

Quests of Doom 4

God of Ore

By Tom Khauss



FROG GOD
GAMES

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God of Ore

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Table of Contents

Credits	p. I
God of Ore.....	p. 4
Map Appendix	p. 23
Legal Appendix	p. 31

God of Ore

*Metal on stones, metal on stones,
Break your backs, shatter your bones.
Dream of riches buried ages untold
Deep streams of mithral, silver, and gold!*

— Ancient dwarven miner's song

God of Ore is an adventure for 3rd-level characters that takes them from the quiet, mountainside town of Miners' Refuge into the heart of the Stoneheart Mountains in pursuit of a failed pilgrimage to discover a phony religious relic deep inside legendary Mithral Mountain. The dark, twisting tunnels that bore into the fabled mountain soon reveal that some mysteries are not what they first appear to be.

Adventure Background

Fantastical tales telling of rich veins of precious metals, wondrous caverns teeming with sparkling gems, and tunnels brimming with valuable minerals echo against the walls of every home, tavern, and inn within every mining community. Every hardy soul that delves into the bowels of the earth with a pick and a shovel shares the same dream. His trusty pick strikes an ordinary rock as it has countless times before and to his amazement, the chance collision unearths the object of his desire. There in the darkness he sees the proverbial mother lode, a pristine and unspoiled vein of prized ore or stones. Such an occasion is a rarity, and those few individuals that experience this fortuitous event often find that their dream soon turns into a nightmare.

Five centuries ago, a dwarven miner named Clovis Stonesplitter discovered firsthand how the fulfillment of such a wish could go terribly awry. One day, the intrepid miner's pick dislodged a loose block from a long-forgotten masonry wall. He peered through the opening and saw a dark tunnel that his ancestors apparently bricked up countless centuries ago. Without giving it a second thought, Clovis smashed through the barrier. Though his instincts warned him not to venture down the ancient, neglected passageway, curiosity prevailed over logic. He gingerly walked through the crooked and uneven corridor until an inexplicable urge caused him to stop at an oddly shaped bend. In spite of his trepidation, Clovis thrust his mighty pickaxe into the rock. The loose stone split into hundreds of tiny pieces, revealing an unimaginable sight that nearly illuminated the dark tunnel. At first glance, the exposed vein looked like silver, but the veteran miner was nearly certain that he unearthed something far more important — a rich deposit of mithral, an extremely valuable and highly sought after metal.

Yet, there was something odd about what just happened. Clovis swore that he also heard another sound akin to a faint whimper reverberate through the quiet tunnel at the exact moment that the metal tip of his pickaxe struck the inanimate stone. Clovis gently pushed the tip of his mining tool into the soft metal. Much to his astonishment, a low, barely audible groan arose from the glistening ore. Clovis fell to the ground in utter disbelief, but nothing could prepare him for what happened next. The vein of metal instantaneously transformed into a vaguely humanoid form. The being's cold, lifeless eyes fascinated Clovis. As visions of riches danced in his head, the bizarre creature placed its mouth-like orifice over Clovis' stunned face. A breath of warm, metallic-tasting air rushed into Clovis' throat, momentarily jogging him out of his beguiled state. He came to his senses far too late. In an instant, Clovis' skin turned gray and his eyes transformed into glistening silver orbs. The creature released its grip seconds later, but in Clovis' befuddled mind, his encounter with the alien being felt like it lasted for several hours. Though the physical changes were instantly noticeable, no one could predict the true extent of the damage dealt to Clovis' fragile mind. From that moment forward, the transfixed dwarf singularly cared about one thing: worshipping the being he dubbed Dwer-Bokham, "Dwarf of Mithral" in the dwarven tongue.

Over the next few days, Clovis lured his kin one by one into the abandoned tunnel where the strange creature waited. There, in the darkness, they too came face to face with the dwarves' new deity, Dwer-Bokham. Though many other dwarves abandoned their former deities and joined Clovis in the veneration of their new "god," some resisted. The new god's zealous minions murdered those that refused to bend to Dwer-Bokham's will, as they set about the task of converting the entire mountain complex into a vast temple honoring their newly revealed divine master.

Only one obstacle stood in their way — Thane Ilgar Ogradmek. Accompanied by his retinue of guards and clerics loyal to their people's true gods, the mountain's sovereign lord and his badly outnumbered followers battled Clovis and Dwer-Bokham's minions for supremacy over their mountain stronghold. The combat raged for several days with each side gaining the upper hand at one point or another during the struggle. In the end, however, sheer numbers and fanaticism won out over tactical and logistical superiority. The upstart deity and its converts killed their former leader and gained undisputed control of the complex. Within minutes of their thane's death, the remaining resistance crumbled.

The majority foolishly surrendered and forcibly joined their enemies in the worship of Dwer-Bokham. The wiser minority fled the mountain and never looked back at their former homeland. Most went into hiding until their dying days and never spoke again about the events that took place during those fateful days. Still, a handful of the survivors could not turn away from the past so easily. Over the next decade, the thane's diehard loyalists made four vain attempts to retake the mountain from Dwer-Bokham and his followers. They ultimately failed, and each successive effort proved more disastrous than the previous attempt. After the fourth and final try, it was possible to count the remaining survivors on one hand. Hopelessly outnumbered and completely drained of their financial resources, the last free dwarves came to terms with the irrefutable fact that they would never return home. They left the area and found work elsewhere. During their extensive travels, they told the tale of their homeland to anyone willing to listen, thus spreading the fable of Mithral Mountain far and wide throughout the settlements within and surrounding the Stoneheart Mountains.

Naturally, the story piqued the interest of countless treasure hunters who dreamed of wresting Mithral Mountain from the heretics and liberating its bountiful treasures from their oppressive grasp. Since the fall of Mithral Mountain, as many as two dozen adventuring companies ventured into the Stoneheart Mountains to add their names to the growing legend. None ever successfully retook the mountain, and the handful that returned never even set foot inside the coveted peak. As the body count grew, interest in the quest nearly faded from memory until one charismatic dwarf burst onto the scene. His name was Bagrus Farmud.

Divine Mission

Unlike his parents, siblings, and other family members, Bagrus Farmud displayed no aptitude or interest for traditional dwarven crafts and professions. He derided miners as "bipedal moles" and stonemasons as "mindless chiselers." Bagrus hated getting his hands dirty, and saw hard work as a "virtue" better performed by others. The young Bagrus' lackadaisical attitude angered his tradition-bound father, who was also a renowned cleric within the community. The two clashed repeatedly throughout his long adolescence (several decades among dwarves); however, no amount of preaching, extolling, shaming, or discipline could instill his father's values into the defiant youngster. Tired and bored of his parents' constant efforts to mold him into their image, the young dwarf left home and went out into the world to make his way.

The spoiled Bagrus soon learned that it took much more than a bad attitude and some choice swear words to make it in the real world. The lazy, unskilled, and hedonistic runaway ran out of money in less than a week, forcing him into the company of civilization's more unsavory



characters. Without his father's protection, the wild child quickly ran afoul of the local authorities and spent the better part of the next ten years in jail for a string of petty offenses. The recalcitrant Bagrus refused to admit defeat and crawl back home, so he had to figure out a way to make use of his meager talents. After several days of intense soul searching, he finally came to the realization that he must put his mouth, instead of his hands, to work. He was born with the gift of gab, and the innate ability to spin a nonsensical yarn into something that others wanted to hear. All he needed to do was to concoct a scheme and then start talking. Then he remembered a chance jailhouse encounter from a few weeks earlier. An elderly dwarf sleeping off a terrible hangover told him an ancient legend about a mysterious Mithral Mountain located in the Stoneheart Mountains. The visions of acquiring tremendous wealth danced in Bagrus' entranced mind, but he had to devise a way to get the treasure without risking his own well-being. A devious grin crossed his face as the perfect idea came to him: Convince other people to risk their necks for him.

From this humble beginning, the rest of his diabolical plan flowed like a mudslide down the side of a rain-sodden mountain. Throughout his youth, he saw firsthand what others would do in the name of faith. He spent the next twenty days wandering the wilderness, claiming that he met Dwer-Bokham, the Great God of the Mithral Mountain. The divine being spoke to him and revealed that the mighty deity inscribed the secret to immortality and eternal happiness on a mithral tablet in the heart of the mountain. As his chosen messenger, he would be unable to read the message alone, however, Dwer-Bokham told him that, with his assistance, someone pure of heart and free from corruption could decipher the wondrous revelation. Several drifters scratching a living at the foothills of the Stoneheart Mountains fell under the charismatic Bagrus' sway, but his newly gained converts fell far short of his expectations. He needed men and women that could fight their way past the mountain's malevolent denizens instead of a battalion of miners and farmers. As soon as he stepped foot into the sleepy town of Miners' Refuge, he was supremely confident that he would find more marks than he would ever need to claim Mithral Mountain as his own.

In a short time, Bagrus Farmud amassed 28 followers to stand beside him on his glorious crusade into Mithral Mountain. Thanks to their generous donations and the funding he cajoled from others, the confidence man masquerading as a religious figure purchased a wagon train of supplies along with two dozen pack animals and several pieces of fine jewelry befitting an esteemed servant of Dwer-Bokham. Led by their prophet, they set out into the teeth of the Stoneheart Mountains two weeks ago to once again liberate Mithral Mountain and its abundant riches.

The expedition unraveled almost as soon as it began. Bagrus' wagon train could not negotiate the steep inclines and narrow mountain passes, forcing them to abandon a large cache of provisions shortly after getting underway. A few days later, as the group approached Mithral Mountain, a band of hobgoblins from the nearby foothills attacked the traveling company and split them in half. The hobgoblins killed or captured the smaller half of the group comprised of the non-combatant women and children. The remaining contingent led by Bagrus fended off the assault and pressed on to the base of Mithral Mountain. Under Bagrus' misguided directions, his armed followers sundered the stone door barring the entrance into Mithral Mountain. Dwer-Bokham's devoted minions poured through the breach and decimated the charlatan's disciples. Bagrus Farmud barely escaped with his life. After observing their movements for several days from a safe location, the conniving dwarf disguised himself as one of his enemies and bypassed the mountain's defenders. He is now holed up in the thane's quarters awaiting his next move. More critically, Dwer-Bokham's followers perceived the attack as an omen, indicating that the time to spread their faith throughout the Stoneheart Mountains is now at hand.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters arrive in the town of Miners' Refuge two weeks after Bagrus Farmud and his associates left the locale on their quest to conquer Mithral Mountain and claim its wondrous treasures. The families of those that accompanied the self-proclaimed prophet express tremendous worry

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

about the pilgrimage, especially in light of a lone survivor's account that confirms their worst fears. Hobgoblin raiders killed numerous pilgrims and scattered the survivors, who are now missing. Unsubstantiated tales also relay that the corrupted dwarves inhabiting the fabled Mithral Mountain are now raiding and pillaging travelers passing through that region of the Stoneheart Mountains. Several interested parties ask the characters to rescue any surviving followers and capture Bagrus Farmud.

The trek to reach Mithral Mountain and the lost caravan takes the characters across the foothills that lead deeper into the Stoneheart Mountains. As they follow the trail of Bagrus' pilgrims, the characters locate the abandoned wagon and inevitably stumble upon the tragic scene of the hobgoblin ambush. The characters are free to follow the wicked goblinoids back to their lair to rescue any surviving captives or continue onward to Mithral Mountain. Along the way, the characters encounter other malevolent and benign denizens that dwell in the inhospitable Stoneheart Mountains. As the characters approach Mithral Mountain, Dwer-Bokham's minions patrol the surrounding area looking to wantonly slaughter unwelcome trespassers that wander too close to their lair.

When the characters arrive at the base of Mithral Mountain, the expedition's ultimate fate becomes apparent. Numerous bodies of dwarves and beasts litter the field just outside the previously sealed entrance to Mithral Mountain. Though the pilgrimage's outcome is no longer in question, Bagrus' reckless actions unleashed Dwer-Bokham's minions onto an unsuspecting world. The characters must now stop the chain of events that the unrepentant charlatan put into motion by delving into the heart of Mithral Mountain and destroying its alleged resident deity. In the depths below Mithral Mountain, the characters encounter more of the false god's servants and also find Bagrus Farmud hiding in the chambers of the former thane. The descent into Dwer-Bokham's inner sanctum reveals the truth about Mithral Mountain. The so-called veins of mithral were a lie. Dwer-Bokham is a cobaltog, a race of aberrations that dwelled in the mountain long before the thanes rose to power. When this monster melds into stone, the surrounding rock takes on the appearance of mithral, thus accounting for the ancient legends about the peak. In spite of this revelation, the characters must still negotiate the locale's structurally unsound passages and chambers before they finally meet Dwer-Bokham and his aging crony, Clovis. Here, the characters must forever rid the world of the enigmatic aberration that transformed an entire people and destroyed a once-proud thanehold.

After defeating the monstrous entity, the characters must decide what to do with Dwer-Bokham's former worshippers, the mountain itself and the phony dwarf salesman responsible for so many deaths. Can the tainted dwarves resume their former existence and return to the welcoming arms of their long-lost kin? Who is the rightful ruler of Mithral Mountain, and what is to become of Bagrus Farmud? The characters are likely to play a significant role in providing these answers.

Part I: Swindler's Wake

The opening segment of the adventure takes place in the bucolic town of Miners' Refuge that lies on the edge of the foothills leading into the Stoneheart Mountains. If the characters traveled here from a distant locale, the Referee may use several encounters that appear in **Part II** of this adventure to challenge the characters. During this portion of the story, the characters are free to roam through the normally sleepy community, which is now abuzz over the presumed loss of so many of its citizens at the hands of hobgoblin raiders in the surrounding foothills. Many blame the pilgrimage's leader, Bagrus Farmud, for the tragedy, though small segments of the population still believe in the charlatan's supposed religious beliefs. As they explore the town, several interested parties approach the characters and beseech them to locate their missing friends, relatives or lost goods. Rumors also swirl throughout town about the magnificent riches that reside inside the fallen Dwarven stronghold of Mithral Mountain.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins in the mountainside town of Miners' Refuge, roughly two weeks after Bagrus Farmud's expedition left Miners' Refuge,

and a few days after the company's lone survivor straggles into the mining community with a frightening tale. The hobgoblins that committed the atrocity subsequently returned to their lair, and Dwer-Bokham's minions are still a long way from the unsuspecting town, so there is no immediate danger to the settlement. Still, many concerned people seek the services of adventurers to locate their missing family members, retrieve their lost goods, and rescue any that survived the harrowing ordeal. Likewise, the substantiated reports of marauding hobgoblins and rumors of strange, rampaging dwarves greatly concern the town's merchants, who must ensure the safety of the vital trade route linking the headwaters of the River Eamon with the lands that lie farther west. In fact, the characters may have accompanied one of these caravans into town, or they could arrive in Miners' Refuge seeking employment protecting other business interests endeavoring to venture into or across the treacherous Stoneheart Mountains.

Adventure Hooks

Though Bagrus Farmud attracted a considerable number of followers during his brief three-week stay in Miners' Refuge, his sales pitch and questionable ethics also rubbed many of its more prominent citizens the wrong way. The fast-talking huckster raised suspicions and doubts wherever he went during his short visit, so there are several influential people who would like to get their hands on the smarmy confidence man. More importantly, there are also many concerned citizens who wait with bated breath for some news about their loved ones' whereabouts and fate. Adventurers are a common sight in town, but their numbers constantly ebb and flow. Right now, none of the town's residents seems eager to step forward and get to the bottom of this predicament, thus all eyes naturally turn to the characters for assistance. With that in mind, the Referee may use one of the following hooks to get the adventure underway, or he may devise a plot device of his own to draw the characters into the story.

Lone Survivor

Because of her husband's heroic actions, the youthful **Yurbryn Nurmalk** (Lawful female mountain dwarf warrior 1) miraculously survived the hobgoblin attack and made it back to Miners' Refuge with only some scrapes and minor bruises. Just before the vicious goblinoids severed the expedition's line train and cut it off from retreat, her brave spouse, Halzin, fought off several of the hideous monsters to buy her enough time to slip away and flee the combat. Though she is fairly certain that he perished in the combat, his fate as well as the fate of the company's other members remains unknown.

Yurbryn has been recovering at the Temple of Dwerfater and is preparing to return to the home she shared with her husband. When she hears that the characters are in town, she asks Nomiba Urpal to contact them so she can offer them employment to find her missing husband. The scion of a wealthy mining family, the grieving widow can offer a fee of 100gp each to anyone who can locate her presumably dead husband and rescue any survivors. Characters can also talk her into paying 5gp each for every survivor that they return to Miners' Refuge. (Because the characters are likely to speak with Yurbryn in great detail regardless of whether or not the Referee uses this hook, her complete account of the expedition is presented here.)

Scarred by her harrowing experience, the young dwarf woman valiantly tries to cope with the fallout from the frightening ordeal and her husband's presumed savage murder at the hands of the ruthless hobgoblins. Not surprisingly, her recollection of these horrific events is disorganized and lacking in specific details. Still, she provides some insight on the pilgrimage's movements as well as its final moments. In spite of the characters' best efforts to steer the questioning in a desired direction, the terrified Yurbryn's story indiscriminately jumps from one place to another. The stunned widow becomes very uplifting when she speaks of Bagrus Farmud, whom she still adores, and extremely emotional when she talks about her husband. She cannot provide an organized narrative, so her memories are presented below as bullet points that can be presented in random order or in a slightly more logical pattern.

- Every day at dawn and dusk, the prophet Bagrus Farmud led the believers in prayers to Dwer-Bokham, the great Mithral God of the Mountain.

He told us that the deity would grant immortality to those true of heart.

