

ASTRENOR

ON THE ARTIFACT TRAIL - PART 3

First Astrenor campaign

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Duration: 5-6h

For 2 to 4 players of at least level 2

Action
★★★★☆

Infiltration
★★★★☆

Dialogue
★★★☆☆

Reflection
★★★★☆

SYNOPSIS

In this scenario, players will travel to the kingdom of Drukh to meet King Guldrak, current owner of the Klodenn artifact. The king is in Wolforge, the kingdom's capital, atop Mount Gigantic, the highest mountain in Rautha. Accompanying them on their climb is the notorious Oriel, whose mission is to bring this mysterious artifact back to the Alliance by any means necessary.

This is the third part of the «On the Artifact Trail» campaign. It is therefore essential to have played parts 1 and 2* before starting this scenario.

**Scenario 2 is optional and can be skipped by playing only the last part.*

CONTEXT

The Asgure invasion of Rautha was launched 4 days ago. Although the Alliance feared a massive influx of reinforcements from the Korimdor Empire, this was not to be: the attack was successfully contained. The Asgure troops were pushed back to the port of Kingshill Landing, where they had landed, while the last survivors hiding in the fortress are currently being taken prisoner by the Alliance.

For the civilian population, this dazzling victory is irrefutable proof of the technological and military gap that now separates the troops of Asgure and the armies of the Alliance of Rautha. Some even believe that it is high time for Rautha to take advantage of its superiority to strike at Korimdor's empire and destroy their enemy at the root. However, the government of the Republic of Rautha sees a much more pessimistic message: the affirmation of a suicide mission. Indeed, after interrogating the prisoners of war, the Alliance has learned that these soldiers are not real warriors trained by Asgure. These poor people mostly come from the Quaz region, north-west of Asgure. Most of these poor people come from the Quaz region, north-west of Asgure. They were driven into battle by the promise of a reward delivered to their families in exchange for their commitment. It is now clear to the Alliance that the sole purpose of this attack was to create a diversion to allow Galarond to steal the artifact from Klodenn. Understanding the importance of this object, but unaware of its real power, Oriel is sent on a mission by the President of the Republic of Rautha, Panorius, to find the artifact as quickly as possible.

In the other kingdoms, rumors of this lightning victory galvanized the inhabitants. Some considered joining the Alliance army, while others seized the opportunity to do business. This was the case for the kingdom of Drukh, Rautha's biggest supplier of weapons and armor, which kept the forges in its capital running at full speed to equip all these soldiers-to-be.

A LONG AND PERILOUS JOURNEY

At around 7 p.m., the PCs meet up with Oriel outside Carleon Castle, fresh from the Alliance's headquarters in Castle City. They make their report and deliver all the information they have obtained from King Toric: he knows nothing of the artifact's nature and claims to have sold it to Guldrak, King of Drukh, for a modest sum.

With the information in her possession, Oriel begins preparing an expedition to Wolforge. She then asks the PCs to help her in her mission. The order comes from President Panorius himself: the PCs have no choice but to accept. If they ask about the mission, Oriel informs them that the President wishes to have the artifact analyzed by Alliance scholars to ensure that it poses no threat to Rautha. This mission is top secret: no one must know that the Alliance is looking for this artifact.

It takes about three days to reach Wolforge from Carleon on horseback. However, at this time of year, climbing Mount Gigantic on horseback is impossible. You'll have to leave the animals at the foot of the mountain and walk the rest of the way. Fortunately, Oriel knows of a small village called Hagdan, where adventurers can drop off their steeds and obtain the right equipment for their journey to the capital.

Before setting off, the PCs can do a little shopping in Carleon if they wish to prepare for their journey. Oriel covers the cost of travel, accommodation and food to Hagdan. Just before leaving, she hires a messenger at Carleon's western stable to deliver a letter to Alliance headquarters. If the PCs ask her about the contents of the letter, she'll say that she wishes to warn President Panorius that she's going to Drukh to meet King Guldrak.

The journey to Hagdan is tiring and testing, with temperatures getting colder and colder the closer the PCs get to Gigantic. Gradually, the green of the trails gives way to muddy, snow-covered furrows. Finally, after two days' travel, they catch sight of the snow-covered village of Hagdan.

The map of Hagdan is available in the Appendix.

The PCs can warm up in one of the town's inns (PI 5) and get a good night's sleep.

Regman the Traveler's store (PI* 8) is known for supplying all the equipment needed to climb the mountain, whatever the time of year. If the PCs ask where they can buy warm clothes or hiking gear, Hagdan's inhabitants will automatically redirect them to Regman's store.

Here's what Regman sells:

- Warm clothing 10 PO
- Pair of mountaineering crampons 4 PO
- Pair of ice axes 2 PO

Hagdan

Small town at the foot of the Gigantic mountain. Its inhabitants live mainly from the tourism generated by their stables and inns, which welcome travelers before their great ascent.

PI* = Point of Interest. They are indicated on city maps

Regman

Regman is an eccentric dwarf in his fifties. A former adventurer, he is now a mountain equipment dealer. His store is packed with unusual equipment, and he gives enthusiastic recommendations with a quirky sense of humor.

Gigantic

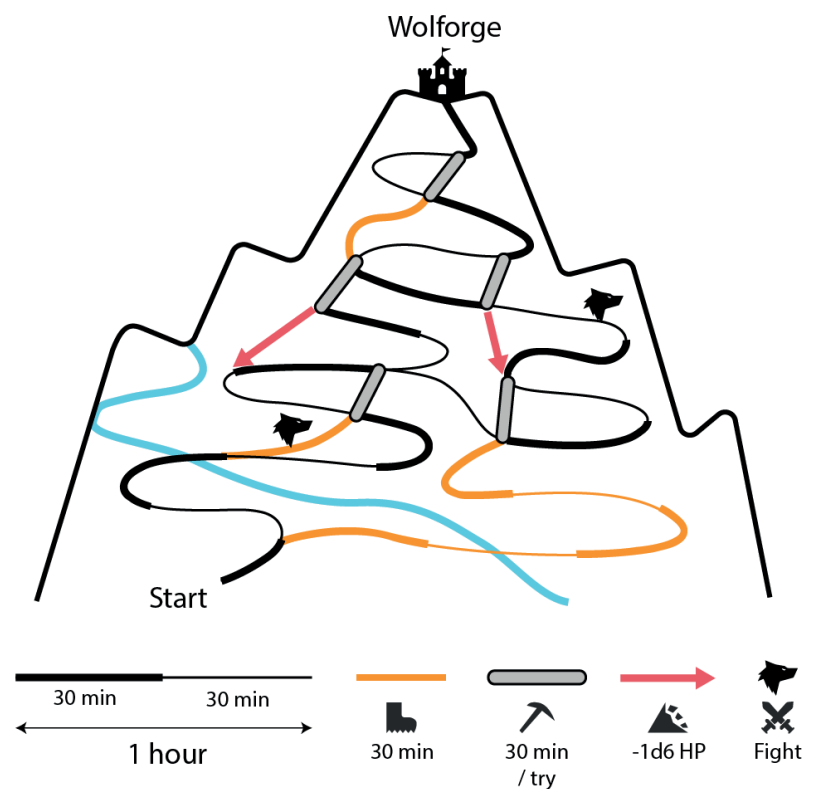
The highest mountain in Rautha, at 5,000 meters above sea level. At the heart of this mountain lies the capital of Wolforge. At the summit, only the visible face of the town is visible.

- Rations 3 AP
- Water bottle (1L) 5 AP
- Tent (2 people) 10 PO
- Tent (4 people) 15 PO
- Tinder lighter 5 AP

With a good night's sleep and their mountain gear in hand, the PCs and Oriel can begin their ascent to Wolforge.

Refer to the Gigantic ascent map below to describe possible locations and routes, and to trigger events based on player choices. This plan must not be divulged to your players.

Gigantic ascent map



During their ascent, PCs automatically lose 1 energy point (EP) for every 30 minutes of walking. If their EP reaches 0, they lose health points (HP) instead of energy points. If they don't wear warm clothing, they also lose an extra 1 health point every hour.

A pair of mountaineering crampons is essential for taking the orange paths. The PCs can follow these paths without them, but the journey will take three times as long.

A pair of ice axes can be used to climb the mountain walls shown in red. PCs wishing to climb with the ice axes must also pass a medium-difficulty Strength roll (10). If they fail, they can try again, but each

new attempt costs 1 ASP. It is impossible to climb a wall without this equipment. A PC at the top, however, can use a 10-meter rope to bring another PC up with him. To do so, he must succeed in a medium-difficulty Strength roll (10). In the event of a critical failure, the ice axes or rope are broken.

The snowfalls represented by the blue arrows indicate the risk of the PCs falling a few meters lower. If a PC fails his Strength roll when attempting to climb a wall above a snowfall zone, he must succeed in a Dexterity roll to avoid the fall. If he fails, he follows the direction of the arrow, landing a few meters below and losing 1 ASP and 1d6 HP.

Finally, wild animals prowl the mountain: they are represented by the wolf's head symbol. If the PCs take a path occupied by these hostile animals, a fight with wolves ensues. The wolves are the same number as the PCs.

The Mountain Road Map and the Wolf sheet are available in the Appendix.

MEETING THE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

Arriving at the summit of Mount Gigantic, the adventurers face imposing stone ramparts that delimit the visible part of Wolforge. Two guards watch the entrance to the town from the ramparts. They call out to the group of adventurers and ask them to introduce themselves.

Oriel immediately speaks up and says the following:

"Hello, people of Wolforge.

Let me introduce myself: I'm Oriel, High Officer of the Alliance. These young recruits in training accompany me on my journey. We've come all the way here on business, at the request of President Panorius. As you know, Rautha has been attacked by Asgure. The President wishes to properly arm our new recruits, not only to prevent another attack, but also to consider reprisals. I therefore ask you to grant me an exceptional audience with King Guldrak so that we can establish a new trade agreement between the Kingdom of Drukh and the Alliance. Rautha's safety is at stake."

