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IRON KINGDOMS

ESCAPE THE MIND SLAVERS



INTRODUCTION

Escape the Mind Slavers is set in the remote dwarven demesne of Rhul, one of the most ancient and insular of the Iron Kingdoms. The adventure begins in the outskirts of the frontier enclave of Farhollow, whose civic ministers have opened the city gates to outlanders for the first time in centuries. Although the Stone Lords' new edict to open the borders of Rhul in the wake of the Claiming is genuine, the characters soon learn that not all Rhulfolk are onboard with outsiders openly trading and settling in their backyard.

Against this backdrop of apprehension and mistrust, the characters find themselves embroiled at the center of an alarming series of disappearances fueled by a hive of malevolent cephalyx who have taken root underground. It's a race against the clock for the characters—first as they join the investigation in an attempt to uncover information about the victims, and then as they become victims themselves and must escape the hive. The characters' true mettle will be tested within the dark confines of these abandoned and long-forgotten tunnels. Will the heroes have what it takes to escape the mind slavers?

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Many thousands of years before the dwarven enclave of Farhollow was settled, the ancient site was home to the fabled City of Ash and Bronze. Unfortunately, its founder, Stone Lord Drinaal Halfaxe, had made many enemies during the Hundred House Rebellion, and one of her foes was keen on seeing Drinaal's Delve crumple into obscurity. Using forbidden rites, Drinaal's nemesis tainted the ore the city was famous for, transforming the city's miners into murderous shaft wights. Fearing the infection would spread beyond the city, Drinaal used powerful magic to collapse her own enclave, forever sealing the unhallowed mine beneath a mountain of dirt and rock.

The Stone Lord's gambit might have prevailed if not for the ill-fated directive of a cephalyx exulon to expand the domain of its subterranean hive. Weeks ago, the cephalyx inadvertently broke through into a lost district of Drinaal's Delve, releasing a shaft wight infestation into the hive. Although the undead threat has since been largely contained, the cephalyx have stepped up abductions in nearby Farhollow to replenish their diminished workforce.

RECENT EVENTS

Escape the Mind Slavers is set early in the spring month of Odul in the year 617 AR, five years after the grim events of the Claiming. The following timeline outlines notable recent events leading up to the opening chapter of the adventure.

- **617 AR, Dovern (1st month) 20:** Vetta Wroughthammer, itinerant gun-for-hire, arrives in Farhollow.
- **Dovern 9:** The cephalyx exulon Anaks orders the digging of new tunnels to expand the hive.
- **Dovern 13:** Cephalyx excavators break through to Drinaal's Delve, long infested with shaft wights.
- **Dovern 20:** Sartok, a cephalyx pariah known as "Smallbrain," offends Exulon Anaks and is imprisoned.
- **Uldern (2nd month) 12:** Exulon Anaks is found dead.
- **Uldern 16:** Cephalyx workers collapse the infested passageways, halting the shaft wight incursion.
- **Dolern (3rd month) 8:** Local ranger Murgun Ayer is found unconscious in the wilds outside of Farhollow, covered in blood and with no memory of what transpired.
- **Dolern 18:** Sinjun Chumley, an acolyte of an order of physicians, is abducted by the cephalyx.
- **Dolern 26:** Epinac Mij, a farrier at one of Farhollow's stables, is abducted by the cephalyx.
- **Ormud (4th month) 6:** Mavli Woldbraid, guild master of Shield Moot Zero, is abducted by the cephalyx. Raenna Coldwell, a well-known street artist who makes her living in Farhollow, witnesses the abduction.
- **Ormud 9:** Girtha Hardwick, a dwarven thug from Groddenguard, is abducted by the cephalyx.
- **Ormud 16:** Kelen Ironbid, an ogrun scout in service to Adept Thasin Jaigridar of the Sept of Kharg Drogun, is abducted by the cephalyx.
- **Ormud 20:** Cullynn d'Gilbert, a representative of the human delegation from Highcastle, is abducted by the cephalyx.
- **Ormud 21:** Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn discreetly orders an investigation into the vanishings.
- **Odul (5th Month) 1:** The gobber Lokmegazomog, an informant for Shield Moot Zero, is abducted by the cephalyx.
- **Odul 7:** The adventure begins.
- **Odul 8–14:** The annual Halfaxe Festival is scheduled to take place in Farhollow.



THE RHULIC CALENDAR

The modern calendar widely adopted by kingdoms across western Immoren was modeled on a calendar that originated in Rhul. The calendar consists of thirteen months, each of which is divided into four weeks of seven days each. The Rhulfolk name their months for the thirteen Great Fathers, creators of the dwarves.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Escape the Mind Slavers is designed for a party of four to six 1st-level characters. By the end of the adventure, the party should advance to 4th level. The adventure is divided into four chapters, and it is recommended that the characters gain a level at the end of each after the first.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins outside the walls of the dwarven enclave of Farhollow, whose soaring ramparts were chiseled from the bedrock of the Glass Peaks in antiquity by Stone Lord Drinaal Halfaxe herself.

Chapter 1, "Of Horns and Frost," begins as the characters approach the Rhulic enclave of Farhollow. Bedlam quickly ensues as the settlement is besieged by a throng of trolls seeking their next meal. Caught up in the tumult, the characters aid in the city's defense, thereby earning the respect of local factions. In the aftermath of the assault, the characters are conscripted to round up refugees and guide them safely inside the city walls.

Chapter 2, "Of Ash and Bronze," unfolds as the characters take in the sights and sounds of Farhollow. After an eve or three enjoying the raucous comforts of Rhulic hospitality, the characters receive an invitation to dine with the local clan lord. This meeting prompts the characters to investigate a series of mysterious disappearances that have plagued Farhollow in recent weeks. No sooner have the adventurers gathered their first clues than they are abducted and spirited way into the darkened tunnels beneath the ancient city.

Chapter 3, "Of Steel and Chains," takes place in the darkened depths of a cephalyx hive. Awakening in bondage, the characters must rally their fellow captives and lead a desperate escape from the hive of cephalyx mind slavers.

Chapter 4, "Of Fear and Freedom," concludes as the characters make a mad dash for the surface. Along the way, necessity will drive them to rummage through the scrap of a grotesque workshop filled with freakish technology, exploit a power vacuum among the leadership of the hive, and escape from their captors.

FIRST-TIME GAME MASTER?

Escape the Mind Slavers was designed to be easy to run for first-time GMs. Perhaps you've played WARMACHINE or HORDES and are running a roleplaying game for the first time. If so, don't worry: we'll guide you through the process step by step!

"Read Aloud text" that appears like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased to the players, typically at the start of an encounter or when the characters arrive at a location for the first time.

This adventure is set in the Iron Kingdoms setting. Additional material for this full-metal fantasy setting can be found in *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*.

Each creature in this adventure is detailed in the core monster book, the *Iron Kingdoms: Monsternomicon* sourcebook, the *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*, or appendix B. (Stat blocks for various NPCs are noted in parentheses as being in appendix C.) When a creature's name appears in bold type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in one of these resources. The Creatures table tells you where you can find creatures that do not appear in the core monster book.

CREATURES

Creature	Source
Argus, common	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Cephalyx agitator	Appendix B
Cephalyx cognifex	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Cephalyx drudge	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Cephalyx mindbender	Appendix B
Cephalyx slaver	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Cephalyx subduer	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Cephalyx warden	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Cephalyx worker	Appendix B
Cephalyx wrecker	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Draeven cultist	Appendix B
Dregg	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Duskwolf	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Farrow	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Gang underboss	Requiem
Mercenary veteran	Requiem
Murder crow	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Ogrun mercenary	Appendix B
Putrid devil rat	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Rhulic hollowman	Appendix B
Shaft wight	Appendix B
Skigg	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Swarm of buzzard beetles	<i>Monsternomicon</i>
Winter troll whelp	Appendix B



CHAPTER 1: OF HORNS AND FROST

In chapter 1, the characters arrive at the walls of Farhollow after an arduous overland trek and are immediately thrown into the action. Their ill-timed arrival at the dwarven enclave happens to coincide with a bloody assault by a throng of winter trolls. Thrust into a chaotic assault, the adventurers must help guide terrified revelers to safety while dodging cannon fire and gnashing teeth. When the troll threat is at last abated, the characters are beseeched by representatives of disparate factions to safely locate and return their missing colleagues. Tradition demands that the gates of Farhollow be sealed at midnight for the start of the annual Halfaxe Festival,

which means that the clock is ticking. Can the adventurers save the wayward associates in time?

When you are ready to begin the adventure, proceed to “The Gates of Farhollow” below.

MODIFYING, EXPANDING, AND ADDING ENCOUNTERS

The encounters in this chapter are designed for four to six 1st-level characters. Note that this chapter largely takes place in the wilderness outside of Farhollow. If you want to add a combat encounter or two, consider rolling on the Random Encounters Outside Farhollow table.

SETTING THE STAGE

This adventure assumes that the characters have already formed a party and arrived together at the city of Farhollow. All outlanders (as non-Rhulfolk are called by locals) must present themselves at the Dawn Gate before being permitted entry into the enclave. If the players haven't done so, now would be a good time to have them introduce their characters.

THE GATES OF FARHOLLOW

When your players are ready to begin, read the following text aloud:

After days of trekking through the remote hinterlands of northern Rhul, your destination at last comes into view. As you crest a low rise along an old trappers' trail, the evergreens fall away to reveal a great verdant dale stretching a mile or two before you. To your right, rugged foothills fill the whole of the northern vista, coalescing around a great pinnacle that reaches upward to pierce the clouds. In the valley at the base of the snow-covered peak, whiffs of hearth smoke rise from a walled settlement carved vertically into the mountain's base. Streaming in from a cascade just out of sight to your left, a great river flows through to the distant settlement before disappearing into a great forest filling the western skyline. Judging by the sun's position in the sky, you should be able to make the enclave by nightfall if you set off immediately.

Once the characters continue toward the settlement, read the following boxed text aloud:

With the sun threatening to disappear below the horizon behind you, you mount one last hillock and behold the dwarven enclave at twilight.

As the characters approach the field outside Farhollow, they spot a queue of travelers waiting their turn to pass into the enclave. A dwarven gate sentinel named Admon Darrow approaches the characters and inquires about their business. Read the following text aloud:

Holding a stout axe in one hand and resting the other on the butt of a repeating pistol, a sturdy male dwarf greets you in the Cygnaran tongue. "Welcome to Farhollow, outlanders. You're addressing Admon Darrow, sentinel of the Dawn Gate. State your names."

GATE SENTINEL ADMON DARROW

Admon informs the characters that they must wait in line with the others seeking entrance to the enclave. The gate sentinel is polite and even-tempered and will gladly answer questions about Farhollow and its environs while the characters wait their turn to enter the city.

If the characters challenge Admon or attempt to bully their way to the front of the queue, the dwarf blows a belt horn at his side, alerting five gate sentinels (treat as **mercenary veterans**) to rally at his side. Each sentinel is armed with a battle axe and a repeating pistol.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS OUTSIDE FARHOLLOW

d100	Encounter
01–20	6 farrow
21–30	6 bandits
31–50	3 wolves
51–60	2 swarms of buzzard beetles
61–80	1 black bear
81–90	1 murder crow
91–95	1 duskwolf
96–00	1 argus, common

ENCOUNTER 1: ASSAULT AT THE DAWN GATE

Winter trolls lead an unlikely assault on the gate at dusk. Still queued outside the town walls waiting for their turn to pass through the Dawn Gate, Rhulfolk and refugees alike are taken by surprise.

HORNS OF HOLGEN HAMMERFALL

Although it hasn't happened in at least a dozen years, Farhollow occasionally comes under attack from bands of mountain bogrin, human barbarians, and even trolls. The enclave's well-trained civil defense militia musters immediately to their assigned duty stations whenever the Hammerfall Horns are sounded three times in quick succession. A repeat of the same horn blast within a minute of the first will spur all civilians to seek refuge within the well-fortified Foundry district until the all-clear is sounded.

DEFENDING FORCES

With the trolls now within sight of the southern wall, a final long blast of the Hammerfall Horns signals the civil defense militia to brace and repel the assault. Each unit consists of five troopers. Two units form a squad, which is led by a commander. Because of the use of established signals and horn blasts to communicate orders, the defending forces are well coordinated.

FARHOLLOW GATE SENTINELS

Infantry Unit

Twelve gate sentinel units are deployed at the Dawn Gate. Each trooper wields a battle axe.

FARHOLLOW CANNONEERS

Ranged Unit

Four cannoner units stand at the ready. Two are deployed atop the city walls flanking the Dawn Gate, and one unit sits in each of the two watchtowers overlooking the bridge south of the enclave. Each unit crews two mounted cannons, and each trooper carries a carbine.

FARHOLLOW BEASTMASTERS

Cavalry Unit

Two elite cavalry units ride two-headed winter argus into combat, although the beasts' frost breath will have little effect against the winter trolls. The beastmaster troopers employ scatterguns with devastating accuracy at close range, finishing off whatever their mounts' fangs have savaged.

FARHOLLOW STEAMJACKS

Siege Unit

One steamjack unit is using Wroughthammer Rockrams at a quarry outside the walls, but it will redeploy to join the defense.

ATTACKING FORCES

Driven to assault the walls of Farhollow, nine winter trolls and a mutilated dire troll lumber onto the frozen field outside the Dawn Gate.

WINTER TROLLS

Infantry Unit

Three winter trolls throw themselves at the city walls with wild abandon, pummeling the granite ramparts with meaty, bloodstained blows of their mighty fists between bellows of freezing breath cold enough to root a dwarf in chains of ice.

Six winter trolls stalk the field, snatching at terrified outlanders thrown into a panic at the sight of the nine-foot-tall giants.

One dire winter troll missing both its arms hangs back beyond cannon range to guide the assault with its booming, gravelly commands.

SEQUENCE OF BATTLE

The troll assault is not intended to play out in a series of rounds like a standard tactical encounter. For one thing, the winter trolls are significantly more powerful than the characters. The intent of this sequence is to thrill the players with a heart-pounding, mass-combat warzone, not to enact a total party kill moments into the adventure.

Recount the sequence of the battle to the players, pausing after each stage to gauge the characters' reactions and ask what their next actions are. The troll assault is simply a shared storytelling exercise until the start of stage 6, when the characters are directly confronted by winter troll whelps and asked to roll initiative.

STAGE 1: CACOPHONY OF HORNS

The bleating of twin Hammerfall Horns from distant watchtowers are the first indication that something is amiss. Gate sentinels assigned to patrol the long queue call out to the confused outlanders (characters included!) and direct them to make haste for the city gate.

STAGE 2: CLAWS AND RENDED FLESH

A more urgent thrum from a Hammerfall Horn mounted near the Dawn Gate signals that the enemy has been spotted from the walls. A throng of winter trolls, spurred into a frenzy by a dire winter troll, stampedes from the wilderness and begins tearing into the mob of panicked outlanders in a flurry of slashing claws and wicked fangs.

STAGE 3: RAIN OF FIRE

Gate sentinels in the field desperately attempt to extricate outlanders from the melee as cannon fire rains down upon the trolls.

STAGE 4: UNLEASH THE WAR MACHINES

A unit of Wroughthammer Rockram steamjacks, fresh from working a quarry outside the walls of Farhollow, arrives at full steam to join the defense.

STAGE 5: BIG, NASTY, POINTY TEETH

As the defending infantry retreat to either side, a cavalry unit of beastmasters mounted on twin-headed argus rip into the invaders, severing limbs with wild abandon.

STAGE 6: DEGENERATE OFFSPRING

As severed troll limbs begin to regenerate, Vetta Wroughthammer joins the characters in fighting five winter troll whelps. Roll initiative and play out stage 6 as a standard tactical encounter (see below).

STAGE 7: CLEANUP

As the defenders slay the remaining trolls, Rhulic tactical arcanists enter the field and use fiery magic to put down the last remaining troll whelps.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER: DEGENERATE OFFSPRING

A winter troll whelp rushes the characters, pulling them into the melee. Read the following text aloud:

The cacophony of the troll assault rages all around you. In the middle of the bloody carnage, a troll's severed arm flops onto the ground nearby, hurled by the blast of a cannon. The hand clenches into a fist before your eyes, and the ragged stump begins to rapidly regenerate, sprouting a small, misshapen body attached to the oversized limb.

At the start of the second round, an additional four winter troll whelps sneak up on the characters. Each whelp has a full-grown body part—a massive jaw, an oversized leg, and so forth—which is the severed body part the whelp has grown from.

As the whelps slink into the conflict, Vetta Wroughthammer (see appendix C) leaps into battle to aid the characters. Read the following text aloud:

"Behind you!" shouts a commanding voice, cutting through the din of battle. Thanks to the warning, you spot four more troll abominations threatening your flank, each undergoing various stages of regeneration. A fierce dwarven gunfighter steps into view and unloads her twin pistols point-blank into the face of an encroaching whelp. "To arms, outlanders!" she cries.



VETTA WROUGHTHAMMER

The party's benefactor during the troll assault is Vetta Wroughthammer, a dual-wielding dwarven gunfighter with a thirst for adventure.

ROLEPLAYING VETTA WROUGHTHAMMER

Vetta is a skilled gunfighter whose keen marksmanship is more than a match for most foes. She is reluctant to speak about her past but will happily discuss current events with the characters. Vetta has grown restless with her lot as a local gun-for-hire and is not shy about her desire to join the characters on their adventures.

VETTA WROUGHTHAMMER IN COMBAT

Outfitted with an ammo bandolier and a leather gun brace carrying three well-maintained hammerlock pistols, Vetta is the quintessential Rhulic pistoleer. At the start of combat, she uses Quick Draw to pull two pistols on her foes. She does not hesitate to engage in close-quarters combat with her firearms and prefers to focus fire on a single target, ensuring that each foe is incapacitated before she moves on to the next.



VETTA'S BACKSTORY

Vetta hails from the Rhulic enclave of Ulgur, where her clan runs the Wroughthammer Silver and Iron Conglomerate. Never having had a knack for the family business, Vetta struck out on her own at a young age to explore western Immoren and enjoy the freedom of a life on the road.

AFTERMATH

As the din of battle subsides, the characters have a few moments to take stock of their surroundings. The desperate wails of the wounded ring out across the blood-soaked field, interrupted only by commanders barking orders as they search for fallen comrades.

TREASURE

The characters can try to surreptitiously loot the corpses after the assault by making a group DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check. If the check succeeds, the characters come away with a bounty of 50 sp. If it fails, gate sentinels forcibly escort the characters to the Dawn Gate and relieve them of their ill-gotten gains, resulting in a loss of 5 notoriety points. (For more information about notoriety points, see the "Notoriety" section in chapter 2.)

CURIOUS WOUNDS

Inspection of the largest winter troll reveals that the icy brute had its forearms surgically dismembered using a technique unknown to the Rhulfolk. Despite the lack of necrotic scarring at the site of the mutilation, the troll's regenerative healing could not restore the beast's severed appendages.

CEPHALYX SURGERY

In truth, this dire troll was the unwitting victim of a cephalyx cognifex, who employed its prosthetic blades with surgical precision. The cognifex then used its considerable psionic talents to command the troll chieftain to lead a doomed assault against the walls of Farhollow in order to distract the enclave from further cephalyx encroachments from below.

