

Four **Redbrand ruffians** are drinking and playing knucklebones when the characters enter. The game isn't far from turning acrimonious, as most of them do. The dice are loaded, and the ruffian to which they belong is naturally winning. All four have been drinking heavily, and they are poisoned (see the appendix in the rulebook for the effects of being poisoned).

The Redbrands immediately recognize characters wearing scarlet cloaks as impostors. However, fast-talking characters might still be able to pass themselves off as "new recruits," especially if they offer to join the game. If you don't think the players are doing a great job roleplaying the deception, you can have the character who is doing most of the talking make a DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check to fool the Redbrands.

#### TREASURE

The wealth in the room is all on the table, having been bet in the game. (Knocking over the table or mixing up all the enemies' loot is a great way to distract them for a short time.) The total amounts to 75 cp, 55 sp, 22 ep, 15 gp, and a gold earring set with a tiny ruby (30 gp).

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 400 XP equally among the characters if the party defeats the Redbrands in this room.

### 11. WIZARD'S WORKSHOP

Faint bubbling and dripping sounds can be heard through either door of this room with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

This room appears to be a wizard's workshop. A rat scurries across the floor and takes refuge under a large worktable set up with alembics, retorts, distillation coils, and other alchemical devices, all of it stewing and bubbling away. Bookshelves are crowded with sheaves of parchment and strange-looking tomes.

Iarno has left his rat familiar here to watch for intruders. The rat shares a telepathic bond with its master, and it sends a brief warning message to Iarno as soon as it detects intruders. The rat moves at a speed of 20 feet and has AC 10, 1 hit point, and no effective attacks. If the rat is killed, it disappears.

If the characters leave the rat unharmed, it follows them around as though curious or hungry. It might even feign affection for a character who feeds it, though it remains absolutely loyal to Iarno.

**Books and Notes.** Iarno is trying to master the art of brewing potions and concocting alchemical mixtures. The books and notes scattered around the room are basic texts on alchemy. Any character proficient in Arcana can see that Iarno's apparatus appears to be set up to brew *potions of invisibility*—not that he has succeeded so far.

Among the books is a tome written in Dwarvish. The journal of an adventurer named Urmon, it describes the history of the Lost Mine of Phandelver and the Forge of Spells. (Share the information in the first and second paragraph of the "Background" section if you have not already done so.) In addition, Urmon records that a magic

mace named *Lightbringer* was commissioned by priests of Lathander, the god of dawn, from the mages working with the gnomes and dwarves of the Phandelver's Pact. The mace was lost when Wave Echo Cave and its mine vanished from history. (Characters might find the mace in part 4, "Wave Echo Cave.")

#### DEVELOPMENTS

Because Iarno and his rat familiar share a telepathic bond, the mage (in area 12) knows the characters are coming and has time to prepare for them.

#### TREASURE

Most of the materials in this room have no value, but three small bottles hold rare reagents: mercury, dragon bile, and powdered nightshade. These are worth 25 gp each to an apothecary or alchemist.

### 12. GLASSTAFF'S QUARTERS

If the characters approach this room through the secret passage from area 7, they can surprise the leader of the Redbrands—Iarno "Glasstaff" Albrek. Otherwise, his rat familiar warns him of any who approach through area 11, and he flees before the characters arrive.

The walls of this bedchamber are covered with drapes of scarlet cloth. The furnishings include a small writing desk with matching chair, a comfortable-looking bed, and a wooden chest at the foot of the bed.

If Iarno is surprised, add the following paragraph:

Sitting at the desk is a short, dark-bearded human male in robes, studying a tome. He wears a princely mantle of ermine. A beautiful glass staff leans against his chair, within easy reach.

If the rat in area 11 warns him that trouble is approaching, Iarno the **evil mage** grabs his *staff of defense* (see appendix A) and the scrolls in his chest (see the "Treasure" section), and flees through the secret door in the northeast corner of the room. In his haste, Iarno leaves behind a letter from the Black Spider (see the "Developments" section) and neglects to make sure the secret door is closed all the way. Characters gain advantage on ability checks made to find the slightly ajar secret door (see "Advantage and Disadvantage" in the rulebook). For more information on secret doors, see the "General Features" section (page 20).

If he manages to escape, Iarno flees to area 1 (through areas 7 and 8) and grabs the satchel hidden in the cistern there. If the nothic is still alive in area 8, Iarno instructs it to waylay any pursuers. If the characters catch up to him, Iarno quaffs the *potion of invisibility* in the satchel and flees the hideout. At your discretion, he could reappear later in the adventure.

#### ROLEPLAYING IARNO

A former member of the Lords' Alliance, Iarno seized an opportunity in Phandalin to line his own pockets. Originally tasked with setting up a constabulary, the mage



instead assembled a group of outlaws and local ruffians to secure his own position in town.

Iarno knew of the Black Spider through his contacts in the Lords' Alliance and brokered a meeting. The drow promised to share the secrets and wealth of the Forge of Spells with the wizard in exchange for his help and loyalty.

Iarno puts on airs of gentility and courteous manners, addressing his ruffians as "my good gentlemen," and referring to sordid acts such as kidnapping or arson as "that unpleasant little business" or "those unfortunate events." He refers to the characters as "guests" and expresses regret that he cannot provide suitable entertainment for their visit. Beneath his genteel demeanor, however, Iarno is just as thuggish and arrogant as any Redbrand outlaw.

If threatened, Iarno uses his *staff of defense* to cast *mage armor* on himself. He then casts offensive spells at enemies he can see. Iarno's stat block contains a list of the spells he has prepared. For descriptions of those spells and their effects, see the rulebook. Iarno uses the *shield* power of his staff for added protection.

If he is reduced to 8 or fewer hit points and has no avenues of escape, Iarno surrenders. He values his life more than anything, and he remains a model prisoner in the hopes that the Black Spider will somehow learn of his predicament and "arrange for his freedom."

If he is questioned while in captivity, Iarno relates the following information, all of which is true:

- The Black Spider is a drow (dark elf).
- The Black Spider sent three bugbears to help Iarno keep the population of Phandalin under control, but the Redbrands have managed without them. The bugbears know the way to Wave Echo Cave, but Iarno does not.
- The Black Spider is searching Wave Echo Cave for the Forge of Spells. Dwarves and gnomes of the Phandelver's Pact used the magical forge to fashion powerful magic items.

- No other members of the Lords' Alliance know of Iarno's betrayal.

