

HEROIC

1-10

"I want you to know something before I die."

"I was awesome."



STORM TOWER

By Christopher Perkins

An adventure for 3rd-level characters

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"Storm Tower" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure designed for five 3rd-level characters. It begins in the town of Fallcrest, described in Chapter 11 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The player characters have been in Fallcrest for a short while, perhaps enjoying some "down time" between adventures, and just long enough for rumors of their heroism to begin circulating among the locals.

BACKGROUND

The fortified town of Fallcrest faces many threats, among them encroaching monsters from the borderlands, where civilization meets the harsh, untamed wilderness. Goblins and giants are of particular concern. To hold them back, the Lord Warden of Fallcrest ordered the reconstruction of a damaged tower that once kept watch over the Witchlight Fens to the south and the Ogréfist Hills to the west. He hired a team of dwarf stonemasons from the stronghold of Hammerfast and sent them to the tower. Nathan Faringray, a captain in the town militia, was assigned to protect them. Faringray and a dozen warriors accompanied the dwarves to the tower, where they set up camp.

While Faringray and his retinue were away, the Fallcrest Guard suffered significant losses defending the King's Road from monstrous brigands. A week ago, Faringray was summoned back to Fallcrest to help train new recruits for the town guard. He left his retinue at the tower and rode back to town, believing that the stonemasons were adequately protected. But he was wrong.

Yesterday, while training raw recruits in the cold, muddy fields west of Fallcrest, Nathan Faringray was surprised to see Sorik Orvash, one of the dwarf stonemasons, staggering along the road toward town. The captain confronted Sorik and learned that brigands had attacked the ruined tower the previous morning. Sorik described the gang of brigands as a mixture of armored humans and walking skeletons. The humans looked haggard, their faces painted to resemble yellow skulls. This evil force overcame the guards at the tower, yet Sorik escaped. Taking advantage of the fog and rain, he fled unseen.

The Lord Warden has instructed Captain Faringray to dispatch another force to reclaim the tower. Rather than risk more of the town's militia, Faringray has decided to hire a party of adventurers. He has

heard reports that such a party currently resides in Fallcrest, and that these adventurers can be trusted with such an important task.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In early 2008, Wizards of the Coast teamed up with the mad geniuses of Penny Arcade to create a very special D&D 4th Edition podcast. James Wyatt and I ran a group of upstarts through an abbreviated version of *Keep on the Shadowfell*, the first 4th Edition adventure. Our players included Mike "Gabe" Krahulik and Jerry "Tycho" Holkins of [Penny Arcade](http://www.penny-arcade.com) (www.penny-arcade.com) and special guest star Scott Kurtz of [PVP](http://www.pvponline.com) (www.pvponline.com). Together they formed Acquisitions Incorporated, a party of adventurers in search of fame and fortune—more fortune than fame, actually. Split into eight hilarious segments, the podcast proved a resounding success, with almost half a million hits on the Internet. The members of Acquisitions, Inc.—Jim Darkmagic, Omin, and Binwin Bronzebottom—became instant legends in the real world.

In December of 2008, Penny Arcade teamed up with Wizards once again for a sequel. Mike, Jerry, and Scott needed another fix. This time, however, we added actor Wil Wheaton to the mix, playing the party intern. Wil's character was an elf avenger named Aeofel, and as it turns out, the very survival of Acquisitions Incorporated would rest on his slender shoulders.

The adventure, which had the working title "Penny Arcade and the Tower of Storms," wasn't written

to be humorous. Quite the contrary. I always knew the humor would come from the players, not the set-up . . . and certainly not the DM. The encounters took 8 hours to complete, at which point we had to cut things short. (Turns out I had another D&D game across town that evening.) We probably could've finished the adventure sooner, but as happens when you run a game for cartoonists and actors, expeditious play often takes a back seat to wacky hijinks.

If you want to know how Acquisitions Incorporated fared, listen to the podcasts. The first one can be found [here](#). I'm not going to tell you which characters died, if any. You'll have to do your research! I will say that Jim Darkmagic and the gang had a tough go this time 'round, and Mike's temper tantrum in the eighth hour is true magic and should be remembered in song.

In closing, I'd like to add that the adventure you're reading isn't exactly the same as the adventure I ran for Mike, Jerry, Scott, and Wil. As a DM, I make impromptu changes to an adventure while running it, usually to heighten the tension or surprise the players. I encourage you to exercise similar license and not be bound by what's written here. I also made a couple alterations to surprise players who listen to the podcast and think they know everything. You can thank me later.

—Chris Perkins

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

When the PCs take the task, they must first venture to Vanamere's Tower, where they find Yellowskull bandits. After the combat with this group, the watching spirit of Vanamere allows them into the tower. Once inside, the PCs encounter more bandits and several traps. Hopefully, they also free the dwarf survivors. Eventually they have to figure out how to get into the vault, and once they do that, they can find the skull that the bandits sought.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins in Fallcrest. The heroes are relaxing inside one of the local inns, such as the Nentir Inn or the Silver Unicorn Inn. Begin the adventure by reading the following aloud.

Thick curtains of rain fall outside, turning the streets to mud, and peals of thunder resound in the distance. Your evening's rest comes to an abrupt end when a figure enters the inn and slams the door behind him. His shoddy cloak is drenched, and when he pulls back the cowl, you see that he's a young tiefling boy. He nods to the innkeeper sheepishly, then slinks toward you. From within the folds of his cloak, he produces a dry, unsealed letter and hands it to you.

This 12-year-old tiefling ne'er-do-well is named Tirion Blackhorn. He lives with a family of human farmers in Fallcrest. The letter is from Captain Nathan Faringray of the Fallcrest Guard. Tirion hands the letter to one of the heroes, having already taken the time to read it himself. He sticks around long enough to see if the heroes offer him a token payment, then darts back outside and slips away into the rain.

Captain Faringray's letter reads as follows:

Good folk,

I have heard tales of your heroism and wish to employ your services. Adventure awaits in the borderlands! The Lord Warden of Fallcrest has authorized me to pay well for your time and effort.

If this offer intrigues you, look for me in the fields west of Fallcrest tomorrow morning. Simply take the western ferry across the river and walk to the outskirts of town. You will find me there.

*With respect and regards,
Captain Nathan Faringray of the Fallcrest Guard*

If the heroes accept Faringray's invitation, read or paraphrase the following text:

The next morning, you head west through the rain and fog. A short ferry ride brings you to the western shore of the river. You march along a muddy road past farmers' dwellings until you see an open field of tilled earth and thicker mud. In the middle of the field scream a dozen militia recruits. They attack one another with wild abandon, swinging wooden swords and shields. Watching them with dismay is a cloaked man on horseback. Near him, standing in a puddle by the road, is a dour dwarf smoking a pipe. Rain pours off his wide-brimmed hat.