The wolves

Wolves are discreet creatures, but during this time of year when roads are less busy and game scarcer, they don't hesitate to take to the various mountain paths in search of food.

Wolforge

This city, considered impregnable, conceals an underground city dug right into the heart of the mountain. While the visible part of the city is freezing at the top, the lower part of the city is permanently heated by the two great cauldrons of lava that feed Wolforge's immense underground forge.



King Guldrak

Sovereign of the kingdom of Druk. Guldrak is a dwarf with an imposing face and a fiery red beard. He rules with an iron fist, imposing authority and respect. His strategic wisdom ensures his kingdom's prosperity.



Gimdus

Advisor to King Guldrak. Gimdus is a relatively discreet dwarf in his forties. He sports a thick moustache that runs down his chin.

Knowing Oriel's reputation, the guards will quickly open the gates and come down from the ramparts to welcome the adventurers. Meanwhile, Oriel discreetly reminds the PCs not to mention King Toric's artifact.

The map of Wolforge Outside is available in the Appendix.

After exchanging a few pleasantries with Oriel, one of the guards leaves to take the gigantic elevator (PI 8) to warn the king that representatives of the Alliance are coming. The other continues to chat with Oriel. The PCs can walk around Wolforge Outside, but access to the elevator is forbidden to strangers without a pass or unless accompanied by a local guard.

After about twenty minutes, the guard who went to warn the king returns and informs Oriel that King Guldrak is ready to receive them immediately. Once the PCs and Oriel are reunited, the guards will lead them to Wolforge Castle. To do so, they take the huge elevator in the center of town, and begin a long descent into the heart of the mountain, where the real city of Wolforge lies.

This gigantic freight elevator is operated by an ingenious mechanism of sturdy steel pulleys and chains, and can support some 50 men in armor. After descending a barely-lit tunnel some fifty meters long, the adventurers discover that they are overlooking an immense cavity in the heart of the mountain. From the elevator, the PCs have a bird's-eye view of the singular town of Wolforge, also known as «The Impenetrable Fortress of Rautha».

The map of Wolforge Inside is available in the Appendix.

As the gondola descends, the cold gives way to a gentle warmth sustained by gigantic lava cauldrons, making warm clothing superfluous. After 5 long minutes of descent, the elevator finally arrives at its destination. The adventurers are taken to the castle, where the King of Druk awaits them.

They cross a bridge over the lava cauldrons and arrive at the castle. There, guards open the doors to the throne room: an imposing room supported by a dozen massive pylons and decorated with legendary weapons. King Guldrak sits at the far end of the room. A man seated to his right whispers something in his ear.

The adventurers are greeted by the king while still a few meters from the throne:

“So here's the famous Oriel, a mysterious Alliance High Officer who's come to do business with your good King Guldrak. Rumor has it that you single-handedly slaughtered some thirty Asgure soldiers. Very impressive! Come closer so I can shake your hand.”

Oriel always wears her mask in public, so the king doesn't know she's a woman.

Oriel complies. The dwarf king's handshake is vigorous, but she manages to keep a straight face. She then takes a few steps back and begins negotiations, justifying her presence in Wolforge. After a few minutes, a scantily-clad girl suddenly bursts into the throne room, shouting out:

"Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Is it true that Oriel of the Alliance is here in..."

She stops staring at Oriel, creating an awkward silence.

If the PCs observe the man on the king's right, they'll see that he's staring at the girl and blushing at her attire. A Perception test of difficult difficulty (15) may be required of the PCs if they are not particularly vigilant in order to obtain this information.

The king finally breaks the silence after clearing his throat :

"Um hum... Let me introduce you to my daughter, Tisry. Princess of the kingdom of Drukh and apple of my eye. My daughter is one of your greatest fans, Oriel, and caught up in the euphoria of your visit, I imagine she didn't realize we were already in audience. But then, you must have traveled a long way to get here. Climbing Mount Gigantic at this time of year can't have been easy, so you must be exhausted. My daughter, who seems to have time on her hands, will take you to one of our best inns. We'll resume negotiations tomorrow, once you're well rested. You are my guests for tonight, and my daughter will settle your bill at the inn. Come back tomorrow at 10 a.m. so we can do business. In the meantime, rest well, and enjoy the charm of our city."

The adventurers are escorted out of the castle by Tisry. The young woman is very intimidated by Oriel and hardly dares to look at her. On the way, Tisry praises the architecture of Wolforge's buildings, as well as the engineering and blacksmithing of the mountain people.

If the PCs ask her about the person next to the king, she'll introduce him as «Gimdus», her father's advisor and the kingdom's treasurer. A difficult Perception roll (15) will reveal that the young woman seems to blush at the mention of the treasurer's name. If the PCs ask her about her relationship with Gimdus, Tisry will be particularly embarrassed and vague in her response, indicating that they have known each other for a long time and that he is a good friend of her father.

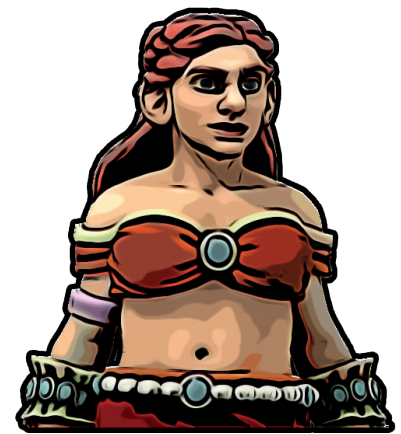
Arriving at the The Confident Star inn (PI 13), Elisa, the innkeeper, greets Tisry before interrupting abruptly :

"Ah princess, you're back! Long time no see! I've got a suite for two, as usual..."

After noticing the presence of the adventurers accompanying Tisry, the landlady picks herself up and continues her sentence, as if nothing had happened:

"... like the time when some of your father's friends wanted to sample the luxury of Wolforge's finest inns... That's right! ?"

Tisry, overcome with unease, quickly books several rooms for Oriel and his companions, then leaves the inn, wishing them a pleasant stay in the capital.



Tisry

Young princess of the kingdom, daughter of King Guldrak. Tisry admires the legends of the alliance, especially Oriel, whose latest feats of arms are beginning to circulate. This young dwarf with magnificent red hair has a knack for drawing attention to herself.

The Confident Star

The Confident Star is a charming inn located in the city's beautiful neighborhoods. It is renowned as a haven for many lovers. Unfortunately, this once-popular venue is now suffering from gossip peddled by the owner, which has driven away couples wishing to remain discreet.

Elisa, the innkeeper, gives a key to Oriel's room and another to the PCs. A Perception roll of difficult difficulty (15) (or medium (10) if the players are attentive to the landlady's physical expressions) reveals the embarrassment in her smile, surely caused by her awkwardness with Tisry.

If the PCs ask Elisa about Tisry's comings and goings, she'll describe the princess as a very down-to-earth person who often visits the capital's merchants. She won't admit that Tisry has ever stayed at her inn, unless the PCs try to bribe her for a few PO. For 5 PO, Elisa will confess that the princess has already been to her inn several times, accompanied by a hooded man who wished to remain discreet. For 10 PO, she'll reveal that the man who accompanied her sported a strange brown horseshoe-shaped moustache. Elisa will only divulge this information if the PCs promise to remain silent.

Once the keys to their rooms have been collected, Oriel goes straight to bed to be in shape for the next day, and advises the PCs to do the same. However, the PCs have free time: they can wander around town for a few more hours, at least if they succeed in a Constitution roll to resist fatigue. The difficulty of this roll depends on how long it took the adventurers to climb Gigantic.

- Easy difficulty (5) for an ascent of 7 hours or less
- Medium difficulty (10) for an ascent between 7h30 and 9h
- Difficulty (15) for an ascent of 9h30 or more

If they manage to stay awake, they'll be able to shop in Wolforge and take advantage of bargain prices on weapons and armor, which are 10% cheaper here.

If they visit the other inns, they will be able to recognize Gimdus coming out of one of them, called The Burrow (PI 14), by succeeding in a Perception roll of medium difficulty (10). He's too far away to be caught: if the PCs try to pursue him, he'll put on his hood and disappear into the crowd. They can, however, learn by bribing or threatening (-1 morale point) the Terrier's receptionist that Gimdus has booked a room for tomorrow at 2pm.

After several hours wandering the streets of Wolforge, the PCs will be exhausted and will have to go to bed at the Confident Star inn. The rooms are spacious and the beds very comfortable. It's certain that, after a day of hiking, the PCs will be sleeping soundly.

Weapon and armour prices

The most legendary weapons and armor in Rautha were forged here, in the Wolforge forges. Distributing all this equipment outside the capital is a real challenge. That's why prices here are much lower than anywhere else.

THE DAY OF NEGOTIATIONS

The PCs are rudely awakened by Oriel's frantic knocking on their bedroom door. It's 9:50 a.m. and the adventurers have an appointment with the king in 10 minutes at the castle. No doubt the previous day's busy schedule and the comfort of the inn's beds didn't help the PCs wake up any earlier.

After this invigorating night, the PCs recover all their HPs.

The adventurers hastily get ready and head for Wolforge Castle a few minutes late. Oriel introduces himself to the guards at the entrance, indicating that he has an appointment with the king. The guards clear the way and lead the group to King Guldrak, who is waiting for them in the throne room. As soon as she arrives, Oriel is gently lectured by the king and his accusing finger pointing at her tardiness. She walks up to the king, apologizing and complimenting the inn Princess Tisry has chosen for them, then, without wasting another moment, begins negotiations.