## DEVELOPMENTS

Various papers and notes are stacked neatly on the desk, mostly consisting of Iarno's written orders to apothecaries and alchemists in nearby settlements for more materials for his workshop. The characters also find a letter signed with the Black Spider's symbol.

Lord Albrek,

My spies in Neverwinter tell me that strangers are due to arrive in Phandalin. They could be working for the dwarves. Capture them if you can, kill them if you must, but don't allow them to upset our plans. See that any dwarven maps in their possession are delivered to me with haste. I'm counting on you, Iarno. Don't disappoint me.



If Iarno is taken into custody, Sildar Hallwinter arranges to have the wizard incarcerated in the townmaster's hall until he can be safely transported back to Neverwinter. Whether Iarno stands trial for his crimes is beyond the scope of this adventure. The Black Spider is too preoccupied to meddle in the wizard's fate.

## TREASURE

At the foot of Iarno's bed is a sturdy, unlocked wooden chest holding the best pickings of the Redbrands' loot over the last two months. It contains 180 sp, 130 gp, and a silk pouch containing five carnelians (10 gp each), two peridots (15 gp each), and one pearl (100 gp). It also contains two magic items that Iarno brought with him from Neverwinter: a *scroll of charm person* and a *scroll of fireball*.

Iarno also wields a *staff of defense* (see appendix A).

## AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 200 XP equally among the characters if the party slays Iarno Albrek. Double the XP award if they capture Iarno and deliver him to Sildar Hallwinter in Phandalin.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The next stage of the adventure continues with part 3, "The Spider's Web," in which the characters undertake a number of short adventures that advance the story. At some point during part 2, the characters are likely to advance to 3rd level, so make sure the players are keeping track of their XP.



## PART 3: THE SPIDER'S WEB

In this part of the adventure, the characters follow up on existing leads and lines of inquiry. They can't learn much more in Phandalin, so they need to set out into the forests and hills surrounding the town to uncover the larger plots they are caught up in. The characters are not required to visit all the locations in this section.

Depending on which NPCs the characters met and which quests or clues they picked up, some or all the following information might be known to them:

- Sister Garale wants the characters to seek out the banshee Agatha in the ruined town of Conyberry and ask her about Bowgentle's spellbook.
- Daran Edermath wants the characters to find out who is lurking near the ruins at Old Owl Well.
- Qelline Alderleaf has suggested that the characters go to the ruined town of Thundertree and consult with the druid Reidoth, who might know the whereabouts of Cragmaw Castle, Wave Echo Cave, or both.
- Townmaster Harbin Wester wants the characters to seek out an orc encampment near Wyvern Tor and chase the orcs away from the area.
- Sildar Hallwinter wants the characters to find Cragmaw Castle, search for Gundren Rockseeker, rescue the dwarf, and retrieve his map.

Each of these possible quests has its own section in this part of the adventure. The characters can remain in Phandalin long enough to rest up and purchase supplies. When they're done, have them pick a storyline to investigate, then set out for the appropriate destination.

### TRIBOAR TRAIL

Phandalin lies in a part of the North known as "the Triboar Trail," "the Triboar Cutoff," or "the Cony Gap." This stretch of foothills and rolling, sparsely wooded plains extends between the Sword Mountains to the south and Neverwinter Wood to the north. The area gains its name from an old trail that runs from the distant town of Triboar to the east, winding westward about one hundred miles through the abandoned village of Conyberry, then running north of Phandalin on its way to the High Road along the coast.

Describe the party's overland travels as vividly as you like, but keep the story moving. "You walk for several miles and encounter nothing of interest" is far less evocative and memorable than, "A light rain dampens the rolling plains as you travel north. Around midday, you break for lunch under a lonely tree. There, the rogue finds a small rock that looks like a grinning face, but otherwise you see nothing out of the ordinary."

### USING THE OVERLAND MAP

During this part of the adventure, the characters will frequently be marching overland from one point of interest to another. As can be seen on the regional map on page 5, some of these areas are a good forty to fifty miles apart, requiring several days of marching overland to travel to the next adventure site.

**Travel Time.** Assume that the party travels twenty-four miles per day over a period of ten hours. The characters must rest for eight hours per day, with the remaining six hours consisting of making and breaking camp, preparing meals, and a little bit of foraging or hunting as the opportunity permits.

### WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Ask the players to tell you the party's marching order, so that you know which characters are in the lead and who's bringing up the rear. When the party camps, ask which characters are on watch. This information is important if the party encounters something dangerous.

The Triboar Trail is not safe. As the adventurers travel throughout this area, they might stumble across hungry beasts, greedy bandits, or vicious monsters. Check for encounters once during the day and once at night by rolling a d20. On a roll of 17–20, an encounter takes place. Roll a d12 and consult the Wilderness Encounters table to determine what the party meets.

When an encounter occurs, and the adventurers gain XP if they defeat the monsters. Each creature's stat block has the XP value for one monster of that sort. Multiply that value by the number of creatures encountered, then divide the total equally among the characters.