The figure on horseback is Captain Nathan Faringray, a handsome 40-year-old man. The captain introduces the dwarf as Sorik Orvash, a stonemason from distant Hammerfast, a dwarven hold in the eastern Dawnforge Mountains.



WHAT FARINGRAY KNOWS

When questioned, Captain Faringray imparts the following information:

- ◆ Some months ago, Faren Markelhay, the Lord Warden of Fallcrest, hired a group of six dwarf stonemasons to rebuild a ruined tower to the west. Faringray was assigned to protect them.
- ◆ Faringray and his retinue of six well-trained guards accompanied the dwarves to the tower. Reconstruction efforts were underway and things were moving apace until Faringray was summoned back to Fallcrest to train new warriors for the town guard. He thought he was leaving the tower in capable hands, however.
- ◆ The day before yesterday, a group of brigands attacked the tower and overwhelmed the guards and masons. Only Sorik escaped. Some of the brigands were humans clad in leather armor, their faces painted to resemble yellow skulls. The rest were clearly undead skeletons.
- ◆ In generations past, the tower was key to the town's defense, watching over the Cloak Wood to the north, the Witchlight Fens to the south, and the Ogréfist Hills farther west. Thirty-odd years ago, a legion of goblins and hill giants advanced from the Ogréfist Hills and attacked the tower, which had but one defender: a powerful elf wizard named Vanamere. No one knows what happened exactly, but when the battle was over, the giants were dead, the goblins were driven off, and Vanamere's tower was destroyed.

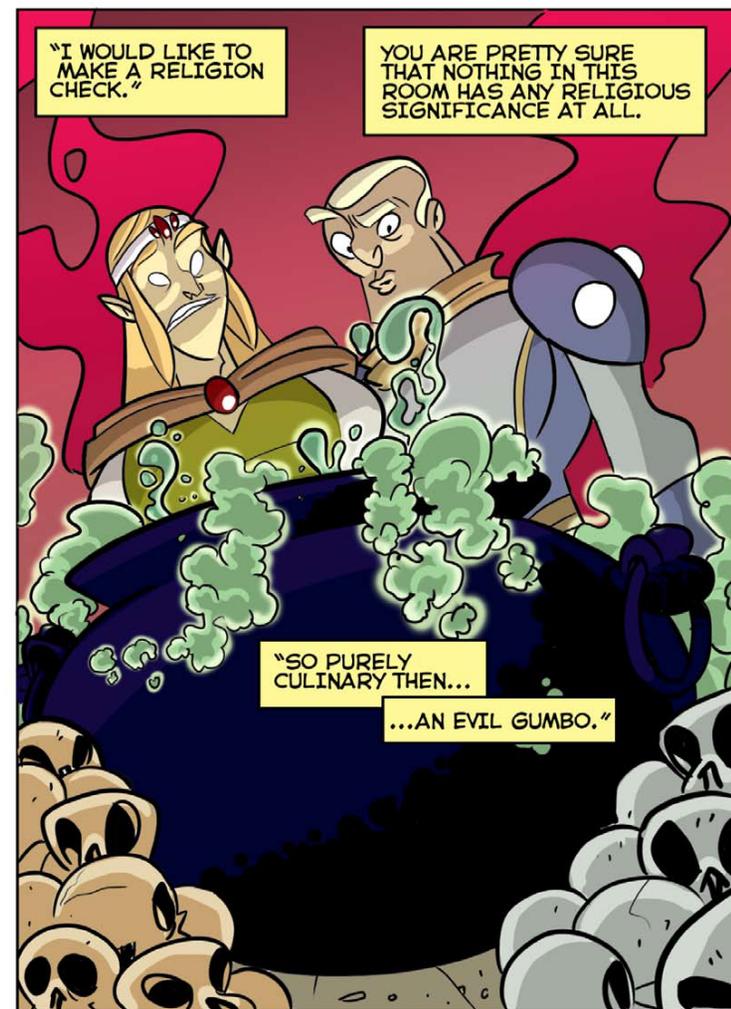
- ◆ For years, Fallcrest lacked the funds and the incentive to rebuild the tower. However, the growing threat of monsters prompted its reconstruction.
- ◆ Although he's not a skilled combatant, Sorik knows the fastest way to the tower and is willing to escort the characters there, provided they keep him out of harm's way.

Faringray would prefer to return to the tower and clean up his own mess, but his orders are clear: He must remain in Fallcrest to complete the training of the new recruits. Therefore, he asks the characters to investigate the tower, look for survivors, and deal with the mysterious brigands.

Major Quest: The PCs gain a 1,000 XP award for dealing with the brigands and rescuing the prisoners.

TREASURE

This adventure can take a party of 3rd-level characters most of the way to 4th level. If you add an encounter or two, it certainly will. Distribute nine (or ten, if you add encounters) level 3 parcels in this adventure. A couple locations—area 1, area 2, and area 5—have suggested treasure. The bandits should have money and valuables, which can be multiple monetary parcels split up among them, but most of the significant treasure is in the hands of the named NPCs. If the PCs demand it, Faringway assures them that the Lord Warden will award them a monetary award that you devise from the parcels. For example, each brigand captured alive and returned to Fallcrest might garner the party 50 gp.



SORIK ORVASH

Sorik Orvash is the stereotypical “dour dwarf” and can barely contain his anger toward the brigands. He doesn’t talk much during the return trip to the tower.

Sorik Orvash		Level 3 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf		XP –
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 12		
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects		
Speed 5		
⊕ Pick (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage, and Sorik shifts 1 square.		
Roll With It (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)		
Sorik can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack. If he succeeds, he can shift 2 squares.		
Stand Your Ground		
When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides Sorik, Sorik moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack could knock Sorik prone, a successful save negates that effect.		
Alignment Good	Languages Common, Dwarven	
Skills Dungeoneering +9, Endurance +10		
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 10 (+1)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 12 (+2)	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, pick, hat, pipe		

WEATHER

This adventure takes place during whichever season works best for your campaign, but regardless of the time of year, it rains constantly, and light fog shrouds every location the characters go. Ill weather is an important theme; rain and fog persist until the adventure is complete.

Rain and Light Fog: Weather lightly obscures anything within 5 squares of a viewer and heavily obscures anything 5 or more squares from a viewer.

REACHING THE TOWER

Vanamere’s Tower lies 25 miles west of Fallcrest, on the far side of the Cloak Wood, on the northern edge of the Witchlight Fens. Faringray urges the characters to steer clear of the forest and instead suggests that they follow the Nentir River south until they come upon the Witchlight Fens. Then they can trudge west across rugged, grassy terrain while avoiding the fens. The total trek covers 30 miles. What’s left of the tower sits atop a hill north of the fens and can be seen from 2 miles away on a clear day.

