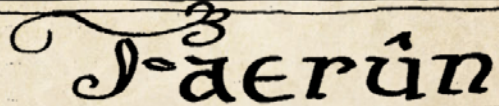


AMARUNE'S ALMANAC



Mountains of the Realms







Sossal ↑

VAASA

GREAT
GLACIER

NARFELL

DAMARA

RASHMEN

HORDELANDS

ORMANTHOR

THE VAST

EARTHSPURS MOUNTAINS

IMPILTUR

EASTING COAST

THE
GREAT DALE

THESK

SUNRISE MOUNTAINS

SEMBIA

SEA OF FALLEN STARS

AGLAROND

THAY

MURGHOM

TURMISH

THE
INING
AINS

CHONDATH

CHESSENTA

UNTHER

MULHORAND

PLAINS OF
PURPLE DUST

VEN MOUNTAINS

TYMANTHER

THE YEIMIAL
MOUNTAINS

FIRESTEEP MOUNTAINS

THE SHAAR

THE
GREAT RIFT

THE EASTERN
SHAAR

BEASTLANDS

ELFHARROW

FOREST OF
AMTAR

LUIREN

WALLS OF HALRUAA

HALRUAA

GREAT SWAMP
OF RETHILD

DAMBRATH



Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	6
<i>Introduction</i>	7
<i>Player Options</i>	9
Circle of the Standing Stones	9
Wyvern Knight Archetype.....	10
<i>Additional Rules</i>	13
Druid: Spellcasting	13
Ranger: Natural Explorer	13
Mountains of the Realms Spells	13
<i>Spellcasting</i>	14
Component: Environment (E).....	14
<i>Spells</i>	14
Druidic Practice.....	14
Landslide	14
Skein of Vines	15
Altitude Endurance/Weakness	15
Mountains to Molehills	15
Boulder	15
Cloudwalker	15
Moradin's Sight	15
Heart Stones.....	16
Guardian of Stone.....	16
Flying Mountain.....	16
<i>Locations</i>	17
<i>Earthspur Mountains</i>	17
<i>Mount Hotenow</i>	19
<i>Spine of the World</i>	21

<i>Storm Horns</i>	23
<i>Walls of Habruaa</i>	25
<i>Between Adventures</i>	27
Downtime Activity: Gathering Plants Expedition.....	27
Regional Flora Table	28
Flora	29
<i>Appendix</i>	38
<i>Beasts and Monsters</i>	38
Dire Ibex	39
King Lion	40
Living Magma	41
Minotaur Lizard	42
Rocling.....	43
Royal Griffon	44
Springthorn Vine.....	45
Taer.....	46
Thylacine	48
Tigerpede.....	49
<i>Magic Items</i>	50
Gauntlets of Stonemithing	50
Heart of the Mountain	50
Maerth's Spike	50
Mountainous Compass	51
Piton of the Peaks	51
Seed of The Spine	51
Shield of the Onyx Pillar	51
Staff of Icedawn	51
Summits and Crag: A Mountain Guide	52
Yehimal's Stalwart Helm	52

Credits

Lead Designer & Producer: Steve Fidler
Editor: Ryan Langr
Writing and Design: Ashley May, BorntoDoStuff, Bryan Holmes, Ed Greenwood, Israel Moreira, Sean vas Terra, Steve Fidler, Trevor Armstrong
Layout & Graphic Design: Nathanaël Roux
Forgotten Realms Sages: Bryan Holmes, and Ed Greenwood

Cover Art: Noreefly (Adobe Stock), composed by Steve Fidler
Cartography: Map of Faerûn by Dusty Haynes @ TableTopAdvantage.com, modified by Steve Fidler & Nathanaël Roux
Introduction Art: Amarune Writing by Dante Ezio Cifaldi
Interior Sketch Art: Shiah "Cinder" Irgangladen

Other Interior Art: Forrest Imel, Some artwork © 2015 Dean Spencer, used with permission. All rights reserved., Henrik Karppinen, Maxim B, Microstocker, Jeremy Mohler
ARTWORK ©2019 OUTLAND ENTERTAINMENT LLC, Kalen Emsley, Breanna Galley, Shomitro Kumar Ghosh, ink splatter brushes (Brusheezy.com).

Definitions

When referencing spells from this book, the superscript "AA7" is used (for example, *druidic practice*^{AA7}). Each volume of Amarune's Almanac uses this notation, with the end numeral changed to match the volume of the book. "XGE" is used to denote spells from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. If other definitions are used, they will appear here in future volumes.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Eberron, the dragon ampersand, Ravnica and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries.

This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild. All other original material in this work is copyright 2019-2020 by Steve Fidler and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

To my adoring fans, another of my dear friend Amarune's guides to the wider world is contained herein.

Mountains! If you were to ascribe the likeness of humble Volo to any one region of Faerûn, it would be its mountains. Imposing yet beautiful. Harsh yet hospitable. Unyielding yet... well. Just unyielding. For I stand tall and proud against any challenge that faces me.

Elminster might not think so. In fact, I am sure he's likened my reaction to adversity to that of a tower of sticks. But as is so often the case, El is wrong and I am like a monolith of stone: impervious to the rigors of time.


I so fondly remember traveling across the Yehimals from Faerûn into Shou with my compatriot Passepout back over a century ago. We'd just started our ascent in the foothills east of Doegan, with the everpresent Cloudspire standing tall above any other peak in the range. There wasn't a time when we couldn't see it, and it acted as our guiding star throughout the first leg of our journey.

Passepout and I set up camp at the base one night and kept ourselves warm with a hot debate over whether we should go around the spire, or climb it. Naturally it was my inclination to take the more difficult, more rewarding route. I was certain there were secrets beyond the ring of clouds that obscured its peak: ancient treasure, benevolent beings, the divine realm of a forgotten deity—something that would make the effort worthwhile. Pass, whether driven by cowardice or simply a lack of imagination, felt we'd find nothing but a cold and lonely death. Of course neither of us knew what was truly up there, and we never did find out.

When I told my dear publisher Elminster this tale, he laughed through his pipe and smoke bellowed from his nose. Surely he knew what was at the top, but in his usual manner, he would not deign to share this with me.

I'd asked Amarune once if she'd shared any of El's memories of Cloudspire, but she turned inward and unresponsive. It wasn't until I was glossing over her manuscript for the Arctics volume of her Almanac that I read her story of climbing the mount and the near-death failure of the endeavor. A chilling thought.

As usual I digress. The twisted peaks of Faerûn are unforgiving, but not without their beauty as the illustrious Amarune captures and details within this tome. Just beware, as such endeavors are fraught with danger, and I will not be held accountable for any ill-given advice contained within these pages.

 Volothamp Geddam

The following D&D books provided material and inspiration:

Ed Greenwood. "The Dragon's Bestiary: Rare beasts of the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting" *Dragon* #139. November 1988

David Cook, Steve Winter, Jon Pickens. *Monstrous Compendium Volume Three Forgotten Realms Appendix (MC3)*. 1989

Doug Stewart. *Monstrous Manual*. June 1993

Ed Greenwood, Julia Martin, Jeff Grubb. *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting 2nd edition (revised)*, A *Grand Tour of the Realms*. 1993

Ed Greenwood. *Volo's Guide to the North*. 1993

Eric Haddock. *Cormyr*. 1994

James Butler, Elizabeth T. Danforth, Jean Rabe. *Elminster's Ecologies: The Cormyrean Marshes*. September, 1994

Ed Greenwood. *Volo's Guide to Cormyr*. July, 1995

Dale "slade" Henson, Ed Greenwood, Julia Martin, Steven E. Schend, Jennell Jaquays, Steve Perrin.

The North: Guide to the Savage Frontier. April, 1996

Ed Greenwood. *The City of Ravens Bluff*. November 1998

Ed Greenwood, Sean K. Reynolds, Skip Williams, Rob Heinsoo. *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting 3rd edition*. June, 2001

Neverwinter Nights (videogame) June, 2002

Ed Greenwood, Jason Carl. *Silver Marches*. July, 2002

Richard Baker, Matt Forbeck, Sean K. Reynolds. *Unapproachable East*. May 2003

Thomas Reid. *Shining South*. October, 2004

Brian R. James and Ed Greenwood. *The Grand History of the Realms*. September, 2007

Foreword

To most folk of the “civilized” Realms, mountains are walls: no-go areas prone to avalanches, roamed by fearsome monsters, and beset by frigid winds and, at their loftiest heights, perpetual ice and snow. The usually rare passes through mountains are vital trade routes—and dangerous gaps invading armies pour through.

Mountains may well be where most gems and precious metals come from, not to mention most drinkable fresh water, and also serve as natural barriers that prevent a mighty realm from just expanding at will to swallow everyplace else. Yet they are essentially features to be gazed at from afar, not climbed or delved into.

Except, of course, for all the intrepid folk (or “reckless fools,” if you prefer) who mount expeditions to explore mountains and find new ways across ranges, hunt and trap their slopes, quarry their flanks, prospect within them, and log their forested foothills.

Hundreds of folk vanish on mountainsides every year in Faerûn. Some are victims of the cold, or life-shattering falls. Others fall prey to all manner of monsters, for mountainous areas are among the last refuges of creatures pushed out of easier terrain—or who desire privacy, and seek out steep and rugged mountainous surroundings because the conditions deter what would otherwise be a nigh-endless parade of would-be slayers or thieves.

Anyone who’s listened to enough tavern tales in the Realms knows red and white dragons lair in mountains, usually in caverns (frigid caves for white dragons, warmer grottoes for reds), so the heart of many a mountain peak contains high-heaped coins, trade bars, gems, jewelry, magic items, and lump nuggets of precious metals to match or beggar the treasury of many dukedoms or baronies.

Tales aplenty speak of orc hordes boiling down out of mountain caverns when hungry mouths exceed the meager available food, but did you know that orcs and many other mountain-dwellers survive hard winters by eating fast-growing mountain-cavern “yarthil” moss? (Quite tasty, akin to graying oak bark in appearance and consistency, but more like spinach with a dash of garlic, on the tongue.)

And most folk have heard of secret dwarven mines and forges deep inside mountains, where lava flows provide enough heat to smelt and smith, and miners chisel away at rich veins of gold, silver, adamantite (“adamantite” is the hard, brittle ore; “adamantine” is the hard but far more durable alloy derived from it), and rarer metals. Almost every bard can speak of the legendary Lost Vein of Adamantite, pure and “as

wide as two wagons and as tall as three,” but I wager none of them have seen it; if it exists at all outside of drunken fancy, it is still lost. Otherwise, I’d be seeing a lot more happily dancing dwarves in adamantine plate armor and shields, waving adamantine weapons. (The few I do see are fearsome enough!)

Other accounts tell of giants who dwell contentedly in the high hearts of steep and jagged mountain ranges few can hope to reach who can’t fly. Many giant homes are many hidden, unspoiled valleys girt by peaks, where herds roam free and can’t hope to overgraze the lush vegetation.

Yet everyone knows tales grow in the telling, and some events spread to many ears while others pass unseen. So it may be that the lost expedition of Urulethar the Clanless, the Beardless Dwarf, that vanished in 946 DR somewhere in the Orsraun Mountains, found a safe and happy route down to lower, greener lands, or an Underdark haven they settled and flourished in...but it’s more likely their gnawed bones lie scattered across the cavern-lairs of formidable monsters (sorts unknown, though many competing accounts provide a broad and colorful menagerie of possible banes).

And it may also be that the claims of just how ‘aware’ certain secret gnome magics can make entire mountains, so the very rocks themselves feel the picks and boots of intruders, not to mention mining and other ‘attacks,’ are exaggerated. Perhaps peaks can’t unleash very-specific-area, targeted avalanches, or open glacial or bedrock rifts that swallow unwanted intruders. Perhaps.

However, Elminster tells me there’s nothing exaggerated about the six treasure-laden Halruaan skyships that crashed somewhere in the Dustwall Mountains, or the lost treasury of Handramas ‘the Bright Baron’ of Amn, seized by brigands who were pursued high into the Troll Mountains, only to be lost forever in a howling snowstorm. To name but two out of so, so many.

Perhaps mountains are worth visiting, and not just gazing at. This tome may help make such visits survivable.

Ed Greenwood

{Creator of The Forgotten Realms}



Introduction

My name is Amarune Lyone Armala Whitewave, and I have a funny way of viewing a concept like 'retirement.' I've lived a complicated life to this point. I was born in a well-to-do family, and always told that I was descended from the great sage Elminster, though I never believed it. When I lost my family, I was forced to grow up and take care of myself, learning the fine art of thievery to get by. I would eventually become a mask dancer in a festhall, with a little burglary on the side. It was in that festhall that I met my favorite customer, and eventually, my lover, Arclath.

Arclath stuck with me through thick and thin; through uncovering fiendish plots to seize the crown of Suzail, through being a vessel for my great-grandfather Elminster's disembodied soul, through becoming a Chosen of Mystra, and through battle at Myth Drannor as a mercenary of the Shadow Enclave.

Yes, as I said, my life has been complicated.

Sharing a mind with my great-grandfather left me with a scramble of memories, not knowing whether or not the things I recalled were my own memories, or Elminster's. In an effort to settle my chaotic mind, and see more of the Realms for myself rather than through the mind's eye of my ancestor, I undertook the Amarune's Almanac project. Still, Arclath remained at my side, this time as my editor. He originally proposed this journey as a vacation with a side of journaling, but it's grown to be so much more than that.

Dearest reader, I thank you for staying with me as well, through what now amounts to seven volumes. As I gaze now at the pile of semi-organized

notes that will comprise my eighth book, I am overwhelmed by the bittersweetness of it all. I will not say this has always been a pleasant undertaking. While writing has brought me joy, there have also been times when my hand ached, when I developed calluses from gripping a quill, or when I was absolutely maddened by my inability to paint a vivid picture with my words. I must admit there were times when I was ready for this project to be over, when I was certain I would close the back cover and say, "That's it. No more."

Yet, somehow, by the time I reached the final page of each of my organized drafts, something had reinvigorated me. There was something that nudged at me, that told me that I needed to keep going, that I needed to push forward. I know by now how to tell the memories of Elminster's from my own, and I know these are not the vestiges of him telling me to push forward, but instead, my own sensibilities.

Having been through this seven times before, I now dread closing the cover of the eighth and final book. I'm not entirely sure what I'm going to do. Will I feel a sense of loss, of emptiness, that my goal has come to an end? Will I begin to desperately seek out some new project to busy myself? Or, will I finally let Arclath take me on a real vacation? I suppose I have one more project cycle with which to figure these things out. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the loyalty of my readers who have stuck by me. I hope that my writings have served to inspire you, and to inform your own journeys across our realm.



The Making of Mountains

It's easy to think of things like the Spellplague as being the most catastrophic, world-changing events in our history. As impactful as it may have been on humanoid civilizations, even the Spellplague cannot hold a candle to the countless millennia of history that has shaped our world. What hubris to think that only our recorded history has an effect on the world! Even when we set aside sudden shifts like earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, there's even more striking change. It is indescribably humbling to stand by a tiny babbling stream that lies between two mountains, and realize these towering peaks were divided by the stream itself; it is not merely that the water took the path of least resistance, but that thousands of years of erosion have sliced the rock in twain.

Mountains of Magic

While some subterranean cultures may choose to live inside of mountains, and many mining economies are situated around their base, surprisingly few people decide to live on mountains. Mountaintop living is generally reserved for those in search of seclusion or in need of a vantage point, like a castle or fortress. Mountains are a natural anchor for magic and magical creatures, keeping distance from the hustle and bustle of settlements, and also the ideal place for magically-inclined folk to do their experimentation and study. Magic has also changed our world in phenomenal ways. More dramatic than the canyon cut by a babbling brook are the notches carved out of the sides of mountains, or the mountains whose summit is floating a mile above the rest of its body, elevated and turned into a floating island by magic. Mountains are dangerous enough by their very nature, but the magic that lives in and around them gives even more reason to explore with caution.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR, ARCLATH DELCASTLE

Becoming an editor was never a great aspiration of mine. To be honest, most of the things I've done in my life were cast upon me, and not by choice. Still, I find the silver linings in many things, and in spite of the many nights we've spent sleeping on the dirt, I still can take time to indulge in the noble comforts I enjoyed in my youth. There are countless luxuries to be found in the world, even in the least luxurious places.

Whilst returning from the Spine of the World, we traveled along the Ten Trail with a caravan of merchants. This might sound like a common story to you, as Amarune and I often travel in such groups. They provide us with transportation that doesn't require wearing holes through our boots once a tenday, and we provide them with protection should some danger arise. In any case, I noticed a young lady with a crate of what appeared to be icicles. They were a pale green color, mottled with brown, so I can't imagine you'd have wanted to drink whatever water formed such icicles.

As we journeyed for Neverwinter, I noticed her crate never leaked. They never melted, no matter how far we strayed from the bitter north. By the time we arrived in Neverwinter, I had to ask her what she was transporting. The fair maid did me an even better turn than to explain it, and she fixed me a cup of icicle tea.

She began with a copper cup, baring cool spring water. She muddled a handful of fresh berries into the liquid before taking one of the 'icicles' from her crate, which she informed me was called zurrud, or icicle mint. She dipped the long spike into the cup, letting it stick up high out one side, and stirred the liquid before placing the cup in my hand. The first sip was almost overwhelming in its refreshing crispness. Oh, how I would adore to have something like this when we explore the sweltering jungles or muggy swamps! Such a drink could make the dead of summer taste like an autumn breeze.

Trail-hardened adventurers, take the time to smell the roses. Enjoy the world and all the comforts it affords you. Give yourself permission to step away from your duties, even if only briefly, to bask in the luxuries that surround you. Whether it's the smell of fresh baked bread wafting from a baker's windowsill, the feel of cool grass between your toes, or the taste of a hardy roast from your favorite tavern, there are too many simple joys in life to allow yourself to be bogged down solely with your tasks and work.

And of course, if you would like to indulge in icicle tea, I can recommend no better vendor than Dawna Ann in the Neverwinter Marketplace, where she sets up her shop for the first half-tenday of each moon. Tell her Lord Delcastle sent you.

Player Options

Presented here are two subclasses, one for the Druid class and one for the Ranger class. These subclasses represent the denizens of the immutable environment of the mountain. The Circle of the Standing Stones, who stand tall in the face of adversity and shape every advantage to their own benefit; and the Wyvern Knight ranger archetype who align with one of the greatest creatures to live among the peaks, the wyvern, to deadly efficacy.

