



THE DWARVEN CLANHOLDS OF DIRESTONE

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DIRESTONE

The dwarven metropolis of Direstone began originally as a joint excavation contract between three rival clans—the Emberhearts, the Thungrun, and the Darkhammers—in an attempt to avoid open conflict. Through shrewd diplomacy, the clans were able to remain peaceful and share the riches of the Stoneshield Range; thus, instead of one great mountain hall, there emerged three confederated clanholds, independent yet united by a shared economic interest. Together, the three founding families became known as the Direstone Triumvirate.

These three halls of stone, metal, and forgefire extend nearly a mile below the surface of the earth. Carved into the sides of the mountain halls are dozens of residential and commercial districts, each humming with the vibrant lives of their citizens; the bottom of the silos is reserved for the noble clanholds, from where the three founding families rule their kingdoms with honor and distinction. Connecting the mountain halls is the Grand Bazaar—or “Dunahrodir” in the Dwarvish language—where outsiders come to barter for the city’s eponymous commodity, direstone: a mineral prized for its universal alloy compatibility and natural strength. It is through the Grand Bazaar, via its interconnected stone highways, that one must pass into the city; magical lamps illuminate the crisscrossing archways, allowing even surface dwellers to see all the way to the bottom. Gargantuan, stern dwarven faces have been carved into the sides of the silos—their eyes are said to follow outsiders on the path down, and to meet their gaze directly is to invite a misstep.

The Grand Bazaar, being the city’s most “neutral” and unregulated zone, is also where the majority of the city’s political intrigue occurs. Each of the three founding families, while outwardly cooperative with one another, is constantly maneuvering for control of Direstone’s senate—for it is the senate that determines whose house occupies the seat of emperor. Lesser clans, too, vie for power and influence, usually by allying themselves with one of the founding families. Every day in the Grand Bazaar, deals are struck, blackmail is rendered, knives come out, and blood is spilled in the name of politics. While some outsiders find it abhorrent, such clandestine activities are taken as a matter of course in Direstone; in fact, amongst the three founding families, there is a sense of sportsmanship to these acts of sabotage and deception. Though an enemy’s scheme might spur consternation, it is always tinged with admiration for a game well played.

While the Grand Bazaar acts as a communal space for the three founding families, their individual clanholds—or “silos”—are quite different from one another. Each mountain hall reflects its family’s trade, culture, and history.

Each, too, holds a secret.

THE EMBERHEART HEARTHOME

The Emberheart clan are renowned metalworkers and weaponsmiths: their contribution to the city’s construction, apart from labor, is its illustrious silver molding. Their leader, Bressir Emberheart, is currently the Emperor of Direstone. Unbeknownst to the other noble houses, the Emberhearts are currently battling a secret war: excavations have uncovered a vast deposit of direstone beneath the Emberheart Hearth-

ome, but its recovery has brought them into conflict with a warren of goblins. Bressir does not wish to share the deposit, and thus fights his war alone.

THE THUNGRUN CLANHOLD

The Thungrun clan are master stonemasons: at the city’s founding, the Thungrun were responsible for constructing the grand stone highways that connect the three mountain halls. Their current leader is Gunnhild Thungrun, the clan’s oldest living matriarch. As she approaches the end of life, Gunnhild has grown increasingly obsessed with finding and opening her ancestors’ secret vault, which is said to have been built directly into the Thungrun Clanhold during Direstone’s founding.

THE DARKHAMMER UNDERKINGDOM

The Darkhammer clan are artisan jewelcrafters: at the city’s founding, the first Emperor was gifted a crown of Darkhammer design. The crown is still worn today, though it currently sits on the head of an Emberheart, much to the Darkhammer’s chagrin. Kazdrek Darkhammer, the clan’s current leader, is secretly plotting to overthrow the other two houses and cast them into obscurity: his agents are in positions of power, the smaller noble houses have rallied to his banner, and his rivals are too distracted by secretive, petty domestic issues to see anything’s amiss. And, should his political scheme fail, Kazdrek has a secret weapon: a magical golem of immense strength.

POPULATION

The population of Direstone is approximately 12,000 people, and the vast majority (about 80 percent) are dwarves. The rest are a collection of gnomes, humans, elves (mostly drow), and other, more exotic subterranean creatures, such as cave trolls and a small coalition of intelligent xorn that have taken residence in the city.

WORK LIFE AND TRACKING TIME

The work day of an everyday Direstone citizen is measured by the bell tower at the center of the Grand Bazaar. The bell is rung three times per day, what the dwarves refer to as “calls”: once in the morning (the call to work), once at noon (the call to break bread), and once in the evening (the call to rest). Its toll causes the very stone of the city to resonate musically; even if you can’t hear the bell, you can certainly feel the vibrations. Each of the founding families takes turns manning the bell tower—the cooperation is symbolic, a daily reminder to the common people that the triumvirate is working together. The reality, of course, is much different.

GOVERNMENT

Direstone’s government is best described as a representative democracy, although certain people are likely to argue—and vehemently—that not every Direstone citizen is accurately represented. Still, despite the inherent biases in the system, there is at least a semblance of a democratic process.

THE NOBLE HOUSES

The smallest building block of Direstone's government is the noble house, of which there are over a dozen currently recognized by the city. These houses vary by size and importance; the Emberhearts, Thungrun, and Darkhammer houses, being the city's founders, are naturally (and, through ongoing subterfuge, by design) the largest of Direstone.

Every three years, the noble houses of Direstone elect house representatives to the Senate. The larger the noble house, the more representatives it gets to appoint. Ergo, the Senate is a thinly-veiled (or "soft") centralization of power, and it is through this governing body that the founding families maintain control of the city.

THE SENATE

The Senate is responsible for executing a variety of legislative tasks, such as tax collection, lawmaking, budget construction, etc., most of which are so dull as to be invisible to the general public (at least, until a new zoning designation suddenly forces someone to close shop). However, the Senate is also responsible for legally recognizing new noble houses—or, in rare instances, disbanding old ones—and appointing house representatives to political offices, including that of Emperor.

Every nine years, the Senate elects a new Emperor of Direstone from that year's pool of eligible house representatives. Every year in between is spent campaigning, scheming, and maneuvering for the next election; it is through these back-room dealings that the smaller noble houses of Direstone earn their keep.

THE EMPEROR

Finally, there is the Emperor of Direstone, who has complete control over the city's military, treasury, and diplomatic agenda. While each noble house has its own clanguard, the Emperor's military (called "the Fireforge Phalanx") is a highly trained and well-equipped force that is loyal only to Direstone and its ruler. To the Fireforge Phalanx, the Emperor is not a mere person, but a symbol of the city's sovereignty that must be protected from threats both within and without.

From the smallest noble house to the founding families themselves, it is well understood by all parties that a civil war between the Emperor and the Senate would be catastrophic for the entire city.

The current Emperor of Direstone is Bressir Emberheart, the head of the Emberheart Hearthome.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the city's noteworthy places can be found in the Grand Bazaar. The following locations are suggested as being there, but they can easily be moved to one of the three clanhold silos instead.

THE GRAND BAZAAR

Just inside the city gates and beyond the domain of any one silo, visiting tourists can find all manner of souvenirs, baubles, and knickknacks. However, in order to find something more specific, one must venture further into the Grand Bazaar. Within the Bazaar, characters are sure to find any shop

or service they could reasonably expect in a medium-sized city. Being a dwarven town, certain services—such as metalworking, jewelcrafting, and masonry—are more common, and competition is fierce amongst the noble houses to corner these markets. Among the Bazaar's shops are four especially notable places of interest.

WHIZZLEBANG'S TINKER TOYS

Located on the eastern edge of the Grand Bazaar, Whizzlebang's Tinker Toys is a charming toy store run by the eponymous Puck Whizzlebang, an elder tinkerer gnome. Puck delights in crafting windup toys for people of all ages; he believes firmly that the power of play is a spiritual experience that belongs to everyone, regardless of your history or circumstances.

