

Wormfood

SURVIVING THE AGE OF WORMS ADVENTURE PATH

NOW HIRING: APPLY WITHIN

While the pages of *DUNGEON* magazine present everything a DM needs to run the Age of Worms Adventure Path, every month *DRAGON* gives the players of that—or any other campaign—tools to enhance their gaming experience.

Diamond Lake produces more than its fair share of the impoverished and the desperate. Aside from mine bosses and their well-paid toughs, most residents wish to leave the lung-clogging, soul-crushing community. For most, such hopes never progress beyond just that—they live and die in Diamond Lake. Others look for a means of escape. Getting in good with a mine boss proves popular with the toughest rowdies, but the more sophisticated in the town (and a few do exist) seek a better life as far from the mines as possible. Ironically, these people often seek their fortunes underground, in the dozens of cairns surrounding the town.

Three such desperate souls have made their desires—and abilities—known. If your character takes the Leadership feat, consider acquiring one of these outstanding citizens as your cohort. Allustan can introduce them to you, if you ask him.

GAR BLITZHAME

Like many dwarves, Gar acts gruff and uncaring toward those he barely knows, but he feels deep compassion for weaker creatures—whether adventuring companions or orphaned owlbear cubs. Despite his connection to the mercantile Greysmere Covenant, Gar seeks to leave Diamond Lake and explore the greater world beyond. Of all the terrible and frightening threats that loom before him on the path he has chosen, none strike greater fear in his heart than that of his uncle, Dulok Blitzhame. While he never explains why, Gar insists on avoiding his uncle's residence and office at all times, and only joins a group if its members swear oaths not to reveal him to Dulok.

A BUNCH OF CHARACTERS

These three characters appear in Erik Mona's Age of Worms playtest game held most Thursdays at Paizo's office. In addition to Daejin, Gar, and Tassilo, the party also consists of "Demon Boy" (played by *DUNGEON* Editorial Assistant Jeremy Walker), Dram Cicaeda (played by "Downer" artist Kyle Hunter), Taan Golden oak (played by Senior Art Director Sean Glenn), Tyrlandi Scrimm (played by *DUNGEON* Managing Editor James Jacobs), and Vyth (played by *DRAGON* Assistant Editor Mike McArtor). For more information on these characters' ongoing adventures and campaign journals, check out the messageboards at paizo.com.

Gar wields a dwarven waraxe and wears the relatively heavy scale mail armor of a fighter, but he also carries a thick tome he spends hours reading every day. In combat, Gar tends to move to the front of the line, shouting either boastful challenges or fear-inspired curses depending on the nature of the creatures faced. Despite the chance of failure due to his heavy armor, Gar attempts to cast *enlarge person* whenever a battle turns desperate or need otherwise dictates. If a foe proves particularly difficult to hit, Gar turns to *true strike* and *shield* if he seems to fall victim to a disproportionate number of blows. Gar recognizes that he might not survive a battle, and he attempts to impress upon those around him that very realization of mortality. As such, he never hesitates to chastise those who fool around in the heat of battle—sometimes reinforcing his chastisements with physical reminders.

Because his introduction to the arcane mysteries came only recently, Gar has yet to summon a familiar.



Gar's antics in the Age of Worms playtest game come via the talents of DRAGON Associate Editor Jason Bulmahn.

GAR BLITZHAME

CR 4

Male dwarf fighter 2/wizard 2 (transmuter)

LN Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Hook** "Uh... please don't tell my uncle."

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Spot +1, Listen +1

Languages Common, Dwarven, Goblin, Orc, Terran

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 23 (4 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3; +2 vs. spells, +2 vs. poison

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee dwarven waraxe +6 (1d10+2/x3)

Ranged light hammer +3 (1d4+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd, 25% arcane spell failure):

1st—*burning hands* (DC 14), *enlarge person*, *shield*, *true strike*

0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 9

SQ summon familiar (none)

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe)

Skills Concentration +8, Craft (stoneworking) +12, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Swim +6

Possessions combat gear, dwarven waraxe, +1 *scale mail*, *pearl of power* (1st-level spell), *elixir of truth*, *scroll of identify*, 154 gp of coins and gems

Spellbook as above plus 0—all except conjuration and necromancy; 1st—as above plus *burning hands*, *expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*, *protection from evil*

DAEJIN MOON

Do not mistake her quiet, retiring ways with meekness or submissiveness. Easy going, but easily bored, Daejin tends to follow the will of

the crowd—until that will turns toward excessive conversation. Daejin keeps to herself and tends only to speak when spoken to—and then only enough to answer the question posed to her. When she does volunteer to speak she usually expresses her boredom with a quick verbal jab. Allies should prepare themselves for a pointed comment or two about their combat abilities—or lack thereof—once the bloodshed has ended.

