

The Trouble at Mountain Pass

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*An introductory adventure for first level characters
Compatible with Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition rules*

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Background

Introduction

Maybe you were down on your luck and needed some coin in your pocket; perhaps a difference of opinion with the local authorities required you get out of town in a hurry; or it could be that you just wanted to see a bit of the world. Whatever the case, you signed on as a guard for a merchant caravan traveling from the city of Forty Oaks to the port of Deep Waters with stopovers at various towns and trading posts along the way.

For the last two days, the caravan has been crawling its way up the back of the Dragon Smoke Peaks towards the mining town of Mountain Pass. This morning, you and few other guards were assigned to scout ahead to make sure the road is clear and “discourage” any ne’er-do-wells who might think a big trade caravan would be a good opportunity to cause some trouble. It’s been an uneventful day so far...

What is Really Going On (Spoilers!)

Goran Ving, the mine boss and a town council member, wants to run the Mountain Pass as his personal fiefdom. A week ago, while the local goblin tribe was celebrating an annual festival, he had their sacred relic stolen (a large, opalescent stone with magical properties) and is keeping it hidden. He then contacted the goblins to inform them that the mayor had it taken in hopes of driving the goblins away from the area. Ving has encouraged the goblins to attack convoys coming approaching or leaving town, claiming that the mayor may be bringing in troops to forcibly evict the goblins and/or sneaking the relic out of the area. When the disruption gets bad enough, Ving plans to forge a truce by recovering the relic and turning over the “thief”. He’ll then use his own goons and some hired thugs to take over and disband the town council.

Key Locations

Mountain Pass (Population: 400)

- Important NPCs: Artemis Lobo (merchant & caravan master), Sheriff/Guard Captain Reginald Merton, Mayor Bonwit Nelson, Council Member Goran Ving (mine boss and BBEG)
- Notable Locations: Temple to Moradin, town hall, Ving’s home, the Pick & Shovel Inn, copper mine
- Geography: Mountain Pass is a small copper mining community in the Dragon Smoke Peaks. It sits in a pass along a modestly trafficked trading route which ensures a semi-regular flow of new miners and adequate transportation for the copper to distant markets.
- Equipment: The caravan has some very basic supplies, but no adventuring equipment, weapons or armor. The shops in town have extensive adventuring and mining equipment, light armor and simple weapons.

Goblin Camp (Population: 1000)

- Important NPCs: Bigboss Girtir Nookl
- Notable Locations: Bigboss’s hut, prison cells, tunnels, ruined temple

- **Geography:** The goblin camp is a cluster of crude huts built in a rough semi-circle against a high cliff wall. The goblins previously hacked a rough set of tunnels into the cliff to mine a small vein of iron. The vein is now exhausted, but the goblins still use the tunnels for storage. Around the camp, the goblins have cleared a large area of forest. This clearing extends 500ft from the edges of the camp.

Cast of Characters

Artemis Lobo (Merchant and caravan master)

Artemis is middle-aged halfling. She owns and runs the trade caravan that the party has signed on as guards for and the party's employer. She's friendly with a gift for putting people at ease. She is an accomplished trader and has a knack for turning every situation into a money making opportunity for herself. If the party acquits itself well in Mountain Pass, she might be a good source of later adventures.

Reginald Merton (Sheriff and Guard Captain of Mountain Pass)

Reginald is a middle-aged human. He did a stint of military service in his youth before returning to Mountain Pass where he grew up. Although no longer in top-fighting form, Reginald has had lots of experience dealing with the rough and tumble typical of a mining town and has a good eye for trouble.

Bonwit Nelson (Mayor of Mountain Pass)

Bonwit is a youthful looking half-elf. He holds the title of mayor by virtue of being the local representative for the trade guild that owns the mine and the town. His primary responsibility is to ensure a steady flow of copper. As long as that happens, the guild doesn't pay too much attention to what is going on. Bonwit has been in town for a couple of years, but is still considered an outsider by most and doesn't really know – or care – very much about mining. He's hoping this assignment ends soon, so he can return to “civilization”.