The store itself is a wonderland of brightly colored windup toys and gadgets, from small animals to human figurines; they cover the floor, waddling, clanging, and singing. The walls of the shop are clear glass, revealing layers upon layers of gears and cogs that click along musically. Puck is always distracted by his work, but he's happy to assist anyone who manages to get his attention.

ROCK BOTTOM INN & TAVERN

Direstone's best-known inn, located at the Bazaar's heart, is owned and operated by an intelligent **xorn** called Bronzemaw. Bronzemaw trades rooms, brews, and food for pieces of metal; while just about any metal will do, Bronzemaw especially appreciates customers who trade in direstone. The only currency that Bronzemaw will absolutely not accept, in fact, are your typical coin pieces (copper, silver, etc.). If you find yourself stuck with a large drinking tab at the end of the night, Bronzemaw might be inclined to ask for your fancy chainmail as payment—and eat it in front of you! Aside from Bronzemaw, the Rock Bottom Inn & Tavern is staffed by a hodgepodge of misfits: gnomes, clanless dwarves, itinerant humans, and so on—a surly lot who are as likely to be drinking as the inn's customers.

THE FREEGUILD HEADQUARTERS

The Freeguild is an organization dedicated to providing social services and financial support to the people of Direstone who can't claim a noble house. It is operated by a dwarf named Thorash the Clanless, who claims that his former clanhold was lost to a horde of goblin invaders when he was young—he's quick to show his scars from this alleged invasion. In truth, Thorash was thrown out of his clanhold for attempted patricide; this charity work is a personal kind of penance. Regardless of its founder's history, the Freeguild is a valuable resource for immigrants and other people who don't quite fit Direstone's dwarven hegemony. The organization has grown so large, in fact, that Thorash has begun lobbying for its inclusion in the Senate.

AZGRON'S ARCANE ABODE

Azgron is an eclectic **cave troll mage** (see the appendix) who owns the Grand Bazaar's most eminent magic shop: the Arcane Abode. However, the "shop" is still just a cave, albeit a nice one with decorations. Azgron is fascinated by magic, arcane phenomenon, and enchanted items, and is

always willing to trade baubles for the sake of discovering something new. They maintain a vast, handwritten catalog of everything they've seen over the years; if the characters are looking for something specific, it is likely that Azgron has at least seen it—if not owned it—at some point. The Arcane Abode is never closed, and yet no one dares steal anything—Azgron is still a cave troll, after all, and could easily tear an intruder's limbs off.

HUSTLE AND BUSTLE

Even at the quietest hours of the night, the Grand Bazaar is a busy place. Each hour (or whenever you deem it appropriate), roll a d20. On a result of a 19–20, an event happens. Roll on or choose from the table below to see what trouble finds the characters.

HUSTLE AND BUSTLE – THE GRAND BAZAAR

d6 Event

- 1 A band of gnomish tinkers are making a big scene about their latest invention: the Embiggerizer! They've drawn a sizable crowd. In truth, one of the gnomes is casting *enlarge/reduce* in the background to enlarge one of the other gnomes; the machine does nothing but shake, blow steam, and sparkle. Still, people are giving them their hard earned coin to become "Embiggered."
- 2 Two drunk dwarves are wrestling in a mud pit. The winner challenges one or more characters to a bout. The catch? That dwarf has expertise in Athletics, and is wearing a *belt of fire giant strength*.
- 3 A dwarf shepherd is attempting to herd 100 goats into a wooden corral, but something startles them into a panic. The goat herd starts rampaging across the Grand Bazaar—right toward the characters!
- 4 A human seer offers to read the characters' fortunes. The fortunes are neither accurate nor helpful, but the seer (a **cult fanatic**) has expertise in Deception (Deception +6). The seer charges the characters an exorbitant amount of money for their "services."
- 5 A **spy** for one of the founding families has botched their mission and is currently running from the clan-guard of a rival house. The spy asks the characters for help.
- 6 The characters stumble onto a murder scene: a member of one of the founding families has been assassinated in the Grand Bazaar.

THE EMBERHEART HEARTHOME

The Emberheart Hearthome is an enormous clanhold a mile deep. Its forges are always burning with industry, lending the very stone of the hold an orange glow; Emberheart dwarves are famous for their heat tolerance (famous, too, for complaining it's "cold" all the time). As the forges are worked, fire spills out of the hold's outer edifices—a reminder to all Direstone of who wields the city's flame.

THE HEARTH FORGE

The Emberheart clan's most prized possession is its Hearth Forge, which has lain at the center of their clanhold for hundreds of years; the ancient forge is said to have doubled as a hearth during the family's leanest years, hence the name. As the clan grew more prosperous, the Hearth Forge remained, serving as a testament to their humble origins.

Once a year, the entirety of clan Emberheart—a little over a thousand dwarves—gathers around the Hearth Forge to celebrate their newfound success. It is a time of drink, song, and storytelling: a sacred holiday where the clanhold shuts its doors and official business is suspended. Even Bressir Emberheart, the Emperor of Direstone, retreats into Hearthome for the day—it is no coincidence then that the Senate seems to pass most of its legislation on the Emberheart holiday.

Although exceedingly rare, friends of clan Emberheart may even be invited to attend the gathering around the Hearth Forge. The other founding families have been trying to insert their spies into the Emberheart inner circle for decades (to no avail), for it is this holiday when the clan is at its most vulnerable.

HALL OF KINGS

The Hall of Kings is clan Emberheart's family museum, a place where artifacts from Direstone's founding (and before) are kept. Here, too, are impressive statues of Emberhearts who became the city's Emperor; Bressir's statue is still under construction.

Unsurprisingly, the museum is well guarded: all artifacts are under glass locked and reinforced with permanent *walls of force*, the space is patrolled by loyal clanguard hand chosen by Bressir himself, and in the event that something does get taken, everything in the museum is magically tagged with a screaming *magic mouth* spell.

Despite its elaborate defenses, the Hall of Kings is the closest thing to a visitor's center that Direstone has; it's a popular tourist destination that offers a comprehensive—if slightly biased—history of Direstone's origins.

THE TUNNELS OF SNIKROT'S WARREN

Far below Hearthome is Bressir's secret project: the excavation of an enormous deposit of direstone. Unfortunately, this valuable deposit runs adjacent to a kingdom of goblins, who seem to have a network of tunnels in Direstone's foundations. The expansiveness of the goblin warren has yet to be determined, but it's clear that the earth below Direstone is teeming with "little noxious ticks" (as Bressir is fond of saying). These goblins are led by a larger-than-average brute called **Warlord Snikrot** (see the appendix), who only became aware of Direstone because of Bressir's excavation project.

While Bressir may not view Snikrot and his horde as anything but a nuisance, the Warlord is much smarter than he appears: the goblins have been fashioning weapons and armor from direstone for generations, and their **giant spider** mounts are formidable even for trained dwarf regiments. Snikrot plans to undermine the founding families' clanholds—slowly, to avoid notice—and overtake the city in one fell swoop. The day is fast approaching that Snikrot's horde will pour forth into Direstone, and on that day, Emperor Bressir will have much to answer for.

THE THUNGRUN CLANHOLD

The Thungrun Clanhold is a veritable fortress of reinforced stone and steel. As the Thungruns are a family of stonemasons, their clanhold is expertly crafted, even by dwarven standards. Each member of the clan is required to make their mark on the hold as they come of age—it is both a rite of passage and a valuable lesson in the importance of continuous self-improvement. Even the family home is never complete.

THE GREAT STONEWORKS

The Great Stoneworks of the Thungrun Clanhold is a massive workshop where the skilled stonemasons of the Thungrun apply their craft and train the next generation of apprentices. The workshop is located in a large, cavernous chamber at the very center of the clanhold; one can hear the sound of hammers on chisels and the grinding of stone against stone throughout the mountain hall. It is in this chamber that the bridges of Direstone were built, stone by stone, hand over hand.

Typically speaking, visitors are not allowed to wander the Great Stoneworks unattended. The Thungrun's methods are well-guarded secrets; the other founding families would kill (literally) to have someone on the inside.