Circle of the Standing Stones

It is not just the mountains that are unmoving. The people who live here are as unyielding as the stone, hardened and sturdy folk. The attendants of the stone are no exception to this, standing as tall and proud as the stones they raise from the ground. Life among the clouds is a difficult one, and would be harder still if not for the diligence of these druids. They work tirelessly to shape the landscape to allow vegetation a chance to grow, ease the paths of travel, and ward off incursions from creatures that threaten their homes.

Circle Spells

Your mystical connection to the land infuses you with the ability to cast certain spells. At 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level you gain access to circle spells connected to the wetlands of Faerûn.

Once you gain access to a circle spell, you always have it prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. If you gain access to a spell that doesn't appear on the druid spell list, the spell is nonetheless a druid spell for you.

CIRCLE OF THE STANDING STONES SPELLS

Druid Level	Spells
3rd	<i>mountains to molehills</i> ^{AA7} , <i>spider climb</i>
5th	<i>erupting earth</i> ^{XGE} , <i>meld into stone</i>
7th	<i>boulder</i> ^{AA7} , <i>stone shape</i>
9th	<i>cloudwalker</i> ^{AA7} , <i>passwall</i>

Mountain Beast Forms

At 2nd level, you can use your Wild Shape to transform into a beast that calls mountains home with a challenge rating as high as ½ (you ignore the Max CR column of the Beast Shapes table, but must abide by the other limitations there).

The maximum CR of your mountain forms increases when you reach certain levels in this class. The max CR becomes 1 at 6th level, 2 at 10th level, and 3 at 14th level.

Land Transmutation: Mountain

Starting at 2nd level, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape feature as an action to magically transmute the area within 60 feet of you into a mountainous hillside. The ground becomes covered in loose sand and gravel, stairs and other inclines become ramps, and vertical surfaces become rocky outcroppings. While in this area, you and up to 5 other creatures gain a climb speed equal to your walking speed. In addition, you can manipulate the area in the following ways:

Raise Earth. As an action, you can cause a column of stone to rise from the ground beneath a Medium or smaller creature that you can see within 60 feet. The column has a diameter of 5 feet and a height of up to 15 feet. The ground where the column appears must be wide enough for its diameter. An unwilling creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against your druid spell save DC to avoid being lifted by the column. If the column is prevented from reaching its full height because of a ceiling



or other obstacle, a creature on the column takes bludgeoning damage equal to twice your druid level, and the column is destroyed. A column is destroyed if it takes any damage (AC 15, immune to poison and psychic damage).

Throw Stone. As a bonus action, you coalesce a pebble of dust and dirt in your hand to throw at a creature within 60 feet. Make a ranged spell attack against that creature. On a hit, the target takes 1d4 + your Wisdom modifier bludgeoning damage. This damage increases as you gain levels in this class, becoming 2d4 when you reach 5th level, 3d4 at 11th level, and 4d4 at 17th level.

The terrain created by this feature is real and not an illusion, but is otherwise magical. This effect lasts a number of hours equal to half your druid level (rounded down). The area then reverts to its normal form unless you expend another use of this feature. You can revert the area to its normal form earlier by using a bonus action.

Cliffcraft

At 6th level, as a reaction when you see a creature within 60 feet move at least 5 feet while climbing, you can cause the surface that creature is climbing on to break away. The climbing creature must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (their choice) against your druid spell save DC or fall.

In addition, you can also use your reaction when you see a creature within 60 feet of you fail an ability check to climb a surface to instead have them succeed.

Entomb

At 10th level, you can entomb a creature you can see within 60 feet in a shell of rock as an action. Until the start of your next turn, the target is considered petrified. An unwilling creature must make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (the target's choice) against your druid spell save DC to avoid this effect.

Stoneform

At 14th level, your body can mimic the earth and stone. When you use your Wild Shape feature to transform into a beast, you can choose to gather dust and stone from around you and harden your body. You gain the following benefits:

- If your form has a fly speed, you can Dash as a bonus action. Otherwise, you gain a burrow speed equal to your walking speed instead. When burrowing through stone or dirt, you leave a

tunnel behind you. The diameter of this tunnel is 5 feet, plus an additional 5 feet for each size category above Medium you are.

- You reduce all incoming damage by 5. If the damage is nonmagical, it is reduced by 10 instead.
- Your unarmed strikes and natural weapons deal an additional 1d10 bludgeoning damage.

This effect ends when your form reverts. Once you've used this feature, you must complete a long rest before you can do so again.

Wyvern Knight Archetype

High atop the forgotten peaks of Faerûn's mountain ranges, one can find the dragonholds of the Wyvern Knight rangers. These settlements usually consist of humans, elves, and dwarves who train alongside jeweled wyverns, a special subrace of wyvern created by elven high magic. These draconic companions are linked at birth to one specific member of the community, and their growth is tied to the capability of their partner.

These mountain fortresses have been rumored to exist since the end of the Time of Dragons, founded by the elves in the wake of their victory. The wyvern knights were originally made with the task of keeping track of the movements of dragons and destroying any burgeoning cabals that would threaten the rise of a new draconic empire. In the modern age, they've also begun hunting down and foiling the plots of the Cult of the Dragon wherever they can.

Wyvern Knight Spells

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Wyvern Knight Spells table. The spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

WYVERN KNIGHT SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	heroism
5th	dragon's breath ^{XGE}
9th	fear
13th	elemental bane ^{XGE}
17th	legend lore

Bonded Wyvern

By 3rd level, the jeweled wyvern you were bonded to has sought you out and found you once more.

It is friendly to you and your companions, and it obeys your commands. While it is in the same plane as you, you can communicate with it telepathically. See this creature's game statistics in the jeweled wyvern stat block. Choose a type of jeweled wyvern from the Jeweled Wyvern table and determine its appearance. The type of wyvern you choose determines what damage type it's resistant to and what cantrip it has access to with its Spellcasting feature.

In combat, the wyvern shares your initiative count, but it takes its turn immediately after yours. It can move and use its reaction on its own, but the only action it takes on its turn is the Dodge action, unless you take a bonus action on your turn to command it to take one of the actions in its stat block, one of the actions allowed by a magical effect it's under, or the Dash, Disengage, Help, Hide, or Search action.

Your wyvern regains all of its hit points whenever it finishes a short or long rest while you are alive. Your wyvern makes death saving throws as normal, but if your wyvern dies you take necrotic damage equal to your level, which can't be reduced in any way. You can revive it by using your action and expending a spell slot of 1st level or higher. After 1 minute, the wyvern returns to life with all its hit points in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of you. If you die, the wyvern dies after 1 hour, unless you are revived.

JEWELED WYVERN

Wyvern Type	Damage Type	Cantrip
Amethyst	psychic	<i>vicious mockery</i>
Diamond	radiant	<i>word of radiance</i> ^{XGE}
Emerald	acid	<i>primal savagery</i> ^{XGE}
Jade	poison	<i>poison spray</i>
Ruby	fire	<i>firebolt</i>
Sapphire	cold	<i>frostbite</i> ^{XGE}
Topaz	lightning	<i>shocking grasp</i>

Jeweled Wyvern

Small dragon, same alignment as you

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points five times your ranger level + your Wisdom modifier + the Wyvern's constitution modifier

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +4

Damage Resistances the wyvern is resistant to the damage type associated with its type

Condition Immunities frightened, charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic, understands the languages you can speak

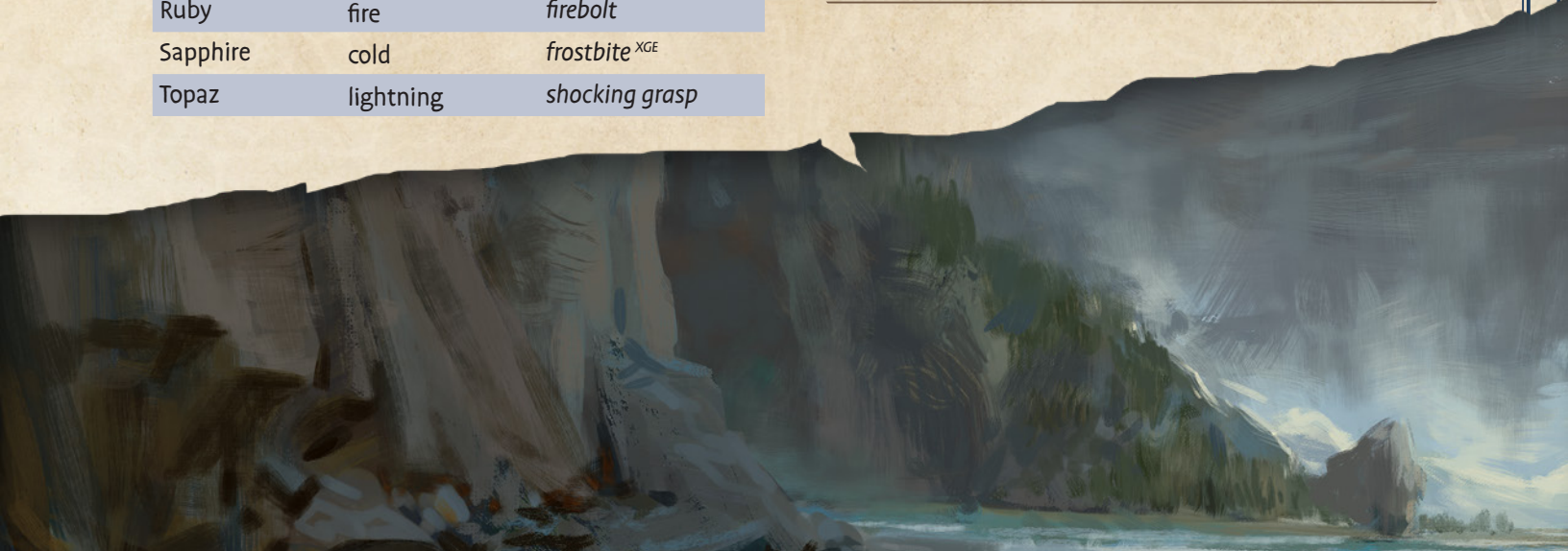
Might of the Master. The following numbers increase by 1 when your proficiency bonus increases by 1: the wyvern's skill and saving throw bonuses (above), the bonuses to hit and damage of its assault and stinger attacks, the bonus to its spell attacks and its Spellcasting save DC. Whenever you gain a level, your wyvern's spellcasting level goes up by one as well.

Ranger Companion. The wyvern counts as a beast for the purposes of your ranger spells.

Spellcasting. The jeweled wyvern is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the cantrip associated with its color, as well as the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. Spells cast with this trait do not require material and somatic components.

Actions

Assault. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage.





DEAN SPENCER

Bonded Growth

Starting at 7th level, you and your bonded wyvern have grown as a duo, which has caused it to physically age to match. Your wyvern becomes a Medium creature, but counts as a creature one size category higher for the purposes of mounted combat and determining carrying capacity, and the weight it can push, drag, or lift. Also, the beast's attacks now count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Additionally, you can command your wyvern to cast some of your spells. On its turn, the wyvern can cast any 1st-level ranger spell you know, or one of your Wyvern Knight spells using its spellcasting feature. This consumes one of your spell slots, as if you cast the spell. If the spell normally uses a bonus action, you can still command the wyvern to take an action as normal.

Elemental Stinger

By 11th level, your wyvern has developed enough to use its stinger, which has been magically turned into a potent dragonslaying tool. When your wyvern hits with its Assault attack, you can use your reaction to command it to use its stinger. For the next minute, the target loses any resistances it had to the wyvern's associated damage type, and any immunity it had to it is treated as resistance instead. If the target is or used to be a dragon, it loses the immunity as well. Then, the creature then takes an additional 5d8 damage of your wyvern's associated damage type.

Once the wyvern uses its stinger, it can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

Primeval Hunter

Starting at 15th level, your wyvern has reached full size and you've grown into an unstoppable duo. Your wyvern becomes Large, but remains serpentine and lithe enough to fit and squeeze into areas as if it were a Medium creature. Additionally, it becomes immune to its associated damage type.

You can't be forcibly knocked off your wyvern while mounting it. Additionally, while mounted on your wyvern and not incapacitated, and an effect would target both you and your wyvern, you can choose to make the effect target only one of you instead.

Additional Rules

Druid: Spellcasting

As a druid, your affinity for the world you are in allows you to quickly tap into its latent magic and call upon its power and knowledge. You can swap a druid spell you have prepared for a druid spell with an Environment component that matches the biome you are currently in by spending 1 minute per spell level in deep meditation. This spell must be a spell you would otherwise normally be able to prepare. This can be performed during a short rest.

Ranger: Natural Explorer

Upon picking a favored terrain with your Natural Explorer feature, Rangers gain a subset of spells associated to that terrain. These represent skills you've mastered as a Ranger, boons granted from the land itself, or simply tricks you've picked up out of necessity. Each spell listed can be cast once. You must complete a long rest before you can cast one of these spells again.

When you gain new favored terrains at 6th and 10th level, you do not learn the spells associated to those lists immediately. Instead, during a long rest you can choose to swap the spells you gained from one favored terrain to instead learn the spells from another.

FAVORED TERRAIN: SWAMP SPELLS

Ranger Level Spell

2nd	<i>skein of vines</i> ^{AA7}
5th	<i>altitude endurance/weakness</i> ^{AA7}
9th	<i>fly</i>
13th	<i>boulder</i> ^{AA7}

AMARUNE'S ALMANAC: MOUNTAINS OF THE REALMS SPELLS

Spell Level	Spell	School	Ritual	Druid	Ranger
1st	<i>druidic practice</i>	abjuration	✓	✓	✓
1st	<i>landslide</i>	evocation	✓		
1st	<i>skein of vines</i>	conjuration		✓	✓
2nd	<i>altitude endurance/weakness</i>	abjuration	✓	✓	✓
2nd	<i>mountains to molehills</i>	transmutation	✓	✓	✓
4th	<i>boulder</i>	evocation	✓	✓	✓
5th	<i>cloudwalker</i>	conjuration	✓	✓	✓
6th	<i>Moradin's sight</i>	divination	✓	✓	
7th	<i>heart stones</i>	conjuration	✓	✓	
8th	<i>guardian of stone</i>	transmutation	✓	✓	
9th	<i>flying mountain</i>	transmutation	✓	✓	

Spellcasting

Component: Environment (E)

Some spells require the caster to be in a specific biome or surrounded by specific terrain, specified in parentheses in the environment entry, before they can be cast. Some features may allow substitutes or replacements for this component and in this case the effect is created from whatever natural materials are available around it. The damage type of the spell does not change unless decided otherwise by the DM.

Spells

Druidic Practice

1st-level abjuration (ritual)

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (25 gp worth of herbs, leaves, and roots, which the spell consumes), E (any natural environment)

Duration: Instantaneous

You perform an ancient druidic ceremony that calls upon the land itself. When you cast this spell, choose one of the following practices, the target of which must be within 10 feet of you throughout the casting.

Forosnai. You touch a willing creature and send them on a spiritual pilgrimage. The target falls unconscious, waking up after 1 hour, if they take damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap them awake. The exact nature of this pilgrimage is unique to the individual and can result in learning new knowledge about an ancestor or past life or receiving guidance from a deity. The exact information learned is up to the DM. A creature can benefit from this practice once each year, during the season of their birth.

Geasa. You touch a willing creature, and choose a creature type: aberrations, beasts, celestials, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, oozes, plants, or undead. Alternatively, you can choose one race of humanoid (such as elves or tiefling). A ward is placed on the target, preventing it from being slain by a creature of the chosen type. If an attack by a creature of that type would reduce the target to 0 hit points, the target is instead reduced to 1 hit point and the ward ends. The ward ends early if the target is reduced to 0 hit

points by a creature of any other type. A creature can benefit from this rite only once.

Imbue. You touch a mundane plant or piece of wood. Magical energy suffuses the object throughout the ritual, preserving its form and allowing it to be used as a druidic focus.

Purify (Creature). You touch a willing creature, who becomes occluded by a mystical smoke that smells of sage. As the smoke clears, you make a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a successful check, the target is restored to its original alignment.

Purify (Object). You touch an object that has been diseased or blighted by a nonmagical source. The blight is removed, restoring it to its original state.

Landslide

1st-level evocation

Classes: Druid

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S, E (mountain)

Duration: Instantaneous

Choosing a point within range, you cause a landslide. A line that travels down from the chosen point follows the contour of the terrain below it. The line is 5 feet wide and 20 feet long. If this causes the landslide to fall from a ledge, the line stops at that point and the landslide affects creatures at the base of the ledge.

Creatures along this line must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the creature can use their reaction to move up to half their speed. Creatures still caught in the area are moved the length of the line and take 1d12 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they're moved plus any fall damage (if applicable). If they succeeded on their saving throw but were still in the area, they only take half damage.

The area affected by the line becomes difficult terrain.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the width of the line increases by 5 feet, and the length by 10 feet for each spell slot level above 1st.

Additionally, if you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, creatures who are moved by the spell take an additional 1d6 fire damage and the difficult terrain is heated for 1 hour, dealing an equal amount of damage to creatures who start or end their turn in the difficult terrain. The amount of fire damage for these effects increases by 1d6 for each spell level above 6th.

Skein of Vines

1st-level conjuration

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you are pushed or pulled in any direction

Range: Self

Components: V, E (mountain)

Duration: Instantaneous

When you are unwillingly pushed or pulled in any direction, you call forth vines from the ground to wrap around your legs and prevent you from being moved until the start of your next turn. This spell can only be cast while you are on solid ground.

Altitude Endurance/Weakness

2nd-level abjuration (ritual)

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch or 30 feet

Components: V, E (mountain)

Duration: 1 hour

One creature you touch has advantage on Constitution checks and saving throws to prevent exhaustion and to resist extreme weather for the duration. Alternately, you can affect a creature within range to invoke a sensitivity to altitude. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks for the duration of the spell. The target may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Mountains to Molehills

2nd-level transmutation (ritual)

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, E (mountain)

Duration: 1 hour

You touch a smooth surface that is difficult or unable to be climbed and transform the landscape to create tiny foot and hand holds in any direction 10 feet wide and up to 60 feet in length. Anyone who attempts to climb the transformed surface makes all Strength (Athletics) checks with advantage.

Boulder

4th-level evocation (ritual)

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: S, E (mountain)

Duration: Instantaneous

A Large-sized boulder is cut out of stone ground or wall that you touch. This boulder weighs around 400 pounds. You can instead create two Medium-sized boulders weighing 100 pounds each, or four Small-sized boulders weighing 25 pounds each.