Gimdus is always present at the king's side. He listens attentively to the discussion without interfering. King Guldrak pays no attention to the PCs and talks only with Oriel. If one of the PCs tries to intervene, Gimdus will put him in his place and order him to be quiet: the king has no time to waste with young Alliance recruits. Negotiations last a good half-hour before a contract worth a hundred thousand gold coins is signed.

To celebrate this new trade agreement between the Alliance and the kingdom of Drukh, the king proposes to organize a great feast in his castle.

Oriel thanks the king for the invitation and expresses her satisfaction at the good relations between the Alliance and the kingdom of Drukh. She takes advantage of the end of the negotiations to broach the subject of their coming together :

“Ha, yes! Forgive me for dragging out this audience, but on my last trip to Carleon, King Toric entrusted me with a request if I came to Wolforge. I'd almost forgotten about it. Apparently, King Toric has given you a family heirloom that he holds dear. He regrets having sold it to you and would very much like it back. Of course, he's willing to reimburse you for the price you paid for it. He's even prepared to give you a little extra to compensate you. Do you think this is possible?”

At these words, King Guldrak sneers:

“Ha ha, holy King Toric. You don't make two like him! Tell him I'm ready to give him back his trinket for 10,000 gold coins. After all, I've become quite attached to it myself. And I think it's a great addition to my collection.”

Oriel wasn't expecting such a large sum, she thought she could buy it back for a few hundred PO.

Unperturbed, Oriël says she'll pass on the message to King Toric, but would like to see the object for herself, to confirm that her precious trinket is still in perfect condition. King Guldrak agrees and instructs his advisor to fetch the blue artifact from his chest.

While Gimdus is away, Oriël and the king exchange a few banalities: now is the time for the PCs to chat with the king if they wish.

If the players ask about Gimdus, the king will introduce him as his most trusted advisor: the two men have been friends for a long time, and the king trusts him completely to manage the kingdom's wealth.

If the PCs ask about Princess Tisry, the king will describe her as the greatest gift his mother, Queen Nesryn, has left him. Queen Nesryn died of a strange illness shortly after Tisry's birth.

If the PCs mention a possible affair between Tisry and Gimdus, the king will laugh out loud :

"You're not seriously thinking about it? My daughter. My sweet, innocent young daughter... She's not old enough for that sort of thing! Besides, Gimdus, that old fart, he's almost my age. Where did you get such an idea? Gimdus, my faithful adviser... He'd never do that."

After ten minutes or so, Gimdus returns with the famous artifact in his hands. The object is about 40 centimetres high and 30 centimetres wide. It is covered with strange symbols reminiscent of those found in the Klodenn temple.

Show players the image of the Klodenn artifact in the Appendix.

Oriël and the PCs can inspect the artifact and note its singularity.

If the adventurers pay attention to Gimdus's face, they can see a very slight red trace on his left cheek with a medium-difficulty Perception roll (10). If they're not interested, a Perception roll of difficult difficulty (15) can be requested from the PCs to obtain this information.

Oriël thanks the king for permission to see the object and says she'll let King Toric know it's in perfect condition.

This concludes the audience with King Guldrak. The adventurers are invited to leave the castle while the party gets organized. This will begin around 6pm. In the meantime, the king invites them to enjoy the charm of the town of Wolforge.

As they leave the throne room, the group meets Princess Tisry in the castle's entrance hall. The young woman greets them warmly and asks if they've had a pleasant night. She seems to be waiting for someone. If the PCs ask her out, she politely declines, claiming to have plans of her own.

If they look closely at the princess's face, they'll see that she's wearing

The Klodenn Artifact

A strange oval-shaped blue object, adorned with gilding and resembling nothing we've ever seen before. It is partially covered with symbols similar to those found in the Klodenn temple. Its dimensions are 40 cm high by 30 cm wide, and it weighs around 4 kg.

light make-up and lipstick.

On leaving the castle, Oriel asks the PCs to follow her into a deserted alleyway in the capital. Once out of sight, Oriel addresses her companions in misfortune :

“What a bummer! I thought I could get the artifact back by putting up the money myself, but I didn’t expect such a sum! That old goat must know what he represents! President Panorius has ordered us to recover this artifact by any means necessary and as quickly as possible. I don’t think we have any choice but to come up with a plan to steal it from the king. Do you have any ideas?”

Normally, the PCs will understand that to access King Guldrak’s treasure, they’ll have to go through his advisor Gimdus. Fortunately for them, there is a way to put pressure on him. In fact, Gimdus is having an affair with Princess Tisry, which would be very unpopular with the king if it were revealed.

If the PCs have the right reasoning, they should suggest to Oriel a plan to follow Gimdus out of the castle, and threaten to reveal his secret if he doesn’t help them seize the artifact.

If he doesn’t, Oriel may suggest that they carry out the mission herself.

While the PCs shadow Gimdus, she will take charge of finding a way to exfiltrate Wolforge without attracting attention. The PCs and Oriel have around 6 hours to complete their mission and meet up in front of the castle, before the party begins.

If the PCs are reluctant to threaten Gimdus or steal from King Guldrak, Oriel will convince them that Rautha’s safety is at stake. She may add :

“King Guldrak is an intelligent man, and I’m sure he knows what this artifact represents. And yet, he’s willing to trade it for a small fortune. Imagine if some enemy infiltrator in our ranks managed to raise the money before we got back. We can’t leave this thing here any longer, no matter what it represents.”

A SECRET LIAISON

Oriel leaves to find another way out of Wolforge, leaving the PCs to deal with Gimdus. The adventurers are free to wander around Wolforge: only access to the castle is forbidden while the party is being prepared.

The Burrow

One of the city's most exclusive inns, The Burrow welcomes only the capital's nobility. Discretion and elegance reign supreme.

This refined haven has become the new hot spot for former customers of The Confident Star.

If the PCs wait outside the castle until 1 p.m., they will see Princess Tisry go out alone. If they follow her discreetly, she can lead them to The Burrow Inn (PI 14). 30 minutes later, she will be joined by Gimdus, who has just left the castle. The PCs will need to pass a medium-difficulty Dexterity roll (10) if they wish to follow either of them discreetly. If Gimdus or Tisry feel they're being spied on, they'll accelerate to the inn. The PCs will then have to pass another Dexterity test of medium difficulty (10) to avoid losing their tracks.

A Concealment spell can be used to follow Gimdus or Tisry without the need for a Stealth test.

Once they've arrived in front of the inn, the PCs will have to wait a good half-hour for Tisry to leave the establishment and return to the castle. Gimdus, for his part, will emerge 15 minutes later and head for the restaurants and bars to the south-west of town (PI 10 and 11).

Gimdus is in charge of hiring a chef, waiters and dancers for tonight's party.

If the PCs enter the inn, they will be escorted out by the receptionist, who will tell them that the establishment is closed.

The inn has been privatized by Gimdus for part of the afternoon. No other customers are allowed in.

If the PCs stop Gimdus as he leaves the inn, they'll have almost irrefutable evidence to accuse him of having a relationship with the princess. It will be very easy to put pressure on him to cooperate in exchange for their silence.

If the PCs question Gimdus as soon as he leaves the castle, they will need sufficiently convincing evidence to succeed in putting pressure on him. A Charisma test of medium difficulty (10) may be required to intimidate him if the evidence is too weak.

Once backed into a corner, Gimdus will declare :

"You're right, I've done wrong... If the king finds out, I'll lose his trust forever. Please, swear not to tell him, and I promise to help you.."

After a few minutes of searching for a solution to help the PCs without risking being held responsible, Gimdus submits a plan to the adventurers :

"Talright, I think I've got a plan that might work for everyone. To keep me out of trouble, it would have to take place during tonight's party,

when I'll be with the king.

Before the party starts, I'll open the door to my apartments on the second floor of the castle. This will allow you to retrieve the key to the treasure room. I'll put it on my desk: all you have to do is steal it and break the glass of one of the windows to simulate a break-in. You can then use the key to open the treasure room in the castle basement.

You'll have to watch out for the guards. If they see you going in or out of the treasure room, even I won't be able to help you.

Once you've retrieved your object, leave Wolforge as quickly as possible.

I'll keep as many guards as possible busy in other parts of the castle.

Does this plan suit you?"

The PCs are free to accept or reject Gimdus's plan. They can propose another plan, but Gimdus will refuse to get his hands dirty or take too many risks. He wouldn't want to get into more trouble by helping the PCs than by revealing his secret.

After agreeing a plan with Gimdus, the PCs still have a few hours before the evening begins. They can use this time to wander around town and do some shopping.

Remember: weapons and armor are 10% cheaper in Wolforge.

At 6 p.m., the PCs can meet Oriel in front of the castle, as agreed. She'll be waiting to tell them what she's discovered.

Once the whole team is assembled, she'll lead them into a nearby alleyway, out of sight. She'll ask the PCs to report back to her, then share her own findings: she knows how to get out of Wolforge discreetly.

"All right, listen up and pay attention... While infiltrating the Wolforge mines, I overheard two miners discussing a secret passage leading out of town. This passage would be located on the lower level of the mines, accessible from a room called The Slug Cellar. Unfortunately, at this time of year, this passage is completely flooded. However, it is said that some unscrupulous miners continue to swim through it to sneak a few gems out of Wolforge. It seems to me the ideal way to get out of here without attracting attention. I hope you're good swimmers."

Once the exchange of information is over, Oriel will entrust the PCs with the difficult task of stealing the artifact during the evening. Unfortunately, Oriel won't be able to help them: her absence would be noticed by the king and his guests. She proposes to meet the PCs in front of the mine once their mission is accomplished, so that together they can escape from Wolforge. However, if things get complicated, she suggests they meet directly at the small village of Hagdan.

Time is of the essence, and the party is about to begin. It would be a shame to keep King Guldrak waiting yet again.