GUNNHILD'S HALL

Gunnhild Thungrun, the matriarch of the Thungrun clan, has become increasingly obsessive on her deathbed. Within her hall in the Thungrun Clanhold, Gunnhild screams and shouts at servants and family alike, hurling vile insults and raving about the lost Vault of Loth'remar. She is convinced that the secret of eternal youth lies within that vault, and she is desperate to find it before she draws her final breath.

Hardly anyone visits Gunnhild these days, as she's grown intolerably hostile at the end of her life. She wanders the halls alone, yelling at shadows: a living ghost haunting her own clanhold. Even her two children, Drogan and Balin Thungrun, do their best to avoid Gunnhild's wrath.

THE VAULT OF LOTH'REMAR

At the very bottom of the Thungrun Clanhold, hidden away behind intricate mazes of stonework, is the lost Vault of Loth'remar. Loth'remar Thungrun was head of the clan during Direstone's founding, and he built the hidden vault intending it to be found by his descendents—but only if the three founding families had grown close enough to cooperate.

Loth'remar handcrafted three keys to his vault. The first, a great stone hammer, he gave to clan Emberheart. The second, a glass arch, to clan Darkhammer. Finally, there was a key-shaped blade, which remains to this day within the Great Stoneworks. Etched secretly onto each key is also a clue to the vault's whereabouts: how to access the mazes, which direction to go once inside, and what word to say once face-to-face with the vault door itself.

Whosoever endeavors to unlock the lost vault of Loth'remar must somehow earn the trust of all three founding families, recover Loth'remar's three keys, and delve into the maze below the Thungrun Clanhold.

THE DARKHAMMER UNDERKINGDOM

The Darkhammer Underkingdom is the third mountain hall of Direstone, equally impressive in scope to its sister halls yet overlooked for its understated appearance. Inside, however, the walls of the Underkingdom are adorned with spectacular jewelwork and light manipulation, creating the illusion of a starry night sky brought to life. Each gemstone is chosen to represent a member of the clan, both the living and the dead; this tapestry of lights is a testament both to the Darkhammer's ingenuity and their reverence toward their ancestors.

THE ASHEN ANVIL

Deep within the heart of the Underkingdom lies the Ashen Anvil, a grand workshop that produces the most exquisite jewelry in all of Direstone. It is upon the Ashen Anvil that the Emperor's crown was fashioned at the city's founding.

The Darkhammers use ancient techniques passed down through generations to create masterpieces that are sought after by collectors both within and without Direstone. The workshop is the source of the Darkhammer's immense wealth, and as such, it is well guarded from intrusion.

THE ROYAL QUARTER

The Royal Quarter is a grand complex of halls, chambers, and suites reserved for the clan's most distinguished and influential members. This opulent space is located beyond the Ashen Anvil—separated by a glass arch crafted by Loth'remar himself—and is accessible only by a series of heavily guarded gates and passages. Like the rest of the Underkingdom, every inch of the complex twinkles with the clan's signature gemstone tapestry.

Kazdrek Darkhammer keeps the Royal Quarter locked down with a group of hand chosen clanguard. Without expressed permission from Kazdrek himself, nobody is allowed inside.

KAZDREK'S WORKSHOP

Hidden away in the Royal Quarter is Kazdrek's workshop. Here, the Darkhammer patriarch is building something in secret: an invincible, magical **iron golem**. Should his plan to ascend to Emperor and abolish clans Thungrun and Emberheart fail, Kazdrek will fuse himself with the golem—becoming a man of iron and forgefire—and attempt to take the city by force alongside his clanguard.

PEOPLE OF INTEREST

Direstone boasts a population of around 12,000 people, yet power rests in the hands of a chosen few. Here are some of the most important people of Direstone.

BRESSIR EMBERHEART

The head of clan Emberheart and Emperor of Direstone, Bressir is an ancient dwarf who is notoriously stubborn and quick to anger, even amongst other dwarves. His outbursts have led to several fistfights in the Senate, although these bouts usually end with a flagon of ale and a good word.

- **Ideal: Tradition.** Bressir holds tradition above all else—nothing supersedes procedure.
- **Bond: Hearthome.** Bressir is more loyal to clan Emberheart than the greater city of Direstone; the Emperor’s crown chafes his head.
- **Flaw: Overconfident.** Bressir has lived a long, successful life: he often underestimates his enemies.
- **Scheme: Defeat Snikrot and Claim the Direstone Deposit.** Bressir wages a secret war against Snikrot and his horde of goblins in the tunnels beneath Direstone. He plans to claim the mineral deposits there for clan Emberheart—and no one else.

GUNNHILD THUNGRUN

Gunnhild is the matriarch of clan Thungrun, and the oldest living dwarf in the city of Direstone. Unfortunately, she’s grown increasingly obsessive toward the end of life. She shouts from her deathbed, hurling insults and impossible demands at her servants, and raving about the clan’s lost vault.

- **Ideal: Wealth.** Gunnhild’s dying wish is to unlock the fabled Vault of Loth’remar—nothing else matters.
- **Bond: None.** Gunnhild is willing to sacrifice anything—and anyone—to prolong her own life or enhance her wealth.
- **Flaw: Unlikable.** Though Gunnhild has rare moments of lucidity—even kindness—she is an incredibly angry, nasty person.
- **Scheme: Unlock the Vault of Loth’remar.** Gunnhild’s dying wish is to uncover and unlock the Vault of Loth’remar, wherein lies a so-called “fountain of youth.” Gunnhild plans to drink from the fountain’s waters in order to rule for another generation.

KAZDREK DARKHAMMER

The most ambitious of the triumvirate is Kazdrek Darkhammer, who has taken advantage of his rivals’ inner turmoils to gain political advantages at all levels of government. When the time is right, Kazdrek will ascend the throne as the Final Emperor of Direstone; through Kazdrek’s machinations, he will ensure that a Darkhammer will rule forever.

- **Ideal: Power.** Kazdrek believes that the clan’s fortunes lie on the throne of Direstone.
- **Bond: Direstone.** Kazdrek is firmly loyal to the power structure and social order of Direstone; the city is greater than any single dwarven clan, even his own—so it’s imperative that the Darkhammers are the city’s master.
- **Flaw: Secretive.** Kazdrek has few friends. He is famously paranoid and secretive, and occasionally loses track of what’s true and what’s false. He is vulnerable to misinformation.
- **Scheme: Ascend to Emperor, Abolish the Senate.** Kazdrek has worked tirelessly over the past few decades to bend Direstone’s political machinery to his indomitable will. His ascension to the throne is all but assured, and once he’s ascended, his agents in the Senate will vote to abolish clans Thungrun and Emberheart as political entities; Kazdrek and his lackeys will have a slim majority during Emberheart’s next Hearth Forge celebration, when the clan turns inward and shuts its doors.

THORASH THE CLANLESS

Thorash the Clanless runs the Freeguild, an organization that provides financial support and social services to the people of Direstone who can’t claim a noble house. While the Freeguild appears to be an honest charity, it is actually a front for an elaborate smuggling ring.

- **Ideal: Freedom.** Thorash wants to do what he wants, when he wants—that doesn’t mean he can’t do some good now and then.
- **Bond: Common People.** Thorash believes that he was wronged for being kicked out of his clanhold, and has since grown distrustful of noble houses and authority figures.
- **Flaw: Guilty.** Thorash feels deeply guilty for attempting to kill his own father, and it is this guilt that spurs his charity work; he knows that without this guilt, he’d be just another common thug.
- **Scheme: Get Appointed to the Senate.** Thorash wishes to turn the Freeguild into a political entity—a noble house in its own right. He has conspired with Kazdrek Darkhammer: in exchange for a Senate appointment, Thorash has agreed to vote to abolish clans Thungrun and Emberheart.

AZGRON

Azgron is an eclectic, spellcasting cave troll who’s fascinated by magic in all its forms. They are the proud owner and operator of the Arcane Abode, Direstone’s most famous magic shop. Fully fluent in multiple languages, Azgron keeps a detailed ledger of every item they’ve come across; if the characters are looking for information about something specific, there’s good odds that Azgron can tell them something useful.