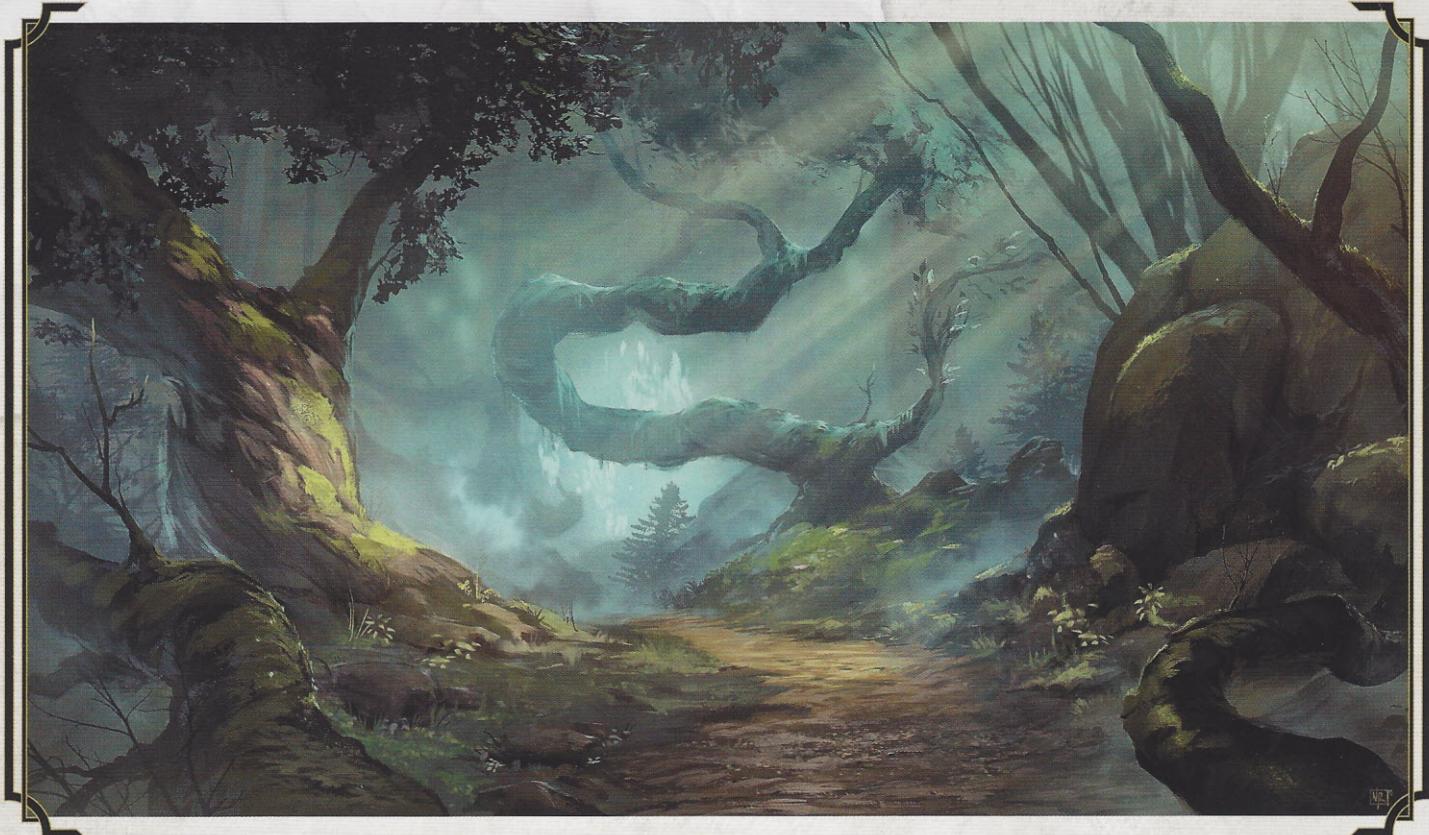
### WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Day Roll	Night Roll	Result
1–2	1–3	Stirges (1d8 + 2)
—	4	Ghouls (1d4 + 1)
3–4	—	Ogre (1)
5–6	5	Goblins (1d6 + 3)
7–8	6	Hobgoblins (1d4 + 2)
9–10	7–8	Orcs (1d4 + 2)
11	9–10	Wolves (1d4 + 2)
12	11–12	Owlbear (1)

**Stirges.** These flying predators drain the blood of their victims and are drawn to the light of campfires at night.

**Ghouls.** These undead humans hunger for living flesh.

**Ogre.** The ogre is looking for an easy kill. It is too stupid to flee once combat is joined.



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**Goblins.** The goblins know the location of Cragmaw Castle and can provide directions if they are captured and threatened. Each one carries a pouch containing 1d10 cp.

**Hobgoblins.** This squad of hobgoblins is actively seeking the adventurers, hoping to collect on a bounty. They know the location of Cragmaw Castle but won't provide directions unless they are charmed. One hobgoblin carries a crudely drawn sketch of one party member, with "25 gold pieces for this one" and a symbol of a black spider drawn beneath it.

**Orcs.** These scouts are part of the band currently based at Wyvern Tor. As they roam, they look for travelers to ambush or homesteads to burn.

**Owlbear.** This hungry predator picks up the characters' scent and pursues them relentlessly.

## CONYBERRY AND AGATHA'S LAIR

The town of Conyberry was sacked by barbarians years ago and now lies in ruins. The Triobar Trail runs right through the abandoned town, providing an easy landmark for locating the lair of the banshee Agatha. From the ruins of Conyberry, an old trail leads northwest into Neverwinter Wood. Agatha's lair is a few miles outside town.

The forest grows dark and still as the trail winds deeper into the trees. Heavy vines and thick layers of moss drape the branches, and the air is noticeably colder than it was in the ruined village. Rounding a bend in the trail, you see a screen made from the warped branches of trees standing close together, woven into a domelike shelter in the shadows. A low doorway leads inside.

If the characters exercise caution and remember what they've come for, they will be able to speak with the banshee. When the characters enter the shelter, read the following:

A home of sorts is sheltered within the dome of woven branches. It is sparsely furnished with chests, shelves, a table, and a reclined couch, all of it old and of elven craft.

Agatha senses the characters' intrusion and manifests shortly after they enter her home.

The air grows cold, and a powerful feeling of dread grips you. A cold, pale light flickers in the air, rapidly taking on the form of a female elf, her hair and robes waving in a spectral wind. She might have been beautiful once, but a hateful expression twists her features now. "Foolish mortals," she snarls. "What do you want here? Do you not know it is death to seek me out?"

If the characters are rude, disrespectful, or threatening, Agatha scowls and disappears. She does not attack them, nor does she return if the characters call out to her.

### DEALING WITH AGATHA

If the characters are respectful and polite, Agatha can be persuaded to help them with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The player whose character takes the lead in speaking with the banshee makes the check. If that player roleplays the encounter well, allow him or her to make the check with advantage. If any character has Sister Garaele's silver comb and presents it to Agatha as a gift, the check is automatically successful.

The ghostly figure smiles with cold amusement. "Very well," she says. "I know that you seek many things. Ask me one question, and I will give you an answer."

If the characters ask about Bowgentle's spellbook, Agatha tells them that she traded the book to a necromancer named Tsernoth from the city of Iriaebor more than a hundred years ago. She does not know what became of the book afterward. Her answer is truthful, and it is all the information Sister Garalee needs for the Harpers to resume their search.

The characters might instead choose to ask Agatha about something else—for example, the location of Cragmaw Castle, the location of Wave Echo Cave, the identity of the Black Spider, or Hamun Kost's question about Old Owl Well (see that section). Agatha is well informed and a capable diviner, so she can answer almost any single question pertaining to the adventure that the characters think to ask. However, the banshee answers only one question, so the characters should choose it carefully.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters gain experience for successfully persuading Agatha to answer a question. If they do, divide 200 XP equally among the characters.