CHOICE AND CONSEQUENCE

In the aftermath of the troll assault, the characters are approached on the field by representatives of three factions seeking their aid in investigating the status of their associates. Time is of the essence, and only one group of waylaid associates can be rescued. Which faction will the characters aid in their time of need? This choice will have ripple effects throughout the rest of the party's stay in Farhollow.

In turns, each representative approaches the characters and offers a proposition to them. If the characters mention the other representatives, each group gives a critical description of its rivals. For example, the representative from the Iron Tribunal might describe the Sept of Kharg Drogun as a "pack of heretical cultists and arsonists to boot," while the Sept's representative might call Shield Moot Zero "crass thieves masquerading as shadow brokers."

ADVENTURING COMPANIES

Adventuring companies represent groups of characters bound together in a common purpose. A company provides a theme, unique benefits, and a loose framework for a group

of characters. For more information about adventuring companies, including the benefits of joining one and the quirks associated with them, see *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*.

IRON TRIBUNAL

Cloaked lawmakers and freedom fighters who want to keep Rhul open to outlanders

Company Type: Law Dogs

Prestige/Tier: 11/1

Headquarters: Hall of the Tribunal (Farhollow)

Rivals: Clan Gherke

Faction Quest: Edict of Unity

With the tacit backing of Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn, the Iron Tribunal has risen from a grassroots political movement to a well-outfitted mercenary company. Its coalition of ministers has long advocated for opening Rhul's borders to outlanders, and recent successes with the Freehold Initiative have emboldened the organization.

It's an open secret that Daggot aspires to restore his clan to the Moot of the Hundred Houses. He views the Iron Tribunal as a critical component of that endeavor and counts several high-ranking members among his closest advisors. The identity of these tribunes remains shrouded behind the facemasks and cloaks they wear during public engagements.

SEPT OF KHARG DROGUN

A society of scholars and archeologists who seek to unearth the ancient secrets of "the Land Beneath"

Company Type: Intrepid Investigators

Prestige/Tier: 11/1

Headquarters: Cenotaph of the Great Mothers (outside Farhollow)

Rivals: Church of the Great Fathers, Cult of Draeven

Faction Quest: Edict of Authority

Deemed a heretical sect by the Church of the Great Fathers, the Sept of Kharg Drogun encourages its followers to "search farther and dig deeper" in pursuit of the hallowed halls of the Land Beneath.

Originally founded in Ghord, the unorthodox faith has had to shift its headquarters numerous times over the centuries after overstaying its welcome in a particular location. Most recently, the sept was driven from Drotuhn in 601 AR following a disastrous conflagration that immolated a quarter of the city.

Today, the Sept of Kharg Drogun operates out of a hidden oubliette beneath the seldom-visited Cenotaph of the Great Mothers, which is located in the foothills outside Farhollow. The Sept is surreptitiously led by Mother Blanca, a gregarious apostate justiciar who runs the titular festhall that bears her name.

SHIELD MOOT ZERO

An underworld confederation of clan exiles and outcasts who trade in espionage, blackmail, and information

Company Type: Spy Ring

Prestige/Tier: 11/1

Headquarters: Bosley's Curio Shoppe (Farhollow)

Rivals: The Glaives (Farhollow city watch)

Faction Quest: Edict of Oaths

A secretive rogues' guild masquerading as a merchant company, Shield Moot Zero is centrally managed from its base of operations in Farhollow but has small cells in many enclaves across Rhul.

The guild's leader of a dozen years, a feisty ginger-haired dwarf named Mavli Woldbraid, vanished three weeks ago. In the intervening weeks, Mavli's lieutenants have struggled to keep the underworld network operational.

In Farhollow, the guild operates out of a hidden vault beneath Bosley's Curio Shoppe. In addition to his public persona as a curator of antiquities, Bosley serves as the guild's primary fence in the region.

ENCOUNTER 2A: EDICT OF UNITY

When the Iron Tribunal representative approaches the characters, read the following text aloud:

A hooded figure in a mask approaches you and raises a hand in greeting.

"Ho there! We of the Iron Tribunal witnessed your heroics during the troll assault and were quite impressed. Though you must be exhausted from recent travails, we beseech you to find the emissaries from Highcastle and escort them back to Farhollow. They last encamped up the river at Duskforge Keep, but we were expecting their arrival days ago and now fear the worst. Were you to aid us in this endeavor, we would be deeply indebted to you."

GM's Note: The rest of this encounter occurs only if the characters align with the Iron Tribunal.

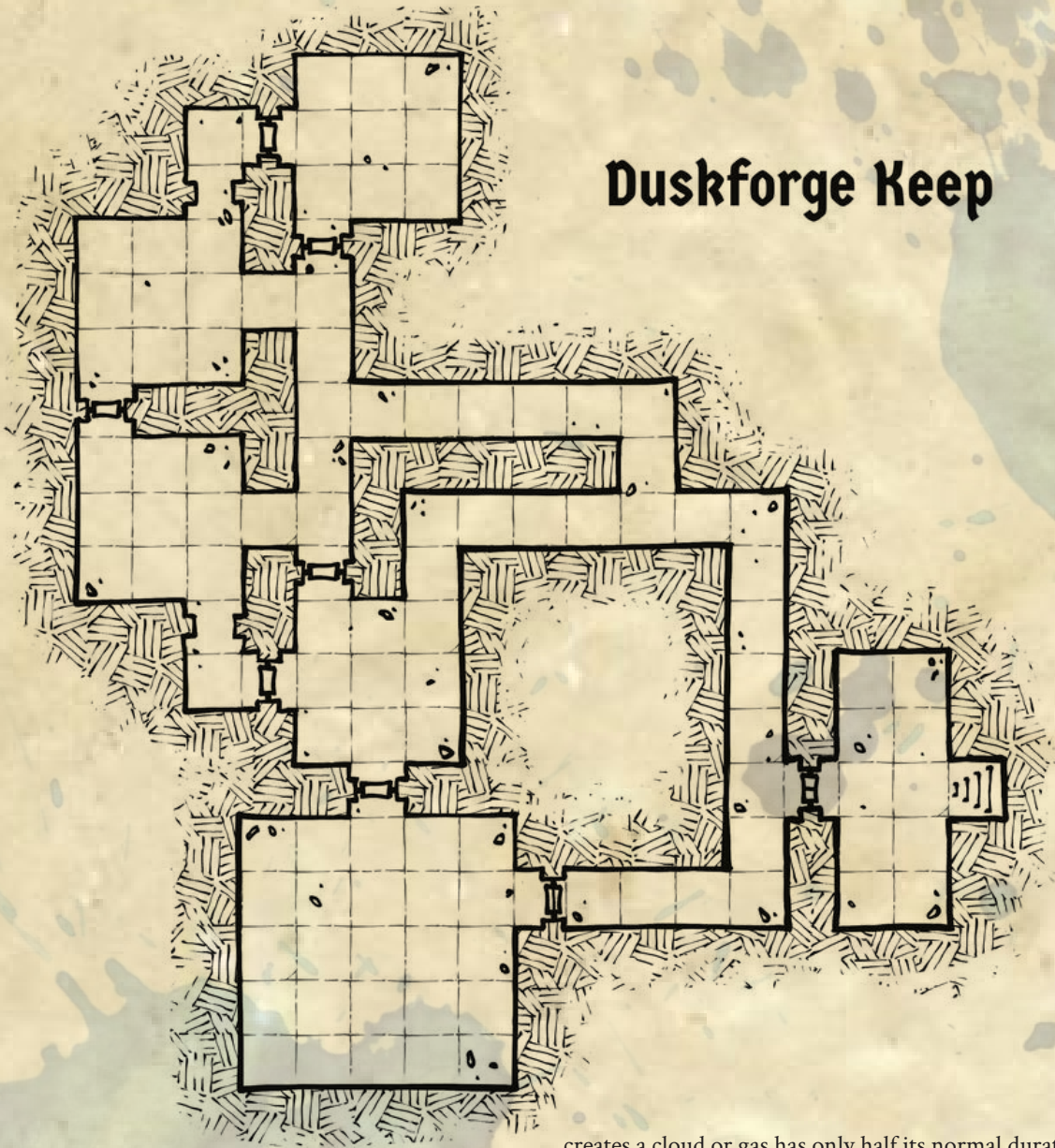
BACKSTORY

Recently, the Iron Tribunal has been in negotiations with Highcastle, a freehold established by human settlers in the wake of the Claiming. Historically, the occupants of Highcastle were barbarians: bogrin and humans who fled into Rhul ages past and lived by raiding Farhollow seasonally. Human refugees who were displaced during the Khadoran occupation of Merywyn emigrated to Rhul in search of a new beginning. These refugees entreated the inhabitants of Highcastle to grant them succor. The two peoples were fully integrated within a few years, and they reached out to Farhollow together to make amends.

In recent weeks, the Iron Tribunal sent word to Highcastle and invited the freehold to participate in Farhollow's annual Halfaxe Festival. The humans accepted, and their delegation was asked to quarter at Duskforge Keep until Clan Lord Daggot gave them his final blessing to enter the enclave.

GM's Note: Cullynn d'Gilbert, a representative of the human delegation from Highcastle, was abducted a fortnight past and now awaits his fate in the cephalyx hive below Farhollow (see chapter 3).

Duskforge Keep



DUSKFORGE KEEP

Carved high into the cliff walls of the great Dawn Gorge east of Farhollow, Duskforge Keep is accessible only by means of a rope elevator anchored to the precipice. The main keep consists of several buildings set into the rock face. Buttressed stone arches link these buildings with the structures above and below them.

AREA INFORMATION

Duskforge Keep has the following important features:

Dimensions and Terrain. Rooms and corridors are carved from the cliff face and reinforced with iron beams. Having been designed for Rhulic occupants, most chambers are only 6 feet tall from floor to ceiling.

Light. Deep cracks in the stone ceiling shed rays of diffuse moonlight into the chambers below.

Sounds and Smells. A strong breeze rushes from one chamber to the next, filling the keep with an ominous, thrumming whistle. Any magical effect or equipment that

creates a cloud or gas has only half its normal duration.

Doors. Most of the keep's wooden doors rotted away centuries ago. What few hinges remain are reinforced with steel filigree.

Floors. The sandstone blocks are weathered and rough but remain solid and sturdy enough to walk on.

Walls. Structurally sound and still standing, the thick stone walls are made from closely fitted blocks of green marble.

LORE

Any character who succeeds on a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check recalls that the Edict of Unity binds all Rhulfolk to unite against external threats and that Duskforge Keep was constructed as a bastion to prevent enemy forces from penetrating eastern Rhul via the Ayeres River. Dwarf and Rhulic ogrun characters have a +10 bonus on this check.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Entering the lower chambers of the keep reveals that the Highcastle delegation was waylaid by bandits. Two of the thugs were incapacitated during the struggle, leaving two ogrun mercenaries to challenge the party.

TREASURE

Thoroughly searching the abandoned keep reveals hidden caches containing a total of 15 gp.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters spare the life of the ogrun mercenaries and their injured companions, the mercenaries escort the characters to a buried cache containing an arcantrik scope (see *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*) with 12 charges.

Once freed, the Highcastle delegates reveal that one of their number, Cullyn d’Gilbert, went missing days before the bandits ambushed them. The delegates are eager to complete their mission and insist the characters escort them to Farhollow immediately. The Iron Tribunal gladly pays a reward of 50 gp for the delegation’s safe return.

ENCOUNTER 2B: EDICT OF AUTHORITY

When the sept’s representative approaches the characters, read the following text aloud:

A female dwarf dressed in clerical robes approaches you. Looking you up and down, she breaks into a wide and earnest smile. “Thank the Blessed Mothers for your valiant efforts, outlanders. Though you must be weary, we humbly request that you answer our prayer. We, the faithful of the Sept of Kharg Drogun, were expecting the return of our expedition days ago and now fear for their well-being. If you would travel to a monument not far from here and return our brothers and sisters to us, we would be eternally grateful.”

GM’s Note: The rest of this encounter occurs only if the characters align with the Sept of Kharg Drogun.

BACKSTORY

In their centuries-long quest to rediscover “the Lost Road of the Great Fathers,” a fabled road leading from the world of Caen to the spirit realm of Urcaen, the Sept of Kharg Drogun has been discreetly excavating sites with links to the Feud of Ages. Even though historical accounts date the founding of Farhollow to a little more than four centuries ago, the nearby cenotaph delved in honor of the immortal Claywives is far, far older.

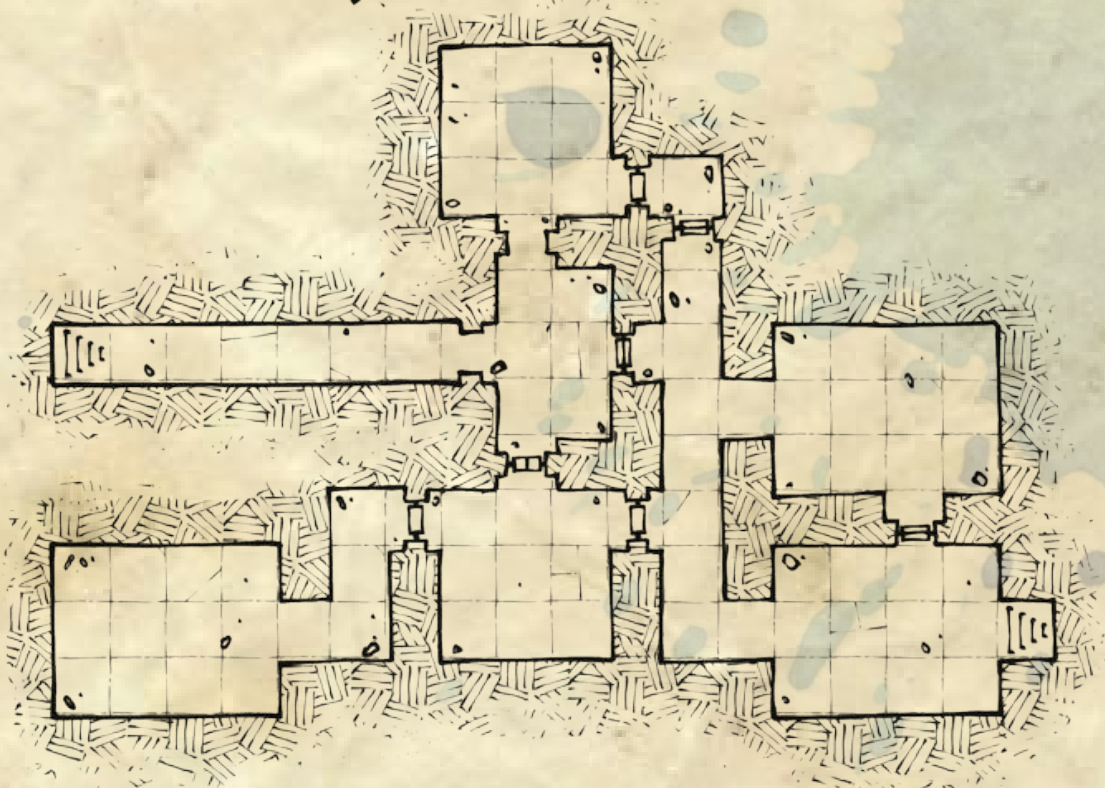
A fortnight ago, the sept sent an expedition to the sacred site with designs to excavate a newly unearthed chamber known only to the sept’s faithful. The expedition was expected back the day before last, and the sept’s elders now fear the worst.

GM’s Note: Kelen Ironbid, an ogrun scout in service to an adept named Thasin Jaigridar, was separated from her korune and abducted a fortnight past. The ogrun now awaits her fate in the cephalyx hive below Farhollow (see chapter 3).

CENOTAPH OF THE GREAT MOTHERS

The Cenotaph of the Great Mothers is a stout, fortified monument that sits atop a rocky tor overlooking a whitewater bend in the Ayeres River west of Farhollow. Constructed millennia past in honor of the immortal Claywives, the site is now crumbling, overgrown, neglected, and largely forgotten. Among the stone effigies still venerated at the hallowed place is that of Hyphatia Halfaxe, beloved wife of Stone Lord Drinaal Halfaxe. Few outside the Sept of Kharg Drogun know that the cenotaph was constructed over a labyrinthine oubliette purported to predate the civilization of Rhul itself.

Cenotaph of the Great Mother



AREA INFORMATION

The oubliette beneath the Cenotaph of the Great Mothers has the following important features:

Dimensions and Terrain. The meandering earthen tunnels are 5 feet wide and 6 feet tall.

Light. The tunnels are unlit and dark.

Sounds and Smells. The passageways are filled with the clanging of pickaxes crashing against hard rock. The air is stale and tinged with the musty odor of iron ocher.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Five Draeven cultists have seized the dig site, murdered the expedition leaders, and forced the remaining workers to complete the excavation. The cultists immediately attack any intruders. Once the characters defeat the cultists, they can easily find their way into the oubliette beneath the monument.

THE CULT OF DRAEVEN

The Sept of Kharg Drogun has undoubtedly ruffled a few feathers among the more traditional adherents of the Church of the Great Fathers, but none more so than the Cult of Draeven. The exact aims of this secretive group of Rhulfolk remain inscrutable, but the cult is suspected of harboring infernalists. The cultists have no love for the sept, a stance they have made abundantly clear through repeated acts of violence against the sept's adepts.

LORE

Any character who succeeds on a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check recalls that the Edict of Authority establishes the mandate of "clan before country" and grants authority to the Stone Lords above all others. In addition, the character recalls that the Cenotaph of the Great Mothers was constructed to highlight the revered Claywives and repudiate this patriarchal, backward-thinking edict. Dwarf and Rhulic ogrun characters have a +10 bonus on this check.

TREASURE

Discarded at the bottom of a 30-foot pit is a well-preserved dwarven skull wearing a pair of farsight goggles (see *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*). The item's capacitor still holds 10 charges. Thoroughly searching the oubliette reveals hidden caches containing a total of 15 gp.

DEVELOPMENT

Once liberated, the remaining members of the expedition immediately march for Farhollow. The Sept of Kharg Drogun gladly offers the characters recompense of 50 gp upon their return to the enclave.

ENCOUNTER 2C: EDICT OF OATHS

When Shield Moot Zero's representative approaches the characters, read the following text aloud:

You spy a male dwarf with a surly demeanor leaning against the city wall. He gestures in your direction before checking to see if anyone else has noticed.

"Psst! Hey, you outlanders! Over here. I represent a group of individuals that were mighty impressed with your showing out there. I called you over because one of our associates, Lok, has not checked in yet. He's a thickheaded gobber, but he's never late. You'd be doing us a big favor if you would venture out into the Grymkin Desolation and return our friend unharmed. Do this, and Shield Moot Zero owes you one. Interested?"

GM's Note: The rest of this encounter occurs only if the characters align with Shield Moot Zero.

BACKSTORY

Although Shield Moot Zero primarily traffics in information, it has branched out in recent years and begun acquiring rare antiquities and technology that might prove useful to its discerning clientele. To that aim, the organization's guild master recruited a middle-aged gobber named Lokmegazomog—"Lok" for short—to head the new operation. Innocuously playing the role of an itinerant junk peddler, Lok roams far and wide across the county of Hathorung in search of unique treasures. Recently, underworld chatter alerted Shield Moot Zero to a graveyard of old war machines left to rot in the Grymkin Desolation. Lok set out to investigate but never returned.