- **Ideal: Knowledge.** Azgron has an insatiable appetite for knowledge.
- **Bond: Mentor.** Azgron was uplifted in his youth by a wizard named Khurnas, who recently died. Azgron is committed to continuing the wizard’s work.
- **Flaw: Naive.** Azgron believes just about anything they’re told. That being said, not many people are willing to lie to a cave troll’s face.
- **Scheme: Resurrect Mentor.** Azgron has caught wind of a hidden vault somewhere in Direstone that may hold the key to resurrecting Khurnas, they’re old mentor.

THINGS TO DO IN DIRESTONE

Direstone is a bustling underground metropolis; for traveling heroes, intrigue and adventure is always just around the corner. For shorter sessions, the following activities can act as downtime tasks—and, should you wish it, several of them can feed into longer adventures via their complications.

BUILD-A-TINKER-TOY

Within Whizzlebang’s Tinker Toys shop, characters can pick out their own parts and have Puck craft them the perfect tinker toy! Or, if the characters are feeling adventurous, they can let Puck pick out the parts himself.

A tinker toy is made of four pieces: a body, a head, a feature, and a quirk. If picking out pieces, the characters can

choose the body, head, and feature—the quirk, however, is always determined randomly.

Each toy costs 25 gp and takes about an hour to assemble.

TINKER TOY BODY

d4 Body

- 1 Humanoid-ish (1d4)
1: Human 2: Dwarf 3: Goblin 4: Bugbear
- 2 Monstrous (1d4)
1: Dragon 2: Giant 3: Demonic 4: Undead
- 3 Aquatic (1d4)
1: Sahuagin 2: Merfolk 3: Kraken 4: Shark
- 4 Avian (1d4)
1: Roc 2: Eagle 3: Hawk 4: Harpy

TINKER TOY HEAD

d4 Head

- 1 Humanoid-ish (1d4)
1: Human 2: Dwarf 3: Goblin 4: Bugbear
- 2 Monstrous (1d4)
1: Dragon 2: Giant 3: Demonic 4: Undead
- 3 Aquatic (1d4)
1: Sahuagin 2: Merfolk 3: Kraken 4: Shark
- 4 Avian (1d4)
1: Roc 2: Eagle 3: Hawk 4: Harpy

TINKER TOY FEATURE

d4 Feature

- 1 Musical (1d4)
1: Clangs cymbals 2: Sings a song 3: Plays an instrument 4: Gently chimes
- 2 Movement (1d4)
1: Hovers 2: Swims 3: Climbs 4: Dances
- 3 Vocal (1d4)
1: Understands simple commands 2: Can record/play message 3: Tells jokes
4: Repeats a phrase
- 4 Functional (1d4)
1: Holds objects 2: Is a safebox 3: Has coil of wire
4: Hidden compartment

TINKER TOY QUIRK

d4 Quirk

- 1 Whenever it does anything, there's a 1-in-6 chance sparks start flying.
- 2 Puck inadvertently included a magical component; the tinker toy can be used to cast a cantrip (GM's choice).
- 3 The tinker toy is incredibly loud, and has a tendency to activate at the worst possible times.
- 4 Over time, the tinker toy begins to develop a personality, an intelligence, and desires of its own.

WORK FOR THE NOBLE HOUSES

The noble houses of Direstone are constantly vying for power over one another, and there's always a need for deniable as-sets. Characters that aren't afraid to get their hands dirty will find plenty of work.

Should the characters wish to engage with one of the noble houses, roll on or choose from the appropriate task table below.

EMBERHEART TASKS

d4 Task

- 1 The Emberhearts need help hunting down a band of goblins in the mines below Direstone.
- 2 The next Hearth Forge celebration needs preparing: there's beer to brew, meats to cure, and cheese to make!
- 3 The Great Stoneworks of the Thungrun Clanhold must hold some great secret. As outsiders, the characters might be able to get a tour.
- 4 A minor noble of clan Emberheart senses a scheme brewing within the Darkhammer Underkingdom. They ask the characters to gather information and report back.

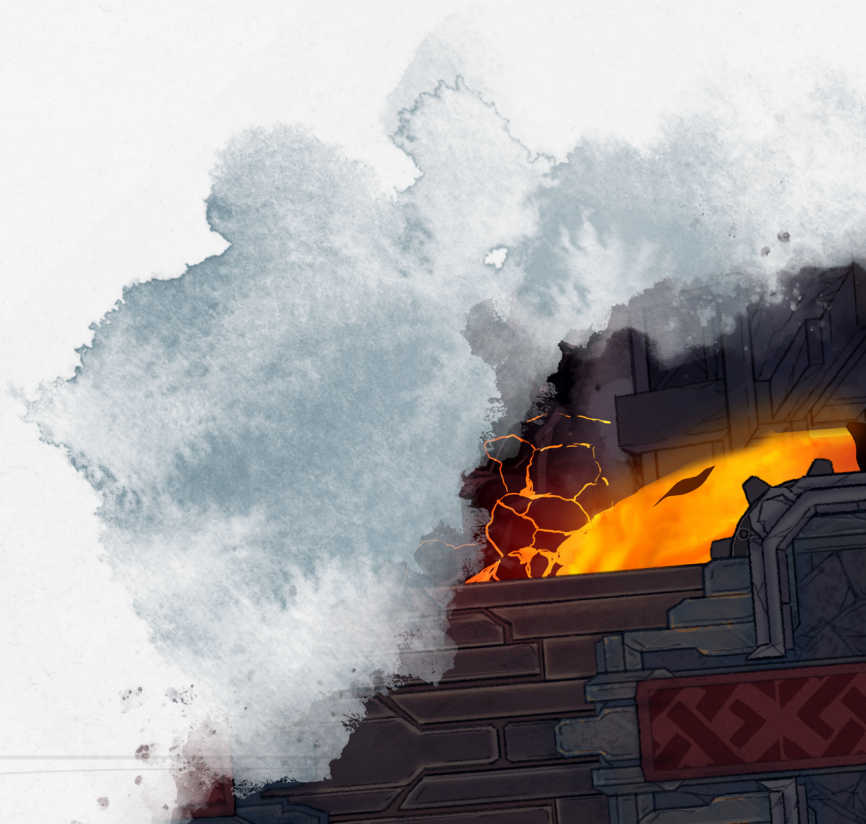
Complication

The goblin warband is much larger than anticipated, indicating the presence of a warren. Refer to "Fighting the Secret War" for more information.

An agent of one of the other noble houses attempts to poison the Emberhearts' beer.

Gunnhild Thungrun, in a rare moment of lucidity, invites the characters to her hall for an audience. She tasks them with counter-infiltrating the Emberheart clan and stealing their great stone hammer.

Kazdrek Darkhammer, being so close to his goal, sends hired killers after the characters. Refer to "Thwarting the Darkhammer" for more information.



THUNGRUN TASKS

d4 Task

1 Laborers are needed to repair one of Direstone's great stone bridges.

2 A laborer is suspected of being a Darkhammer spy, but the Thungrun don't want to tip their hand. They ask the characters to gain their trust and report back.

3 Gunnhild Thungrun has put out an open call to adventurers: help the clan find the lost Vault of Loth'remar.

4 A minor noble of clan Thungrun has gone missing. The characters have to figure out what happened to them.

Complication

An accident occurs, sending Thungrun dwarves and at least one of the characters sprawling over the side of the bridge. They need to be rescued before they fall.

The laborer is indeed a spy for the Darkhammer clan, and they attempt to get the characters to sabotage the Great Stoneworks.

The task isn't nearly as simple as finding a door and opening it. Refer to "Finding the Fabled Vault" for more information.

The Thungrun noble is a Darkhammer defector, and they're currently living incognito in the Underkingdom. Once cornered, they admit to being bribed by Kazdrek. Refer to "Thwarting the Darkhammer" for more information.