#### WHERE'S THE MAP?

No maps are provided for Agatha's lair, Old Owl Well, or Wyvern Tor. These adventure locations contain only one or two points of interest, and you don't need maps to run the encounters effectively. If you feel the need for a map, create your own using the adventure text as a guide.

## OLD OWL WELL

Built thousands of years ago by a long-vanished empire, Old Owl Well is a ruined watchtower that now consists of little more than a few crumbling walls and the broken stump of a tower. In the tower's courtyard stands an old well that still delivers clean, fresh water. Old Owl Well lies in the wild and rugged hills south of the Tribobar Trail. The site is relatively easy to find, and any NPC in Phandalin can provide directions to the ruins.

Recently, prospectors in the area have noted that someone has set up a campsite at Old Owl Well, and that undead guardians have been posted to keep intruders out.

As you crest a low ridge, you spy the crumbling ruins of an old watchtower standing amid the rugged hills. The place is so old that the walls are only mounds of rubble enclosing a courtyard of sorts, adjacent to the broken stump of an old tower. A colorful tent has been set up in the middle of the courtyard, but no one is in sight.

The ruins are currently occupied by a mage who is busy exploring the site in the hope of gleaning arcane lore left behind by its builders. The characters can enter the

site from any direction, either following old footpaths or scrambling up the slope and finding a gap in the surrounding walls of rubble.

Twelve **zombies** lurk inside the crumbled shell of the old watchtower and can't be seen from outside. However, any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 10 or higher smells a deathly odor wafting from the tower's direction. When characters approach the tower or the tent, the zombies shamble out of the tower.

If a battle erupts, Hamun Kost, the **evil mage**, emerges from his tent and asks, "What is the meaning of this?"

Kost is a stout, red-robed figure with sallow skin, a shaved scalp, and a black tattoo on his forehead. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes Kost's tattoo as a necromantic symbol. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check verifies the garb as that usual for Thay, a land far to the east where wizards pattern their flesh with tattoos. The tattoo on the head represents a wizard's school of magic. Kost's school is necromancy.

If any character attempts to talk to Kost, even by calling out a greeting or answering his questions during combat, he temporarily calls off his zombies. The Red Wizard is not particularly aggressive, and he is willing to strike a deal that advances his interests at the same time it helps the characters.

Kost stays tight-lipped about the reason for his presence in the region. He is, however, willing to provide information the party needs if it does a favor for him. If the characters give Kost some indication of what they want, he shares one or both of these requests:

- He wants the orcs at Wyvern Tor removed, since they have scouted out his camp and seem inclined to cause trouble.
- He wants to ask a question of Agatha the banshee: "What is the name of the wizard who built the tower at Old Owl Well?" Kost won't risk the banshee's anger, but the characters could ask the question for him. (Agatha knows the name: Arthindol.)

#### TREASURE

Hamun Kost's tent contains a comfortable traveling suite, including a cot, a chair, a writing desk, supplies, and a chest of clothes. In the chest is a leather bag containing 35 sp, 20 ep, 20 gp, 5 pp, one pearl (100 gp), a *potion of healing*, a *scroll of darkness* in a bone tube, and a tiny jeweled box (25 gp) containing a *ring of protection* from ancient Netheril, the Red Wizard's most interesting discovery so far.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Learning about the Red Wizard's presence at Old Owl Well completes a quest given to the party by Daran Edermath in Phandalin. Divide 200 XP equally among the characters if the party parleys with Hamun Kost and reports back to Daran.

Divide 800 XP equally among the characters if the party defeats Hamun Kost and his zombies.

## RUINS OF THUNDERTREE

Near the place where the Neverwinter River emerges from Neverwinter Wood stands the abandoned village of Thundertree. Once, this was a prosperous community on the outskirts of the forest, wealthy from the work of its woodcutters and trappers. Then thirty years ago, the eruption of Mount Hotenow to the north devastated Thundertree. In the wake of the natural disaster, a plague of strange zombies swept over the area, killing or driving off those who survived the eruption.

Though most of the zombies have long since crumbled to dust, strange magic permeating the area has mutated the local vegetation into new and dangerous forms. Few people dare to venture into the ruined village now, and those who do so seldom stay long—with two notable exceptions. The druid Reidoth (see area 4) visits Thundertree from time to time, keeping a wary eye on its dangers. Cultists have also arrived recently (see area 13) to treat with a dragon that claims Thundertree as its domain (see area 7).

As the party approaches the ruins, read the following:

Gradually, the trail becomes an old, overgrown lane winding between dilapidated buildings choked in vines and brush. Ahead of you, in the middle of the settlement, rises a steep hill, upon which stands a stone tower with a partially collapsed roof and an adjoining cottage. A dirt road hugs the base of the hill and wends its way between old stone houses, many of which are roofless ruins with interiors open to the weather. Other buildings appear more or less intact. The whole place is eerily silent.

A wooden sign is nailed to a post nearby. It reads: "DANGER! Plant monsters AND zombies! Turn back now!"

Reidoth placed the sign to discourage bands of treasure seekers from stirring up the monsters in the area.

### GENERAL FEATURES

Many of Thundertree's buildings have crumbled in the years since the town was abandoned, even as nature threatens to swallow what remains.

**Buildings.** A building in Thundertree is either ruined or intact, as shown on the map.

Ruined buildings are empty shells with stone walls 5 to 8 feet high. Their roofs are gone, leaving piles of debris inside the walls. The debris is difficult terrain (see "Difficult Terrain" in the rulebook).

Intact buildings are rundown, ramshackle stone cottages that are otherwise still standing. Their wooden doors are swollen and require a successful DC 10 Strength check to force open. The windows of any intact building are 2 feet wide and covered by wooden shutters containing 6-inch wide arrow slits. Creatures on one side of an arrow slit gain three-quarters cover against attacks from the other side (see "Cover" in the rulebook). Dusty old furnishings such as simple wooden chairs and tables remain in most intact buildings.

**Trees and Brush.** Trees average 30 to 40 feet tall and provide cover. Brush consists of large bushes that count as difficult terrain.

### 1. WESTERNMOST COTTAGE

This cottage has seen better days.

Cowering in the shadow of an old tree is a crumbled stone cottage with no roof. Weeds are rampant here.

Two **twig blights** hide among the weeds that flank the cottage's open doorway. Make a Dexterity (Stealth) check for the blights, and compare the result to the passive Wisdom (Perception) scores of the characters to determine if the blights are spotted.

The blights do not attack on their own (except in self-defense) but quickly come to the aid of the twig blights in area 2 if combat erupts there.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 50 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys the twig blights.

