

IMMERSIVE SE ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST RPG GAME

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Introduction

BEFORE YOU BEGIN PLAYING

Read the adventure once or twice. Take notes of anything you would like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the game. Such notes could include, but are not limited to, ways to role-play an NPC, combat tactics for a creature, or the locations of important things. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and maps.

- Have all the material and accessories you will use to aid you in running this adventure. Such as flashcards, a GM screen, minis, dice, and battle-maps.
- It is useful to have the player characters' names, race, class, armor class, and hit points in a separate and easy-to-see piece of paper or screen. It may also be important to note other things like backgrounds and personality traits.

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important task. The GM is the table's narrator and organizer for a good game. You must take care of the narrative and adjudicate the party's actions. You transform these words into a living thing.

Here are a few guidelines to help you make this happen:

You have the Power. You make the decisions about the adventure progress and how the group interacts with NPCs, creatures, and the setting's elements. You are encouraged to improvise and change things. Each group is different and they will all have different needs and things they enjoy and things they don't like.

Give Them a Good Challenge. You are the judge of your group's experience. Give them a well-balanced challenge to keep them engaged. A good challenge does not necessarily mean combat. Try to feel out what your group is more interested in and try to give them what they crave. A role-playing situation like a tough negotiation, an interrogation, or calling a favor may be as intense as a full-blown battle.

Do not Stall. If the game starts to slow down because the players are unsure of what to do, feel free to provide hints, clues, or a helping NPC to nudge your group in the right direction. Players can get frustrated if they are unable to react to the adventure due to the lack of necessary information. Hints and clues may present themselves as "ideas" or "thoughts" the characters have. An alternative method is to introduce an NPC who will provide a veiled suggestion to the characters directly and serve as the "GM's voice"

CREATING AN ADVENTURING PARTY

This adventure does not rule out any combination of races, classes, or other features. There are no alignment requirements for this adventure but it is suggested that at least half the party is of good alignment. Otherwise, the incentives for finishing the adventure are curiosity and/or the promise of gold. Good or neutral alignment are recommended for new players.

If you are playing with a new batch of PCs, ask the players why their heroes are together and acting as a team. Each player may choose one or two options from the following list to justify why they are together. This will help the game go smoother from the beginning and it will give them a few cues on how to interact with each other.

- Two characters are childhood friends. They come from the same city or town.
- One character saved another PC's life a year ago.
- One character owes money to another.
- Two or more characters are currently employed as mercenaries by the same guild.
- Two characters of the same race are relatives (siblings, cousins, etc.)

This list is not exhaustive. Players are free to invent reasons why they already know each other.

As the GM, you are free to disregard this if your players are experienced enough. These instructions are designed to kick-start the game from the top and help new players get a hold of the group faster. A group of experienced players might get together and come up with reasons to work together on the fly with little to no difficulty.

ABOUT LINEARITY AND PLAYER AGENCY

This adventure includes several approaches that the adventurers may take and several variants in the conclusions of each chapter. These options are not exhaustive but there is a limited amount of information or options a module can include. This adventure, as written, is somewhat linear but the intention is not to constrain players' creativity and options. We have included what we believe are the most likely courses of action in the adventure.

ABOUT NOTATION

Some events or things described in this document express their odds of happening in this format: "1-in-6", "2-in-6" and so on. This means that the GM rolls a d6. Rolling the first number or less means success.

There is a 2-in-6 chance of finding the hidden door.

This means that a player or the GM rolls a 1d6, on a result of 2 or lower, the hidden door is found.

ADVENTURE PRIMER

Many valiant rockfolk engage in the ultimate pilgrimage. None of them ever return...

Rockfolk Fisherman

WHERE TO ADD THIS ADVENTURE

Rain of Fire is a tier-1 adventure optimized for level 4 characters. The adventure centers around a strange people of elemental-infused humanoids known as rockfolk. They live in a river valley by the skirts of an often active volcano. Once every few years, the volcano threatens to erupt and cause havoc in the area but the sacrifice of brave rockfolk individuals calms down the mountain. Those who walk the Ultimate Pilgrimage never return to tell the tale and are regarded as heroes.

Forgotten Realms. In the Nether Mountains, east of Sundabar and south of Citadel Adbar.

Eberron. In the Endworld Mountains, in between the Blade Desert and Newthrone, the capital of Q'barra.

Estimated Duration: 6 - 8 hours.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Strange happenings and the unlikely motivation to perform the ultimate sacrifice are a common thing in Rockfolk Valley. Outsiders look down on the rockfolk for their odd customs and cultural differences but the thing that causes the most commentary is the Ultimate Pilgrimage.

The rockfolk live by the skirts of the Ruby Mountain, an active volcano. Every few years, the volcano threatens to explode and destroy their settlement. When this happens, a dozen or two of rockfolk climb the mountain to reach the lava shrine and appease their draconic deity. They call it Ultimate Pilgrimage because no one ever returns. Their sacrifice protects the lives of others.

To the rockfolk, deciding to take this journey is a reason of pride for the traveler and a mixture of joy and sadness for their close ones. Nevertheless, the decision is accepted and regarded with respect. The brave individuals leave to climb the mountain. Within a day, the volcano calms down. It is understood that those involved in the pilgrimage sacrifice their lives to the volcano.

To the rockfolk, such has been their way of life for generations. Not all of their kind agree on these measures as they consider them insane. The rebels have tried to organize the community and convince them all to stop the pilgrimages forever. They appear to have been success ful since most people declare themselves against the sacrifices. But when the volcano wakes up, a group of rockfolk shows up again with unshakable determination to climb the mountain and save the community. Once any rockfolk decides to do it, no one can convince them to back down from their decision.

THE NEW RELIGION

The rockfolk worship an obscure entity known as the Lava Draconid. It is depicted, in images and effigies, as a four-legged reptilian creature with large metallic scales and long fangs. The draconid creature swims in lava and is said to empower the volcano's fiery displays that prompt the locals to climb the Ruby Mountain. They believe that the pilgrimage pleases the Lava Draconid.

All rockfolk in the valley worship the strange deity with fervor. They often see the draconid in their dreams. It whispers things to them. Prophetic passages about their future or the world, or so they say. Truth or not, the Lava Draconid is an integral part of their existence.



THE DRAGON-RUBY TIARA

The reason for the rockfolk's zealotry to the mountain and their religion lies three hundred years in the past. A past that none of them remember due to their lack of written records and the generations-wide mental manipulation of the Lava Draconid.

Back then, an influential rockfolk priest rose to prominence when he forged the power of the mighty mountain into a golden tiara with a large ruby. The artifact gave him true power which he abused to enslave the rockfolk race. The tiara gave him the power to manipulate the minds of his kin, binding them to his will. No rockfolk could resist the power of the artifact. The priest had a shrine/ prison built in the volcano and made it its lair. The situation was invisible to outsiders; the tiara had such control over the populace that no one could cry for help. It went unnoticed. The priest befriended an elemental draconic creature that lived in the mountain and adopted it as a pet and companion. The creature was loyal to the priest until he died of old age in his shrine in the volcano.

After the priest's passing, the draconid got the tiara. It took the half-sentient beast a few years to learn how to command the artifact's power. When ready, the draconid called on some inhabitants of Rockfolk Valley to climb to the shrine and imprison themselves. The draconid ate them and went to sleep. Since then, the draconid wakes up every few years and sends a telepathic call for rockfolk to come to the prison and wait to be eaten. Unbeknownst to the creature, the power of the artifact creates a projection of the Lava Draconid's energy that the locals perceive in their dreams as prophetic visions, and physically causes the Ruby Mountain to heat up as if ready to explode. After generations, the rockfolk ignore that their religion is self-imposed and fake; that their pilgrimages have no other purpose than to feed a beast.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the chapters and how the adventure is most likely to play out:

- 1. Rockfolk Valley. The adventurers arrive at Rockfolk Valley and get acquainted with the locals and their unique customs. Many of them are concerned about the group of pilgrims that climbed the mountain this week.
- 2. Lava Draconid's Shrine. The adventurers visit a strange underground volcanic complex where the pilgrims go to stop the volcano from exploding. Nothing is what it seems and a strange snakefolk sorceress attempts to strike a deal with the adventurers.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Rain of Fire may begin with one or more of the following adventure hooks:

A COLLECTOR'S REQUEST

A renowned scholar and curator of a private museum has learned of an old artifact: the Dragon-Ruby Tiara. It was created by a powerful rockfolk priest 300 years ago but was lost after the evil priest passed away. The scholar's records mention a shrine in the volcanic mountain next to Rockfolk Valley. There is a reward of 1,500 gp for retrieving the artifact. The scholar warns the adventurers that the locals may have it in store and might not be willing to part with the relic. The scholar/curator doesn't care if the tiara is stolen or bought from the rockfolk.

OPEN CALL FOR VALIANT WARRIORS

Rockfolk Valley's townspeaker, Garlla, posted a bounty contract for mercenaries and sellswords. The notice poster summons adventurers to the rockfolk settlement next to a volcanic mountain range. It promises a reward of 1,500 gp for "probably dangerous" investigative work. The poster is explicit in that any hired mercenaries must be ready to face extreme environment conditions in the Ruby Mountain, a semi-active volcano.