If the characters travel the route that Faringray suggests, the journey to the tower is dreary and uneventful. Feel free to insert an encounter with the creatures of the Witchlight Fens if the players are spoiling for a fight. Here’s one you can use.

Encounter Level 4 (XP 875)

- ◆ 1 visejaw crocodile (level 4 soldier; *Monster Manual* page 45)
- ◆ 4 greenscale hunters (level 4 skirmisher; *Monster Manual* page 178)

If the characters ignore Faringray’s advice and try to cut 5 miles off the journey by traveling through the Cloak Wood, use the following encounter to illustrate the dangers of the forest and why it’s usually avoided. During the encounter, Sorik does his best to hide and avoid combat. If the characters are defeated, he flees.

Encounter Level 5 (XP 1,250)

- ◆ 1 goblin underboss (level 4 elite controller; *Monster Manual* page 138)
- ◆ 4 goblin skullcleavers (level 3 brute; *Monster Manual* page 137)
- ◆ 2 spitting drakes (level 3 artillery; *Monster Manual* page 91)

VANAMERE’S TOWER

A pair of retired adventurers—an elf wizard named Vanamere and a human fighter named Lethion Goldenhawk—married and built this tower as a private residence, sinking a considerable amount of their accumulated wealth into the endeavor. Only later did the tower become important to the defense of Nentir Vale, and only after special agreements were reached with the owners.

When Lethion passed away, Vanamere placed his remains in a secret tomb carved out of the hill beneath the tower. With him she buried their remaining treasure, including magic items seized during their careers. One of the items entombed with Lethion was a gold-plated human skull, taken from the corpse of a gnoll demon-worshiper in the Ogréfist Hills. The golden skull is believed to be one of several stolen from the Temple of Yellow Skulls (see *Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 208).

Goblins from the Ogréfist Hills and Witchlight Fens tried to overrun the tower on several occasions, but their attacks were rebuffed. Thirty-odd years ago, the goblins joined forces with a clan of ogres and a giant, and descended from the hills in force. They pounded the tower with rocks and broke through its defenses. Vanamere used a ritual to summon a mighty storm.

When they breached the tower, a great bolt of lightning struck its peak, causing the tower to explode. Jagged shards of rock killed most of the invaders. The magical attack so frightened the remaining monsters that they fled back into the hills, never to return. What became of Vanamere, no one knows. According to legend, when the lightning struck, she became one with the tower and remains trapped within its ruined walls to this day.



ARRIVAL

When the characters approach within a mile of the tower, read the following (assuming Sorik Orvash is alive):

The rain and fog make it hard to discern your surroundings. Sorik looks at you wearily. "We're almost there," he says, leading you up a gentle hill dotted with head-sized chunks of gray stone half embedded in the ground. You also see bones lying amid the grass and weeds.

The skeletons are all that remain of those that attacked the tower around 30 years ago. No valuables can be gained by searching them.

When the characters reach the top of the hill, proceed with the first encounter.

Tactical Encounter: 1. Yellowskulls (page 57).

Once the encounter begins, the PCs can follow the trail of encounters through the tower areas until they finish what they came to do.

THE YELLOWSKULLS

The brigands who attacked the tower paint their faces to resemble yellow skulls and call themselves the Yellowskulls. They came from the Temple of Yellow Skulls, a ruin located in the Ogréfist Hills to the west. They were sent by their evil masters to retrieve a relic

of the temple—a gold-plated skull—that was stolen years ago and is rumored to lie somewhere below Vanamere's tower. The leader of these brigands is a necromancer named Jeras Falck, but he is merely the henchman of a more powerful enemy. The identity of Falck's master is left up to you.

THE DUNGEON

Falck's lieutenants, Tregger and Lurash, are stationed here and they are guarding the six captured dwarf stonemasons.

Tactical Encounter: 2. The Dungeon (page 60).

TRAPPED HALL

Flameskulls can take cover behind the double doors here and make good use of trap positions to create a challenging combat environment for the PCs.

Tactical Encounter: 3. Trapped Hall (page 62).

SKULL CAULDRON

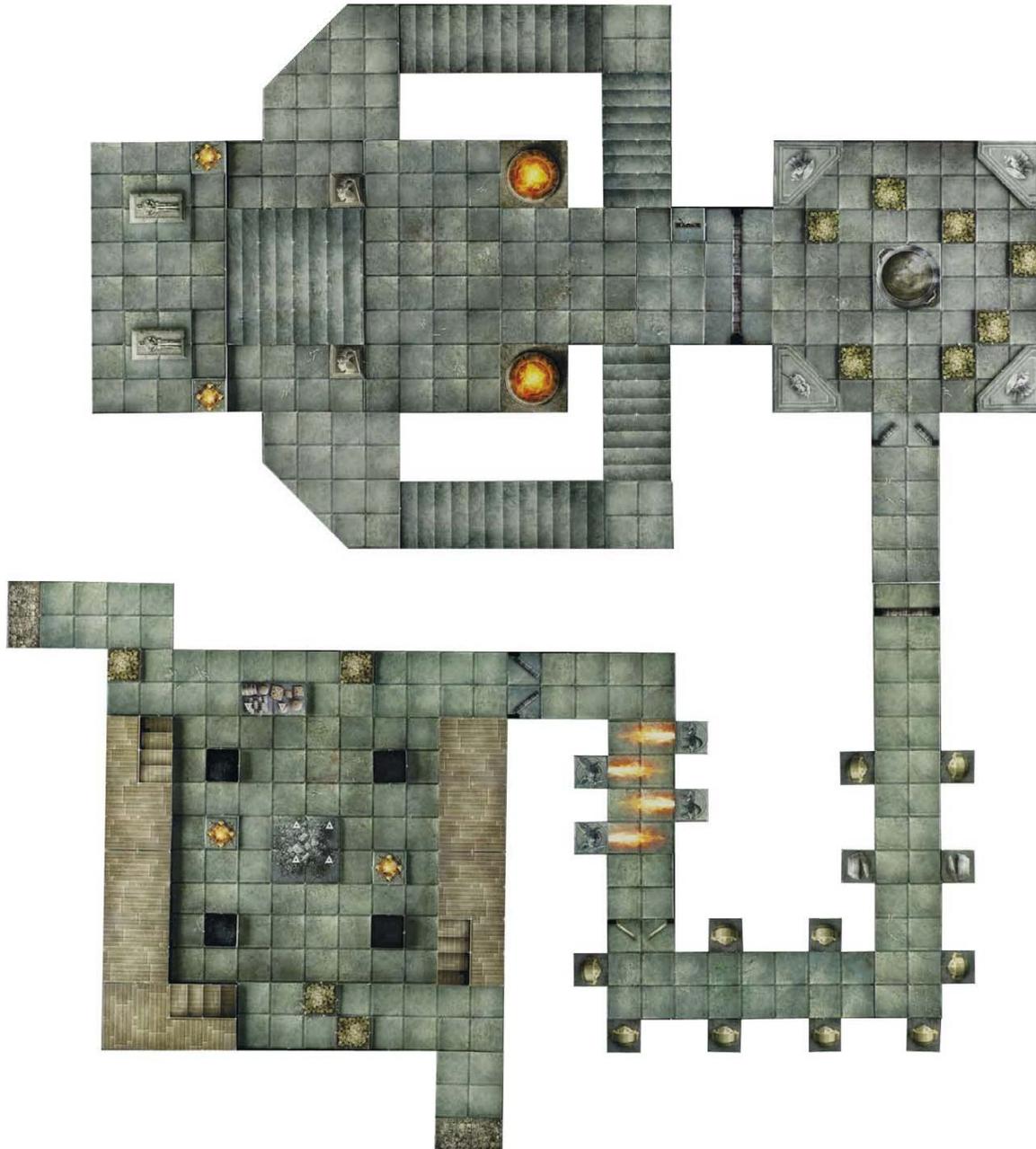
The cauldron here serves as the key to getting into the vault. If the PCs fail to deal with it correctly, they encounter the defenses for the vault.

