**Scenario 4: Whispers in the Dark**

**Summary:**

In Scenario 4, Kalgor, a struggling orc chieftain, leads his dwindling band of orcs through treacherous mountains to escape human forces. They stumble upon a mysterious cave, which presents a respite from the harsh outdoor conditions but offers its own challenges: darkness, fear, and psychological manipulation. The cave is a vast labyrinth with eight secrets to be uncovered.

As the player controlling Kalgor's party, the goal is to navigate the labyrinthine cave, starting in the south-east with four units and two chests containing boots that enhance movement. The team encounters various challenges and events, such as deciphering cave inscriptions, battling bats, a monstrous spider, oversized ants, and a skeleton revenant. The discovery and destruction of the spider's nest lead to the hatching of another spider.

Furthermore, the party uncovers the Ring of Darkness and the Blade of Dread, each granting Kalgor new abilities at the cost of his mental stability. Also, a stack of bones emits a disquieting aura, further disturbing Kalgor's psyche.

Throughout the journey, the team triggers five ancient runes, each revealing hidden paths and invoking increasingly unsettling ambiance in the cave. After the last rune, a passage to a grand cave palace, the dwelling of a figure known as Voldur, is revealed.

Inside the palace, Voldur, a seemingly benevolent master of the arcane, offers Kalgor power in exchange for embracing darkness. Eager to protect his people, Kalgor agrees, marking a pivotal moment in his journey and the end of the scenario. The cave adventure has undoubtedly changed Kalgor, leaving him more powerful but psychologically vulnerable, setting the stage for more dramatic events in the future.

**Story:**

As the mountain peaks jutted from the earth like monstrous teeth, Kalgor and his weary men ventured further into the unforgiving terrain. The journey was treacherous; every step was a gamble against the cruel ice and hidden crevasses. Desperation hung like a shroud over them as they trudged forward, urged on by the relentless pursuit of the human forces. Starved of food, warmth, and hope, each day, a few more orcs succumbed to the cold, their breath freezing in the icy air. Yet, Kalgor pressed on, the burden of leadership a heavy weight upon his shoulders.

In the eerie silence of the night, as the pale moonlight fell upon the snow-blanketed rocks, Kalgor would often sit alone, his gaze lost in the distant peaks. His mind was filled with doubt and fear, yet the fire of determination still burned in his heart. But with each passing day, the fire seemed to flicker and wane, swallowed by the encroaching darkness.

After two days of marching through the relentless mountains, Kalgor spotted a small gap on amountain's ledge. The gap lead them into a seamless inviting cave.

Their descent into the cave was almost a relief, a sanctuary from the relentless winds and snow. Yet, the relief was short-lived as they were quickly swallowed by a new enemy - darkness. It wrapped around them, muffling their whispers and transforming the familiar into the unknown. As they moved deeper, the light from their torches barely pierced the oppressive gloom. Shadows danced on the walls, transforming harmless rocks into monstrous shapes. Anxiety gnawed at their hearts, their footsteps echoing eerily in the expansive silence.

Yet, it was not the darkness that truly gnawed at Kalgor; it was the whispers. Subtle and insidious, they seemed to emanate from the very walls of the cave. They spoke of power and sacrifice, of surrender and control. They told tales of darkness and the void, promises of strength to protect his people and defeat his enemies. The words echoed in his mind, leaving traces of doubt and fear, sowing seeds of depression and despair.

The once strong and determined orc chieftain was now a silhouette against the gloom, a figure of uncertainty and unease. With each passing hour, his demeanor shifted, the light in his eyes fading as the darkness within and without seemed to tighten its grip. Yet, even in the depths of despair, there was a glimmer of hope. A tiny spark, an unyielding resolve that clung to the idea of power, of protection, and of a destiny yet to be fulfilled. It was this spark, flickering in the gloom, that would lead Kalgor further into the heart of darkness.

**Scenario:**

A large cave labyrinth, that has 8 hidden secrets for the player to explore.

**Random events:** Throughout the scenario, random narrative messages are shown, building tension and suspense.

**Event:** Start

The player starts in the south-east of the cave with a total of 4 units. The player has 2 chests in the beginning, that allow 2 of the units to equip boots, that grant +3 movement points for this scenario.

Narrator: “Kalgor and his surviving men stand at the mouth of the cave. An eerie silence envelops them, their uncertain whispers swallowed by the vast, black void.”

**Objectives:**

Win: Explore the cave.