A NEED FOR ALCHEMICAL INGREDIENTS

A mage and alchemist patron requests the adventurers to embark on a perilous quest in exchange for a reward of 1,500 gp. The mage requires the adrenal glands and eyeballs of a rare draconic creature. The only report of such a creature in the area is that of an evil priest wizard's companion that passed away 300 years ago. However, the Lava Draconid has a lifespan of hundreds of years; there is a chance it still lives to this day in the volcanic area next to Rockfolk Valley. The mage mentions that the rockfolk in the area should know something about the draconid and where it might live.

ROCKFOLK VALLEY

Call us insane, but the Ultimate Pilgrimage is something we must do. It's our duty.

Garlla Townspeaker

Located by the Ruby Mountain, divided by a river, lies Rockfolk Valley. At first glance, it looks like a small settlement. An almost temporary town adapted to the mountains. But the rockfolk are a well-developed people. They manage to harvest crops in the hard, mountainous soil and made farms. They raise goats and use the river as their main source of food. Over the years, the rockfolk's thirst for expansion and growth has led them to occupy more of the mountain's skirts, and even go beyond the river; they've populated more than one hundred feet of land on the other side. Rockfolk are proud, hard-working individuals. They look like regular humans, but their skin is gray and hard as a rock. They have longer lifespans and they're more resilient than humans. However, their minds are prone to manipulation. To this day, the rockfolk are bound to a self-imposed religion they don't even comprehend. And a costly one, to say the least.

SUPER-IMPOSED CULTURE

The rockfolk have followed a series of traditions and customs for more than three hundred years. What they don't know, and they have no records of it, is that this so-called religion and creed is but a magical manipulation created by the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara* inside the Ruby Mountain.

More than three centuries ago, when the rockfolk priest-mage still lived, he created the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara* and subdued his kin to achieve his evil purposes. Ironically, his befriending of the Lava Draconid was a mere secondary task; his main objective was to enslave his race and find a way to use the volcano's power via the tiara. Thus, the priest spent his life trying to extract even more power from the mountain while pleasing the Lava Draconid with charmed, hypnotized, warm prey.

The priest used the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara*'s power to command innocent rockfolk to march to the mountain and imprison themselves. He did so by making the rockfolk have strange dreams and premonitions. Now it is his former pet, the lethal Lava Draconid, who wears the tiara and uses its power. The beast employs the same method as the priest-mage to charm the rockfolk. It sends messages disguised as dreams and spiritual callings that prompt the rockfolk toward the mountain.

First the priest and now the Lava Draconid. The poor rockfolk have been brainwashed for almost four centuries. Generation after generation, rockfolk minds have been tainted and corrupted with the tiara's power. Hopefully, some of the youngest rockfolk have been born with an innate higher resistance to the tiara's enchantment.

CULT TO THE MOUNTAIN

The four-century-long brain-washing has left marks in rockfolk society. To start, the Ruby Mountain and the Lava Draconid are seen as divine entities. Phrases like "Praise the mountain" or "May the Lava Draconid forgive us" are more than common, they're creed. Houses and businesses alike are all decorated or named after these two god-like beings. The Ultimate Pilgrimage is mentioned often, despite it happening every two or three years when the Lava Draconid wakes up to eat. It is considered a high honor to be "chosen". It is so because the rockfolk believe their sacrifice appeases the mountain's anger and its supposedly approaching eruption. However, in recent decades, more and more rockfolk have grown restless and gone against tradition. But even they have a change of heart if subjected to the tiara's power.



GORKO

Rockfolk (age 46)

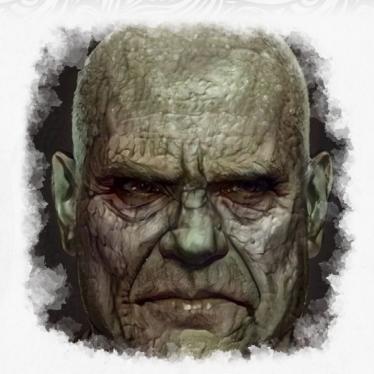
Gorko (thug) is a corpulent and tall individual. His features are hard and he has no hair. He is a popular person in the mining community. He is a seasoned miner by profession. His arms and chest are muscular and large.

Gorko's brother, Rudaka, is imprisoned inside the Ruby Mountain. Gorko claims there is something odd going on. He claims his brother would have never gone to the Ruby Mountain willingly. He is sure of it.

Manner. Blinks twice as much as a normal person.

Ambition. Gorko wants to know what happened to his brother. He wishes to go with any party of adventurers.





GARLLA, TOWNSPEAKER

Rockfolk (age 35)

The townspeaker of Rockfolk Valley is a tall, thin woman named Garlla. Everyone in Rockfolk Valley knows her and respects her word and commands. She is a strong believer in the Ruby Mountain faith and the divine powers of the Lava Draconid. However, the increasing number of rockfolk that speak against the Ultimate Pilgrimage has caused her faith to shake. She believes that sending a group of brave warriors to the mountain might help them find answers and the truth of their situation.

Manner. Garlla wears her hair in a ponytail that she undoes and does every five minutes.

Ambition. She wishes the well-being of the rockfolk.

EXPLORATION PARTY NEEDED

Regardless of the reason that brings the heroes to Rockfolk Valley (see Adventure Hooks), the adventurers arrive at a complicated time. It's been a few days since the last Ultimate Pilgrimage, where fifteen rockfolk marched to the Ruby Mountain, never to return. Rudaka (page 13), Gorko's brother, was among them.

The moment he sees the heroes, Gorko doesn't stop insisting that something odd is going on and that his brother may be in danger. Townspeaker Garlla seems like a more reasonable individual but she confirms that more and more rockfolk start to think and feel like Gorko, restless and dissatisfied. The whole town's faith trembles.

The townspeaker's will is strong, though. She tells the adventurers that she and her people need answers. She begs the heroes to climb the Ruby Mountain and seek the protection of the Lava Draconid. She tells the heroes that the ancient magma god might have the answers the community seeks. She trusts that the solution to the rockfolk's unrest lays in the dragon-like god's wisdom.

Gorko and other rockfolk claim their dreams and visions are contradictory. They believe the Ruby Mountain and the Lava Draconid are but a shaded veil. They can't explain it or put it into words, but their discontent and stress are visible. Whatever comes to pass inside the mountain, a time for change has certainly come for the rockfolk people and their mystifying religion.

Roll once or twice on the following table when the adventurers talk or chat with Gorko, Garlla, or with any rockfolk in town, ignore repeated results or just pick one:

d10 Rumors

- One rockfolk claims Gorko's brother was the leader of a group of detractors of the Ultimate Pilgrimage.
- Gorko claims Townspeaker Garlla doesn't believe in the 2 Ultimate Pilgrimage anymore but won't say anything due to her position in Rockfolk Valley.
- Two rockfolk elders chat and express their feelings of frustration of having had dreams and visions their whole lives but never being chosen for the pilgrimage.
- Garlla confesses that her faith is shaking. It is but a heartache, but something tells her that the Lava Draconid might not be as godly after all.
- Two rockfolk children say that their dad is considered a hero. He left on the pilgrimage three years ago.
- A group of rockfolk can be heard talking. They are 6 angry. They do not understand a sudden change of mind of someone they won't mention.
- A friend of Gorko's confirms to the heroes what Gorko claims. He says Rudaka would've never gone to the mountain of his own volition.
- A group of rockfolk women tells the heroes that their leader, Garlla, will always protect them by pleasing the Lava Draconid. It has been the law for centuries.
- A young rockfolk tells the heroes the dreams and visions they have are more common in older rockfolk.
- Five rockfolk men talk in the pub. They discuss the idea of how to dissuade Garlla to spend money on heroes and send them to the mountain to seek answers.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following descriptions of areas A1 through A10 correspond to the Rockfolk Valley map.

Terrain. The whole town is built on uneven terrain and mountainous rock. Walking around town is exhausting.

Heat Waves. While the Lava Draconid is awake, the volcano releases heat waves that can be felt throughout the valley. The heat is harmless but a surprise to visitors.

Religion. The settlement is decorated with red colors and draconic-shaped stuff. Local shrines, symbols, and other religious paraphernalia can be found in all places.

Uneasiness. The rockfolk are going through a complex period of transition. The town's faith is partly broken. An increasing number of heretics shake the beliefs of others. Garlla, their leader, doesn't know how to respond.

A1. NORTH MINING SPOT

Equipment (miner's picks, shovels, lanterns). **Mine** (silver, copper, and zinc are extracted here).

A group of strong rockfolk pull mine-carts with various ores, coal, and mining tools. Their skin and clothes are stained from a hard day's work.

Rockfolk have several mining spots along the valley. This is by far their main source of income when it comes to exportation. Their durable skins make the hard work of a miner an easier task, in comparison to humans.

Bartering. The heroes can shop raw zinc, silver, and gold ore from the miners. Their prices are great; all purchased ores can be sold with a 33% gain elsewhere.

A2. VALLEY'S FORT

Walls (massive crenelated stone walls). **Towers** (manned and armed with heavy crossbows).

The largest building in the valley can be seen from afar, overlooking the settlement. Four towers protect the keep where the rockfolk leader rules.

The central keep of this small fortress is the home of Garlla, the townspeaker and leader of the rockfolk. She's never alone. She's always accompanied by a score of servants and advisors. Plus a squad of armored rockfolk soldiers prepared to die for her, at her command.