- Bagrus confessed to us that his former sins prevented him from understanding the wondrous message inscribed upon the mithral tablet within Mithral Mountain's inner sanctum. Each night, he extolled us to free our souls from the burdens of evil and embrace purity and righteousness.
- The wagon slowed the party down tremendously. As we climbed the lower slopes, we abandoned the vehicle and continued onward toward Mithral Mountain.
- The hobgoblins poured out of the hills a few nights after we abandoned the wagon. They seemed to come from everywhere and split the pilgrims into two. Our group headed back down the hills toward town, and those that stayed with Bagrus Farmud fled deeper into the mountains.
- My husband bought me time as I slipped through a narrow pass and away to safety. He told me that someone betrayed them by alerting the hobgoblins about their movements. When I turned back to look for him, he was gone, as were the other followers. Many hobgoblins were also dead, but a few remained. There were no signs of Bagrus or the rest of the pilgrims.
- It took me three days and nights to finally make it back to Miners' Refuge. Fortunately I found the road home and encountered no one else on my way back.

Yurbryn does not want to relive the terrifying experience for more than a few minutes at a time. If the characters persist in questioning her, she breaks down and uncontrollably wails for 1d4 minutes before she shuts down and refuses to speak about the matter any further.

My Sons' Keeper

From the moment he met the shady Bagrus Farmud, **Graham Angeheim** (Neutral male human expert 5), a member of the local Merchant's Guild, knew that the conniving dwarf was a fraud. He never believed Bagrus' tall tale about the religious nature of his trek to Mithral Mountain. The astute businessmen and concerned parent sensed that the greedy dwarf needed saps to risk their lives in pursuit of the forbidding peak's alleged treasure. Sadly, his two thrill-seeking sons, Donnator and Errol, lacked his wisdom. They fell for Bagrus' false promises and joined his misguided pilgrimage into the Stoneheart Mountains in search of adventure. Now, their distraught father grieves for his lost children and demands retribution against the man responsible for their untimely demise — Bagrus Farmud. He offers a 500gp bounty to anyone that captures or kills Bagrus Farmud. In either case, those seeking payment of the bounty must return him either dead or alive to Miners' Refuge. In addition, he also offers a 100gp reward for the return of his sons' body (200gp for both children) to Miners' Refuge for proper interment. He describes his children as being aged 24 (Donnator) and 21 (Errol), each with long blond hair held in a tail by a steel-studded strap. Donnator has a tattoo of a grieving angel (Saint Carmela Tirozo) on his left shoulder, and Errol has the same tattoo on his right shoulder.

Lost Collateral

Bagrus Farmud did not confine his empty promises to his spiritual disciples. He also spread his wealth of lies and deceit to the town's business community. Supposedly short on cash, the scheming hustler gave his creditors only a relatively small deposit for the purchase of his wagon and the expedition's provisions. To make up the difference, he sold them "shares" of the treasure hoard. After Bagrus departed, the dwarf's lenders soon realized that their percentage of Bagrus' loot exceeded 1000%. Realizing that they had been taken by the crafty swindler, Bagrus' largest creditor and current councilmember **Falgar Bazdak** (Neutral male mountain dwarf aristocrat 6) seeks adventurers to locate and return his wagon, remaining provisions, and Bagrus Farmud to Miners' Refuge in exchange for 500gp. More importantly, Falgar believes the legends of Mithral Mountain to be true, based upon the fact that he is a great grandnephew of Thane Ilgar Ogradmek. He offers the characters 400gp and a 5% ownership stake in the mountain if they clear out its current occupants. (Of course, Falgar's relatives including the Thane's other nephews and nieces have something to say about his claims to the mountain's riches.)

Trail of Fools

The roads leading to and from Miners' Refuge are well worn and heavily traveled. Men, beasts, and vehicles travel across these established thoroughfares on a daily basis, making it virtually impossible to track a specific individual or even a group with any degree of certainty. The entire community unanimously agrees that Bagrus Farmud led his entourage out of town via the eastern road leading deeper into the Stoneheart Mountains. If the characters opt to follow the tracks, the trail leads them into the foothills surrounding Miners' Refuge and **Part II** of the adventure.

Part II: Lower Slopes of the Stoneheart Mountains

If the characters spend more than two days in Miners' Refuge, pressure to locate Bagrus Farmud and the missing pilgrims steadily mounts. Ultimately, at least one member of the town council seeks out the characters and directly asks for their assistance.

Mithral Mountain lies roughly 40 miles east of Miners' Refuge. The tall peak is easily visible from town because it towers 1000ft above the neighboring mountains and because of its distinct, sheer western face. Much of the terrain between the town and the fabled locale consists of rolling hills that represent the lower slopes of the mountains in the valley of the River Eamon gradually ascending to the far-more-prominent mountain peaks. The frozen expanse of the Shengotha Plateau lies not far beyond Mithral Mountain. The grueling journey is more arduous than the mileage indicates. The road leading out of Miners' Refuge is anything but a direct path to Mithral Mountain, so much of the trek is through rugged terrain on a narrow, sometimes perilous track. In addition, the slope increases the actual distance traveled to some degree. Finally, walking uphill is more tiring than downhill, so fatigue becomes an important factor along the way. Depending upon their mode of transportation, it could take up to a week to reach their destination.

Events on the Lower Slopes

There are no permanent settlements of any note within this part of the Stoneheart Mountains, however, the region still sees a fair amount of traffic. The intrepid miners that make a living in this harsh environment typically go it alone or work in small groups. It is not uncommon to come across an active or an abandoned miner's camp while traveling through the region. Traveling merchants and wagon trains en route to dwarven markets higher among the peaks also make their way across the forbidding landscape, though they rarely deviate from the familiar highways and mountain passes. On their way to Mithral Mountain, the characters may meet one or more of these parties during their travels. These encounters are to provide the characters with recent news and new information about their current task. They are designed to complement rather than replace the more intricate combat and role-playing encounters that follow later in this part of the adventure. The Referee may use some or all of the subsequent events to afford the characters additional details about what lies ahead of them.

Mountain Merchant

Chem Monzak, a traveling merchant and his **3 guards**, are on their way to Miners' Refuge from distant Abad Durahai. The talkative and outwardly friendly middle-aged man tries to sell the characters his inventory of items that he purchased during his stay in the dwarven capital. The chatty Chem charges an additional 10% for these items. If the characters ask Chem for information about Bagrus Farmud, he feigns ignorance. The purchase of a single item almost instantly loosens his tongue, however. He tells the characters that he saw a few open crates and barrels on the roadside several miles back. They were too large and heavy to strap onto a pack animal, so e presumes that they were originally transported on a vehicle.

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

Chem Monzak, Male Mountain Dwarf Merchant (Ftr3): HP 20; AC 5[14]; Atk warhammer (1d4+2); Move 9; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** darkvision 60ft, multiple attacks (3) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD, +4 saves vs magic, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus.

Equipment: chainmail, warhammer, silk pouch containing 12gp, 18sp, and a red garnet (25gp).

Dwarf Guards (Ftr1) (3): HD 1; AC 4[15]; Atk warhammer (1d4+1); Move 9; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** darkvision 60ft, +4 saves vs magic, +1 to hit.

Equipment: chainmail, shield, warhammer, 2d4sp.

Mining Company

A company of **3 dwarven miners** (Lawful male mountain dwarf expert 4) named Tandreld Feldcutter, Okzen Veinfinder, and Zog Blindenluck sit around their camp discussing their next foray among the peaks. The glum dwarves are not fond of conversation with outsiders; however, their dour attitudes suddenly shift to wide-eyed enthusiasm as soon as someone mentions Mithral Mountain. They ramble on at length that there is enough mithral in the mountain to armor an entire generation. Okzen also tells the characters that he ran into another dwarf a few days ago in mountains who claimed that he smashed his way through the sealed portal at the mountain's base, only to see his men scatter and run at the first sign of resistance. Okzen's description of the dwarf roughly matches that of Bagrus Farmud, but he is also quick to add that he appeared unkempt and badly shaken. Still, he tried to recruit Okzen to join him in entering the mountain, but given the circumstances of his kin's appearance, in his mind he wisely declined.

Lone Prospector

Lorn Broadbeam tells the characters that he was entrusted to sell vast tracts of land within the Stoneheart Mountains in order to fund a joint military operation being conducted by the town council in Miners' Refuge and city officials in Abad Durahai. He offers to sell the property for the miniscule price of 10gp per square mile of land (noting with a wink that its per "horizontal" square mile; if you calculate by "vertical" square miles among the precipitous mountain peaks the deal becomes a virtual steal). The wily agent can draft a fresh deed in a matter of minutes, claiming that the proper authorities designated him to transfer the land to lawful purchasers on their behalf. Even if caught in a lie, Lorn refuses to admit this elaborate scheme is a giant ruse, however, in order to save his own skin, the crafty salesman offers the characters important information in exchange for a pardon. He tells the characters that the dwarves of Mithral Mountain now patrol their territory, slaying anyone that trespasses on their land. Furthermore, he conveys that he personally saw a small band of hobgoblins leading two bound and seriously injured dwarves and a human woman through the foothills toward an unknown location. Lorn does everything in his power to avoid a physical confrontation or detention. Flight is his first choice. He fights only when there is no other alternative.

Lorn Broadbeam, Male Mountain Dwarf Prospector (Ftr2): HP 12; AC 9[10]; Atk pick (1d6); Move 9; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** darkvision 60ft, multiple attacks (3) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD, +4 saves vs magic.

Equipment: pick, belt pouch containing a bent quill, a sealed bottle of ink, a sheaf of unsigned "property agreements," 22gp.

Rumors on the Lower Slopes

The hardy souls that earn a living in the rugged Stoneheart Mountains know far more about the activities in their native habitat than the "urbanites" from Miners' Refuge. The characters may learn the following tales from the folk they encounter on their way to and from Mithral Mountain. These stories are so commonplace among these daring folk that 1d2 can be heard with each event encountered.

- A small tribe of vicious hobgoblins lairs in a valley surrounded by four low peaks that the savage creatures use as sentry points. They recently attacked a caravan of travelers that resulted in a significant loss of life on both sides of the ledger.

- The dwarves of Mithral Mountain are on the prowl, attacking any living thing they encounter. The strange humanoids have mithral-colored skin and eyes, and they worship a deity named Dwer-Bokham.

- Three humanoid hunters with dark red hair and cloudy hazel eyes sometimes descend from their lair high in the mountains in search of prey. They are skilled warriors who are most feared for their mastery over the weather and the elements. (This is a false rumor.)

- A bipedal cat-like predator stalks the mountains. Beware its horrific caterwaul!

In addition to these tales, the individuals traveling through the Stoneheart Mountains are also aware of the earlier rumors regarding Mithral Mountain.

Encounters on the Lower Slopes

Unsavory humanoids, hungry beasts and malevolent monsters call the treacherous mountainous terrain of the lower slopes home. On their journey to Mithral Mountain, the characters inevitably make contact with these native denizens. Four of these meetings occur at fixed locations upon the lower slopes. These set encounters at **Areas T1, T2, T3 and T4** are presented first. The locations appear on the regional map that details the hills outside of Miners' Refuge. The Referee is also encouraged to challenge the travelers using one or more of the random encounters that follow.

On Bagrus' Trail

Characters that follow Bagrus' trail on the road out of town may continue to do so without difficulty. Once Bagrus' path deviates from the road, it becomes even easier to pick up and follow his individual tracks.

T1. Abandoned

Wagon Logistics is not one of Bagrus Farmud's strong points. The conniving salesman is nearly unmatched at selling his grand vision, but he is a rank novice on matters relating to traveling through uncharted terrain. The greedy charlatan could not pass up an opportunity to acquire more treasure at a bargain price, so he financed the wagon and loaded it with provisions, never thinking that the cumbersome vehicle would have any difficulty negotiating the uneven, sloped ground. Bagrus' treasure wagon negotiated the highway well enough, but the vehicle was ill equipped to handle the rugged side track. The situation deteriorated almost instantly after leaving the main road. The vehicle hit a large rut that destroyed one of its wheels and the rear axle. The disabled wagon was rendered motionless and hopelessly stuck. The shortsighted Bagrus never thought of recruiting or hiring someone to maintain and repair the wagon, leaving him no choice other than to offload as much as he could and abandon the wagon on the side of the trail.

Within a day of its abandonment, opportunists stripped the wagon bare. It remained where Bagrus left it until **2 ogres** happened upon the site. The surly brutes used their tremendous strength to lift the now-empty vehicle out of the rut and lug it up to their lair a few thousand feet away. In order to move the wagon, the ogres keep the disabled rear wheels off the ground and push it up the gently sloping hill. The monstrous humanoids are completely absorbed with the task, rendering them nearly oblivious to their surroundings.

When the characters arrive on the scene, the ogres are 2d6 x 100ft away from their cavernous home. The ogres are not visible from the road; however, characters following the road or Bagrus' trail have a 2-in-6 chance to spot the marks made by the monsters' footsteps and the front wagon wheels. The tracks head north. Otherwise, characters that accidentally stumbled upon the ogres can first spot them at a distance of 2d10 x 10ft. The ogres are engrossed in their efforts, and have a 1-in-6

GOD OF ORE

chance of noticing the characters. When either party locates the other, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Two hulking, giant humanoid armed with massive clubs push a wagon slowly up the gently sloping hill. The enormous creatures have cruel, beady eyes and a wide mouth crowded with crooked, rotten teeth.

The ogres immediately attack any living creatures that cross their path or attack them. They let go of the wagon, causing the rear end to crash to the ground, and charge toward their foes, swinging their enormous clubs until they fell their enemies or until one of them falls. In the latter case, the survivor attempts to flee, if possible; otherwise, the outmatched ogre surrenders and offers his possessions in exchange for his wretched life. Though stupid, the giant is clever. The ogre only reluctantly can be made to divulge anything about his lair unless. If that occurs, the ogre leads the characters to a small cave carved from the side of a steep slope. The ogres traveled a circuitous path from their lair to the wagon, so it is impossible to follow their tracks without doubling back to the wagon and tracing them back from there. Characters attempting to locate the ogres' lair without walking in their footsteps or obtaining the monsters' assistance must search a wide area or rely upon blind luck to stumble upon their home.

Ogres (2): HD 4+1; HP 29, 26; AC 5[14]; Atk club (1d10+1); Move 9; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** none.
Equipment: club.

Treasure: The ogres have buried an iron coffer in a hole within the fetid chamber. It contains 240gp and six bloodstones worth 100gp each. The ogres wear hide armor, and each carries a club and 4 javelins. Each also carries a small sack containing 3d6 x 10gp and 1d6 x 50gp gems.

T2. Ambush Site

As Bagrus Farmud led his followers deeper into the rugged terrain of the Stoneheart Mountains, a large hobgoblin force awaited them. A treacherous resident of Miners' Refuge tipped them off about the caravan's movement. When Bagrus and his followers reached the ambush site, the hobgoblins sprang into action and rained death upon the ragtag band. The hobgoblins drove a wedge between the slower, less-fit members of Bagrus' party and his abler warriors. The savage goblinoids devastated the former group, killing most of them and enslaving the few survivors. The hobgoblins did not fare as well against Bagrus and his more-capable soldiers who withstood the chaotic surprise attack and then forced their hobgoblin foes into a mad retreat. After a brief, obligatory search for the other half of his disciples, the pilgrimage's messianic leader and 9 surviving fighters callously forged ahead to Mithral Mountain, leaving the rest of the group behind to suffer their ultimate fate.

The hobgoblins' assault left both parties in shambles. Neither side could muster the will to tend to their fallen comrades, leaving many to die an agonizingly slow death from their collective wounds. Though some time has passed since the vicious struggle's end, the eerily quiet former battlefield paints a stark portrait of the horror of war. When the characters reach the site, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

The bloated, mottled corpses of human and dwarven men, women, and even a handful of children, striking gruesome and torturous poses, litter the hillsides. The decaying bodies of numerous hobgoblin warriors lie in contorted positions alongside their victims. Likewise, the carcasses of several pack animals, stripped clean of their goods, join their former masters in the macabre landscape of death.

In all, 47 bodies lie strewn across the ground in a one-square-mile area. In every instance, the cause of death is readily apparent. Severe blood loss, lacerations, instantly fatal stab wounds, and brutal bludgeoning ended the

lives of everyone here. A close examination of the field reveals how the battle progressed. The bodies of five men (two humans and three dwarves), six women (two humans and four dwarves) and two dwarf children are concentrated in the area several hundred yards northwest of where the fight initially took place. Twelve dead hobgoblins accompany them. Most of these people were non-combatants attempting to flee the onslaught. The hobgoblins stripped these bodies clean, leaving nothing behind but their ragged clothing and sentimental belongings. The hobgoblins also captured three survivors. They led two injured dwarf men and a dwarf woman back to their encampment two miles from this location. One of the dwarves is Yurbryn Nurmalk's courageous husband (see **Area H5**) who suffered grievous injuries in a successful effort to save his beloved wife.

The opposite side of the field roughly one mile east of the preceding site tells a contradictory story. The mangled corpses of sixteen hobgoblins rot under the open sun. Many wear their shattered armor and still grasp their weapons in their decaying hands. Three fresh bulges in the earth hold the remains of three more dwarf followers who fell in battle defending the pilgrimage's leader. Bagrus stripped his disciples of their arms and armor before committing them to their eternal rest.

The few hobgoblins that survived the encounter retreated to their lair. Tracks lead directly back to their hideaway, indicating that the hobgoblins knew the pilgrims were coming. Bagrus led his significantly smaller group deeper into the Stoneheart Mountains toward his intended goal.

The remaining five bodies belong to four donkeys and one horse. The terrified and heavily encumbered animals instantly froze and fell where they initially stood, thus marking the location where the skirmish started. In their quest for plunder, the hobgoblins relieved the beasts of their worldly burdens and took them back to their lair for redistribution among their kin. Severed ropes are all that remain of the pack animals' goods. The looters' trail converges with those of their hobgoblin brethren near where the majority of humans and dwarves were slain.

T3. Hobgoblin Lair

The largely disastrous attack against Bagrus Farmud and his pilgrims dealt a heavy blow to the hobgoblins' ambitious plans. The failed assault nearly halved their numbers, forcing the militaristic creatures to abandon their goals of conquest and adopt a more defensive-minded approach. Unfortunately, their lack of manpower is more aptly suited for survival mode than anything else. They can no longer fully man their defensive outposts or dispatch raiding parties to hunt for food and intruders. Naturally, the hobgoblins' loss is the characters' gain. The hobgoblins' weakened defenses may allow the characters to penetrate the outer perimeter unnoticed and gain access to the lair without battling the outer sentries.