For each boulder created in this way, choose a point within a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on you. The boulder moves directly to that spot when you finish casting the spell. If a boulder strikes or is dropped on another creature, it deals bludgeoning damage for each 10 feet it moves. Large boulders deal d10 damage, Medium deal d8, and Small deal d6.

Cloudwalker

5th-level conjuration (ritual)

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 300 feet

Components: V, S, M (a handful of cotton),
E (mountain)

Duration: 10 minutes

You bridge your current location to a point within range that rests on a mountain. Clouds quickly coalesce at your location and extend to the point you choose. The bridge is 10 feet wide. The clouds remain for the duration of the spell.

If a creature casts *dispel magic* or uses a spell that magically generates wind on the cloud bridge, it erases a 10-foot-by-10-foot portion.

Moradin's Sight

6th-level divination (ritual)

Classes: Druid

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, E (mountain)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Touching a small bit of metal or gemstone extracted from the mountain, you focus on the greater source of where that material originated. You can see the gemstone seam or vein of metal in full, glowing so you can easily see the exact shape and size of it.

Heart Stones

7th-level conjuration (ritual)

Classes: Druid

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (A pair of matching gemstones worth at least 100 gp), E (mountain)

Duration: Instantaneous

You link two gemstones that you touch, creating an unbreakable bond between them. While wearing the stones, you are both aware of the relative health of one another (any conditions the other is suffering from, if their hit points are above half or below half, and if they're making death saving throws).

At any time, you can use your gemstone as a material component in any conjuration spell that would let you teleport to the other gemstone. If you do, the pair are destroyed and the teleportation spell cannot go awry or be countered. This functions even if one gemstone is in an area of dead magic or anti-magic.

If both gemstones are being held, you can communicate telepathically between yourselves. If you both agree to use your reactions to destroy the gemstones, you teleport back to the location the spell was originally cast.

Guardian of Stone

8th-level transmutation (ritual)

Classes: Classes

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, E (mountain)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A construct erupts from a suitable stone source within 60 feet of the location you touch. The DM will select a creature of CR 6 or lower that is native to the mountain for this construct's form. This construct uses the creature's statistics, but gains the following:

- Immunity to poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine.
- Immunity to the charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, and poisoned conditions.

- It understands only the languages you speak. It cannot speak.
- The construct has an immutable form: any spell or effect that would alter its form automatically fails.
- The construct has advantage on saving throws against spells or other magical effects.
- The construct's weapon attacks are magical.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell using a spell slot of 9th level, the creature's form is a creature of CR 8 or lower that is native to the mountain.

Flying Mountain

9th-level transmutation (ritual)

Classes: Druid

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

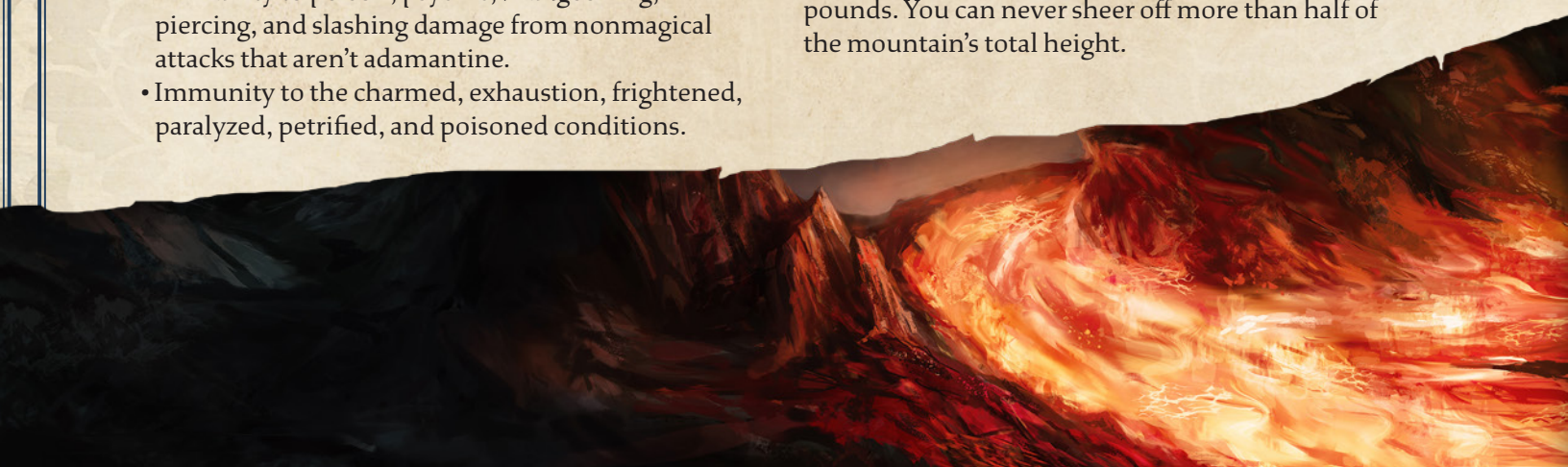
Components: V, S, E (mountain)

Duration: Instantaneous

When casting this spell, you must touch the peak of a mountain. You suffuse the top 60-feet of the mountain with transmutation magic designed to levitate. Once you cast this spell in the same location for 30 days (these do not need to be consecutive, but must all be performed within a year), you can choose to have the top 60 feet of the mountain sheer off, separating from the mountain and levitating into the air.

When the peak begins to levitate, it slowly rotates until the peak points downwards, leaving a 60-foot diameter surface at the top, which you safely move to. The floating mountain has a fly speed of 30 feet (hover), and you can use your action on each of your turns to move it in any direction. The mountain can hold a maximum of 9,000 pounds. If the weight exceeds this, its fly speed becomes 0 and it gently descends to the ground at a rate of 60 feet-per-round. If the weight exceeds 4,500 pounds, the mountain's fly speed is halved.

For each day you cast this spell on a mountain peak in excess of the 30 days required, you increase the amount of mountain sheared off by 20 feet, the fly speed by 5 feet, and the maximum weight by 500 pounds. You can never sheer off more than half of the mountain's total height.





Locations

Earthspur Mountains

When Arclath and I were ready to set out into the Earthspur Mountains, we stopped at the Uplands foothills to restock our equipment. We were directed, for some unfathomable reason, to the town of Laviguer. That's not to say that Laviguer was not a functional town with various supplies and sundries to offer, nor do I mean to say there were no inns to lay our heads to prepare for our journey. What I do mean to say is that Laviguer is a town of, and for, the miners. Everything in Laviguer is catered to the hard-living folk who bring so much wealth out of the mountains.

It's understandable why the people of Laviguer, and indeed all of Impiltur, would want to keep the miners happy. After all, they form the economic backbone of the region and they put their lives on the line to do so. However, catering to miners to such an extreme often means doing so at the cost of everyone else's comfort. For instance, Laviguer is under "daggerbond," a martial law that prevents the open wearing of weapons within town. This is a law enforced by the Warswords of Impiltur to discourage organized crime. Though Arclath and I were forced to stow our weapons of defense, the miners were free to carry swords and knives openly, simply because they were miners.

I wouldn't have minded this special treatment if it weren't for the fact that we could find no inn within Laviguer that didn't subject us to the shouting and merrymaking of drunken miners from sundown to nearly sunrise. There would be no quality rest while we prepared for our journey; each evening was a new exercise in finding materials to plug our ears or how to bury our heads under pillows sufficiently without suffocating.

Fauna. Rocling, Royal Griffon

Flora. Eaglesong Broadleaf, Rock Moss, Ruthklo, Xukluth

- A caravan was spotted a tenday ago, leaving for the Earthspur mountains. The guards that were supposed to check for contraband lay dead at their checkpoint. One of them is missing the top half of his skull.
- Upon excavating a loose wall in a cavern, miners have broken into a vast cavern filled with ancient dwarven gold. It is protected by a gold dragon who is unusually unpredictable and wild.
- Gold-crazed prospectors who attack anyone who comes too near to their claim are sadly common in the Earthspur Mountains. Unfortunately, one has staked a claim right beside a major trail and is swinging a pickaxe at anyone traveling by.
- A deep cylindrical staircase has been found on one of the peaks, covered in bloodstone and the iconography of the slain Witch-King, Zhengyi.

One generally doesn't want to start an expedition into chilly mountains on little to no rest, but lingering in Laviguer would've only made matters worse. With bags under our eyes, Arclath and I embarked on our journey to visit the Monastery of the Yellow Rose.

The Earthspur Mountains are imposing to say the least. Its highest peaks reach four miles into the air, and a ribbon of ice called the Glacier of the White Worm weaves through its northern core. The monastery is cut into the rock overlooking the glacier and is inhabited by devotees of Ilmater, the Crying God. I can imagine no better place for the followers of the One Who Endures than this; truly, every day in the Earthspur mountains is a test of one's perseverance.

Goblins and orcs inhabiting the mountain range harried our journey. I would not call them a serious threat to ones such as Arclath and myself, but I can only imagine how much havoc they inflict on other travelers passing through. Just a few days into our journey we were beginning to feel the exhaustion setting in from lack of sleep. Fleeing from a band of goblins that set upon us in the night had forced us to

drop one of our bags, and we were on the lookout for anything we could hunt to extend our food supply.

Instead, we spotted something different just off of the narrow trail. In the shadow of a rocky outcropping, there was a lean-to made of branches, offering some shelter from the bitter wind. We cautiously approached, announcing our presence, but found the site unoccupied. Inside the lean-to, in a hole covered by a conspicuous flat rock, we found a bag full of dried fruit and meat, hardtack, two skins of water, a knife, and a tinderbox. While I would be hard pressed to call our night 'comfortable,' camping there was at least a more restful experience than we'd had in a while. The next morning, we replaced what we could, cleaned up the site, and moved on.

We would come to find many more of these sites, called Watcher's Mounds, all along the path through the Earthspur Mountains. Sometimes the cache was hidden in the hollow of a tree, and sometimes there was no shelter. We even spotted orcs making use of one as they tended to the broken leg of one of their hunting party members. Some nights we ate some of the rations, but most nights we just made use of their camping spots. At the minimum, we refilled the water reserves from fresh streams before we departed.

The Earthspurs are not an inviting place. The higher you climb, the tall and skinny trees thin out even further, giving way to barren rock with patches of meager grass and foliage, quickly picked over by the creatures that live on the mountainside. Grasses and mosses meant little to us, but Arclath and I were able to find some of the most delicious wild blueberries growing just off the trails. They were a lovely supplement to our rations and the caches within the mounds.

The Monastery of the Yellow Rose was a stunning sight to behold, and a great reward after so long on a cold and rough trail. Carved out of the mountainside itself, the monastery was a true monument to endurance; many of the monks worked sixteen hours a day to preserve the grounds and provide the basic necessities of life. They also took it upon themselves to maintain the Watcher's Mounds, to relieve the suffering of those traveling in the Earthspur Mountains. But, the monastery is not as austere as you might imagine. Though the monks are dedicated to venerating their Crying God, they do not seek to suffer in his image, but instead prove that people can thrive in the harshest conditions. Their monastery produces blueberry wine from the wild berries growing in the mountains, and they've curated a stunning museum of artwork dedicated to Ilmater.

FRESH BAKED BREAD

It is no secret that I appreciate the finer things in life. Most people would assume this means silks, wine, and perfumes, and while those things may all be correct, the true mark of nobility is being able to appreciate the most simple luxuries. While touring among the poorest and most downtrodden parts of Faerûn, I have become most fond of the smell of fresh baked bread.

Nearly every region has their own bread. Some rise like fluffy white clouds, others maintain generally flat shapes and can be used like eating utensils. They're made of different grains and some use milk or butter, and some might even have fruit or nuts added in, but there's hardly a form of bread that doesn't smell utterly delicious when baking.

So of course, I was drawn to the kitchens of the monastery when I smelled the familiar scent, and I was surprised with what I'd observed. I have watched a lot of bread being baked over our travels, but the monks of the monastery took such care with these loafs. Their measurements were exacting, and unlike any other; a little more flour, a little hotter fire, a little less time in the oven, a little more liquid, a little less yeast... Everything was tweaked and nudged to perfection.

As it turns out, baking on a mountaintop is quite different from baking in a valley, and one recipe could not be shared between the two. The air is thinner and drier here, and that affects more than just the people and animals; the dough itself behaves differently. The bread of the Monastery of the Yellow Rose is its own unique creation, a rare treasure indeed, not for nuts and berries mixed into it or the crunch of the crust, but for the care and dedication put into every loaf.

Arclath and I enjoyed a tenday among the devotees of Ilmater, each morning waking to overlook the glacier. From our vantage point, we could see the monks of the monastery riding the albino remorhazes for which the glacier was named, using the beasts to test their discipline and resolve. Arclath and I would not venture down into the glacier itself, and after our tenday's stay, we set off back down the mountainside bound for Laviguer again, with intent to pass through as quickly as possible. I respect these monks a great deal, but there is only so much 'enduring' one such as myself can stand.



Mount Hotenow

While Arclath may seem a carefree sort, he actually takes his duties as my editor very seriously. Early on in the compilation process of Amarune's Almanac, when we were still in the planning stages, he expressed the concern to me that the 'Mountains' volume might too closely resemble *Amarune's Almanac Volume 4: Arctics of the Realms*. Unfortunately, his dedication to the integrity of the almanac series has worked against him more than once. The effort to find more diverse mountainous regions, to find "something different", led us to Mount Hotenow.

As you might recall in my writings on the Vast Swamp, when I mused on the etymology of certain place names, that some people believe Neverwinter is named as such after the sun elf Haluth Never. Haluth made what he was certain would be his last stand on the grounds that would become Neverwinter, or as he called it, Never's Winter. Even if you believe this story to be the factual root of the city's name, it does not change the fact that the city is unusually temperate even in the dead of winter, with rivers and ports that never freeze. The blessing that allowed the city to thrive is owed to the Neverwinter River, a flow of water that is consistently warmed by Mount Hotenow.

Arclath and I would follow this river through Neverwinter, and we could still see the scars left upon the city from the last time Mount Hotenow erupted. Thousands of Neverwintans lost their lives, including the entirety of the royal family. Though reconstruction of Neverwinter has been progressing for decades, you can still see memorials dotted through the city, as well as lengthier projects like the bridges that cross Neverwinter River. Though the historic Sleeping Dragon and Dolphin bridges have been rebuilt, the iconic statues that once decorated them are still receiving the finishing touches from

Fauna. Living Magma, Royal Griffon, Springthorn Vine, Taer
Flora. Dulduggar, Kulduth, Rock Moss, Sarrinth, Ullukka, Xukluth, Zurrud

- Members of the Uthgardt sky pony tribe have been pushed away from their ancestral mound within the Craggs around Hotenow. What sort of power could keep the tribe from their home?
- A dragon has been seen circling Mount Hotenow on particularly bright nights. Was Karrundax not truly killed, or is this a new incumbent taking a lair in the fiery heart of the mountain?
- Batches of dead fish, seemingly boiled whole, are washing up in Neverwinter. It seems something is causing the fire elementals upstream to go a little overboard.
- A chilling breeze persists from the north, causing the denizens of Hotenow to become distressed and move south.

their artisans, an ever-present reminder that they are a facsimile of the history that once stood there.

It was hard to believe, as we rode our horses along the shore, that these crystal clear waters were once choked with ash to the point of becoming a stream of gray sludge. At least, it was hard to grasp it at first, but the thought grew more vivid as we neared Mount Hotenow, seeing the dark smoke rising from the shattered peak and darkening the skies to this day.

Mount Hotenow does not simply resemble a mountain with a wisp of smoke gently flowing out the top, like a gentleman puffing his pipe. No, this volcano, set in the midst of the Craggs mountain range, is capped with jagged tooth-like outcroppings, blackened and scorched, but lit with a vivid orange glow from deep within. These sharp rocks seem almost as if they stab angrily toward the sky, with rivers of magma bleeding from the cracks in between. For all of my efforts to describe it as vividly as it appeared, my words fail me now.

Our goal was never anything as exciting as climbing Mount Hotenow. We know what lies further up the mountain, and be it gushes of lava or the denizens that find it comfortable, like fire



elementals, fire giants, or red dragons, we know that scaling the rocks only invites death. No, our goal was merely to survey the surrounding area and observe from afar how the creatures that live here manage to survive. We would quickly learn that this necessitated a lot of running and hiding. As it turns out, many fire giants can see and hear at twice the distance an ordinary human can. Keeping to the chasms cut into the crag was a filthy, soot-covering tactic, but it protected us well from the random rocks being hurled through the air from enemies we'd never even noticed.

It was in one of these crags that we met Istorren. Whilst fleeing from another flying boulder, we slid into a crevasse and covered our heads. After the crash swept over us and ash rained down on our heads, we heard a gentleman's voice say, "So you're the reason for all of the racket."

Sharing our same hiding space was a drow man, his white hair tinged gray with ash, and wearing a dirty cloth across his nose and mouth. He tugged the scarf down and said, "The fire giants have been up in arms for hours since you arrived, and the dragons are beginning to get annoyed. You may want to lay low for a while."

Needless to say, we were shocked by Istorren's hospitality, especially when he offered to lead us to a nearby network of caves that would keep us safely underground. However, he answered our gratitude with the terse reminder that he was only trying to keep the giants and dragons from escalating matters and making his home all the more noisy.

"My wife doesn't care for company, so you'll keep your distance from our home," he said as he pointed down one path of the cave, "Walk for a few hundred feet, and you'll find a room with jugs of water, one of my hunting camps. Beyond that, the cave path empties out into another crevasse at the far end of the mountain. When morning comes, it will be the best route to leave."

"You and your wife live here?" Arclath asked in surprise.

Seeing that he could not fully escape our inquisitive nature, Istorren walked us to his austere little hunting camp, recognizable only for the water

stores, and the knives that hung over the cleaning table. As he told it, his wife was a priestess of Lolth who fell victim to the politicking of her peers, and was eventually exiled. In an effort to protect both of their lives, Istorren spirited her away from their home before the assassins could come for her.

"Why here?" I couldn't help but ask, "I can't imagine why you chose this as a place to settle."

"The darkened skies allow me to hunt at all hours of the night or day without the aggravation of the sun," Istorren explained, "Furthermore, we dare not travel too far from the reaches of our people, as we ever await word that my wife's name will be cleared and her position reinstated. The very volatile forces that saw us ejected from our home could see us restored again, should some other political force find my wife's presence useful."

"Not far?" Arclath asked, "You mean to say there's a drow city nearby, even after Mount Hotenow's eruption?"