### 2. BLIGHTED COTTAGES

Wind and weather have done their work here, and little remains of these houses or their former contents.

These ruined, side-by-side cottages look as though they might have been the homes of prosperous shopkeepers or well-off farmers in their time. All that remains are collapsed walls and piles of debris. Several young trees have grown up in the midst of the ruins.

The overgrowth conceals a deadly threat—six **twig blights** lurking among the ordinary foliage. Spotting them requires a successful Wisdom (Perception) check challenged by the blights' Dexterity (Stealth) check.

These plant monsters are hungry and fight until destroyed. One round after they attack, the twig blights in area 1 join the fray.

#### TREASURE

A merchant who once lived here had a chest full of coins hidden under the flagstone floor of his home. A thorough search of the interior of the eastern cottage and a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the old chest among the roots of the tree growing up through the house. The chest contains 700 cp, 160 sp, and 90 gp.

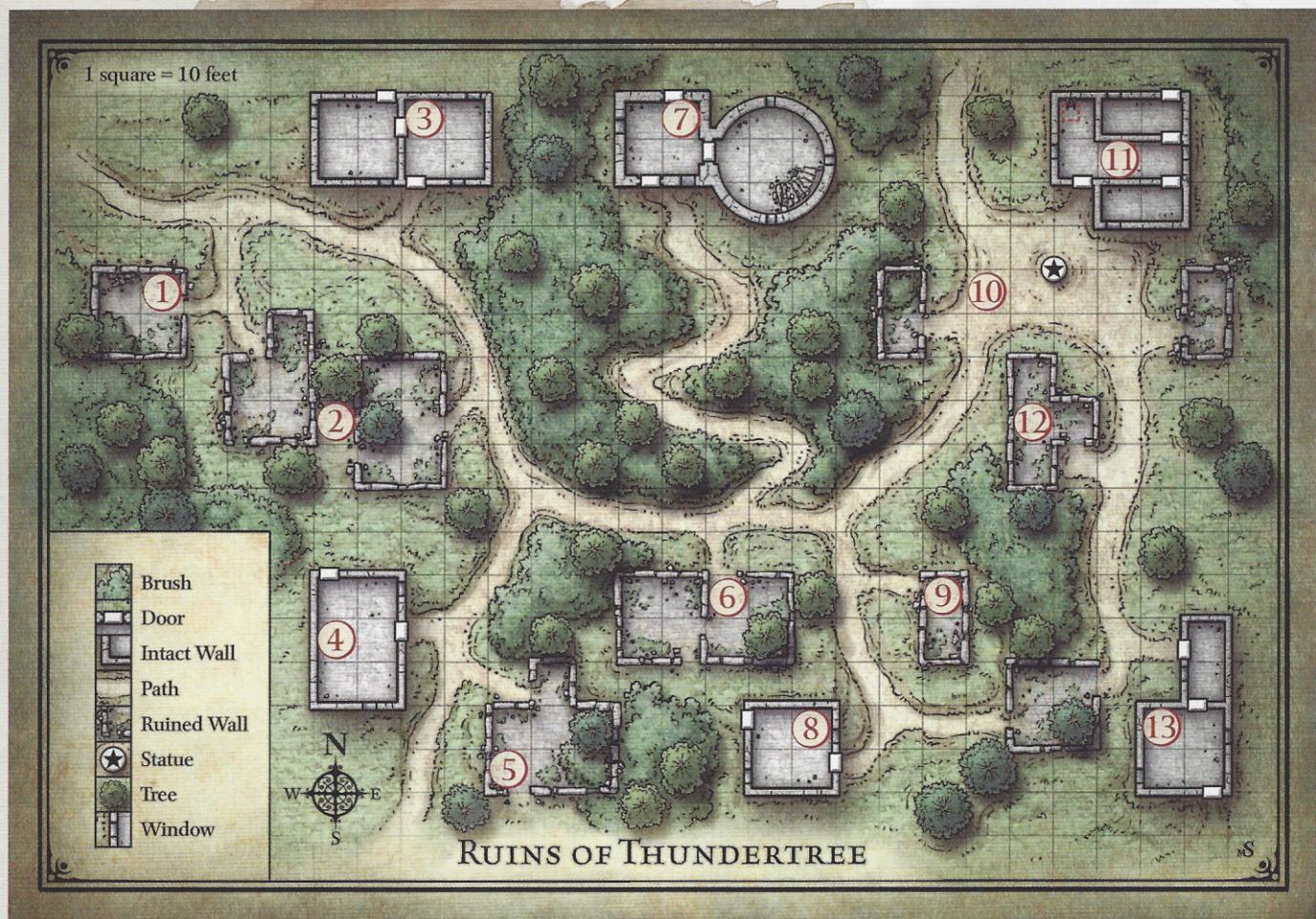
#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 50 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys these twig blights.

### 3. THE BROWN HORSE

This was formerly the Brown Horse, a tavern renowned for its excellent ale.

A weathered signboard by the door of this large building shows the faded image of a workhorse holding a flagon of ale. The building is sagging and dilapidated, but it is more intact than the ruins across the road.



Four **ash zombies** (see the “Ash Zombies” sidebar) lurk in the shadows in this building, slumped against the walls or under the bar. When living creatures enter, the zombies groan and stir, slowly climbing to their feet (spending half their speed to do so—see the “Being Prone” section in the rulebook). They pursue any characters they see, attacking until destroyed.

The eastern half of the building is the old common room, while the western portion held the kitchens and the brewer’s vats. Huge wooden tuns stand to the west, and a faint smell of yeast still permeates the air. The ale is long gone.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 200 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys the ash zombies.

#### ASH ZOMBIES

These zombies were created by the magical devastation when Mount Hotenow erupted thirty years ago. They use the **zombie** stat block, with the following additional trait.

**Ash Puff.** The first time the zombie takes damage, any living creature within 5 feet of the zombie must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on it early with a successful save.

#### 4. DRUID’S WATCH

When Reidoth visits Thundertree, this is where he makes camp.

This small house appears to be in better condition than the ruined and dilapidated structures nearby. The doors are reinforced with heavy iron bands, and thick shutters protect the windows.

Reidoth is a gaunt, white-bearded human who doesn’t use two words when one word will do. Though he receives very few visitors, he is reasonably hospitable.