GM's Note: Lok was recently abducted by the cephalyx while salvaging a "misplaced" warjack left to rust in the Grymkin Desolation. The cantankerous gobber now awaits his fate in the cephalyx hive below Farhollow (see chapter 3).

THE GRYMKIN DESOLATION

Not five years past, before the devastation exacted by the Claiming, the vale known today as the Grymkin Desolation was a verdant place flush with countless flora and fauna. In the final weeks of the conflict, when a call to arms roused the warrior clans of Rhul to assemble and march on Henge Hold, all but one clan rallied to the Stone Lords' summons. Betraying the Edict of Oaths, Clan Kragguard did not rally at Ghord as requested. Instead, the deserters fled east, intent on seizing Farhollow while the remote enclave's finest warriors were away at the Rhulic capital. The traitors never made it. One by one, they were lured to their deaths by the Wicked Harvest, their soulless husks forced to wander the twilight vale now desecrated by their cowardice.

AREA INFORMATION

The Grymkin Desolation has the following important features:

Terrain. Few landmarks dot this forlorn moorland. For each hour the characters remain in the Grymkin Desolation, they must succeed on a group DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a failed save, the characters become lost for 1d6 hours, after which they can attempt the check again.

Weather and Light. Fog shrouds the vale, obscuring all sight—including darkvision—beyond 5 feet.

Sounds and Smells. The air rarely stirs here but occasionally reeks of rusted metal.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Mere minutes after the characters step foot within the Grymkin Desolation, two Rhulic hollowmen emerge from the fog to threaten them.

TREASURE

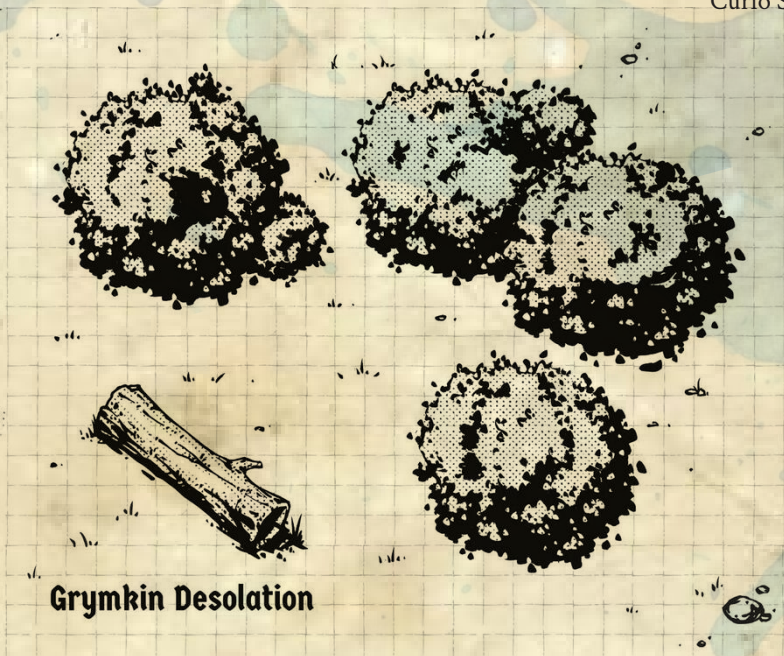
Each of the hollowmen has a coin purse containing 2d10 sp. The military rifles they wield dissolve into dust upon their passing, but Lok's signature chronometer can be found by any character who searches the creatures' remains. Vigorous inspection of the steamjack graveyard reveals rusted armor and weaponry bearing the crest of Clan Kragguard, which famously failed to join the coalition at Ghord. It also reveals a functional arcantrik convergence engine on the body of a fallen captain. The device is engraved with the runic formula for the *bulwark* spell.

LORE

Any character who succeeds on a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check recalls that the Edict of Oaths defines the importance of sworn promises and offers suggested punishments for oath breakers. In addition, the character recalls that Clan Kragguard renounced their sworn oaths during the Claiming and paid for their betrayal with a reckoning by the Wicked Harvest. Dwarf and Rhulic ogrun characters have a +10 bonus on this check.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters return Lok's chronometer to Shield Moot Zero, they earn the guild's favor and a bounty of 50 gp.



CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Chapter 1 concludes when the adventurers successfully complete one of the faction encounters (2A, 2B, or 2C).

AFTERMATH

When the characters return to Farhollow, read the following text aloud:

As Farhollow once again comes into view, a grinning Vetta claps her hands in anticipation.

"Well done! Let's find someplace to settle down tonight before this place gets sealed up for the Halfaxe Festival. It's an annual tradition in these parts, you know. As soon as the bells of the old Northern Bastion Church signal midnight, the gates are locked tight for the better part of a fortnight." The dwarf's grin becomes a wide smile as she begins to break into a trot. "Hurry, mates! My thirst is great, and the festival beckons!"

A WELCOME COMPANION

Vetta is happy to remain with the characters and guide them as they explore Farhollow. The astute mercenary is shrewd enough to know a meal ticket when she sees one. Sticking with the characters all but guarantees that Vetta will end up pocketing some serious coin in the coming days.

CONSEQUENCES

Since only one of three faction quests can be undertaken before the gates to Farhollow are sealed, the characters' decision will have consequences. No matter which group they choose, they will have earned the respect of a strong faction within the dwarven community, but this esteem will come at the cost of gaining the enmity of the other two.

Iron Tribunal Enmity. If the characters do not complete encounter 2A, they are not welcome in the Ayeres Whitewater Priakos.

Sept of Kharg Drogun Enmity. If the characters do not complete encounter 2B, they are not welcome in Mother Blanca's festhall.

Shield Moot Zero Enmity. If the characters do not complete encounter 2C, they are not welcome in Bosley's Curio Shoppe.



CHAPTER 2: OF ASH AND BRONZE

In chapter 2, the characters are whisked into an annual celebration that sees Farhollow locked down for two straight weeks. With their enthusiastic new companion leading the way, the characters are encouraged to enter contests of skill in hopes of boosting their public profile.

Their scheme bears fruit in no time. The adventurers are soon invited to dine with the ruling clan lord, who enlists their aid in investigating a series of disturbing disappearances. While the characters are hot on the trail of the vanished, their newfound companion joins the ranks of the missing. After uncovering a number of clues in the case, the characters are invited to join the clan lord overnight as his guest in Wendlmar Hall. Can they solve the mystery and locate their missing associate?

When you are ready to proceed, proceed to encounter 3, “Fortnight of Revelry.”

MODIFYING, EXPANDING, AND ADDING ENCOUNTERS

The encounters in this chapter are designed for four to six 1st-level characters. Note that this chapter focuses on urban adventure with a heavy emphasis on skill challenges and roleplaying encounters. If you want to add a combat encounter or two, consider rolling on the Random Encounters in Farhollow table.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN FARHOLLOW

d100	Encounter
01–20	5 giant rats
21–30	5 mastiffs
31–50	3 swarms of rats
51–60	3 putrid devil rats
61–80	1 thug
81–90	2 skiggs
91–95	1 dregg
96–00	1 gang underboss

TOURING FARHOLLOW

Smaller and far more isolated than most cities in Rhul, Farhollow stands apart from its more cosmopolitan sister cities. When describing the sights and sounds of Farhollow, emphasize the dizzying verticality of the city, which is built upon a sheer rock face at the base of a dormant volcano.

For details on the dwarven enclave, see appendix A.

GETTING SETTLED

Farhollow’s liege, Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn, is not holding court when the characters arrive in the enclave and remains unavailable to the characters until he invites them to dine with him later in the chapter.

TRAVEL WITHIN THE CITY

Outlanders are typically restricted to the High Meridian district until they can prove themselves trustworthy. Because the characters helped defend the city during the troll assault, they are awarded credentials permitting them to move about Farhollow freely upon their entry. These credentials are spot-checked whenever the characters pass between city districts. Should these credentials ever be misplaced, the characters will need to report to a sentinel gatehouse in order to verify their identities.

LODGING

Vetta is happy to suggest lodgings amenable to her companions. If the characters are short on funds, she suggests Gramble's Lodge; if they can afford to pay a bit more for lodgings, she suggests Bluegill Dormitory instead.

ENCOUNTER 3: FORTNIGHT OF REVELRY

This encounter begins with the characters congregating in their chosen lodging's common room for their morning meal. A smiling Vetta waves them over to a nearby table. Read the following text aloud:

"Good morning, friends! Come, come. Grab something to eat while I tell you about the coming festivities. It's important to partake in the Halfaxe Festival with moderation. Pace yourself, make new friends, win a few contests of skill, and you'll have the whole city eating out of the palm of your hand. Listen closely, and I'll tell you how it's done."

Between bites of her meal and generous swigs of hollowbite liquor, Vetta lays out information about the Halfaxe Festival and the various tests of skill that are part of it. She encourages the characters to try their hand at these contests, as doing so is sure to raise their esteem in the eyes of the locals. As Vetta notes, better standing means better jobs, better jobs mean better pay, and better pay means a happy Vetta.

THE HALFAXE FESTIVAL

Local tradition claims that the ancient site upon which Farhollow was later founded was built by an exiled clan of rabble-rousers banished from Ghord during the Hundred House Rebellion. It is said that the lost City of Ash and Bronze was established as an egalitarian utopia free from the heavy-handed edicts passed down by the Great Fathers. These legends served as the inspiration for the Halfaxe Festival. One fortnight every summer, the citizens of Farhollow strip away their inhibitions and gather to celebrate the legacy of Drinaal Halfaxe, exiled Stone Lord.

GM's Note: In accordance with longstanding tradition, the city gates are barred for the entirety of the festival, effectively forbidding anyone from entering or leaving the enclave for two weeks.

CONTESTS OF METTLE

Each year, the Halfaxe Festival hosts contests that test the mettle of Farhollow's citizens. Each contest is conducted in three rounds and requires three characters to participate as a team.

Different locations around the city host these contests, giving the characters the opportunity to visit different parts of Farhollow. Vetta is eager to act as a tour guide for the characters and insists on ending each night with a bawdy evening of drinking back at the characters' lodgings.

In addition to using the contests as a way to have the characters explore Farhollow, you can use this portion of the adventure to seed clues of events to come. For example, the characters might spot posters of missing persons plastered on walls throughout the city. Even though people disappear in every city, the high number of disappearances in and around Farhollow might raise a few eyebrows.

Scoring. Each round, the GM rolls 3d20 for the characters' opponents, adding +1 to each die in the first round, +2 in the second round, and so on. Each of the three participating characters rolls a single d20, adding the appropriate ability modifier to each die. The high, middle, and low scores on each side are matched up and compared, with 1 point awarded to the side with the highest score in each match. If the characters win a round, they move on to the next; otherwise, they are eliminated from the contest.

Each contest uses a different ability. If a character's skills or background would be appropriate for a contest, the GM can allow the player to add the character's proficiency bonus to the die roll.

TRIALS OF VIGOR

Conducted at the Field of Skalds on the morning of the first day of the festival, the Trials of Vigor test a team's strength.

Bending Bars. The first round requires a team to bend three bars of iron in tandem.

Barrel Toss. The second round requires a team to lob barrels of hollowbite the farthest distance.

GAUNTLET OF AGILITY

Held on the evening of the festival's first day, the Gauntlet of Agility tests a team's manual dexterity.

Clever Cutpurse. The first round requires a team to pickpocket three volunteers in a large crowd.

Rune Shot Arcade. The second round requires a team to shoot down the most targets in a complex mechanical shooting gallery.

STOMACH OF IRON

Those who believe they have the constitution of an ox can go to the riverfront to compete in the Stomach of Iron competition on the morning of the festival's second day.

Get Pissed. The first round of the contest requires a team to down massive mugs of beer before their opponents.

Fish Head Banquet. The second round of the contest requires a team to finish plates stacked high with brined fish heads taken from the Ayeres River.



FEATS OF INGENUITY

If the characters have more brains than brawn, they can demonstrate their team's intelligence by taking part in Feats of Ingenuity on the evening of the second day of the festival.

Stubborn Laborjack. The first round requires a team to marshal the notoriously stubborn laborjack "Mule's Arse" to deliver three barrels to their side, while the opposing team does the same. Whoever can out-shout their opponents and keep the jack moving the right way wins.

Box of Scraps. The second round of the contest requires a team to assemble a functioning piece of mechanika out of a random assortment of components before their opponents do.

GAMES OF CHANCE

Those who believe that wisdom and luck go hand in hand can prove it by taking part in this morning spectacle on the third day of the festival.

Knucklebones. The first round of the contest requires a team to win at a game similar to liar's dice.

Argus Two-Headed Ante. The second round of the contest requires the team to win at a game of cards.

GIFT OF GAB

Those who have the gift of gab and the charisma to prove it can participate in the final contest of the third day, which takes place at the city's amphitheater and is attended by a massive crowd of spectators.

Flying. The first round of the contest is a battle of insults in verse, with each team member taking a turn to call out one opponent.

Rhulic Dirge. The second round of the contest is a test of musical or oratory skill.

DEVELOPMENT

The characters earn 1 point of notoriety for each contest round they win. Encounter 4, "Dinner with the Clan Lord," begins only when the characters earn at least 20 notoriety points.

SCUTTLEBUTT

Because the Halfaxe Festival is a veritable breeding ground of gossip and rumors, the characters might pick up a few pieces of interesting information while they engage in the festivities.

The first four rumors in the list below may be shared freely, but the remaining scuttlebutt should be awarded only to deliberately inquisitive characters who succeed on a DC 15 ability check appropriate for the activity. For example, a character interrogating a drunken ruffian can make a Charisma (Intimidation) check to obtain information, a character looking for clues can make an Intelligence (Investigation) check to overhear something of interest, a character chatting up the locals can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather useful gossip, and so on.

Take the ability check with the highest score, look up the score on the Rumors in Farhollow table, and then consult the list of rumors below. If at least half the party succeeds on their checks, add 5 to the score.

RUMORS IN FARHOLLOW

Check Result

15–19 Roll 1d4 + 4 and consult the list of rumors below.

20–24 Roll 3d4 + 2 and consult the list of rumors below.

25–29 Roll 3d4 + 6 and consult the list of rumors below.

30+ Roll 3d4 + 8 and consult the list of rumors below.

1. The Halfaxe Festival was started centuries ago as a ritual to purge the enclave's inhabitants of their wickedness. (False.)
2. Because there are no roads connecting Farhollow to the rest of Rhul, Rhulfolk typically travel to and from the enclave via boat. (True.)
3. Farhollow's major trade exports include freshwater fish, liquor, furs, and watercraft. (All true.)
4. Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn took over the clan when his father died seventeen years ago. (True.)
5. Farhollow was settled by clanless outcasts during the Hundred House Rebellion. (True.)
6. Shield Moot Zero's hideout is under the basement of Mother Blanca's. (False. Shield Moot Zero operates out of a hidden vault beneath Bosley's Curio Shoppe.)
7. The humans of Highcastle are peaceable today but used to conduct seasonal raids on Farhollow prior to the Claiming. (True.)
8. Famed local ranger Murgun Ayer was recently found unconscious in the wilds covered in blood and without any memory of the preceding day's events. (True.)
9. Tegrin Puldor, proprietor of the Flaming Beard tavern, lost his legs in an ill-fated hunting accident about ten years ago. (True.)
10. The Iron Tribunal has cleared Duskforge Keep of bandits and is using the site to enact dark rituals. (The first part is true, but the second is false.)
11. An oubliette of labyrinthine tunnels and secret passages lies below the Cenotaph of the Great Mothers. (True.)
12. During the Claiming, Clan Kragguard was waylaid by the Wicked Harvest, giving rise to the Grymkin Desolation. (True.)
13. The Lohrun Sisters of the Northern Bastion have plans to drive the Sept of Kharg Drogun from Farhollow. (True.)
14. Residents of the Foundry have reported that a series of tremors have shaken the district over the last month. (True. These tremors were caused by the expansion of the cephalyx hive.)
15. Farhollow was built upon the ruins of an even older enclave: Drinaal's Delve, the fabled City of Ash and Bronze. (True.)
16. Street artist and known rabble-rouser Raenna Coldwell was spotted fleeing from the site of a vanishing. (True. Raenna witnessed the abduction of Mavli Woldbraid and fled the scene in terror.)
17. Legendary Claywife Drinaal Halfaxe is the only female dwarf known to hold the title of Stone Lord. (True.)
18. Bosley's Curio Shoppe is a front for Shield Moot Zero's underworld activities. (True.)
19. A cephalyx cognifex was spotted battling a frost drake in the foothills northeast of Farhollow. (True.)
20. Those who vanished were captured by cephalyx mind slavers and are being subjected to unnatural experimentation. (True, except for those who have already died in captivity.)

NOTORIETY

Before Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn will trust the characters with details of the vanishings, the characters must earn favorable standing among Farhollow's citizenry. In game terms, the characters' standing is tracked by notoriety points. As the characters' notoriety points increase, the distrust of the Rhulfolk diminishes. Unfortunately for the characters, the more notoriety points they have, the higher their risk of being abducted by the cephalyx mind slavers.

By the start of chapter 2, the characters have already acquired 8 notoriety points due to their actions in defense of the city during the troll assault and completing a faction quest. The Achieving Notoriety table lists several actions that can increase the characters' notoriety. (The characters can earn points multiple times for any action marked with an asterisk.) In addition, if the characters defeat any creatures in a random encounter, they gain notoriety points equal to the

creatures' total CR. As the GM, you should feel free to add or remove actions as you see fit.

ACHIEVING NOTORIETY

Action	Points
Aid the sick at hospice.	2
Calm skittish argus in a kennel.	2
Catch a pickpocket in the act.	2
Learn of Drinaal's Delve.	2
Perform at the Field of Skalds.	2
Stop a drunken brawl.	2
Uncover a clue in the investigations into the vanished.*	2
Win a round in a Halfaxe Festival contest.*	1

ENCOUNTER 4: DINNER WITH THE CLAN LORD

Up to this point in the adventure, the characters have been unable to gain an audience with Farhollow's clan lord even if they sought it, but that is about to change. Due to the characters' growing notoriety, Daggot's chief attendant has learned about their exploits and has advised his liege to break bread with the party over supper.

WENDYLMAR HALL

If the characters accept the dinner invitation, a well-dressed attendant escorts the party to Wendylmar Hall. Read the following text aloud:

The ancient citadel of Wendylmar Hall stands alone on a windswept prominence overlooking the enclave of Farhollow. Built atop a fifteen-foot-high granite berm, the entrance to the main keep is accessed by means of a granite ramp flanked by gas-fueled lamps. The towering main doors of the citadel stand closed against the chill. The well-preserved head of a dire troll looms above the entryway's facade.

AREA INFORMATION

Wendylmar Hall has the following important features:

Dimensions and Terrain. Rooms are immaculately appointed and well maintained. Each hallway is 10 feet wide and decorated with fine art from across western Immoren.

Light. The citadel is well lit, with brass lamps and sconces throughout.

Sounds and Smells. Sounds carry easily throughout the citadel and echo down its many corridors.

FOYER

The characters are asked to leave their implements of war in the attendant's care. If the characters refuse to disarm, grim-faced glaives object until Daggot arrives to diffuse the situation.

DINING HALL

The attendant escorts the honored guests through the citadel, finally arriving at the grand dining hall. Read the following text aloud:

This grand dining hall is as impressive as it is spacious, its thirty-foot-high vault supported by stone arches adorned with carvings of winged beasts. The northern end of the hall is slightly elevated, with six sconces illuminating the recessed space. An imposing granite statue fills the alcove. It is expertly hewn in the likeness of an armored dwarven warrior holding aloft a Rhulic high shield clenched in both hands.