The hobgoblins' stronghold is two miles north of the ambush site. The subterranean complex burrows into the side of a rugged slope surrounded by four low peaks that the hobgoblins use as outposts. The redoubts are nothing more than 4ft-high, square wooden fences that allow archers to observe and snipe at nearby moving targets. When the characters come within visual range, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Four broad, rounded hills roughly surround a central hill. Four-foot-high, square-shaped wooden fences occupy the top of each outer mound. Thin wisps of smoke pour out of a hole on the central hill's south face.

Hr. Redoubt

This redoubt consists of a 4-foot-high wooden fence with a single gate. The barricade has numerous gaps between its posts and planks that allow creatures to see or fire ranged weapons into and out of the obstacle.

The **6 hobgoblins** defending the outposts use the earthworks for cover and to remain partially concealed. The wily hobgoblins predominately

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

peek through gaps in the fences to keep a close eye on the surrounding area. Right now, three of these defenses are each manned by two hobgoblins. The cunning monsters use the partially skeletal remains of their deceased brethren to make it appear that two of their kin occupy the unmanned northwest outpost. If the hobgoblins spot intruders, they shoot arrows at the attackers while raising a colossal ruckus that attracts the attention of their fellow sentries. The archers do not leave their posts until the enemy attempts to enter the main complex, at which point they exit the redoubts and rush down the hill to engage their foes.

Worse still, each manned outpost has a trained **leopard**. When commanded, the powerful cat climbs or leaps over the fence and charges toward the intruders. There is nothing inside of each redoubt other than a supply of 2d20 arrows, two bedrolls, and 1d6gp worth of personal effects.

In addition to the outer sentries, another **6 hobgoblins** are stationed inside **Area H2**. These guards are too far away from the redoubts to hear a battle that takes place near one of the outer hills. If the battle comes within sixty yards of the entrance into the hobgoblin lair, these warriors have a chance to hear or see it. If the battle occurs 100ft from the entrance, 4 hobgoblins respond to the incursion by rushing out to join their kin in melee combat, and the other two alert the complex.

Hobgoblins (6): HD 1+1; HP 9, 7x3, 6x2; AC 5[14]; Atk weapon (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none.

Leopards (3): HD 3; HP 22, 20, 19; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6); Move 16; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 290)

H2. Entranceway

In spite of its proximity to the exterior entrance, clouds of smoke from a dying fire create a gray haze within a crowded chamber. The red-hot coals and chunks of ash still sear the remaining flesh of a partially dismembered humanoid body rotating on a spit above the intense heat. Scraps of meat, goblets, utensils, two pairs of dice, and numerous coins cover the surface of a large table surrounded by six chairs.

Still smarting from their recent losses at the hands of Bagrus' trained warriors, the **6 hobgoblins** manning this guard post are not their usual aggressive selves. On rare occasions, one of them furtively glances outside, desperately hoping that their services are not needed. Because of this disinterest, the guards have no chance of hearing any sounds of combat that are more than 200ft away. Obviously, they cannot see a combat that is not in their direct line of sight. Once alerted to the presence of intruders, the hobgoblins split up into two units. One group of four engages their foes in combat, and the remaining two warn the remainder of the complex, starting with their chieftain. These two hobgoblins later join forces with their kin in **Area H7**. Unable to hunt en masse because of their depleted numbers, the starving hobgoblins roasted one of the two dwarf prisoners for food. If the characters catch the guards unawares, the hungry monsters stand around the table gnawing on pieces of meat from their fresh kill. Regardless of the conditions, the hobgoblins stand and fight to the last man.

The passageway connecting the guard post with the rest of the complex slopes steeply downward. By the time the passageway reaches the first intersection, it reaches a depth of 40ft. The adjoining corridors also delve deeper into the ground, though the descent is far less pronounced or noticeable.

Hobgoblins (6): HD 1+1; HP 8, 6x2, 5x3; AC 5[14]; Atk weapon (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none.

Treasure: The crockery on the table is worthless; however, there are 58gp, 109sp, and 155cp scattered across the table. In addition to their listed gear, one of the hobgoblins carries a *potion of healing* and another carries a jar of honey worth 5gp.

H3. Primary Living Quarters

The crowded, humid chamber cannot contain the terrible stench of body odor and waste that spills into the adjacent passageway. The creatures occupying this cramped living quarters reside in utter squalor. Many lie in their own filth on foul-smelling bedrolls piled against the far wall. An underground stream feeds a pond of brackish water that the humanoids apparently use for every purpose other than drinking.

There are **24 female hobgoblins** and **12 juveniles** who cower at the sight of intruders. The frightened children hide behind the closest adults, who also gingerly retreat to the far corners of the room. They voluntarily reveal nothing unless coerced to do so. Under these circumstances, the adult females admit that the hobgoblins lost almost half their warriors during the ill-fated attack. They also tell the characters that the chieftain's quarters and the prisoner area are near one another farther down the adjoining corridor. These hobgoblins have no treasure.

H4. Barracks

Eight rickety bunk beds are scattered haphazardly throughout an otherwise open chamber. Piles of soiled clothing, sundry items, armor, and some weapons are piled beneath the bottom bunk of each bed. The putrid smell of sweat fills the air.

The complex's residents live a communal existence, so none of the guards has his own bed in the conventional sense. Those individuals currently not on duty find an empty bed and fall asleep. Presently, **5 hobgoblins** occupy an equal number of the beds. The snoozing goblinoids wear no armor, though they keep their longswords by their sides. Hobgoblins caught in this drowsy state make a feeble effort to fight back before quickly laying down their arms and pleading for mercy.

Tactics: If the guards from **Area H2** alerted the complex, these hobgoblins are instead awake and taking up defensive positions behind the beds against the far wall. They try to don their armor, if possible, while watching the entrance. They fire longbows at anyone they see and continue firing from behind the beds until the characters engage them in melee combat. Once their numbers are reduced by half, the surviving warriors immediately surrender.

Development: Unlike the perimeter guards, these hobgoblins took part in the battle against Bagrus and his minions. They are reluctant to tell the characters anything, but they can be compelled to talk. The cagey monsters explain that Bagrus led his best soldiers away from the fray, leaving the defenseless women and children to die. After the battle, he directed an extremely short, perfunctory effort to rescue or locate the weaker members of his contingent before moving on without a second thought. In terms of their present situation, the hobgoblins relay that an ogre jailor and his leopard pet still hold one dwarf and three humans captive. One of the humans in town alerted the hobgoblins about the caravan.

Hobgoblins (5): HD 1+1; HP 8, 7x2, 5, 4; AC 5[14]; Atk weapon (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none.

Treasure: The hobgoblins that dwell in the barracks stuff their worldly possessions under the beds scattered throughout the room. This debris includes an assortment of old rags, tattered clothing, personal items, and other sundry items along with workable armor and weapons. There are twelve suits of hide armor under the beds, seven longswords, and two heavy wooden shields. There is a 30% chance of finding a pouch under each bed containing 2d4 gems worth 50gp apiece. In addition to their listed gear, the hobgoblins occupying the room each keep 2d10gp and 1d3 50gp gems on their person at all times.

H5. Prison

The door granting entry into the prison is unlocked but snug, which makes it difficult to open. Furthermore, the heat and humidity from the charcoal pit also swells the wood (–2 Open Doors check).

The sharp crack of a whip echoes against the walls of a sparsely furnished chamber as a female giant, whose face and arms are covered with piercings and tattoos, uses the cruel instrument against a badly injured man tethered to a scourging post in the center of the room. The leather strap striking skin elicits a terrifying wail from the bloodied victim. Four similar posts are scattered throughout the spacious room in addition to a closed iron maiden and a red-hot charcoal pit. Numerous metalworking tools rest against the side of the elevated cast-iron charcoal pit. Low, dull groans emanate from the far wall where a male dwarf and three female humans are chained to the wall by iron manacles. A mountain lion lounging on a bearskin licks its face and paws as blood from the man tied to the scourging post splatters its fur.

The hideous **ogress** uses the whip to inflict pain upon her subject. Upon sighting the characters, she immediately draws her club instead. She wears extremely tight-fitting hide armor that accentuates her ample bosoms along with her chubby belly, hips, and buttocks. The characters' intrusion denies the ogress her sadistic pleasure, a development that infuriates her more than anything else. As soon as his mistress engages in combat, the **mountain lion** also springs into action and attacks the nearest enemy. The muscular cat obeys the ogress' commands, so she directs the hungry beast to flank her opponent whenever possible. Both combatants fight to the bitter end. If the ogress is forced to capitulate, she is solely preoccupied with her little fiefdom of misery. She knows nothing about the complex's layout and can only provide information about the prisoners in her custody.

Ogress: HD 4+1; HP 30; AC 5[14]; Atk club (1d10+1); Move 9; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** none.
Equipment: club.

Mountain Lion: HD 3+2; HP 23; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 18 (climb 12); Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** none. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 634)

The man tethered to the post and nearly unconscious is **Travis Truesbury** (Lawful male human expert 3), one of Bagrus's pilgrims. The other 4 prisoners manacled to the wall are eternally grateful for their release as they were next in line for Travis' fate. The male dwarf is **Gliv Nurmalk** (Neutral male mountain dwarf warrior 3), Yurbryn's husband. He immediately asks the characters if they know anything about his wife. If told of her safe return to Miners' Refuge, the relieved dwarf thanks the characters for their assistance in the matter. His account of what happened during the hobgoblin attack is nearly identical to Yurbryn's version. He tells the characters that the hobgoblins knocked him unconscious after his spouse's escape. Gliv awoke, bound and chained. The hobgoblins led him and another dwarf along with Travis and a human woman to their lair. He has not left the prison since his arrival about a week ago. The hobgoblins took the other dwarf away a few hours earlier and indicated that they would soon return for him. He does not know where the other dwarf went or what happened to him.

Unlike his wife, Gliv no longer harbors any illusions about Bagrus Farnud. He brands him as a snake charmer who uses his followers to perform free labor for him. He was totally self-absorbed with preserving his own well-being during the hobgoblin assault. Bagrus made no effort to protect the most vulnerable members of his company. Though Gliv would like to exact revenge against the hobgoblins, he insists that he must return home to see Yurbryn and rebuild his shattered world.

The two female prisoners are too traumatized to speak of their ordeal. **Caitlyn Teri** (Lawful female human commoner 2) was captured alongside

Gliv during the hobgoblin raid against the pilgrims. The young, budding artist says nothing about the ordeal and desperately wants to return home. The same can be said for, **Dina Prescott** (Neutral female human commoner 3). The hobgoblins captured this farm wife while she looked for a stray cow not far outside Miners' Refuge.

Tricia Dromu (Chaotic female human commoner 3) is the final female prisoner. Several years ago, a former client told her of a hobgoblin tribe that would pay handsomely for information about merchant caravans. After hearing about Bagrus' expedition, the opportunistic Tricia followed his general directions and set out into the higher mountains in search of her big payday. The fearless and crafty negotiator told the hobgoblins' chieftain about Bagrus' huge caravan in exchange for a percentage of the take. Unfortunately, she grossly underestimated the pilgrims' fighting prowess. After the failed attack, the hobgoblins reneged on the deal and imprisoned Tricia for deceiving them. Of course, Tricia never mentions any of this information to the characters, even if they tell her that Greta sent them to find her. Instead, she spins a fantastic yarn about a treasure map that an unknown man gave her the night before she left Miners' Refuge. The aging courtesan uses her fading looks and flirtatious ways to diffuse any suspicions about her true intentions. Anyone attempting to get a truthful story from Tricia must forcibly compel her to tell the truth; otherwise, she sticks to her story.

All four prisoners can be set free using the ogress's keys. They are also aware that the ogress lives in an adjoining chamber connected to this one via a secret door opened by rotating the northwest column in a counterclockwise direction. The column spins on its axis with relative ease.

Treasure: In addition to her listed gear, the ogress also wears an amber amulet worth 100gp and a bone bracelet worth 25gp. She carries keys for the prisoners' manacles.

H6. Ogress' Chamber

An oversized bed rests against the far wall flanked by two closed iron chests. A large fur lies beneath a wooden post that supports an elevated platform five feet above the ground.

Both iron chests are closed, but neither is locked. The chest against the east wall contains odds and ends of ogre clothing. The ogress' pet mountain lion sleeps on the bear fur or on the elevated platform above it. The vicious cat uses the fur and the post to sharpen its claws, a practice that reduced the once valuable fur to shredded refuse.

Treasure: The chest against the west wall contains 2099sp, 431gp, a mahogany drum worth 50gp, and 16 +1 arrows.

H7. Secondary Living Quarters

The roaring flames from the fire pit illuminate and heat an expansive chamber crowded by dirty bedrolls and cloth sacks. A seared pig carcass hangs on the spit above the blaze. Water from a subterranean stream flows beneath the walls and collects in a small pool along the near wall.

The water in the pond is surprisingly clean and potable. The filthy bedrolls are tattered and badly soiled rendering them worthless. Likewise, the cloth sacks are filled with rancid textiles that also have no value.

The number of hobgoblins in this room depends upon whether the guards from **Area H2** alerted the complex to the presence of intruders. If they did, those **2 hobgoblins** accompany the **4 hobgoblins** already here. In addition to the warriors, there are an additional **15 hobgoblin females** and **9 juveniles** who are non-combatants. They know no more information than the ones in **Area H3**.

Hobgoblins (4 or 6): HD 1+1; AC 5[14]; Atk weapon (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** none.

Tactics: In addition to their increased numbers, these hobgoblins prepared a nasty surprise for the characters. They coated the floors and

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

walls in the dotted area with a thick layer of animal fat and oil from their roasting pig carcass. Any creature that runs or charges through the area must roll below his dexterity on 3d6 to avoid falling. Worse still, the grease is highly flammable. The 2 hobgoblins from **Area H2** stand at the ready with lit torches in their hands. On their turn, they hurl the torches onto the grease, setting it ablaze. The oil burns for 2 rounds, dealing 1d6 points of fire damage per round to any creature in contact with the burning substance. With nowhere else to run, these hobgoblins fight to the death. If they are forced to speak, the hobgoblins provide some crude details about the complex's remaining layout and its occupants. They did not participate in the attack against Bagrus Farmud and the pilgrims.

Treasure: A thorough search of the bedrolls unearth 10d10sp. The 4 hobgoblins normally found here carry a total of 95gp in addition to their listed gear.

H8. Shrine to Kakobovia

The image of a longsword driven through a boar's skull emblazons the wooden door that leads into the shrine. The image is the symbol of Kakobovia, the hobgoblin demigod of war.

Pieces of damaged armor, broken shields, and sundered weapons adorn the walls. A stone statue of a muscular hobgoblin clad in heavy armor and clutching a massive sword in his hands stands in each of the near corners. Two crude tapestries celebrating hobgoblin victories over their vanquished foes adorn the walls in front of an unusual ceremonial altar crafted from four huge, curved horns affixed to the floor. The horns are placed at each corner of a square and their points conjoin in the center. An upside-down iron helmet stained with blood rests atop the strange junction.

The hobgoblins' shrine venerates Kakobovia. The shrine's decorations are mostly worthless. The irreparably broken weapons, armor, and shields that adorn the walls were taken from their fallen enemies during past conflicts. The artistically vapid and poorly sewn tapestries celebrating the hobgoblins' glorious victories are riddled with holes and tears. The stone statues depict Kakobovia. The rudimentary sculptures are poorly crafted and worthless.

Kamazzoa, the hobgoblin's high priest, prays for guidance from his divine patron after the last military debacle. If he is aware of the characters' incursion, the tribe's spiritual authority prepares for battle. He fights to the death, and, if taken alive, reveals nothing about the hobgoblin complex or its residents unless magically forced to do so. As the chieftain's most trusted advisor, he knows the complex's layout and its current strength.

Kamazzoa, Male Hobgoblin Cleric of Kakobovia: HD 4; HP 27; AC 5[14]; Atk weapon (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** +2 save vs. paralysis and poison, spells (2/1).

Spells: 1st—*cause light wounds, detect magic*; 2nd—*hold person*.

Equipment: chainmail, heavy mace.

Zombies (2): HD 2; HP 13, 11; AC 8[11]; Atk longsword (1d8); Move 6; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** immune to sleep and charm.

Treasure: Kakobovia's altar is made from four dire ram horns that are worth 50gp each. The inverted horns are affixed to the floor. In addition, as an instrument dedicated to evil, each horn imposes a -1 penalty on attacks, damage, and saving throws to any Lawful creature in possession of one or more of them.

H9. Chieftain's Audience Chamber

An unusual chair crafted from broken blades and long bones sits atop a 4-foot-high raised platform at the far end of the chamber. A stone staircase ascends to the top of the elevated dais. A tile mosaic of a bloody stained longsword takes up much of the floor just beyond the entrance. Five poorly mummified humanoid heads adorn the walls.

The hobgoblin's chieftain Argomuuth uses this grandiose and intimidating audience chamber to instill fear in all those that stand before him. He normally glares down at his frightened visitors from atop the macabre throne crafted from a mixture of bleached bones and dulled, broken sword blades. The tile mosaic of a bloodied longsword that covers much of the floor is also the propagandist's handiwork, a symbol of Kakobovia, the hobgoblin's bloodthirsty demigod of war. In a further display of his martial prowess, Argomuuth crudely mummified and mounted the heads of five adventurers that he personally killed in battle. The victims include two dwarves, two humans (one male, one female), and an elf. In spite of the hobgoblins' inferior mummification techniques, characters might recognize the faces as belonging to a once-renowned adventuring company known as The Pillars of the Stonehearts. This group of four men and one woman disappeared two years earlier during a much-ballyhooed attempt to infiltrate Mithral Mountain. Like Bagrus Farmud, the hobgoblins intercepted them first, albeit with a much different result.