Their zealotry and unwavering determination are caused by the rockfolk's fanatic beliefs. Garlla is their leader and, as such, her word is considered law, holistically and spiritually. Some rockfolk see her as an extension of the Lava Draconid and its divine will. Hence, Garlla's dilemma to openly speak her mind.

A Collector's Request. If the heroes came to the valley for other reasons than the bounty contract described in the Adventure Hooks, their interactions with Gorko and the rest of the rockfolk might earn them a contract.

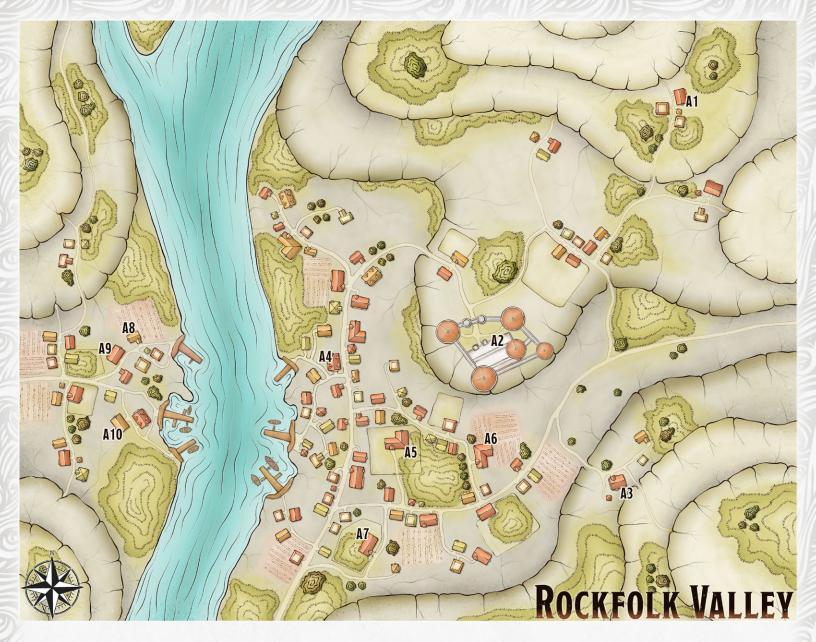
A3. SOUTH MINING SPOT

Equipment (miner's picks, shovels, lanterns). **Mine** (silver, copper, and zinc are extracted here).

This is the smallest and newest mining spot in town. A group of six rockfolk work here. Their ore output is considerably lower than the other mines, as of yet. But it is also due to a current pest problem. If the heroes come by, the miners beg them to get rid of the swarms of centipedes in the mine. They offer 100 gp in exchange.

Critters from the Dark. If the heroes accept, they must deal with three **swarms of centipedes**. When one swarm disperses, a giant centipede attacks too.





A4. RUDAKA'S HOME

Size (two-story stone building with wooden beams). **Desolated** (the home seems empty, not habited).

If the heroes knock on the door of Rudaka's home no one responds. If they insist, his wife, Puki, answers. She's devastated since his husband is gone. Her children hide behind her and wipe their tears with their hands. She manages to say the same things as Gorko and asks them to leave her alone and speak with Gorko instead.

A5. VALLEY'S GOATS

Goats (eating grass). Fence (square, varnished wood) Workers (many rockfolk tend to the field and animals).

Taronni is the owner of the goat business. He has more than one-hundred goats and he's a master breeder. These are the only farm animals that can live under the conditions of the Ruby Mountain so all rockfolk eat goat, whether they like it or not. Visitors shall find goat meat served on their plates anywhere in the valley.

A6. GORKO'S HOME

Size (three-story stone building with wooden beams). **Farm** (turnips, potatoes, and sweet potatoes).

Gorko and his family greet the heroes with a smile. They believe the adventurers can find answers inside the Ruby Mountain. They beg them to go there and find answers.

If asked, Gorko speaks openly about rockfolk traditions and the last Ultimate Pilgrimage. He describes how Rudaka, his brother, was one of the most dissatisfied rockfolk in town and that there is no logical explanation for his sudden change of heart. Gorko believes that something or someone hides in the Ruby Mountain.

A Possible Ally. Gorko (page 8)'s brother is imprisoned in the mountain shrine. He tells the heroes he's willing to go with them to help find answers. It is up to the heroes if they accept his help or not. As much as he wants to learn of his brother's fate, if the heroes refuse his help, Gorko fears the Lava Draconid too much to go alone.

A7. ROCKFOLK WARES

Farm (turnips, potatoes, and sweet potatoes). **Wares** (silver and gold jewelry, general store).

The store has an extended repertoire of fancy pieces of jewelry. From bracelets to earrings, to necklaces and rings. Their prices are unmatchable due to the proximity to the mines. However, rockfolk's expertise in mining does not translate well to jewelry design.

Making Profit. The prices are good but their art is tasteless. All purchased pieces of jewelry can be sold with a 33% gain elsewhere with a successful DC 16 Persuasion check. On a fail, no gain is made.

A8. FANATIC'S HOME

Walls (painted in magma colors, full of messages). **Main Door** (dragon head sculpted on the wood).

A rockfolk shouts to the sky and preaches by yelling his thoughts. He wears dirty red robes and holds a torch with which he burns himself.

The home of a madman. Kamu (**commoner**) is a fanatic. His perception of what religion means has gone beyond comprehension and logic. If interacted with, he yells stuff like "Sinners shall repent and burn!", "The lava draconid will cleanse our souls with fire!" or "We are destined to die at the feet of the mountain god!". He proceeds to burn a different part of his body with the torch he holds. He reacts with violence if someone attempts to stop him or put an end to his frenetic speech.

A9. MAGMA GOD INN

Size (two-story stone building with wooden beams). **Low-business** (just one room is taken at the moment).

The inn is managed by Laduka, a fair rockfolk woman. She is one of the rockfolk that stand against the cruel Ultimate Pilgrimage and demand answers. She tells the heroes they can stay for free as long as they pair up with Gorko and speak with Garlla about doing something.

A10. ROCKFOLK FISH SHOP AND BOATS

Transport (small boats come and go to each shore). **Smell** (fresh fish and seafood). **Crowd** (ever-present).

A crowd of more than thirty people moves around the several fish stands, the smell is strong.

The wharves are crowded; rockfolk love fish. They cook it in hundreds of different ways. The ferry boats nearby can carry up to six people at a time. Miners and fishermen ride them for free, the rest do so for a small fee.



DEVELOPMENT

The adventurers' actions may affect the complex and ongoing situation at Rockfolk Valley. The poor rockfolk ignore the reality of what's behind their fake religion. So much so that there is not even a hint about the priestmage from hundreds of years ago. The heroes must make use of what they have and what little they rockfolk know. The largest clue for the adventurers is Gorko's position about his brother's sudden change of heart. Something out of the ordinary made Rudaka change his mind.

Garlla looks for a group of adventurers (see Adventure Hooks). Her doubts have accumulated and she wants answers. She cannot provide any help, however. Gorko is the only one who dares to enter the mountain. The rest of the rockfolk fear the Lava Draconid too much.

GORKO'S FATE

The heroes would be cruel and foolish not to accept Gorko's help. He is no skilled swordsman. But he's strong. The quest to save his brother is enough motivation to make him see past his fears. However, Gorko's good intentions might prove fatal to his brother and him.

GORKO'S RALLY

If Gorko is present when reaching areas B8, B9, B17, and B18, he urges the heroes to help him free the prisoners so they can fight back! This can end badly though. Most rockfolk aren't warriors or skilled in combat. But their minds are weak and Gorko's speech is convincing. If they fight the Lava Draconid, the probabilities of failure are high. But a hero could be born that day.

LAVA DRACONID'S SHRINE



Perhaps we can work together. I only want a trinket buried in this hellish place...

Fir'Dihara

THE SHRINE AND FACTIONS

The lava shrine features three entities at odds with each other. They co-exist momentarily among magical traps and guardians left by the long-gone rockfolk priest.

THE LAVA DRACONID

The 400-year-old draconid is awake. It bids its time to eat the captive rockfolk before returning to slumber. It doesn't leave area B10 willingly. It can command any charmed rockfolk to take its side and protect it.

THE CHARMED PRISONERS

The Lava Draconid has already eaten four of the fifteen pilgrims that climbed the mountain last week. The remaining eleven are imprisoned in the several cell sections. One of them, Rudaka, regained consciousness two days ago but remains trapped in area B18. Any of the other rockfolk can be mentally freed with a *remove curse* or *dispel magic* spell. Any charmed rockfolk has a 3-in-6 chance of becoming aggressive toward the adventurers; as commanded mentally by the Lava Draconid.

FIR'DIHARA

The snakefolk sorceress can be found in area B13 investigating the rockfolk priest's *magnificent mansion* spell access. She hired a sage to cast a *legend lore* spell and is aware that a powerful artifact is hidden in the shrine. She knows it is a magical tiara but little else. She expects the adventurers to be of some help and offers *protection from energy* spells in exchange for allowing her to keep the bygone relic for her own purposes.

TRAPS AND GUARDIANS

The rockfolk priest-mage that built the dungeon created many magical traps and bound elemental guardians to protect the place from unwanted visitors.

Traps. All magical traps are operational. They reset magically 1d12 hours after being triggered.