Nearly peerless in Diamond Lake or even the Bronzewood Lodge community in archery skill, Daejin tends to keep away from the general fray at the heart of melee, preferring to fill her foes with arrows. She possesses strong tactical knowledge, and always moves into the best position for delivering ranged attacks. Although she takes her role as support fighter very seriously, helping to set-up effective and efficient battlefield strategies, she has little patience for those who don't—in her estimation—pull their weight in battle.

Sarah Robinson, Graphic Designer for DRAGON, plays Daejin in the Age of Worms playtest game.

DAEJIN MOON

Female half-elf ranger 4

NG Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Hook** "You're not very good at that, are you?"**Senses** low-light vision, Spot +8, Listen +8**Languages** Common, Elven**AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13**hp** 26 (4 HD)**Immune** sleep**Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** longsword +5 (1d8+1/19-20)**Ranged** +1 composite shortbow +6 (1d6+2/x3)**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +7**Atk Options** Point Blank Shot**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (2)**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd):
1st—*pass without trace***Abilities** Str 16, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 9**SQ** animal companion (Wolf, *Monster Manual* 283)**Feats** Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track**Skills** Climb +7, Handle Animal +4, Hide +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Spot +8, Survival +9**Possessions** combat gear, *sleep arrows* (4), *arrows* (40), +1 composite shortbow (+2 Str bonus), studded leather, 130 gp**TASSILO VINIESE**

As you might expect from an experienced cleric of Heironeous, Tassilo struggles to balance his actions between strict adherence to regimen and the never-ending need for compassion. He spent most of his life within the quiet confines of Heironean religious enclaves, and only recently did his superiors send him into the larger world to investigate the death of a paladin assigned to his temple. Tassilo does not let his sheltered youth and relative inexperience keep him from sharing his natural wisdom with others, although as a reserved individual he rarely comes across as a bossy know-it-all. He suffers fools now much more easily than he did in his youth, but at times such

CR 4

suffering gets the better of his patience. The biting quips that occur then often instruct as well as castigate—ever with an eye toward the perfect balance of warrior, healer, and teacher.

Tassilo acts in combat as one might expect from a cleric of the god of battle: he uses his superior knowledge of tactics and battlefield positioning to both aid those who fall in battle and support those still standing. He performs a constant balancing act between pressing the attack and tending to the wounded, and he does so almost flawlessly. Tassilo recognizes that occasionally the victor in battle sometimes only wins because he makes the gravest sacrifices. To that end, he shows no fear in placing himself in a position that puts him in immediate danger if by doing so he can assure overall victory. Heironeous, however, obviously favors his devout worshiper, as despite sometimes suffering grievous wounds Tassilo still lives.

F. Wesley Schneider, Assistant Editor for *DRAGON*, breathes life into Tassilo during the Age of Worms playtest game.

TASSILO VINIESE

CR 4

Male human cleric 4 (Heironeous)

LG Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Hook** "Keep in mind I do worship the god of war."**Senses** Spot +4, Listen +4**Languages** Common, Dwarven**AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14**hp** 22 (4 HD)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +7**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** longsword +5 (1d8+1)**Ranged** light hammer +3 (1d4+1)**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +4**Atk Options** Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm**Special Atk** turn undead (+1, 2d6+5, 9th), spontaneous casting (cure spells)**Combat gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th):
2nd—*aid* (CL 5th), *bear's strength*, *shield other*, *spiritual weapon*^D
1st—*bane* (DC 15), *bless*, *cause fear* (DC 15), *protection from evil*^D (CL 5th), *shield of faith*

0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

D: Domain spell. Domains: Good, War

Abilities Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 19, Cha 13

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Investigator, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword)^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B

Skills Concentration +5, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +3, Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +5, Search +4, Spellcraft +7

Possessions combat gear, masterwork light hammer, masterwork chain shirt, *amulet of natural armor* +1, scroll of *inflict moderate wounds* (2), 149 gp

FOLLOWERS IN DIAMOND LAKE

It is possible that a particularly heroic or well-funded character could achieve a leadership score high enough to attract a small number of followers. Followers drawn from the Diamond Lake area might come from any number of sources, including local militia members, junior clergy affiliated with one of the local faiths, experienced miners, or nearby woodsmen. Although skill in the arcane arts and cultural sophistication might be in low supply, followers from this area are hearty, grim fellows, ready to tackle thankless tasks or pass on a bit of ill-gotten information to a loyal patron.

USES FOR THE DM

When present, cohorts should serve an important role in the campaign. If the players miss an important piece of information or lack the motivation to investigate a plot point, a cohort can serve as an excellent tool to drive your story forward. What better motivation to adventure than a friend in need or danger?

If any of these cohorts seem suitable to your campaign, introduce them early and let your PCs get to know them. Cohorts should be friends and allies before signing on with the group. ■