"Not as such," said Istorren, "We sit now perched above the ancient dwarven city of Gauntlgrym. The ceasing of its forge and the freeing of the primordial fire spirit that fueled it was what caused the volcano to erupt in the first place. As far as I know, House Baenre is working to reclaim and rebuild what's left of Gauntlgrym now, into a city the likes of Menzoberranzan."

That very idea sent a chill up our spines. Not only that there were likely countless drow and their abused slaves toiling under our feet at this very moment, but the idea that there was a sleeping primordial being capable of erupting volcanoes and destroying cosmopolitan cities.

"Well," Istorren said as he turned to depart; "Be gone by the time I arrive in the morning, or I'll sell you to the slavers down below in exchange for supplies."

With no further farewells, he vanished into the darkness of the cave, beyond our lantern light. Arclath and I slept only a few hours, and fled from the crevasse the moment the sun began to rise above the crags in the east. We'd had our fill of "something different" for a while.



Spine of the World

It took some work to convince Arclath that the Spine of the World was worth paying a visit in our journeys. After all, the denizens of the Spine are not considered the friendly and welcoming sort, hence why there are so few settlements in the region despite rumors of fantastic wealth to be found in the region's mines. Any village that erected its walls in the rolling foothills beneath the mountain range was prone to becoming the breadbasket of the trolls, giants, goblins, and orcs that dwell up in the rocks and caves.

It was when we were visiting Icewind Dale (as you no doubt recall from *Amarune's Almanac Volume 4: Arctics of the Realms*) that I finally convinced him to make the trek with me. The night before our planned departure from Bryn Shander, we had met a group of loggers in a tavern who were preparing to set out the next morning as well. Instead of heading back south for a more temperate climate, they were making the dangerous journey across a glacier to the east to reach the conifer-shrouded foothills of the Spine. Though their wagons would be full for the return, they agreed to let us hitch a ride with them on the way there, in exchange for a small bit of coin. I finally wore Arclath down with the promise that he wouldn't have to walk for a while, and the deal was struck.

When we arrived at the foot of the Spine, the loggers quickly got to work, taking shifts between cutting down trees and watching for attackers to come down from the mountains up above. The Spine of the World was a line of mountains capped in pure white, reaching up so high and so evenly toward the dull gray sky, vanishing into the clouds, that it seemed almost as though the mountains were holding up the sky itself. Though the rising sun in the east could not pierce the heaviness of the clouds and haze, it still provided a hazy glow behind the

Fauna. Dire Ixex, Rocling, Taer

Flora. Dulduggar, Helmthorn, Kulduth, Sarrinth, Ullukka, Xukluth, Zurrud


- Either this halfling was drunk, or they stumbled across a tropical oasis nestled somewhere in the mountains. By their account, this hidden valley could be filled with dinosaurs!
- Rumors of a "Realm of the Gods" beyond the mist covered peaks of the Spine of the World were thought to be greatly exaggerated, until a well-respected explorer returned from a climb with an inexplicable artifact thrumming with divine energy.
- The Dragon's Eye, a famous glowing cave set as the 'eye' of a rock formation shaped like a dragon's head, has stopped glowing. What this means for the trolls, lizardfolk, and yuan-ti living within the caves remains to be seen.
- Avalanches have been raining down First Peak for the past month. People have reported shouts in Giant radiating from the mountain for miles.

mountain edges. I know I was gazing thousands of feet into the sky, but there was something strangely claustrophobic about it all, as though the vastness of the wild north was beginning to close in on me.

Arclath and I gathered our belongings from the loggers' wagons before we set off on foot. As we climbed, the sounds of the loggers grew more distant, until it seemed as though we were the only upright standing creatures in the region. There were snow hares, foxes, and goats abound, all of which gave us a wide berth. I never presume that upright-walking creatures are the apex predators of any locale, but the wildlife at least knew we were probably not good news.

This trend would continue as we climbed the mountainside. I'm certain the presence of orcs, goblinoids, and the Uthgardt had instilled a sense of wariness into the creatures that made up their prey. We were lucky to bag two goats in a tenday to supplement our rations, along with a few berries and some roots here and there.

You can imagine our surprise then when Arclath and I crested the rocks and found ourselves



overlooking a valley between two mountains, filled with frost-glazed grasses and flocks of grazing animals. Large herds of sheep, goats, and rothé roamed the valley in peace, paying us no mind as we descended into their domain. In fact, many of them even seemed curious to see two-legged folk walking among them. Many kept their distance, but some even came to investigate our presence, perhaps sniffing out the roots and berries in our bags.

"This place is like a winter paradise," Arclath said as he shooed away several sheep that came to nibble at his coat. "Can you imagine how all of these creatures came to be in a sanctuary like this? They wouldn't last five minutes on the other side of the mountain."

"They're lucky," I replied, "I can't fathom how no other creatures have turned this valley into their feeding ground."

How foolish I was to tempt fate with such words. The sky darkened, a patch of dark gray forming in the clouds like an impending storm. Soon after, the patch began to take shape, as the draconic figure grew nearer. All at once, a massive red dragon punched through the clouds above our heads, vapor still trailing off of its wings and tail as it swooped into the valley. The flocks of grazing creatures began to flee in a panic, scattering in every direction, but there was nowhere they could go to outrun their hunter.

The dragon opened its flaming maw as it skimmed over the valley floor, gluttonously scooping up a mouthful of rothé as easily as one might shove a handful of berries into their mouth. With a sickening crunch, it consumed the first mouthful, letting a few loose limbs and pieces fall from his scaly jowls into the snow before he pursued another mouthful of goats.

Though the dragon was flying away from us, we wasted no time to see if he would turn around for another pass. Climbing back up the rocks to leave the way we'd entered was out of the question, and instead, Arclath and I bolted for the nearby wall of the valley, seeking refuge within the small cracks and caves that the livestock had flooded into. Though the sheep were climbing over one another for access to one small cave, we climbed a little higher and threw ourselves into the first opening in the snow we saw. When Arclath and I hit the cold stone floor of the cave, we laid still, barely hearing the distant, pleased roar of the dragon over the sound of our pounding hearts.

It would be a few minutes before I was brave enough, or recovered enough to slowly lift my head. When I did, I saw the strangest flower laying on the

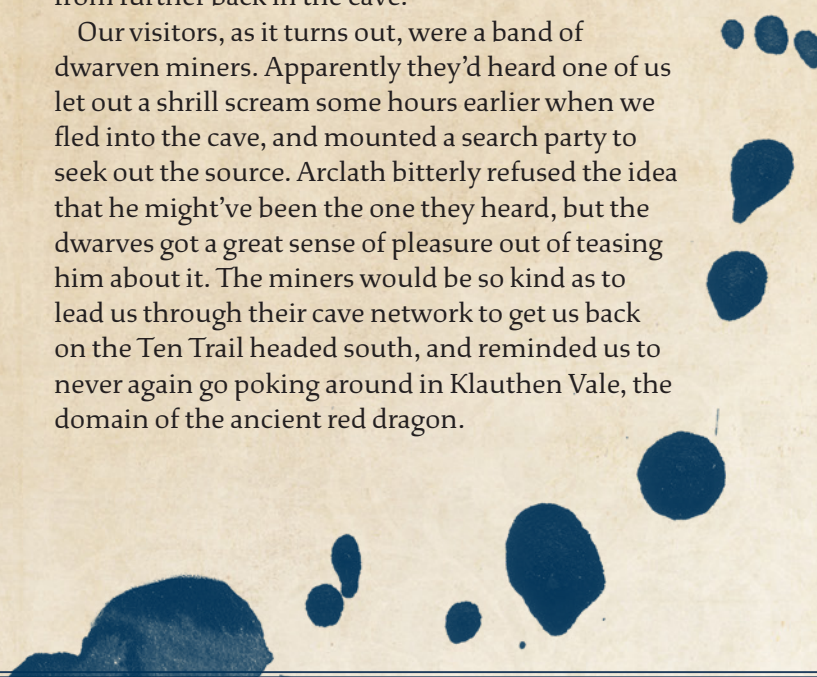
ground before me, ripped from its stem and half-crushed by my weight. The flower was comprised of but a single petal wrapped around its stamen, not unlike an arum lily, but unlike any mundane flower I had ever seen before, the petal was etched with arcane runology.

I roused Arclath from the floor and we slowly stood, to see that the entrance of our small cave was covered in these brilliant blooms. At the base of each flower was a thorny stem and roots that twirled around the rocks in the most intricate, precise designs I'd ever seen occurring in nature. Each flower presented different magical glyphs; though I could not consciously identify them, I could feel Elminster's own memory scratching at the back of my mind. Holding the half-crushed flower that I'd apparently torn from its roots in my dive for safety, I somehow knew that I was holding none other than the meteor swarm spell, even if I lacked the know-how to use it.

I would spend some time sketching these beautiful blooms, but we were careful not to damage another. It already seemed a shame that we had ruined a single one of these exotic beauties, and as long as we were going to be stuck in this cave, I was dedicated to not damaging another.

Unwilling to risk venturing deeper into the cave, tempting an encounter with anything from giant spiders to baby dragons, we decided to wait until nightfall to slip out of the cave and try to make it back out of the valley. Arclath and I cuddled for warmth as the gray sky darkened, not wanting to start a fire and either draw the dragon's ire, or traumatize the local livestock. In retrospect, it is no small miracle that we were found, but at the time, we were terrified to see the light of a torch appear from further back in the cave.

Our visitors, as it turns out, were a band of dwarven miners. Apparently they'd heard one of us let out a shrill scream some hours earlier when we fled into the cave, and mounted a search party to seek out the source. Arclath bitterly refused the idea that he might've been the one they heard, but the dwarves got a great sense of pleasure out of teasing him about it. The miners would be so kind as to lead us through their cave network to get us back on the Ten Trail headed south, and reminded us to never again go poking around in Klauthen Vale, the domain of the ancient red dragon.





Storm Horns

It's not uncommon for particular locales to have numerous names. Waterdeep is also known as the City of Splendors, the Crown of the North, while long ago it was known as Bloodhand Hold, or Aelinthaldar a few millennia before that. These are only the names we have recorded, so I cannot imagine how many different nicknames a place has gone by from the mouths of the locals. The Storm Horns don't have a colorful list of nicknames that I'm aware of, but Arclath and I did meet a young man who called it "My medicine chest."

We were lucky to have met Eddard. Just as we were starting up the High Horn Pass to travel through the Storm Horns into Cormyr, my boot decided to catastrophically cease functioning as a boot. The sole became unattached from the rest and caught a rock, sending me tumbling onto my face. My forearms were battered and scraped, the back of my head was struck by a pot from my own travel pack, but worst of all, my ankle was badly sprained. It began swelling so rapidly that Arclath had to cut away the remains of what I once called a boot. We would have turned to head back were it not for a passing lizardman trade caravan that told us to press onward, for "the medicine boy is just ahead."

Eddard was a young boy of about fourteen, living alone in a ramshackle hut near the mouth of High Horn Pass. The outside of his humble hovel was decorated with a variety of trinkets from lizardmen, aarakocra, and the occasional human or elven piece. While this hardly seems like the kind of place a boy should be living without protection or community, Eddard was surprisingly cheerful and content with his living situation. As Arclath carried me toward the hut, Eddard was standing outside tying up bundles of herbs to dry in the crisp mountain air. The moment he saw me, he guided us inside.

Fauna. Dire IbeX, Royal Griffon

Flora. Ardenard, Ateris, Castleroot, Eaglesong
Broadleaf, Kirin

- Word from Skull Crag: wandering the mountains is a skeleton the size of a cloud giant. It doesn't seem to be aggressive, and so the local priests presume it's a sign from Kelemvor.
- Reports from High Horn indicate that two rogue Cormyrian war wizards have ascended to the peak of the mountain to perform a ritual of unknown purpose.
- Gnom Pass is cloaked in thick smoke. If one of the coal veins has caught fire, the pass might not clear for centuries unless someone rectifies the situation.
- A storm swirls around the southern Storm Horns, and won't dissipate. The bodies of wingless aarakocra have been found at the mountain bases.

Calling things "magic" that are not within the realm of the divine or the arcane is not something I care to do, but Eddard's work gave me pause. With ice chipped from a block he kept in his cellar, a mixture of herbs from various jars and boxes, and a tight wrapping of gauze bandage, my ankle was improving within the hour. Of course, while I was laid up with a bruised ankle propped up on cushions, I couldn't help but reach for my note papers and begin asking Eddard his entire life story. This is what I do, after all.

As it turns out, he was raised by his great-grandmother on the side of this mountain for as far back as he could remember. She was once a healer working in the service of High Horn Hold up on the mountaintop, before having some manner of falling-out with the War Wizards stationed there. She would later move down to this very hovel, continuing to practice medicine and serve the people who traveled the pass without the suffocation of military oversight. Though she passed around a year ago and left him alone here, Eddard has followed in his great-grandmother's footsteps, healing not only Cormyte soldiers, but all of the denizens of the Storm Horns who might be in need of help. His collection of multi-cultural trinkets hanging from the eaves of his roof were not only

gifts of thanks from people he treated, but also markers that he was not to be harmed by raiders or bandits, lest they face the fury of the locals.

The Storm Horns, as it turns out, make for a fantastic medical resource. The next morning, my foot was doing well enough to slide into a backup boot, and I was feeling brave enough to test it on a short walk. Arclath and I accompanied Eddard on his morning gathering walk, traveling up the mountainside to collect the various plants, herbs, roots, and saps that would fill the small wooden cabinet that he carried strapped to his back. The cabinet was full of empty jars to pack with his newly gathered materials, as well as basic tools for processing the ingredients while he was away from home.

From the turis trees, he scraped back the heavy bark and collected sap to make a healing salve; he told us he once used it to treat an aarakocra who claimed she was a princess, and was mortified that a wound she'd received might damage her lovely

plumage. Though he doubted she was really a princess, she had hunters bring him wild game for six months after out of gratitude for him healing her wound without scarring.

From densely scattered patches between the rocks, he gathered Bowen's flower, a sedative that made an excellent night-time tea. Eddard collected ateris buds, not so much for their valuable exports, but to assist him through tending to badly infected wounds or helping prepare bodies for funerals. Throughout his mountain stroll, he filled his cabinet with all manner of nature's bounty, and every bit of it with some important medicinal use. I even spotted the particular leaf he ground up to apply to my ankle. I can't imagine how much of it Arclath and I walked right past as he carried me to Eddard's house, thinking it only to be weeds.

I might've liked to have stayed with Eddard for a while, learning more about the Storm Horns and High Horn Pass, but I didn't want to impose any longer than necessary in his tiny home. I asked him how we could repay him for his help.

"Coin doesn't do much for me here," Eddard said, "The Storm Horns provide most everything I need. All I ask is that you stay safe and healthy. But, I never turn down any kind of souvenir of where you're from!"

Answering the question of where we were from was unexpectedly complicated. The simple answer would have been Suzail, but not entirely truthful either. Instead, I reached into my bag and I produced a copy of Amarune's Almanac: Forests of the Realms, and laid it in Eddard's hands. His eyes lit up as I told him that it contained stories from across Faerûn, and that I'd see further volumes of the Underdark, the grasslands, and more, be delivered to him in the months that followed. Normally, I'd feel terribly vain about repaying a debt with a copy of my own book, but I have a feeling Eddard will treasure these volumes as much as anything.

ATERIS AND I

While exploring the Storm Horns, I glimpsed a familiar plant, which dredged up childhood memories best left forgotten. When I was a boy, my parents had gotten their hands on the buds of the ateris plant that grew in these mountains. Even in Suzail this herb is not cheap or readily available, as the bud begins to lose potency within just a few weeks of being picked, no matter how carefully one works to preserve it.

But, the ateris bud is so prized by nobles for its colorless extract and fragrant scent. Though commoners think of nobles as easily turning their noses up at anything they find distasteful, the truth is, a crinkled nose doesn't look attractive on anyone and it reflects poorly on a noble's dignity to carry about a sour expression. Thus, many nobles will rub the ateris bud over their upper lip, so that the pleasant aroma entirely drowns out whatever stench might arise around them.

When I was a young boy, my parents decided to take me promenading down by the docks, and we each used the ateris bud to free ourselves of the fishy stench. However, a few minutes into their walk, my upper lip began to burn and I began to sneeze. My parents thought I was simply being fussy, but when my mother looked and saw that my upper lip had swollen to double its size, she screamed aloud and nearly fainted. As it turns out, I have an allergy to the sweetly-scented ateris. Simply standing downwind of it makes me itch.





Walls of Halruaa

The magical city of Halruaa enjoyed the seclusion and protection of the crescent-shaped mountain ranges that surrounded it, guarding it from outside incursion. That's not to say Halruaa enjoyed an entirely peaceful history; it still faced attacks on its ports and threats at its borders, though I can only imagine how much worse things would've been if Halruaa had been sitting in the middle of open plains. Halruaa is famous for its electrum mines, its wine, and its revolutionary use of magics, and those things make it a delectable target for those who seek to take whatever they desire. These mountains, however, would also cause Halruaa no small degree of difficulty during the Spellplague. The height of the mountains, known collectively as the Walls of Halruaa, make them nearly impossible to travel.

In the east of Halruaa lie the Muaraghal Mountains, cut by the narrow and winding Azhal Pass. Rocs, manticores, and cockatrices make these mountains their home, and with the path not easily traversed by large groups with armed guards, it makes for too dangerous a road for small collections of refugees to flee through. Much the same could be said for the treacherous Talath Pass, weaving through the Lhairghal Mountains in the west.

The only noteworthy route for those fleeing Halruaa would be to follow River Aluar from Lake Halruaa, and to follow one of its branches along the High Aluar river that flowed from the Lhairghal Mountains. The millennia of erosion from the river cutting through rock would leave a wide pass around the flowing water, giving room for horses and wagons to travel in relative safety.

Alas, a single pass does not allow for an entire nation of people to flee from the devastation of the Spellplague. Most of Halruaa was, as we are so told, saved by its wizards who used the power of the blue fire itself to shift most of Halruaa into

Fauna. Dire Ibex, Rocling, Royal Griffon, Thylacine, Tigerpede
Flora. Ardenard, Brahsk, Glyphic Orchid, Norrau, Ruthklo, Xukluth

- The mountains around here are filled with bothersome humanoids like goblins or kobolds. I wouldn't bother you with the details, except one goblin tribe caught my eye. They wanted to build a bridge to the moon. The tribe disappeared overnight, and their bridge extends 200 feet into the air... going nowhere.
- Living spells of all shapes and sizes have descended from the Nathagals into High Aluar, preventing access to the valley from anyone without access to a flying device or the willingness to overcome the mountain ranges.
- Mining rights are a tricky thing. Who owns the abandoned electrum mine in the Muaraghal Mountains? The recently returned Halruaans, the dwarves claiming eminent domain, or the manticores that moved in about forty years ago?
- A young Halruaan mage recently rose to extreme power, and created a castle in the mountains to showcase it. What could have given him such power so fast?

another plane, saving it from destruction. Mind you, I did say 'most'. Those who were not lucky enough to escape into another plane or through the High Aluar were left in the path of destruction of wild magics and worse.