Tactical Encounter: 4. Skull Cauldron (page 64).

THE VAULT

Once the vault opens, the PCs encounter Falck, who seeks the gold skull that is within the sarcophagus.

Tactical Encounter: 5. The Vault (page 66).



ENCOUNTER 1: YELLOWSKULLS

Encounter Level 4 (878 XP)

SETUP

Celk, Yellowskull Doppelganger (C)

4 Yellowskull bandits (B)

6 zombie rotters (Z)

When the Yellowskull bandits attacked the tower, Faringray's guards put up strong resistance. Eight bandits died. Jeras Falck took his revenge by turning the dead guards into zombies that now wander the hill. He then ordered four bandits and Celk, a doppelganger, to stand guard in and around the tower. Celk assumes the form of a dwarf stonemason named Tarjin Stoneheart and pretends to be the bandits' prisoner.

Place the bandits and Celk only when they come within 5 squares of the characters. Beyond that range, the rain and fog grant total concealment. The \$zombie rotters are placed only after the battle is joined (see "Tactics" below).

When PCs reach the ruined tower, read:

Fog obscures your view of the hilltop, but as you ascend, you see a tower that has been reduced to a broken ring of mortared stone, punched through with gaping holes. It rises to a height of only 20 feet, its top resembling a jagged crown. The upper levels are gone, their remains scattered upon the hillside. Some large shrubs grow near the tower, and you also see a pair of drab tents and a smoldering campfire threatened by the rain.

When the characters and bandits meet, read:

Sullen men clad in leather armor, their faces painted to resemble yellow skulls, take aim with crossbows. Rain has streaked the paint on their faces. Near them stands a haggard dwarf, his hands tied behind his back. "Drop your weapons or the dwarf dies!" shouts one of the bandits. His voice is nearly drowned by a deafening peal of thunder.

Any character who suspects a ruse can make a DC 20 Insight check to determine that the dwarf is not, in fact, the bandits' prisoner or a DC 19 Perception check to spot the short sword hidden on the dwarf's person.

Peals of thunder make it impossible for the bandits beneath the tower to discern cries of alarm from the bandits stationed here. No reinforcements are forthcoming.

TACTICS

Sorik Orvash stays out of harm's way but recognizes the other dwarf as Tarjin Stoneheart, a fellow stonemason. The bandits threaten to kill their dwarf prisoner unless the heroes throw down their weapons and surrender.

If the characters refuse or attempt to put one over on the bandits, "Tarjin" stomps on the boot of the nearest bandit, causing him to yelp. Then he bolts toward the PCs, taking cover behind their ranks. If a fight breaks out, Celk slips out of his bonds, draws a hidden short sword, and attacks. He tries to take out the party's leader or controller while avoiding defenders and strikers. The doppelganger withdraws into the fog if combat turns against him.

The bandits use the tower walls for cover as they shoot at the PCs. When forced into melee, they draw their maces and attempt to gain combat advantage by flanking.

The zombie rotters appear in two groups of three, arriving on the second and third rounds of combat.

4 Yellowskull Bandits (B)		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1	
HP 37; Bloodied 18		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6		
⊕ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
⚔ Dazing Strike (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Weapon		
Requires mace or crossbow; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
⚔ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
Combat Advantage		
The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, crossbow with 10 bolts		

6 Zombie Rotters (Z)		Level 3 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 38 each
Initiative -1	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 4		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 6 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 3 (-3)
Equipment chainmail, Fallcrest Guard tabard		

DEVELOPMENT

When the last enemy falls, the PCs have proven their worth to Vanamere's watching spirit. As they prepare to descend the shaft or take a short rest, lightning strikes the top of the tower, breaking away part of the wall and causing a wooden scroll tube to fall to the tower floor.

The scroll tube has a golden stopper at each end, one emblazoned with the symbol of Corellon and the other adorned with the symbol of Kord. The scroll tube contains a scroll with the Hand of Fate ritual (175 gp, 25 gp for the scroll tube).

Celk's Lies: If Celk is defeated but kept alive for questioning, he uses his Bluff skill to spin a web of lies, claiming that he and the brigands are under the spell of a bog hag named Zerilka who lives in the Witchlight Fens, with orders to explore the secret dungeon beneath the tower. Those whom Zerilka hexes wither and die if they defy her. Celk goes on to describe the hag's rivalry with Vanamere, and how the hag only recently learned of the secret dungeon beneath Vanamere's ruined tower. Celk claims that slaying Zerilka is the only way to free him and the cursed brigands from her spell. Of course, none of his story is true, although Zerilka might be real.