There is a 50% chance that **Argomuuth** occupies his throne awaiting news about the latest developments from the world around him, provided he has no knowledge of the characters' incursion into his stronghold. Once notified about the presence of intruders in his midst, the hobgoblins' chieftain returns to the safety of his personal quarters (**Area H12**). If Argomuuth is found here, he is always accompanied by **2 hobgoblins** who serve as bodyguards. If Argomuuth is somehow captured, see **Area H12** for details of what he knows.

Argomuuth, Hobgoblin Chieftain: HD 5; AC 4[15]; Atk +1 longsword (1d8); Move 9; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** none.

Equipment: +1 chainmail, +1 longsword, *potion of frozen concoction*.

Hobgoblins (2): HD 1+1; HP 8, 5; AC 5[14]; Atk weapon (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** none.

H10. Meeting Room

A massive oak table covered by a large map serves as the room's focal point. It is plainly evident that the map depicts the area it covers in fine detail. Five wooden chairs and a stone seat upholstered with leather cushions surround the table. A bronze statue of an armored hobgoblin clutching a metallic shield and a longsword overlooks the table.

The dog-eared map details the area in the 20-mile radius surrounding the hobgoblins' stronghold. A wooden token placed on the map marks the location where the hobgoblins attacked Bagrus Farmud's pilgrimage. In addition, the map details a structure near the summit of Mithral Mountain annotated with the word "secret" written in goblin. The base of the same peak is also circled, with the words "now open" next to it, also in goblin. There is a secret door on one wall that can be opened by pushing the door in and then to the right.

Argomuuth frequently discusses his plans with the **2 hobgoblin lieutenants** who are present in this room. If the hobgoblins are unaware of the characters' presence, the lieutenants sit at the table and occupy their time playing cards. Under these circumstances, they are lax to respond to any external threats. They barely look up when the door opens, surprised at seeing intruders. Otherwise, the lieutenants remain sharp and alert. They immediately react to the slightest sound and cannot be surprised.

GOD OF ORE

There is a 15% chance that Argomuuth is also here. Argomuuth always retreats through the secret door and into his personal quarters at the first sign of danger.

Hobgoblin Lieutenants (2): HD 4; AC 5[14]; Atk longsword (1d8); Move 9; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** none.
Equipment: longsword, *potion of healing*, *potion of giant strength*.

Treasure: The exquisitely detailed and beautifully illustrated map is a valuable tool for miners and explorers alike. Because of its many potential uses and artistic value, the map is worth 80gp.

H11. Secret Passage

This corridor links Argomuuth's personal quarters (**Area H12**) with his tactical command center (**Area H10**). Like most of his kin, self-preservation ranks at the top of the hobgoblin's chieftain's priorities; therefore, this trapped passageway serves as his last line of defense against intruders. After slaying an enemy cleric, Argomuuth ordered the tribe's cleric, Kamazzoa, to create a **trap** in the corridor. The wary Argomuuth commanded his subordinate to design the trap so that it would activate whenever anyone else, including other hobgoblins, passed through the protected area denoted by the series of dots on the map. The trap activates whenever a living creature other than a hobgoblin of Argomuuth's exact height (5ft-2in) passes over it. Of course, the treacherous high priest also set the trap so he can bypass the glyph without harm. The trap detonates with a loud boom that does 2d6 points of damage to anyone within 5ft. who fails a saving throw.

The sound wave produced by the trap reverberates against the secret doors on both sides of the passage. Argomuuth attached a small bell to the side of the concealed portal facing into his personal quarters. The sonic blast exerts enough force to ring the tiny apparatus, alerting Argomuuth to the presence of intruders. If this occurs while he occupies his quarters, the hobgoblin chieftain rushes out of his quarters to battle the weakened intruders.

H12. Argomuuth's Personal Quarters

The spacious bedchamber is more befitting of human royalty than a barbarous hobgoblin warlord. Silk sheets and an exquisite animal fur cover the large oak bed against the far wall. A stone hearth and an oak armoire occupy the far corners that flank the bed. There is a life-sized stone statue of a muscular hobgoblin on the near wall adjacent to a closed iron chest. Against the opposite wall is an oval quartz pedestal. A pewter goblet containing a viscous red liquid rests upon the pedestal's surface, which contains the engraved image of a hobgoblin thrusting a longsword through a boar's skull.

The vain Argomuuth coerced a captured sculptor to craft his likeness in limestone in exchange for a merciful death. Despite his affection for it, the tacky sculpture is worthless. The oak armoire next to the bed has two doors that are currently closed. The quartz pedestal is an altar dedicated to the hobgoblin's chief deity, Kakobovia. The iron goblet contains human blood that the hobgoblin's cleric ritually used before their ill-fated excursion against Bagrus Farmud.

If the characters did not encounter Argomuuth in **Area H9** or **Area H10**, he is always found here. The normally defiant hobgoblin leader is more reserved than he would be in the presence of his bodyguards and minions. He does not engage his foes in banter and fights valiantly until reduced to fewer than 10 hit points. At that point, Argomuuth offers to surrender in exchange for his treasure and information, if the characters insist on obtaining the latter in order to spare his life. Otherwise, he fights to the death.

Development: If defeated and spared, Argomuuth confesses that Tricia Dromu tipped him off about the pilgrimage, promising that stealing from the caravan would be a lucrative and easy task. Of course, her assessment of it fighting abilities proved far from accurate. After the debacle, he

imprisoned her in **Area H5**. He has also learned that since the battle, Bagrus Farmud and his remaining followers reopened the base to Mithral Mountain but were driven back by the dwarves who still occupy the mountain. Bagrus fled the scene and is likely hiding somewhere in the mountains nearby. He knows that an abandoned lodge near the summit of Mithral Mountain conceals a secret entrance into the stronghold. Lastly, Argomuuth insists that Dwer-Bokham is hardly a god in the traditional sense. Instead, he claims that the so-called deity is likely a creature of legend from ancient mountain myths known as the cobaltog that was reputed to dwell somewhere within this region of the Stoneheart Mountains. He remembers nothing about the mythical being other than its ability to assume a vaguely humanoid-shaped form and that of an ordinary vein of mithral.

Treasure: The armoire contains two noble's outfits and a royal outfit in addition to an assortment of worthless hobgoblin fashion. The silk sheets and the bear fur on the bed are worth 100gp and 20gp, respectively. The iron chest holds 1058gp, 904sp, a bronze music box worth 100gp and 2 arcane scrolls (*darkness 15ft radius*, *invisibility*) and (*phantasmal force*, *shield*, *wizard lock*). If brought back to Miners' Refuge, the residents identify the bronze music box as a cherished heirloom previously belonging to Lily Rom, one of the presumably deceased pilgrims.

H13. Elite Living Quarters

There are two barracks style beds, each with a top bunk and a bottom bunk in the chamber. A circular table surrounded by four wooden chairs fills the space between the beds. Piles of clothes and other items lie in the space beneath both beds.

The two hobgoblin lieutenants and Kamazzoa, the cleric, occupy these chambers. The tribe's sergeant also resided here until his death a week ago during the attack against the pilgrims. The bedroom's furnishings are best described as rudimentary and poorly made, rendering them worthless.

Treasure: Scattered amid the soiled clothing, dirty rags, and sundry under the beds is an ivory comb worth 25gp, a bronze brooch worth 20gp, and a silver hand mirror worth 10gp.

H14. Crematorium

The smell of burnt charcoal permeates the air. The odor emanates from a 6-foot-deep pit full of charred debris. Soot coats the floor, walls, and ceiling. Stone shelves protrude from the walls at varying heights and widths. Earthenware vessels sit upon them.

The hobgoblins cremate their more prominent dead in this crude crematorium and store the decedents' ashes in the ceramic urns that lie upon the protrusions jutting out from the walls. There are eighty-four vessels in all. Six of these ceremonial containers bear the image of a longsword embedded into a boar's skull, which is the symbol of Kakobovia. The burial vessels have no value.

H15. Workshop

Warm air from a smoldering forge surges out into the corridor. Two unkempt, sweaty, and exhausted-looking dwarves feverishly work around the anvil. They alternate between pounding the glowing metal and dipping it into a cooling bath. Several other heated pieces of iron await the same fate. A wheelbarrow containing more bars of unforged iron rests against the far wall. To one side an elf woman glues a horn nock on one end of a bow stave.

The chieftain assigned **4 hobgoblins** to oversee his slave labor force. They never retreat and fight to the death rather than submit to the humiliation of defeat. The hobgoblins captured these laborers three

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

months ago and immediately charged them with the task of building hobgoblin armaments. The two dwarves **Kron Steelbreather** (Lawful male mountain dwarf expert 3) and his partner **Brogg Clawsasher** (Neutral male mountain dwarf expert 3) work in unison to replenish the hobgoblins' supply of weapons. Unlike her counterparts, the elf **Wynosa** (Neutral female elf expert 3) subtly resists the demands of her captors. In comparison to her hardworking compatriots, Wynosa spends as much time as possible on the aesthetics of her handiwork rather than their functionality in a deliberate effort to slow her progress. She adds painstakingly fine details to her bows under the guise that she is adding "magic runes" to aid the hobgoblins in battle (though the bows she crafts are not magical). The hobgoblins captured the trio in the valley of the River Eamon in search of employment. They are very familiar with the complex's layout because they frequently share their quarters with their jailors. They are also aware that many hobgoblins died during a recent raid, and the enraged chieftain blamed the catastrophe on a deceitful woman whom he subsequently imprisoned.

Hobgoblins (4): HD 1+1; HP 8, 6x2, 5; AC 5[14]; Atk longsword (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none.
Equipment: longsword, 1d4gp.

Treasure: One of the hobgoblins carries a jade locket that bears the inscription "*May luck be with you*" that is worth 100gp.

T4. Bagrus' Hideout

The pilgrimage's slippery leader escaped the massacre and hid in this small, secure outcropping a meager 600 yards northwest of his failed foray into Mithral Mountain. From this location, Bagrus kept a wary eye on the patrols moving through the area at night. After monitoring the disorganized dwarves' routine for several days, the schemer devised another plan. Using the ingredients at hand, he mixed up a concoction of silvery-gray makeup that he applied to his skin. He then lured one of the infused dwarves up to his concealed position and killed him in a surprise ambush. He hastily dumped the corpse behind a cluster of rocks and took his place among the patrol. Using this clever disguise, Bagrus finally infiltrated Mithral Mountain, where he awaits his next move.

The characters can locate his makeshift camp by following his tracks or visually noticing the outcropping. The trail leads back to Bagrus' temporary camp where they can find the poorly hidden corpse by its foul smell. Upon reaching Bagrus' former hideout, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

A small outcropping surrounded by several large stones protrudes from the side of a mountain slope facing Mithral Mountain. Clumps of loose dirt and small stones cannot mask the stench of decay emanating from a partially covered dwarf corpse. A few gnawed bones and other scraps of food as well as a ceramic bowl containing a thin veneer of silvery-gray liquid are scattered about the area.

Characters that examine the corpse immediately determine the cause of death without making a check — a single blow to the back that shattered the victim's spine. Decomposition cannot hide the silvery-gray color of the corpse's skin and pupils. In addition, similarly colored deposits are also present underneath its nails. There are no other visible anatomical differences between this dwarf and others of his race.

The silver-gray liquid in the bowl is makeup that Bagrus concocted to coat his skin and make him appear like one of Dwer-Bokham's minions. Bagrus used the material to alter his appearance and infiltrate Mithral Mountain.

Random Encounters

Presented below are four random encounters that may take place in the foothills at the edge of the mountain range or within the Stoneheart Mountains proper. The Referee is free to use or omit any or all of these encounters and replace them with other random encounters.

Cat of Nine Tales

The tall grasses of the plains and lower mountain slopes are the natural habitat of the sleek and cunning caterwaul. The beast uses this camouflage to methodically stalk its intended victim. The moment it comes within 60ft of its designated target, the monster emerges from the grass and emits its horrific cry.

A terrifying scream emanates from the grass nearby. The source is a bipedal feline with almost elfin features, yellow eyes, dark blue fur, and a long tail. Dropping to all fours and racing across the ground at breakneck speed, the beast bares its ferocious teeth and hurtles towards you.

The **caterwaul** attempts to surprise its foes with its screech attack before closing to melee. The caterwaul uses its tremendous speed to charge the most-isolated opponent with its bite and claw attacks. The beast remains constantly on the move. If seriously threatened, the caterwaul relies on its remarkable speed to retreat and lope back to its lair. It has no treasure in its lair.

Caterwaul: HD 5; HP 34; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6); Move 21 (climb 9); Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: screech (1 every 10 rounds, 1d8 damage to all in 60ft, save for half). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 85)

Bat Country

When night falls upon the hills and mountains, one of its most feared aerial predators takes to the skies. The merciless mobat hunts its prey under the cover of darkness. The enormous, nocturnal bat soars through the heavens in search of its next meal. Naturally, campfires and other light sources pique its interest. When it spots potential prey, the magical beast stealthily circles overhead, slowly descending until it is within 20ft of its intended target. The massive predator then unleashes a deafening screech and attacks its stunned opponents. Once it drops below 10 hit points, the aerial monster takes wing and ascends into the heavens to live another day.

Mobat: HD 4; HP 30; AC 3[16]; Atk bite (1d8); Move 9 (fly 15); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: sonic screech (20ft radius, save or stunned for 1d3 rounds). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 48)

The only way to follow a wounded mobat back to its lair is to track it visually during flight, a difficult proposition in darkness. The mobat lives in a craggy peak 1d4 miles away in the nearby mountains. The creature has treasure consisting of a leather pouch containing 6 aquamarines worth 100gp, a +1 battle axe, and a coin purse that holds 65gp.

Early Worm Gets the Adventurers

Instead of scouring the mountains searching for a meal, a tazelwurm selects a strategic position above and overlooking a well-worn path. It hides until it detects the arrival of prey. The cunning predator never rushes headlong into the middle of a sizable group, however, and instead tries to pick off a lagging traveler or one who otherwise becomes separated from its group. The solitary tazelwurm never retreats and fights to the death. It has no lair.

GOD OF ORE

Tazelwurm: HD 7; HP 48; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (1d6), bite (2d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 9; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** camouflage (1-in-6 chance to spot), frightening exuviation (10hp fire damage causes skin to melt, revealing skeleton, viewers must save or be paralyzed for 1d3 rounds), resist fire (50%). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 543)

Mithral Mayhem

If nothing else, Bagrus Farmud's failed attack accomplished a feat that borders on the impossible. The bloody assault pushed the paranoia and hatred coursing through the metallic veins of Dwer-Bokham's minions to unprecedented heights. The formerly reclusive dwarves of Mithral Mountain now patrol the area around their stronghold as they search for food, survivors from the botched raid, and new intruders. At dusk, 2 infused dwarves leave the security of their lair and scour the surrounding area all night long. They return to their lair just before dawn. Even their newfound zeal is not strong enough to overcome their light blindness, so they never are encountered outside during daylight hours. Often, the infused dwarves stand silently on ledges overlooking their patrol areas, for all intents and purposes appearing to be carved mithral statues until they decide to move. Their mithral-infused skin grants them a +1 AC bonus.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; HP 20, 19; AC 5[14]; Atk hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); **Move** 9; **Save** 14; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

Tactics: The pair lacks any semblance of organization or purpose. They aimlessly wander a 3-mile radius around the base of Mithral Mountain and make no effort to conceal their presence or sneak up on their unsuspecting prey. Their tactics are always the same regardless of whether they stumble upon a defenseless animal or a giant humanoid. They charge their opponent with reckless abandon. Wild screams and contorted facial expressions accompany their mad charge. When the characters encounter the infused dwarves, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Two dwarves with dull silvery skin and metallic eyes brandish their axes and shout an indecipherable war cry as they advance forward with maniacal glee.

Development: During battle, the dwarves cry the phrase "Dwer-Bokham!" repeatedly amid their otherwise inane babbling. Mithral Mountain's warriors hate other dwarves more than any other race; therefore, they focus their attacks against their sworn enemies. The infused dwarves never retreat and fight to the bitter end. If the characters capture them, they refuse to speak other than to extol the virtues of their God of Mithral. Their fanaticism prevents them from being intimidated, and they can be magically compelled only to divulge information about the mountain. They confirm that an abandoned lodge near the summit conceals a rarely used entrance into the stronghold and begrudgingly admit that the "unbelievers' blasphemy" significantly weakened their numbers. They describe Dwer-Bokham as taking a silvery humanoid form and dwelling within one of the deepest caverns inside the mountain.

Part III: Mithral Mountain

After completing the long, arduous trek into the peaks of the Stoneheart Mountains, the characters finally arrive at their intended destination — Mithral Mountain. The high mountaintop and its lodge are easily visible from as far away as Miners' Refuge, though it is impossible to distinguish any specific details from such a distance. Standing in the shadow of the staggering peak,

the characters must delve into the depths of the former stronghold and destroy the false god that holds sway over a corrupted people.

Approach to Mithral Mountain

Throughout their journey in the Stoneheart Mountains, the characters have repeatedly kept a wary eye focused on their ultimate destination. Still, the view from afar differs dramatically from the perspective at the mountain's base, which is thousands of feet above sea level. The most telling dissimilarities are the telltale signs of Bagrus Farmud's failed pilgrimage. When the characters come within 300ft of the mountain's base, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

A rocky mountain practically devoid of any vegetation soars an additional 3,000 feet into the heavens at a remarkably steep angle before culminating in a jagged, stony summit. The peak is reminiscent of an inverted funnel with a steep, narrow base and a sharply ascending, conical-shaped upper body. A dilapidated stone structure occupies a ledge at the junction between these two opposing features nearly 500 feet below the mountain's apex on its western side. A roughly hewn entrance on the southern face just above the base burrows deeper into the mountain. The access point appears to be unguarded. Rotting dwarf corpses litter the gravelly terrain in front of it. Many of the bloated, decomposing bodies still clutch their axes and heavy shields. Their shredded armor clings precariously to their torsos. Skeletal ribs are visible through the numerous gaps in the steel links.