Reidoth is adept at staying away from the ash zombies that overrun the village, as well as avoiding the area’s mutated plants. He knows that dangerous spiders lurk in the ruins at the base of the hill, and he suspects that someone is hiding out on the eastern side of town—he’s seen “folk in black masks and cloaks” (the cultists) skulking around. However, he is currently most concerned by the fact that a green dragon has moved into the tower (area 7) since the last time he was here. He warns the characters of all these threats, and suggests that they leave Thundertree before they get themselves killed.

## DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters ask about Cragmaw Castle, Reidoth gladly provides directions. He is a member of the Emerald Enclave, a widespread group of wilderness survivalists who preserve the natural order while rooting out troublesome threats. The enclave works to restore and preserve the natural order by keeping the elemental forces of the world in check, preventing civilization and the wilderness from destroying one another, and helping others survive the perils of the wilds. The goblins are a threat to the delicate balance.

If the characters ask Reidoth about Wave Echo Cave, he will not divulge its location but will offer to guide the party there in exchange for a favor: he wants them to chase off the dragon in area 7. If they succeed, Reidoth will honor his part of the agreement but will not accompany the party inside the mine.

If the characters attack him for any reason, Reidoth transforms into a gray squirrel and scurries out of the cottage through a crack in the wall. He vanishes into the woods, then waits for the hostile characters to leave. His watch post contains nothing of value.

## JOINING THE EMERALD ENCLAVE

If the party helps Reidoth by chasing off Venomfang, the druid privately approaches certain members of the group and urges them to join the Emerald Enclave. He speaks with those who exemplify the ideal of protecting the natural order. If a character agrees, Reidoth gives the individual the title of Springwarden.

## 5. BLIGHTED FARMHOUSE

To its south, this farm abuts a field with thick patches of gorse and briars.

This ruin looks as if it might once have been a farmhouse. It is now half swallowed by a dense thicket, with trees growing up through its ruined foundations. The lane continues south a short distance past the ruin before ending in an overgrown field.

The thicket east of this ruin is crawling with eight **twig blights**. Any disturbance in the ruined farmhouse (for example, characters rooting around in the rubble) draws the blights' ire.

Each round for 3 rounds, two twig blights head for the south doorway leading into the farmhouse while two more head for the north doorway. The blights attack until destroyed.

### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 200 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys the twig blights.

## 6. RUINED STORE

This former general store is not a complete ruin yet, with portions of its tile roof still intact.

At an intersection near the middle of the village, a narrow lane winds up the steep hillside to the north. Directly to the south is a ruined building that might have been a store or workshop. Webs stretch across the lane, from the building to the trees on the north side of the road.

Two **giant spiders** hide on the inner walls in this ruined building, so they are not visible from outside. Trailing lines from the webs in the lane allow the spiders to sense when prey is moving through the webs, at which point they nimbly scuttle over the wall and attack. The alert spiders surprise any character whose passive Wisdom (Perception) score is less than 17.

**Webs.** The webs fill two squares north of the doorway (and the square marked "6"). They are difficult terrain, and a creature trying to move through them must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failure, the creature is restrained in the webs (see the rulebook for the effects of being restrained). A snared creature can take an action each round to attempt to break free with a DC 12 Strength check, or it can try to cut its way free by using a light weapon that deals slashing damage. The webs have AC 10, 5 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage (see "Damage Resistance and Vulnerability" in the rulebook for how vulnerability works).

Going around the webs is difficult because of the thickets on the north side of the road. Going around the ruined building to the south leads to the twig blights in area 5.

### TREASURE

The corpse of an unfortunate adventurer is cocooned in spider silk in the western half of the building. The body is shriveled up and sucked dry, but appears to have been a male elf. The body wears studded leather armor and a shortsword in the scabbard at its hip. A careful search also yields a *potion of healing* in a belt pouch, along with 23 gp and 35 sp.

### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 400 XP equally among the characters if the party defeats the giant spiders.

## 7. DRAGON'S TOWER

This tower was formerly the home of a human wizard, who was killed fighting the ash zombies that overran Thundertree thirty years ago.

At the top of the hill stands a round tower with a cottage attached. Both are in good condition, although half of the tower's roof is gone. A door leads into the cottage, and several arrow-slit windows are visible in the tower. You can't help but notice an eerie quiet in the area and a strange, acrid smell in the air.

The corpses of two hideous giant spiders are sprawled near the edge of the pathway, apparently dragged there. Their bloated bodies are puckered and blistered, and appear to have been mauled by a large animal.

A young green dragon named Venomfang has recently claimed the tower, having passed over Thundertree while searching Neverwinter Wood for a suitable lair. The giant spider corpses are the former residents of the tower, killed by the dragon after it tore its way through the roof. Since then, Venomfang has been laying low.

**Tower.** The dragon lives in the tower—a single room with a 40-foot-high ceiling. A 5-foot-wide staircase circles the interior, rising to the now-opened rooftop that allows the dragon easy access to its new home. Heavy wooden beams and stair supports crisscross the tower interior.

Venomfang does not want to give up such a promising lair, but if the characters reduce the dragon to half its hit points, it climbs to the top of the tower and flies off to fight another day.

**Cottage.** The cottage contains dusty furniture draped in webbing, but nothing of value. If the characters make a lot of noise in the cottage, the dragon hears them and steals itself for a fight.

#### TREASURE

An old wooden chest broken open on the tower floor holds the last of the dead wizard's treasure: 800 sp, 150 gp, four silver goblets set with moonstones (60 gp each), a scroll of *misty step*, and a scroll of *lightning bolt*. Venomfang spends much of his time greedily admiring the loot.

The dragon has barely noticed the most interesting item in its hoard. Beneath the coins is a rusty old battleaxe of dwarven manufacture. Runes in Dwarvish on the axe head read, "Hew," and the rust is misleading. *Hew* is a +1 battleaxe that deals maximum damage when the wielder hits a plant creature or an object made of wood. The axe's creator was a dwarf smith who feuded with the dryads of a forest where he cut firewood. Whoever carries the axe feels uneasy whenever he or she travels through a forest.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 2,000 XP equally among the characters if the party drives away Venomfang. Given their level, the characters aren't likely to slay the dragon, but it is worth 3,900 XP.

## 8. OLD SMITHY

This smithy was abandoned long ago.

A wide chimney and rotted piles of firewood jumbled outside the walls of this sagging building suggest that it was a smithy in its day.

Two **ash zombies** (see the "Ash Zombies" sidebar) are slumped on the floor. When the characters enter, the monsters climb to their feet (spending half their speed to do so—see the "Being Prone" section in chapter 2 of



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the rulebook). Then they attack. When the zombies have caught sight of the characters, they pursue them no matter where they go.