Guardians. Several elemental creatures protect the dungeon, they attack non-rockfolk visitors. If destroyed, they are reformed from the molten lava after 24 hours.

ENTERING THE SHRINE

There is a single entrance in the Ruby Mountain; the descending stairs to area B1. From B2, there's no set order to explore the shrine and the many paths adventurers may choose. This is a non-linear dungeon crawl.

When moving within the shrine and exploring new locations, there is a 1-in-6 chance of encountering any of the following threats:

- 1 1d4 magma mephits patrolling the dungeon
- 2 1 **fire elemental** on its way to area B2
- 3 Talkative rockfolk **ghost** who died 75 years ago
- A black pudding on the hunt
- 5 An aggressive rockfolk **ghost** floating aimlessly
- 6 1d3 magma mephits freeing a rockfolk prisoner
- 7 1d3 **swarms of spiders** (not in lava areas)
- 1d3 **giant spiders** (not in lava areas)



12

RUDAKA, PRISONER

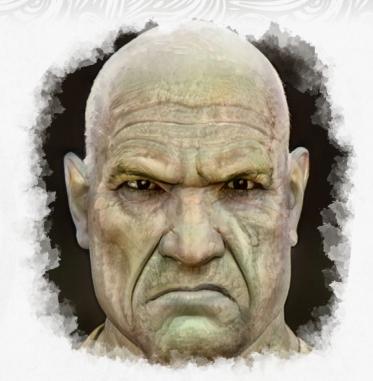
Rockfolk (age 46)

Rudaka is one of the fifteen people that volunteered to make the Ultimate Pilgrimage last week. He imprisoned himself in area B18 along with a few other rockfolk. Rudaka's strong will and innate resistance to the tiara's power helped him break free from the mind charm, but he was already captive when he came to his senses. He can help the adventurers if freed.

Manner. Rudaka pounds his chest with a fist when he announces what he is about to do.

Ambition. He is a seasoned coal miner and wants to become a foreman in the valley's mining sites. The current situation might propel him into prominence.





FIR'DIHARA, SORCERESS

Snakefolk (age 34)

She is part of a snakefolk hybrid tribe that has reptilian features like a bifid tongue, snake eyes, scaly skins, and infra-vision. They are humanoid, however. Fir'Dihara (see page 21) is in the shrine looking for a way to recover the Dragon-Ruby Tiara. She has explored the dungeon partially. She claims there is a magical tiara buried in the shrine somewhere; she offers her help in the form of protective spells in exchange for the head-wear piece.

Manner. Fir'Dihara's bifid tongue flutters to taste the air in between her sentences in an unsettling way.

Ambition. Fir'Dihara wants to acquire the *Dragon-Ru*by Tiara to increase her power and influence.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unbearable Heat. Areas B2 and B10 are too hot to resist longer than 30 seconds without magical protection. After that, creatures take 1d4 fire damage per round.

Lava. Molten rock in the lava pits and canals is liquid but too viscous to get submerged fast. A creature that falls in the lava takes 2d6 fire damage on contact. 1d6 is cumulatively added each subsequent round of contact to a total of 6d6 fire damage on the sixth round of continued direct contact with the molten rock. A creature that drops to 0 HP bursts in flames and is submerged.

Doors. Heavy stone slabs hand on well-oiled hinges. They are unlocked and can be pushed by a medium-sized creature. The vault door in area B21 is locked.

B1. SHRINE ENTRANCE

Stone disk (10-foot-wide, arcane sigils carved deep). **Temperature** (wall of unbearable heat from area B2).

A sigil over the gate to area B2 portrays the Lava Draconid deity from Rockfolk Valley, it was crudely added in recent decades by the pilgrims that come every few years.

Magic Circle. A spellcaster can learn the functioning of the circle by studying it for 30 minutes (DC 14 Arcana). If a level-2- spell slot is spent, an alternate version of the etherealness spell is cast on one creature stepping on the circle. They can freely dungeon this way. The spell is limited in that the person cannot leave the dungeon or enter areas B10 or B22. Returning to the circle is the only way to end the spell. They can see the snakefolk sorceress, Fir'Dihara, in area B13.

B2. Lava Pit and Draconid Sculpture

Platforms (granite flooring with volcanic rock below). **Temperature** (dangerous heat from the lava pool).

A huge, finely-carved draconic head statue dominates the far end of the chamber. A large lava pool is the source of the dangerous heat. A stone hanging bridge crosses the room 20-feet above.

The draconid face on the east wall opens its maw to allow access to area B10 when the two mechanisms in area B15 and B16 are activated. Otherwise, the only way to enter is through the canals that feed this chamber with liquid lava. Jumping across platforms is only dangerous when doing it in combat situations. A **fire elemental** emerges from the lava to defend the shrine. It can traverse the lava canals to areas B4 and B5.

The Chests. The two chests next to the draconid's face are illusions designed to attract tomb robbers. There's a 1-in-6 chance of falling to the lava when jumping to them.

B3. ROOM OF SPIKES

Spikes (3-foot-tall and sharp, made of steel). **Temperature** (unbearable heat comes from area B2).

The room contains a 15 by 10 feet steel platform with sharp spikes and a stone table by the far wall. The spikes are the bottom of the pitfall traps in areas B15 and B16. A *detect magic* spell reveals a faint aura of conjuration on the chamber's stone ceiling.

B4. SOUTH LAVA CANAL

Canal (5-foot-deep, slow-flowing lava).

Temperature (unbearable heat comes from the canal).

Lava from area B2 flows through a narrow canal to this chamber. The lava then flows west and into the volcanic soil itself again. This controlled release of molten rock keeps the Ruby Mountain cool. It was designed by the rockfolk priest to avoid unwanted eruptions when using the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara*'s power.

Four **magma mephits** stand on top of the stairs, in area B12. They fight over a piece of magma-stained obsidian rock and are unaware of the party. If the party reveals their presence, the mephits drop the rock and attack.

B5. North Lava Canal

Canal (5-foot-deep, slow-flowing lava).

Temperature (wall of unbearable heat from the canal).

This room is a mirrored projection of area B4. Two **magma mephits** hide in the lava canal and wait for the best moment to attack. The **fire elemental** in area B2 squeezes through the canal to reach this chamber and attacks the adventurers unless it has already been destroyed.

B6. Guardians' Tombs

Cool (shielded from the dangerous lava heat). **Stone enclosures** (heavy lids, unlocked).

A small chamber with a low ceiling and an oppressive aura to it is flanked by two stone coffins. The lids are engraved with their names and deeds.

The rockfolk priest-mage had his four most loyal followers interred here a few years before he passed away. One coffin in each tomb contains a **ghast** to continue to protect the shrine mindlessly to this day.

B7. SECRET VAULT ACCESS

Stone chests (unlocked, half-open, trapped). **Access switch** (pulling the sconces in area B6).

The chests in these areas are meant for would-be tomb-robbers. They feature a spring-loaded poison needle trap and contain 100 gp and 400 sp each. The chests are locked (DC 13 Thieves' Tools). Any attempt to lock-pick any chest triggers a poisoned needle to shoot from the keyhole (DC 14 Dexterity save, 4d6 poison damage).

B8. SOUTH CELLS

Cells (iron-bar portcullises, hard to bend). **Remains** (rockfolk bones in several cells).

Eight small cells flank the long eastbound hallway. A flight of stairs at the end ascends to area B17. The metal-plate in the middle of the hallway causes all eight cells' portcullises to raise when pressed.

Captive Rockfolk. Three charmed rockfolk prisoners sit motionlessly in individual cells. Their names are Rudki, Allakia, and Fikara. While charmed they cannot take decisions but follow others if prompted.

Bones. Two rockfolk skeletons lie in two cells. They, like Rudaka (area B17), beat the mental manipulation of the tiara. They died of thirst and hunger years ago.

B9. North Cells

Cells (iron-bar portcullises, hard to bend). **Remains** (rockfolk bones in several cells).

Eight small cells flank the long eastbound hallway. A flight of stairs at the end ascends to area B18. The metal-plate in the middle of the hallway causes all eight cells' portcullises to raise when pressed.

Captive Rockfolk. Three charmed rockfolk prisoners sit motionlessly in individual cells. Their names are Fiki, Halakku, and Valokki. While charmed they cannot take decisions but follow others if prompted.

Bones. Some cells contain the skeletons of rockfolk that suffered the same fate as the ones in area B8.

B10. Lava Draconid's Lair

Cells (iron-bar portcullises, hard to bend). **Temperature** (dangerous heat from the lava pool).