The ground at the mountain's base is a gradual slope. Characters that attempt to scale the mountain to reach the abandoned lodge encounter a steep slope. Furthermore, an area of shifting gravel, i.e. scree, fills a 100ft-wide ring just beneath the stone structure. The scree is on a steep slope, forcing characters to roll below their dexterity on 3d6 to clamber across it without sliding and tumbling (and taking 1d6 points of damage).

The seven dwarves and two humans that continued to follow Bagrus Farmud after the hobgoblin's assault strike macabre death poses at the base of Mithral Mountain. Eight of Dwer-Bokham's minions join them in the gruesome montage. Despite the passage of time since their death, the cool climate preserves the corpses well enough to distinguish the native dwarves from Bagrus' contingent. In addition, the two human corpses are in good enough shape to positively identify them as Graham Angeheim's missing sons, Donnator and Errol (see the **My Sons' Keeper** hook from **Part I** of the adventure), provided of course that the characters look for their distinguishing tattoos and physical features. The mountain's inhabitants do not partake in any rituals to commemorate the deceased. They are content to let the corpses rot and eventually coalesce with the surrounding dirt. The concept of rummaging the bodies of the dead for treasure does not register with the false god's followers.

After spending centuries sealed within the mountain, the resident dwarves find the necessity of guarding the breach completely revolting. During the day, the 2 infused dwarves assigned this unpleasant task lurk in the shadows and darkness within **Area M1**. Neither of the guards performs any active reconnaissance or keeps a vigilant eye on the surrounding area. The best they can offer is a halfhearted, nonchalant glance pointed toward the outside world. The infused dwarves leave the safety of the darkness only if they are attacked or if they get an incredible stroke of luck and spot an intruder.

The dwarves are much more at ease once the sun sets. Then they keep a vigilant watch over their surroundings and sweep the area around the entrance every 2d3 x 10 minutes. These guards always remain within 300ft of the entrance and spend 2d4 minutes scouring the vicinity near the complex for intruders or prey creatures.

Infused dwarves that spot outsiders always react in the same manner. They fly into battle, wildly swinging their axes and screaming as they barrel toward their foes. Stealth is not part of their vocabulary, and the notion of warning their kin to the presence of potential danger also never crosses their obsessed minds. Of course, their maniacal screams may be

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

enough to alert their brethren about the characters' arrival, but doing so is a happy accident rather than a deliberate plan.

Regardless of the time of day, none of the native denizens even glances in the direction of the mountain pass that leads to the lodge (**Area L1**) near the mountain's summit. They respond to any loud disturbances emanating from the area. Otherwise, they never give the abandoned structure a second thought.

Treasure: Bagrus' seven dwarves each carry a dwarven hand axe and a steel shield. Three are *+1 axes*, while four are ordinary, though three of these mundane ones are broken. The same numbers also apply to the steel shields. Five of these dwarves wore chainmail and two wore ring mail. These items all are broken. In addition to the preceding combat equipment, each dwarf also carries a pouch containing 2d6 gems worth 10gp each. One dwarf also has a *potion of slipperiness*, and another dwarf carries a *potion of invulnerability*. Donnator and Errol wear studded leather armor with the broken condition. The eight dwarves beholden to Dwer-Bokham wear ordinary broken chainmail, eight steel shields, eight dwarven axes and eight heavy crossbows. The weapons are all ordinary and remain fully functional. In addition, these dwarves each carry a pouch containing 1d6 small agates worth 10gp apiece.

Gaining Entry

There are two ways to enter Mithral Mountain. The more obvious is the entrance that Bagrus Farmud created. The dwarf charlatan centered his efforts on a sealed stone door on the mountain's southern face. After bashing the sealed stone door into pieces, he and his retinue finally smashed their way through an adjoining span of natural rock and stone, thus creating the entrance that is visible today. The lodge is the less-apparent entrance into the mountain's inner workings. The dwarves under Thane Ilgar Ogradmek's grandfather built the impressive structure centuries earlier for the dual use as a lookout tower and a drinking hall. The lodge's difficult-to-reach location made it easy to spot encroaching trespassers trying to negotiate the daunting scree leading up to the enclave and also gave the thane and his soldiers an ideal vantage point to observe the movements of rival dwarven clans and other enemies throughout the region.

This following section first details the more obscure path into Mithral Mountain before detailing the more noticeable entrance.

Pass Less Traveled

A rocky, gravelly path meanders its way around boulders and other obstacles on its way toward the summit. The lodge is roughly 2500ft above the base of the mountain, but the circuitous path through the mountains increases the actual distance by an additional mile. In addition, characters attempting to scale the mountain and gain access to the lodge by means other than the path must also negotiate the scree blocking their way. If the characters successfully bypass this treacherous terrain, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

An ancient stone structure juts out from the surrounding rock and peers across the valley below it. A weathered limestone staircase ascends from the mountainside to the stone door emblazoned with the depiction of a hammer and an anvil. The portal is tightly shut. Numerous crossbow slits span the western, southern and northern walls. Nothing larger than a rat could pass through these small openings.

Despite its neglected and abandoned appearance, the dwarves of Mithral Mountain are aware that a secret door connects their complex to the lodge. Before Bagrus unsealed the main entrance at the base of the mountain, the infused dwarves also used the lodge to enter and exit their complex to hunt and to gather other supplies not available within their lair.

The symbol on the door is a legacy of Thane Ilgar Ogradmek's rule. It is the religious symbol of Dwerfater. In spite of defying the current residents' faith, the infused dwarves did not remove or otherwise deface the heretical image. The heavy stone door requires some effort to open.

L1. Lodge

Narrow, focused beams of natural light penetrate through a series of crossbow slits that span the entire western wall overlooking the mountain and half of the northern and southern walls. The warm rays illuminate a stone statue of a majestic, muscular dwarf warrior clad in a chain shirt with helm and armed with a mighty axe. The figure has a bushy mustache and wiry hair. Another statue near the far wall depicts the same subject in a slightly different pose. A granite oval table surrounded by eight granite chairs occupies much of the room. Several dozen ancient pewter tankards and an equal number of stained, stone dishes cover the table. Two weathered tapestries depicting a great dwarven victory over a hobgoblin army cover nearly half of the far walls. The hall's crowning achievement is a double-headed drum cast in pure silver. The musical instrument rests upon an iron stand.

The Thane's grand hall remains much the same as it did during the mountain's heyday. Most of the furnishings are far too bulky and heavy to remove, with the granite oval table being the best example. However, the twenty-seven pewter tankards and twenty-seven stone plates can be taken. The two statues are carved from limestone and weigh more than 1000 lbs. Both statues depict Thane Ilgar Ogradmek a few years before Dwer-Bokham's minions deposed him. Likewise, the tapestries on the walls also portray the dwarves' leader defeating Argomuth's distant ancestors centuries ago. The tapestries are artistic masterpieces and historical treasures, but neither has aged well. Many of the images are badly faded or even missing in spots, which significantly reduces their value.

The drums are the room's centerpiece and the key to opening the secret door concealed on the east wall. A character that searches the drums for clues finds an inscription along the rim of one drum. The etching says in Dwarven, "*In Praise of Mithral*," which refers to an ancient dwarven song. The drumbeats similarly are etched into the edge of the drum. Characters who play the indicated beats cause the outline of the secret door to become visible on the east wall for 1 minute before fading again. Characters that fail to locate the hidden portal through this means must do so the old-fashioned way — search for it. In either event, the door must still be forced open to gain entry to **Area L2**.

Treasure: The pewter tankards are worth 1gp apiece. Despite their poor condition, each tapestry is worth 100gp. The silver drums are easily transportable and are worth 350gp.

L2. Passageway

A featureless, roughhewn tunnel winds its way through the surrounding stone.

The stone passageway links the lodge with the main complex roughly 2500ft beneath it. The narrow, claustrophobic corridor is nearly 2 miles long as it corkscrews its way into the mountain itself. There are no steep inclines or descents, so it is fairly easy to negotiate the passage's many twists and hairpin turns. During Thane Ilgar's reign, his guards routinely secured the lodge, and outdoor patrols kept a vigilant eye for intruders. In the absence of any undisputed authority, the long passageway remains unguarded. The only obstacle barring the way from the lodge into the main complex is a long-forgotten vestige of the stronghold's former masters. A **symbol trap** engraved several feet inside of the tunnel activates whenever any non-dwarf passes through the threshold (infused dwarves do not activate this glyph). Anyone within 5ft of the glyph takes 3d6 points of electrical damage unless they make a saving throw for half damage.

The secret door connecting this passageway to the lodge is easily noticeable from this side. The characters must still force the door open.

In spite of the fact that the passageway is unguarded, there is a 20% chance of encountering **2 infused dwarves** for every 10 minutes spent moving through the passageway. The passageway ultimately leads into **Area C1**.

GOD OF ORE

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; AC 5[14]; **Atk** hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); **Move** 9; **Save** 14; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

Mithral Mountain Features

Thane Ilgar Ogradmek's former stronghold is a marvel of dwarven engineering and craftsmanship. All surfaces are constructed from worked stone, and the ceiling height is 8ft with the exception of the mining tunnels in **Area M7** and the entire Sanctum Level. These areas feature roughhewn stone corridors and surfaces with an average ceiling height of 1d4+4ft. Doors are made from stone and are surprisingly well-maintained, allowing characters to open unlocked portals without exerting any effort. Doors that are stuck, locked, or barred are noted in the room description. The resident dwarves have darkvision and light blindness; therefore, there are no light sources throughout the complex.

Mr. Entrance

A roaring fire pit against the far wall heats and illuminates a spacious, roughhewn chamber. A handful of metal skewers rest on the floor along the fire pit's edge. Two filthy bedrolls lie on the floor against the near wall. Numerous large chunks of rock and stone are scattered around the entrance, and the opening's edge are rough and uneven in many spots. Several sculptures protrude from the wall adjacent to the entrance. Dwarven runes also cover much of the same area.

Bagrus Farmud originally attempted to enter Mithral Mountain through its sealed stone doors, but the effort ultimately failed. Instead, he battered through the adjoining natural rock and stone. Characters can notice that the stronghold's original stone doors are intact. Dwer-Bokham's minions sanded down the carvings and runes that appeared on the outside of the doors decades earlier, but much of the original sculpting on the inside of the doors is unblemished. The carved images of four dwarven warriors protrude in relief from the door's interior. The runes that surround the carving identify each figure as one of the clan's legendary thanes. They include Thane Rognar Ogradmek, Thane Balaster Ogradmek, Thane Thern Ogramek, and the last ruler of Mithral Mountain Thane Ilgar Ogradmek.

Unlike the conventional fire pit that burns wood, the mountain's residents use coal and tar for fuel. There is an ample supply of these flammable materials within the mining complex. The filthy bedrolls belong to the **2 infused dwarves** that occupy the entrance. These two guards act as described in the preceding section.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; HP 20, 19; AC 5[14]; **Atk** hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

M2. Water Supply

An underground current continually fills a 6-foot-deep pool with fresh, clean water. An overflow channel built into the far corner siphons any excess water out of the chamber. A sturdy steel cart with four attached buckets is parked just inside of the first entrance.

Engineers built this reservoir hundreds of years ago to provide an ample supply of water for a large population. The dwarves use the cart and its

attached buckets to draw water from the pool and transport it throughout the complex. The water is surprisingly fresh and is safe to drink.

M3. Food Supply

The smell of moldy earth is unmistakable. A thick layer of damp soil covers the entire floor. Hundreds of mushrooms, some measuring several feet in diameter, spring up from the ground.

Unable to grow traditional crops or raise livestock in their dark subterranean abode, the dwarves instead grow mushrooms, which are the staples of their diet.

M4. Guard Room

Two stone statues of an idealized dwarf warrior clad in heavy armor and clutching a readied crossbow occupy the chamber's far corners. An overturned and badly damaged identical statue rests on the floor near the entrance. The lower torso, an arm and an attached head and arm of the same sculpture lie strewn about the floor close to the near corner.

During Mithral Mountain's golden era, the thane's underlings greeted honored guests and dignitaries in this antechamber. The stronghold's current occupants use it as a guardroom manned by **2 infused dwarves**. Like their brethren, they charge headlong into the fray, wildly swinging their dwarven axes. Throughout the battle, they repeat the clearly audible phrase, "Dwer-Bokham!" They never retreat or surrender. As with their compatriots on patrol, these guards reveal nothing about the stronghold unless magically compelled to do so. If forced to speak against their will, they reveal the same information that Dwer-Bokham's minions outside the mountain gave.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; HP 20, 19; AC 5[14]; **Atk** hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); **Move** 9; **Save** 14; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

Treasure: In addition to their listed gear, each guard has a pouch that contains 1d4 bloodstones worth 100gp apiece. One of the guards also has a bone scroll case containing an arcane scroll (*confusion, ice storm*).

M5. Living Quarters

Small buildings crafted from stone and large piles of rubble fill an immense, open chamber that stretches for as far as the eye can see in most places. Though there are minor variations to each of the standing structures, they share the same general features of being two stories tall and accessible through a stone door at the top of a staircase or at the bottom of one. Passages akin to streets and alleyways crisscross their way throughout the vast space carved out of the hewn stone. The domed ceiling reaches a staggering height of 80 feet at its apex with a minimum height of 20 feet along the room's edges.

The dwarves of Mithral Mountain dwelt in these residences; Dwer-Bokham's minions abandoned the homes, causing them to fall into a state of disrepair and neglect. The buildings are not identical, but they share the same general characteristics. Each consists of two stories and a lower

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

level. The rooms on the two upper floors are dedicated to living quarters, whereas the lower floor functions as work or storage space. One family typically occupied each of the homes, with some exceptions. As more dwarves fell under Dwer-Bokham's influence, some fled the mountain, taking their belongings with them. Those who came under the false god's sway and Thane Ilgar's loyalists remained behind along with their personal possessions. After the decisive battle, the victors looted many of their foes' homes and offered those treasures to their allegedly divine benefactor.

Mithral Mountain's current occupants view these residences as a hateful reminder of their heretical past. Characters that explore the area have only a 10% chance per hour of encountering **2 infused dwarves** wandering through the chamber. The pair never ventures into the buildings.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); Move 12; Save 14; AL L; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

Treasure: There is a 50% chance that a particular location has no treasure. Characters searching a location with treasure can discover 6d6gp worth of valuables in each location.

M6. Ruined Temple of Dwerfater

Pieces of four overturned stone statues that depicted dwarf warriors are scattered about the floor near four recessed alcoves in a resplendent temple. Many of the chunks of stone strewn about the room are nearly pulverized. The larger pieces on the floor appear to have been deliberately defaced, as evidenced by large gouge marks in the stone and disgusting, desiccated streaks of foul matter smeared on the sculptures' surfaces. The same fate befell the once magnificent bas-relief sculptures of dwarves laboring in front of forges that adorn the outer walls. Though still intact, a quartz altar and a mosaic of a hammer and an anvil occupying much of the floor are marred by the same desecration. A larger alcove behind the altar leads to a stone staircase that descends into darkness.

Here the mountain's former residents worshipped their patron deity, Dwerfater. Immediately after the thane's expulsion, Dwer-Bokham's minions desecrated the temple of their former deity by toppling the statues and spreading excrement on the artworks. The four sculptures depicted non-specific dwarf warriors whereas the mosaic on the floor represents Dwerfater's symbol. The staircase beyond the altar leads to the thane's halls of power and his personal quarters.

M7. Mine Tunnels

The polished stone walls, floors and ceilings end, and roughhewn stone passages begin, boring holes and tunnels into the surrounding rock.

By and large, the mine tunnels yield relatively ordinary finds that cast the legends about abundant quantities of mithral and other precious materials into doubt. Salt and coal are the most prevalent substances found in the mine. Though still valuable in their own right, their worth pales in comparison to the mountain's namesake. The current inhabitants liberally use both materials in their daily lives. They extract the minerals from the surrounding stone and load their treasures onto the untended mine cart in the easternmost tunnel. The dwarves never enter **Area M7A** and **Area M7B**.

In spite of their allegiance to Dwer-Bokham, his minions still occupy some of their time scratching stones from the mountain's rich deposits.

There is a 40% chance of encountering **2 infused dwarves** every 30 minutes spent in the area.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 14; AL L; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

M7A. Fulgurate Mushrooms

The ground is soft and spongy. A patch of sky blue mushrooms with cloudy, white stems rises out of the soil just beyond an intersection.

The **fulgurate mushrooms** are harmless until touched. They occupy a 10ft-square area an additional 10ft past the end of the spur connecting the two passageways. Though they predominately grow out of the soil, a handful of hardy specimens cling to the walls.

Fulgurate Mushrooms: HD 1; HP 8; AC 9[10]; Atk lightning blast (2d6); Move 0 (immobile); Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** lightning blast (2d6 damage, save for half). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 258)

M7B. Weird Area

The narrow, stone passageway opens into a foul-smelling chamber. Dead leaves, branches, mosses, fungi, and plants form a thick layer covering the floor. Numerous bones and the glint of several manufactured objects are interspersed among the dried and rotting plant matter.

Dwer-Bokham's minions never wander into this sinister chamber because of the resident **fungus weird**, a large serpent seemingly formed from fungus, plants and tangled vines. The bizarre, semi-intelligent plant hides among the decaying debris atop it. Regardless of its lust for blood and meat, the fungus weird cannot leave its fungus pool; it must rely upon victims to fall into its clutches rather than actively pursue them. Surprise is its ally, so the monster waits for an ideal

moment to strike. The fungus weird hopes that various objects such as shields, armor or weapons might grab the characters' interest and lower their guard. The malevolent plant's "pool" occupies the entire roughly round chamber. The objects are scattered throughout the chamber, thus requiring the characters to enter the "pool" to reach them. The moment this occurs, the fungus weird attacks.

Fungus Weird: HD 5; HP 35; AC 8[11]; Atk bite (1d8); Move 0 (immobile); Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** camouflage (invisible until it attacks), fungus pool (20ft pool), reform (4 rounds), sleep spores (10ft cone, as sleep spell, save resists), vulnerable to fire (200%). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 591)

Tactics: Creatures that are pulled into the pool or step into it of their own accord are automatically entangled. The fungus weird then uses its sleep spores to knock its foes unconscious. The monster uses this ability whenever possible. Otherwise, it attacks with its bite attack. The fungus weird fights until destroyed, though resumes the combat when it reforms.