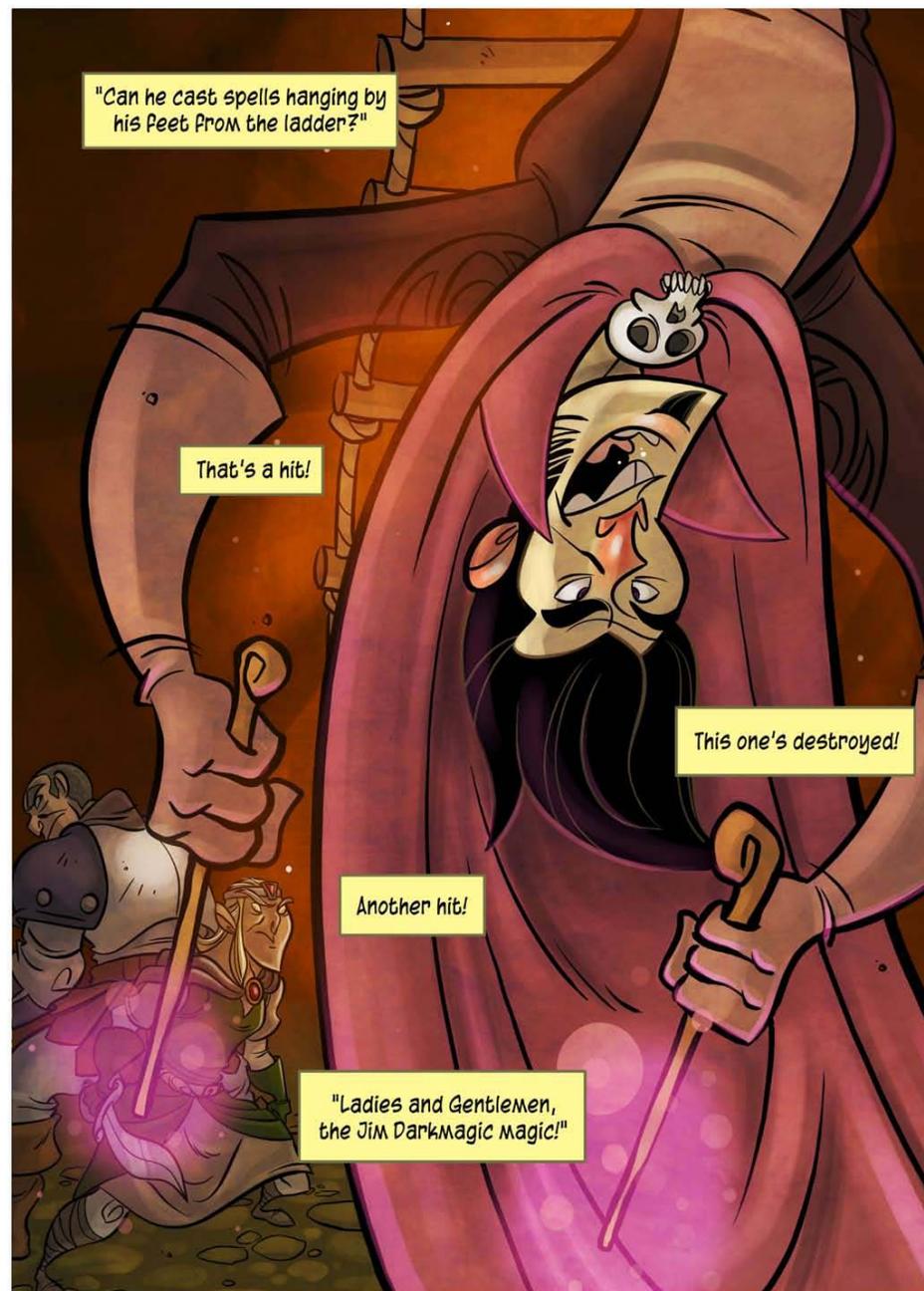
Sorik Orvash: If he survives the battle, Sorik remains in the tower while the characters explore the dungeon.

Voices from Below: Characters who listen to the voices from below hear the following exchanges (in Common) with a successful Perception check:

DC 12: "Who built this place anyway?" "Some elf wizard with a lot of money and time on her hands, apparently."

DC 15: "So, why we keepin' the dwarves alive?" "I dunno, maybe Falck thought they'd be more useful alive than undead." "Ain't it obvious, you two? This place is partly collapsed. We might need 'em for diggin'."

DC18: "This place gives me the creeps." "Don't worry. As soon as Falck finds that skull, we're outta here."



ENCOUNTER 2: THE DUNGEON

Encounter Level 5 (1,000 XP)

SETUP

Tregger, Yellowskull berserker (T)

Lurash, Yellowskull cutthroat (L)

4 Yellowskull bandits (B)

“Chomper,” iron snapjaw (C)

The bandits stationed here include Falck’s lieutenants, Tregger and Lurash. Six captured dwarf stonemasons (D) are also kept here (see “Development”). The map shows everyone’s location, but Lurash is hidden under the scaffolding. Do not place him on the map until he’s spotted or until he attacks.

If the characters alert the bandits, Tregger takes up position behind one of the pillars so that he’s no longer out in the open. Although they exchange insults, the bandits cannot be coerced into giving up their position or allowing the PCs through without a fight.

When the PCs descend into this room, read:

The hole breaks through the ceiling of a 60-foot-square, dusty room with four large pillars. Directly beneath the hole is a mound of rubble. Two braziers illuminate the area and reveal three exits. A heap of supplies and several piles of skulls are on the chamber floor.

The walls are adorned with half-finished murals depicting great battles. Rickety, 10-foot-high wooden scaffolding clings to the north and south walls, directly below these murals.

Upon the floor and scaffolding stand several leather-clad figures with yellow skulls painted on their faces, as well as a device that looks like rusty iron jaws stained with blood.

The PCs might see the masons. They might also recognize the real Tarjin among the dwarves. All the dwarves have statistics like those of Sorik Orvash.

TACTICS

Tregger uses *staggering strike* to push an enemy adjacent to the iron snapjaw he calls “Chomper.” He resorts to throwing handaxes only if targets are out of melee reach on a given turn.

Lurash remains hidden until he can attack a PC with 1 round’s worth of actions. He poisons his targets so he can keep combat advantage easily. Meanwhile, he tries to stay close to another bandit, so that when he’s targeted by a melee or ranged attack, he can use *sly shift* to move out of harm’s way.

The bandits shoot their crossbows from atop the rickety scaffolding until forced to engage in melee.

Tregger, Yellowskull Berserker (T)		Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2	
HP 66; Bloodied 33		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12		
Speed 7		
⊕ Maul (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.		
⊕ Staggering Strike (standard; recharge ⓧⓧⓧⓧⓧⓧ) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 3d6 + 6 damage, the target is pushed 2 squares, and Tregger shifts adjacent to the target.		
⊕ Battle Fury (while bloodied)		
Tregger deals 1d6 extra damage on any hit.		
✂ Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common
Skills Athletics +9, Endurance +9		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, maul, 2 handaxes		

Lurash, Yellowskull Cutthroat (L)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 175
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +4	
HP 52; Bloodied 26		
AC 18 (22 against opportunity/immediate attacks);		
Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Speed 6		
⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and Lurash shifts 2 squares.		
Poisoned Blade (minor; at-will)		
Lurash dips his short sword in a poison-filled scabbard. The next time he hits with his short sword, Lurash makes a secondary attack against the target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +7 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage, and is dazed (save ends both). Lurash has enough poison for three attacks.		
Sly Shift (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or ranged attack; recharges when first bloodied)		
Lurash switches places with an ally within 2 squares (each shifts into the other’s space) and redirects the attack to that ally.		
Combat Advantage		
Lurash’s attack deals 2d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common
Skills Acrobatics +11, Stealth +13, Thievery +13		
Str 8 (+1)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 12 (+3)	Cha 9 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, poisoned scabbard		

“Chomper,” Iron Snapjaw (C)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (blind, construct)		XP 150
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +2; tremorsense 3	
HP 47; Bloodied 23		
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Speed 6		
⊕ Clamping Bite (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (-2 to escape) and takes ongoing 10 damage while grabbed. While grabbing an enemy, the iron snapjaw cannot make attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 16 (+4)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 1 (-4)

ENCOUNTER 3: TRAPPED HALL

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

SETUP

- 2 **Yellowskull bandits** (B)
- 4 **flamejet statues**
- 2 **iron maidens-in-chains** (T, pressure plates)

When they heard sounds of battle from area 2, the Yellowskulls here took cover behind the double doors east of the flamejet traps (eastern doors) and readied actions to shoot at the first enemy that moves into view. Don't place them until the PCs see them.