GUEST QUARTERS

The citadel houses guest quarters for important dignitaries and trading partners. The guest wing is patrolled by loyal, well-drilled glaives at all hours.



CLAN LORD DAGGOT GELHURN

Lawful good male Rhulic dwarf fighter

Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn is an opportunist who has had difficulties living up to the expectations of his kinsmen. He assumed control of the clan when his father died seventeen years ago but has had difficulty making his own mark. Daggot's only heir—his daughter, Agami—is a competent warrior in her own right. The clan lord fears that rival clans will challenge his daughter's succession when the time comes, but he's confident that she has the grit and charisma to cement her claim.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Social interactions between player characters and nonplayer characters are a critical component in making a fantasy world feel alive. A well-roleplayed social encounter can dramatically shift the trajectory or tone of an entire campaign. As one of the three main pillars of the game, social encounters should be just as evocative and memorable as combat or exploration.

To help GMs run encounter 4, "Dinner with the Clan Lord," we've provided something akin to a social encounter stat block. Instead of listing the NPC's attacks and defenses, we provide social maneuvers and reactions. Much like a combat encounter, a social encounter plays out in a series of rounds. Instead of attacking with swords and spells, the characters are armed with insightful ploys and clever gambits. Winning such an encounter may result in political advantage, monetary reward, or a clue to the next encounter.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn has summoned the characters to dine with him in hopes of persuading the adventurers to aid the investigation into the recent disappearances, which he calls "the vanishings."

Encounter Type. This encounter is a negotiation.
Starting Attitude. Daggot's starting attitude is friendly.
Base DC. The base Difficulty Class for this encounter is 12.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter is played out over a series of rounds and continues until the characters collectively fail six ability checks or succeed at twelve. The initiative order for each round always begins with Daggot followed by the characters. The characters can choose the order in which they speak, or you can set the order by starting with the highest Charisma ability score and proceeding in descending order.

CHARACTERISTICS

Daggot has strengths and weaknesses that may either aid or hinder his negotiation with the characters.

Egotistical. Characters who compliment Daggot's leadership gain a +5 bonus to Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) for the rest of the encounter.

Inadequacy. Daggot has had difficulty living up to the heroic reputation of his late father, Clan Lord Mattick Gelhurn. Characters who mention the exploits of the clan lord's late father gain a +5 bonus to Charisma (Intimidation) checks for the rest of the encounter.

Opportunist. If the characters fail an Intimidation check against Daggot, the next two checks made against him have disadvantage.

DISCLOSURES

Daggot reveals the following information if the characters succeed on a Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Lords of Farhollow (DC 12). "The strongest martial clan in town has always led Farhollow, and a Gelhurn has ruled in Wendylmar Hall for the last seventy-five years."

Moot of the Hundred Houses (DC 18). "It's hardly a secret that I aspire to restore Clan Gelhurn to the Moot of the Hundred Houses, a feat no clan of Farhollow has achieved since the enclave's founding."

Iron Tribunal (DC 25). "Yes, I have dealings with the Iron Tribunal. Our interests are aligned, and I rely on their council. Even I don't know who leads the tribunes, but I'm fairly certain Thutmuk the Bricklayer is counted among their number."

NPC MANEUVERS

Daggot may employ the following conversational tactics once each during the encounter.

Clan Lord's Decree. "As sovereign of this enclave, I could demand your participation in this investigation." Daggot gains a +5 bonus to Intimidation checks for two rounds.

Heroic Sacrifice. "Gate Sentinel Admon Darrow gave his life so you could aid us in our time of need." Daggot gains a +5 bonus to defend against all Charisma-based ability checks for one round.

Money Talks. "Am I dealing with heroes or mercenaries?" Daggot tosses a platinum coin to each character, immediately winning his next ability check.

CHARACTER REACTIONS

Each round, have the characters make a group DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check. If they succeed, reveal to the players one of the following tactics for provoking a beneficial reaction during the negotiation.

Bureaucracy. The characters question why the clan lord delayed so long before formally opening an investigation. They gain a +5 bonus to Wisdom checks for two rounds.

Kazyzy Gambit. The characters claim to be agents from Korsk sent to Rhul to open trade negotiations. They gain a +5 bonus to Charisma (Deception) checks for two rounds.

TREASURE

If the characters agree to investigate the disappearances, Daggot will direct his attendant to cover their expenses at any inn in the city and to pay them a daily stipend for their trouble. The amount of the stipend is determined by the number of ability check successes the characters accumulated during their negotiations, as noted in the Stipends table.

STIPENDS

Successes	Daily Stipend
0-6	2 gp
7-10	5 gp
11-14	10 gp
15+	25 gp

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters agree to aid in the investigation, proceed to encounter 5, "The Vanishings."

Request Denied. If the characters refuse to aid in the investigation, Daggot informs nearby glaives to kindly escort the adventurers to the High Meridian district and confiscate their credentials, effectively restricting them to the outlander district for the remainder of their stay. The characters are abducted the next time they sleep in Farhollow, and chapter 3 begins.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE VANISHINGS

As the evening's negotiations conclude, Daggot takes the characters aside. Read the following text aloud:

"These vanishings are quite worrisome. The festival has been a welcome distraction for Farhollow, but I demand answers. The sentinels and glaives have been investigating for weeks, but all for naught. Bungling fools, the lot of them! Uncover what's behind these disappearances, and I will pay you handsomely."

THE INVESTIGATION

With the characters signed on to the investigation, they are given even greater freedom of movement throughout the enclave. Daggot even offers the characters an escort of two glaives if they so desire. Despite the clan lord's impatience, however, this isn't a case that can be solved in a matter of hours.

MISSING PERSONS

To aid in the investigation, Daggot has provided the characters with a dossier of missing persons compiled by the glaives. If the characters ask for information around town, they can uncover interesting facts about each victim by succeeding on a Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check against the indicated DC.

Sinjun Chumley. Male human. Acolyte of the Brotherhood of the Bloody Shroud, an order of physicians. Missing for 46 days. Last seen having his robes hemmed at Abasha's Fine Clothiers. Gossip (DC 20): Sinjun's robes are always caked in mud that smells of iron ocher.

Epinac Mij. Male dwarf. Farrier at Redfire Stables. Missing for 38 days. Last seen at the argus kennel. Gossip (DC 15): Epinac has an uncanny ability to control the argus. Some people suggest he possesses the gift of a warlock, like the notorious dwarf Brun Cragback.

Mavli Woldbraid. Female dwarf. Jeweler at Bosley's Curio Shoppe. Missing for 30 days. Last seen strolling the Vastmark Marina at dusk. Gossip (DC 25): Mavli is one of the masked tribunes of the Iron Tribunal.

Girtha Hardwick. Female dwarf. Mercenary from Groddenguard. Missing for 27 days. Last seen boarding a ferry upriver. Gossip (DC 25): Girtha is an ex-convict on the run from her former gang.

Kelen Ironbid. Female ogrun. Scout in service to the Sept of Kharg Drogun. Missing for 20 days. Last seen at the Cenotaph of the Great Mothers. Gossip (DC 15): Kelen is bound to her korune, the adept Thasin Jaigridar.

Cullyn d'Gilbert. Male human. Representative of the delegation from the Highcastle freehold. Missing for 16 days. Last seen quartering at Duskforge Keep. Gossip (DC 18): Cullyn is a nobleman from a prominent house in Merywyn.

Lokmegazomog. Male goblin. Traveling junk dealer. Missing for 8 days. Last seen exiting the Dusk Gate and heading west. Gossip (DC 25): Lok is secretly an informant for Shield Moot Zero.

WHERE'S VETTA?

Three days after the characters begin investigating the disappearances, they wake up to discover that Vetta has joined the ranks of the missing. The spirited gunfighter was last seen chatting up some visiting Iosans at the Flaming Beard tavern.

CLUES

With a grim roll call of everyone who's gone missing, it's now time for the party to search every nook and cranny of the enclave for clues. If the characters succeed at a difficult group Intelligence (Investigation) check, they discover an important clue. The characters can uncover the clues in the order presented below and can discover one clue for each 24 hours of investigation.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

As with most investigations, a lot of time will be spent tracking down leads that don't pan out. The following items, however, can be tied directly to the vanishings.

Cracked Respirator (DC 20). A couple of months back,

Murgun Ayer was found unconscious outside of Farhollow covered in another creature's blood and with no memory of what had transpired. Curiously, he was clutching a damaged respirator of unknown artifice.

Sawed-Off Hammerlock (DC 22). One of Vetta's signature hammerlock pistols was found in the privy at the Flaming Beard tavern following her disappearance. The steel barrel of the pistol's steel barrel was sawed clean through, as if cut by a circular saw.

Wrecking Ball (DC 25). An angler trawling the Ayeres for bluegill crawfish hauled up one of her nets to find and found a dense iron sphere and heavy chain welded to a prosthetic gauntlet.

GRAFFITI

Curious drawings can be found on walls and other surfaces throughout Farhollow. Embedded within the street art are warnings written in Rhulic runes. Unknown to most, the graffiti is the work of Raenna Coldwell.

Heroes Fall (DC 18). In the courtyard in front of the Hollowbite Distillery in Five Gates stands a monument to one of Farhollow's favorite daughters. Carved from emerald-veined marble, the looming statue depicts Garline Gherke, one of the vaunted heroes of the Battle of Henge Hold. A recent addition to the warcaster's chiseled armor is graffiti depicting a pickaxe lodged in the skull of a shaft wight, accompanied with runes that translate to "As above, so below."

PERSONS OF INTEREST

Eyewitness accounts of the vanishings are hard to come by. Three persons of interest will reveal their story to the characters, but only after being offered a significant bribe of at least 25 gp.

MURGUN AYER

Lawful neutral male Rhulic dwarf ranger

A taciturn soul who never uses two words when one will do, Murgun is never without his belt flask of hollowbite. Muscular and fit for a venerable dwarf of his advanced years, the ranger is at home both on the river and out among the nearby mountains and tundra.

If the characters question Murgun, read the following text aloud:

"I was tracking a Raevhan buffalo in the lowlands east of Harrow Lake when I heard what sounded like a circular saw spinning up behind me. I turned around to confront my assailant, but before I could pull my durned axe, that slack-jawed buffalo jumped us both. Next thing I know, Epinac Mij is drowning me with swill, trying to rouse me. Where is that crazy-eyed argus whisperer, anyhow?"

RAENNA COLDWELL

Chaotic good female Rhulic dwarf bard

A free-spirited artist and skald, Raenna Coldwell is something of an oddity among Rhulfolk. She alternates between bouts of melancholy and mania, although she doesn't know why. The bard seldom travels without her paints and brushes and is ready to apply her art to literally any canvas.

when inspiration strikes her.

If the characters question Raenna, read the following text aloud:

"I was tagging that new monument in Five Gates when Madam Mavli caught me in the act. I didn't want no trouble from Shield Moot Zero, so I began fumbling with my coin purse. Before I could pull a single coin, the sewer cover near the distillery slid open, and three lurking horrors emerged. They dragged old Woldbraid screaming into the darkness from whence they came. Honest!"

TEGRIN PULDOR

Lawful neutral male Rhulic dwarf fighter

Tegrin Puldor is the proprietor of the Flaming Beard, a well-regarded pub known for serving hollowbite and a wide variety of imported ales. An amiable fellow who lost his legs in an ill-fated hunting accident a decade past, he moves about Farhollow in a wheeled contraption of his own invention, which he calls "the Iron Chariot."

If the characters question Tegrin, read the following text aloud:

"Aye, I served Ms. Wroughthammer on the night in question. Entertaining some outlanders with tall tales and trick shots, she was. Didn't know anything was amiss until patrons started complaining about the privy. Something had buried up into the jakes from below. I found one of Vetta's pistols discarded in the filth, its barrel cut clean through. Great Fathers below! I hope the lass is okay."

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Chapter 2 concludes shortly after the adventurers discover at least three clues in the investigation and achieve at least 30 notoriety points.

AFTERMATH

Noting their burgeoning influence in the enclave, Daggot invites the characters to relax overnight at Wendylmar Hall and take in the fine amenities. If they are lodging elsewhere in the city, he offers the guest chambers to them for the remainder of their stay.

When the characters report their findings to the clan lord, read the following text aloud:

"You've turned up some promising leads. As the festival draws to a close, I am optimistic that we can draw this investigation to a close as well and finally put these vanishings behind us. Please, everyone: eat, drink, and rest your brains. Tomorrow you set out anew, and with the Great Fathers' blessings, I hope you can bring this unpleasantness to an end."

Unfortunately for the characters, their rising notoriety in Farhollow has also attracted the attention of the cephalyx mind slavers. After the characters have enjoyed a good night's rest at Wendylmar Hall and leveled up, read the following text aloud:

You awake with a pounding migraine, your hair and clothes thick with caked-on blood and bile. Everything aches, and it takes a moment to clear your eyes. A faint glow from above reveals your companions are nearby, each unconscious and in rough shape. As darkness descends upon you once more, you imagine the sound of distant voices, all crying out for help. One voice in particular stands out among them: that of your missing companion, Vetta Wroughthammer.

LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

If you're using the milestone system instead of experience points to track advancement, the characters advance from 1st to 2nd level when they complete the chapter.



CHAPTER 3: OF STEEL AND CHAINS

In chapter 3, the party finds themselves captives of the unknowable cephalyx, a nearly alien offshoot of the human race who place no value whatsoever on the lives of other beings. These psychic humanoids live in subterranean hives throughout Immoren, and their lairs are complex colonies built by means of strange technologies and psionic powers. Few have witnessed these mind slavers and lived to tell the tale, and fewer still believe them to be more than mere myth.

THE HIVE

The cephalyx hive outside Farhollow is a multilayered underground compound that reflects their society's caste structure. The colony is separated into zones. The leadership caste dwells in the uppermost zone, known as the hive brain.

Other zones include the Mechanifex's workshop, where cephalomek is designed and engineered; the cerebral athenaeum, a library of brains maintained by the lower-caste preservers; the breeding complex and crèche, where reproduction and raising of the young occurs under clinical conditions; the low cephalomek chambers, where experiments are conducted on the unfortunate prisoners of the cephalyx; the captive cells, where prisoners are kept until needed; and the corpse larder and sludge processing area, where the cephalyx use unspeakable methods to generate their "food."

The characters begin this chapter in the captive cells, a temporary holding center for prisoners who are intended to be studied or converted into drudges. The zone's smooth walls consist of a grey-blue stone-like material, and the floors in many areas are reinforced with steel gratings.

Each room that is not a cell contains one or more hidden levers that can be used to sound an alarm that can be heard throughout the zone, alerting the guards to dangers posed by the captives.

GENERAL FEATURES

The cephalyx hive has the following important features:

Ceilings. Passages and chambers are 20 feet high unless otherwise indicated.

Doors. All doors are made of steel with concealed hinges and built-in locks. They are unlocked unless otherwise indicated. The cephalyx use telekinesis to operate the locks and therefore do not carry keys. A character using thieves' tools can unlock a locked door with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check unless otherwise stated. Alternatively, a character can break open a locked door with a successful DC 20 Strength check, although doing so produces a great deal of noise that might draw unwanted attention.

Light. Most areas are brightly lit by concealed alchemical lighting structures.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE HIVE	
d100	Encounter
01–30	10 giant rats
31–50	5 swarms of rats
51–70	2 cephalyx workers
71–90	2 cephalyx drudges
91–00	2 shaft wights

MODIFYING, EXPANDING, AND ADDING ENCOUNTERS

The encounters in this chapter are designed for four to six 2nd-level characters. If the party seems to be making their way through the hive too easily, feel free to either increase the number of guards or roll on the Random Encounters in the Lower Levels of the Hive table.

SLUDGE PIPES

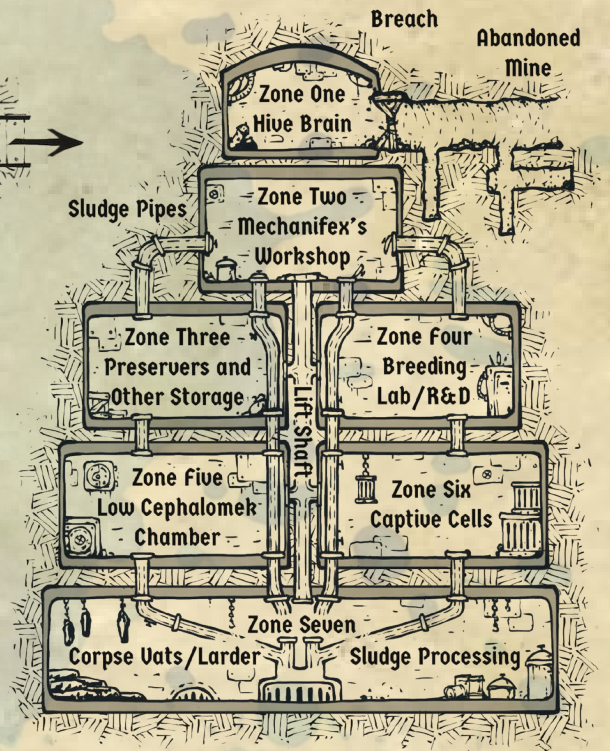
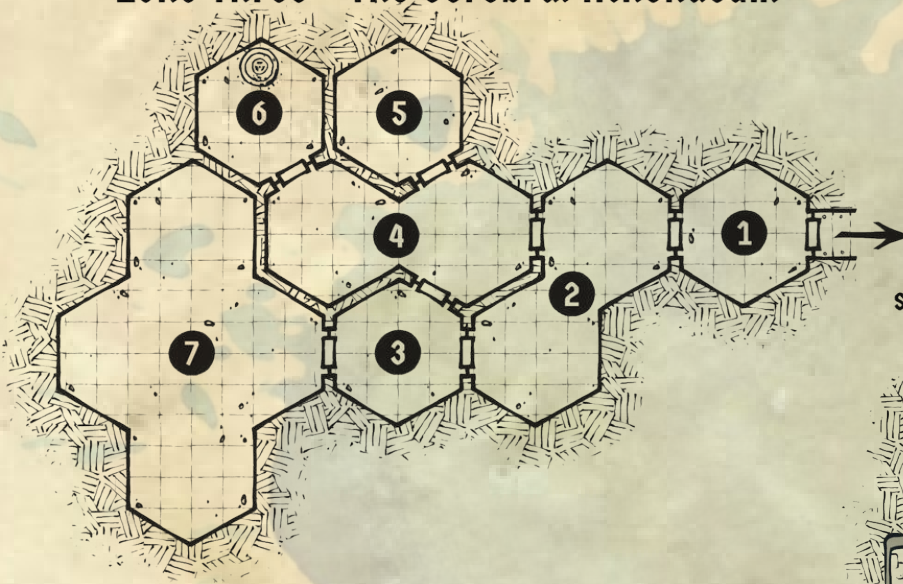
Certain areas throughout the hive contain waste ports—metal drains that stick out of the floor and are used to eliminate waste. Most of these are only about a foot in diameter, but a few are large enough for a Small or Medium creature to fit through. Waste ports are unlocked unless otherwise noted. A character using thieves' tools can unlock a locked waste port with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check. Alternatively, a character can break open a locked waste port with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check, although doing so produces a great deal of noise that might draw unwanted attention.