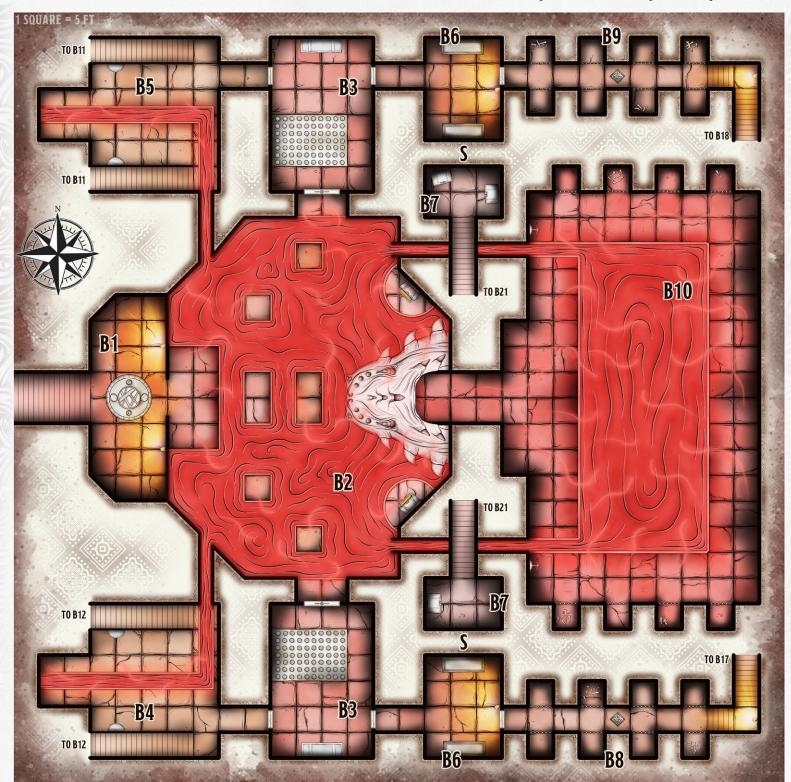
A large lava pool takes up the majority of the stone chamber. Molten rock bubbles and bursts as a creature swims underneath the hellish surface.

The **Lava Draconid** (see page 21) is primitive and proud. It is overconfident in its own power and abilities. The presence of uninvited guests offends it but also fills it with unexpected joy and curiosity. It has spent the last

few hundred years eating and sleeping. The Lava Draconid emerges from the lava pool and attacks the adventurers with joyful playfulness. Like a cat pouncing its prey, intending to play with it for as long as possible.

The draconid uses the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara* to command all charmed rockfolk (**commoners**) to come to its aid. There are ten charmed individuals in the shrine unless the party broke the enchantment to any of them. Magma mephits press the plates to free them.

Valves. Closing the valves by the canals impedes the lava flow. Lava in other areas dries up after 1d4 days. This causes the Ruby Mountain to erupt violently.



B11. NORTH LAVA CANAL (UPSTAIRS)

Mural (a robed priest worshiped by a mob of rockfolk). **Temperature** (considerable heat from the canal below).

This is the second floor of area B5. The second-floor balcony is 20 feet above the lava canal. The adventurers face 2 **magma mephits** and maybe the **fire elemental** from area B2, if it pursues them here.

The man in the mural is the evil rockfolk priest-mage that built the shrine. He is portrayed wearing an oversized, golden, glowing tiara with scarlet rubies.

B12. South Lava Canal (upstairs)

Mural (draconic creature loved by a mob of rockfolk). **Temperature** (considerable heat from the canal below).

This is the second floor of area B4. The second-floor balcony is 20 feet above the lava canal. Four **magma mephits** stand on top of the stairs, fighting for a worthless piece of obsidian, as described in area B4.

The creature in the mural is the Lava Draconid immortalized as the loyal companion of the evil priest.

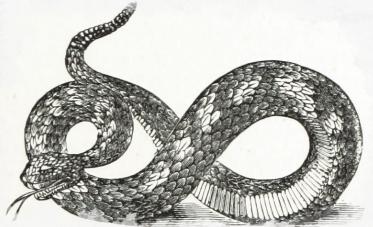
B13. MAGNIFICENT MANSION DISK

Stone disk (10-foot-wide, arcane sigils carved deep). **Temperature** (dangerous heat from area B14).

A carved stone disk and two metallic plates decorate the floor of this chamber. A mural on the wall portrays a powerful rockfolk man in ceremonial robes, enjoying a luxurious dinner.

The magic circle in this room is the entrance to the priest-mage's *magnificent mansion* spell. To activate it, both metal plates must be pressed while a spellcaster spends a level 3 spell slot on the magic circle. The mansion remains in great condition to this day. There is nothing of interest in it but portraits of the rockfolk priest.

Fir'Dihara. The snakefolk sorceress (see page 21) is in this area deciding how to approach the rest of the shrine. She tries to strike a deal with the adventurers. If they agree, she helps in good fate to acquire the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara*. If they refuse, she pretends to leave, casts *invisibility*, and follows them (see Conclusion).



B14. LAVA PIT (UPSTAIRS)

Platform (held by four sturdy chains and the bridges). **Temperature** (unbearable heat from the lava below).

The steel chains that hold the center platform are sturdy. Any of them can be broken by dealing 10 damage to it. If one chain is severed, there is a 3-in-6 chance the platform and the bridges collapse down to area B2. Cutting a second chain causes the immediate collapse of the platform. If this happens, creatures on the platforms below take 3d6 damage and are thrown into the lava pool.

The iron cables that hold the bridge are too hot to touch. Crossing the bridge requires good balance (DC 13 Dexterity save) to avoid falling to the lava pool below. Jumping from the platform to either of the balconies of areas B13 or B21 is a risky action (DC 15 Strength).

B15. NORTH VAULT MECHANISM

Floor engravings (gold and platinum inlays). **Temperature** (dangerous heat from area B14).

A small magical stone circle lays by the far wall. The arcane runes on it activate a part of the clockwork device in area B21. A spellcaster must spend a spell slot to activate the circle. The effect lasts for 24 hours.

Pitfall Trap. Creatures standing on the inlaid floor or that attempt to pry the inlays from the floor trigger the trap. The floor collapses and any creatures standing on the 15-by-10 ft. floor-section fall to the spikes in area B3 (DC 15 Dexterity save, 4d6 damage). Creatures reduced to 0 HP are impaled in a gruesome way.

B16. South Vault Mechanism

Floor engravings (gold and platinum inlays). **Temperature** (dangerous heat from area B14).

A small magical stone circle lays by the far wall. The arcane runes on it activate a part of the clockwork device in area B21. A spellcaster must spend a spell slot to activate the circle. The effect lasts for 24 hours.

Pitfall Trap. This trap is identical to the one described in area B15. It drops creatures to the south B3 area.

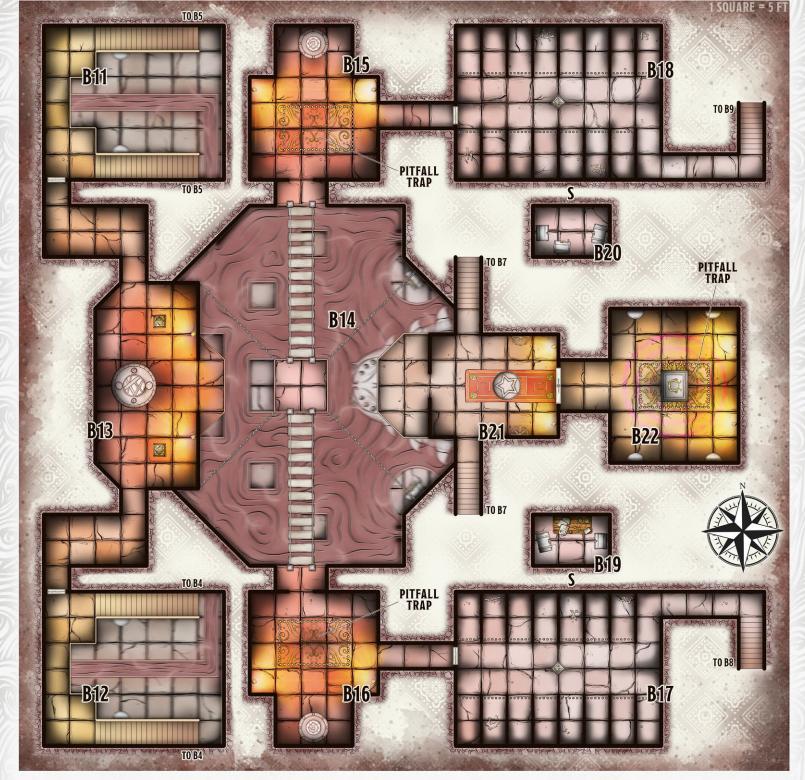
B17. SOUTH CELLS CHAMBER

Cells (iron-bar portcullises, hard to bend). **Remains** (rockfolk bones in several cells).

The chamber contains fifteen 10-foot-deep individual cells. The metal-plate in the middle of the room causes all fifteen cells' portcullises to raise when pressed.

Captive Rockfolk. Two charmed rockfolk prisoners sit in individual cells. Their names are Darunni and Plaku.

Bones. Some cells contain the skeletons of rockfolk that suffered the same fate as the ones in area B8.



B18. North Cells Chamber

Cells (iron-bar portcullises, hard to bend). **Remains** (rockfolk bones in several cells).

The chamber contains fifteen 10-foot-deep cells. The central metal-plate button causes all fifteen cells' portcullises to raise when pressed. Two magma mephits are here to retrieve a prisoner for the draconid.

There are several bones, rocks, and a boot next to the button at the center of the chamber. This is Rudaka's doing; he has unsuccessfully tried to escape by throwing several things to activate the button.

Captive Rockfolk. Two charmed rockfolk prisoners sit motionlessly in individual cells. Their names are Trakzi, and Pinnaka. They cannot take decisions or respond.

Rudaka. He is held in the second-to-last northeast cell. He is happy to see visitors and pleads to be let out. He ignores why his kin in the other cells are unresponsive but suspects that the strange dreams are to blame. If Gorko is present, they embrace and swear to free the rest of the captive rockfolk despite their current condition.

