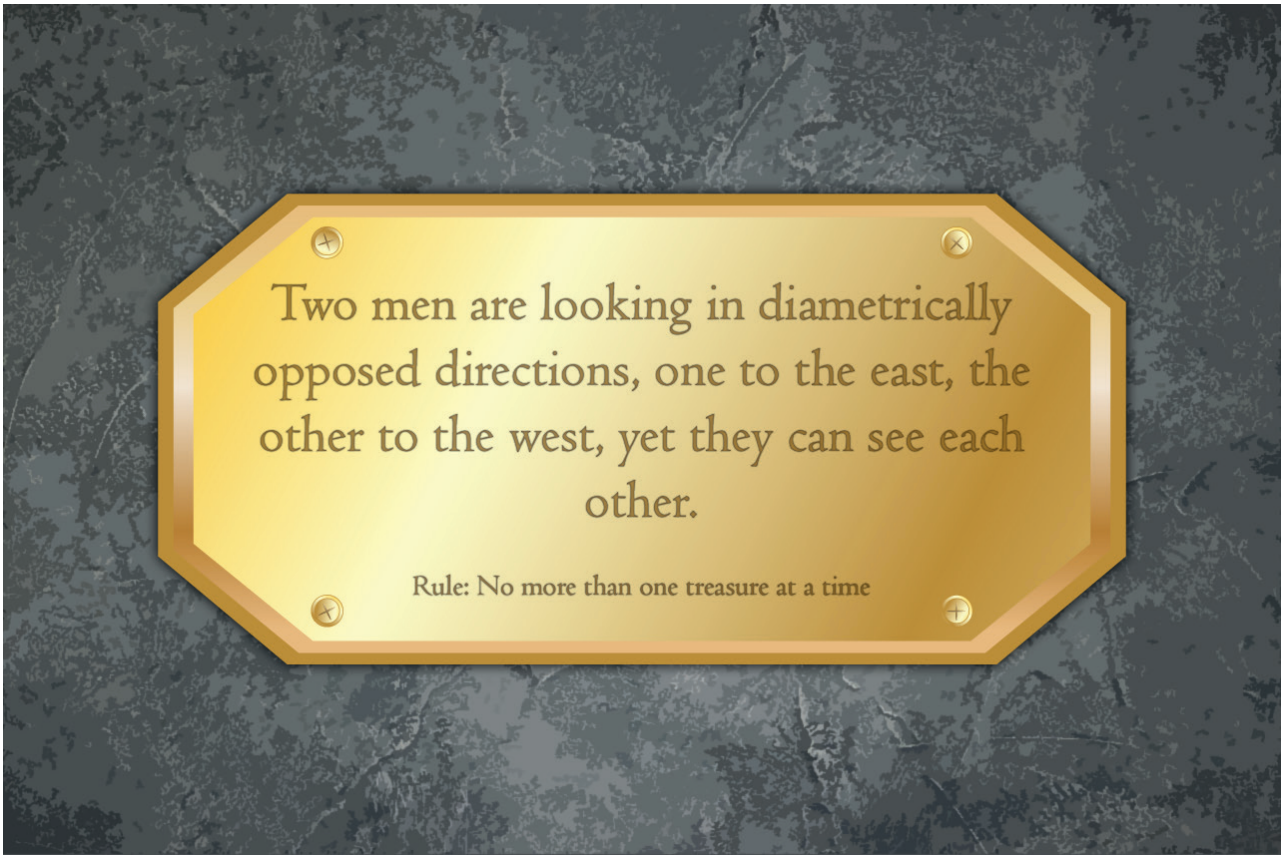
Basement



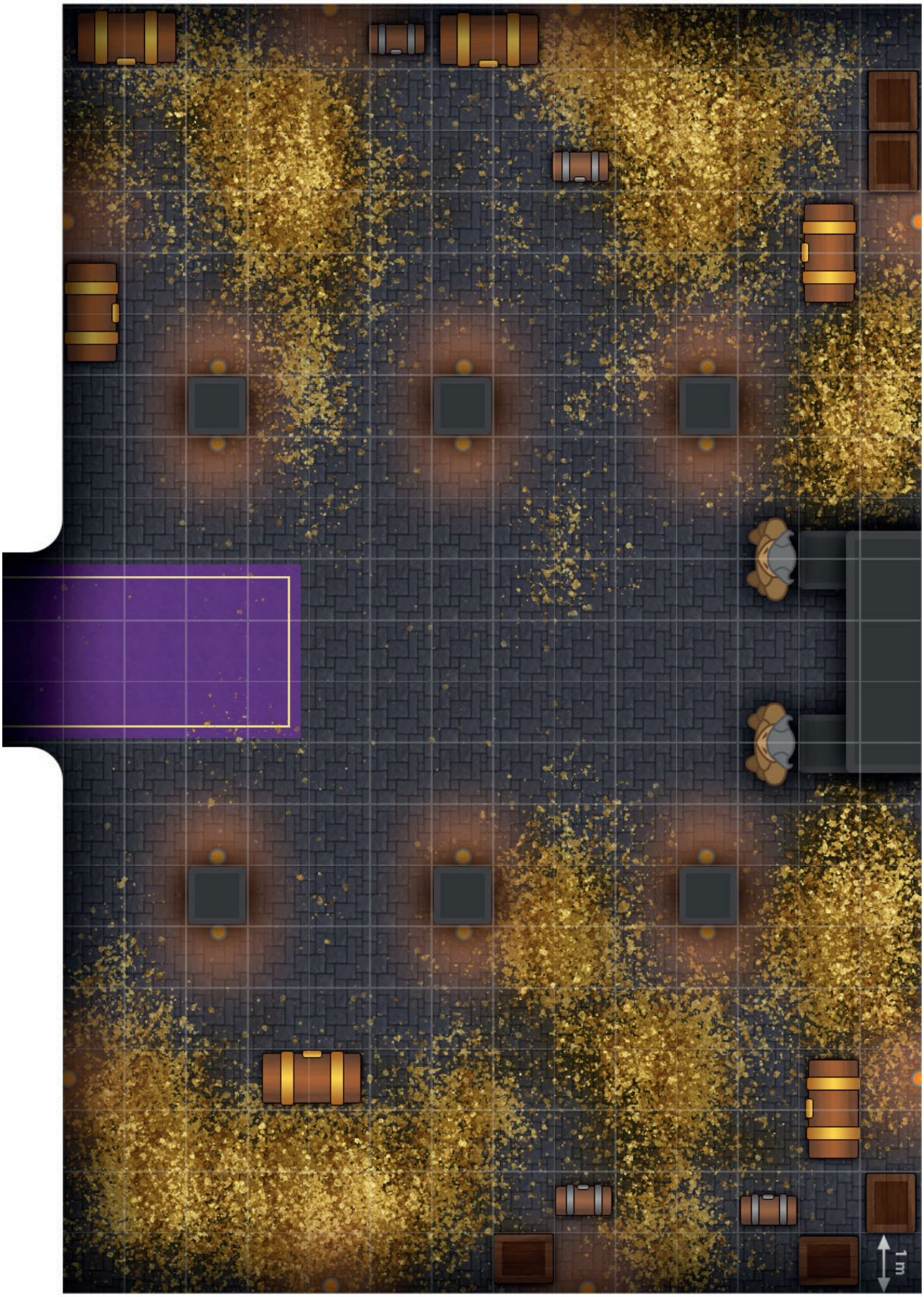
Legend

- Door
- Locked door
  Can be hooked or pushed in
- Locked armoured door
- Stairs
- Guard
- Domestic
- The guard's route
- The domestic route