When the PCs reach the first corner, read:

Around the next corner you see four alcoves. Statues of angels occupy the alcoves on the right; statues of demons fill the alcoves on the left. All four statues breathe continuous gouts of flame. Beyond these jets of fire, you see an open set of double doors.

Perception DC 21: *Two human figures are crouched behind the double doors.*

When the PCs pass the eastern doors, read:

Beyond the double doors, you see more alcoves, each one containing an upright sarcophagus. The lids of these sarcophagi bear the graven images of elf and human warriors.

TACTICS

If one or more intruders advance past the flamejet traps, the bolters withdraw to the end of the hall, avoiding the iron maiden trigger plates in the floor.

2 Yellowskull Bandits (B)		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1	
HP 37; Bloodied 18		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6		
⚔ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
⚔ Dazing Strike (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Weapon		
Requires mace or crossbow; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
⚔ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
Combat Advantage		
The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, crossbow with 10 bolts		

4 Flamejet Statues		Level 1 Blaster
Trap		XP 100 each
Flame belches from the mouth of each statue, threatening to burn all who pass.		
Trap: Flame fills the 2 squares directly in front of the statue.		
Perception		
♦ DC 10: The character thinks it might be possible to avoid the flames with a successful Acrobatics check.		
♦ DC 15: The character sees a way to disable a statue (see Countermeasures, below).		
Trigger		
The trap attacks any creature that enters a fiery square.		
Attack		
Free Action	Close burst special	
Target: The triggering creature		
Attack: +4 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 1d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
Miss: 1d6 fire damage.		
Countermeasures		
♦ Thievery (DC 20); standard action; an adjacent character can disable a statue until the end of his or her next turn.		

- ♦ Acrobatics (DC 20); part of a move action; the character can move into a flaming square without being attacked by the trap.

2 Iron Maidens-in-Chains	Level 2 Obstacle
Trap	XP 125 each

Stepping on a hidden pressure plate causes the iron sarcophagus in the nearby alcove to open, revealing a lid lined with spikes. Animated chains lash forth from inside the sarcophagus to pull you in.

Trap: The floor in front of the iron maiden contains a hidden pressure plate. Stepping on it causes the iron maiden to open and attack.

Perception

- ♦ DC 20: The character spots a hidden pressure plate in the floor.
- ♦ DC 25: The character realizes that the "sarcophagus" is an iron maiden.

Trigger

The trap attacks any creature that enters the square directly in front of the iron maiden. If a creature is trapped inside the iron maiden already, the trap does not attack.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee 1**

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: A Medium or smaller target is grabbed and pulled into the maiden, taking 1d6 + 4 damage and ongoing 5 damage. Other creatures lose line of sight to the target, and the target loses line of sight to everything outside the iron maiden. A Large or bigger target is grabbed (DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check to escape).

Countermeasures

- ♦ Thievery (DC 18); standard action; an adjacent character can disable a pressure plate.
- ♦ Athletics (DC 18); standard action; an adjacent character can force open the iron maiden, freeing the creature within and ending the ongoing damage. A creature caught in an iron maiden can open it from within, but the DC is 20. A freed creature appears in the iron maiden's square.
- ♦ A character outside the iron maiden can attack it (AC 15, Fortitude 15, Reflex 2; hp 50). Destroying the iron maiden frees the creature within, ending the ongoing damage. The freed creature appears in the iron maiden's square.

ENCOUNTER 4: SKULL CAULDRON

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

SETUP

2 cauldron corpses (C)

Do not place the monsters on the map until they show up (see “Features of the Area”).

When the PCs open the double doors, read:

The centerpiece of this 20-foot-high room is a monstrous stone cauldron nearly 5 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter. Black, fetid tar fills the cauldron to the brim. Surrounding it are seven piles of goblin skulls. Each pile contains skulls painted a specific color.

Four statues depicting elf warriors and human warriors stand atop daises in the corners of the room. Fifteen-foot-high iron doors stand closed to the south.

If cauldron corpses appear, read:

The cauldron belches, and suddenly two blackened corpses rise up out of the tar, their eyes filled with hate.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

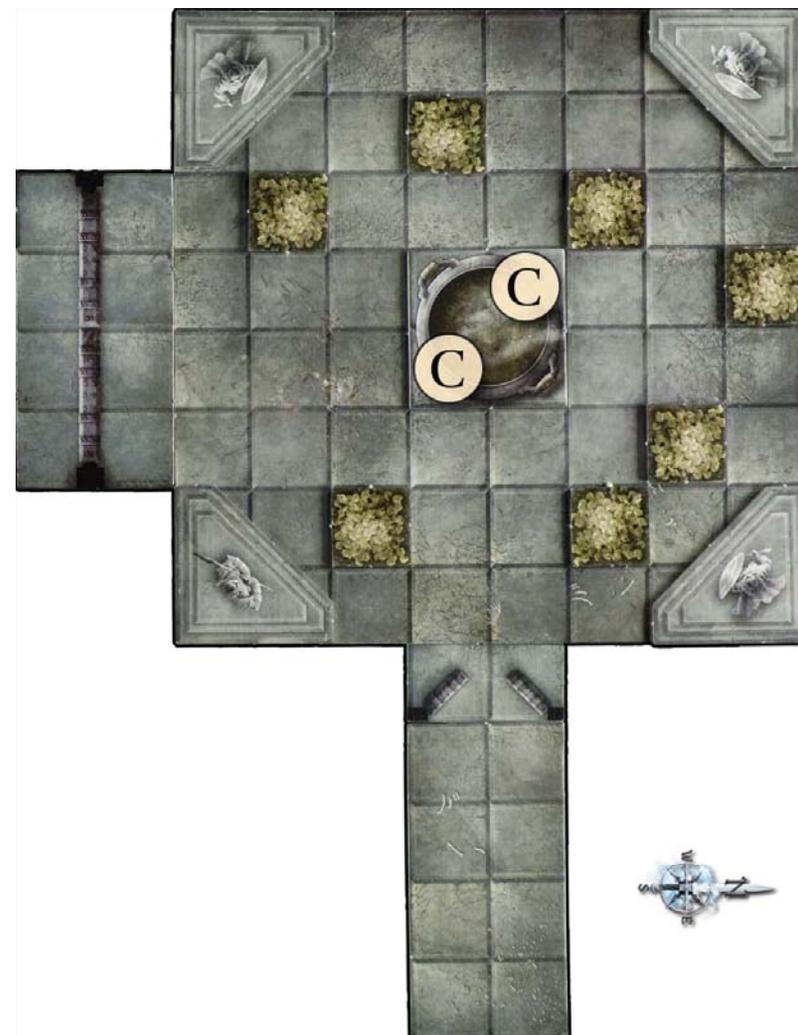
Piles of Goblin Skulls: Each pile contains goblin skulls of a specific color. The number of skulls in each pile varies, with no less than 30 of each color. Beginning with the northernmost pile and moving clockwise, these colors are: black, green, red, gold, purple, white, and blue.