DARKHAMMER TASKS

d4 Task

1 The lights of Direstone need maintenance.

2 A Thungrun spy has been caught trying to steal the clan's glass arch. The Darkhammers need to know why. Then, the spy must be dealt with.

3 Some nobles of inconsequential houses have been grumbling about the Darkhammers cutting deals behind the scenes. They must be placated.

4 The Emberhearts have been sticking close to Hearthome, even more so than usual. The Darkhammers want to know what's going on inside their mountain hall that's got them so secretive.

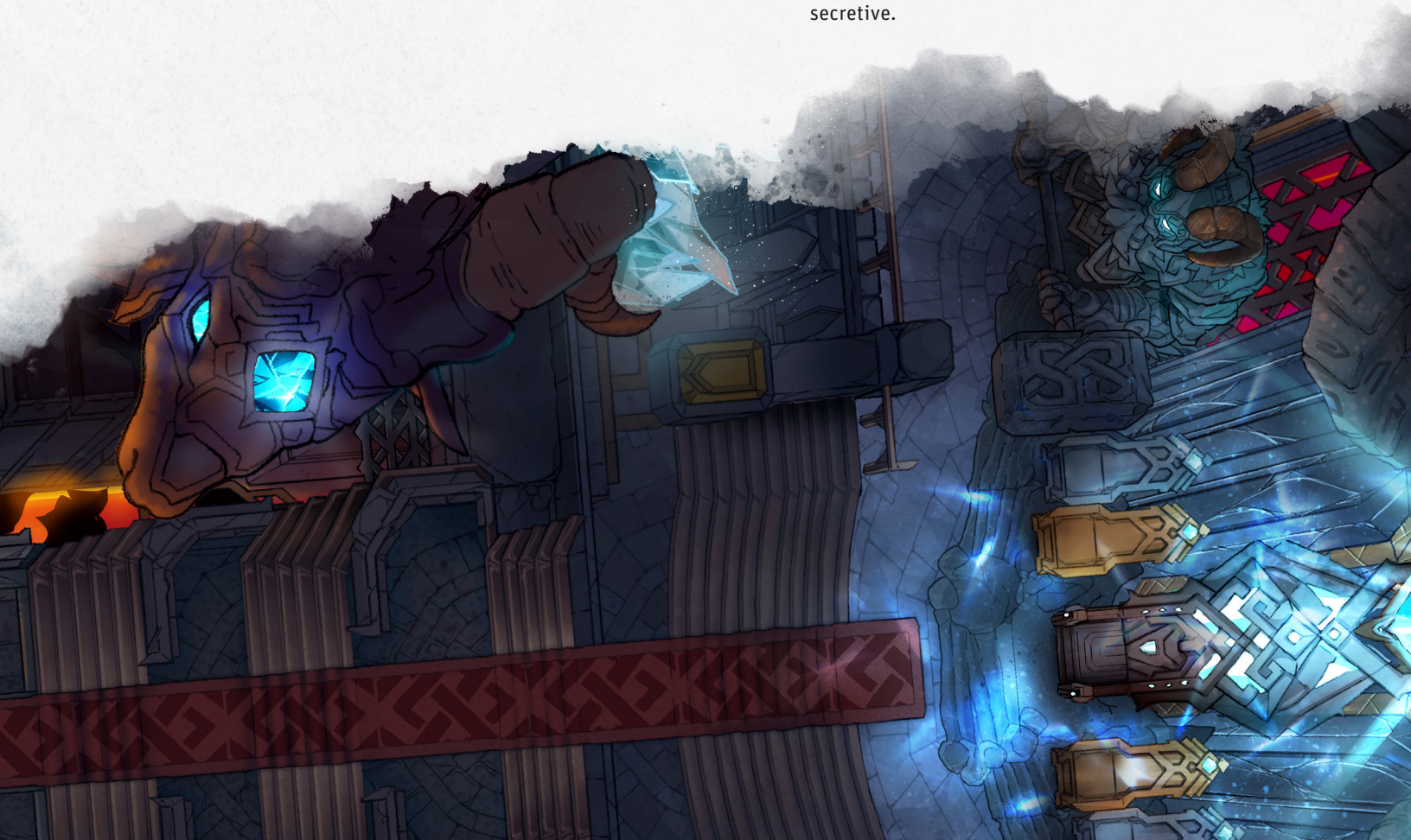
Complication

The characters aren't paid. Instead, they're promised a "favor," the preferred currency of the Darkhammer.

Once properly "motivated," the spy says he was instructed by Gunnhild Thungrun herself to steal the glass arch, but doesn't know why. In fact, he thinks the clan matriarch is chasing fairy tales. Refer to "Finding the Fabled Vault" for more information.

One of these minor nobles threatens to tell Emperor Bressir of the Darkhammer's treachery. Refer to "Thwarting the Darkhammer" for more information.

The characters might stumble into the Emberheart clan's conflict with Snikrot and his goblin horde. Refer to "Fighting the Secret War" for more information.



AID THE FREEGUILD

Thorash the Clanless is always looking for volunteers for his Freeguild, and characters that display a certain aptitude for thievery might get approached for smuggling work.

Should the characters wish to engage with the Freeguild, roll on or choose from the appropriate task table below.

FREEGUILD TASKS

d4 Task

1 Some **cave trolls** (see the appendix) are having a hard time adjusting to city life. Get help from Azgron and get the other trolls settled down.

2 One of the other volunteers hasn't been heard from in over a week. The characters are sent to check on them.

3 A group of immigrants have arrived from a nearby settlement. Distribute medical aid, supplies, and find them beds.

4 One of the **xorn** has been stripping the molding from around Direstone, and the Freeguild needs them to stop before the noble houses take notice.

Complication

A group of drunk dwarves approaches the trolls and begin harassing them.

The volunteer's home is completely empty. When the characters report back, Thorash suspects that the volunteer was a spy for one of the noble houses.

The characters learn of the catastrophe that befell the settlement (GM's discretion). Ideally, it should be something the characters have encountered before.

The xorn promises to stop, but doesn't. Eventually, the Emberheart clan gets involved.

SMUGGLING TASKS

d4 Task

1 A mineshaft below Direstone is serving the Freeguild as a dead drop. The characters must enter the shaft and recover what's there.

2 Someone high up in the Emberheart clan is waiting for an exotic pet to arrive. The pet must be delivered safely.

3 Certain merchants in the Grand Bazaar haven't paid their tithes to the Freeguild this month.

4 The characters must help a young woman remain hidden from her pursuers.

Complication

The smuggled goods—a crate of silver ore—has been stolen by a band of **goblins**. These goblins belong to Snikrot's horde.

The "pet" is actually a **gelatinous cube**. It arrives in a giant wooden crate. En route to Hearthome, the crate breaks.

One of the merchants has hired guards and is refusing to pay the Freeguild's "extortion fee."

A group of people come to Direstone, demanding information about the girl. They say (truthfully) that she's guilty of murdering her ex-husband.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN DIRESTONE

As the characters explore the city, a complication or development might help bring the setting to life. The table below offers some suggestions.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d10 Encounter

1 The timekeeper atop the bell tower in the Grand Bazaar is drunk: they won't stop ringing the bell.

2 An **assassin** runs past the characters, followed shortly thereafter by 1d3 + 1 **Fireforge Phalanx** dwarves (see the appendix). The assassin's clothes are covered in blood.

3 One or more **earth elementals** have manifested somewhere nearby; the commoners keep a wide berth, but Azgron wants to capture one inside a gemstone.

4 A prankster casts *major image* to create a giant boulder, then sends it careening down the stone highways of the Grand Bazaar. A panic ensues.

5 Two minor nobles from different houses are having a standoff over something trivial.

6 A gnome and a **cave troll** are performing a circus act in the Grand Bazaar. Highlights include fire-belching, juggling, and tiny bicycle riding.

7 A **xorn** emerges from the earth and asks for something to eat.

8 Somebody is giving free hang gliding lessons at the very top of the city. Every hour the characters are outdoors in Direstone, there is a one-in-six chance that a hang gliding student crashes into them, causing 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage to a random character and knocking them prone. Once that happens, the Fireforge Phalanx shuts down the lessons.