When we'd heard some solid word that Halruaa had been returned after the Second Sundering, beyond rumors and murmurings of course, I wanted to visit. Arclath stood staunchly opposed, on the grounds of halruaan consumption.

During the time in which Halruaa was replaced with a plagueland, some adventurers decided to explore the area, to see what might've been left behind in the ruins of the once grand civilization. From the sounds of the explosion heard all the way in Waterdeep, most people assumed Halruaa was destroyed and not teleported away. What the adventurers found, however, was naught but danger and disease. The most virulent of which was called halruaan consumption, a wasting disease that made the body more susceptible to damaging magics and more resistant to the healing variety. If left

untreated, some might spontaneously recover, but for many it was terminal, not even leaving a corpse to be buried, but instead a pile of blue dust where their shriveled body once laid.

Though I couldn't convince Arclath to travel all the way to Halruaa, and his excuse that we were writing about the wilds and not the cities was relatively airtight, I did manage to convince him we should visit the Nathaghal mountain range in the north of Halruaa. Not only did we need to see more mountains, but specifically, Mount Talath in the Nathaghals was once home to the High Temple of Mystra. As Chosen of Mystra ourselves, it was only right that we make the pilgrimage.

Mount Talath laid north of Talath Pass, and was the western most peak of the Nathaghal range, rather than a part of the Lhairghals as the pass itself. As unforgiving as this narrow pass is, it was once traveled by many scholars who sought out the High Temple of Mystra, which was famed for its massive library of magic tomes. Not only would scholars pay exorbitant prices to be able to view even single works brought up from the library's catacombs, but it could take years to locate a specific piece of information. There were diviners in the town around the temple who dedicated their entire lives to perfecting the magics to find specific records within the library.

As we climbed the all-but-abandoned trail, my eyes were wide with wonder at the very thought of such a collection of knowledge. In my mind's eye, I could see Elminster's visions of breathtaking stone spires and crystal walls. Meanwhile, Arclath's eyes were wide in terror as he constantly checked himself for symptoms of wasting. We encountered little wildlife on the trail, and he took it as an obvious sign that this place was dangerous to all living creatures. He was correct, but not in the way he imagined.

Though Halruaa may be settled back in its proper place once more, the wild magics that roamed the land have not slipped away into nothingness. Living spells prowl the land like predators, weaving through the woods and crawling over stone, driving back any fauna that dare come to feed on the verdant grasses and mosses that have come to thrive in decades of seclusion. While they did not directly threaten us, besides an occasional shimmering wall in the air that forced a minor detour, they were enough to keep me and Arclath both on our toes.

We would eventually reach the site of the High Temple of Mystra in the midday under the high sun. I can only call it the site of the temple, as the temple I'd dreamt of no longer stood in its

entirety. The town that housed its clergy and staff was gone, leaving overgrown ruins in their stead, and most of the temple itself had collapsed. Some parts of the temple appeared destroyed, perhaps smashed or exploded, while others seemed as though they crumbled with age under the weight of clinging vines.

Though the temple's structure was frail, its surroundings were vibrant. Visible tendrils of magic coiled around the crystal and stone, weaving between the lines of mortar like wisps of smoke, and in other places, bricks would pulsate, glowing with magic. We watched a shining twig sprout from beneath two stone pavers and grow into a mighty oak that ripped apart the stone around it, before withering and falling into rotten chunks and sawdust that were carried away on the wind, in a span of two minutes or less. To say this place was inundated with magic would be an understatement.

Arclath and I made camp on the trail, rather than beside the temple itself. It was here, early the next morning, that we met with an elderly human man hobbling up the trail. He wore the faded blue robes of a priest of Mystra and introduced himself only as such; he gave us no name beyond "a humble priest of the Lady of Mysteries".

Our humble priest of mysteries told us, as we had suspected, that the temple was destroyed in the Spellplague. When Halruaa itself was ripped away, the High Temple could not go; the temple was anchored to the Weave itself, and could not be separated, even as the Weave became unraveled. This is also why the temple draws to so many wild magics and magical creatures to this day.

Though I was disappointed by the current state of the temple, I could not help but ask, "Does the library still remain beneath the temple?"

The priest did not respond, as a terrifying roar echoed over our heads. We looked up the path to the temple, watching trees fall as a massive creature clawed its way out of the ground. At first, I thought it a chimera of gargantuan size before I saw the vile spiked tail of a manticores whip about. The tail crashed through a tower, knocking its middle section out entirely, though the spire still floated in the air, still and undisturbed. The beast, a mantimera if you will, began to bleat with its goat head, roar with its lion head, and spit poison gas with its dragon head.

"Well, you're welcome to look for it," the priest said calmly.

Needless to say, Arclath and I pursued our exploration of the temple no further.

Between Adventures

Faerûn's mountains are abundant with flora that is wholly unique to the landscape of the summits. The following section details a downtime activity which you can participate in to gather the flora of specific regions. Of course, these roots and herbs are not only found in the wild; they can be used to populate marketplaces, act as quest hooks, or simply add another element of depth to an environment. Some even function as spellcasting components to improve spells or can be used in the crafting of weapons and equipment.

Downtime Activity: Gathering Plants Expedition

The world is a wealth of natural resources, and it only takes a keen mind and a bit of regional knowledge to collect its bounty.

Resources. An expedition to gather resources and materials takes a workweek from planning to completion. Part of this time is spent gathering information about what types of plants can be found in the region, and how difficult they are to find. Each of the plants on the Regional Flora table designates the regions of Faerûn in which they are most commonly found.

Resolution. The character must make a series of checks, with the DC for all checks determined by the plant the character is searching for: the character's choice of Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival), Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception), and a Wisdom check using an herbalism kit, or an Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies. If the plant is poisonous, they can use an Intelligence or Wisdom check using a poisoner's kit instead.

If none of the checks are successful, the character becomes lost and is on the expedition for an additional tenday.

If only one check is successful, the character never finds their bounty but returns as expected.

If two checks are successful, the expedition is a partial success, netting the character 1d4 units of the plant they sought after.

If all three checks are successful, the expedition returns 1d4 + 3 units of the plant they sought after.

Whether the expedition is a success or a failure, all is not lost. Roll an additional d6 and consult the Mundane Flora table, to determine if anything else was found.

MUNDANE FLORA

d6	Reward
1	Nothing of value was found, and roll on the Expedition Complication Table.
2	Nothing of value was found.
3	5 gp worth of herbs and materials were found.
4	10 gp worth of herbs and materials were found.
5	25 gp worth of herbs and materials were found.
6	25 gp worth of herbs and materials were found, and one unit of one of a unique flora that can be found in the region (determined by the DM).

EXPEDITION COMPLICATION TABLE

d6	Complication
1	The trail you were following is not where you thought it was, adding two days to your expedition.
2	A persuasive and intrusive bard meets you on your journey and insists that, because you overheard his music, you owe him compensation.
3	In the dead hours of the night, your packs are ransacked by local fauna, leaving you with half as many provisions as are required to complete the expedition.
4	It is too early or late in the season for the plant to have its clear indicators, making it nearly impossible to find.
5	You encounter an aggressive band of beasts local to the region.
6	The cliff face path you were using to reach your destination gives way, taking all of your provisions with it.



REGIONAL FLORA TABLE

	Ardenard	Ateris	Brahsk	Castleroot	Dragonsear	Eaglesong	Dulduggar	Emperor Broadleaf	Glyphic Oak	Helmthorn	Kirin	Kulduth	Primal Lotus	Norau	Rock Moss	Ruthklo	Sarrinth	Ullukka	Xukluth	Zurud
Aglarond					✓					✓										
Amn																✓				
Anauroch	✓	✓								✓	✓		✓				✓			
Beastlands				✓																
Calimshan																✓				
Chessentea				✓	✓			✓												
Chondath				✓	✓										✓					
Cormanthor								✓								✓	✓			✓
Cormyr	✓	✓			✓			✓				✓								
Damara								✓												✓
Dambrath				✓		✓														
Elfharrow				✓																
Great Glacier						✓	✓	✓					✓					✓	✓	✓
Greypeak Mountains	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Halruaa	✓			✓						✓			✓				✓			✓
Hordelands								✓												✓
Jungles of Chult	✓																			
Lantan										✓										
Lapaliya						✓														
Luskan	✓						✓				✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Mhair Jungles						✓														
Moonshea Isles																✓				
Mulhorand				✓	✓					✓			✓				✓			
Murghôm					✓															
Narfell						✓	✓	✓					✓					✓	✓	✓
Neverwinter							✓						✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Rashemen								✓					✓				✓			✓
Semia					✓							✓								
Silver Marches			✓					✓			✓									✓
Sossal								✓		✓			✓					✓	✓	✓
Spine of the World								✓			✓		✓					✓	✓	✓
Tethyr																✓				✓
Thay	✓							✓		✓			✓				✓			
The Dragon Coast					✓															
The Great Dale					✓															✓
The High Forest	✓							✓			✓					✓				
The High Moor																✓				
The Shaar				✓	✓	✓							✓				✓			
The Shining Plains					✓															
The Western Heartlands	✓	✓						✓			✓					✓				✓
Thesk					✓			✓					✓				✓			
Turmish					✓															
Unther				✓	✓															
Vaasa								✓	✓				✓					✓	✓	✓
Yehimal Mountains	✓			✓				✓		✓			✓					✓	✓	✓

Flora

Presented in this section are details of some of the flora you can find on the tall peaks of Faerûn. The regional flora table in the previous section will detail where they can be found in the wild, and the following section and table provides the details about the flora and their measures and values.

Flora: Mountains

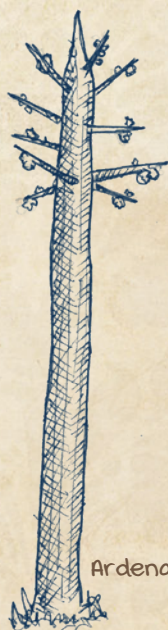
Below is a table which lists each plant included in this book, sorted alphabetically. Each plant has a quantity of material and a gold cost associated with that quantity. The costs listed are for high quality and adventurer-grade examples of each material.

Flora	Unit	Value
Ardenard	a bundle of short spears or one 10-foot-spear	10 sp
Ateris	1 bulb	4 cp
	1 dose of ateris extract	2 gp
Brahsk	1 large root or 2 small roots	1 cp
Castleroot	1 plant	1 sp
Dragonsear	5 lbs. of dragonsear	50 gp
Dulduggar	a dozen needles	12 sp
Eaglesong Broadleaf	1 dried calling leaf	25 gp

Emperor Oak	1 golden fruit, 25 lbs. of lumber	25,000 gp
Glyphic Orchid	1 glyph flower	twice as much as a spell scroll of the same level
Helmthorn	20 indigo berries, 1 red berry, or 20 thorns	1 sp
Kirin	a sprig of kirin's leaf	200 gp
	1 vial of Kirin's Delight	800 gp
Kulduth	10 lbs. of kulduth cups	25 sp
Norrau	10 sq-ft of intact norrau	15 gp
Primal Lotus	1 elemental lotus	500 gp
Rock Moss	5 lbs. of rock moss	5 gp
Ruthklo	an intact net of ruthklo	5 gp
Sarrinth	10 lbs. of "scales"	50 sp per lb.
Ullukka	1 flower	1 gp
Xukluth	10 lbs. of xukluth	50 cp per lb.
Zurrud	a dozen "spikes"	1 gp

MATERIALS: UNITS

When gathering flora, the useful part of the plant varies. In the case of a flower, it might be each individual seed; or in the case of a tree, it could be cords of burl or specific cuts of lumber. The units and values shown here represent what is usefully gathered by a small adventuring band, which is likely far less than the amount of units a major lumbering organization can procure within a tenday.



Ardenard



Ateris



Brahsk

SHIAH "CINDER" IRGANGLADEN

Ardenard

Ardenard, or "Mountain Spear," are rare plants of the high peaks, found everywhere in Faerûn south of the Spine of the World range. From a distance, they are often mistaken for the leafless trunks of trees left behind after a forest fire. Closer up, their true nature becomes more apparent: tough, fibrous stalks that resemble giant gray asparagus spears, with their uppermost tips festooned with a crown of tiny branchlets sprouting clusters of small purple and royal blue flowers. Ardenard are harmless and inedible, and have tough roots that grow deep into rock crevices and then expand to wedge themselves and firmly anchor the plant upright. Ardenard usually bend rather than break in an avalanche of snow, and nothing else can dislodge them; to get one free, its roots must be severed.

Adventurers harvest ardenard for two reasons: they are the only things close to a ten-foot pole or any sort of sapling to be found on many high mountain slopes, for use as reaching aids or in the making of sledges or shelters, and as signaling beacons. Mountain spears are oily and burn with thick, choking, voluminous clouds of dark green smoke (they are less than ideal as firewood, though the oil can keep a flame burning in cold, wet conditions for days, but their smoke makes very effective signals).

Ateris

Native to the Storm Horns and the Thunder Peaks of Cormyr, the ateris plant is a gnarled, brown plant covered in stout thorns. People from Tilverton, where it can be especially common, pick up the scent of the plant every so often and go on harvests. The plant's buds secrete an invisible liquid that masks unpleasant scents. Travelers often use it when passing through

unpalatable areas, such as bogs or spice districts. The buds only last two tendays after they are picked, so their use is generally restricted to the Cormyr area.

The ateris oil is an irritant, so applying too much can cause irritation and loss of scent. Some aspiring alchemists and apothecaries have taken note of this to create ateris extract. When it hits a creature's face, a dose of ateris extract causes a creature to automatically fail all Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on scent for the next 24 hours. Over the course of an hour, a creature with an herbalism kit or alchemists' supplies can attempt to make ateris extract from a dozen bulbs. At the end of the hour, they make a DC 17 Intelligence check using alchemists' supplies or a Wisdom check using the herbalism kit. On a failure, the supplies are wasted. On a success, they produce 1d4 doses of ateris extract.

Brahsk

Brahsk is a crimson root, with a dry, white flesh. It is a common plant in southern and southwestern Faerûn, which is often harvested from the wild each season. It's tradition in the cities and towns near the Underchasm that the adolescents would head out in groups to harvest the root, brandishing one-handed mattocks to chop away at the thorny brambles that the root grow near. The roots grow near the base of mountains and on rocky patches and cliffsides.

Brahsk is incredibly spicy and was most often used to season meats, gravies, and other savory dishes with a unique kick. Some high-class drinks include a small carving of brahsk, which young nobles often compete in eating as a test of mettle. One should mind their intake of brahsk however, for if eaten whole, or if too much of the substance is eaten in one sitting, it can instead act as a powerful laxative.

Castleroot

Castleroot (or “lurrl” in dwarvish) is a grass that grows on the bed of mountainous streams and rivers. They are simple plants on the surface, being a thin-bladed grass that grows thin blades no taller than 7 inches. They are easily identifiable by the wood-like bulb at their base, a trait that makes walking in patches of the stuff uncomfortable at best.

Castleroot plays an important part in reinforcing the mountainous geography around the Sea of Fallen Stars, for their root systems are more akin to that of trees than grasses. Their expansive root systems make uprooting them nearly impossible, and make the land around them extremely stable. This property of averting mudslides, rockslides, and similar phenomena make these plants invaluable to mountain communities, and so they actively protect and cultivate them in and around their settlements.

Dragonsear

Dragonsear is a surprisingly abundant dark green but mottled with lighter green to white, dusty-looking plant that grows in tufts that look, in the words of one adventurer, “Like the outthrust hands of hill giants.” Others don’t see the resemblance, and compare dragonsear to the aloe plant, as it grows in clumps of fleshy, sap-filled green spikes. Although harmless to humans (it’s edible but not very nourishing, and is soapy-bland but fibrous and with a bitter aftertaste), to all dragons and most reptiles, ingesting dragonsear is like eating acid. It sears their tongues and mouths, imparting a horrible aftertaste. If ingested in large amounts, it acts like a poison that causes convulsions, vomiting, weakness, and dizziness/loss of balance.

Almost all dragons know this and avoid dragonsear plants with such enthusiasm that an angry dragon will refrain from biting, approaching, or even breathing on a human holding up a dragonsear spike or plant for fear of the dragonsear effects (once felt, never forgotten, and forever after loathed). Less intelligent reptiles may attack anyway, but will rarely bite twice.

While any small amount of dragonsear will injure a dragon, it takes 5 pounds of it to create one dose of *dragonsear poison*. The plant must be pulped and combined with alcohol distillate (which requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence check using alchemist’s tools). When ingested by a dragon, or introduced to their body through a puncture wound or topically through an open wound, the dragon immediately becomes incapacitated. If the dragon

has assumed the form of another creature, it reverts back to its true form at this time. The dragon remains incapacitated until it has made a successful DC 17 Constitution saving throw, which it makes at the start of each of its turns.

Dulduggar

Dulduggar, or “Snow Weed,” is a tumbleweed-like tangled mass of wild plant stalks, beige to darker brown in hue, that grow constantly and flower continuously (unusually, the twelve-overlapping-petals flowers are dark brown like much of the rest of the plant). Easily uprooted and blown about, they roll like tumbleweeds until they fetch up against a rock wall or in a crevice. Whenever a dulduggar stalk is damaged (usually from hard contact with sharp rock), it grows a side-branch that becomes a new stalk and adds to the thickness of the weed bundle it is part of. Rothé, goats, and some strong-stomached wild herbivores and omnivores can eat dulduggar, but all other creatures find it woody and inedible.

If cut with a sharp blade and skill, it can yield long, flexible needles for sewing, or darts for traps and weapon use; long ago, some Uthgardt tribes fashioned raking hand claws as weapons, using snow weed needles as the talons. Dulduggar needles used as ammunition in a blowgun deal 1d4 piercing damage. A skilled leatherworker can craft the needles into gauntlets (a DC 13 Dexterity check using leatherworker’s tools), which the wearer can use to perform unarmed strikes that deal 1d4 piercing damage. Such gauntlets can be worth as much as 25 gp.