Statues: These 6-foot-tall statues are blocking terrain.

The Cauldron: The cauldron is bolted to the floor and filled with necrotic filth (DC 15 Arcana to identify the danger). Any living creature that touches the tarlike substance takes 1d8 necrotic damage.

Tossing a green, red, white, or blue goblin skull into the cauldron causes two cauldron corpses to rise up from within and attack. Tossing a black skull, a gold skull, and a purple skull into the cauldron (at once or in any order) causes the iron doors to open. The crest of Vanamere and Lethion, as displayed in the ruined tower (see Encounter 1), is comprised of these three colors.

The Iron Doors: These doors cannot be opened by force or with magic. However, they open loudly when three skulls of the appropriate colors are dropped into the cauldron in any sequence (see The Cauldron). The iron doors remain open for 1 round before closing on their own. Attempting to hold an iron door open as it tries to close requires a DC 28 Athletics check.



TACTICS

The corpses fight until destroyed. They are not concerned about catching other undead in their necrotic spray.

2 Cauldron Corpses (C) Level 5 Elite Brute Medium natural animate (undead) XP 400

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 152; **Bloodied** 76
AC 18; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Resist 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Necrotic Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

↘ **Necrotic Spew** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Ranged 5; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the cauldron corpse's next turn.

↶ **Necrotic Spray** (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Close burst 1; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage, and the cauldron corpse releases one cauldron mote.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 6 (+0) **Cha** 4 (-1)

Cauldron Mote Level 3 Minion Brute Tiny natural animate (undead) XP –

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic
Speed 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 +8 vs. AC; 3 necrotic damage, and ongoing 2 necrotic damage (save ends). The ongoing damage stacks with that delivered by the cauldron corpse.

Tomb Tactics
 When a cauldron mote hits a target adjacent to three or more other motes, it deals double damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –

DEVELOPMENT

Correct Skull Key: Vanamere and Lethion found the cauldron and hid it here. Only later did Vanamere put its power to use protecting the tomb. If the PCs open the iron doors without causing cauldron corpses to appear, award them experience as if they had slain the cauldron corpses.



I SWEAR AN OATH OF EMNITY ON THE BARBARIAN.

Ἰσχυρὰ ἐπιβεβαιῶμαι ἐπὶ τοῦ Βαρβάρου!

WOW. THAT WAS TOTALLY BANGING.

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THAT AGAIN. THINK I SPRAINED MY UVULA.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE VAULT

Encounter Level 6 (1,452 XP)

SETUP

Jeras Falck (F)

2 boneshard mongrels (B)

4 skeleton archers (S)

4 zombie rotters (Z)

Jeras Falck is attempting to bypass wards to reach the treasures within Lethion's sarcophagus. So far, his efforts have failed. This failure has made him very angry. The PCs might not see the archers when combat begins. Describe the skeletons only once they're seen.

When the PCs open the doors to the tomb, read:

The iron doors part loudly, drawing you into a great vault illuminated by stone-rimmed wells of belching fire. At the far end of the vault, broad steps climb 15 feet to a platform supporting two stone sarcophagi and a pair of braziers. Statues of armored warriors stand at the base of the steps, to either side of which is a raised gallery 20 feet above the floor.

Zombie Yellowskull bandits stand silent in the vault, reeking of death. Behind them, at the top of the stairs, a human wearing a golden mask shaped like a skull limps forward, drawing a crimson orb from the folds of his black robe. His voice is hollow and hateful. "This tomb will be yours unless you leave, now."

TACTICS

Falck tries to avoid melee. He targets distant enemies with *pain bolt* and *crimson claws*. Each turn, he also uses *command undead* to position allies between him and his enemies. When two or more enemies are bloodied and within the area of effect, Falck employs *overwhelming wounds*. If he drops to 32 or fewer hit points, Falck assumes *wraithform* and tries to escape.

The undead attack the nearest enemies, while the skeleton archers shoot arrows from the galleries.

2 Boneshard Mongrels (B)	Level 5 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 200 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +4; darkvision
HP 70; Bloodied 35; see also <i>boneshard burst</i>	
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 15	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 6	
↓ Boneshard Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
↓ Bite and Hurl (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞) ♦ Necrotic	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends), and the target slides 2 squares and is knocked prone.	
↓ Boneshard Maul (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
Targets a prone creature; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 16 (+5) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 3 (-2) Cha 3 (-2)

Jeras Falck (F)	Level 5 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 400
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +2
HP 114; Bloodied 57	
AC 19; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 18	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 4	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Dagger of Pain (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 2d4 + 2 damage, and the target slides 2 squares.	
⊗ Pain Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 20; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target takes -2 to all defenses until the end of Jeras's next turn	
⚡ Flurry of Pain (standard; at-will)	
Jeras makes two basic attacks.	
✂ Crimson Claws (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞) ♦ Implement	
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage and the target is immobilized (save ends both). While the claws immobilize the target, Jeras gains regeneration 3.	
⚡ Overwhelming Wounds (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement	
Close burst 5; +9 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 damage, and if the target is bloodied after the damage, that target is dazed until the end of Jeras's next turn.	
Command Undead (move; at-will)	
Undead allies within 10 squares of Jeras Falck can shift 2 squares as a free action. One destroyed undead minion rises again with 1 hit point and stands as a free action.	
Wraithform (standard; encounter)	
Jeras Falck becomes insubstantial and gains phasing until the end of his next turn.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Religion +9	
Str 12 (+3) Dex 9 (+1) Wis 10 (+2)	
Con 15 (+4)	Int 16 (+5) Cha 18 (+6)
Equipment robes, dagger, orb, golden skull mask (100 gp)	

4 Skeleton Archers (S) Level 2 Artillery

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 125 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision**HP** 31; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic;**Vulnerable** 5 radiant**Speed** 5⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.

🏹 **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 20/40; +6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.