A PERILOUS BURGLARY

Summary of the Gimdus plan

The objective for the PCs is simple: take the key from Gimdus's office, open the treasure room, find and retrieve the artifact, exit the castle undetected, follow the galleries of the Wolforge mines until you find the secret flooded passage and finally, swim to the exit...
Child's play.

It's past 6pm, and guests are beginning to stream into the château. The guards let through the nobles and bourgeois of the capital, and filter out the wretches who wish to intrude on the evening. Guests are directed by the guards to the throne room, the party venue. This room has been completely refurbished, with a dozen tables covered in red tablecloths and magnificent hangings replacing the weapons hanging on the walls. The atmosphere is much warmer and more festive. Guldrak invites Oriel to his table, while the PCs have to find their own seats if they wish to enjoy the food on the menu.

PCs who enjoy the meal earn 10 HP.

At around 8pm, the atmosphere is in full swing. All the guests are there. The dancers and acrobats who have come for the occasion liven up the evening, and the alcohol flows freely. A few guards can be seen enjoying the party, mugs in hand. This is the perfect moment for the PCs to begin their mission. As expected, Oriel is unable to help the PCs: sitting at the king's table, he doesn't seem to want to leave her side.

Show your players the map of Wolforge Castle on the PC side to help them find their way around. Use the GM's map of Wolforge Castle, without revealing it to the players, to describe locations and NPC encounters.

Gimdus office

Gimdus' apartments are upstairs (see map of Wolforge on GM side).

If a guard sees a PCs using one of the corridors leading to a staircase in the castle, he will stop him and tell him that he has no business here, and that access to the upper and lower floors is strictly forbidden to guests. If the PCs refuse to obey, they will be forcibly removed from the castle. The last thing they need is to come to blows, as this could cause a diplomatic incident and derail their mission for good.

If a servant comes across a PC, he won't say anything unless he sees him enter one of the castle's rooms. In this case, the servant will go straight to a guard and warn him that something fishy is going on upstairs.

PJs can make Perception tests to detect the presence of guards or servants. The difficulty of this roll may vary according to the distance between the PCs and the NPCs.

Once inside Gimdus's apartments, the PCs notice that the place has been left in disarray. Clothes, books and notebooks litter the floor. Desk drawers and cupboards are all open.

Gimdus set up this staging to fake a burglary.

SO on the councillor's desk, PCs find, as agreed, a gold key inside a small wooden box that has already been opened.

If they break one of the windows, as Gimdus had planned, they risk alerting one of the servants upstairs. The PCs can perform a Perception test of medium difficulty (10) to hear the sound of approaching footsteps. They can either escape through the window or set a trap to prevent the servant from alerting the guards. If the PCs choose to escape through the window, they risk injury if they don't use a rope (5 or 10 m) to rappel down (1d6 gross damage if they fall).

Treasure room

With the key in their possession, the PCs should head for the treasure room in the castle's basement. Access to the corridor leading to the staircase on the lower floor is guarded by the guards at the entrance. The easiest way for the PCs is to return to the throne room, where the party is taking place, and discreetly use the door leading to this corridor. Fortunately, they can enlist the help of Oriel and Gimdus to distract the king and the guards present.

When they reach the basement, they'll come across a guard asleep at the end of the corridor, holding a tankard of mead. They can try to open the door without waking the guard, by succeeding in a Dexterity roll of medium difficulty (10). Otherwise, they can always stun and/or gag him so that he doesn't disturb them. If one or more PCs decide to eliminate him, they lose 2 morale points.

When the door opens, PCs can discover and admire the place housing the wealth of the Druk kingdom: an immense hall covered with gold coins forming mounds, where dozens of chests containing countless valuables are stored. Opposite them, two 2-meter statues seem to guard the entrance to a secret room. Behind each of the two statues is a small 50-centimetre-high pylon. Above the door to the secret room hangs a golden plaque, inscribed with a message.

Show your players the secret room riddle available in the Appendix.

They don't know it, but by approaching the sign, they've activated a mechanism that gives them just a few minutes to solve the riddle before it goes off. A difficult Perception roll (15) will enable one of the PCs to hear the regular clicking sounds produced by the mechanism.

The PCs have 3 minutes to understand that they must turn the heads of the statues towards each other so that they look at each other. This deactivates the mechanism and opens the door to the secret room.

Only the heads of the statues are movable; a joint at the neck can be discovered by analyzing the statues more closely and succeeding in a medium-difficulty Perception roll (10).

If, after 3 minutes, they still can't solve the riddle, the mechanism is triggered, bringing the statues to life and preparing to attack the PCs. In this case, launch a fight between 2 golems and the PCs. The map of the Treasure Room and the golem sheet are available in the Appendix.

Castle guards

The castle guards wear thick chain mail and are mostly armed with halberds and swords. As Wolforge is an almost impregnable city, having never known siege or invasion, the guards have developed the annoying habit of not taking their work seriously. In fact, they don't hesitate to drink copiously throughout the evening.

The statues

Two imposing statues of dwarves in armour on a much larger scale. According to the inscriptions at their feet, they represent the two founding brothers of Wolforge. Carved from solid brown rock, they are fixed to the ground by their weight.

Once the golems have been defeated, the door to the secret room opens. Fortunately, the festivities drown out the sounds of fighting in the basement...

Secret room

Inside the secret room are a multitude of relics and valuables arranged on several shelves. At the far end of the room, on a display rack, PCs recognize the Klodenn artifact, stored right next to a thick old grimoire. Examination of the book will reveal that it is written in an ancient language, with symbols similar to those found in Klodenn's buried temple. On consulting the book, if a PC succeeds on an easy Luck roll (5), he or she may come across a page containing a representation of the artifact. It goes without saying that this book, once deciphered, will enable them to learn more about this mysterious object.

If the PCs decide to leave the secret room with more than one object, then the two statues at the entrance to the room will come to life and attack them. If they've already been defeated, nothing happens.

The Treasure Room map and Golem sheet are available in the appendix.

Tip: PCs can take out several items one at a time, going back and forth several times to avoid activating the statues.

With the artifact in their possession, the PCs need to sneak out of the castle and into the mines, where the only hidden passageway to the outside of Wolforge is to be found.

The old grimoire

A strange, mysterious-looking book from an ancient, unknown civilization. Its writing is similar to that found in the Klodenn temple. The book's cover is adorned with intricate, bewitching patterns, giving the impression of revealing the secrets of a distant past. Inside, you'll find illustrations depicting the artifact.

A HASTY ESCAPE

Leaving the castle isn't difficult: PCs can wait for Oriel directly at the entrance to the mines, or choose to go back through the throne room first.

In the latter case, they can discreetly inform Oriel that the mission has been accomplished. However, Oriel will not be able to leave without arousing suspicion. She may suggest that the adventurers go and wait for her directly at the mines, until the party is over.

The PCs shouldn't stay too long at the party. Indeed, if anyone discovers a trace of their presence, having no alibi and being complete strangers, they will quickly be judged responsible.

Once the PCs are outside the castle, they can move freely through the streets of Wolforge.

In front of the entrance to the mines, two guards are chatting and making sure that the miners don't come out with any precious stones on them. They don't pay much attention to people entering the mine. On the other hand, they might find it strange that people are waiting at the entrance. The PCs can advance a little further down the mines or keep a safe distance from the guards so as not to attract their attention.

After a few minutes of waiting, an alarm suddenly sounds, echoing throughout Wolforge. The relaxed-looking guards straighten up and become much more alert. If they're near the PCs, they'll ask them to stop immediately. If they flee, they'll go after them.

If the PCs are already inside the mine, they will have been seen by the guards at the entrance. The guards will start looking for them as soon as they hear the alarm.

If the PCs have stayed at a distance, they'll have to enter the mines quickly, as the town guards are on their heels.

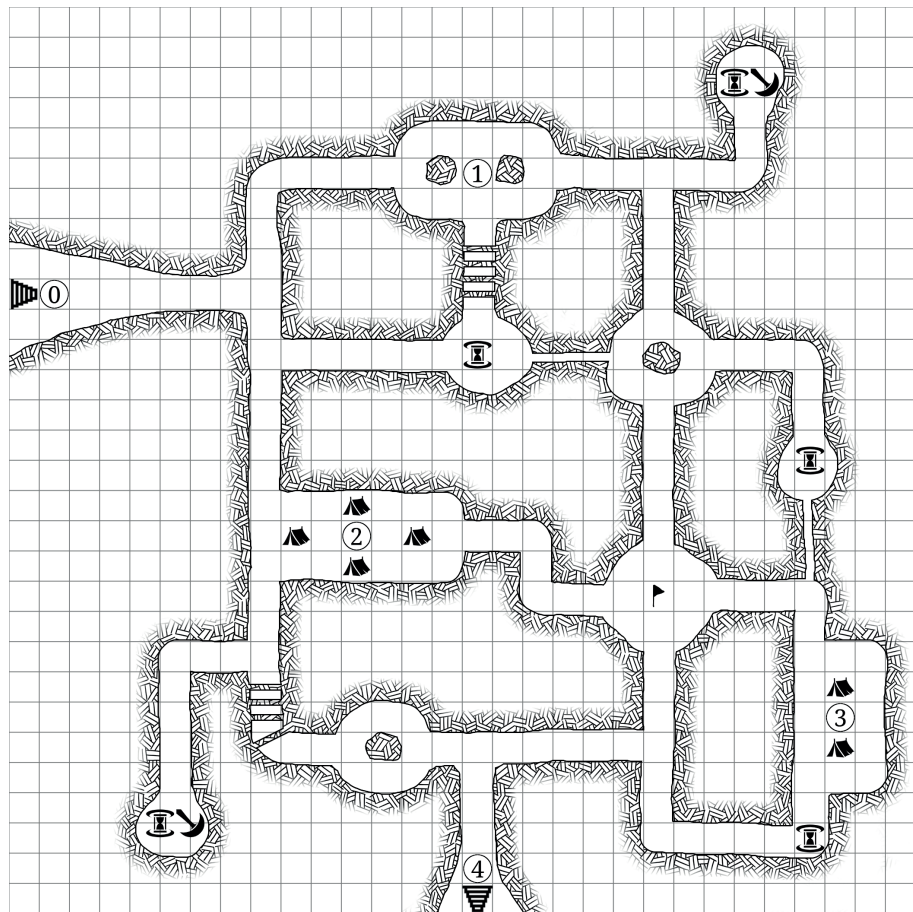
Whatever happens, the PCs need to get out of Wolforge before things get ugly. They can't afford to wait for Oriel any longer: they'll have to get down into the mines and find the passage leading out of town as quickly as possible. If they're too slow, they risk being caught by the guards who are chasing them.