A variety of old tools—tongs, bellows, hammers, and a pair of iron anvils—are scattered around the interior of this building.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 100 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys the ash zombies.

## 9. HERBALIST'S SHOP

This was an herb and alchemy shop belonging to the family of Mirna Dendar, now a resident in Phandalin (see encounter 5 in the "Redbrand Hideout" section).

This ruined shop is cluttered with sagging storage shelves and broken furniture. Shards of glass and pieces of pottery glint in the weeds and rubble next to rotted books and casks.

All the reagents and concoctions here have long since been ruined, and the books are unreadable masses of rot. However, a small wooden case is hidden in a compartment beneath the storage shelves. A character searching through the wreckage can find the case with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The check succeeds automatically if Mirna sent the party to find the heirloom.

#### TREASURE

The case is worthless but contains a gold necklace with a fine emerald pendant (200 gp).

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 200 XP equally among the characters if the party returns the necklace to Mirna instead of keeping it.

### 10. TOWN SQUARE

Encroaching underbrush has yet to engulf the square.

On the east side of town, the lane opens up to form a small square. Several ruined buildings surround the south side of the square, but a larger, intact structure to the north looks like a barracks. One lane leads southeast, another heads southwest around the hill in the middle of the town, and a third way meanders north. In the middle of the square, leaning to one side ever so slightly, is a weathered wooden statue of a warrior clutching a spear and shield.

The leaning statue is ten feet tall, including the base. It depicts an old hero of Neverwinter named Palien, who supposedly defeated several monsters in Neverwinter Wood when Thundertree was first founded. A character who studies the statue recognizes the depiction with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check. The statue can be knocked over with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

### 11. OLD GARRISON

For the residents of Thundertree, living so close to Neverwinter Wood demanded constant vigilance.

The barracks appears to have weathered the years better than most buildings in town. Its rooftop features a simple battlement, and arrow-slit windows confirm that it was built to serve as a small keep in times of emergency.

Five **ash zombies** (see the “Ash Zombies” sidebar) lurk within this building. Former members of the garrison, they still wear the remnants of rusted mail and soldiers’ surcoats. These scraps of armor do not improve their Armor Class, however. The zombies animate and attack if any living creature disturbs their rest.

The interior of the building still contains furnishings, and the main room has a ladder leading through a trapdoor to the roof. The chamber to the north contains two double bunks, while the chamber to the south has three double bunks, providing quarters for ten soldiers altogether. To the northwest of the main area of the barracks was a kitchen and pantry, now containing piles of well-rotted sacks and barrels that once held salted meat. All the foodstuffs have long since been devoured by vermin.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 250 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys the ash zombies.

### 12. WEAVER’S COTTAGE

This fallen cottage is a lure for the creatures that lair nearby.

Heaps of wreckage litter the interior of this ruin. In one corner stands a broken loom.

Six **twig blights** lurk in the thicket south of this ruin. Allow each character to attempt a Wisdom (Perception) check contested by the blights’ Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid being surprised by them.

#### DEVELOPMENTS

Any loud noises here alert the cultists in area 13, who quietly and cautiously investigate.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 150 XP equally among the characters if the party destroys the twig blights.

### 13. DRAGON CULTISTS

A group calling itself the Cult of the Dragon seeks to forge alliances with powerful dragons of the Sword Coast. Toward that end, four cultists recently tracked a green dragon to Thundertree (see area 7) and are waiting for the right moment to approach the dragon and broker an alliance. They have been spying on the dragon from afar, trying to gauge its demeanor and its needs.

This small farmhouse appears to be just another empty home at first glance. However, all the doors are shut and windows shuttered.



The doors to this cottage are barred from the inside, requiring a successful DC 20 Strength check to force open. The shutters are also barred from inside and can be forced with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Six human **cultists** are hiding in the house. Four stand guard (two in each room) while the others rest in the larger chamber. The cultists wear black cloaks cut to resemble dragon wings, and black leather masks with stylized dragon horns. In addition to the Common tongue, these cultists speak Draconic.

The interior of the house is dusty and strung with cobwebs. The only furnishings are a small stove, a table, two chairs, and a bunk (which the cultists share).

#### ROLEPLAYING THE CULTISTS

The cultists are not interested in fighting anyone and prefer to be left alone. The leader of the group is an evil and ambitious young man named Favric, who hopes to rise through the ranks quickly by earning the allegiance of the green dragon in area 7. His fellow cultists lack Favric's ambition and flee if he is captured or killed.

If the characters talk to the cultists, Favric explains that they have come to treat with the green dragon (whose name he doesn't know). If the characters express a similar desire, Favric suggests an alliance. He really plans to offer the characters to the dragon as part of his tribute, and if a fight ensues, the cultists side with the dragon.

#### TREASURE

In the main room, Favric has a small coffer containing tribute for the green dragon: three diamonds (100 gp each). He also carries a *potion of flying* in a stoppered vial around his neck.

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 150 XP equally among the characters if the party defeats or drives away the cultists.

## WYVERN TOR

This crag is a prominent landmark in the rugged hills northeast of the Sword Mountains, and is easily visible from twenty miles away. People traveling along the Triboar Trail in the vicinity of Conyberry catch glimpses of Wyvern Tor to the south as they go. The tor was formerly the home of a large and dangerous nest of wyverns, but a band of bold adventurers dealt with the monsters years ago. Though the wyverns never returned, other creatures lair here from time to time. Wyvern Tor's current squatters include a band of orcs and their ogre ally.

The orcs are scouts of the Many Arrows tribe. These orcs often roam into the more civilized areas of the North, spying out human settlements, waylaying travelers, and looting and plundering as opportunities present themselves. Stories of new settlers near Phandalin and renewed traffic along the old Triboar Trail drew this band to the area. Their leader is Brughor Axe-Biter—a savage brute who is more interested in murdering and looting than scouting.

#### ORC CAMP

Wyvern Tor is a sizable hill, with miles of rugged terrain on its flanks and slopes. Searching for the hidden orc camp takes time. The party can attempt one DC 15

Wisdom (Perception) check or DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check per hour to find the camp, made by the character leading the way.

When the characters find the camp, read the following:

The faint smell of smoke hangs on the air as you ascend a rugged ridge on the lower slopes of the hill. Fifty yards away, a cave mouth opens up at the bottom of a ravine. Hunkered down by a boulder twenty yards outside the cave, keeping watch, is a single orc.