9 A traveling group of performers needs help putting on a puppet show—many of the troupe fell ill after eating at the Rock Bottom Inn. The show lasts one hour. Each character that participates must make a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, the crowd tips the troupe 100 silver pieces. On a failure, they only tip 25 silver pieces. Either way, the troupe splits the tips with the characters.

10 A **cave troll** has fallen asleep in someone's shop, and the owner is irate. The troll refuses to budge, insisting that it just needs a nap.

ADVENTURES IN DIRESTONE

For more longform campaigns, Direstone has several adventure paths that a group of enterprising heroes might embark upon. Alternatively, a GM could treat each adventure path as happening concurrently to their own campaign, meaning the characters might only become aware of them once a full-blown crisis emerges.

Each adventure path is described below in stages. As always, feel free to use, modify, or ignore whatever you wish.

FIGHTING THE SECRET WAR

Bressir Emberheart is fighting a secret war against a warren of goblins in the tunnels below Direstone. He does not want the other houses to get involved for fear of losing out on the wealth below the city. But the war is not going well: Snikrot's horde will eventually overwhelm the Emberheart clanguard and spill into Direstone.

Discovery. The characters become aware of an immense goblin presence below Direstone. If brought to the nobles' attention, the Emberhearts downplay the threat—they may even attempt to bribe or assassinate the characters. Because the characters are outsiders, it's going to take more than just their word alone.

Burden of Proof. The characters must delve into the warren itself and recover some kind of proof that the goblins are an actual threat. A combination of reconnaissance, hostage-taking, and item recovery (specifically the goblins' direstone weapons and armor) would be proof enough. At this point, the Senate will descend into chaos as Bressir demands the characters be thrown out of the city—the other noble houses refuse, and a brawl occurs. Once the dust settles, Kazdrek Darkhammer will call for an emergency election and ascend the throne.

Crisis: Goblin Invasion. Snikrot, sensing a window of opportunity, triggers his endgame: the invasion of Direstone.

- **No Proof.** If the characters previously failed to convince the Senate of the goblins' power, the city struggles to repel Snikrot's horde. Without intervention, the war lasts for a month. Thousands die, including Azgron, Bressir Emberheart, and Thorash the Clanless. Though the goblins are eventually beaten back, Direstone is crippled, and the looming threat of another invasion leads to a mass exodus from the city.
- **Proof Presented.** If the characters presented sufficient evidence to the Senate, then the noble houses are prepared to meet Snikrot's horde. Led by Kazdrek Darkhammer (now fused with his **iron golem**), the goblins are soundly defeated in mere days with minimal losses. Direstone stands strong.
- **Final Battle.** Characters who wish to participate in the Battle for Direstone may be instructed to guard the Freeguild Headquarters, where a lot of defenseless civilians (including children) are currently residing. The Headquarters comes under attack by several waves of **goblins riding giant spiders**. Several of the goblin riders are equipped with nets and hooks.
 - If the city wasn't prepared for Snikrot, the waves of goblins are endless. The characters must figure out a way to evacuate the civilians from the city.
 - If the city is prepared for Snikrot, then only three waves of goblins spill out into the Grand Bazaar.

Denouement: Hunting Snikrot. Once the city is made safe, the Senate (or what's left of them) convenes to decide on their next course of action. The characters are asked to delve back into the goblin warrens and put an end to Warlord Snikrot. Once Snikrot is dealt with, the rest of the goblins split into disparate factions and begin infighting, neutralizing themselves. The characters are duly rewarded, and the city begins to recover.

FINDING THE FABLED VAULT

Gunnhild Thungrun, in a desperate bid to cling to life and authority, is openly seeking the Lost Vault of Loth'remar. She believes that a "fountain of youth" lies inside the vault, and will pay handsomely for its uncovering.

Discovery. The characters become aware of Gunnhild's plan to unveil the vault. If they pledge their services to the Thungrun's matriarch, she tells them of Loth'remar and the legend of the three keys.

- She knows that the Thungrun key resides in the Great Stoneworks.
- She doesn't know what or where the other keys are, only that the other founding families each possess one.

The Great Stone Hammer. The great stone hammer, gifted to clan Emberheart, lies above the Hearth Forge in Hearthome. At the GM's discretion, use the legendary *Emberheart hammer* magic weapon. The characters must either gain Bressir's trust, infiltrate the Hearth Forge celebration, or plan a heist. An inscription in Dwarvish—revealed only when the hammer is heated—reads, "*Two truths will uncover the way: a true strike to true stone.*"

- When the hammer strikes the cornerstone of the Thungrun Clanhold, it produces a specific, magical resonance that causes a section of stone to crumble, unveiling a passageway into the mazes below.

The Glass Arch. The glass arch, gifted to clan Darkhammer, separates the Royal Quarter from the Ashen Anvil inside the Darkhammer Underkingdom—the most secure part of the mountain hall. The characters must either gain Kazdrek's trust (no easy feat) or plan a heist. A map—visible only at a single angle—is etched on the inside of the glass arch: the map of the mazes below the Thungrun Clanhold.

- The map leads to what appears to be a dead end. However, the wall is false: once struck by the great stone hammer, it crumbles.

The Key-Shaped Blade. Once the maze is conquered, Gunnhild allows the characters to retrieve the key-shaped blade from the Great Stoneworks inside the Thungrun Clanhold. Once inserted into the vault door, however, the door reveals itself as a magical construct; it spits the key out of its mouth, opens its eyes, yawns, and asks the characters for the password. A single word in Terran (the language of the Elemental Plane of Earth) is etched on the key-shaped blade: Alliance. The word is visible only in total darkness.

- Once the word is spoken (and pronounced fluently), the vault door accepts the key.

Denouement: Loth'remar's Treasure. Inside the vault is a dizzying hoard of treasure (GM's discretion), but Gunnhild's prize is a mere wooden cup. An inscription in Dwarvish reads, "*Drink deep and speak, and ye shall have it.*"

- The wooden cup grants the wielder a single *wish* spell.
- If returned to Gunnhild, she immediately uses it to restore her youth...but it doesn't make her any nicer. She does make good on her promise, however, and rewards the characters half of the vault's treasure.

THWARTING THE DARKHAMMER

Kazdrek Darkhammer is plotting to become Emperor and abolish the other founding families during the next Hearth Forge celebration, when the Emberheart clan turns inward and suspends official business (including their involvement in Senate votes).

Discovery. The characters become aware that the Darkhammers are plotting something nefarious. If they make their concerns public, Kazdrek has his agents attempt to bribe (or even assassinate) the characters.

Gather Support. The characters must somehow convince clans Thungrun and Emberheart that they're in imminent danger. However, both clans are too distracted by internal matters—the fabled vault and the secret war, respectively—to pay any attention to the Darkhammers. The characters must prove beyond a shadow of a doubt what the Darkhammers are planning.

Crisis: Direstone Divided. This year, the election of the Emperor and the Hearth Forge celebration happen to be mere days apart.

- **No Intervention.** If the characters don't intervene, Kazdrek assumes the throne, taking both the Emberhearts and Thungrun by surprise. Then, days later, as the Emberhearts are celebrating inside their mountain hall, Kazdrek initiates a Senate motion to abolish both houses as political entities. The motion passes, and the Darkhammers become the sole rulers of Direstone. Once the celebration is over, the unthinkable happens: civil war. Kazdrek, fused with his **iron golem**, handily defeats the other two houses.
- **Intervention.** If the characters do intervene, Kazdrek still assumes the throne, albeit less convincingly, but fails to abolish his rivals. The Emberhearts, in an unprecedented move, storm the Senate during the Hearth Forge celebration and spoil the vote. Then, a massive brawl breaks out, injuring Bressir. Kazdrek disappears into his workshop and fuses with the **iron golem**.
- **Final Battle.** Characters who wish to participate in the Direstone Civil War may be asked to confront Kazdrek directly. Treat Kazdrek as an **iron golem**, except that it retains Kazdrek's personality, memories, thoughts, and languages. He is accompanied by several **Fireforge Phalanx** dwarves and a **Fireforge Phalanx elite** (see the appendix). If the characters can't defeat Kazdrek, he wins the war.