Lose: Death of Kalgor.

Note: The cave might have secret items for Kalgor's benefit.

**Event:** A unit moves to either of the chests for the speedy boots

Narrator: “These boots grant +3 max moves for the unit wearing them.”

Option 1: Equip them.

Narrator: “The unit is granted +3 max moves for the rest of the scenario.”

Option 2: Leave them for somebody else.

The boots aren’t picked up, and another unit can move onto the chest to benefit of their bonus.

**Event:** A unit examines the cave entrance’s walls

Unit: “There's carvings on these walls...”

Narrator: “A warning sign, speaking of a forbidden, haunted path. The unsettling implication hangs heavy in the air, a challenge to Kalgor's courage.”

**Event:** Cave bats are sighted

Narrator: “A sudden wave of screeching fills the cave. The orcs brace themselves as bats descend in a chaotic flurry, their silhouettes flashing in the dim torchlight.”

**Event:** Spider sighted

Narrator: “Without warning, a monstrous figure leaps from the dark recesses of the cave.”

**Event**: The spider’s nest and eggs are sighted and destroyed

Unit: “This must be the monster's eggs.”

Kalgor: “Take care of them, before it's too late.”

Narrator: “As the monstrous spider's first nest is crushed, the eggs nearby start moving and cracking, revealing an ignominious spectacle of a slimy abomination coming to life.”

Another spider appears.

**Event**: Ants sighted

Unit: “By the gods... I've never seen ants of such monstrous size in my life!”

**Event:** Skeleton revenant sighted, who guards the Ring of Darkness

Narrator: “As Kalgor and his dwindling band of orcs push deeper into the cave's gloom, a sudden chilling wind sweeps through the narrow passage. Their whispers fade as the darkness coalesces into a deeper silence. The cold smell of damp stone and ancient dust hangs heavy in the air.”

Narrator: “A skeleton warrior, standing in grim defiance, its hollow eyes gleaming in the torchlight. Clad in decayed armor, it clutches a rusted sword, an otherworldly aura hanging around it.”

Unit: “Dark spirits... we've walked into a cursed place.”

Kalgor: “Face it we must... for life clings tighter than death.”

**Event:** Kalgor picks up the Ring of Darkness

Narrator: “Kalgor's eyes are drawn to a red band gleaming eerily amidst the debris. As he places the ring on his finger, a chilling rush permeates his being, as if tendrils of shadow were coiling around his heart.”

Narrator: “Kalgor feels his senses sharpen, yet a cloud seems to descend upon his thoughts, causing his decision-making to skew towards aggression and ruthlessness. His heart thrums with an unknown power, yet also a bleak melancholy, as if the ring has infused him with a piece of the infinite void itself.”

Kalgor is granted the attack Ring of Darkness, an arcane ranged attack.

**Event:** First rune is uncovered

Narrator: “As the rune flickers to life, casting strange shadows upon the cave walls, an unseen wind stirs, and a distant echo resonates through the cave.”

Kalgor: “The cave responds. It reveals itself, bit by bit. Let's proceed with caution.”

A cave hall to the south-east, next to the cave entrance, opens, revealing more bats and another rune.

**Event:** Second rune is uncovered

Narrator: “The rune hums with an ancient energy as it activates. Soft whispers fill the air, and a pathway once hidden now begins to shimmer.”

Kalgor: “The cave whispers secrets. It calls us further in.”

A cave hall to the north opens, spawning an enemy Ghost and revealing the Blade of Dread.

**Event:** Kalgor picks up the Blade of Dread

Narrator: “A blade, enshrouded in an aura of desolation, lays tempting on the ground. As Kalgor wraps his fingers around the hilt, a sharp, bitter cold races up his arm, as though frost was creeping under his skin. His consciousness sinks deeper into an ocean of darkness, the whispering voices of despair echoing louder in his mind.”

Kalgor loses his orcish greatsword and its attacks, but is granted the Blade of Dread instead, an arcane melee weapon.

An enemy Spectre unit appears.

Narrator: “A spectral figure materializes from the gloom. Its hollow, haunting gaze sends shivers down Kalgor's spine.”

Narrator: “With a shaky breath, Kalgor steps back, gripping the blade tighter, his heart hammering against his chest, he stares into the void-like eyes of the Wraith.”

Kalgor: “<i>(whispering)</i> W-w... Why are you here? What do you want from me?”