Treasure: The three objects in the fungus weird's pool are a steel shield, a broken suit of platemail armor, and a +1 mace.

Catacombs Level

The walls, floors and ceilings on this level are crafted from the finest polished marble. The architectural features are otherwise the same as those encountered on the ground level.

C1. Audience Chamber

A magnificent greenish-black throne carved from a single block of stone sits atop a raised dais accessible via a stone staircase in front of it. The wondrous seat of power overlooks a grandiose chamber supported by four columns fashioned into the likeness of a mighty hammer. Even the slightest glimmer of light reflects off the flecks of crystals embedded into its polished walls. Two stunning tapestries memorialize great battles between the dwarves and marauding hordes of hobgoblins.

The thanes that ruled over Mithral Mountain frequently met their subjects and other dignitaries in this impressive audience chamber. The room's centerpiece is the malachite throne, which rests upon a 4ft-high dais. Though the height is not particularly intimidating by human standards, the throne's incredible craftsmanship and the elevation served its intended purpose whenever the thane interacted with others of his kin and most other humanoids. The dwarves carved the limestone columns into the shapes of upright hammers as a tribute to their patron god, Dwerfater. The archway in the northwestern corner of the room opens into **Area L2**, the long, circuitous passageway that connects the main complex with the lodge near the mountain's summit.

A tiny raised button on the left side of the throne opens the secret door that leads to the thane's personal quarters. Characters who fail to detect the mechanism must use magical means or brute force to gain entry into that area.

Treasure: The two tapestries are in surprisingly good shape considering their age and are worth 100gp each. There are 106 crystals embedded in the walls worth 5gp apiece. It takes a standard action to pry each crystal free. A check that fails by 5 or more destroys the crystal, rendering it worthless.

C2. Catacombs

Dwer-Bokham's minions greatly fear death and the undead. They closed the massive stone door barring passage into the catacombs. The doors must be forced open.

Rows of intricately carved and detailed stone coffins form makeshift streets and alleys in an otherwise massive, open chamber. Nearly all of the sarcophagi's lids are sculpted into the likeness of the occupant with inscriptions of the deceased's name on the coffin's side. In spite of the number of coffins, much of the chamber's southern portion remains empty.

The dwarves arranged their relatives' final resting places in precise, orderly fashion. The oldest burials appear closer to the entrance, whereas the more recent are farthest away. The newest additions to the catacombs are those that are farthest south along the west wall. A cluster of burials appears to coincide roughly with Dwer-Bokham's uprising. These sarcophagi are less detailed than the others and appear to be rushed. The catacomb's longest-tenured deceased occupants have been here for 950 years, while the newest are 5 centuries old.

The remains inside of the sarcophagi are nothing more than piles of bone and dust. If the characters rob the dead of their possessions, the offense greatly offends any dwarves that learn of it.

The characters' more pressing concern is the room's lone occupant. It is easy to mistake the **ectoplasm** for an unhappy spirit. Though unintelligent,

the monster is a skilled hunter that benefits from common humanoid misconceptions. Its appearance and location implies that it is undead but the ectoplasm is actually an ooze. It feeds on dead organic matter, but that does not preclude it from attacking living creatures that trespass on its territory. When it detects the presence of living creatures, it manifests itself and unleashes its breath weapon at its enemies. It then touches its foes, trying to weaken them. After 1d4 rounds of combat, the ectoplasm realizes that the characters are not edible. The incorporeal being attempts to flee, passing through coffins until it finds a suitable hiding space.

Ectoplasm: HD 7; HP 49; AC 9[10]; Atk pseudopod (1d8 plus weakness); Move 6 (flying); Save 9; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; **Special:** +1 or better magic weapons to hit, weakness (cumulative -1 penalty to hit and damage). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 222)

Treasure: There is a 10% chance of finding a random magical item such as a shield, armor or weapon inside each coffin (30% when searching a thane's coffin). If one of these items is present, the characters also find jewelry and gems worth 1d6 x 100gp on the body.

C3. Thane's Quarters

A corridor decorated with faded frescoes of a great dwarven city opens into a spacious bedchamber. A moldy, tattered bearskin rug covers much of the floor. The lit hearth in the far corner illuminates and warms the surrounding area, which includes a magnificent stone bed with a limestone headboard, a granite-bathing vessel, an armoire carved from burl, a writing desk made of the same material, and a granite privy.

Despite the passage of time, most of the furnishings other than the bearskin rug are in surprisingly good condition. The armoire is still solid, though, the thane's surviving loyalists emptied out its contents along with those within the writing desk before fleeing the mountain. The granite pieces are a testament to the dwarves' superior stonecutting skills. Unfortunately, these wondrous items are far too heavy and bulky to move.

The hearth's smoldering embers are a surefire clue that the luxurious bedchamber is no longer unoccupied. In fact, the bedroom's current resident is as brazen as they come. **Bagrus Farmud**, the false prophet that led his followers to their doom, casually relaxes on the bed, acting like he does not have a care in the world. Tattered scraps of clothing drape over the bloodied leather armor of an obviously dehydrated and emaciated dwarf. Deep fissures mar the surface of his gaunt, drawn face, and his hair and beard are a wild mess filled with clumps of caked dirt and blood. Flecks of silvery paint still cling to the skin on his hands and face. The disheveled dwarf is a far cry from the impeccably manicured person who sauntered into Miners' Refuge two weeks earlier and charmed a legion of awestruck followers.

Bagrus Farmud, Male Mountain Dwarf Ftr3/Thf3: HD 6; HP 30; AC 4[15]; Atk dagger (1d4), light crossbow (1d4+1); Move 9; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** darkvision 60ft, +4 saves vs magic, thieving skills.

Thieving Skills: Climb 87%, Tasks/Traps 35%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 25%, Silent 35%, Locks 25%.

Equipment: +1 leather armor, dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, cloak of protection +2, 2 potions of healing.

Development: Bagrus is happy to see the characters, but his inner spirit presents a stark contrast to his outward appearance. The crushing defeat at the hand of Dwer-Bokham's minions did little to thwart Bagrus' ambitions and he plays fast and loose with the truth when it comes to his role in the fiasco. He actually quaffed a *potion of invisibility* and fled the scene the moment that the battle turned against his forces.

Bagrus relates a sanitized version of the story to the characters. He claims that he and his disciples used a spell to breach the sealed entrance

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

at the base of the mountain. As soon as they encountered any resistance from the native denizens, he intended to conduct an orderly retreat to a designated rallying point where he would then formulate a formal strategy to contend with the opposition. Of course, he accepts no blame for the humiliating rout and instead tells the characters that his followers failed to withdraw from the combat as originally planned. Their religious fervor drove them onward. They disobeyed his instructions and launched a chaotic frontal assault against their enemies. Even though they inflicted heavy losses on Mithral Mountain's dwarves, the mountain's dogged defenders were too numerous to defeat. In spite of his valiant efforts to rally the troops and win the day, his men broke and ran, forcing him to flee the battle. He returned to the scene the following morning hoping to uncover any traces of survivors. They were all gone. Cleverly creating some silver paint for his skin, Bagrus killed one of the mountain's sentries and infiltrated their lair, making it as far as his present location.

The animated Bagrus is quick to gloss over the failings of the past and now turns his attention to the promise of the future. He insists that he and his troops dealt a severe blow to their foes, leaving the mountain vulnerable to a small band of seasoned adventurers. Naturally, the confident Bagrus gladly volunteers to lead the expedition. He eagerly offers advice, encouragement, and wisdom as an authority figure. On the other hand, fighting is a task best performed by his underlings. Characters that strike a bargain with the wily charlatan soon learn that Bagrus' words speak louder than his actions. The clever rogue never objects to raising his voice to help his fellow warriors. The same cannot be said for his dagger.

Characters seeking to detain Bagrus or dispense their own brand of frontier justice encounter a defiant adversary. The recalcitrant dwarf vigorously disputes any charges raised against him, countering that everyone who accompanied him on his journey came of their own free will. If the characters attempt to apprehend him, attack him or cast spells at him, his first inclination is to flee back into the mountains. Characters that successfully capture Bagrus must deal with a disruptive prisoner who constantly tries to escape while creating a gigantic row.

Characters that successfully intimidate Bagrus or magically coerce him into divulging information gain a surprisingly small amount of information. He admits that he learned about Mithral Mountain while a prisoner of a rival clan. He also knows that the dwarves of Mithral Mountain worship a deity they call Dwer-Bokham who is supposedly a creature made from living mithral. Though he does not know the being's exact location, he is almost certain that he dwells somewhere deep in the mines. He also relays that the residents never venture to this area of the complex, making it a safe location to rest and regroup before pushing onward against Dwer-Bokham and his worshippers. Lastly, Bagrus begrudgingly admits that he made up the story about the mithral tablet containing the secret to immortality in order to attract followers.

Sr. Lower Mine Tunnels

Roughhewn stone tunnels bore into the mountain, descending deeper at a noticeable angle.

The tunnels descend at a steady grade, but even at this depth, there are no signs of the legendary veins of mithral that gave the mountain its name. For every 15 minutes spent in the tunnels, there is a 30% chance of encountering **2 infused dwarves** and a 20% chance of encountering **1d4 cave scorpions**. Dwer-Bokham's minions actively patrol the mine tunnels, whereas the cave scorpions mimic piles of stone and lie in wait for passing prey. The sounds of combat echo throughout the mining complex, so the chances of a random encounter doubles on the next check that follows the battle. In either event, the characters cannot encounter more than 4 infused dwarves and 8 cave scorpions during their exploration of the lower mine tunnels.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 14; AL L; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

Cave Scorpions (1d4): HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 pincers (1d10), sting (1d4 plus debilitating poison); Move 12; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** debilitating poison (-2 to hit, Movement halved for 1d6+2 rounds, save resists).

SrA. Unsound Tunnels

In addition to the monsters that roam the tunnels, several areas within the tunnels are structurally unsound. The intelligent inhabitants avoid these locations, so there are no humanoid tracks around these sites.

There is a 30% chance that any sound louder than an ordinary conversation creates enough vibrations to cause the crumbling ceiling to collapse. A full-scale battle doubles the chance of a deadly cave-in every round.

S2. Living Area

Flames fueled by burning coal spew black smoke into a crowded chamber. The bonfire roasts a man-sized scorpion's tail affixed to a spit. Filthy animal skins line the far wall, and the stench of bodily waste hangs heavy in the polluted air. A basin of dust-coated water sits against the near wall, and a trough filled with large mushrooms rests across the room.

The dwarves' current living conditions are a far cry from the splendor of Thane Ilgar's reign. Dwer-Bokham's xenophobic minions live in utter squalor, sleeping on the floor, drinking foul, brackish water, and subsisting on a constant diet of mushrooms occasionally supplemented by cave scorpion. At the present time, **2 infused dwarves** rotate the rare treat of a scorpion's tail over the fire. In addition, the horrific odor of excrement and urine is powerful. Throughout the battle, the two dwarves deliberately make a tremendous racket that may attract the interest of more dwarves roaming the tunnels or even the cave scorpions searching for a meal. Of course, if the characters eliminated all of the wandering creatures described in **Area S1**, then their cries for aid are in vain.

Infused Dwarf Guards (2): HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk hand axe (1d6) or heavy crossbow 1/2 (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 14; AL L; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** -2 to hit in bright light, +4 saves vs magic, darkvision 60ft.

Equipment: ring mail, hand axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

S3. Active Mine

Steam billows forth from a 4-foot-long red, winged reptile as it blasts the rocky wall with a cone of fire. The creature's translucent scales are mauve and burgundy, while its wings are mottled black. Its crimson eyes glow in the darkness, as do the rocks and stones on the far wall subjected to the full effect of its roiling inferno. Two unattended mining picks rest on the floor, and an empty mining cart stands at the ready. An alcove along the near wall leads into darkness.

In a rare twist, Dwer-Bokham raised this subservient **fire drake** from an egg and put it to good use softening metallic ore from surrounding stone for easier extraction. In this case, the beast works to separate tin from the natural rock formation. The malevolent monster immediately attacks any creatures other than its master and his minions. The capricious dragon relies almost exclusively on its breath weapon, discharging a cone of fire every round unless the characters surround it. In that case, the fire drake falls back upon its melee attacks, concentrating its claws and bite on a single foe. The monster fights until killed.

Fire Drake: HD 4; HP 30; AC 5[14]; Atk bite (1d6); Move 9 (fly 30); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** breath weapon (5/day, 40ft range, 2d8 damage, save for half), pyrophoric

GOD OF ORE

blood (attack with bladed weapon causes fiery blood splash, 1d3 damage, save resists), resist fire (50%). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 213)

Treasure: The fire drake's blood can be harvested and used as a firebomb to deal 1d6 points of damage or to temporarily give weapons the flaming property (1d6 additional points of damage for 1d4 rounds). Never one to part with its worldly treasures, the fire drake keeps 285gp, 800sp, and 14 garnets worth 100gp each in a pile located at the back of the alcove. In addition to the coins and stones, there is also *chime of opening* and a *luckstone* in the pile.

S4. Ancient Alcove

The roughhewn walls merge with a section of a solid, polished wall crafted from granite that features a bizarre tile mosaic. The image shows a chunk of silvery-grey metallic ore in the process of transforming into a humanoid shape with metallic plates and an oddly fashioned head with a rounded mouth. A dwarven warrior splits the creature's head in two with his fearsome axe.

The strange mosaic predates the dynastic line of the Ogradmek thanes. The artist created the work 2000 years earlier, while ancient dwarves constructed the wall two millennia earlier. The painting shows the dwarves battling their long-forgotten enemy, the cobaltogs, a race of aberrations that could fascinate observers with their gaze and could meld into stone. With this knowledge and the details found in the painting, the characters may correctly deduce that the mountain's alleged veins of mithral were in fact cobaltogs that melded into stone.

S5. Shrine

Three limestone statues depicting kneeling dwarves rest at the feet of a white marble statue of a vaguely humanoid being with outstretched hands. Thousands of coins and dozens of ornamental stones rest upon a crude altar that sits on the floor of a recessed niche.

Five centuries ago, Dwer-Bokham first emerged from the surrounding stone at the very spot now commemorated by the altar. His loyal followers periodically place their offerings upon the ceremonial stone. Nearly all of the riches found here were taken from their dwarven foes after their original uprising.

The sculptures of the prostrate dwarves pale in comparison to the artistic quality and detail found in the depiction of Dwer-Bokham. Though the faux deity is generally humanoid in shape, the creature is rigidly structured yet featureless. The arms and torso are covered in metallic plates, but they lack any muscular or skeletal definition. Its lower body consists of a singular tentacle rather than actual legs. The face is also more alien than human. Other than indentations for eyes, the subject has no hair, nose, ears, or jawline. Its mouth is nothing more than a circular orifice with no defined lips or teeth. The white marble is finely polished but unpainted so it is impossible to tell if the artwork accurately reflects Dwer-Bokham's actual coloration.

Treasure: The altar holds 684gp, 2709sp, and 68 agates worth 10gp each.

S6. Dwer-Bokham's Sanctum

A stone portal separates this chamber from the other tunnels and chambers. The door is rarely used as the occupants on the other side almost never venture out of the inner sanctum. It is not stuck or locked in the conventional sense, yet it still requires a good amount of effort to force open the poorly made door.

Four pieces of gray, metallic ore rest upon marble pedestals set roughly equidistant around the perimeter of an oval cavern. Likewise, several large chunks of rock salt lie inside a marble basin. A bright shiny being, humanoid in shape loiters near the receptacle. The creature's lower torso consists of a single appendage that more closely resembles a thick tentacle covered in metallic plates than an actual leg. Likewise, its upper body is best defined as a segmented central torso that connects the lower body with two hardened, chiseled limbs and a bizarre head that contains two silvery eyes and a round, formless mouth. A wizened dwarf wearing an ancient robe and armed with a heavy mace stands nearby these disgusting belongings.

At first glance, the objects resting atop the pedestal appear to be large deposits of mithral given their appearance and the mountain's reputation. The material is not mithral at all, however. In fact, it is not stone or metal. Instead, it is extremely dense matter that fossilized eons ago.

The being known as Dwer-Bokham is a **cobaltog**, an ancient race of aberrations that all but disappeared from the world following the ascendancy of the prevalent humanoid races. The creature survives on a diet of salt, thus explaining the large quantities of the mineral within the marble basin. After spending centuries holed up within the mountain fortress, the aspirant false deity seeks new converts to his heretical faith. Though they age at only about one-fifth their normal rate, infused creatures are sterile, so its followers cannot reproduce, thus explaining the need to acquire fresh bodies to infuse. The characters' arrival gives him the perfect opportunity to add to his diminishing legions. The cobaltog's senses make him aware of the trespassers lurking outside of the door. Though he cannot tell the exact nature of the creatures awaiting him, he knows that no more than two of his dwarven servants ever approach his inner sanctum. He telepathically tells his most-devout servant, the old dwarf **Clovis**, to use his magic to prepare for battle. Of course, the loyal subordinate complies with his master's wishes.

Dwer-Bokham, Cobaltog: HD 8; HP 59; AC 3[16]; Atk slam (1d8 plus weakness); Move 9; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; **Special:** avaricious gaze (100ft radius, save or stand stunned), infusion (infuse with metal, +1 AC bonus, controlled by cobaltog), light blindness (stunned for 1 round), weakness (Movement lowered by one-quarter if save fails). (See **Sidebox**)

Clovis Stonesplitter, Infused Male Mountain Dwarf Clr3: HD 3; HP 21; AC 3[16]; Atk heavy mace (1d6); Move 9; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** darkvision 60ft, infused (+1 AC bonus), spells (2).

Spells: 1st—*cause light wounds, detect magic.*

Equipment: heavy mace, *bracers of defense* AC 4[15], 2 *potions of extra healing*, pet bat named Khazhan.