Bones. Some cells contain the skeletons of rockfolk that suffered the same fate as the ones in area B8.

B19. SOUTH VAULT

Access switch (pushing a button-brick in area B17). Stone chests (unlocked, filled with treasure).

This is one of the two real vaults in the shrine. It contains two unlocked stone chests and a rotting wooden table with several papers and clay medallions. The written documents are rotten and illegible. They turn to dust when touched; nothing can be learned from them.

Treasure. The chests contain 400 gp, 1,200 sp, a spell scroll of protection from energy, and a spell scroll of remove curse. Three clay medallions worth 50 gp each.

B20. North Vault

Access switch (pushing a button-brick in area B18). Stone chests (unlocked, filled with treasure).

This is one of the two real vaults in the shrine. It contains three unlocked stone chests and two well-preserved oil paintings on the south wall. The oil portraits both depict the rockfolk priest-mage. A detect magic spell reveals a faint abjuration aura; the spell that keeps the paintings in pristine condition, free of moisture.

Treasure. The chests contain 650 gp, 2,200 sp, 4,100 cp, a spell scroll of protection from energy, and a spell scroll of power word stun. A finely carved leather scabbard contains a masterwork +1 shortsword. The runes on the blade claim the sword is named "Savage", it belonged to one of the rockfolk priest-mage's bodyguards.

B21. Fake Vault's Antechamber

Sculpture (robbed rockfolk priest-mage, wears a tiara). **Temperature** (dangerous heat from area B14).

The stone rockfolk priest statue wears a golden tiara. Behind it, a grandiose carved stone door that features a complex clockwork mechanism.

This chamber is designed to fool uninvited visitors into believing it is the antechamber to the shrine's main vault. The clockwork apparatus by the door in area B21 is an overly complex piece of machinery. To open the door, both arcane circles in areas B15 and B16 must be activated. Then, two people must operate the wheel valves on each side of the vault door at the same time to open it.

Using Tools. A character can try to bypass the opening mechanism by manipulating the exposed clockwork machinery by the vault door (DC 18 Thieves' Tools).

Poison Gas Trap. Tampering with the clockwork machinery has a 5-in-6 chance of triggering the trap. The base of the priest's statue shoots out jets of red-colored gas in a 15-foot-radius that burn the nose, throat, and lungs (DC 16 Constitution save, 4d6 poison damage).

B22. THE FAKE VAULT

Floor engravings (gold and platinum inlays). **Glowing harp** (fake artifact, strong magical aura).

A stone pedestal stands over a gold and platinum inlaid floor. A glowing golden harp with three large rubies levitates one inch above the pedestal.

The whole room is a clever trap designed to drop wouldbe tomb robbers to the lava pool in area B10. A detect magic spell reveals a faint aura of conjuration on the floor under the pedestal and a strong conjuration aura on the harp. This is not the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara*. Its magic makes it glow, float, and be physically immovable where it is. A DC 30 Strength check is required to move it 10 ft.

Pitfall Trap. A creature standing on the inlaid floor that attempts to move the harp triggers the trap. The floor collapses and any creatures standing on the 15 by 10 feet floor section fall to the center of the lava pool in area B10 (DC 16 Dexterity save, 3d6 fire damage).

The Immovable Harp. An observant individual (DC 16 Perception) notices that the harp has a small lever underneath that can be toggled to activate its immovable property. It can hold up to 8,000 pounds of weight.

THE DRAGON-RUBY TIARA

Artifact, legendary (requires attunement)

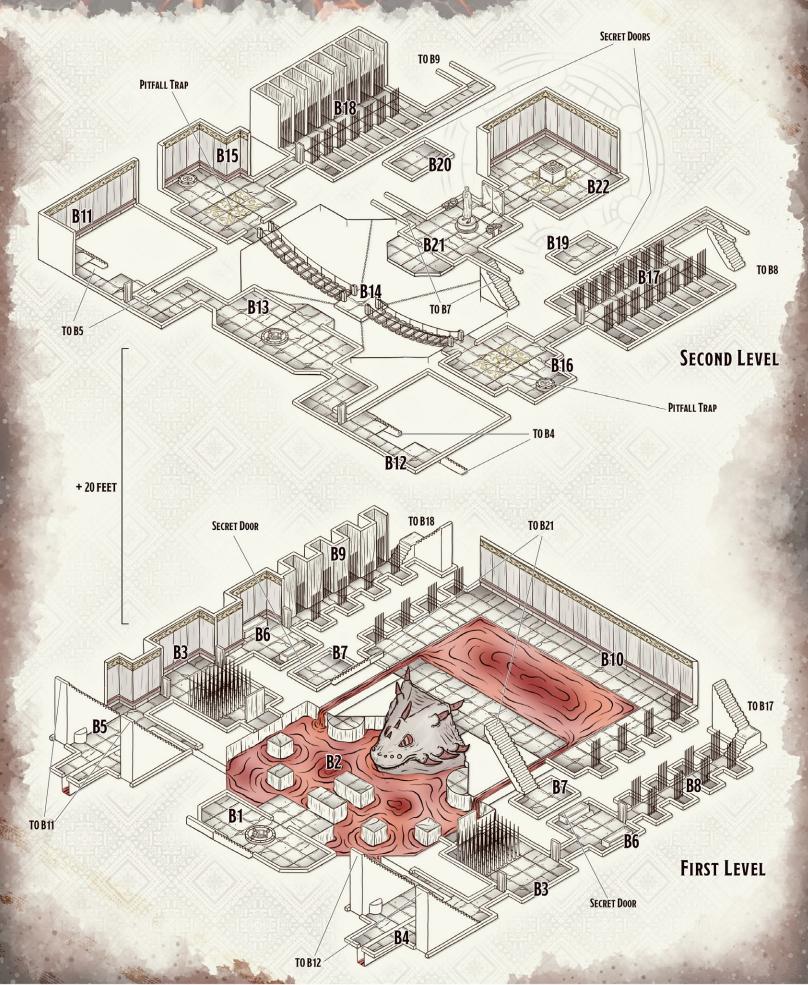
The Dragon-Ruby Tiara's power is tied to the Ruby Mountain. It can only function within 15 miles of the semi-active volcano. Attuning to the tiara requires a large expenditure of the user's life force. The user ages 4d10 years each time they attune to the tiara.

The Dragon-Ruby Tiara's powers are self-limiting because they can only be used to affect the rockfolk, but frequent use can cause the demise of all rockfolk in the area and the destruction of Rockfolk Valley.

Charm. The user can send a telepathic call to rockfolk individuals within a 15-mile radius. 3d6 rockfolk individuals become charmed as a result of this ability. The user can command them to do anything for as long as the enchantment lasts. The victims become submissive and unresponsive but do walk around if prompted to do so. The charm effect ends if the ability is used again to affect other rockfolk individuals.

Volcanic Activity. The Dragon-Ruby Tiara uses the volcano's power to function. Each time the charm ability is used, the Ruby Mountain heats up. If the user uses the charm ability twice in a single week, the Ruby Mountain explodes and destroys all settlements within 15 miles.

LAVA DRACONID SHRINE





CONCLUSION

The adventurers' decisions and actions in the shrine may affect the conclusion of this adventure in several ways.

FIR'DIHARA

A DEAL KEPT IN GOOD FATE

The snakefolk sorceress, Fir'Dihara wants the *Drag-on-Ruby Tiara* for her own ends and offers to help defeat the Lava Draconid in exchange. If the adventurers agree to the deal and let her keep the artifact, she bids them farewell and leaves the shrine.

She figures out how to operate the tiara a few weeks later. She tries her luck commanding the rockfolk to do her bidding. Unfortunately, she abuses the tiara's power and causes the Ruby Mountain to explode and destroy herself and Rockfolk Valley. Hundreds of lives are lost.

A DEAL REFUSED OR BETRAYED

If the adventurers refuse Fir'Dihara's proposition. She uses her magic to turn invisible and follows them around the shrine. She waits until the Lava Draconid is defeated to attack. The sorceress ambushes the party when they are at their weakest to retrieve the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara*.

If the adventurers accept her help but betray her by not letting her keep the artifact, she becomes enraged and attacks them on the spot with her magic.

THE DRACONID IS DEAD

Killing the Lava Draconid means the end of the Ultimate Pilgrimage custom in Rockfolk Valley. Years after the event, groups of rockfolk continue performing the pilgrimage to the Ruby Mountain shrine, this time of their own free will. The difference is that they do return. The custom becomes a voluntary journey of self-growth.

The Lava Draconid religion and the night visions the rockfolk had end instantly; they all feel a sense of personal rejection toward it. The disbanding of their religion causes turmoil and concern for a few months. Rudaka raises in popularity and is elected as ruler.

An Artifact Misused

If the adventurers attempt to use the *Dragon-Ruby Tiara* for selfish purposes and gain power in Rockfolk Valley, they may cause the accidental explosion of the Ruby Mountain and destroy themselves in the process.

If Rudaka or Gorko live, they are witness to the power of the tiara. They single out the adventurers as lowly traitors. The adventurers are branded dangerous criminals and the populace calls for their arrest.