SHIAH “CINDER” IRGANGLADEN



Eaglesong Broadleaf

Eaglesong Broadleaf

The eaglesong broadleaf (also called amakos by elves) is an herb that grows along holes and cubbies along the cliffs and mountain peaks of Northern and Interior Faerûn. This dark-hued herb has crescent shaped leaves with rigid teeth on one side. When winds strike the leaf at the right angle, it creates a loud, shrill cry like that of a great bird. The mountains where they grow become congregation points for hundreds of predatory birds. Giant eagles have been known to intentionally pollinate these plants.

A druid, ranger, or someone proficient in wind instruments can blow into one of these leaves to release the same shrill note, which carries up to 5 miles on a clear day. This destroys the leaf if it has been dried for preservation. The user must roll a d100 and add their Constitution score to the result. If the result is over 60, then a **giant eagle** flies to the location of the call. Druids and rangers can roll the d100 twice and pick the result they want to use. A DM can adjust the target of this roll to adjust for situational difficulties, or deem it is impossible for a giant eagle to hear the call in a given location.

Emperor Oak

The lofty Emperor Oak may be the rarest plant on Faerûn by the eyes of the average humanoid. Its bark is a unified bronze, which branches rise into the air in a radially symmetrical crown of platinum leaves. Its roots are a pattern of onyx and tarnished bronze. The largest ever reported was 150 feet tall, and its roots reached thrice that in reach and depth. The only reason the extent of its



Emperor Oak

roots is known in such depth is because they were plainly visible on the edges and underside of the floating island it was centered on. These trees soar through the skies, aimlessly drifting high amidst the cloud cover such that the only time they are even visible to the groundfarers is from upon their high mountain peaks.

Strangest of all, the tree seems to naturally radiate its own mythal, the effects of which seem entirely random and whimsical, from nullifying all damaging spells to inordinately increasing the power of specific spells or schools of magic. The halls of arcane sages constantly flutter with the supposed properties of the tree: some say it can be used as a focus to direct your magic anywhere in the world regardless of spell range. Others say eating the tree's golden fruit can impart memories and sorcerous power. And still others mention its roots can be brewed with mandrake root and dragon's blood to create a philter of eternal youth.

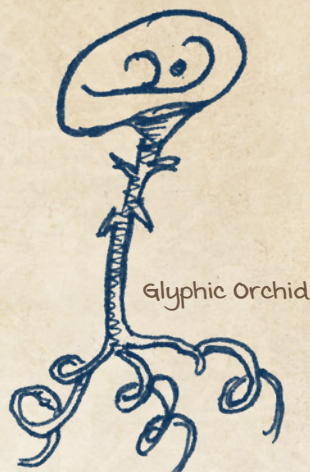
Even the origins of the trees are not known with certainty. Records indicate that their first sightings started after the Karsus' Folly and the fall of Netheril, suggesting the Netherese discovered or created them, and kept them hidden for some reason. The oldest and most reserved of elven sages, should you be able to prove yourself to them beyond any question or doubt, perhaps would tell you of the tree's vague reminiscence of the Quess'Ar'Teranthvar, the Golden Grove of Hidden Knowledge that housed a set of Nether Scrolls in tree form.

MYTHALS

mythals are among the most powerful magic of Faerûn. They are traditionally formed by several casters of extreme power and influence in a ritual that can cost one or more of them their lives. The result is a ward of immense power that can do things such as change the rules of the weave or forbid the passage of specific types of creatures in its area. There are few still alive that can work mythals, and most of them are old, old elves whose names aren't even known to most.

Glyphic Orchid

The glyphic orchid can be found growing on mountain peaks and the mouths of mountaintop caverns. They seem to savor the wind, even though they seem completely unaffected by the strong mountain gusts. Its roots twirl and spiral into and around rocks in mathematical patterns, leading into a singular straight stem with between one and nine spiraling thorns. The flower consists of a single white petal, which creates the entire circular flower. On each petal, there is a magical glyph that corresponds to a single arcane spell, the level of which is given by the number of thorns.



For this property, glyphic orchids are also known as Mystra's Flower, and they are among the most sought after study materials for archives everywhere. The glyphs can be studied like a scroll by a wizard in order to learn the spell corresponding to the glyph, but it takes ten times as long and ten times the value in resources to do so. Still, mages make the effort because these flowers often contain spells crafted in ancient times, which would otherwise be lost to the ages. Stories say that after the fall of Netheril, it was from one of these flowers that the *delayed blast fireball* spell was recovered.

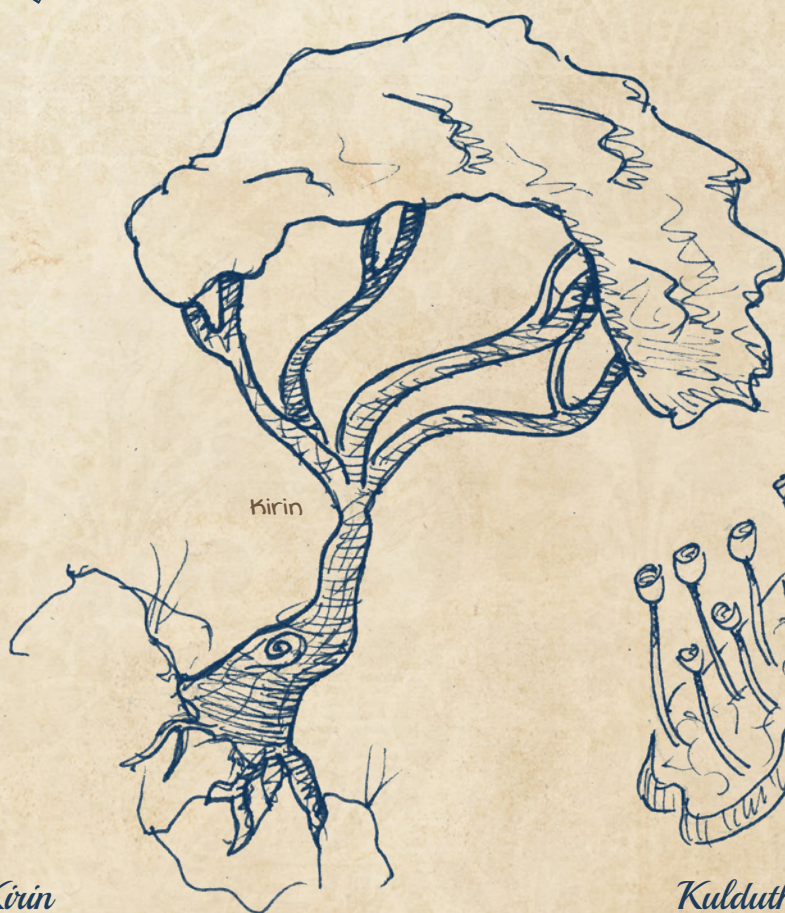
Druids, rangers, and others aligned with nature can identify the name of the spell in the flower simply by touching it. While holding the flower, they can cast the spell within it. After the spell is cast from the flower, it withers, loses its magic, and leaves behind two silver, almond-like seeds. The spell is cast as if using a 9th-level spell slot. The DC for a glyphic orchid spell is 17, and the spell attack bonus is +11.

Helmthorn

This large, vine-like bush grows like brambles along the grounds and walls of valleys across Faerûn. They are most well known for their large black thorns, which can reach the length of a man's hand. The tips of these thorns, made for effective darts and blowgun needles, are lightweight and absorbent. Substances like poisons can remain on the needles and darts for a whole day before losing effectiveness, without risk to the handler.

The brambles produce indigo berries, which are edible, but are mostly used in the creation of wine. The sweet wine was good, but standard. Occasionally, the plant produces red berries in small clusters. These smaller, tart berries are bad for wine, but workers of magic could use them as a material component in the *goodberry* spell. The berry is consumed by the magic, causing the magic of the goodberries to last an additional 24 hours.



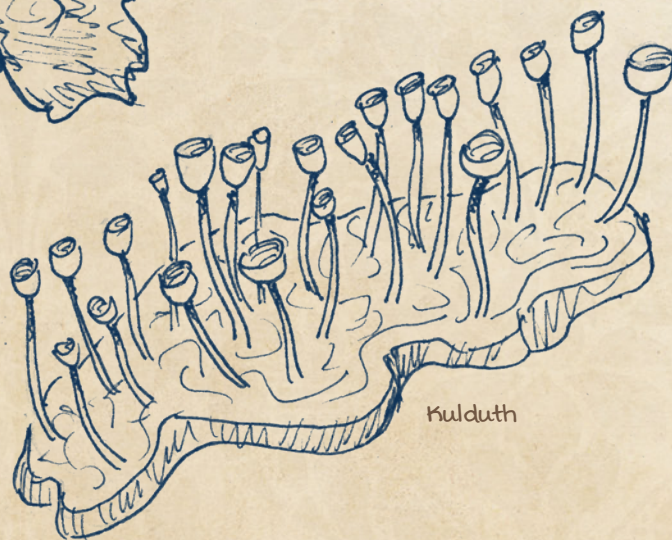


Kirin

This small tree was only found on the eastern side of the Thunder Peak Mountains of Cormyr. It has a sparse canopy of oval, reddish-brown leaves on wispy branches that look as though they are constantly blowing in the wind. No more than 15 feet tall, these trees rely on large mountain moths and hummingbirds from the lands below to pollinate their deep, funnel-shaped white flowers.

The leaves of the tree, sold as the kirin's leaf herb, can be processed by an alchemist into a potion that reverses the emotional state of the drinker for 1 hour, known as *kirin's delight*. The potion does not make an individual act against their nature (e.g. it can't force a goodly knight of the realm to commit murder in cold blood), but it makes them act in a way exactly opposite to how they feel. A creature with alchemists' supplies can attempt to make this potion over the course of an 8-hour period, which consumes a sprig of kirin's leaf and 200 gold pieces of alchemical reagents. At the end of an 8-hour period, the creature attempts a DC 17 Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies, creating a dose of *kirin's delight* on a success.

A spellcaster can also use a sprig of kirin's leaf as a material component when casting the *calm emotions* spell. If they do, the leaf is consumed and creatures have disadvantage on their saving throws made to resist the spell for that casting.



Kulduth

Kulduth is an alpine fungus that's fast disappearing from rock ledges as more and more wayfarers discover it as a food source. It looks like a mass of brown, rotting vegetation or offal, often about the size of a human forearm, from which sprout a dozen or more nut-brown, inverted-cap mushrooms or toadstools ("cups on stalks" shape, like wineglasses). If just one or two caps are harvested, the plant will vigorously grow more. If the entire plant is torn up from its ledge, it will last for about a tenday before desiccating enough to crumble away like dry dirt.

Kulduth tastes buttery if raw, and like the choicest fatty roast boar (bacon) if fire-seared. It's very nourishing; each cup (or the same volume of the body they sprout from) will satisfy an active full-grown human like a large, hearty meal.

Norrau

Norrau (pronounced "Nor-RAW"), or "Mountain Mouths," are odd plants that may be far more plentiful than most sages believe, for so long as they remain undisturbed, their rough, irregular gray puffball-like bodies very closely resemble rocks.

If touched firmly or heavily (for example, by a descending climber's hand or mountain goat hoof), they temporarily split open to reveal a gaping reddish maw lined with "fangs" that are actually white sticky tendrils (sticky enough to

capture insects and small birds and smaller rodents and worms). Norrau digestive fluids can dissolve organs, tissue, and chitin, but leaves metal and other inorganic items untouched. Norrau subsist on insects and birds, but some have been found that contained the bones of human hands and items that once adorned those hands. Clusters of norrau have been known to eat fallen mountain goats and dissolve the skin and flesh of exhausted human climbers. Norrau are mobile, creeping along on their roots toward more light, more moisture, or nearby food. They are, however, very slow; it might take a norrau a month to move as far as one human stride. Despite wild tales and rumors to the contrary, they can't see or think.

For every 5 feet a creature moves across a surface where norrau is present, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or one of their appendages gets caught in a norrau mouth and the creature takes 2d4 acid damage and becomes restrained. A creature restrained by norrau takes 2d4 acid damage at the start of each of its turns, and can use its action to make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, freeing itself on a successful check. If a creature dies while in contact with a norrau cluster, they are consumed by the plant over the next hour (plus an additional hour for each size category above Medium), leaving only acid-washed bones and inorganic material behind.

Primal Lotus

For one tenday out of the year, the skies of Akanûl are alight with the gently floating primal lotuses, which descend from the Akanapeaks mountains around the time of the spring equinox. Each flower appears partially translucent and glows with a dim light corresponding to each elemental plane: orange for fire, blue for water, white for air, and green for earth. The flowers have a perfectly symmetrical

radial petal pattern that is three layers deep, starting with four and doubling each subsequent layer.

The plants were actually native to Abeir, and crossed into Toril during the Spellplague alongside the genasi who have formed their own kingdom in the area. The plants can't bloom without a source of elemental energy nearby, and as such rely on the genasi's presence to bloom. Akananeans use this blooming period as a beautiful backdrop to their Festival of Freedom, which celebrates when they were brought to Toril and consequently freed from their slavers on Abeir.

While a mere delight on Abeir, Toril's weave of magic has made these flowers very sought after. Their tie to elemental magics in the presence of the weave creates a material that can be used as magical fuel for elemental spells (spells that deal acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage). A spellcaster that casts an elemental spell can choose to use its corresponding flower as a material component. The flower is consumed by the spell, and causes the spell's DC to increase by 2 for that casting.

Rock Moss

Many mountain climbers who have climbed the same mountain multiple times have noted that portions of a mountain can seem to grow or recede with time. Even more experienced mountain climbers will notice the faint white marbling of the stone in some sections of the climb and avoid them at all costs. The latter understands the dangers of rock moss, (or "lharghcos" in dwarvish), a fungus native to the mountains of the Sword Coast. It's mycelia burrow into rock, using the minerals as sustenance and incorporating chunks of rock into their bodies to disguise and protect themselves. They often form shelves on the mountain side, which can grow out to 25 feet on any given side.



Norrau



Primal Lotus

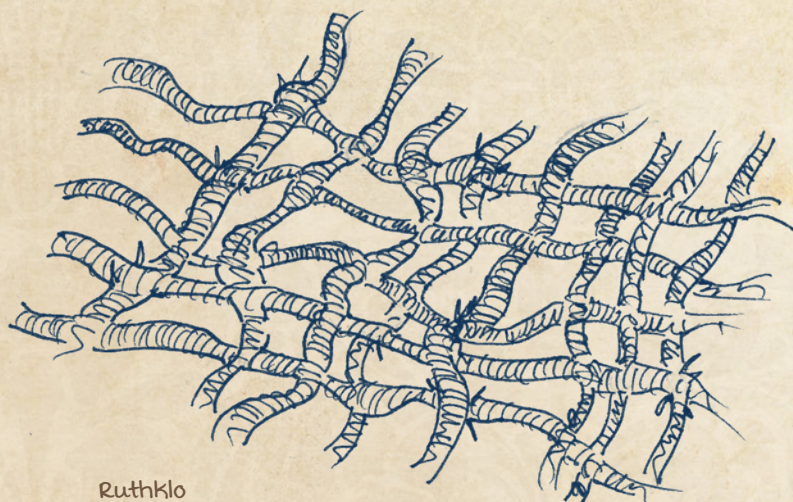
These shelves can look like tempting respites to a weary creature, though they soon learn that rock shelves are carnivorous fungi. After feeling pressure from a living creature on its shelf for 1 minute, the rock shelf activates and remains active for the next 10 minutes. Whenever a creature starts its turn on an activated shelf, tendrils from the shelf lash out toward them. These creatures must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A creature can use its action to make a Strength check against this DC, breaking free on a success. A creature that ends its turn restrained by rock moss takes 2d10 acid damage, as its tendrils dissolve their bodies.

A shelf has 18 AC, and a number of hit points equal to 10 times its longest dimension. It is immune to psychic damage and vulnerable to acid damage. Successfully killing the fungus is not enough to end the danger however, for the shelf begins to crumble immediately after the fungus dies.

Ruthklo

Ruthklo (pronounced “Ruh-thkLOH”) is a dense rock-crevice-rooted creeper that grows on sheer cliffs and sharp rocks in a crisscrossing net of great expanse and toughness, easily able to bear the weight of many human-sized creatures hanging from it at the same time. If carefully sliced free from its anchor roots (which will slowly shoot forth new growth to replace the removed vine), a sufficiently-large ‘net’ of ruthklo can be used to ensnare or—as a wrap—store and carry even horse- and oxen-sized creatures, and unless a creature wrapped in the ruthklo net wields a sharp-edge blade, fangs, or tusks to slice the plant, the ruthklo is almost always resilient enough to survive the creature’s struggles intact. Ruthklo is a reddish-brown vine that begins as thin stalks but can grow to as thick as an adult human forearm. It grows in segments, the joints marked by darker, raised ridges, like bamboo. Ruthklo flowers with human-fist-sized green, russet-edged blossoms at all of its joints, and wherever its vines cross each other and touch (they flower first, then fuse together, thereby starting to form a net).

A ruthklo net is a net, except a creature must make a DC 15 Strength check or deal 10 slashing damage to the net to free a creature trapped in it.



Ruthklo

Sarrinth

Sarrinth, or “Bloodtail,” is a crimson-hued mold that grows on cold, high altitude mountain rocks. It looks like overlapping snake scales, is rough, and clings very tightly, and so can aid climbers by helping them grip rocks and in darkness when it has earlier absorbed enough sunlight (or bright light from other sources), glows a bright ruby red. This natural luminescence is bright enough to be seen for miles, and because sarrinth grows in vertical strips, widening every few feet into slightly wider patches like a row of buckles strung along the same belt. The radiant strips look like red lines (blood tails) down the rock face. Sarrinth is edible to certain rock lizards (minotaur lizards in particular nest in areas where sarrinth grows abundantly), but humans find it like eating tasteless grit. Some sarrinth “scales” have edges sharp enough to score metal (for writing or engraving symbols) or even sharpen knife blades and tools. It is said that, under the right moonlight, metal sharpened or scored by freshly cut sarrinth scales can impart the ruby red glow on the metal surface. This is a cosmetic effect, but such objects fetch a high price—upward of five times their normal value.