Tactics: Dwer-Bokham uses his avaricious gaze to fascinate his humanoid foes. The cobaltog physically attacks any humanoid creatures that shrug off the effects of his avaricious gaze. If he fascinates at least half of the characters, he attempts to infuse his fascinated foes, starting with the physically weakest character. Clovis lends magical aid to his master. Clovis fights to the death defending his god. He rebuffs any overtures to renounce Dwer-Bokham, and his loyalty to his cobaltog master never wavers.

Development: If the battle turns against Dwer-Bokham, he attempts to bargain for his life, offering the characters his treasure as well as a long-forgotten secret. He tells the characters that the greatest collection of lost knowledge can be found in the Library of Arcady on the Fiergotha Plateau several hundred miles north of their present location. (The Library of Arcady is the setting for *A Little Knowledge*, the next adventure in the series.) If the attempt fails, Dwer-Bokham fights to the end.

Cobaltog

Hit Dice: 8

Armor Class: 3[16]

Attacks: slam (1d8 plus weakness)

Saving Throw: 8

Special: avaricious gaze, infusion, light blindness, weakness

Move: 9

Alignment: Chaos

Number Encountered: 1, 1d3+1

Challenge Level: 10/1400

A cobaltog is a shiny gray creature that appears like an amalgamation between a humanoid being and a worm-like alien coated with an eerie sheen similar to the color and texture of liquid mercury. Its lower torso resembles a thick trunk-like appendage covered in flexible, metallic plates rather than a pair of conventional legs. Likewise, its upper body is best defined as a segmented central torso that connects the lower body with two hardened, chiseled limbs and a bizarre head that contains two silvery eyes and a round, undefined mouth. A cobaltog hits with a powerful slam that also slows a creature by one-quarter its Movement unless a saving throw is made. Any creature within 100ft of a cobaltog must make a saving throw vs. the creature's gaze or stand stunned as if finding a vein of valuable metal. The effect ends if the cobaltog moves farther than 100ft. The cobaltog can infuse stunned victims automatically by placing its mouth against the victim's mouth and exhaling into the victim's mouth. The stunned creature must make a saving throw or be infused with metal. The infused creature gains a +1 AC bonus, but is under the control of the cobaltog. *Remove curse* can cure an infused creature. A cobaltog is stunned for 1 round by bright lights.

Cobaltog: HD 8; AC 3[16]; Atk slam (1d8 plus weakness); Move 9; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400;

Special: avaricious gaze (100ft radius, save or stand stunned), infusion (infuse with metal, +1 AC bonus, controlled by cobaltog), light blindness (stunned for 1 round), weakness (Movement lowered by one-quarter if save fails).

Concluding the Adventure

Dwer-Bokham's destruction eliminates a threat to Miners' Refuge, however, his absence also creates several unforeseen consequences. With their false deity gone, any remaining dwarves who previously fell under his sway are now divided and leaderless. His inherently chaotic followers soon abandon Mithral Mountain and fan out across the region, leaving a trail of violence in their wake.

In addition, Thane Ilgar's relatives and few surviving loyalists see this as a perfect opportunity to reclaim their former homeland and begin life anew in their ancestral home. Several contenders step forward to fill the power vacuum and lead the rebuilding of the community; however, there is no universal consensus regarding who should rule in the thane's stead. Ilgar has no direct line of succession, so there is no obvious choice to succeed him. Despite the high stakes, none of the possible successors wants the situation to escalate into an armed conflict. One or more of the candidates may turn to the characters for an endorsement or to dredge up potentially damaging information about an opponent. It is even possible that an unscrupulous powerbroker may turn to the characters to intimidate a foe into dropping out of contention or attempt to assassinate or otherwise incapacitate a rival.

The characters must also decide what to do with Bagrus Farmud. Naturally, if the characters killed him, they can collect their reward without any further complications. Otherwise, they must return the captive Bagrus to Miners' Refuge to receive their recompense and bring him to justice. The conniving swindler knows that his fate is all but sealed if he returns to Miners' Refuge. As a result, throughout the journey back to town, he pleads for his freedom. He offers to pay the characters double or even triple the amount of the highest award in exchange for setting him free. Of course, the skilled conman has no intention of fulfilling that promise. He flees into the mountains at the first opportunity, never to set foot anywhere near Miners' Refuge again. If the characters rebuff his overtures and hand him over to the council to face his accusers, a speedy trial and execution awaits the charlatan.

If the characters ventured to the hobgoblin lair and freed the captives, the townspeople are overjoyed to see the characters upon their arrival.

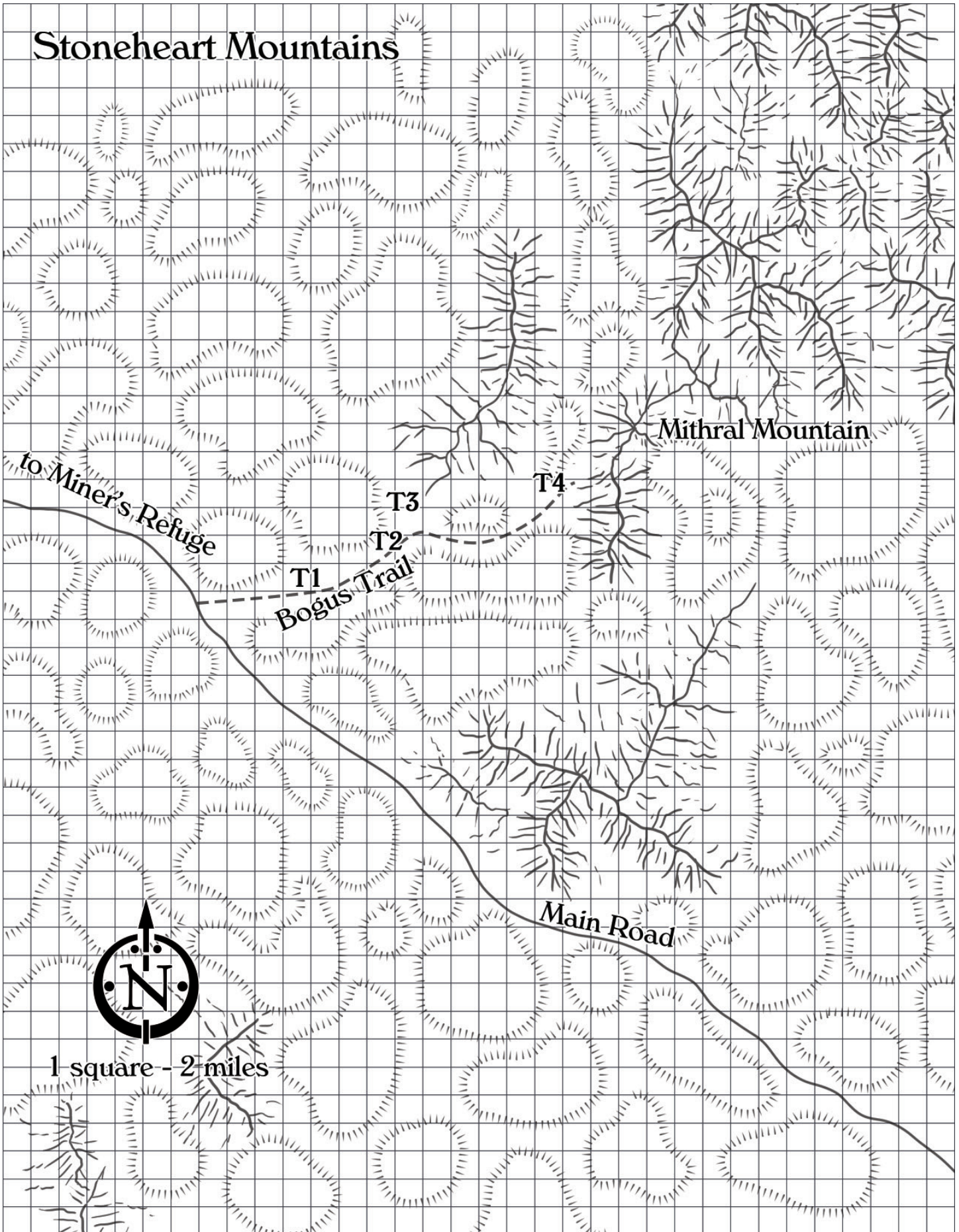
The respite also gives the characters an ideal opportunity to rest and recuperate for the next adventure, *A Little Knowledge*, which takes place on the distant Fiergotha Plateau.

C7. Dwer-Bokham's Vault

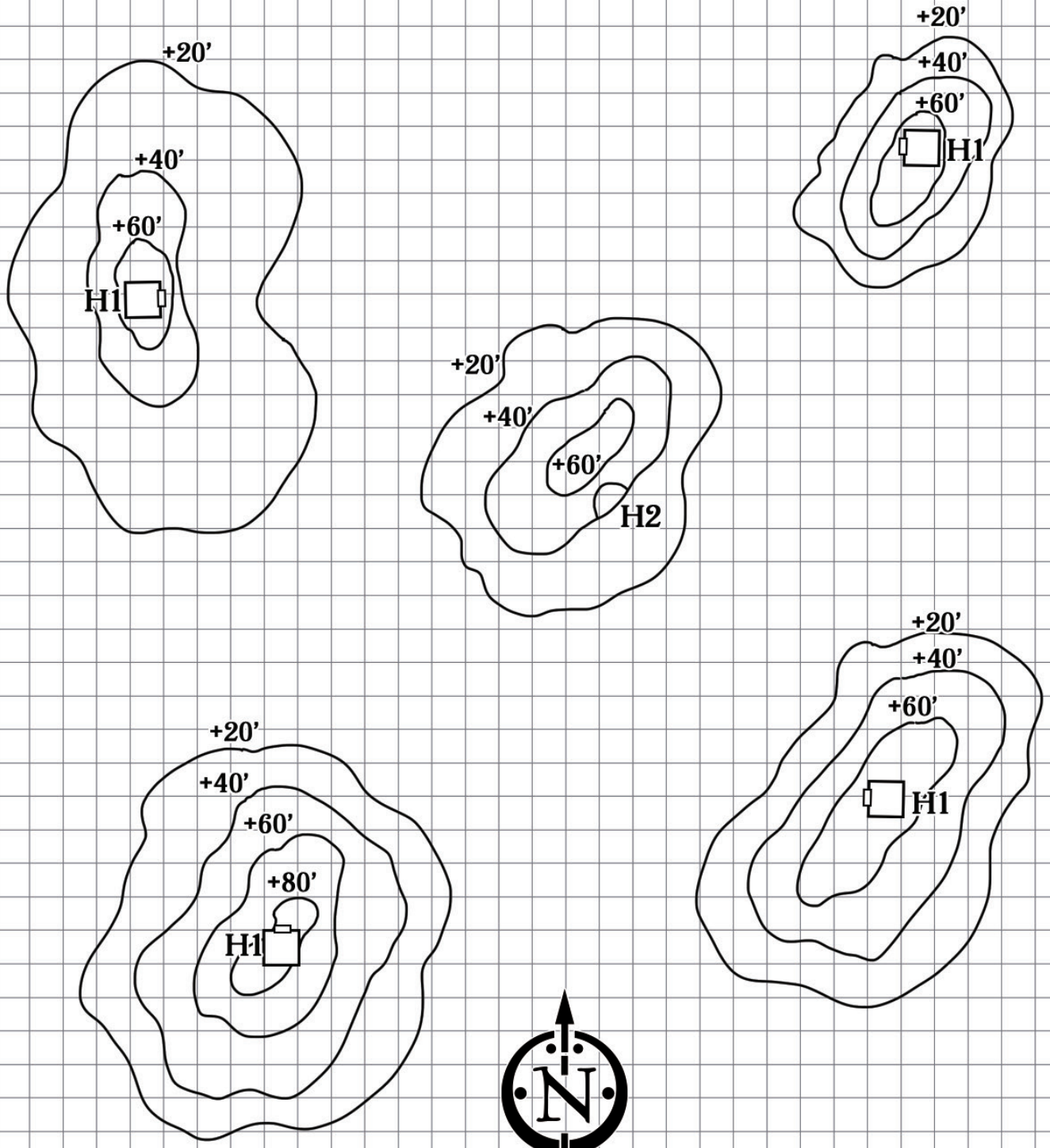
Numerous loose coins and other objects nearly cover the entire floor. Colorful bas-relief sculptures adorn the walls. Though chipped and faded in some spots, the artwork clearly depicts ancient dwarf warriors waging an epic battle against silvery, humanoid creatures that are shown melding into the surrounding stone where they resemble a vein of silvery-gray metallic ore.

The sculptures adorning the walls date back nearly 2000 years. The artwork reveals that the legends of Mithral Mountain were indeed false. The alleged veins of mithral were in actuality cobaltogs that melded into the surrounding stone, making them appear to be pure veins of the precious metal.

Treasure: During his reign, Dwer-Bokham has accumulated a vast array of material goods from looting the halls and chambers of the mountain, including 3059gp, 4320sp, 8 tourmaline stones worth 100gp each, 12 +1 crossbow bolts, an arrow direction, and a bag of holding.