THE LAVA DRACONID

Large dragon

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

HP 85 (10d10+30)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim (lava) 40 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA 17 (+3) 14 (+2) 16 (+3) 9(-1)13 (+1) 12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +7, Wis +4, Cha +4

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities Fire

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., p. Perception 14

Languages Draconic, Ignian

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Lava Walk. The draconid can move across and climb lava surfaces without an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of lava or fire doesn't cost it extra moment.

Rolling Charge. The draconid rolls like an armadillo for 40 feet. Each creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and getting shoved 5 feet on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Actions

Multiattack. The draconid makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

sphere from its mouth that explodes in a 15 feet square (range 40 ft.). Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 20 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

FIR'DIHARA

Medium humanoid, snakefolk

Armor Class 13 (studded leather) **HP** 28 (5d8+5) Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +3, Persuasion +3 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12 Languages Common, two other Challenge 3 (700 XP)

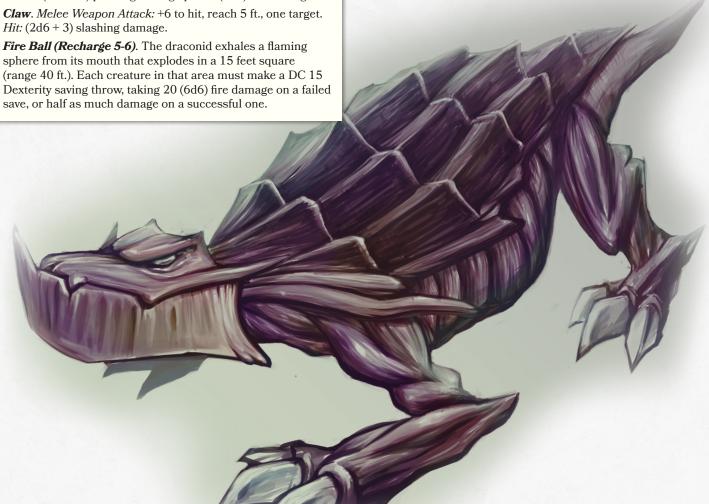
Spellcasting. Fir'Dihara is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spell casting ability is Intelligence (DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): light, fire bolt, minor illusion

- 1st level (4 slots): magic missile, mage armor, burning hands
- 2nd level (3 slots): hold person, scorching ray, invisibility
- 3rd level (2 slots): dispel magic, protection from energy

Actions

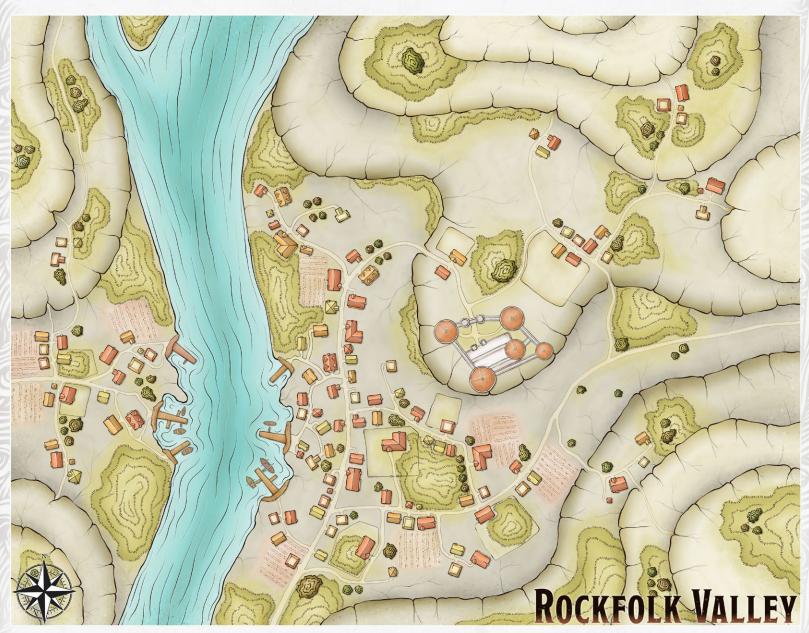
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.