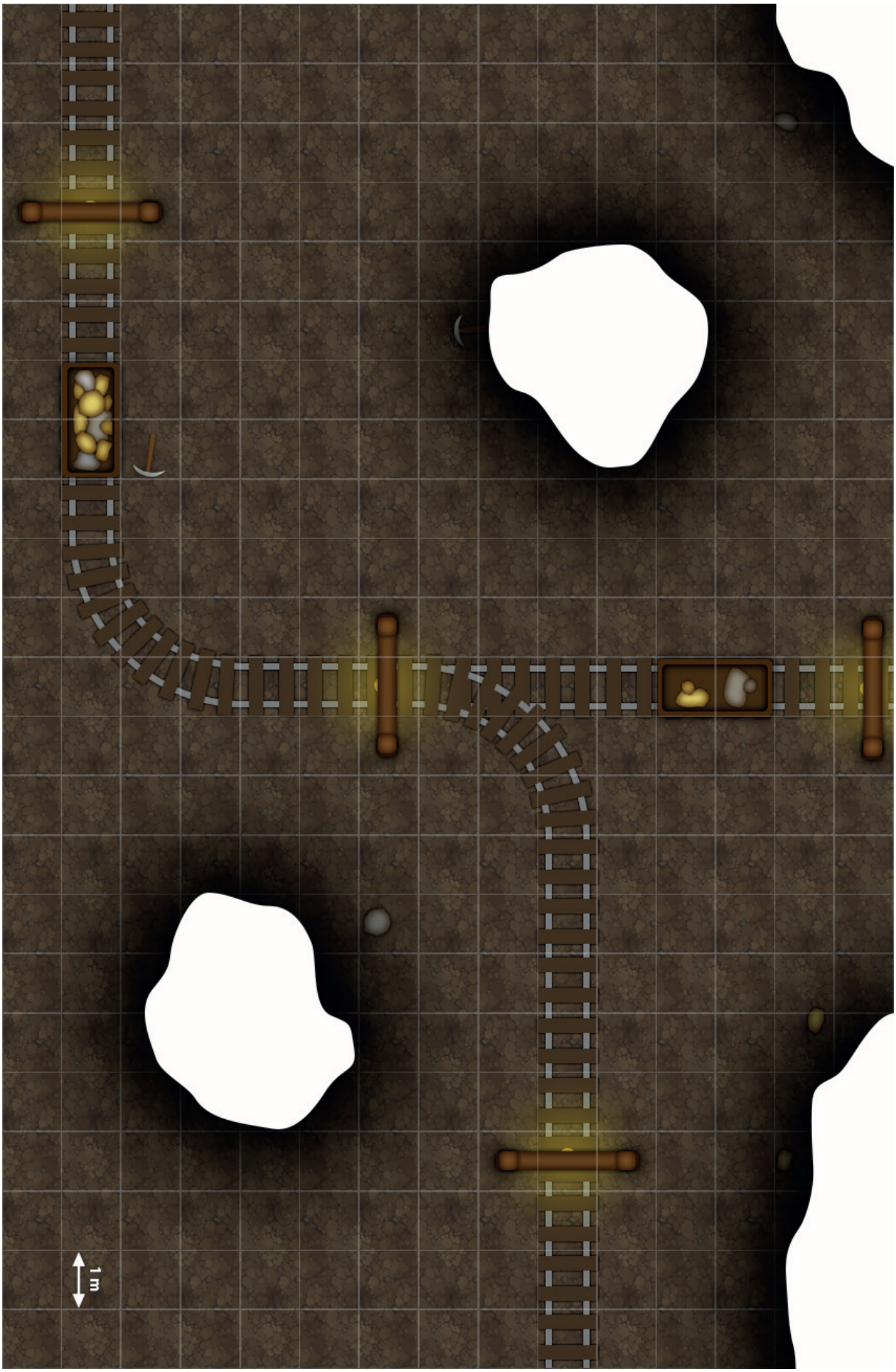
RIDDLE OF THE SECRET ROOM



Treasure Room



Mine



Creatures and NPCs

WOLF

HP : 7 EP : 0

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
2	2	-3	-1	3	1

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Jaw	Melee	1d20+2	1d4+STR+DEX Raw*

**The raw damage does not take armor into account*

WOLFORGE GUARD

Warrior : 4

HP : 20 (4) EP : 14

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
2	0(-2)	-2	3	-2	1

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Sword	Melee	D20+4	1d10+STR
Or			
Halberd	2m max	D20+1	1d8+4+STR

Armor	Require	Penalty	AP
Half Plate	Constitution > 2	-2 Dexterity	4

**Applies only to creatures with the Undead Edge*

STONE GOLEM

HP : 30 (2) EP : 20

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
6	0	-6	6	0	0

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Fist	Melee multi-target*	1d20	1d8+STR

**all targets within a 1m radius of him*

Stone golems are artificial magical creatures carved out of stone in the shape of large, impressive statues. Animated by magic, golems are very resistant creatures; they are generally used to protect places from an intrusion.

Edges : Tough+, Magical creature

Special moves : Palm Strike, Stunning Blow

ORIEL

Rogue & Druid : 4

HP : 24 (2) EP : 19

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
-2	3	2	0	2	1(-1)

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Fine Longbow	3 - 60m	1d20+4	1d10+DEX+PER
Dagger	Melee	1d20+4	1d8+DEX

Armor	Require	Penalty	AP
Studded Leather Armor	None	-1 Charisma	2

Special moves : Tactical Retreat, Thorn Trap, Magical Berries, Piercing Strike, Mark, Animal Form

ZICO

Warrior / Rogue : 4

HP : 26 (2) EP : 17

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
2	3	-1	0	1	1(-1)

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Fine Brawling Weapon	Melee	D20+4	3d4+STR+DEX

Armor	Require	Penalty	AP
Studded Leather Armor	None	-1 Charisma	2

Special moves: Tactical Retreat, Piercing Strike, Execution

WARRIOR (LVL 1)

Warrior : 2

HP : 17 (1) EP : 10

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
3	0	-2	2	-1	-2

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Basic Axe	Melee	1d20+2	1d6+1+STR

Armor	Require	Penalty	AP
Padded Armor	None	-	1

Special move : Fury

MAGE (LVL 1)

Mage : 2

HP : 12 EP : 10

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
-3	0	3	-3	1	2

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Wand	-	1d20+2	1d10+INT

Edge : Elemental Mastery

Special moves :
Elemental Spell Fire, Lightning and Ice

ROGUE (LVL 1)

Rogue : 2

HP : 13 1 EP : 10

STR	DEX	INT	CON	PER	CHA
-2	3	-1	-2	2	0

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Basic Dagger	Melee	1d20+2	1d6+DEX
Basic Dagger	Melee	1d20+2	1d6+DEX

Armor	Require	Penalty	AP
Padded Armor	None	-	1

Edge : Ambidexterity

Special move : Tactical Retreat