Hobgoblin Lair

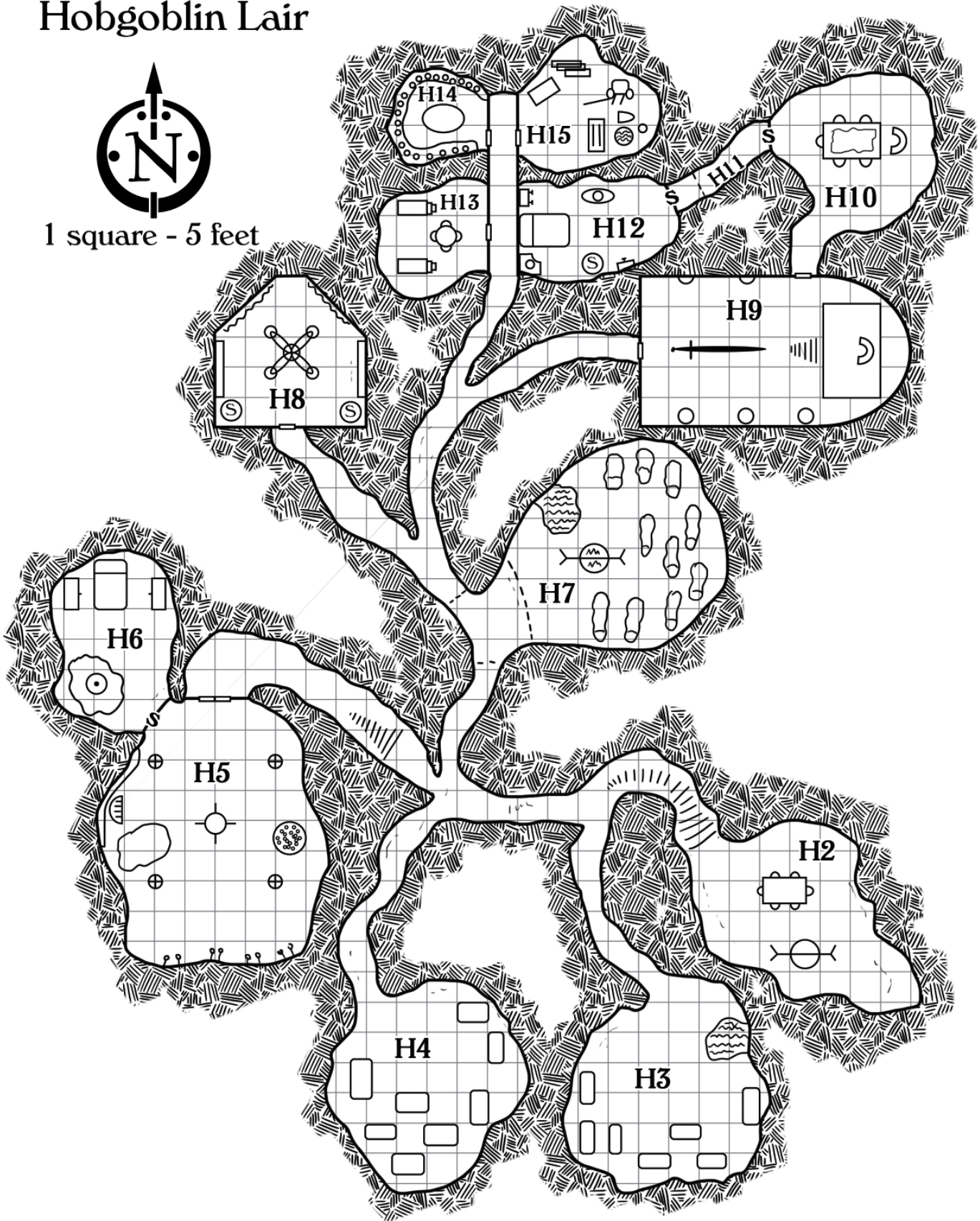


1 square - 10 yards

Hobgoblin Lair



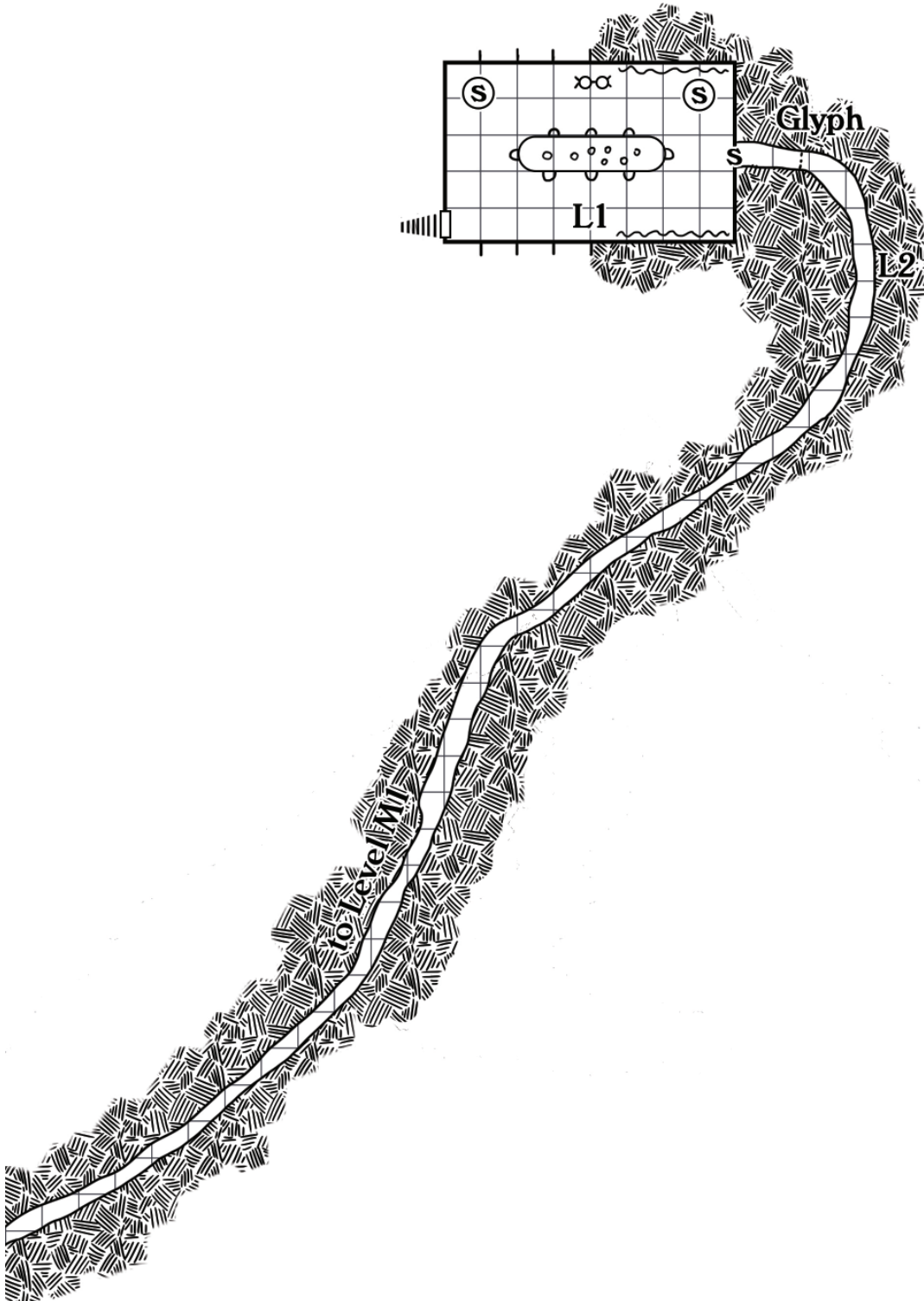
1 square - 5 feet



Lodge



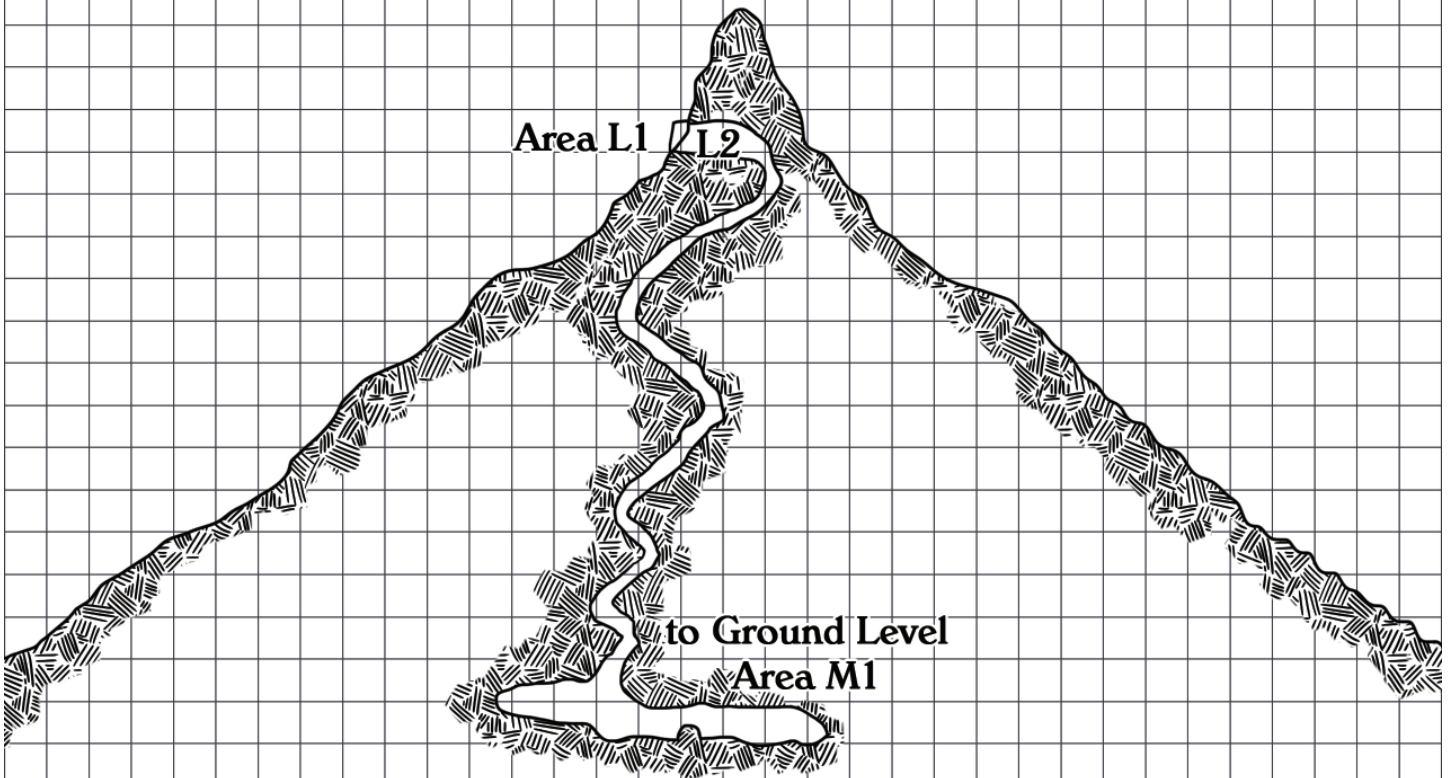
1 square - 5 feet



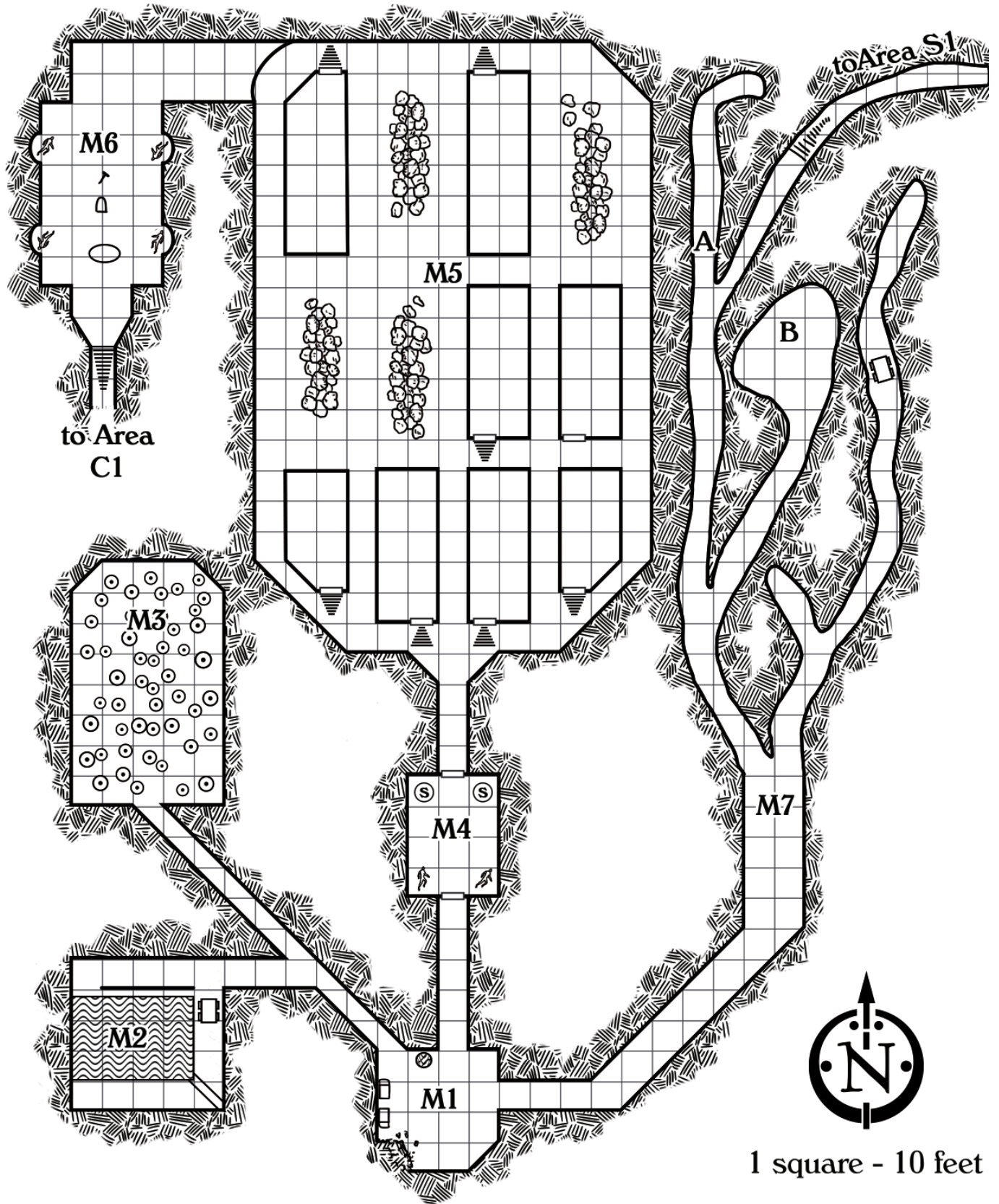
Side View of Mithral Mountain



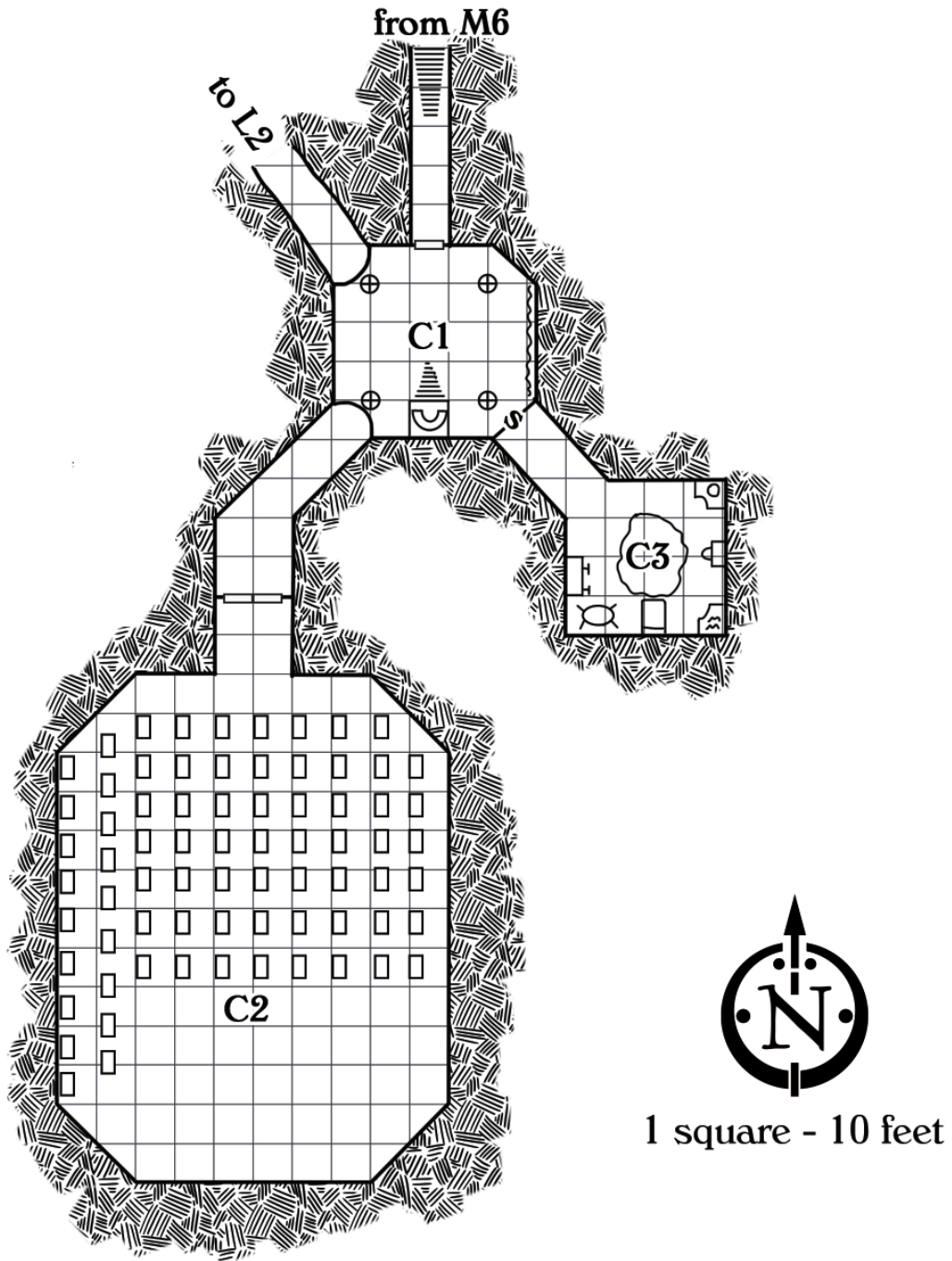
1 square - 200 feet



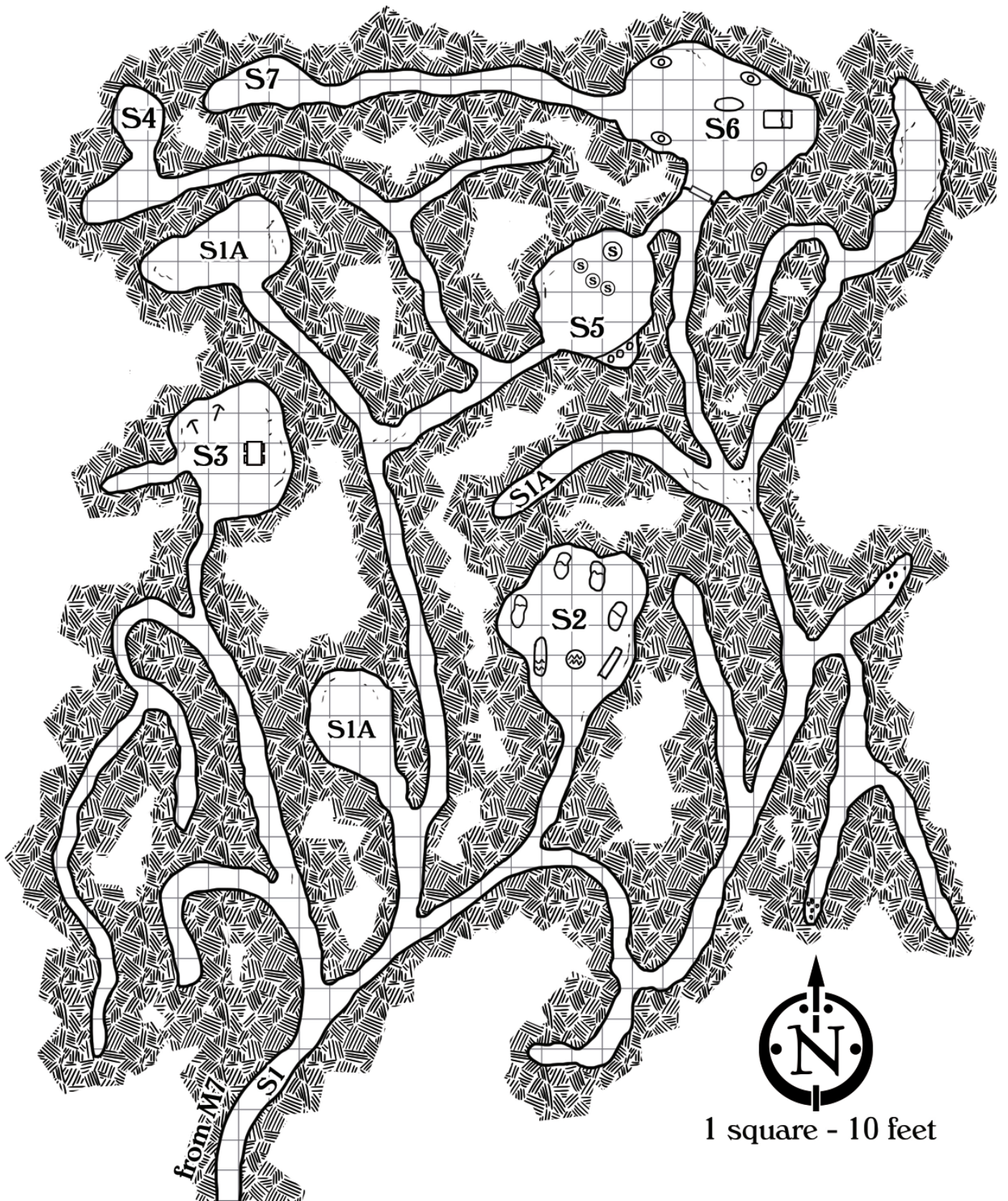
Mithral Mountain Ground Level



Catacombs Level



Sanctum Level



GOD OF ORE

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QoD41

Quests of Doom 4

God of Ore

God of Ore is an adventure for 3rd-level characters that takes them from the quiet, mountainside town of Miners' Refuge into the heart of the Stoneheart Mountains in pursuit of a failed pilgrimage to discover a phony religious relic deep inside legendary Mithral Mountain. The dark, twisting tunnels that bore into the fabled mountain soon reveal that some mysteries are not what they first appear to be.



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