Denouement: Restoring Order. Once the civil war is over, whatever its outcome, the city is restored to order. If the Darkhammers win, their enemies are cast out of the city (including the characters, if they took up arms against Kazdrek). If the Darkhammers lose, they're banished from Direstone by the other two founding families.

EXAMPLE TREASURE

Direstone is known for its eponymous mineral: direstone. Direstone is extremely resilient and takes well to magical enchantments. Any magic item with "direstone" in its name would be appropriate to find in this city, such as a *direstone dwarven key*. The legendary *Emberheart hammer* made by Loth'remar, which is optionally used in the Finding the



Secret Vault adventure. Other dwarven magic items, such as a *battlebrew bomb*, *dwarven boozehound's backpack*, or *knocking boots* are also more likely to be found here. Items used in forging, such as the *coldfire anvil*, *forgekeeper's spark*, or the *royal engineer's greatcoat* are also possible to be found here among the plethora of accomplished artisans in the city. Stonework items, too, like the *armor of the stone citadel*, *ball of wild earth*, *belt of four elements*, *bulette torpedo*, *bullfrog totem*, *rod of instant pillars*, or the *stonemason's companion* are perfect fits.

When visiting Whizzlebang's Tinker Toys shop, magical toys could be a delightful addition to the stock there. Examples include the *wind-up merchant* or *stuffy familiar*. Lastly, anything that a xorn would like, especially gemstones, like the *candy xorn* or *xorn-sole boots* would be especially fitting.

APPENDIX: DIRESTONE STAT BLOCKS

CAVE TROLLS

Cave trolls, like normal trolls, are tall and lanky giantkin. Cave trolls, in particular, are more gray and hunched over. They have a penchant for crystals and often collect them for trade or crafting. They form small communities within their cave networks, and at times make the transition to larger society.

FIREFORGE PHALANX

The dwarves of the Fireforge Phalanx are extremely militant and unwaveringly committed to Direstone's safety. They march in heavy armor and tall shields emblazoned with the gilded mark of Direstone.

GARGOYLES

Gargoyles that have survived for centuries become ancient, all-knowing statues. Some adventurers turn to such gargoyles, despite the risks, in hopes of gleaning information from their wisdom and lasting memories. Their gaze can even create new statues by petrifying living creatures.

Conversely, small statuettes possessed by the same sentience granted by the Elemental Plane of Earth are called gargoyle implings. These stone pranksters are sometimes employed as chaotic familiars of warlocks, who enact no shortage of mischief together.

HEARTH GEM

Hearth gems are exceptionally rare gemstones that have been granted sentience by magic, divine intervention, or an unusual proximity to the Elemental Plane of Earth. Hearth gems grow over millenia, and only rarely speak to creatures—thereby masking their true nature. Renowned hearth gems include the one at the center of the Emberheart forge, as well as the one at the center of the H'rethi desert.

CAVE TROLL



CAVE TROLL

Large giant, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 73 (7d10 + 35)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Investigation +3, Perception +3

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Giant, Undercommon

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The troll has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the troll's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes fire or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its morningstar.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

CAVE TROLL MAGE

Large giant, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +8, Investigation +8, Perception +6

Damage Resistances nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant, Undercommon

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The troll has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the troll's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes fire or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Spellcasting. The troll is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16). The troll has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *light*, *mending*, *prestidigitiation*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*,* *floating disk*, *shield*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *locate object*, *mirror image*, *shatter*, *spider climb*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*

4th level (3 slots): *stone shape*, *stoneskin**

5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*

*The troll casts these spells on itself before combat.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its staff.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

FIREFORGE PHALANX

Medium humanoid (dwarf), any alignment

Armor Class 19 (splint, shield)

Hit Points 76 (9d8 + 36)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances fire, poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Dwarven Resilience. The dwarf has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dwarf makes two attacks.

Shield Bash. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

REACTIONS

Protect. When a creature attacks a target other than the elite that is within 5 feet of it, the elite imposes disadvantage on the attack roll. To do so, the elite must see the attacker and be wielding a shield. If the attack hits, the damage the target takes is reduced by 7 (2d6).

FIREFORGE PHALANX



FIREFORGE PHALANX ELITE

Medium humanoid (dwarf), any alignment

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +7

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +5

Damage Resistances fire, poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Active Defense. In addition to its normal reaction, the elite can take a special reaction each round that can only be used for its Protect reaction option.

Charge. If the elite moves at least 10 feet straight toward a Large or smaller target and then hits it with a melee weapon attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Dwarven Resilience. The elite has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elite makes three attacks.

Shield Bash. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Taunt (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest). The elite lets loose a raucous taunt. Each creature of the elite's choice within 30 feet of it that can hear it must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the taunted creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than the elite for 1 minute or until the creature takes damage from a creature other than the elite. For each creature affected by the taunt, the elite gains a +1 bonus to AC, to a maximum of +5. A taunted creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

REACTIONS

Protect. When a creature attacks the elite or another target within 5 feet of it, the elite imposes disadvantage on the attack roll. To do so, the elite must see the attacker and be wielding a shield. If the attack hits, the damage the target takes is reduced by 14 (4d6). If the attack misses, the elite immediately makes a shield bash attack against the attacker, provided that the attacker is within 5 feet of the elite.

GARGOYLE, ANCIENT

Huge elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 149 (13d12 + 65)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +9, Cha +3

Skills History +3, Perception +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Terran

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

False Appearance. While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

Magic Resistance. The gargoyle has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gargoyle makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its fists.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) piercing damage.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Petrifying Gaze (Recharge 6). The gargoyle glares at one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target magically begins turning to stone and is restrained. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

GARGOYLE IMPLING

Tiny elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d4 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Deception +2, Perception +3

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

False Appearance. While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

Magic Resistance. The gargoyle has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Mocking Rebuke (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest).

When a creature within 60 feet of the gargoyle deals damage to the gargoyle or one of its allies it can see, the gargoyle weaves a magical insult at the creature. If the target can hear the gargoyle (though it need not understand the gargoyle), it must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the next time the target makes an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw before the end of its next turn, it must roll a d6 and subtract the number rolled from the result.

VARIANT: GARGOYLE IMPLING FAMILIAR

Some gargoyle implings are willing to serve spellcasters as a familiar. Such gargoyle implings have the following trait.

Familiar. The gargoyle impling can serve another creature as a familiar, forming a magic, telepathic bond with that willing companion. While the two are bonded, the companion can sense what the gargoyle impling senses as long as they are within 1 mile of each other. While the gargoyle impling is within 10 feet of its companion, the companion shares the gargoyle impling's Magic Resistance trait. At any time and for any reason, the gargoyle impling can end its service as a familiar, ending the telepathic bond.

HEARTH GEM

Tiny construct, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (22d4 + 110)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +5

Skills History +9, Insight +8, Perception +8

Damage Resistances psychic

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 18

Languages understands all but can't speak, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

False Appearance. While the gem remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate gemstone.

Immutable Form. The gem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Innate Spellcasting. The gem's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17). The gem can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *light, mending, prestidigitation*

3/day: *continual flame, enhance ability, heat metal*

1/day: *sunbeam, wall of fire*

Magic Resistance. The gem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Stonemind. The gem has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on a spell.

Unusual Nature. The gem doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gem makes four light ray attacks. It can cast a spell in place of two attacks.

Light Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

REACTIONS

Brilliant Spark. When the gem is hit by a melee attack, it emits a blinding flash of light. Each creature within 10 feet of the gem must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

WARLORD SNIKROT

Medium goblinoid (goblin), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 144 (17d8 + 68)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Intimidation +5, Insight +5, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the warlord hits with it (included in the attack).

Nimble Mind. The warlord can take the Help or Search action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Pack Tactics. The warlord has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the warlord's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warlord makes three attacks.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage in melee or 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage at range.