The pipes smell terrible, and any character that enters one must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour after exiting the pipe. Characters who attempt to climb down the pipe will find themselves in a complex maze of tubes. Roll on the Wandering the Sludge Pipes table to find out what happens to them.

HIVE LAYOUT

The hive is structured vertically, and the characters will start in the center of it. Because the characters can choose to go up or down once they get to the lift, the scenarios may play out in a different order than the one provided below.

Zone Three - The Cerebral Athenaeum



Zone Five - Cephalomek Chambers



Zone Six - Captive Cells



WANDERING THE SLUDGE PIPES

2d6 Results of Wandering

- 2-3 The characters get stuck in a dead end filled with sludge and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw to get unstuck. Any character who can't find a way to breathe can survive for up to 1 minute, after which the character begins to suffocate.
- 4-6 The characters get turned around and end up where they started.
- 7-8 The characters find a lateral tunnel that carries them to area 6 of the low cephalomek chambers.
- 9-12 The characters find their way to the sludge pit in the sludge processing facility (see the "Sludge Processing" section).

IA. GUARD TOWER

This area comprises three conjoining hexagonal shapes. In the center stands an enclosed platform 10 feet above the floor. The platform has glass windows through which cephalyx guards can monitor all cells and cell entrances using a cephalomek device that acts as the *scrying* spell but can only scry the contents of the containment cells. A successful DC 20 Wisdom saving throw prevents a creature from being observed.

There will always be at least one **cephalyx worker** and one **cephalyx drudge** here at any time. At any sign of trouble, the cephalyx can call one more drudge from area 1B as well.

IB. INACTIVITY CHAMBER

This area contains a vertical cylinder of cephalomek design known as an inactivity chamber. The chamber's padded interior is large enough to comfortably house one Medium or smaller creature. A humanoid creature that spends 1 hour inside the chamber while it is activated gains the benefits of a long rest. Each creature can benefit from this effect only once in a 24-hour period. Activating the chamber for the first time requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

A **cephalyx drudge** stands beside the chamber, awaiting orders. The drudge does not attack unless it is attacked or is directed by a cephalyx.

CAPTIVES OF THE CEPHALYX

The party awakens in a dismal cell (area 12 on the map). Read the following text aloud:

Dim blue light from an unseen source illuminates this six-sided chamber. The walls are made of cold, smooth stone. The grated metal floor reeks of dried blood and bodily waste. Every surface of the cell is covered in a sticky film of excrement mixed with other unknown substances. You hear a faint thrum beyond the walls, as if some industrious machines are continuously working at some unknowable purpose. Occasional screams and cries for help echo in the distance before they are suddenly silenced. This feels less like a prison and more like an abattoir.



1C. STORAGE AREA

Cabinets and work tables line the southern portion of this area. A quick search of them reveals enough items to create a set of tinker's tools and a healer's kit.

2. HALL OF HORROR

Both doors to this area are locked. The area is guarded by a **cephalyx worker** and a **cephalyx drudge**. The NPCs sound the alarm if they spot any prisoners outside of their cells and will fight to prevent any prisoners from escaping. The worker allows the drudge to do the actual fighting if possible and will flee to get reinforcements at the first opportunity.

3. CONCOURSE OF CRUELTY

A locked door at the west end of this area opens to a hallway leading to the lift and the low cephalomek chambers (proceed to "The Low Cephalomek Chambers").

The southern chamber contains a locked waste port wide enough for a Small creature to fit through. Moans can be heard from the cell in area 15.

4. PROCESSING

The door leading to this area is locked. A **cephalyx worker** waits here at all times to manage comings and goings into and out of the cells. Scattered throughout the room are records of all acquisitions and documentation regarding which slaves are to be converted into drudges or monstrosities and which are to be eliminated and dropped into the sludge pipes for refining.

Thought Cage. A roughly egg-shaped metallic object, approximately two feet long, sits on a steel table. It has the distinct look of cephalomek technology. One side features markings and latches but no discernible lock. A cephalyx can open the cage psionically; physically opening the cage requires a successful DC 20 Strength check to pry it open or a successful DC 15 Intelligence check using tinker's tools.

The cage contains the preserved remains of a humanoid brain. This strange item keeps the brain alive and is used to project records directly into the still-living brain; when the organ can no longer any more information, it is sent to the preservers for archiving. This particular brain contains records of every being to enter the cells.

5. STAIRWELL

Stairs here lead up to the entrance of the breeding lab and crèche (see "The Breeding Lab and Crèche").

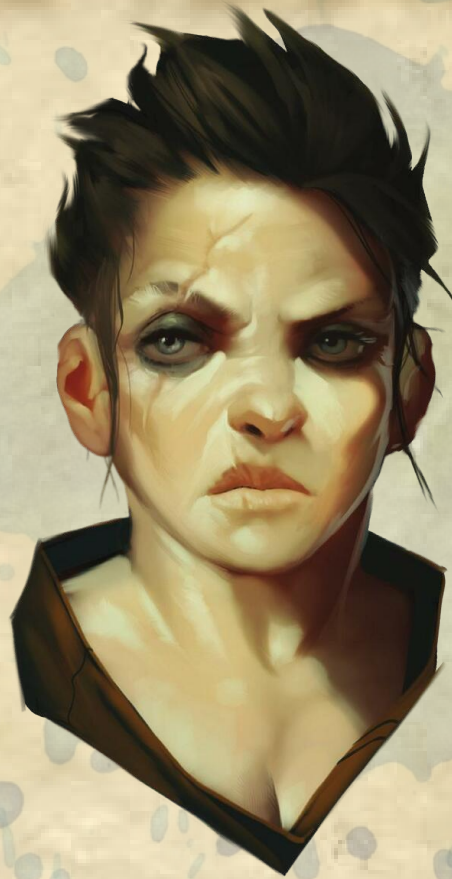
6. DECONTAMINATION

Prisoners are brought to this room to be stripped of their possessions, hosed down with alchemical decontaminants, and searched. This process is conducted once when new prisoners arrive but is not conducted again after the prisoners are locked in their cells. This area also contains a locked waste port wide enough for a Small creature to fit through.

7. CORRIDOR OF CONSTERNATION

The cell attached to this room (area 14) is the source of at least some of the screaming the characters heard from their cell. The cell door is battered and covered with slash marks but seems to be holding strong. Occasional animalistic howls come from within the cell.

8. ANTECHAMBER OF ANXIETY



The door to this room is locked. Another cell lies to the south.

9. GIRTHA HARDWICK

Like all the prisoner cells in this area, this hexagonal room is 20 feet wide at its narrowest point and 30 feet at its widest. This cell holds a young female Rhulic dwarf named Girtha Hardwick. She is a **thug** from Groddenguard whose notoriety was just starting to get her some big scores when a member of her gang snitched on her. She took a ferry along the river to Farhollow with plans to lay low for a while but was snagged by cephalyx slavers while camping in the mountains. She awoke a few days ago to find herself a prisoner here.

Girtha is a liar and a cheat, but she knows she's in a place worse than the Dungeon Tower of Lakeforge and will side with anyone who can get her out of this jam.

10. LOKMEGAZOMOG

This cell contains Lokmegazomog, or Lok, a middle-aged gobber **commoner**. He made his living as a traveling junker before finding himself in his current situation. Lok is honest but sometimes forgets that other beings don't take kindly to "sharing" their belongings. He has somehow managed to find a small piece of metal and sharpen it into an effective blade that he keeps hidden in his cell. (Treat the blade as a dagger.)

11. VETTA WROUGHTHAMMER

This cell holds the party's former benefactor, Vetta Wroughthammer. She has been beaten and bruised by the slavers but is still strong and willing to fight.

12. THE CHARACTERS' CELL

There is a locked door on the northwest wall of this cell. Picking the lock draws the attention of the guards in area 1A unless the character who picked the lock makes a successful Dexterity (Stealth) check against the guards' passive Wisdom (Perception) score.

The steel gratings on the floor can be lifted or damaged with a successful DC 25 Strength check. Lifting or damaging the gratings reveals a floor beneath them. This exposed floor is slightly concave, and a smaller grating at its center funnels liquid waste away through the sludge pipe system to the lowest level of the hive for processing into sludge. The pipe is about a foot in diameter.

13. SARTOK ("SMALLBRAIN")

This cell contains a small humanoid in cephalyx clothing. This is Sartok, derided by other cephalyx as "Smallbrain." Their face is masked like a cephalyx, but they lack the telltale prosthetic blades. If approached, the cephalyx cowers away from the characters and takes great care not to make any threatening gestures.

If the characters attempt to communicate with Sartok, the cephalyx introduces themselves in a hoarse and cautious voice produced by a grating prosthetic voice box. Sartok is an outcast among the cephalyx for their lack of telepathic ability. Treat Sartok as a **cephalyx worker** with none of the special traits or attack options except for the ability to cast *mage hand*.

If pressed, Sartok explains that they were the lowest-level worker in the hive and were given the task of unclogging the sludge pipes and processing corpses into "food." They were imprisoned for a minor offense that offended Exulon Anaks, who had them thrown in a cell.

Sartok is not unintelligent but suffers from very low self-esteem because of their "disability." Sartok is very much aware of what fate awaits them and the characters if they do not escape but finds their situation to be utterly hopeless.

If the characters convince Sartok to join them in their escape, the cephalyx is able to lead them to the lift but has very little knowledge of the hive's higher levels.

14. DREGG

This cell contains a wounded **dregg**. Its forearm blade has been removed, leaving only a bloody stump. It has been trapped for several days and is currently clawing at its own flesh and screaming in ecstasy. If the dregg notices the characters, it will immediately attack them with its claws and bite.



15. SHAFT WIGHTS

Two **shaft wights** are being held captive here with the intent to study them and determine the most effective way to kill their kind, as they lack the thinking minds of living creatures and are thus invulnerable to mental attacks. The shaft wights invaded the hive when Exulon Anaks ordered new tunnels be dug to expand the hive brain.

The shaft wights attack the characters on sight.



16. CULLYN D’GILBERT

A thin, fair-skinned human male named Cullynn d’Gilbert is here. A **noble** from an old and once-wealthy family from Merywyn, Cullynn has travelled throughout Rhul in search of investors in his father’s business. His funds had already run low by the time he arrived in Farhollow. Feeling like a failure, he spent the last of his coin in a dwarven tavern trying to drown his sorrows. The next thing he remembered was waking up here.

17. CORPSE

A bloated human corpse has been rotting in this cell for a few days, and the stench of death is stronger in this cell than in any of the others. The age and gender of the deceased are not readily apparent, but a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the corpse is that of a middle-aged male.

18. KELEN IRONBID

A female ogrun named Kelen Ironbid (see appendix C) sits here. A native of the Glass Peaks, Kelen was captured while exploring a cavern with her korune, a dwarf named Thasin Jaigridar. Thasin fell down a crevasse during the struggle with the cephalyx, and Kelen was subdued. She blames herself for allowing her korune to be harmed but is holding out hope that she may be reunited with him.

Kelen is ashamed to admit that she is frightened of the cephalyx but is willing to join the characters in their escape. Although currently unarmed, she will take up weapons at the first opportunity and is proficient with simple weapons and martial weapons. She will trust any dwarven characters almost immediately.

EXODUS

The characters are held captive in their cell for an indeterminate amount of time, during which they may try to make their escape. For the first forty-eight hours of their containment, the guards do not interact with them whatsoever. The cephalyx are not in the habit of treating their prisoners with any degree of humanity, so the characters will be without any equipment, food, or spell components during this time. If the characters do not obtain nourishment and proper rest, they gain one level of exhaustion for every 24 hours spent in captivity.

Once the cephalyx believe the characters have been sufficiently weakened, they attempt to transport the party out of the cells and into the low cephalomek chambers, where the cephalyx intend to run experiments on the characters and convert them into drudges if they are found worthy.

Before transporting the characters, the cephalyx flood the cell with a debilitating gaseous substance. Any character subjected to this toxin must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is also restrained while poisoned in this way as the gas dulls its senses and causes its body to become numb. Once the gas has taken effect, a **cephalyx worker** and a drudge extract the characters’ unconscious bodies and strap them onto gurney-like devices. Because most of their captives are incapable of withstanding the gas, the cephalyx do not expect any resistance.

If the characters resist and defeat their captors, they can explore the prison area. If the characters resist but fail to escape, the cephalyx attempt to stabilize any fallen characters before strapping them down for transport, as described above.

If the characters are subdued and rendered unconscious, they will be brought to the preparation room in the low cephalomek chambers (see below).

THE LIFT SHAFT

The cephalyx and their minions travel between levels of the hive by means of an enormous lift shaft that runs through the middle of the colony. When the characters arrive at this structure for the first time, read the following text aloud:

The hallway leading away from the captives' chambers runs for several hundred feet before it opens out into a massive shaft. The vertical tunnel is about four hundred feet in diameter. In the center is a stone tower that stretches from the inky blackness below. The tower is less than thirty feet in diameter yet stands impossibly tall. You can see neither top nor bottom; both ends disappear out of sight as they blend into the darkness of the shaft.

A metal gangway about ten feet wide provides a path to the tower. It is supported by hundreds of cables that stretch to the walls of this colossal cylinder. The passage leads directly to a door on the side of the tower.

The lift can be used to travel vertically between zones. A trip from one level to another takes about fifteen minutes. Beside the door on the outside of the tower is a series of levers and buttons that control the lift. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will make the operation of the lift apparent.

Opening the door to the lift reveals a cubicle 15 feet long and 15 feet wide. On the opposite side of the cubicle is another door, as well as a set of controls identical to those on the outside of the tower. An identical gangway on the opposite wall leads to the low cephalomek chambers.

THE LOW CEPHALOMEK CHAMBERS

Low cephalomek involves the production of drudges and the conducting of anatomical experiments, and the chambers in this area of the hive contain all the facilities required to produce and maintain the hive's drudge population. The cephalyx who perform this work are typically of lower station in the hive than those who concern themselves with more cerebral matters, but the cephalyx who leads this area—the Mechanifex—holds a more esteemed role in the hive.

THE TUNNEL

The hall that leads to the low cephalomek chambers measures 15 feet wide and 15 feet tall and is made of the same stone found throughout the hive. It progresses for 400 feet before ending in a locked metal door that leads to the preparation room. A character using thieves' tools can unlock the door with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check.

1. PREPARATION ROOM

A **cephalyx worker** examines all captives brought through this room and determines their fitness for transformation. The bound prisoners are poked, prodded, measured, and weighed before their fates are determined. The great majority become drudges, but exceptional specimens are marked for conversion into monstrosities.

2. STAGING ROOM

After being examined, bound captives are moved to this area until they are required by the Chirurgeon in area 5.

The room contains several gurneys and is guarded by one cephalyx worker and two cephalyx drudges.

3. RESEARCH ROOM

When the characters enter this room, read the following text aloud:

The eerie blue light that permeates this subterranean compound seems brighter here. Several tables and cabinets cluttered with ominous devices fill the room. In the center stands a small tripod supporting a claw-like contraption that holds a humanoid heart. Despite being removed from its body, the heart is still beating.

This room contains magnifying devices, scales, petri dishes, and other tools for investigating the wonders of biology. The tripod instrument is part of an experiment to see whether a heart can be kept alive as long as a pulse of arcane energy is passing through it.

Countless scalpels, beakers, vials, and other scientific objects are scattered across the nearby tables and stored within the many cabinets in this room. The inside of one particular cabinet is as cold as if it were filled with ice, but the temperature seems to be regulated by cephalomek principles. The cabinet contains several vials of blood, a jar of dwarf eyeballs, and a tray filled with spores, molds, and fungus.

4. STORAGE ROOM

This room is filled with crates containing surgical equipment, antibacterial liquids, and prosthetic parts ready to be grafted onto test subjects. A quick search of the room reveals enough components to make ten healer's kits, and the mechanical prosthetic pieces can be scavenged to form ten effective facsimiles of any simple melee weapon.

5. LABORATORY

When the characters enter this room, read the following text aloud:

A Y-shaped room stretches out before you. At roughly forty feet across at its widest points and forty feet long, it is the largest area you have encountered so far. Seven slab-like structures covered in arcane surgical apparatuses are staged here. One particularly large slab houses the body of a massively muscular ogrun who is either dead or unconscious. A freakishly lanky being clad from head to toe in black leather is hunched over the ogrun's body. Several prosthetic implements protruding from the creature's back dart to and from the slab, although whether to dissect the ogrun or operate on it, you can't be sure. The creature seems completely immersed in its work and unaware of your presence.

This individual is the Chirurgeon, a cephalyx slaver who is in the process of converting the ogrun into a **cephalyx warden**. The job is only half done. The ogrun's limbs have been replaced with mecha fists, but the Chirurgeon has yet to complete the placement of the head plate. Until this task is done, the ogrun is only mostly a monstrosity and cannot be controlled by the cephalyx any more than any other being can.

If the characters successfully interrupt the process and defeat the Chirurgeon, they can revive the ogrun with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The ogrun has no memory of his life before waking up on the slab but can be



persuaded not to attack the party if they are kind to him. The ogrun uses the stats of a cephalyx warden but doesn't have the Respirator special trait or the Head Plate attack.

The other six slabs are empty.

This room also contains an inactivity chamber similar to the one in area 1B of the captive cells, as well as a waste port wide enough for a Small creature to fit through.

6. CLEANSING

The Chirurgon and their assistants use this room to clean their clothing and equipment before and after surgery. Devices in the room produce steaming-hot running water

at the flick of a lever. The room includes a waste port wide enough for a Medium creature to fit through.

7. FAILED EXPERIMENT WARD

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

You enter what seems to be a museum of aberrant freaks. The chamber is eerily quiet save for the occasional hiss and gurgle of liquid life. The walls are lined with several rows of shelves, each of which is lined with jars containing blood, strange fluids, organs, and things you can't identify.

This is where failed cephalomek experiments are kept. It is filled with cabinets and display cases containing various horrors, including:

1. A head sitting beneath a large bell jar on a black marble plinth. The head continuously stares at all who enter the room. It moves its mouth as if to speak, but no words come out. If removed from the jar, the head goes motionless and remains an inert body part until placed back under the glass.
2. A troll arm being kept “alive” with arcane infusions. The arm’s regenerative properties have been amplified, and the arm has sprouted multiple new fingers that split off from each other like the branches of a tree.
3. A six-foot-tall glass cylinder on a stand containing a mass of quivering, oozing flesh that drips a steady stream of green goo. The creature within is a **gibbering moulder**. It is dormant but will reveal countless eyes and teeth if disturbed. If the glass is broken, the creature attacks immediately.
4. The half-dissected corpse of a male dwarf strapped down on a slab. The corpse’s left arm has been replaced by a saw-toothed blade, and its open chest cavity is missing a heart. If the heart from area 3 is placed inside the chest cavity, the opening will seal itself, and the corpse will behave as a **zombie** with an Intelligence of 9 and the neutral alignment. The zombie will not attack the party unless threatened but will attack cephalyx or drudges on sight.

8. GUARD ROOM

When the characters enter this room, read the following text aloud:

This chamber is empty. Two doors lead out of it. One resembles the cell doors from the prison zone. Large dents protrude out of it and into the room, as if something on the other side—something very strong—has been trying to force its way out. Three of your captors’ mindless slaves are standing at attention with their weapons extended toward you.