If the characters can quietly and expeditiously take out the lone **orc**, they have a chance to surprise the orcs in the cave. If the sentry spots the characters sneaking up, or if it is not silenced during the surprise round, the orc retreats back to the cave to warn the others.

The marauders in the cave include Brughor Axe-Biter (an **orc** with 30 hit points), six ordinary **orcs**, and a filthy **ogre** named Gog. Gog fights until slain, while the orcs fight until Brughor is killed, at which point any remaining orcs flee.

#### TREASURE

Brughor's band plundered several homesteads farther north on their way to Wyvern Tor. An unlocked treasure chest in the cave holds 750 cp, 180 sp, 62 ep, 30 gp, and three vials of perfume (10 gp each).

#### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Defeating the monsters at Wyvern Tor completes a quest given to the party by Townmaster Harbin Wester in Phandalin, and it delivers on a promise to Hamun Kost at Old Owl Well. Divide 1,250 XP equally among the characters if the party deals with the orcs and the ogre.

## CRAMGAW CASTLE

The Cragmaw tribe consists of marauding bands and rival goblinholds scattered throughout the area of the Triboar Trail and the Neverwinter Wood. However, one chieftain is grudgingly recognized by all others as supreme: King Grol of Cragmaw Castle.

Cragmaw Castle is not a goblin construction, nor is that the structure's original name. Raised by a talented wizard-noble of old Phalorm, an ancient realm that once controlled much of the North, the stronghold consists of seven overlapping towers; however, its upper levels have long since collapsed to heaps of crumbling masonry. Only the ground floor is still sound enough to be habitable.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

The centuries have not been kind to Cragmaw Castle. The goblins have shored up the weakest areas beneath its falling towers with crude timbers, but it's only a matter of time before the structure collapses completely.

**Ceilings.** Ceilings are 15 feet high unless noted otherwise.

**Doors.** Interior doors are made of wood reinforced with iron bands. They have neither locks nor keyholes. It takes a successful DC 15 Strength check to break down a door that is barricaded shut.

**Floors.** Cracked and uneven flagstones conceal a dirt floor underneath.

**Light.** A small amount of natural light filters through the arrow slits around the castle. During the day, this provides dim light in most areas. At night, all areas are dark.

**Walls.** Exterior walls and load-bearing interior walls are 5 feet thick, with 3 feet of mortared fill sandwiched between 1-foot-thick courses of hard stone blocks. Interior walls are 1-foot-thick worked stone.

Arrow slits in the castle walls are 10 feet above the outside ground level, 4 feet above the interior floor level, 8 inches wide, and 4 feet high. A creature on one side of an arrow slit gains three-quarters cover against attacks from the other side (see “Cover” in the rulebook).

## 1. CASTLE ENTRANCE

The main gates between areas 1 and 2 are made of bronze-covered wood, but they are corroded and collapsed.

The castle consists of seven crumbling towers of different sizes and heights, but the upper stories are all in varying states of collapse. A short flight of steps leads up to a terrace in front of the main entryway. Past the wreckage of a pair of sundered doors lies a shadowed hall. Round towers loom over the entranceway, with dark arrow slits looking down on the terrace.

No monsters dwell here, but the goblin sentries in area 3 are supposed to be keeping watch. They glance only occasionally out of the arrow slits, however, so characters who move quietly might be able to creep past them. Have each character make a Dexterity (Stealth) check. The lowest check is the DC for the goblins’ Wisdom checks to notice the party.

### DEVELOPMENTS

If the goblins spot the characters (or if the characters approach openly), the goblins shoot arrows from behind the arrow slits. However, they can’t fire directly at enemies at or past the broken gate. The goblins also shout loudly

### DISGUISED CHARACTERS

Rather than storm Cragmaw Castle with weapons in hand, clever characters might try to talk their way inside. For example, they might don the scarlet cloaks of the Redbrands and claim to be emissaries sent by Iarno “Glasstaff” Albrek, the Redbrand leader, to meet with King Grol. A good DM rewards this kind of clever thinking by giving the characters a chance to succeed.

It’s okay if the characters circumvent combat and talk their way past castle defenders. Both the Cragmaw tribe and the Redbrands work for the Black Spider, so the goblinoids aren’t likely to attack the party if they claim to be working in the Black Spider’s interest.

If the characters try to perpetrate a deception as a group, have them each make a Charisma (Deception) check contested by the monsters’ Wisdom (Insight) checks, and give the characters advantage on their checks if the deception is particularly well planned or roleplayed. If at least one character wins the contest, the deception is a success. You may award XP for monsters fooled by the deception. As the party makes its way deeper into the castle, additional checks might be required, at your discretion.

enough to alert their comrades in areas 4 and 6 that the castle is under attack.

## 2. TRAPPED HALL

Once the castle’s foyer, this wide hall makes a dangerous battleground.

Doors stand closed to the north and south, with a crumbling mound of rubble partially obscuring the southern hall. To the east, a broad corridor ends in two more doors leading south and east. The corridor is cluttered with dusty rubble and fallen plaster from a partial collapse of the ceiling overhead.

If the goblin sentries in area 3 raised the alarm, the goblins and hobgoblins in areas 4 and 6 come running out of the north and south doors at the same time. They attack from both directions, trying to overwhelm the adventurers and drive them out of the castle.

**Trap.** The dusty plaster and rubble in front of the door leading to area 8 conceals a copper tripwire connected to linchpins hidden in the ruined ceiling. Spotting the tripwire requires a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of at least 20, or a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check if characters are actively searching for traps in the area. Once spotted, the tripwire is easily avoided and disarmed (no ability check required).

Any creature that walks over or through the rubble without avoiding the tripwire triggers a cave-in of wooden beams and heavy stones. (The area of the collapse is marked on the map.) Any creature in the area when the trap triggers must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take  $3d6$  bludgeoning damage from the falling rubble (half as much damage on a successful save). The noise of the collapse puts the monsters in areas 3, 7, 8, and 9 on alert.

### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 100 XP equally among the characters if the party detects or survives the trap.

## 3. ARCHER POST

Cragmaw Castle’s main defenses are its secret location and the appearance of having been abandoned. In addition, King Grol posts sentries to drive off intruders who get too close.

This small room is littered with debris. The arrow slit opposite the door offers a fine field of fire over the terrace in front of the castle gates.

Two **goblins** occupy each of these two rooms. By taking turns shooting arrows and ducking back, both archers can fire each round at targets outside. When characters enter the room, the goblins drop their shortbows and draw their melee weapons.

### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 100 XP equally among the characters for each pair of goblin archers the party defeats.