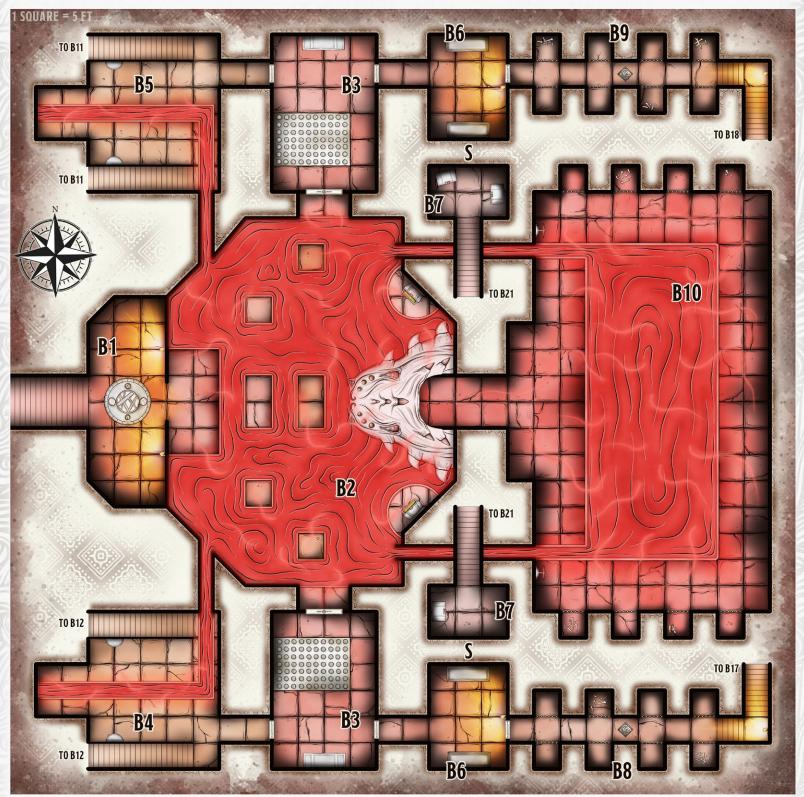
APPENDIX - MAPS



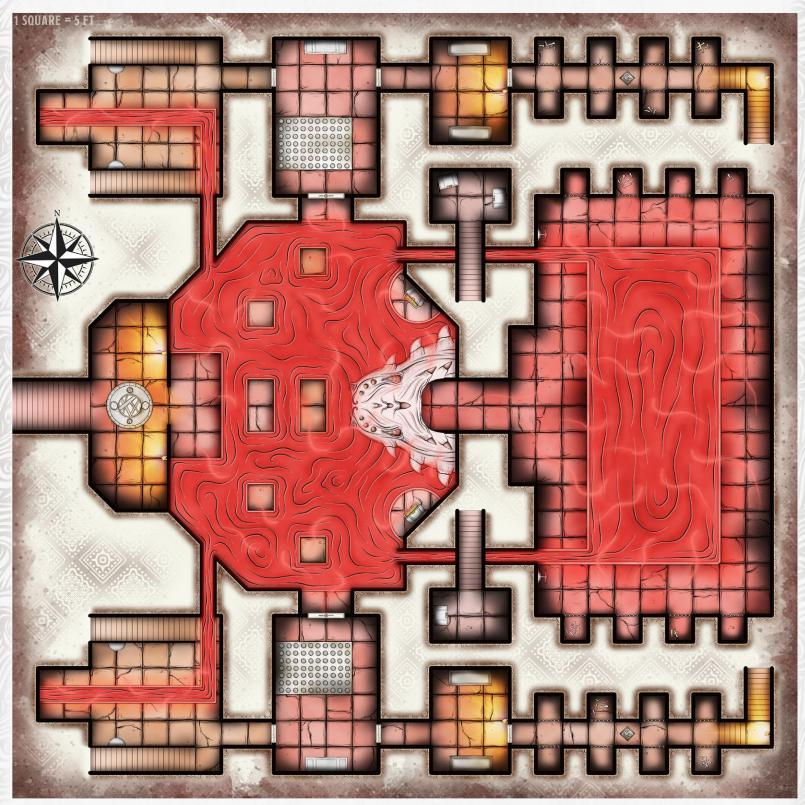
DM Map



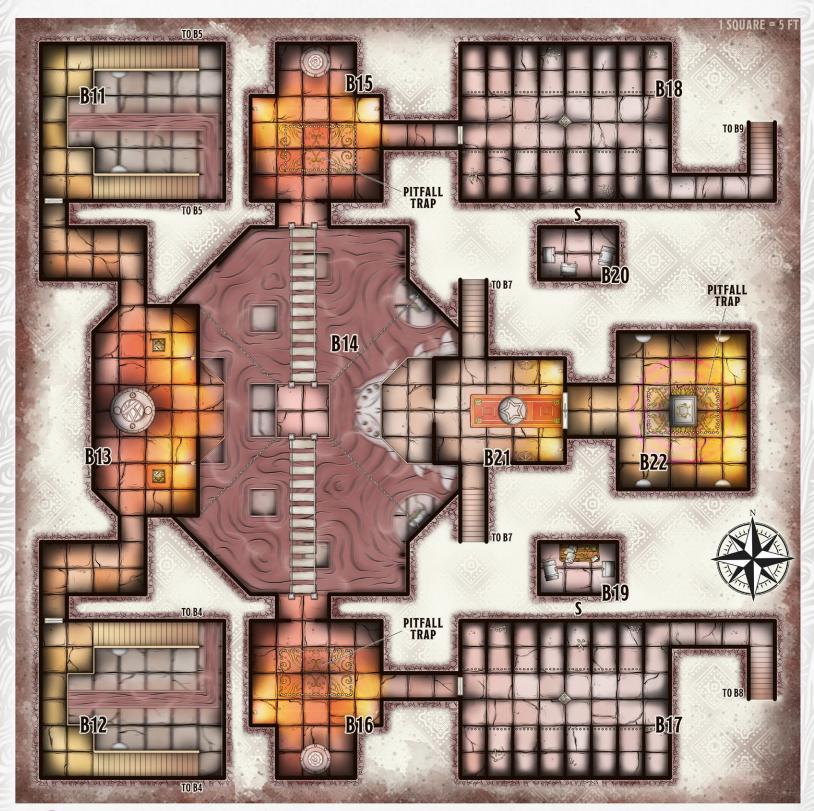
PC MAP



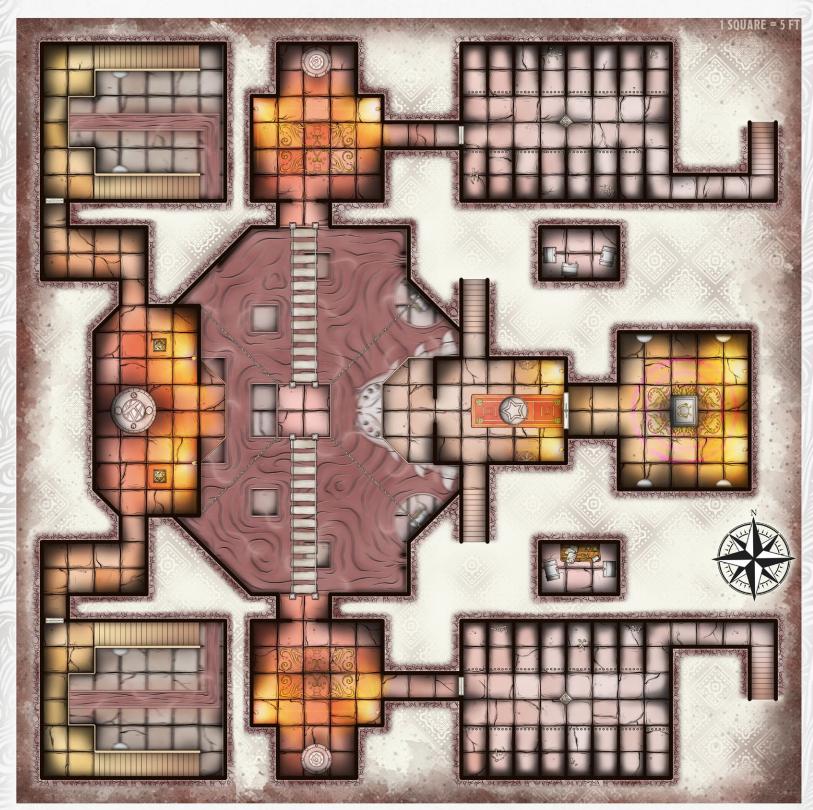
DM Map



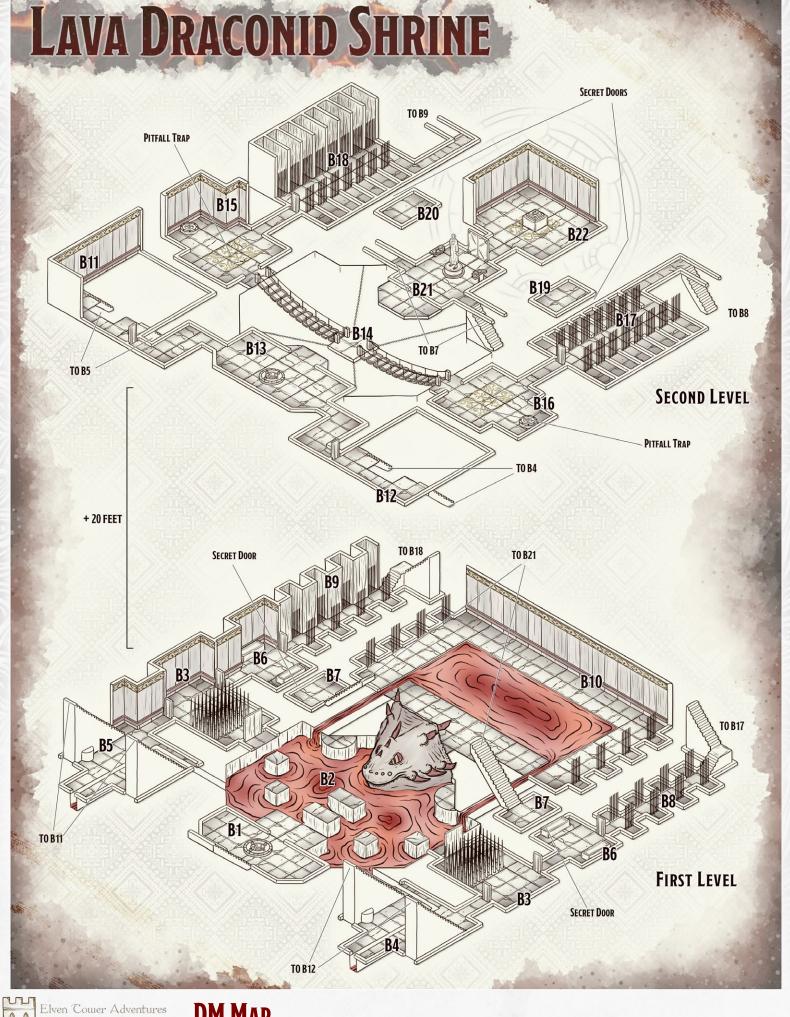
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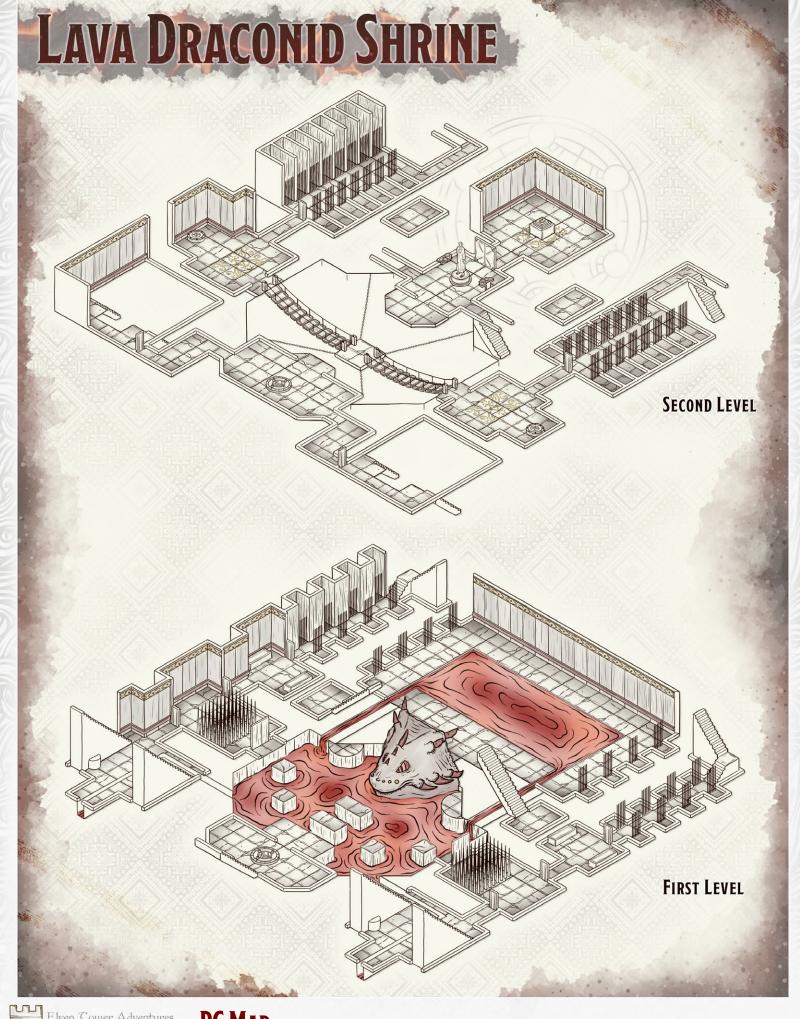


DM MAP



PC MAP



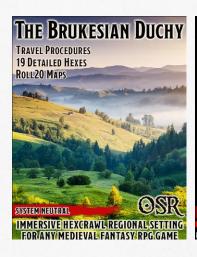




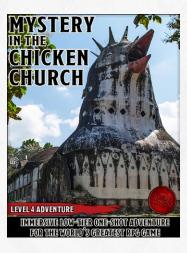
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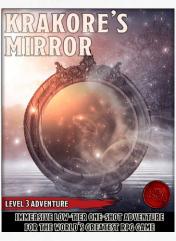
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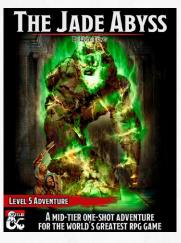


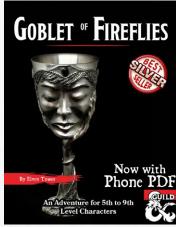












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