Three **cephalyx drudges** stand guard here. Their commands are to not let anyone pass other than the Chirurgeon.

9. CELL

This cell is structurally identical to the cells where the characters first wake up in the hive. Its current inhabitant is a half-transformed human named Darek. Darek does not recall his life before waking up here. He is very hungry but will attack only if provoked. Darek can no longer eat ordinary food but will instinctively know how to insert the sludge ampoules into his feeding tube.

Due to the lockdown that was initiated immediately after the shaft wight incursion, the Chirurgeon didn’t have time to finish Darek, who was placed in this cell a couple of days ago and temporarily forgotten. Even though his memories have been erased, Darek still has his free will, more or less.

Treat Darek as a **cephalyx drudge** with an Intelligence of 9 and a Wisdom of 12 and without the Respirator special trait.

10. SLUDGE STOCKPILE

Refined sludge from the lowest level of the hive is kept here in large glass ampoules stacked on carts. Each ampoule weighs 2 pounds and is equal to one day’s worth of nourishment for a drudge and half a day’s worth for a monstrosity. There are two dozen ampoules in total.

Any creature other than a cephalyx, drudge, or monstrosity that attempts to consume the sludge must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or begin retching and be poisoned for 1d4 hours.

11. CELL

This cell is structurally identical to cell 9. It contains a dregg that was fully converted into a drudge, but the cephalyx found that their mind control commands did not work on dregg even after the creatures had been fully converted. Treat the creature as a **dregg** with the drudge’s Inhuman Fortitude and Respirator special traits.

THE CORPSE LARDER

If the characters take the lift down to the lowest levels, read the following text aloud:

The lift ends here in a dark basement. A vast corridor nearly forty feet wide extends to the east and west. The biting cold of the stone floor is particularly sharp here. This area is as silent as a tomb, and the immense hall extends into utter blackness in both directions.

A narrow metal rail-line runs the course of the passage.

The rails are used to carry carts from the larder to the sludge processing center to the east.

The hall to the west travels for several hundred feet before ending in a wide wall with one set of 10-foot-wide double doors at its center. The doors are protected by a standard lock and chain. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools.

If the characters open the door, read the following text aloud:

The door opens to a truly horrific sight. A monstrous chamber stretches as far as the eye can see. You are struck by an overwhelming odor of iron and copper, and your cold breath dangles in the air before you as you gaze at row upon row of carcasses hanging from tenterhooks. Countless human and humanoid bodies—each one headless, limp, split down the center, and drained of vital fluid—are stored here like so much meat. Dozens of cephalyx workers hover about this slaughterhouse tending to their duties. Each is accompanied by a drudge servant that seems to be responsible for performing any physical labor.

The cephalyx use this area to store the leftover cadavers of their victims, as well as their own dead. Some of those who were deemed unfit for drudge conversion or whose bodies were too damaged during their capture are used in experiments, but most are carted off to the sludge processing center to be converted into “food.”

The larder contains three dozen **cephalyx workers** and an equal number of **cephalyx drudges**. If the characters are not silent, the workers will spot them and set off an alarm, but only a fraction of the room’s occupants will give chase

if the characters flee. If it becomes apparent that the hive is being infiltrated, Silexus Hexamon will send a **cephalyx slaver** and a **cephalyx subduer** down the lift to capture the party and return them to the cells under higher security.

SLUDGE PROCESSING

The railway ends here at another 10-foot-wide double door. Two empty carts sit outside the doors. Banging, clanking, whirring, and thrumming can be heard beyond the doors—the sound of some tremendous machinery working at some dark and unknown purpose.

The doors are unlocked. If the characters open the doors, read the following text aloud:

Your face is assaulted by a wave of heat as you open the door. A huge factory floor stretches out before you. Numerous pipes connect from the ceiling to a multitude of machines. Boilers, filtration systems, and other strange mechanisms are transforming the liquid goo from the sludge pipes into something else.

Workers and their servants scurry about their tasks, engrossed in some purpose you don't understand and prefer not to think about for too long.

SLUDGE PIT

Waste pipes from throughout the hive funnel into this area. The lowest-ranking cephalyx sort organic waste from inorganic waste (using drudge labor, of course). Organic matter is pureed into a sludge that is pumped into glass ampoules to be distributed throughout the hive and used as sustenance by cephalyx and drudges.

A few dozen **cephalyx drudges** and **cephalyx workers** are here, but not all of them will engage the characters. Use your best judgement to determine how many workers confront the party directly. If the characters are spotted, the workers sound the alarm, prompting the overlords from the higher levels to send appropriate reinforcements (see “The Corpse Larder”).

There are enough tools in this compound to create six sets of smith's tools and six sets of tinker's tools.

At the rear of the facility is a fungus farm, the produce of which is used to supplement the sludge production. It contains enough mushrooms and other edible fungus to make up to twenty days' worth of rations for one individual.

THE CEREBRAL ATHENAEUM

The western tunnel from the lift ends in a set of unlocked double doors leading directly to the cerebral athenaeum. This massive complex is structured like an ordinary library, but instead of books, this hall of knowledge contains brains preserved in jars, each containing a lifetime of memories. Here the preservers organize and store the history of the hive, as well as their collective knowledge of science and magic.

Several low-level cephalyx work here as preservers under the command of the Minder, a cephalyx named Gnossik.

1. FOYER

If the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

The angular, minimalistic style of this hall is somehow more decorative than the rest of the complex. The marble columns that flank the entryway are carved with a strange relief pattern that resembles the texture of coral . . . or perhaps a human brain.

2. VISITORS' HALL

Cephalyx from around the hive come here to inquire about information stored by the preservers. Visitors from the crèche occasionally come here looking for new information with which to program the offspring, as do various low-level cephalyx delivering archives in the form of thought cages, like the one found in the processing area of the captive cells. The area is almost always empty except for a lone **cephalyx worker** who serves as a clerk.

3. ANTECHAMBER

Two **cephalyx drudges** stand guard here to prevent unauthorized individuals from entering the major archive. Their commands cannot be overridden by anyone ranking lower than an overlord other than the Minder.

4. MINOR ARCHIVE

This is where the cephalyx psychically and physically dissect individuals who have information they require. Useful brains are extracted and placed in jars in order to maintain their utility as storage devices for information.

Two **cephalyx workers** are currently attending to the brain of a **cephalyx slaver** who was killed during the shaft wight incursion. Their orders are to extract evidence that Silexus Hexamon orchestrated Exulon Anaks' untimely death.

5. THE MINDER'S PRIVATE STUDY

The door to this chamber is protected with a mechanical lock. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Gnossik the Minder, a **cephalyx slaver**, conducts their own private research here. Gnossik is convinced that Silexus Hexamon is behind the death of Exulon Anaks. The Minder seeks to improve their own standing in the hive by revealing this transgression. Gnossik believes it is high time that the preservers have a more direct influence on the control of the hive and has been promised by Akulon Kardax that their investigation will be rewarded.

Gnossik's study contains several jarred brains that are allowed to be read only by the Minder or a higher-ranking cephalyx. It also contains a single inactivity chamber.

6. NECESSITIES

This room contains two inactivity chambers for low-ranking preservers to use, as well as a waste port wide enough for a Small creature to fit through.

7. MAJOR ARCHIVE

The door to this room is protected with a mechanical lock. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.

This 90-foot-by-60-foot chamber is where the minds of cephalyx and outsiders are stored. Most of the brains kept here are those of dwarves and humans whose stored memories have been altered to maintain the hive's gathered knowledge. A few are kept with their original memories intact, either because they were considered of interest or because the preservers have not gotten around to wiping and rewriting their memories.

If the characters enter this chamber, read the following text aloud:

This monumental rotunda contains a labyrinth of shelves over twelve feet high. A dim light coming from somewhere overhead allows you to just make out the contents of this twisted library. Each shelf is lined with bell jars containing humanoid brains suspended in some sort of greenish gel. At a glance, there must be thousands of brains kept here. The room is devoid of any occupants.

If the characters touch one of the jars, read the following text aloud:

You touch the glass jar and immediately feel a tingling sensation run the length of your arm. From what you can tell, the human brain tissue is still alive.

The brains are in a permanent state of suspended animation and are not cognizant of anything (including the passage of time) unless another being communicates with them using telepathy, the detect thoughts spell, or similar magic.

Most of the minds collected here contain reference knowledge, but many store histories of the hive and its beginnings. This hive was formed centuries ago after a much larger hive suffered a calamity and was broken into several smaller ones.

The majority of unaltered brains belong to cephalyx who have passed on but whose contributions were considered worthy of preservation. These brains are resistant to spells such as *detect thoughts* and will not communicate with lesser beings. Non-cephalyx brains are used primarily for storage.

Characters who search for unaltered (or mostly unaltered) brains can find the preserved minds of the following NPCs:

- Tash Lamaron, a human paladin of Menoth from Sul who was captured by the cephalyx years ago. His mind has been kept whole to be studied and used as a control specimen for experiments. The preservers are investigating whether brain structure is connected to the ability to cast divine magic. If they discover that such a connection exists, they will attempt to implement divine magic through cerebral augmentations. If the players communicate with Tash, he will be gracious but cautious. He doesn't realize his fate and only remembers falling during a fight.
- Emwyl Cloud, a human mechanik from Corvis who ran off with an adventuring company when she was young and then met her end at the hands of a cephalyx raiding party. Her brain is being kept intact solely because her caustic wit has amused her assigned preserver every time the preserver has attempted to dissect her mind. It is unheard of for a cephalyx to develop fondness for a lesser creature, so the preserver hid their shame by stashing Emwyl's brain behind a series of brains filled with knowledge of sludge pipe maintenance.
- An insane male dwarf whose tattered gray matter sits in a very dusty jar tucked away in a corner. The dwarf was captured and dissected by the cephalyx long ago and no longer recalls his own name. If communicated with, he babbles about how the city is sinking and how no one

will listen to him. If the matter is pressed, he screams and laughs for several moments before becoming silent, after which he will not respond to further attempts at contact.

THE BREEDING COMPLEX AND CRÈCHE

The eastern tunnel from the lift leads here, as does a stairway in area 5 of the captive cells. Cephalyx breeding technicians use this area both to reproduce their species and to manipulate their own genetics in order to enhance their already prodigious psychic ability. (All cephalyx are created through artificial reproduction with no concept of gender.)

The offspring containment center and crèche are also located in this zone. The crèche is where young cephalyx are developed and educated in specialized inactivity chambers that implant knowledge directly into their minds.

1. ENTRYWAY

Two **cephalyx drudges** guard the entryway with orders to attack anyone who enters.

2. GUARD POST

The door to this room is made of steel and protected with a mechanical lock. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

A **cephalyx worker** is stationed here. At the sound of any trouble from the entryway, the worker sounds an alarm.

3. BREEDING LAB

If the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

This area houses a series of enormous glass tubes filled with a greenish gel similar to the stuff found in the brain jars from the library. Floating in each jar is a pale, bald, and weak humanoid youth, seemingly alive but unconscious. Each tank is connected to a system of tubes, filters, and unknowable apparatuses. After a moment, you recognize the tanks' eerie, limp inhabitants: row after row of young cephalyx, all identical in every way.

A **cephalyx worker** and two **cephalyx drudges** are monitoring the immature cephalyx. The worker orders the drudges to attack all outsiders.

All the cephalyx youth within the cloning tubes are physically similar to humans, albeit sickly and weak specimens. Physically, they appear to be somewhere between ten and fifteen years old.

If a tank is broken, the gel spills out of it, and the cephalyx inside will start to suffocate. An immature cephalyx can be stabilized with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Any awakened cephalyx are disoriented but not immediately prone to violence. They can't speak but can communicate telepathically. Although intelligent, the immature cephalyx are all but catatonic and have not yet been imparted any knowledge by their caretakers. Like infants, they can communicate basic needs only. The cephalyx are hungry but can't feed themselves. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that they use sludge ampoules as food, just as the drudges do. Any character who provides one of these cephalyx with sludge has advantage on any Charisma rolls with that particular cephalyx.

Treat the immature cephalyx as **cephalyx workers** with 6 hp, AC 10, a Strength of 4, and a Dexterity of 10 and without the Mind Blast and Prosthetic Blade actions.

4. STORAGE AND CLEANING

This chamber is split in two. One half contains several hoses with running water for cleaning, as well as a small waste port that is only about a foot wide. The second half is filled with cleaning, medical, and scientific research supplies. There is enough equipment here to create four healer's kits and two sets of alchemist's supplies.

5. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This chamber is filled with several objects and materials used for research and development of cephalyx technology. A large table in the middle of the room is covered with test tubes containing different liquids and chemicals. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the cephalyx are capable not only of reproducing their species in a lab, but also of using their scientific devices to pick and choose which traits are most desired in their offspring.

6. GUARD POST

The passageway between the breeding lab and the crèche is long and narrow. A door at the end of it is guarded by a cephalyx warden being controlled by a cephalyx worker.

7. CRÈCHE

The crèche is laid out in a grid pattern with dozens of tubes similar to those in the inactivity chambers. Each contains an adolescent cephalyx covered from head to toe in the leather suits typical of their kind. Cephalomek devices within the chambers flood the young cephalyx with the knowledge they will need to perform their functions. A cephalyx worker referred to as the Instructor is here maintaining the machines and determining the curriculum.

Several crates are stacked against one wall. Each is filled with sludge ampoules, machine parts, and prosthetics that have not yet been assigned to the young cephalyx.

8. TRAINING

This enclosure is outfitted with obstacles and objects for manipulating and maneuvering around. A **cephalyx**

THE TUNNEL RAT

A female gobber who refers to herself as Ak-ak (see appendix C) has taken up residence in a series of tunnels she has dug behind the stack of crates in the crèche. The young cephalyx have seen Ak-ak come and go when the Instructor and the Trainer are not around and have told them about her. Unable to detect the reported intruder, the Instructor is concerned that some sort of defect in the learning devices has caused this batch of juveniles to become tainted and delusional and is deciding whether to euthanize them all.

In truth, Ak-ak was a captive who suffered a brain injury while captured and escaped the Chirurgeon in the chaos that occurred during the shaft wight incursion. For some reason, her injury has made her incapable of being detected by the psychic powers of the cephalyx.

Ak-ak is becoming unhinged and starting to behave erratically as a result of her untreated brain trauma and the stress of surviving in the tunnels with little food or drink. She has managed to evade capture so far due to her immunity to psychic probing but is low on resources and getting desperate.

worker known as the Trainer uses this room to instruct young cephalyx in the coordination of their bodies and prosthetics.

The room is currently occupied by the Trainer, six young cephalyx, and two **cephalyx drudges**. Treat the young cephalyx as cephalyx workers without the Mind Blast action.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Chapter 3 concludes when the adventurers have completed exploring the lower zones and advance to the Mechanifex's workshop.

LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

If you're using the milestone system instead of experience points to track advancement, the characters advance from 2nd to 3rd level when they complete the chapter.



CHAPTER 4: OF FEAR AND FREEDOM

In this chapter, the characters make their way into the heart of the cephalyx hive, where its highest-ranking members see to the most advanced research and fabrication, attended by throngs of drudges and powerful monstrosities. In order to escape their captors, the characters must make their way through these well-guarded chambers and through an infestation of undead. Along the way, they might uncover a plot that has upset the delicate balance of the hive.

MODIFYING, EXPANDING, AND ADDING ENCOUNTERS

The encounters in this chapter are designed for four to six 3rd-level characters. If the characters seem to be making their way through the chapter too easily, feel free to increase the number of guards or roll on the Random Encounters in the Upper Levels of the Hive table.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE UPPER LEVELS OF THE HIVE

<i>d100</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
01–30	2 cephalyx workers
31–70	2 cephalyx drudges
71–80	2 shaft wights
81–90	1 cephalyx slaver
91–00	1 cephalyx subduer

THE MECHANIFEX'S WORKSHOP

The Mechanifex is the hive's master of cephalomek, the science of surgical and mechanical hybridization that allows for the many enhancements that help make the cephalyx so fearsome. Within the Mechanifex's domain, select captives are exposed to growth-inducing hormones and converted into the towering, murderous monstrosities that make up the heaviest weapons in the hive's arsenal.

1. THE GRAND FACTORY

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

The lift ends here in the center of a gargantuan workshop filled with esoteric machines made of polished black metal. Half a dozen cephalyx workers and their ever-present drudges operate the machinery, which mostly seems designed to generate implements of destruction.

Tubes and wires running across the floor and dangling from the ceiling connect the machines to power sources and to one another. Caches of tools and weapons line countless racks throughout the workshop.

Six **cephalyx workers** and six **cephalyx drudges** toil at various machines here. Several workers are attempting to repair a **cephalyx wrecker** that is lying unconscious on an enormous slab. If the characters attack, one of the workers will use an action to wake the wrecker and then flee as the monstrosity lashes out at all creatures in its sight. The wrecker is injured and has half its total hit points.

Several other workers are churning out blades, saws, gauntlets, and other weapons used by drudges and monstrosities. The rest are hovering over various machines and tending to their esoteric duties.

2. THE MECHANIFEX'S STUDIO

The Mechanifex is a **cephalyx slaver** tasked with designing weapons, armor, and other devices, as well as with investigating any new technology that the cephalyx come across. They are currently locked in their study examining a steamjack recently acquired during a raid. (If one of the characters had a 'jack, this one is theirs. Otherwise, use the stats for a light laborjack of your choosing.) The steamjack is partially disassembled with its cortex exposed. The Mechanifex has been trying to communicate with the steamjack's cortex in an effort to learn the weaknesses of steamjacks and devise a method of controlling them and possibly even overtaking them on the battlefield. Thus far, their efforts have been fruitless.

The Mechanifex has also been working on a helmet that protects the wearer against the psychic powers of others. Four finished helmets are scattered throughout the studio. Each one grants the wearer resistance to psychic damage.

3. DRUDGE PENS

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

Countless cubicles made of steel bars arranged in a grid pattern fill this area. A cephalyx drudge stands waiting in each cubicle, like an implement stored in a drawer until it is needed.

A mechanism by the door to this area allows a character to lift some or all of the bars so that the drudges may exit the pens. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals how to work the mechanism. If a character flips random levers in an attempt to work the controls, roll on the table below to see what happens.

2d10 Result

2-6 1d4 creatures are released from the pens.

7-12 Nothing happens.

13-18 One creature is released from the pens.

19-20 All the creatures are released from the pens at once.

The drudge's minds have been lulled into a stupor, and the drudges do not act unless ordered by a cephalyx. There are 120 drudges currently housed here.

4. MONSTROSITY PENS

These pens are similar to the drudge pens, but the individual pens are much larger and the bars are much thicker. Six **cephalyx subduers** and six **cephalyx wreckers** are housed here. The monstrosities are far more murderous than their drudge counterparts and will attack anyone who sets them free. Only a cephalyx ranked as an overlord or higher can calm them.

The mechanism for releasing the monstrosities is nearly identical to the one in area 3. Any character who succeeded on the Intelligence check to operate the mechanism in the drudge pens can operate this one as well. If the characters decide to pull random levers, roll on the previous table to determine what happens.

5. ARMORY

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

Aisle after aisle of weapons are stored here. Wrecking balls, spiked metal clubs, gigantic bladed flails, and prosthetics of all shapes, sizes, and variety of construction are stacked here alongside cephalomek armored shells and other devices of indiscernible purpose.