Ullukka

Ullukka (pronounced “Ull-OO-kah”, also known as peakflower) is a once-abundant plant of the high mountains that is rarer and rarer over the last century. It has distinctive white flowers as large as many large warriors’ round shields, tinged with blue and purple around the outer edges. Peakflower is bitter and poisonous to birds and all mammals, and so tends to go untouched, but its petals, stalks, and roots can all be readily hand-crushed and wrung to yield a flammable oil invaluable for use in lamps and as a firestarter when wood is damp. Ullukka grows

SHIAH “CINDER” IRGANGLADEN

like a vine, thrusting down many roots and thrusting up many flowering stalks. When one flower is damaged or rots or wind-weathered away, another bud opens throughout the year.

Xukluth

This abundant cold-climate rock mold (also known as “Brownscale”) grows only where light is dim or absent, and can be found thickly cloaking cavern walls and ceilings wherever orcs, goblins, and hobgoblins are absent. Goblinkind races all dine on it as a staple, smashing it off rocks to carry as a chewy, dried-meat-like staple. It has an earthy taste, rather like some mushrooms, and is a filling, sustaining foodstuff for all mammals, though an acquired taste for most.

The long-ago sage Araundar called xukluth “the most important food plant of the north Sword Coast” because if it wasn’t so plentiful, and didn’t grow and re-grow so swiftly (from spores, released whenever any xukluth is broken off walls), orcs would starve far more often, and be forced to raid for food (forming far more orc hordes, more frequently) or die.



Ullukka

Zurrud

Zurrud, or Icicle Mint, is a rare and unusual plant found only in frigid high rocky places, growing from the undersides of projecting rocks. It takes the form of downward-growing, thickening-over-time spikes, like icicles, but looks pale green, mottled with brown and beige, rather than white or gray as ice usually is. Zurrud is edible, if unexciting, to all mammals, and has a minty, cool taste akin to menthol. However, the locations where it grows can make harvesting it perilous. Rare zurrud cling to rocks strongly enough to provide handholds, but trusting in them as a climber is not considered wise.

ICICLE TEA

Zurrud has the appearance of ice, but does not melt. A new trend amongst nobles, concerned with keeping a ‘fighting form’ despite their lavish indulgences, is Icicle Tea. The components of icicle tea are as follows:

- A copper or brass cup that can contain roughly half a pint of liquid.
- A mixture of fruit, crushed and pulped to release their flavor, mixed with cool mountain water in the cup.
- A single ‘spike’ of zurrud, sticking as tall and obvious out of the cup as can be maintained without spilling the liquid.

The minty cool taste suffuses the drink and such a potable is enjoyed under the warm sun, or immediately after partaking in other luxurious activities that might cause fatigue or stress upon the body.



Zurrud

Appendix

Beasts and Monsters

Mountains boast a diverse ecosystem, supporting nesting creatures that spend their entire life among the peaks, and serve as eyries for creatures like eagles, rocs, and wyverns who roost among the relative safety, leaving only to hunt. Each mountain serves as its own microbiome, often with its own unique ecology and properties such as snow-capped peaks or the fervent heat of an active volcano. This grants them the range of desolate, solitary chunks to rock to vibrant and full of life.

REGIONAL BEASTS TABLE

	Dire IbeX	King Lion	Minotaur Magma	Lizard	Rocling	Springthorn Vine	Royal Griffon	Taer	Thylacine	Tigerpede
Aglarond				✓	✓	✓				
Amn			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Anauroch	✓				✓			✓		✓
Beastlands		✓							✓	
Calimshan			✓			✓	✓		✓	
Chessentea				✓		✓				
Chondath				✓		✓				
Cormanthor					✓	✓				
Cormyr	✓					✓				
Damara	✓			✓	✓			✓		
Dambrath										
Elfharrow				✓						✓
Great Glacier	✓							✓		
Greypeak Mountains	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Halruaa	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓
Hordelands	✓			✓				✓		
Jungles of Chult			✓						✓	✓
Lantan			✓							
Lapaliiya				✓					✓	
Luskan	✓				✓		✓	✓		
Mhair Jungles			✓		✓				✓	✓
Moonshea Isles			✓				✓		✓	
Mulhorand			✓		✓	✓				
Murghôm				✓	✓	✓				
Narfell	✓				✓			✓		
Neverwinter			✓			✓	✓	✓		
Plains of Purple Dust			✓							
Rashemen	✓			✓	✓			✓		
Sembia	✓					✓				
Silver Marches	✓				✓			✓		
Sossal	✓							✓		
Spine of the World	✓				✓			✓		
Tethyr				✓			✓			
Thay	✓			✓						
The Dragon Coast		✓			✓	✓				
The Great Dale				✓	✓	✓				
The High Forest	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓
The High Moor				✓			✓			
The Shaar		✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
The Shining Plains		✓			✓					✓
The Western Heartlands	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Thesk	✓				✓					
Turmish	✓			✓					✓	
Unther		✓		✓		✓				
Vaasa					✓			✓		
Yehimal Mountains	✓				✓			✓		

Dire Ibex

Prized beasts of mountain-dwelling giants and goliaths, dire ibex dwarf all other more mundane varieties of goat. The sheer mass of food required by such a creature leads them to be found alone or in a pair, and presents a considerable challenge to any enterprising herder. Very few mountain-dwelling creatures can challenge a dire ibex, making them excellent livestock guardians for the giants who keep them.

The ibex kept by giants are marked with patterns of colorful runes and symbols painted into their fur, both to denote who owns this particular beast, and also to provide them sacred protection. Sometimes these runes confer magical abilities unto the ibex itself, allowing them to resist the onset of spells or even blast thunder from their hooves.

The ground horns of a dire ibex are allegedly a critical ingredient in creating *potions of giant strength*, though the giants themselves might present a challenge to alchemists seeking such an ingredient...



Dire Ibex

Dire Ibex

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d12 + 12)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Athletics +8

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Stunning Charge. If the ibex moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Sure-Footed. The ibex has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The ibex makes one ram attack and one hoof attack.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Hoof. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

VARIANT: BLESSED IBEX

The giants who keep dire ibex often mark them with runes and patterns to signify ownership, as well as their sacred status. An ibex marked by runes can gain one of the following features:

Guardian Rune. Friendly beasts within 60 feet of the ibex (other than itself) have resistance to all damage.

Stalwart Rune. The ibex has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Thunder Rune. The ibex can cast the thunderwave spell at will, without components (4d8 damage, DC 12).

King Lion

Much alike to a typical large cat, this rare variety of mountain lion has a slender form, fur coloring that blends into its environment, and ferocious teeth and claws. It is believed the king lion (also known locally as a dire mountain lion) carries the curse of lycanthropy due to its unnaturally aggressive behavior.

The lion is relatively unheard and unseen outside of its annual hunting season, during which time, humanoids living in their hunting grounds quickly begin to disappear and the numbers of lions swell in equal parts.

When such threats mount, the tribes often rally together to face the challenge, which can be a difficult task if your loved ones have gone missing. Nevertheless, the blood of the lion can be distilled into a draught, which, while unable to cure lycanthropy, can protect its imbiber from contracting the curse for 24 hours after drinking. Such draughts are stockpiled in advance of their hunting season much like grain before a long winter.

PLAYER CHARACTERS AS LYCANTHROPES

The *Monster Manual* gives guidance on how to use the curse of lycanthropy on characters. The King Lion is not a lycanthrope itself, but can carry the curse of lycanthropy and spread it to its victims. You can use the following information to apply to the specific werelion lycanthrope.

Werelion. The character gains a Strength of 17 if their score isn't already higher. Attack and damage rolls for natural weapons are based on Strength. For the Pounce trait, the DC is 8 + the character's proficiency bonus + Strength modifier.

King Lion

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +5

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the lion can long jump up to 25 feet.

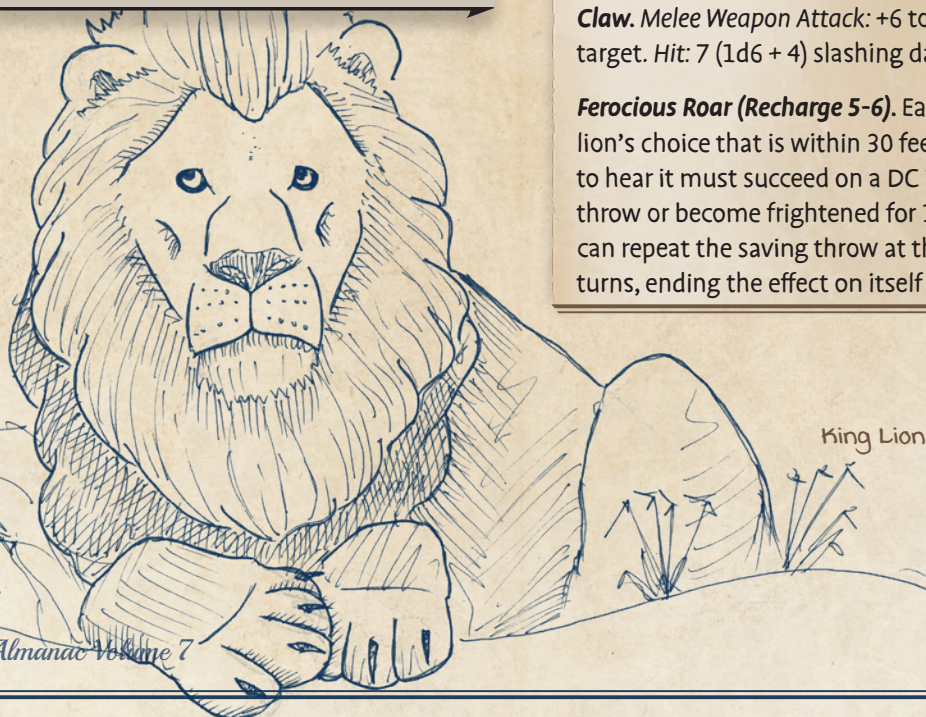
Actions

Multiattack. The lion makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werelion lycanthropy.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Ferocious Roar (Recharge 5-6). Each creature of the lion's choice that is within 30 feet of the lion and able to hear it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



Living Magma

Volcanic mountains are places of great riches and immense power, which stir the magma within itself with elemental energy, sometimes producing the elementals known as living magma. As their name suggests, the bodies of these elementals are composed of viscous molten rock, making them relatively slow-moving but incredibly dangerous up close. The elemental engulfs anything hapless enough to stand in its way, trapping the victim in a fiery embrace.

Even decades or centuries after a volcano has gone dormant, living magma can dwell within the caves and tunnels beneath. They are inscrutably drawn to underground caverns rich in ore, a fact that makes them a particular danger to miners and prospectors seeking to exploit the wealth dredged up to the surface by the volcano.

When the elemental is slain, its body cools and crumbles into ash and shards of obsidian, leaving behind only a small glowing stone, which is seemingly ever-hot, retaining its latent heat for up to a century. These magma stones are used mostly for cooking, as they will quickly boil a pot of water without the need for a fire.



Living Magma

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d8 + 60)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Ignan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Cooling Lava. For every 5 feet the elemental moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 cold damage. If the elemental takes 10 or more cold damage at once, its exterior cools and becomes rigid, and the elemental is restrained until the start of its next turn.

Illumination. The elemental sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

Magma Form. The elemental can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the elemental or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The elemental makes two touch attacks, or attempts to engulf a creature and makes one touch attack against it.

Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Engulf. The elemental attempts to move into a creature's space within 5 feet of it. Unless the creature succeeds on a DC 14 Strength saving throw, the elemental moves into their space and stops there, engulfing the creature with its body of magma. A creature engulfed by the elemental immediately takes 11 (2d10) fire damage and is restrained. A restrained creature takes 11 (2d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns, and can attempt to escape as an action, making a DC 14 Strength check, freeing itself on a success.

Minotaur Lizard

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Rush. If the lizard moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a horns attack on the same turn, the target is pushed backwards 15 feet. If the target collides with a wall or other solid object, it takes an additional 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone.

Hold Breath. The lizard can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Multiattack. The lizard makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the lizard. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and the lizard can't use its tail attack.

Horns. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target not grappled by the lizard. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) piercing damage.

Toss. The lizard throws a creature that is grappled by its tail up to 15 feet in a direction of its choice. If the target collides with a wall or other solid object, it takes an additional 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone.

Minotaur Lizard

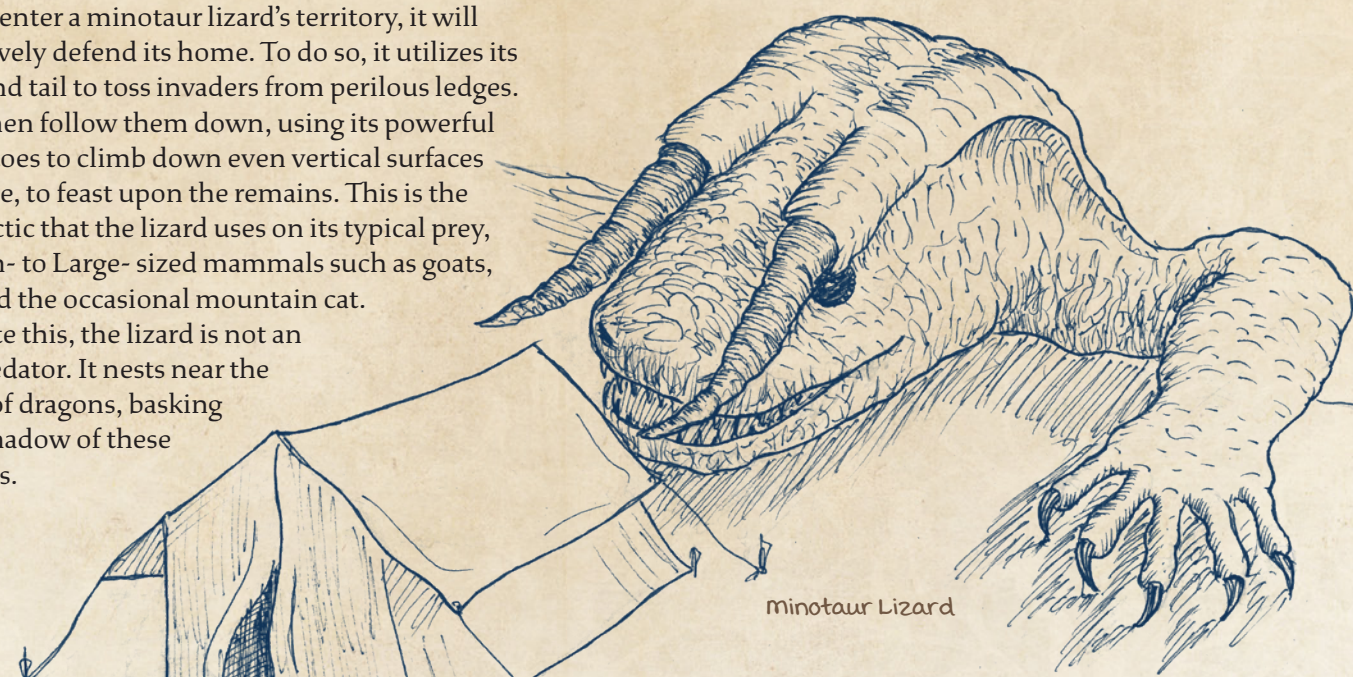
The minotaur lizard resides in tropical climate mountains and hills, particularly those around the Chultan peninsula and Halruaan mountain ranges. The lizard has a long body, up to 40 feet in length, and powerful muscles throughout its legs, tail, and neck. It is known to carve its own nests out of the rock faces of mountains by ramming the stone with its horns.

If you enter a minotaur lizard's territory, it will aggressively defend its home. To do so, it utilizes its horns and tail to toss invaders from perilous ledges. It will then follow them down, using its powerful clawed toes to climb down even vertical surfaces with ease, to feast upon the remains. This is the same tactic that the lizard uses on its typical prey, Medium- to Large- sized mammals such as goats, yaks, and the occasional mountain cat.

Despite this, the lizard is not an apex predator. It nests near the homes of dragons, basking in the shadow of these creatures.

Dragons, wyverns, and even rocs keep a careful eye on the cliff faces of their hunting grounds and pluck the lizards from the sheer cliffs.

In addition to its hide, which is used to create fine leather, the claws of a minotaur lizard can be crafted into boots and mitts that provide its wearer a climb speed equal to its normal speed.



Rocling

Rocs are legendary birds of prey, but they are born as juvenile rocplings. While they are not born monstrous in size, rocplings are still bigger than a horse. Their juvenile form allows them to be faster and nimbler than adults, though they must limit themselves to much smaller prey. Rocs do not care much for their young, and rocplings must hunt for themselves in the mountains where they are born, using their speed to launch hit-and-run attacks; tactics that adults need not concern themselves with.

Rocplings are wanderers, driven to fly far away from their parent's home territory and seek out new places to begin building their own nests. This can lead them well afield of their preferred mountain terrains, occasionally even roosting in granaries or the high towers of cities.

The flight feathers of rocplings preserve the properties of their fully-grown kin but are a much more manageable size. One use is to cut them into smaller fletchings for arrows or bolts, which are then able to fly twice as far as the weapon's normal range without suffering disadvantage.



Rocling

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 73 (7d12 + 28)

Speed 10 ft., fly 150 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +6, Wis +1, Cha +1

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Dive Attack. If the rocpling flies and dives at least 30 feet straight down toward a target and then hits it with a melee weapon attack, the attack deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage to the target.

Flyby. The rocpling doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Sight. The rocpling has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The rocpling makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the rocpling can't use its talons on another target.

Rocling

Royal Griffon



Royal Griffon

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Sight. The griffon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Mounted Superiority. When the griffon's rider hits with an attack, the griffon can make one beak attack against a target within reach as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. The griffon makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Strike from the Sky! (Recharge 5-6). The griffon drops at least 30 feet downward toward a target and makes one claws attack against it with advantage. If the attack hits, the griffon's rider can also make one attack against the same target as a reaction.

Reactions

Got You! When the griffon's rider is knocked off of it, the griffon can quickly move and catch the rider in its talons.

Royal Griffon

Griffons are often sought after as tamed mounts, and no variety of griffon is better suited to this role than the Royal Griffon. Featuring flamboyant plumage of red and gold, the royal breed of griffon has been shaped into an ideal mount for any griffon-rider. They are trained from birth to handle a rider, learning specialized mid-air maneuvers to help fight in tandem with a mounted warrior. A young royal griffon can be imprinted onto its future rider to help this process along, often producing a

rider-mount bond that allows them to fight as one creature in the sky.

Royal Griffons are not found in the wild; they are solely a domesticated variety. If you encounter one alone in the wilderness, it either has escaped from its owners or is the wandering former mount of a rider who has perished. It is said that a Royal Griffon whose bonded rider dies can never be happy again, becoming violent and spiteful to all around it.