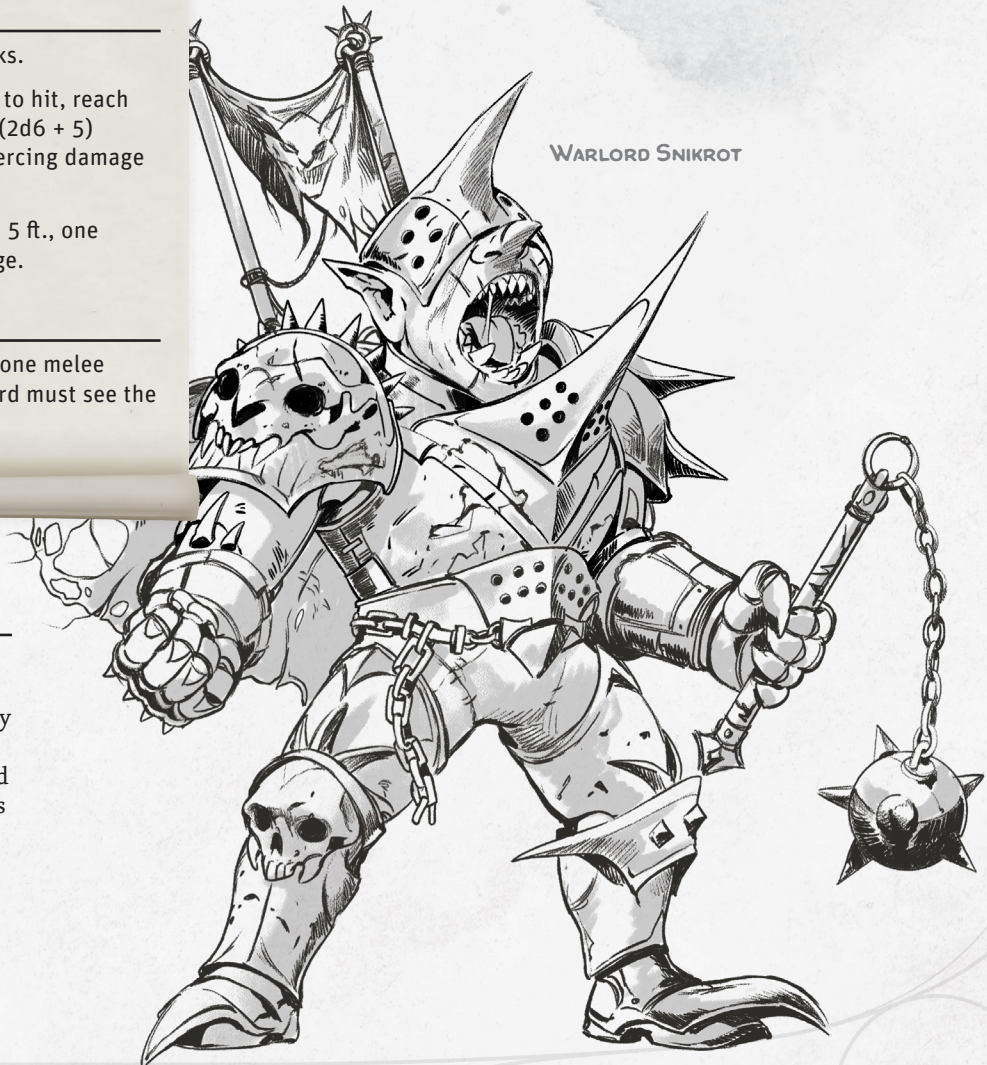
Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The warlord adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the warlord must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

WARLORD SNIKROT

A colossal brute of a goblin, Snikrot is the imposing leader of the goblin horde beneath Direstone and the secret sworn enemy of Bressir Emberheart. His unwavering conviction and hatred of Direstone, coupled with his incredible military prowess, makes him a deadly adversary.



WARLORD SNIKROT



SHILDBEARER

NEW FIGHTER ARCHETYPE

Not everyone who can tell you which end of a sword to hold is a fighter: that title is reserved for the trained guards, valiant knights, and masterful veterans of the world, and apart from their shared expertise with weapons, armor, and combat, few two fighters are exactly the same. Fighters are focused on the honing of their skill in combat, adapting to the settings around them and developing new solutions to the challenges they face. Some choose to focus on the mastery of one particular weapon or develop keen tactical skill, whereas others rely on clever magical forces to enhance their martial prowess. Beyond that, weapon and armor preference play a significant part in determining a fighter's role. When you are a fighter, you're equipped to face the world's dangers head-on.

SHILDBEARER

As a shieldbearer, you are a warrior of metal and grit. You are a mobile fortress, dedicated to shrugging off blows and defending your allies in harm's way. You are capable of turning mundane shields into powerful battering rams, and can single-handedly make way for your allies to turn the tide of battle.

IMPROVED PROTECTION

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain the Protection option from the Fighting Style class feature. If you already took that option, you can instead choose a different one.

Your version of the Protection fighting style has a range of 10 feet, instead of 5, provided that your speed isn't 0. When you use your reaction in this way, you can move up to 10 feet to a space within 5 feet of the attacked target, which doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. Even if the triggering attack hits, the damage the target takes is reduced by an amount equal to 1d4 + the shield's total bonus to AC. This damage is reduced by an additional d4 when you reach certain levels in this class: 7th level (2d4), 10th level (3d4), 15th level (4d4), and 18th level (5d4).

In addition, you gain a special reaction that you can take on any creature's turn, even if you've already used your normal reaction, but no more than once per turn. You can use this special reaction only to use your Protection fighting style, and you can't use it on the same turn that you take your normal reaction. You can use this special reaction twice, and you regain all expended uses of it whenever you finish a short or long rest.

SHIELD BASH

Also at 3rd level, you can use a shield you're holding to make melee weapon attacks. You are proficient with it, and you add your Strength modifier to its attack and damage rolls. Its damage is bludgeoning, and its damage die is a d6. If your shield grants you a magical bonus to AC, such as a +1 shield, that bonus is also applied to any attack and damage roll you make using the shield in this way.

In addition, shields have the thrown property for you (despite not being considered weapons), and they have a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet. You can also don or doff a shield using a bonus action, and if you throw one you're wielding in this way, you can doff it as part of the attack.

Lastly, if you're wielding only a shield and no other weapons, your shield is considered to be a weapon for you, in addition to being armor.

BATTERING RAM

At 7th level, you can use your shield to force your way through any obstacle. When you make a Strength check to break down a door or similar barrier using your shield, you gain a bonus to the check equal to 2 + your shield's total bonus to AC.

In addition, when you move at least 20 feet in a straight line toward a Large or smaller target and then immediately hit it with an attack, that target must also make a Strength saving throw. The DC is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice). On a failed save, the target is knocked prone and takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage. If the target is an object or structure, the extra bludgeoning damage is doubled. You must be wielding a shield.

ACTIVE DEFENSE

Starting at 10th level, you can ready yourself to leap into defensive action. Your Protection fighting style can now be used to impose disadvantage on an attack roll made by a creature attacking you, instead of only your allies. When an attacker misses a target as the result of you using this Fighting Style option, you can immediately make one melee attack with your shield against the attacker as part of that reaction, provided that the attacker is within 5 feet of you.

You can also use the special reaction from your Improved Protection feature three times between rests, instead of twice.

MASTER OF PROTECTION

By 15th level, your Protection fighting style has a range of 15 feet, instead of 10, and you can move up to 15 feet when using your reaction in this way, instead of 10. You can also use the special reaction from your Improved Protection feature four times between rests, instead of three times.

IMPENETRABLE TAUNT

At 18th level, you can use an action to let loose a raucous taunt. Each hostile creature of your choice within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw, provided that it can hear you. The DC is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice). On a failed save, a creature falls for the taunt. An affected creature remains taunted for 1 minute or until it takes damage from a creature other than you. A taunted creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you for the duration. For each creature affected by the taunt, you gain a +1 bonus to AC, up to a maximum of +5.

A taunted creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

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