Consult the Mine map below, to describe the locations and possible routes, and trigger events according to the players' choices.

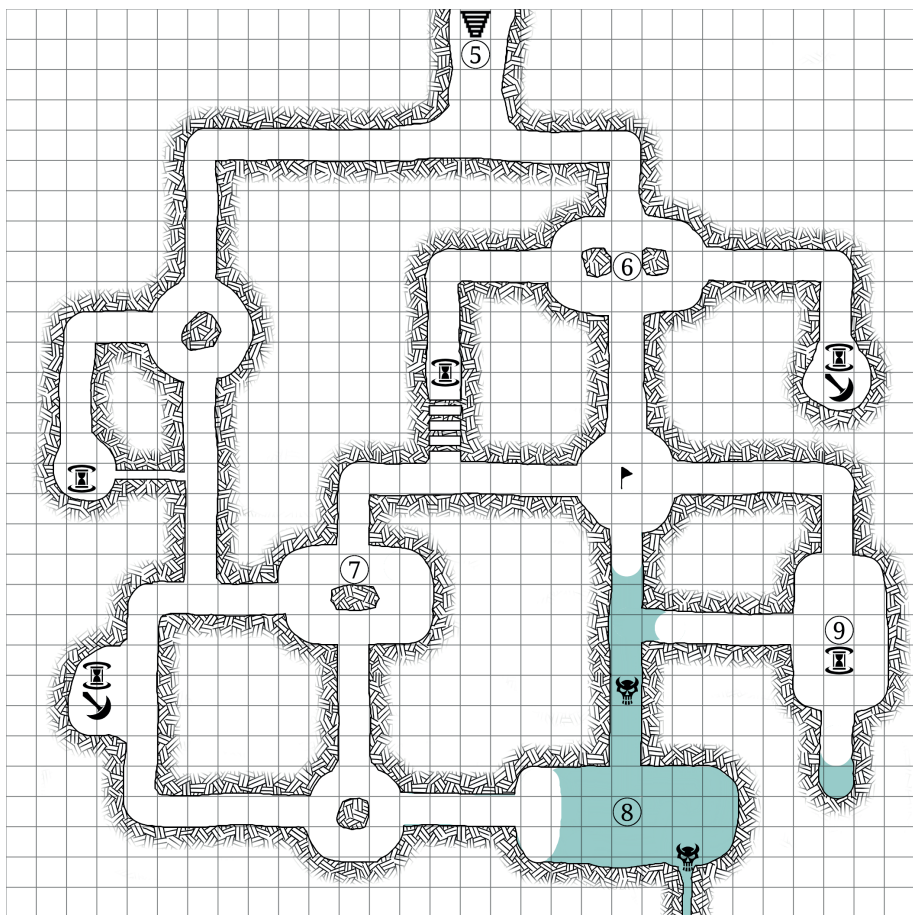
Legend

- 0 : Mine entrance
- 1 : The earthworm portal
- 2: Large chamber
- 3: Mole room
- 4: Access to lower floor
- 5: Access to upper floor
- 6: Corridor
- 7: The chapel
- 8: Slug cellar
- 9: The bathroom

Mine - upper floor



Mine - lower floor



Hourglasses: These indicate where the PCs are likely to lose time. If the PCs turn back on 2 hourglasses, they will be caught by the guards and forced into combat. The first time, they'll face 2 guards, then 3, 4, 5 etc., each time they turn back twice.

Pickaxes: These indicate the presence of miners. A medium-difficulty Perception roll (10) allows you to hear the sound of a pickaxe striking stone, up to 50 meters away (10 squares maximum). If a miner comes across a PC, he won't seek confrontation, but he may go and warn the guards. A roll of Chance can help determine the minor's behavior. If the guards are alerted, they will get dangerously close to the PCs and may catch them at the slightest mistake.

Tents: These indicate the places where miners sleep or rest. The PCs must all pass an easy Dexterity roll (5) so as not to disturb the miners. If they fail, the miners will alert the guards.

Fagnon: They point out where there are directional signs with the names of the rooms on the floor concerned.

Skull and crossbones: These indicate places where PCs are in danger of drowning. PCs must make a Constitution roll of easy difficulty (5) to avoid drowning every time they pass over a death's-head. If a character drowns, his HP instantly drops to 0 and his inert body follows the current to the exit. If a drowning PC is not quickly attended to (Reanimation Spell or Rescue Kit), he dies permanently. Count -2PS for each minute spent unconscious. Reminder: If a character's HPs fall below their maximum negative value, he dies permanently.

Cramped passageways: PCs must pass a medium-difficulty Dexterity roll (10) to pass through these passages without losing time. After 2 consecutive failures, they will be caught by the guards.

Vertical passage (hatched passage on plan): PCs must pass a medium-difficulty Strength roll (10) to climb or descend a vertical passage without risking injury. They lose 1d6 HP each time they fail.

The map of the Mine and the Guard sheet are available in the appendix.

Arriving in the flooded secret passage, the PCs are sucked into the current and propelled out of Wolforge. They fall several meters and land in one of the rivers flowing down the mountain.

The miners

Wolforge's miners are low-paid workers at the bottom of the social ladder. They can work both day and night. Some of them have discovered a way to earn extra income by bringing jewels out of the mine through a secret passage unknown to the guards. If they come across the PCs, the miners will have no interest in fighting them. They'll simply prefer to call the guards, so they won't be accused of complicity or negligence.



Zico

A Reptilian in his thirties, Zico never goes anywhere without a cigar in his mouth. He claims to be a member of the Alliance, but his moody, violent nature makes him hard to trust.

Elven warriors

Elven warriors combine grace, agility and combat expertise. Their slender features and finely chiseled weapons reflect their martial skill. They are renowned for their tactical acumen and absolute dedication.

AN UNEXPECTED TWIST

Freezing cold, the PCs have to warm up quickly and put on their warmest clothes. Although this shortcut has saved them precious time, they still have an hour or two's walk to the village of Hagdan.

After a few minutes' walk, the PCs come across a man called Zico. He is accompanied by several men and claims to be an Alliance officer. He wears the Alliance crest and claims to be coming to the rescue of Oriel and the adventurers accompanying him. According to him, he has been commissioned by President Panorius to escort the adventurers on their mission to Wolforge to Castle City.

Few people climb Gigantic at this time of year, and the atypical profile of the group of PCs suggests they're not from around here. Zico is quick to make the connection and deduce that they are the adventurers accompanying Oriel. He insists that they accompany them to Castle City.

Follow Zico

Zico and his men lead the PCs to Hagdan, where the stagecoach is waiting to take them to Castle City. On the way, Zico asks about Oriel. He doesn't seem to be worried about her: according to him, she's gotten out of much more delicate situations before.

Zico is aware of the artifact's existence. He'll try to ask more or less subtle questions to peek into the PCs' bag, such as:

"Were you able to do some shopping in Wolforge? I'm curious to see what you bring back with you..."

Once in the village of Hagdan, Zico leads the PCs to the north stable (PI 6) where his stagecoach is located. Once inside the vehicle, the group immediately sets off in the direction of Castle City.

Unfortunately, as soon as they leave the village of Hagdan, they come under surprise attack from a dozen elven warriors. The horses towing the stagecoach are each shot with an arrow, sending all passengers tumbling to the ground. Zico's men don't even have time to get up: they are executed by their assailants. Zico miraculously escapes, while the PCs are taken prisoner. If they try to struggle, they'll be knocked unconscious.

The PCs are tied up and thrown into another coach, driven by one of the elves. If they ask any questions, their captor will simply reply that the King of Epheria wants to speak with them.

Fight Zico

If the PCs refuse to follow Zico's lead, he'll be threatening and won't hesitate to use force.

The map of the Mountain Path and the Zico and companions file are available in the Appendix. Zico's companions are the same number as the PCs. Draw archetypes (Warrior, Mage or Thief) at random for each of Zico's henchmen.

The fight continues until only one PC is left standing or Zico drops below 5 HP.

Just as the fight seems to be drawing to a close, a group of ten or so elven warriors emerge to rescue the PCs. They finish off Zico's henchmen and try to do the same to him, but he miraculously manages to escape. He swears to find the PCs and do them in.

Once Zico and his gang have been routed, the elves approach the PCs on the pretext of wanting to heal them. Confident and exhausted by the fight, the PCs will instinctively let their guard down: they'll all be knocked unconscious and pass out.

A few minutes later, they wake up in a moving stagecoach, their hands and feet bound. Inside the coach, two elven guards watch over the PCs. One of them says:

"Finally awake? I hope you like long walks, rookie. We still have a long way to go to Aethel."

CONCLUSION

The PCs find themselves in a delicate situation: they are tied up and taken by force to Aethel, capital of the kingdom of Epheria, to meet King Lurius. They don't know what they're accused of, and their captors don't seem very chatty. Their weapons and personal belongings have been taken from them. The artifact, meanwhile, has been carefully placed in a sturdy wooden chest at the back of the coach.

The adventurers have many questions. Who are these people? How do they know about this? What does the King of Epheria want with them? What fate do they have in store for them? All these questions will only be answered at the end of their long journey.