The party can use the materials in this armory to create improvised versions of any simple weapon or any melee martial weapon. If the party had any special weapons or equipment you would like them to recover, this would be a logical place for those items to turn up.

THE HIVE BRAIN

The hive's upper echelon spend their time here. Compared to the workers, these cephalyx are largely idle. Most of their time is spent arguing with one another over how best to advance the goals of the hive or plotting against their superiors for a chance to command.

This section of the adventure describes the personal chambers of some cephalyx NPCs. When the characters enter one of these chambers, roll a d6. On a roll of 5 or 6, the room's owner is present unless the narrative prevents it (for example, if the NPC is dead or is known to be in another location at that time).

CEPHALYX HIERARCHY

Each cephalyx hive is governed by a rigid hierarchy of ruling cephalyx. Those who occupy the lowest leadership positions are known as overlords and are usually organized into trios. The akulons direct multiple teams of overlords in the day-to-day running of the hive. Those who have achieved the rank of silexus govern the hive's resources directly and serve as a link to the hive's supreme leader, known as an exulon. Ambitious cephalyx rise in rank by demonstrating their surgical and psychic prowess and completing vital assignments for their superiors.

WHAT THE PLAYERS DON'T KNOW

Some time ago, Exulon Anaks ordered the expansion of this area of the hive. Unbeknownst to the cephalyx, they were tunneling into a lost district of Drinaal's Delve that was infested with shaft wights. The undead swarmed the hive for three days. Akulon Kardax and their counterpart and rival, Akulon Poleximus, spearheaded the counterattack that drove the undead back to the mine shafts, which the cephalyx then collapsed in order to prevent more of the creatures from entering. This misstep cost Anaks much of their credibility, and Silexus Hexamon called an assembly in the amphitheater to challenge the exulon's leadership. Rumors had been spreading that some shaft wights were still loose in the hive after the shafts were collapsed, but Anaks and Kardax both denied the possibility.

The leadership challenge did not succeed, and Anaks maintained authority. As the exulon was exiting the assembly, they encountered Sartok, a low-level worker known as "Smallbrain," who had become lost while on an errand to an area of the hive they had never visited before. Sartok failed to avert their gaze from the exulon and was imprisoned for this minor offense.

Many days later, Exulon Anaks was found dead in their chamber, covered in the gravel of a shaft wight's vomit. Akulon Kardax suspects that Silexus Hexamon was instrumental in the exulon's death. Kardax maintains that the only shaft wights left inside the hive were those captured to be studied, and only a high-ranking member of the hive would have the authority to not only remove a shaft wight from the laboratory but also cover it up.

When the characters enter the hive brain, read the following text aloud:

You are deep in the home of your captors. The honeycombed chambers of this level snake and turn in a labyrinthine manner. Cephalyx overlords hover in the air as they go about their inscrutable business while their drudge and monstrosity servants walk in tow.

1. AMPHITHEATER

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

You enter a wide hall shaped like a hexagonal bowl with a flat area at the bottom. Unlike a standard amphitheater, it has no stairs and no seats. Although this area is currently empty, it appears to be a gathering place for the cephalyx.

This is where the cephalyx gather for important announcements and assemblies. Because the cephalyx can hover naturally, they have no need for stairs or seats here. A character who falls or willingly descends to the bottom of the meeting chamber will need to succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to climb out.

2. PERSONAL CHAMBERS

The hive brain is home to many personal chambers belonging to upper-level cephalyx overlords, but most are virtually identical. When the characters first enter such a chamber, read the following text aloud:

This room seems to be the personal chamber of a member of the cephalyx leadership caste. A niche in one wall contains a selection of identical leather body suits, a desk-like table covered with various personal effects, and a larger and somewhat more comfortable-looking model of the many strange cylinders you have seen throughout the hive.

Whenever the characters enter one of these chambers, roll a d6. On a roll of 4 or 5, the chamber's owner, a **cephalyx slaver**, is present. On a roll of 6, the owner is accompanied by 1d4 **cephalyx drudges**.

3. COMMUNAL SANITATION

This room contains a series of pipes and tubes that produce hot running water on command, as well as several waste ports wide enough for a Medium creature to fit through.

4. STORAGE CHAMBER

This area contains spare prosthetics, clean leather suits, medical supplies, and stockpiles of sludge ampoules. It is guarded by 1d4 **cephalyx workers** and 1d6 **cephalyx drudges**.

5. POLEXIMUS' CHAMBER

This chamber belongs to Akulon Poleximus, a **cephalyx agitator** loyal to Silexus Hexamon. Poleximus suspects that Kardax is plotting against Hexamon and is trying to gather evidence to support this suspicion in the hopes of currying the silexus' favor.



6. VAULT OF ANAKS

Two **cephalyx subduers** guard the door to this chamber. The door is protected with a mechanical lock and is trapped. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

A heavy guillotine blade is hidden in the ceiling in front of the door. A character can discover the trap with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character using thieves' tools or tinker's tools can disarm the trap with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check. When the door is opened, the blade springs downward. Any creature within 5 feet of the door must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d10 slashing damage.

The door opens into the former study of Anaks, now a makeshift tomb. The cadaver of the former exulon lies atop a slab. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the exulon's brain has been removed. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that the exulon could not have been killed by a shaft wight, as they have not risen as one after death.

7. KARDAX'S CHAMBER

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

This chamber is somehow sparser than any of the others you have encountered. It lacks even the strange cylinders common among the private spaces of these beings. The only indication that it is a personal chamber at all is a recessed alcove containing a wardrobe of identical leather body suits, a simple workbench, and some spare prosthetic parts.

Akulon Kardax is a **cephalyx mindbender** who suspects that Silexus Hexamon murdered Exulon Anaks to gain control of the hive. The hive is currently without an official leader, and the overlords and other akulons are getting restless. Most of the ranking cephalyx support Hexamon because the silexus' intellect and disposition are similar to that of Anaks, but Kardax would prefer to take on the mantle of leadership instead. To expose Hexamon, Kardax has enlisted Gnossik the Minder to find proof of the wrongdoing.

8. HEXAMON'S PRIVATE STUDY

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

This personal chamber is more finely appointed than most. It maintains the spare style of the cephalyx, but the walls, doors, and furnishings have a slightly decorative, if brutalist, look to them.

Silexus Hexamon is a **cephalyx cognifex**. They do not normally wear their armored shell within the hive and therefore have an AC of 13. Hexamon is guarded at all times by two cephalyx wardens.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a hidden compartment in the bottom of Hexamon's inactivity chamber. Inside the compartment is a thought cage containing the missing brain of Exulon Anaks.

9. ABANDONED CONSTRUCTION SITE

This long tunnel leads away from the main living quarters of the hive and ends in destruction, as the entire passage appears to have been collapsed and abandoned. This is where Exulon Anaks ordered the expansion of the hive and encountered the shaft wights that invaded the cephalyx domain.

Rubble and debris cover the last 200 feet of the tunnel before the blockage, making this area difficult terrain. Thirty feet before the blocked tunnel is a locked waste port wide enough for a Medium creature to fit through. This particular section of pipe was supposed to be attached to the main system once the expansion was ready, but since the expansion was abandoned, the pipe was never attached and is completely dry. Creatures may pass single-file through this pipe to reach area 1 of the breach (see below).

If the party decides to enter the pipe, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, 1d4 **shaft wights** are crawling through the pipe toward the port.

RESOLUTION

The tunnels to the outside world are hidden behind a stone monolith on the edge of the complex. The slab weighs over three hundred pounds and is challenging to move without the aid of a cephalyx using telekinesis. The tunnels beyond the monolith are a puzzling and complex labyrinth designed to prevent both infiltration and escape.

Characters who manage to subdue or placate one of the cephalyx leaders long enough to negotiate may be able to persuade their captors into making a deal to help them escape. Such a transgression against the hive would be punishable by torture and death, so the characters must offer something quite valuable to entice any cephalyx to take the risk.

ANAKS

Anaks' brain is still technically alive while encased in the thought cage. Despite being in a state of suspended animation, Anaks is fully aware of their surroundings. Unlike the cephalyx brains from the library, Anaks will communicate with the players if they initiate contact through magic or telepathy. Anaks knows that Hexamon killed them and is

quite offended that anyone would think that the mighty mind slaver could have been done in by a lowly undead. Anaks will provide the characters with information about how to escape in exchange for the characters revealing to the rest of the hive that Hexamon was their killer. Anaks prefers that the characters kill Hexamon and destroy the silexus' brain entirely.

Anaks cannot physically help the characters escape but can describe the layout of the tunnels leading to the surface.

Because the exulon exists in a state between life and death while their brain is in suspended animation, magic such as the *speak with dead spell* will not work on Anaks' corpse. Destroying the brain will allow such magic to work as normal.

HEXAMON

Hexamon considers themselves the de facto leader of the hive and feels no sense of obligation or loyalty to any other being. If bested in battle, they will act to spare their own life and will make promises to get what they want with absolutely no intention of keeping said promises. They are aware that Kardax suspects them in Anaks' death and will offer to free the characters in exchange for eliminating the rival akulon.

Hexamon has intimate knowledge of the labyrinth and the ability to move the monolith out of the way but will do so only as a last resort to spare their own life.

KARDAX

Kardax is desperate to prove that Hexamon betrayed Anaks and that the silexus should be cast out of the hive. Kardax has enlisted Gnossik the Minder to assist the effort but has not had favorable results so far. If the party can locate Anaks' brain or find any other way to reveal the truth, Kardax will provide them with safe passage through the monolith. The akulon is not overly concerned that the party will actually make it alive through the labyrinth, which is filled with cephalyx drudges and monstrosities.

POLEXIMUS

Poleximus is loyal to Hexamon and will not betray the silexus but will do anything to damage their rival, Kardax. Poleximus knows that Kardax is working to besmirch their leader's reputation but doesn't know that Hexamon actually killed Anaks.

If Poleximus discovers the truth, they will attempt to cover it up to protect Hexamon and will confront Kardax if need be. Poleximus knows the way to the labyrinth and knows it well enough to navigate through it.

THE LABYRINTH

A tremendous monolith stands against the hive wall on the outskirts of the hive. Weighing just over three hundred pounds, it blocks the passage to the labyrinth of tunnels that lead to the surface world.

Any cephalyx of overlord rank or above has in-depth knowledge of the labyrinth and can navigate their way to the surface in 1 hour. All other creatures must find their way through by wandering the maze.



NAVIGATING THE LABYRINTH

Investigation

Roll	Result
1-4	The party loses its way. Add 20 minutes to the time needed to find the exit.
5-8	The party is temporarily bewildered. Add 10 minutes to the time needed to find the exit.
9-12	Nothing special occurs. The time needed to find the exit remains unchanged.
13-15	The party discovers a shortcut. Subtract 10 minutes from the time needed to find the exit.
16-19	The party discovers an excellent shortcut. Subtract 20 minutes from the time needed to find the exit.
20+	The party gets an unexpected insight into the design of the maze. Subtract 30 minutes from the time needed to find the exit. Additionally, treat results of 1-8 as 9 for the remainder of the time spent in the labyrinth.

The characters begin by needing 180 minutes to escape the tunnels. The party nominates one character to guide them through the labyrinth and make an Intelligence (Investigation) roll every 10 minutes to determine their progress through the tunnels. The result of the roll determines the outcome of those 10 minutes of travel. Look up the result in the Navigating the Labyrinth table, and add or subtract time as directed. When the time drops to 0 minutes, the characters have found the exit and can return to the surface world.

For every 30 minutes that the party spends in the labyrinth, roll on the Random Encounters in the Upper Levels of the Hive table at the start of this chapter.

CHANGING GUIDES

The characters can nominate another guide to lead them every 10 minutes they spend in the labyrinth, should they desire. In the event they are accompanied by an NPC, such as one of the named cephalyx, that is familiar with the labyrinth, then no roll is necessary: the characters spend 1 hour in the labyrinth, experiencing one random encounter.

THE BREACH

The breach is responsible for much of the recent chaos in the cephalyx hive and indirectly responsible for the increase in abductions from Farhollow. When the cephalyx sought to expand their underground network, they unwittingly opened a subterranean chamber filled with a large population of shaft wights. The ensuing battle between drudges and the

undead threatened the hive's existence, severely depleted its contingent of drudges, and forced the slavers to capture more specimens to replenish their losses.

WHAT THE PLAYER'S DON'T KNOW

Nearly eight thousand years ago, this mine was an open-air pit used to extract copper from the land. Drinaal Halfaxe herself commissioned the mine and used the resources it provided to fuel the production of metal that gave the fabled City of Ash and Bronze its name.

Exiled from Ghord during the Hundred House Rebellion, Drinaal had many enemies who wished to see her city fail. One of these rivals used profane magic—and, some whisper, infernal influence—to curse the minerals within the mine, causing the workers to transform into dreaded shaft wights, which immediately turned on one another in a fit of violence. Unable to undo the curse and with no way of knowing who had been infected, Drinaal used powerful magic to cover the mine forever, protecting the city from being infected with the curse of the undead but also trapping hundreds of miners within. This decision plagued the Stone Lord to her final days.

1. THE CONCOURSE

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

The pipe runs for about sixty feet before giving way to a raw cavern tunnel about five feet in diameter. After another forty feet, the tunnel ends at the edge of a vast, open space: a cavern roughly two hundred feet across and fifty feet high. The cavern's limestone floor is fifteen feet below the tunnel opening and decorated with inlaid patterns of ancient Rhulic design.

A double door with bronze decorations stands wide open at the far end of the cavern. Standing before the open portal is a twenty-foot-tall bronze sculpture of two dwarven women, each with one hand wrapped around the handle of a battleaxe the two are holding aloft together. Beyond the doors, you can barely make out what appears to be a grand and dark hall.

Milling about on the concourse are half a dozen shaft wights, presumably the long-dead remains of the dwarven miners who built this hall.

The sculpture represents Drinaal and Hyphatia Halfaxe. At its base is an inscription in Rhulic:

Dedicated to my wife, Drinaal: Claywife, Stone Lord, Smelter of Bronze, and Founder of Cities. Forgiven in my heart and remembered for all eternity.

An extremely thick layer of dust covers the floor of the concourse. The giant doors were obviously sealed shut for a very long time and opened only recently.

2. ANCIENT COPPER MINE

When the characters enter this area, read the following text aloud:

This colossal cave is about six hundred feet in diameter and roughly circular in shape. The dome of the ceiling rises about fifty feet above your head. The walls and ceiling are speckled with blue-green mineral clusters. The floor of the cave is a hollowed-out pit consisting of forty or so ten-foot tiers arranged like steps in a circular stairwell. The lowest level is dotted with tunnels that resemble mine shafts. Skeletons of ancient miners are scattered throughout the area, clutching their pickaxes. Many look as if they died violent, sudden deaths. Nearly all have a thin patina of copper dust covering their bones.

At the bottom of the pit, you spy at least a dozen shaft wights seemingly continuing their life's work of digging tunnels beneath the ground in search of ore. Beyond them, on the far wall of the chamber, a glimmer of light shines down from fresh tunnels bored into the rock.

A dwarf or any character familiar with mining notices that this mine is quite unusual. Copper mines were often dug this way in ancient times, but those were always open to the sky. Any character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines that the cave's ceiling is not natural and that it was created by magical means, almost as if someone were trying to cover something up.

The tunnels bored into the far wall are a recent modification. After the cephalyx dealt with the shaft wights in their hive, they sent a team of five drudges to give the shaft wights a way out in the hopes that the undead would wander out of the mine of their own accord. The drudges succeeded in breaching the stone but were killed by the shaft wights, and their undead bodies are now milling about in the area below.

If the characters make their presence known, twelve **shaft wights** climb the pit as swiftly as possible in a furious attempt to slaughter the living. A half dozen tunnels line the bottom of the pit. Each contains several dozen more shaft wights, which emerge throughout the battle to reinforce those who fall in combat against the party.

Each round after the characters engage with the shaft wights, an additional 1d6 shaft wights exit these tunnels and join the fray. There is an effectively inexhaustible supply of undead within the mine shafts, so the characters will have to make their way to the tunnels on the far wall in order to escape.

BLIGHTED MALACHITE

The air in this mine is filled with dust from copper ore that has been tainted with an ancient curse. For every hour a creature spends here, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains one level of exhaustion. Any humanoid creature that dies from exhaustion caused by blighted malachite rises 1 minute later as a shaft wight.

ESCAPE!

Once the characters reach the tunnels on the far wall, they can smell fresh air and see the way out of the mine. When they exit the mine, read the following text aloud:

Your eyes are blinded by the midday sun as you step out of the cavity in the bedrock and into a dense mountainside forest. You take a deep breath and fill your lungs with fresh, clean air. To the south, you hear the rushing of the mighty Ayeres River.

A crisp wind blows through the pines, bringing with it a hint of hearth smoke. Following the smell, you come to an outcropping of stone that ends at a steep cliff. Looking down, you spy the familiar walls and rooftops of Farhollow in the distance.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the characters return to Farhollow and report on the existence of the cephalyx hive, Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn musters a large force of soldiers and steamjacks to destroy the hive. The characters are invited to join this task and are provided with weapons and armor to replace any that they might have lost in the hive.

By revealing the presence of the cephalyx, the characters have done a great service to the people of Farhollow and made a powerful friend of the city's clan lord. Once the cephalyx hive is destroyed, the characters will be offered the opportunity to join—and perhaps lead—the adventuring company they chose to ally with in chapter 1.

LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

If you're using the milestone system instead of experience points to track advancement, the characters advance from 3rd to 4th level when they complete the chapter.



APPENDIX A: FARHOLLOW

Having been founded less than four centuries ago, the frontier enclave of Farhollow is relatively new by Rhulic standards. Few who live there today know that the settlement was built upon the bones of an even older enclave: Drinaal's Delve, the fabled City of Ash and Bronze. Today, Farhollow is known throughout Rhul as an angler's paradise and an exporter of fine liquors.

FARHOLLOW

Population: 10,000 dwarves (doubling to 20,000 in the warm months), 2,500 ogrun, 500 outlanders

Ruler: Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn

Military: Small garrison of mixed dwarven and ogrun troops

Imports: Cereals, meat, beer, tools, weapons, metal, lumber

Exports: Salmon, furs, pike, liquor, boats

Farhollow has many qualities that make it an ideal choice for a starter campaign:

- A frontier town in desperate need of outside aid (cue the adventuring company!)
- Rival factions vying for power through murder and back-alley intrigue
- Ancient ruins that hold the allure of lost treasure
- A monster-infested lair ready to unleash horrors on an unsuspecting populace

GOVERNMENT AND LAW

The strongest warrior clan has always led Farhollow, and for the last seventy-five years, that clan has been Clan Gelhurn, renowned for their skill with both axe and carbine. Today, Clan Lord Daggot Gelhurn rules the enclave from the Hall of Lords at Wendylnar Hall.

GOODS AND SERVICES IN FARHOLLOW

Despite being a frontier settlement, Farhollow offers an extensive list of services popular with adventurers. Each location is appended with its area number in parentheses. Refer to the map of Farhollow later in this appendix.