Shake the Mark (immediate reaction, when the skeleton archer is marked; at-will)

The skeleton archer is no longer marked.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)**Con** 13 (+2) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)**Equipment** short sword, longbow, quiver of 20 arrows**4 Zombie Rotters (Z) Level 3 Minion**

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 38 each

Initiative -1 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10**Immune** disease, poison**Speed** 4⚔ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 6 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 6 (-1) **Wis** 8 (+0)**Con** 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)**Equipment** leather armor

FEATURES OF THE AREA

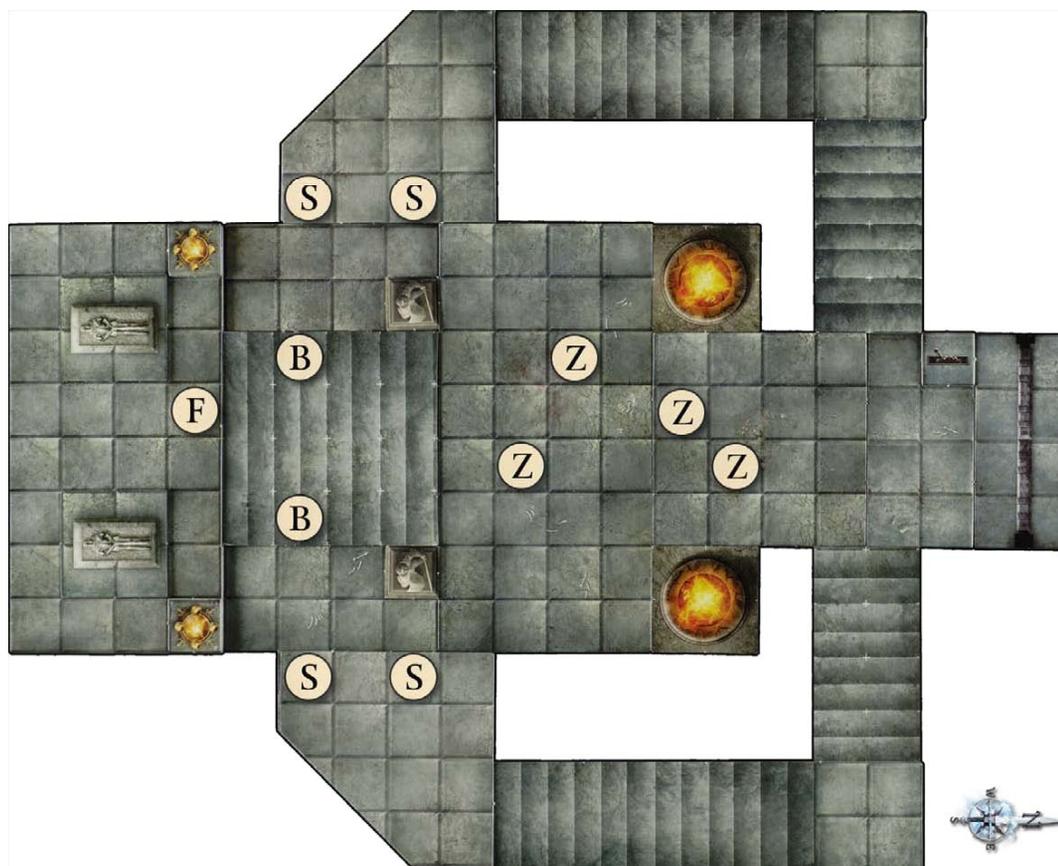
Vault Levels: The ceiling in the main hall is 30 feet high. The platform upon which the sarcophagi rest is 15 feet above the floor of the main hall and has a ceiling 15 feet high. The western and eastern galleries that overlook the main hall are 20 feet above the main hall's floor and have 10-foot-high ceilings.

Stairs: The stairs up to the galleries and to the platform are not steep.

Iron Lever: A few feet inside the vault, a heavy iron lever juts out of the floor. Pulling on this lever opens the iron doors, which remain open for 1 round before closing on their own. Attempting to hold an iron door open as it tries to close requires a DC 28 Athletics check.

Wells of Fire: These stone wells are 20 feet deep (DC 20 Athletics to climb) and filled with fire that spews from volcanic vents below the tomb. Any creature pushed into a well takes 1d10 fire damage, in addition to the fall. Any creature starting its turn in a well takes 1d10 fire damage.

Fiery Braziers: These brass braziers contain burning oil. Knocking over a brazier fills a close blast 2 area with flaming oil: +4 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).



Statues: The two 6-foot-tall statues are blocking terrain.

Vanamere's Sarcophagus: This sarcophagus has a lid carved in the likeness of a female elf wizard wearing a robe and clutching a staff. Carved into the staff is the following, in Elven:

anbōvō ñ anōā nāō vōv anōvōvō

The runes translate as follows: "Master of magic and fey majesty." The phrase refers to the god Corellon. The lid is askew, exposing the empty interior.

Lethion's Sarcophagus: The lid of this sarcophagus is carved in the likeness of a male human fighter clad in plate armor and clutching a greatsword. The lid refuses to budge, and the sarcophagus seems impervious to harm. The following Elven script is carved into the blade of the stone sword:

hōvō ñ onōōōō nāō āāā ñ vōōōōō

The Elven letters translate as follows: "Lord of battle and king of storms." This phrase refers not to Lethion but to the god he worshiped: Kord. When a holy symbol of Kord touches the sarcophagus, or when a prayer to Kord is uttered while touching the sarcophagus, the magical seal is broken, and the lid can be pushed aside with a DC 15 Athletics check.

Within the sarcophagus are three treasure parcels and a gold-plated human skull (see "Development").

DEVELOPMENT

Gold Skull: The gold-plated skull in Lethion's sarcophagus contains the bound essence of a powerful demon. Evil forces based in the Temple of Yellow Skulls are after this and other skulls lost over time. Any character who holds the skull can sense the evil trapped within it. However, evil creatures within 20 squares can hear it calling out to them for release.

Finishing With Falck: If Falck escapes and returns to the temple empty-handed, his superiors give him one chance to redeem himself. Within a week, the necromancer hires a mercenary gang and attempts to recover the skull. The villains begin their search in Fallcrest, and this time, Falck fights to the death.

If he is captured and successfully intimidated, Falck might be persuaded to reveal what he knows about the Temple of Yellow Skulls. However, before he can divulge anything, he bursts into flame, lets out a horrifying scream, and turns to ash.

CONCLUSION

The defeat of the Yellowskull bandits brings an end to the rain. Sunlight breaks through the gray clouds as the characters prepare to depart. Vanamere is at rest once more, and the characters are free to return to Fallcrest and claim their reward.

About the Author

Chris Perkins is the D&D Creative Manager at Wizards of the Coast LLC, and this is his first contribution to *DUNGEON*® Magazine since "The Lich Queen's Beloved" in Issue #100. He would like to dedicate this adventure to Mike, Jerry, Scott, and Wil.