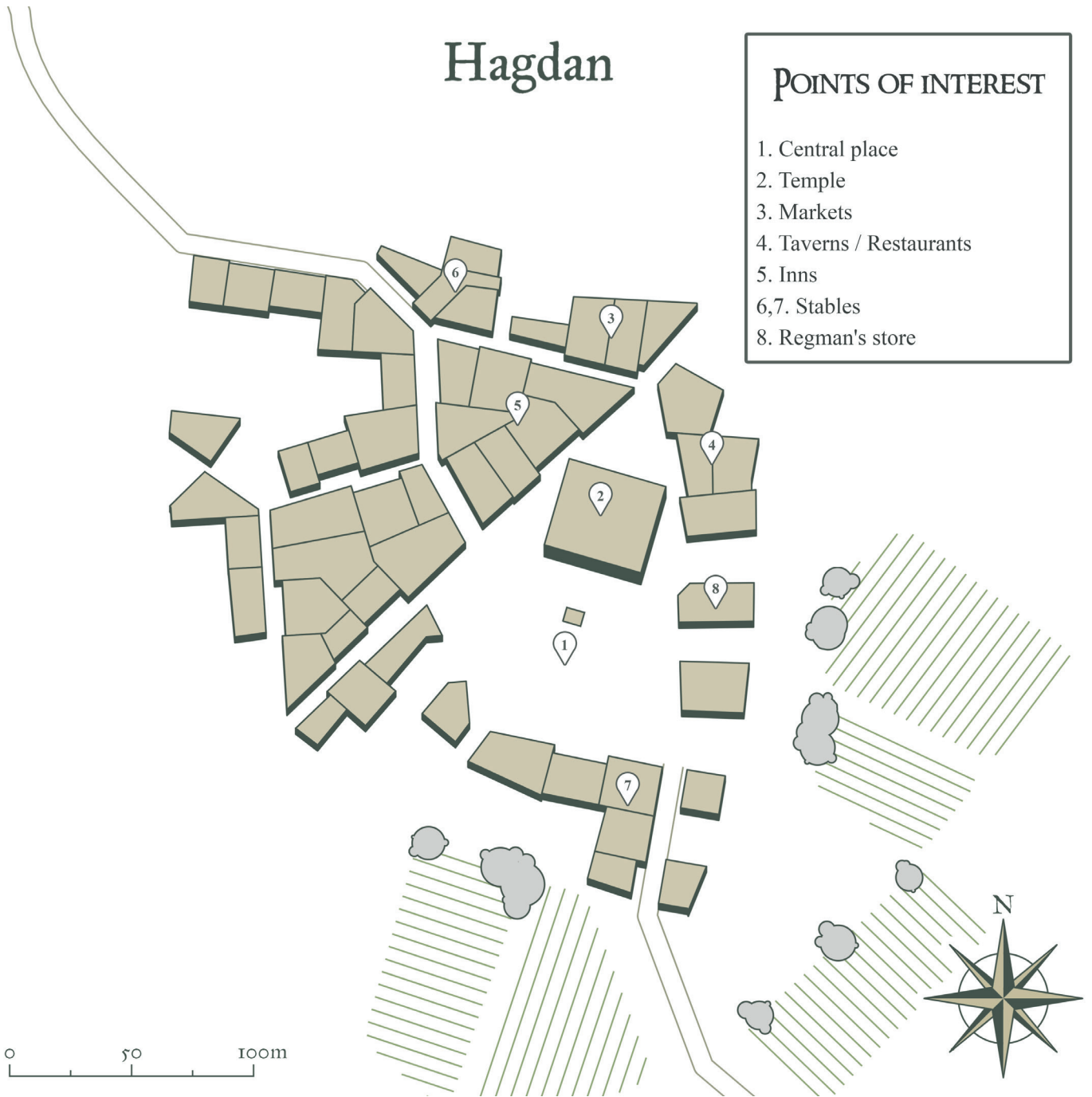
AWARDS

Here is the list of end-of-scenario rewards available, depending on the objectives reached:

Objectives	Awards
Take on Zico and get him down to 5 HP or less	120 experience points
Ne pas avoir affronté de garde	1 morale point + 100 experience points
Stolen artifact	150 experience points
Stolen gold	-1 point de moral
Solve the riddle of the treasure room	100 experience points
Defeating the golems	80 experience points
Climb Gigantic in 7 hours or less	50 experience points
Climb Gigantic in 9 hours or less	50 experience points
Climb Gigantic in 11 hours or less	50 experience points
Complete the scenario	90 gold coins