Amphitheater/Arena: Field of Skalds (10)

Armor: Felzoun's Fine Armor (12)

Bakery: Salmon Head (15)

Blacksmith: Bothor's Smithy (11)

Carpentry: Old Troll Woodworking (13)

Clothing/Textiles: Abasha's Fine Clothiers (14)

Distillery: Hollowbite Distillery (2)

Festhall: Mother Blanca's (7)

Fishery: Bagram Fishery (3)

Grocery: Ebrum the Greengrocer (16)

Hospice: House of the Bloody Shroud (20)

Inn/Hostel: Gramble's Lodge (1), Bluegill Dormitory (9)

Magic/Mechanika: Bosley's Curio Shoppe (17)

Merchant: Ayeres Whitewater Priakos (18)

Stabler/Farrier: Redfire Stables (21)

Tavern: Flaming Beard (4)

Temple/Shrine: Northern Bastion Church (6)

Weapons/Firearms: Doogan's Arsenal (19)

THE SENTINELS AND THE GLAIVES

Farhollow is defended by two martial forces: the sentinels, who are tasked with guarding the town walls and patrolling the surrounding moors, and the glaives, who are sworn to police the enclave and protect its citizens. Both forces are comprised of mixed dwarven and ogrun troops.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Because Farhollow is a remote enclave far from the commercial center of Rhul, trade plays a vital role in its economy. Without any roads linking it to the rest of Rhul, the settlement owes its very existence to shipping trade along the Ayeres River. Outlander merchants are free to do business in the city but must first declare their goods and intentions at the Dawn Gate.

CRIME

Despite being an enclave founded by outcasts and criminals, Farhollow is subject to extraordinarily little crime. The glaives deal harshly with any criminal organizations that spring up, especially if they impair commerce in any way. Shield Moot Zero has wisely avoided notice thus far and stands alone as the city's preeminent purveyor of illicit activities.

DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS

Farhollow is divided into six districts: High Meridian, Five Gates, the Scrivening, Silverfall, Cannoneer's Green, and the Foundry.

HIGH MERIDIAN

Outlander District

Millennia ago, the fabled City of Ash and Bronze collapsed, literally swallowed whole by a ravenous sinkhole. When Farhollow was founded centuries later, the dwarves avoided the few surface structures that escaped the great collapse. Ever since the establishment of freeholds in Rhul, however, refugees have taken to setting these ruins, and the Rhulfolk of Farhollow are largely content to let the outlanders have a district of their own.

Gramble's Lodge (Inn). This ramshackle, well-worn flophouse—erected precariously close to the cliff's edge—is favored for the discreetness of its host, a dour old dwarf who lost his beard to a fire decades ago. Among the few inns amenable to boarding outlanders, Gramble's Lodge offers freeholders welcome succor during their stay in Farhollow. Rooms at the inn cost 2 gp per night and include a hot bath and stabling. Hot meals are available for 5 sp. Although the food is nothing to write home about, the portions are generous.



FIVE GATES

Trade and Warehouse District

Rhulfolk who make their living from the Ayeres River are the primary inhabitants of Five Gates. After the annual spring thaw, Five Gates swells with transients arriving on river barges from across Rhul. The district takes its name from the five cyclopean dolmens that have stood sentinel over this stretch of the Ayeres since time immemorial.

Hollowbite Distillery. Built by Clan Puldor five generations ago and currently overseen by grand matriarch Lokti Puldor, this distillery harvests and processes a single cactus-like local succulent into a distilled spirit called hollowbite. Unlike that of many succulents, the fleshy, engorged stem of the hollowbite plant is not covered in spines. Instead, the plant, which grows only in the arctic tundra northeast of Farhollow, is reinforced with serrated

ridges sharp enough to slice flesh, cloth, and even uncured leather with merely a touch. Any creature that touches hollowbite without proper precautions takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

Bagram Fishery. Blessed with a commanding view of the harbor, Bagram Fishery harvests fish and other aquatic foodstuffs from the brisk Ayeres River before packing them for export to other locations throughout Rhul. This very lucrative commercial enterprise is run by a sweating and swearing old salt named Garton Whitewater. The fishmongers of Five Gate must pay Garton a tithe of 10% of their daily earnings or risk a visit from his hired goons. An oval ironclad watercraft built for two paddlers, called a coracle by locals, may be rented from the fishery for 7 gp per day. The rental fee includes fishing gear and nets.

The Flaming Beard. This dockside tavern is Farhollow's

most boisterous pub. Its signpost—a brightly polished visage of a smiling dwarf whose well-groomed beard is alight with prismatic fire—is visible from a considerable distance. Patrons can procure tankards of dark ale and shots of fine spirits, but this rowdy dive does not offer any food. The proprietor of the Flaming Beard, a heartily cheerful fellow named Tegrin Puldor (see the “Persons of Interest” section in chapter 1), tends the bar and fills his patron’s drinks with a generous pour. Ale, stout, and mead are available for 3 cp per tankard or 1 sp per hand keg. Spirits, including the establishment’s signature hollowbite liquor, cost 5 cp per shot or 1 sp per tall glass.

THE SCRIVENING

Temple and University District

Notable for its unique structures of freeform architecture, the Scrivening is home to Farhollow’s elite thinkers and theologians. Situated above Five Gates and below High Meridian, this open-air district consists of a series of terraces carved vertically into the cliff wall at the base of Mount Grend.

Northern Bastion. Despite serving as a house of worship, the Northern Bastion better resembles a stronghold, complete with a dry moat and a spiked iron enclosure. Assessor Heldine Lohrun and her sister, Juror Peldine Lohrun, preside over the devout dwarven congregation. The bastion, one of the oldest and largest structures in Farhollow, has an extensive cellar whose hidden passages connect the church to Drinaal’s Delve. Any petitioners who are willing to add to the church’s coffers can secure up to three potions of healing for a reasonable donation of 40 gp each.

Mother Blanca’s. Inlaid with bronze, this ornate manse of gleaming black polished marble stands at the end of a nondescript alley carved deep into Mount Grend. For those in the know—and in possession of the correct code word—Mother Blanca’s operates as both a gambling hall and a house of pleasure. A single platinum coin will satisfy the entry fee; additional services cost extra.

SILVERFALL

Civic and Highborn District

The wealthiest clans of Farhollow live in Silverfall, a semicircular promenade recessed behind the district’s namesake waterfall. The Silverfall cascade was formed when the Ayeres River was diverted following the collapse of the City of Ash and Bronze.

Hall of the Tribunal. This striking edifice, with its large, conical-roofed, and many-windowed turrets, was clearly inspired by the human architecture of Caspia, the City of Walls. The great hall was once an embassy housing representatives from Cygnar but now serves as the base of operations for the Iron Tribunal (see the “Iron Tribunal” section).

CANNONEER’S GREEN

Garden and Cultural District

At ground level east of Five Gates sprawls the largest of Farhollow’s six districts. A district of common folk and quiet neighborhoods, Cannoneer’s Green is named for the massive cannon that guards the city’s southern flank.

Bluegill Dormitory. This large, twin-towered tenement stands just inside the western gate to Cannoneer’s Green. Its arched double doors are painted blue and adorned with a brass nameplate that reads “Welcome Home” in Rhulic. Halidar Myrt, daughter of famed local ranger Murgun Ayer, serves as the proprietress of this hostel. Rooms at the Bluegill vary from 2 gp to 5 gp per night, depending on guest count and amenities. A morning meal is included in the cost. By special arrangement, Myrt can provide restorative salves and herbal remedies for 25 gp each. Applying one of these natural remedies restores 1d4 + 1 hit points. Myrt can produce ten doses of remedy each day.

Field of Skalds. This open-air amphitheater and arena showcases performances by skalds, poets, strong-armed ogrun, and acrobats alike. Rising tiers of stone-cut seating form a semicircle that gives spectators a great view of the spectacles taking place in the oval field below. Admission varies from 4 cp to 6 gp per head, depending on the act. Between scheduled events, the young sons and daughters of Farhollow’s more affluent citizens use the private amphitheater as a hangout.

THE FOUNDRY

Industrial District

Given over almost entirely to industry and manufacturing, the Foundry is largely populated by hardworking laborers, tinkers, and mechanics, as well as their salt-of-the-earth families. The entirety of the Foundry lies under Mount Grend and is illuminated by gas lamps.

Bothor’s Smithy. A burly giant of an ogrun, Bothor is a master blacksmith and farrier with no equal in all of Hathorung. A dozen apprentices keep the smithy busy day and night and they dutifully carry out their korune’s orders. Only Bothor’s most discerning clientele know that the ogrun is a purveyor of illicit ironmongery useful to thieves and adventurers alike.

RHULIC METALLURGY

The dwarves of Rhul were one of the first peoples to master the art of metallurgy. Over the course of many centuries, the dwarves experimented with different ways to mine metal, melt it, and shape it into useful tools and weapons of war. Clan Halfaxe of Drinaal’s Delve was the first to develop bronze alloy—a melding of nine parts copper with one part tin that resulted in a metal alloy stronger than any known before. The great number of smelters that soon arose in Drinaal’s Delve gave the ancient enclave its famed appellation, “the City of Ash and Bronze.”

SURROUNDING ENVIRONS

Beyond the stout walls of Farhollow lies an eldritch hinterland alive with verdant forests and majestic highlands. Some whitebeards deep in their drink grumble that this corner of Rhul is forsaken by the Great Fathers, but most who settle here welcome the peaceful respite and solitude afforded by the region’s isolation.

HATHORUNG

The largest and least populated county in Rhul, Hathorung encompasses a vast swath of ice-swept highlands along the nation's eastern frontier, stretching from the Glass Peaks in the north to the Skybridge Mountains in the south. Farhollow is Hathorung's only Rhulic settlement of note, but recent years have seen a spattering of freeholds take root in this unforgiving frontier.

GLASS PEAKS

Cracked from centuries of exposure to extreme weather and littered with jagged scree, the Glass Peaks are notoriously treacherous to traverse. Steep and barren of any flora able to survive at such elevations, these frost-scarred reaches are stalked only by hardy predators on the hunt for a warm-blooded meal and herds of shaggy mountain goats that graze on the sparse vegetation.

SKYBRIDGE MOUNTAINS

Once the proud demesne of a forgotten clan of dwarves, the halls beneath the Skybridge Mountains have been abandoned ever since the stout folk who once lived there were driven from these lands centuries ago by a deathless interloper and its undead armies. The mountain range gets its name from a series of peaks, each taller than the last, that rise like a great staircase reaching up toward the heavens.

AYERES RIVER

The mightiest and longest of Rhul's rivers, the Ayeres snakes for hundreds of miles and serves as a natural barrier between the Glass Peaks and the Skybridge Mountains. Those daring or foolish enough to swim in its deep frigid waters risk being unable to escape its nearly vertical bank, which is piled high with slush.

FLEETSILL RIVER

Every spring, melting runoff from the Skybridge Mountains swells the Fleetsfill and transforms it from a babbling brook to a raging torrent. Folks who attempt to reach the source of the Upper Fleetsfill, which lies just inside the borders of Ios, always find themselves inexplicably turned around at the frontier of the foreboding elven realm with no recollection of having doubled back.

FREEHOLDS

In the aftermath of the Claiming, the Moot of the Hundred Houses opened Rhul's borders to outlanders for the first time in centuries. In exchange for a simple oath to abide by the tenets of the Codex—the body of law that governs life in Rhul—refugees are free to establish freeholds along the Rhulic frontier and may live in peace as full citizens of the realm. The freeholds listed below are just three of the half dozen or so settlements that now dot Hathorung in eastern Rhul.

HIGHCASTLE

Decades prior to the Claiming, human barbarians of a bloodthirsty lineage launched seasonal raids on Farhollow from their encampment along the northern banks of the Ayeres River. Today, Highcastle and its more even-tempered inhabitants trade peaceably with Farhollow.

KALAMITY

Roughly twelve miles south of Harrow Lake, deep in the heart of the Skybridge Mountains, rests the secluded gobber and bogrin commune of Kalamity. Founded by a tribe of tinkers fleeing persecution in Cygnar, Kalamity was constructed from the technological detritus of a ruin that predates the Orgoth Occupation.

BAVARDAGE

The somber freehold of Bavardage stands at the foot of Mount Skycatcher near the headwaters of a tributary of the Fleetsfill. Settled by mute, black-eyed Iosans derided as "the soulless," Bavardage can be unnerving to outsiders unaccustomed to the emotionless mannerisms of its populace.

GREATER RHUL

Translated as "hearth" in the elder tongue of the dwarves, Rhul is a resilient land of snowcapped peaks, rugged hills, sheltered valleys, and deep gorges. The dwarven clans that rule here have governed since before humanity learned to rub two sticks together to spark a fire.

The Rhulfolk enforce the borders of their domain with massive stone watchtowers positioned every mile along the frontier. These stout bastions, accessible only by subterranean tunnels, house all manner of armaments, including artillery and heavy steamjacks.

In the aftermath of the Claiming and the rise of outlander freeholds in Hathorung, there is renewed interest in creating a new branch off of the Ulgar-Brunder rail line and connecting Farhollow to Rhul's great iron railway at long last.

COINS OF THE REALM

Although Rhul's coinage is rarely seen outside the dwarven nation's borders, it is trusted throughout western Immoren due to the dwarves' exacting standards for weight and metal purity. The Rhulic Currency table shows the coins commonly used throughout Rhul, as well as their composition and value.

RHULIC CURRENCY

Coin	Metal	Value
Scepter	Platinum	10 gp
Anvil	Gold	2 gp
Horn	Silver	2 sp
Flint	Bronze	1 sp

RUNESTONES

Rhulfolk prefer to record their musings on stone in lieu of perishable materials. Many a stone wall, menhir, and obelisk throughout Rhul bear the Drogunic glyphs devised by the dwarves. (These glyphs are named after the Land Beneath, known as "Kharg Drogun" in the Rhulic tongue.) Skalds among the Rhulfolk prefer to record their epics by inscribing such glyphs along the circumference of flat, circular rocks known as runestones. Completed writings are collected by stringing several runestones together with iron or steel filigree.

APPENDIX B: BESTIARY

This appendix provides encounter stat blocks for enemies that appear in this adventure. Entries are presented in alphabetical order.

CEPHALYX AGITATOR

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, Insight +5, Medicine +7, Perception +5, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands all languages but chooses not to speak, telepathy 200 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Command Drudge. Cephalyx drudges obey the agitator's telepathic commands, no matter how suicidal.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The agitator's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*

3/day: *mage armor*

1/day each: *dominate monster*, *hold person*, *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The agitator makes four attacks with its prosthetic blades.

Prosthetic Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid creature and is hit by all four of the agitator's melee attacks in a single turn, the target is surgically mutilated in some capacity and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have one of its ability scores (the agitator's choice) permanently reduced by 1. The reduction lasts until the removed by the greater restoration spell or similar magic. Other curative magic simply forms scar tissue.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The agitator magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Influence. The agitator targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or use its reaction on its next turn to attack the nearest friendly creature.



CEPHALYX MINDBENDER

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, Insight +5, Medicine +7, Perception +5, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands all languages but chooses not to speak, telepathy 200 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Command Drudge. Cephalyx drudges obey the mindbender's telepathic commands, no matter how suicidal.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The mindbender's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*

3/day: *mage armor*

1/day each: *dominate person*, *hold person*, *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mindbender makes four attacks with its prosthetic blades.

Prosthetic Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid creature and is hit by all four of the mindbender's melee attacks in a single turn, the creature is surgically mutilated in some capacity and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have one of its ability scores (the mindbender's choice) permanently reduced by 1. The reduction lasts until the removed by the greater restoration spell or similar magic. Other curative magic simply forms scar tissue.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The mindbender magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Adrenal Flood. The mindbender psychically enhances the strength and endurance of up to four drudges it can see within 30 feet of it. Until the start of the mindbender's next turn, each affected drudge gains a +2 bonus to all Strength-based melee damage rolls and gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. Each drudge can receive this benefit from only one mindbender at a time.

Burst Drudge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The mindbender can cause one drudge it can see within 90 feet of it to explode. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on the drudge must make a Dexterity saving throw. The creature takes 8d6 thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The drudge is killed in the process.

CEPHALYX WORKER

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3

Skills Insight +3, Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands all languages but chooses not to speak, telepathy 200 ft.

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Command Drudge. Cephalyx drudges obey the worker's telepathic commands, no matter how suicidal.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The worker's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*

1/day each: *command*, *hold person*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The worker makes two attacks with its prosthetic blades.

Prosthetic Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The worker magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or take 8 (2d4 + 3) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

DRAEVEN CULTIST

Medium humanoid (dwarf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (scale mail)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Rhulic

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Marked Soul. The cultist has a marked soul. An infernalist can use the marked soul to summon horrors into the physical world.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the cultist can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Spellcasting. The cultist is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks).

The cultist has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *resistance*

1st level (2 slots): *bane*, *inflict wounds*

ACTIONS

Ritual Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

OGRUN MERCENARY

Large humanoid (ogrun), neutral

Armor Class 16 (infantry armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +4, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Rhulic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Charge. If the mercenary moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee weapon attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) damage of the weapon's type.

Tempered by War. The mercenary has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.





RHULIC HOLLOWMAN

Medium fey (grymkin), unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Apparition. As a bonus action, the hollowman can teleport up to 10 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hollowman makes two bayonet attacks.

Bayonet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands.

Military Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SHAFT WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 34 (4d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the shaft wight to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the shaft wight drops to 1 hit point instead.

Spawn Shaft Wight. A humanoid slain by the shaft wight's Constitution Drain attack or Gravel Vomit attack rises 24 hours later as a shaft wight unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shaft wight makes two pickaxe attacks. It can use its Constitution Drain in place of one pickaxe attack.

Pickaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage

Constitution Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its Constitution score is reduced by 2. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its Constitution to 0.

Gravel Vomit (Recharge 5-6). The shaft wight spews a wretched mix of gravel, sand, and brackish liquid from its mouth onto one target within 5 feet of it. The target must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



WINTER TROLL WHELP

Small giant, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (3d6 + 15)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Perception +3, Survival +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Regeneration. The whelp regains 1 hit point at the start of its turn. If the whelp takes necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the whelp's next turn. The whelp dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Rime. A creature that touches the whelp or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 1 cold damage.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 1 cold damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 1 cold damage.



APPENDIX C: NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

AK-AK

Small humanoid (gobber), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Skills Insight +4, Investigation +3, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Cygnaran, Gobberish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Telepathic Invisibility. Ak-ak cannot be detected by psionic means but can be seen by ordinary vision. She cannot be communicated with telepathically, and spells such as detect thoughts do not work on her.

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Ak-ak can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ak-ak deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Ak-ak that isn't incapacitated and Ak-ak doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ak-ak makes two melee attacks.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.





KELEN IRONBID

Medium humanoid (ogrun), lawful neutral

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +2, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Cygnaran, Molgur-Og, Rhulic
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Huge Stature. Kelen's large size allows her to wield two-handed weapons in one hand. When she uses a weapon with the versatile property, she always uses the damage associated with that property.

Powerful Build. Kelen counts as one size larger when determining her carrying capacity and the weight she can push, drag, or lift.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kelen makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 bludgeoning damage.

VETTA WROUGHTHAMMER

Medium humanoid (dwarf), chaotic good

Armor Class 15 (infantry armor)
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +2, Persuasion +4
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Rhulic
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dwarven Resilience. Vetta has advantage on saving throws against poison and has resistance against poison damage.
Fast Reload. If a firearm Vetta wields is not loaded, she can reload it as part of an attack.
Gunslinger. Vetta's pistol attacks don't have disadvantage on attack rolls made against targets within 5 feet of her.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Vetta makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.
Pistol Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.
Repeating Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.



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