**Event:** Kalgor attacks the Spectre

Narrator: “Each swing of the blade, while demonstrating increased strength and precision, also chips away at Kalgor's spirit, causing him to grow further despondent and susceptible to manipulation.”

**Event:** Third rune is uncovered

Narrator: “The rune glows brightly, and a low rumble reverberates through the stone. The cave's air seems to grow denser as if it is alive and breathing.”

Kalgor: “It feels as though we tread upon the heartbeat of the earth. The cave is aware, and it guides us.”

The room to the north-west opens, revealing the Bonestack and the fourth rune.

**Event:** Kalgor moves onto the Bonestack

Narrator: “The stack of bones pulses with a sickly green aura. As reaching out to touch it, the cold touch of death washes over Kalgor. It's as if every ounce of happiness, every trace of hope, is being sucked out, leaving only a chilling emptiness in its wake. A sinister whisper brushes past his consciousness, stirring up his darkest fears and fanning his thirst for power.”

Narrator: “It’s an eerie feeling, like an unseen hand tugging at the strings of his soul, drawing him deeper into the abyss of darkness, shaping him into a perfect puppet for unseen machinations.”

**Event:** Fourth rune is uncovered

Narrator: “The cave's ambient noise takes on an eerie tone. The walls seem to pulse, resonating with the growing energy of the runes.”

Kalgor: “We're near. I can sense the cave shifting, responding to our movements, our decisions.”

A big room to the south-east is opened, revealing the fifth and final rune

**Event:** Fifth rune is uncovered

Narrator: “As the rune ignites, the cave lurches slightly. A soft glow illuminates a part of the cave previously enshrouded in darkness, revealing yet another hidden passage.”

Kalgor: “The cave unveils its secrets one after another.”

A final small room is set free, as well as the main entrance to Voldur’s cave palace to the north-west.

**Event:** Kalgor enters the cave palace and sights Voldur, first known as “Stranger”

Narrator: “A sense of dread and apprehension clings to Kalgor like a second skin. The room is enormous, its ceilings lost in shadow, stalactites hanging down like the fangs of some primordial beast. Torches flicker in sconces along the walls, casting an eerie, otherworldly light upon the space.”

Narrator: “At the far end of the chamber, against an enormous throne of stone and bone, sits a figure draped in a cloak of inky darkness. As Kalgor draws closer, the figure stands to reveal himself. His face is shadowed by the hood of his cloak, but the glint in his eyes is almost familiar, like a friend who has been waiting for him in the darkness.”

Stranger: “Ah, Kalgor, my friend.”

Narrator: “The voice echoes, filling the cavern with a soothing resonance that seems to quell the unrest within Kalgor's soul. It's a balm, a salve to the wounds of fear and uncertainty that he'd been nurturing within himself.”

Narrator: “Hesitant, Kalgor moves forward, drawn by the strange allure of this enigmatic figure.”

Stranger: “You've traveled far and fought hard to reach here. Come, sit by my side.”

Kalgor moves next to the stranger.

Narrator: “Each step echoes within the cavern and within his mind, an undercurrent of anxiety and anticipation mixing with a growing sense of relief.”

Kalgor: “Who are you? Why am I here?”

Narrator: “The stranger's gestures seem oddly inviting, strangely comforting, an anchorage in a sea of uncertainty.”

Voldur: “I am Voldur, a humble master of the arcane, and you, Kalgor, are here because destiny has led you to me.”

Kalgor: “I... I seek power. Power... to protect my people... Power to vanquish my enemies.”

Voldur: “A noble pursuit.”

Narrator: “Voldur's voice is laced with sympathy. The tone is disarming, drawing out Kalgor's anxiety, layer by layer, and replacing it with a sense of hopeful anticipation.”

Voldur: “And I can help you achieve it, Kalgor.”

Narrator: “With a sense of hope igniting within him, a spark within the all-consuming darkness, Kalgor nods.”

Kalgor: “Teach me, Voldur. I am willing to embrace the darkness if it saves myself... and my people.”

Narrator: “Kalgor's declaration rings out, echoing in the cavern, and within him, a sense of both foreboding and exhilaration twines around his heart.”

Narrator: “Voldur smiles in the flickering light, a promise and a threat intertwined.”

Voldur: “Then let us begin, Kalgor. Together, we will shape the destiny of our lands.”

Narrator: “As the words echo within the cavern, a shroud of darkness seems to descend on Kalgor, a cloak of power, fear, and hope.”

Scenario end