APPENDIX

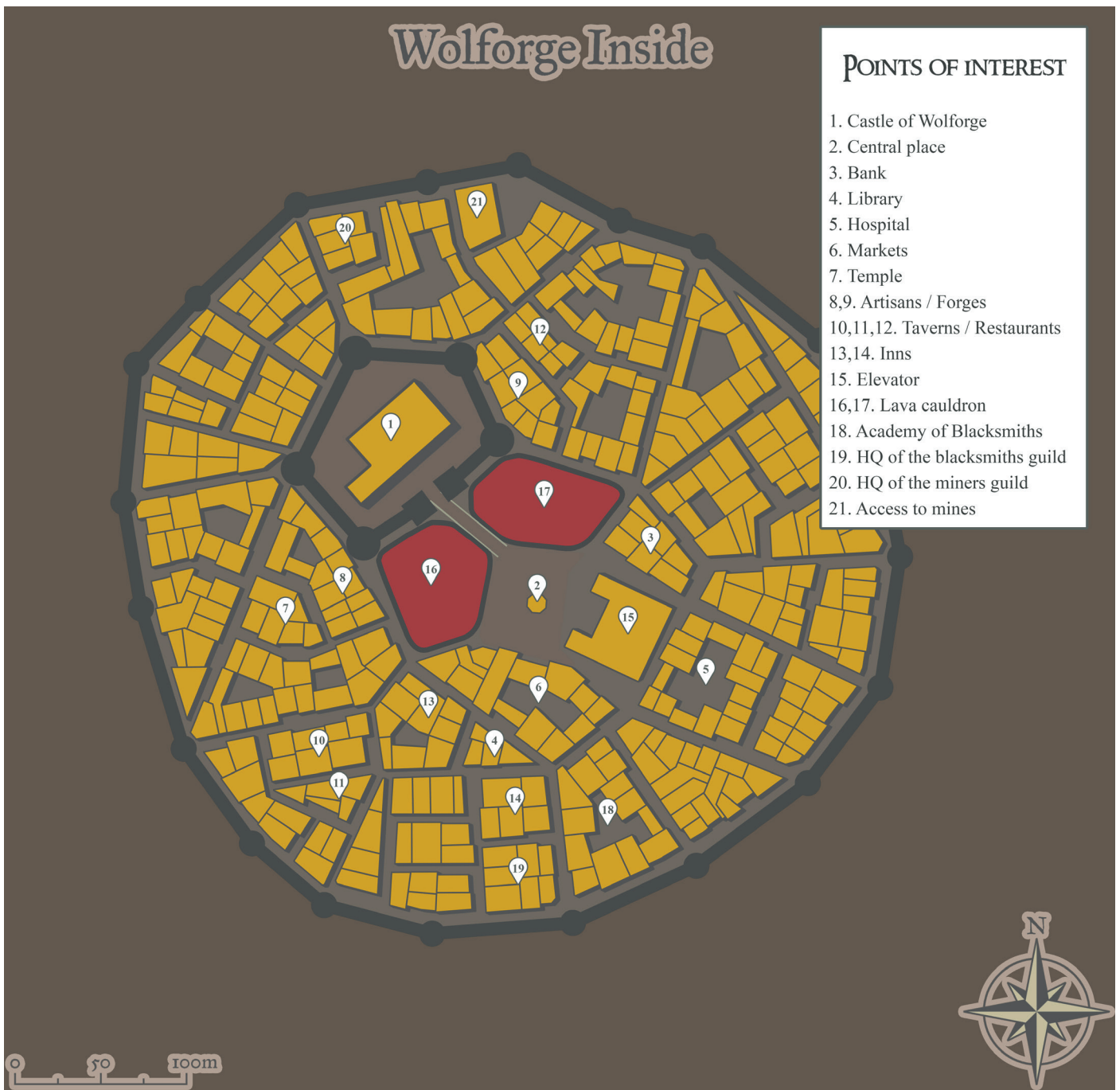
MAP OF HAGDAN



MOUNTAIN TRAIL



MAP OF WOLFORGE INSIDE

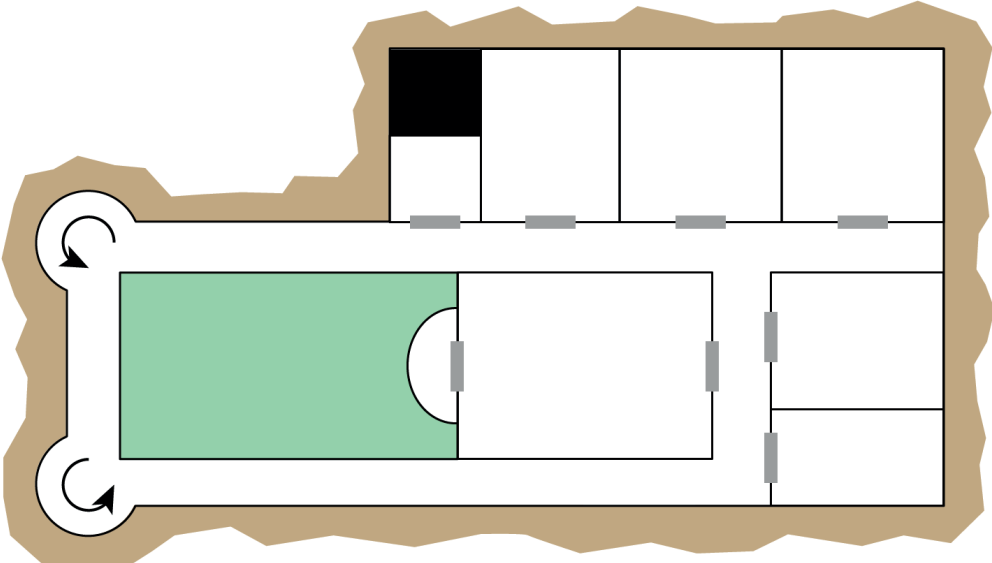


KLODENN ARTIFACT

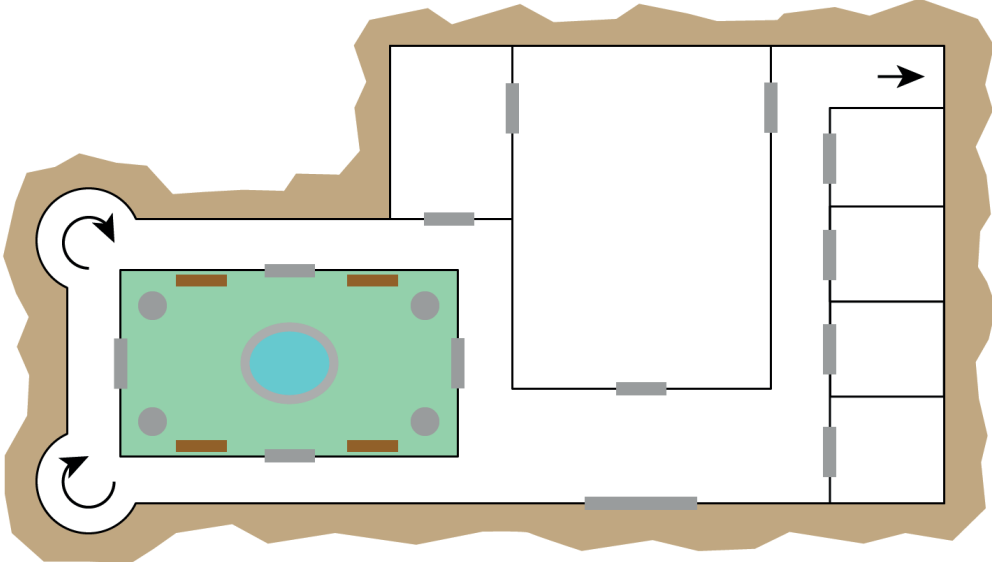


PLAN OF WOLFORGE CASTLE PC SIDE

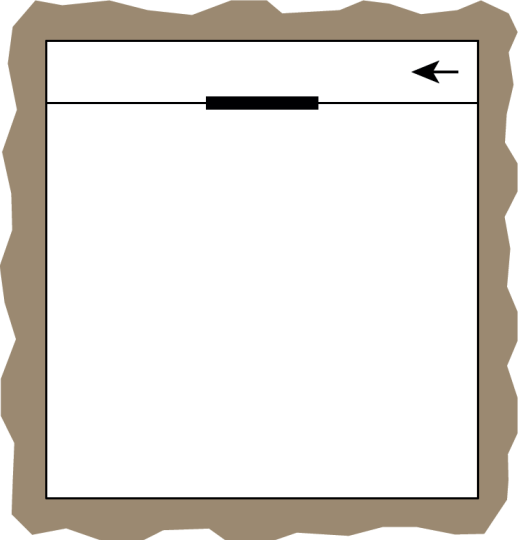
SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