The feathers of royal griffons can be carefully crafted into potions with a DC 20 Intelligence check using alchemist supplies. When drunk, such a potion confers the benefit of the *feather fall* spell for 10 minutes.

Springthorn Vine

The springthorn vine appears as a tangled ball of desiccated stalks with large barbed thorns every 4 to 6 inches along the vines. It ambulates by extending these thorns to push against the ground and rolling. The vine is carnivorous, as the rarity of nutrient rich soil resulted in the vine never developing a strong root structure. The prey in these regions are often creatures capable of extended periods of flight, so the vines that proliferate are those that have developed the ability to launch their thorns to bring down the flying game. When the creatures are larger, such as rocings and wyverns, many vines group together and work in concert to hunt.

When prey becomes scarce, or learns to avoid the area, the vines can enter a state of dormancy for years without requiring nutrients, subsisting entirely on rainfall or polar melt and sunshine. In this state, the vines are unable to stabilize themselves with their thorns and blow easily from the mountain tops, often to their doom.

Most who encounter springthorn vines are encountering the fallen, dormant kind. An almost fossil-like specimen of the real creature. When one slays an active vine and is knowledgeable of their composition, they are rewarded with the milky substrate that acts as a hybrid muscular and cardiovascular system for the vine. The material is tough and elastic, more so than even refined rubber. It can be used in a variety of applications such as elastic waistbands on clothes, fluid bladders that can expand in size, and even Lantanna mechanical devices. A 10-foot length of springthorn band, the typical amount harvested from a vine, is worth up to 100 gp.

Springthorn Vine

Springthorn Vine

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

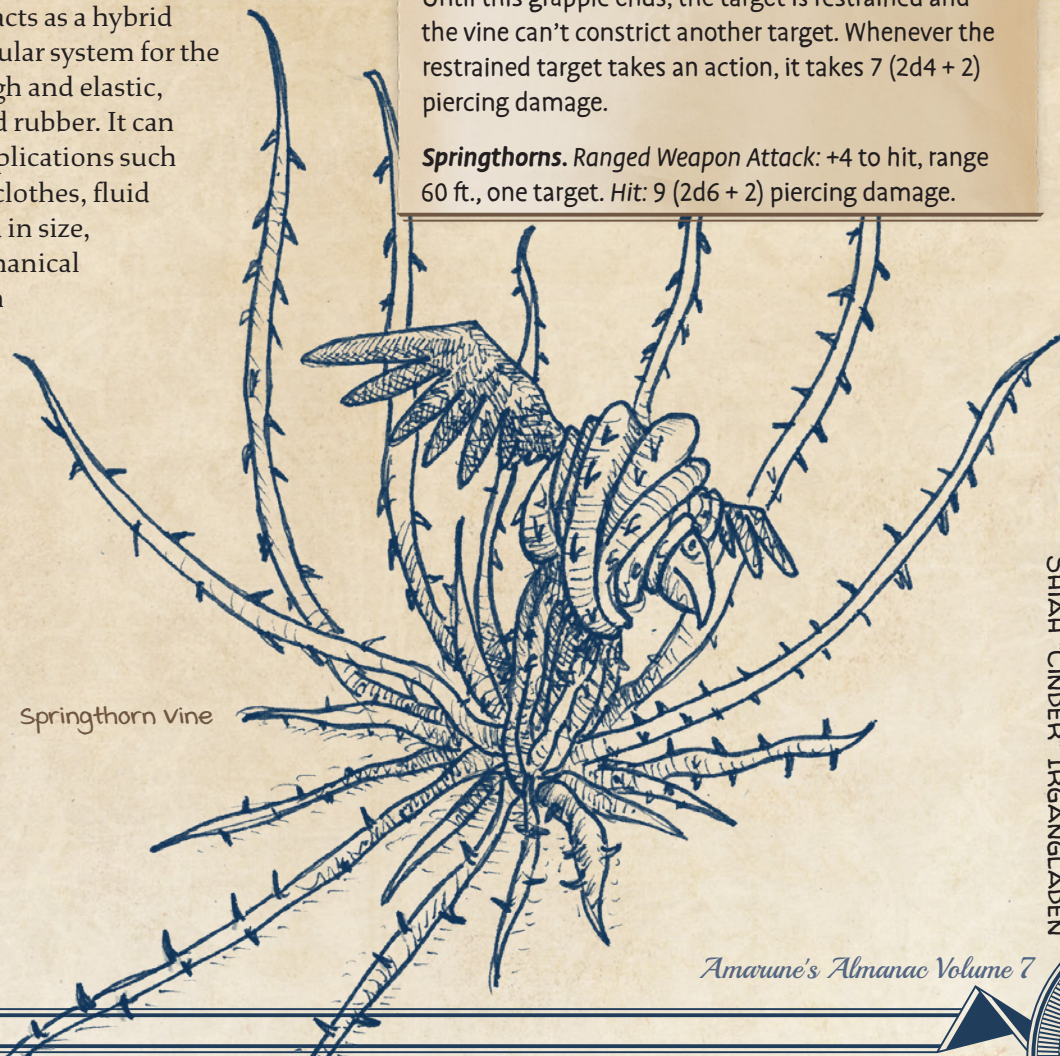
False Appearance. While the vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mountain plant.

Actions

Multiattack. The vine makes two attacks with its springthorns.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage, and a Large or smaller target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and the vine can't constrict another target. Whenever the restrained target takes an action, it takes 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Springthorns. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.



Taer

Medium giant, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4

Damage Resistances cold

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The taer makes two melee weapon attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage and 5 (2d4) cold damage.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Taer

Despite their relative size, these creatures are impressively bulky and carry a dominant air about them. Taer call the mountain regions of northern Faerûn their home from the Spine of the World all the way east to the Icerim Mountains north of Rashemen. Myths of blue-haired mountain beasts coming down like an avalanche to raid small outposts and villages often refer to the taer, but like all myths, contain a significant portion of creative emphasis. When taer raid villages, they take livestock and supplies—such as blankets, tools, and timber—resources they would not otherwise have access to in the glacial mountain ranges.

Their society comprises familial pods no more than two generations large. Typically once taer reach the age in which they can bear children, their parents leave to roam the wastes or scavenge gifts they leave for their young to ensure that the scant resources are allocated to the most promising generation. Each pod typically has at least one adept, a spiritual leader connected to either Auril or in rare cases, Loviatar.

Taer Adept

Medium giant, any neutral alignment

Armor Class 16 (frostskein)

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Wis +6

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Giant, Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Frostskein. The adept's fur and skin are magically frozen, creating a hard barrier. Its AC can't be less than 16.

Innate Spellcasting. The adept's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit will spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *frostbite* (see "Actions" below), *goodberry*

3/day each: *armor of Agathys*, *ice knife* ^{XGE}

1/day each: *Snilloc's snowball swarm* ^{XGE}

Actions

Frostbite (Cantrip). One creature the adept can see within 60 feet must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 3 (1d6) cold damage, and it has disadvantage on the next weapon attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage and 2 (1d4) cold damage.



AMARUNE'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE TAER

If one were to call the taer primal and barbarous, they could be forgiven as they are known to travel from their mountainous homes and raid the countryside for resources. I've come to know this is an act of desperation, however. Mountain resources are scarce, scarcer still in the desolate wastes of the North. During my time traveling the Spine, exploring the arctic regions of the land for flora and fauna to document, I came across many Taer families. It was never what I would call an amicable or positive experience, but when you catch a glimpse of their

infants wrapped in fur blankets distinctly from Silverymoon, it becomes all too understandable.

That being said, I'd often come across ritual sites laden with clear markers that taer frequent the area. Also present were symbols of Auril, the Frostmaiden. It's not unusual for denizens of the Spine to pray to Auril, but the dichotomy makes me feel uneasy. These are beings relegated to the colds but seek amnesty from its rigors at every turn. If a more hospitable place existed for them, without fear of being treated as monsters, who knows what heights they could reach?

Thylacine

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Pounce. If the thylacine moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the thylacine can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

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

Actions

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

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

Change Shape (1/day). The thylacine magically polymorphs into a humanoid has a challenge rating no higher than its own. It reverts to its true form if it dies or if it dismisses this effect (no action required). Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the thylacine's choice).

In a new form, the thylacine retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, proficiencies, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Thylacine

These large, agile cats can be found in the mountains and forests in southern Faerûn and northern Zakhara. For reasons yet unknown, they possess an innate defense against effects that can influence their mind and the ability to transform themselves into a humanoid with illusion magic. It is suggested that they may have fey origins. Another, less prominent belief, is that they originate from the mountains and jungles surrounding Halruaa and are either the result of experimentation, or the unexpected product of latent magical radiation.

The light-absorbing nature of their dark fur makes for an excellent cloak or clothes, providing a benefit to its wearer while in dim light or darkness. Creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight to detect the wearer. The brain of a thylacine can be used in the creation of a magical ink worth up to 50 gp. When scribing the spell *mind blank* into a scroll or spellbook, this ink reduces the time required to scribe by half. In addition, if provided as a material component when casting the spell, it grants the target immunity to the frightened condition for the duration of the spell, in addition to its other effects.

Tigerpede

A grotesque fusion of a tiger and a giant armored centipede, the origins of the tigerpede are unknown. Regardless of how this monstrosity came to be, the few that exist have taken various mountain ranges as their territory. Crawling up and down cliff-faces and ridge-lines, before pouncing upon their prey with toxic fangs, the only thing that could make the tigerpede better suited to mountainous terrain would be wings (please don't give them wings).

Tigerpedes are normally nomadic, taking no territory or permanent lairs, but a few unfortunate adventurers have stumbled across a tigerpede nest. A single tigerpede will lay a dozen man-sized eggs and protect them with its body until they hatch. Seemingly many of the eggs never hatch, only producing one or two viable offspring per clutch, perhaps the reason they haven't taken over every mountainside by now!

Tigerpede fangs carry a small amount of their poison within them, even after being extracted from its maw. They're too small for a knife, but can be fashioned into blow darts or arrowheads that deal an extra 1d8 poison damage on a hit. They are nearly guaranteed to break upon use, however.



Tigerpede

Tigerpede

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Saving Throws Str +7

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +4, Stealth +8

Senses tremorsense 30ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Pounce. If the tigerpede moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tigerpede can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Spider Climb. The tigerpede can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sure-Footed. The tigerpede has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The tigerpede makes one bite and one claw attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 +6) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Reactions

Reposition. When the tigerpede takes damage, it can move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Magic Items

In addition to the flora, fauna, and perilous peaks of the realms, throughout my travels I have learned about or interacted with multiple wondrous artifacts. Whether of dwarven craft, or an explorer's tool, these relics epitomize mountains.

Gauntlets of Stonesmithing

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

These gauntlets are made from a dark marbled stone, finely chiseled. They somehow flex and articulate with no visible joints, and are far too heavy to be practical when you first put them on. When you attune with them you feel them suddenly lighten, and you are able to move freely once again. These gauntlets have 4 charges and regain 1d4 expended charges each day at dawn.

While wearing these gauntlets your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d8 bludgeoning damage.

When you touch a stone object or a section of stone no more than 10 feet in any dimension, you can expend a charge as an action to form it into any shape that suits your purpose. For example, a weapon, statue, or small passage through a wall, so long as the wall is less than 10 feet thick. The object you create can have simple hinges but fine mechanical detail is not possible. Additionally, if you expend a charge and concentrate for 1 minute, as if concentrating on a spell, you can create a stone object that is no more than 5 feet in any dimension, even if there is no stone nearby.

Heart of the Mountain

Wondrous, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster or dwarf)

This item is visibly sculpted to look like a humanoid heart. It has a large ruby depressed into its left side. When you attune to this heart a light within the ruby begins softly pulsating in time with your own pulse, and a soft thrumming can be heard coming from within the stone.

While attuned to this item, you must fail 5 death saving throws to die instead of 3.

Additionally, once per day as an action you can choose to cast either *stoneskin* or *investiture of stone* ^{XGE} on yourself, ignoring concentration. If you are not a spellcaster you use your Constitution modifier as your spellcasting ability for this effect. If you choose *investiture of stone* ^{XGE} you gain 1 level of exhaustion as the spell ends.

Curse. While attuned with this item you are vulnerable to thunder damage. If you un-attune with this item or it is destroyed, you immediately drop to 0 hit points and begin making death saving throws. Additionally, you gain 1d4 levels of exhaustion that lasts for 10 days and can only be removed by the *greater restoration* or *wish* spells.

Maerth's Spike

Weapon (warpick), very rare (requires attunement)

This marbled stone pick is reinforced with black iron bands. It has obviously been imbued with magic to have lasted this long without shattering.

This magical item has 10 charges and regains 1d8 + 2 expended charges each day at dawn.

Molehill. If you are standing on soil or stone, as an action you can strike the ground and expend a number of charges while concentrating as if on a spell, causing the earth to ripple around you.

When you do, you target a number of 10-foot-square areas of soil or stone within 120 feet equal to the number of charges expended, which rise up to create a bluff. You can choose for each of these target areas' sides to slope gradually or be a sheer cliff up to 10 feet tall, so long as at least one side is inclined.

If you maintain concentration on this effect for the next hour, the bluffs become permanent and can't be dispelled. Otherwise, the bluffs sink back into the earth.

Mountain. As an action you can target any area you can see that was targeted by the Molehill feature within the past day and expend a charge for each targeted area.

At each targeted area, a 10-foot-square pillar of stone bursts from the ground and rises to a height of up to 20 feet. If a pillar is created under a creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be lifted by the pillar. A creature can choose to fail the save. If a pillar is prevented from reaching its full height because of a ceiling or other obstacle, such as a Huge or larger creature, a creature on the pillar takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage and is restrained, pinched between the pillar and the obstacle. The restrained creature can use an action to make a DC 17 Strength or Dexterity check (the creature's choice). On a success the creature is no longer restrained and must either move off the pillar or fall off it.

Mountainous Compass

Wondrous item, uncommon

This tiny crystal sphere has an intensely detailed mountain covered in loose snow. When you shake it the snow flies around the miniature landscape, creating a swirling snowstorm. The wind in this diorama always blows toward the peak of the tallest mountain in your current plane of existence.

Piton of the Peaks

Wondrous, common

This piton is made of folded iron and confusingly heavy. It functions as a normal piton, however after 1 minute of contact with solid stone, the rocks around it trembles and coalesce to form a stone foothold with no seams or cracks.

Seed of The Spine

Wondrous, rare

This dark pebble is etched with minute circular patterns and has a single ridge running around its circumference. When you hold it you feel as if the earth itself is whispering to you, suggesting you swallow the pebble to get closer to it and understand it better.

When swallowed, you notice nothing at all for 1d4 days, after which you feel a sudden chill and stiffening along your spine. Over the next few minutes your skin darkens and hardens. Fractured plates of stone grow from underneath your skin on your arms, ribs, and jutting along your spine across your back.

You gain resistance to piercing, slashing, and lightning damage as well as tremorsense out to 30 feet. Additionally, as an action, if you put your ear to the ground and concentrate as though on a spell, you gain tremorsense out to 500 feet until you move from that spot or lose concentration, whichever comes first.

Curse. Once your flesh has started turning to stone you have vulnerability to thunder damage. Additionally, while within sight of The Spine of the World, each morning you hear it whisper to you, calling you to it, and you must succeed on a DC 8 Wisdom saving throw or spend that day compelled to walk toward the base of the sister peaks. This compulsion is not mind control, and you do nothing rash to follow it, but it is a constant distraction and pull while you are not trying to travel toward The Spine.

These effects, including your skin's appearance, cannot be reversed except by a *wish* spell.

Shield of the Onyx Pillar

Armor, rare (requires attunement)

This tall rectangular shield is lavishly emblazoned with a towering mountain and set with onyx.

As a bonus action while standing on stone or earth, you can activate the shield to create a 5-foot-square pillar of stone and onyx in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of you that rises to a height of 10 feet or until it meets the ceiling. This pillar sinks back down into the earth after 1 minute or when you create another pillar, leaving the ground undisturbed.

Staff of Icedawn

Staff, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or creature with proficiency in religion)

This smooth stone staff is covered in frost and topped with an intricately abstract sculpture of ice. This staff never melts or thaws, and at high altitudes snowflakes dance around its base.

This staff has 4 charges and regains 1d4 expended charges each day at dawn. If the temperature is below freezing at dawn it regains all its charges. If you are not a spellcaster you use Wisdom as your spellcasting modifier for this item's effects.

While attuned to this staff you do not suffer from the effects of traveling at high altitude and know the cantrip *chill touch* if you did not already know it. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell. Additionally, as an action you can expend a charge to chill creatures of your choice within 60 feet. A chilled creature feels a stone-cold hand on their neck and must succeed a Constitution saving throw or take 3d8 cold damage and be frightened until the beginning of their turn. Creatures that are made of stone or immune to cold damage automatically succeed this saving throw.



Summits and Craggs: A Mountain Guide

Wondrous item, uncommon

This book's cover has been painstakingly hewn from a single piece of black granite. The facade of a more typical book design has been carved into its face, making it look as though someone has petrified a novel straight out of a library.

If you spend a long rest or an equivalent amount of time studying this book, the mountains biome becomes favored terrain for you for the next week, and you can ask up to three questions about a specific type of creature, ore, mineral, or stone, within the mountain biome that the DM gives a short reply to. Additionally by looking through the book, you can identify the name of any ore or mineral in any biome with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check. If you succeed by 5 or more, you can ask the DM one question about the ore or mineral you identified.

Yehimal's Stalwart Helm

Wondrous, legendary (requires attunement)

This regal helmet is made of jet black granite, and trimmed with gold. Despite its dense materials it is not overly heavy. If you have horns the helmet gladly morphs to fit.

While attuned to this helmet you gain the following features.

Mountain's Soul. You gain proficiency in Constitution saving throws and Athletics checks. You also gain fluent knowledge of the Giant and Terran languages.

Giant's Strength. While wearing this helmet your strength score changes to 20 unless your strength is already greater than 20, and it cannot be reduced below 20 while you are wearing the helmet.

Additionally, if a rock or similar object is thrown at you you can, with a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, catch it and take no bludgeoning damage from it.

Impassable Wall. As an action you can envelope creatures near you with an immense crushing presence. Each creature of your choice within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. A creature frightened in this way sees you appear to grow up to 18 feet tall, or as large as the space around you allows, and takes an additional 2d6 psychic damage each time you hit them with a melee weapon or unarmed attack. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

After you use this feature you cannot use it again until the end of a long or short rest.