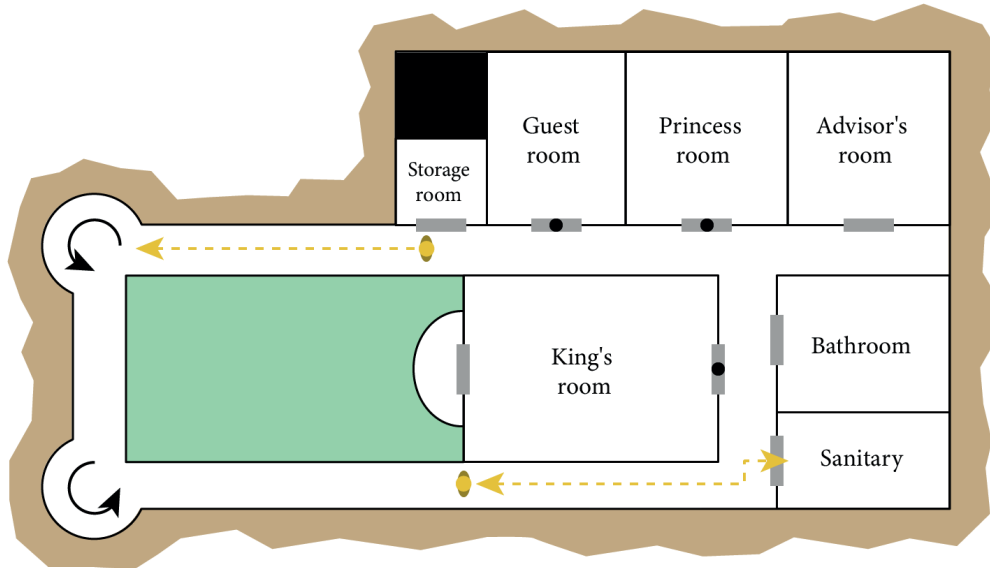


BASEMENT

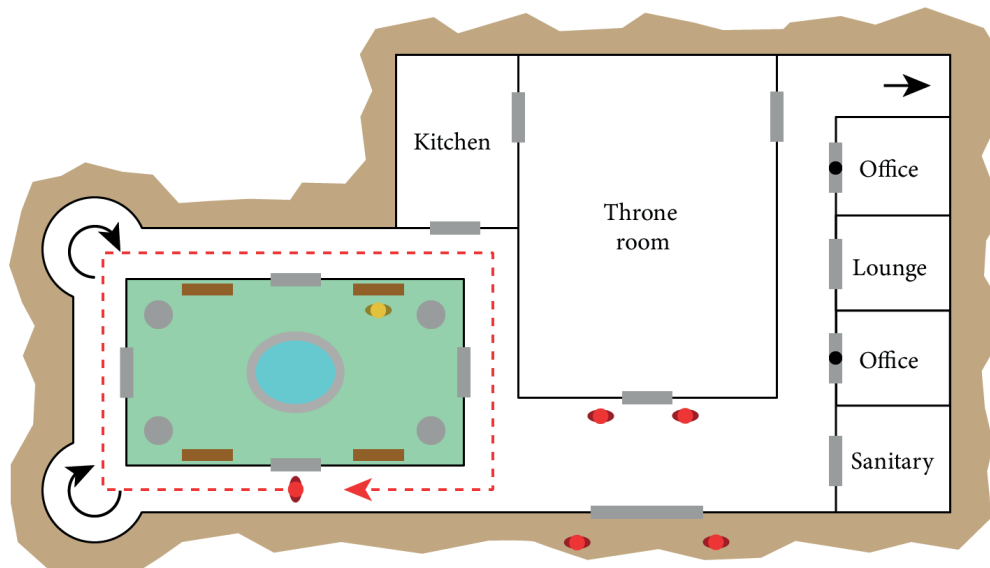


PLAN OF WOLFORGE CASTLE GM SIDE

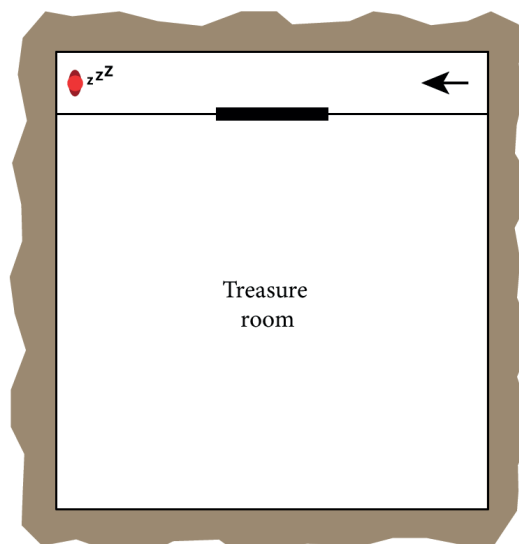
SECOND FLOOR



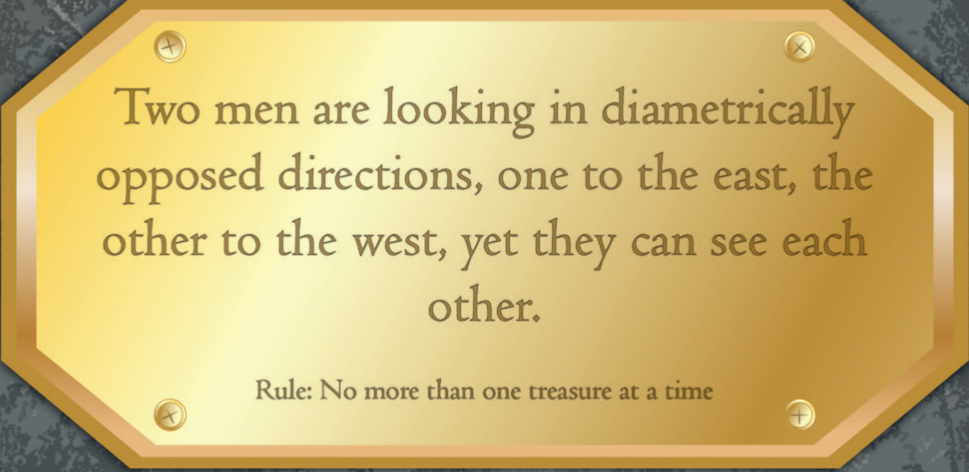
FIRST FLOOR



BASEMENT



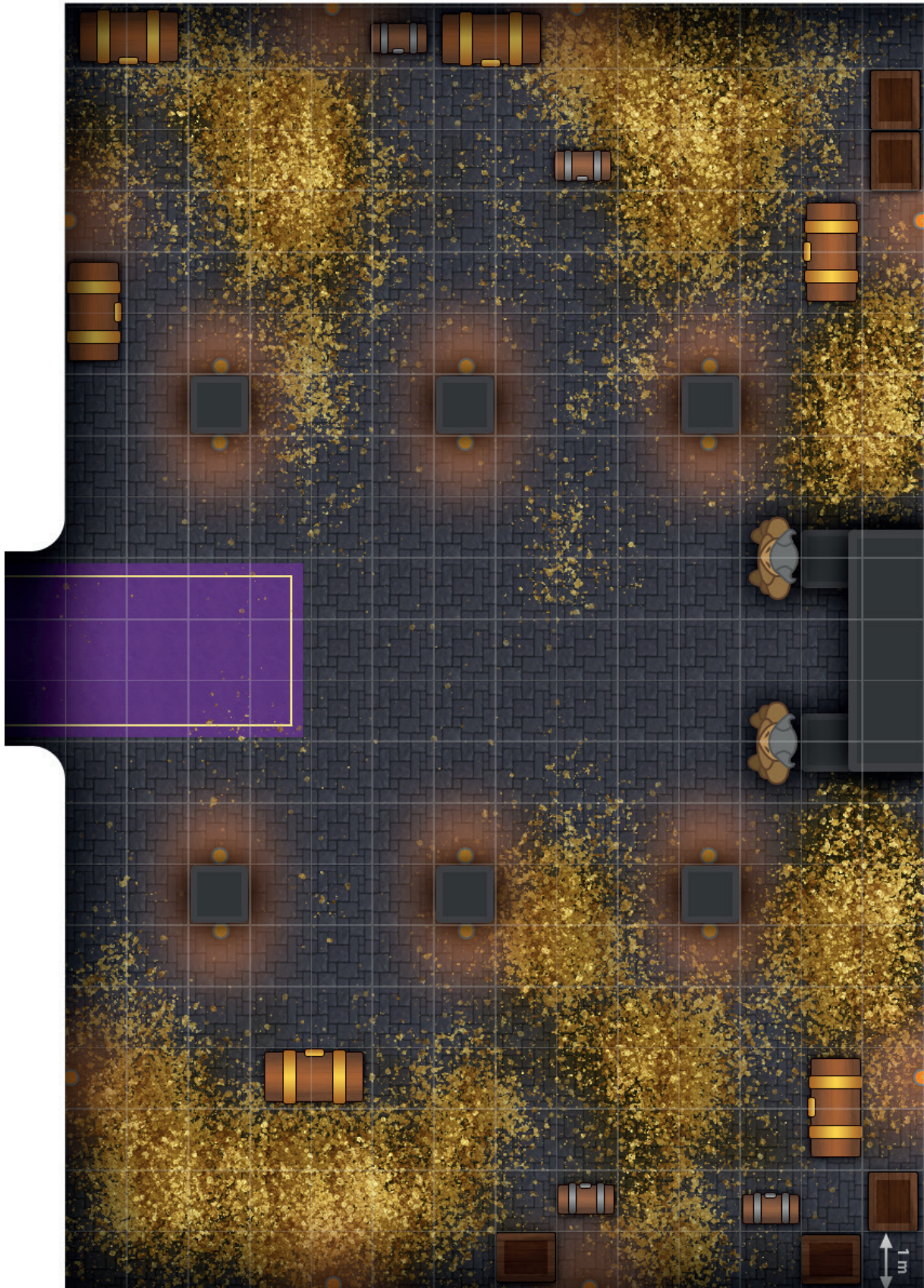
RIDDLE OF THE SECRET ROOM



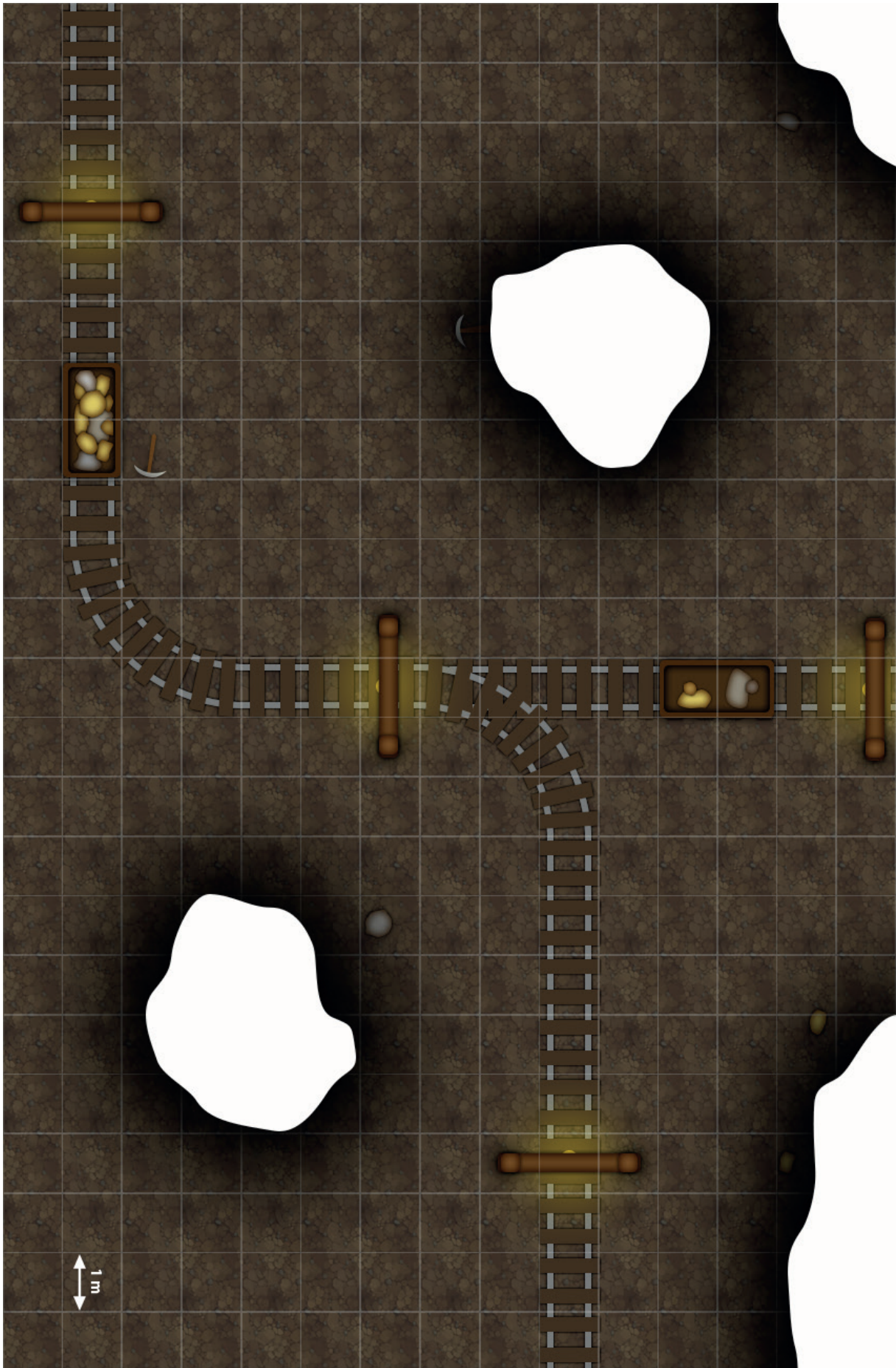
Two men are looking in diametrically
opposed directions, one to the east, the
other to the west, yet they can see each
other.

Rule: No more than one treasure at a time

TREASURE ROOM



MINE



CREATURES AND NPCs

WOLF

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Claw	Melee	D20	1D4+DEX+STR
Croc	Melee	D20	1D4+2+STR

WOLFORGE GUARD

Warrior :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Sword	Melee	D20+4	1D10+STR
Halberd	2m max	D20+1	1D8+4+STR

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Chain mail	Constitution > 3	-3 Dexterity	5

**applicable only on creatures with the Undead strenght*

STONE GOLEM

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Fist	Melee multi-target*	D20	2D4+DEX+STR

**all targets within a 1m radius of him*

Stone golems are artificial magical creatures carved out of stone in the shape of large, impressive statues. Animated by magic, golems are very resistant creatures, they are generally used to protect places from an intrusion.

Strengths : Robust+, Magical creature

Special moves : Stunning blow

ORIEL

Thief / Wizard :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Quality dagger *2	Melee	D20+4	1D8+DEX+INT

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Studded leather armor	-	-	2

Strengths : Ambidextrous

Special moves : Tactical withdrawal, Dissimulation, Piercing blow, Absorption, Mark

ZICO

Warrior / Thief :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Quality pugilistic weapon	Melee	D20+4	3D4+STR+DEX

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Studded leather armor	-	-	2

Special moves : Fury, Tactical withdrawal, Stunning blow, Reversal, Piercing blow, Vital points

WARRIOR (LVL 1)

Warrior :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Basic sword	Melee	D20	1D8+STR

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Studded leather armor	-	-	2
Basic shield	Strenght > -1	-	1*

**only applicable in a defensive position*

Special moves : Fury

WIZARD (LVL1)

Wizard :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Wand	15m max	D20	1D10+INT

Strengths : Elementary mastery

Special moves :

Fire, Lightning and Ice elemental spells

THIEF (LVL 1)

Thief :

HP :  EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Basic shortbow	2m 20m	D20	1D6+DEX
Basic dagger	Melee	D20	1D6+DEX

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Padded armor	-	-	1

Special moves : Tactical withdrawal