Goran Ving (Mine boss and BBEG)

Goran is a powerfully built human. He oversees day-to-day operations of the mine and serves as something of a union boss for the miners. He's a local tough who worked his way up and forced his way into his current position. He has largely convinced the miners that the guild and Bonwit, who he considers to be little more than an inconvenient obstacle, are out to screw them.

Bigboss Girtir Nookl (Goblin chief)

As far as the party can tell, Girtir looks just like every other goblin – small, smelly and uneducated. His grandfather led the tribe to escape from a group of Hobgoblins a number of years ago who used them as slaves, cannon fodder and whipping boys. As a result, Girtir commands a fairly loyal following despite lacking any of the usual trapping of goblin leadership – size, strength, cunning or magical ability. However, Ving has made a secret deal with the camp's sub-boss to support a coup once Ving is in control of the town.

The Goblin's Relic

At first glance, this appears to be a large, many-faceted, opalescent stone. A closer examination will reveal that it is actually a large number of small stones magically bonded together to form a single large stone. The whole thing strongly radiates magic. In its current form, it creates a magical zone of peace and prosperity in a wide radius.

If the party decided to keep the relic rather than return it to the goblins, it is exchangeable for a L7 magic item or comparable amount of gold in any large community. Alternately, the individual stones can also be pried apart and set into up to 4 brooches (or similar items) where they will function as +1 Amulets of Health.

Encounters

Encounter 1: Thugs on the Road (Combat)

As you round a bend in the road, you hear a gravelly voice growl, "Well then, what do have we here? Looks like these folks have lost their way and we'd best relieve them of any coins or other valuables that might be weighing them down." Standing before you is a small group of goblinoids thugs with a pair of vicious looking dogs. The largest of the group points at you and says "Don't make this hard on yourselves. Just drop your coin purses in the road and head back the way you came!"

Combat

Terrain: The road (20ft wide) starts on south edge of the map near the west edge. It runs north for 20ft then curves northeast and continues off the edge of the map. On the inside of the curve, the terrain slopes down steeply. It counts as difficult terrain and if a character suffers forced movement into the area then he/she must make a medium difficulty Acrobatics check or slide to bottom of slope (no damage) and end up prone. The outside of the curve consists of scattered underbrush (difficult terrain) and large trees (blocking terrain).

- 2 Goblin Warriors [L1 Skirmisher] (note: designate one as the speaker who threatens the party)
- 2 Rabid Dogs [L1 Brute] (note: use Dire Rats stats)
- 4 Goblin Cutters [L1 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 10): 150sp (divided amongst various goblins), 25gp copper ring (goblin warrior)
- Experience Points: 500xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Goblin Warrior (100xp), 30sp and decrease ring value by 5gp

Interlude 1: Entering Town (Mountain Pass)

The party continues on to town or returns to the caravan which reaches town uneventfully. Once in town Artemis speaks with the guard captain who informs them that there is a tribe of goblins in the area which has been causing problems. The tribe has been in the area for many years and used to mostly keep to themselves. In fact, they even did a little bit of trading with the town. However over the last few weeks, they have suddenly become very aggressive. They've been staying away from town so far, but have been harassing, robbing and killing travelers on the road – even well armed ones and fairly large groups. Since the tribe hasn't been threatening the town directly, the captain hasn't been able to convince the town council to commit resources to resolving the problem.

Artemis doesn't want to risk the caravan, so she breaks the guards to break up into squads. One group is to scout out the road out of town, the other group (the party) is to locate and recon the goblin camp.

Negotiate for Extra Pay or Supplies

The characters' base pay is 5gp each per day (5 days so far, but only paid upon completion of the journey), meals and access to basic supplies. The party might be able to negotiate with Artemis for additional pay and/or with Sheriff Merton for some adventuring equipment. These negotiations also serve as introductions to the skill challenge mechanic.

- *Success condition.* 2 successes before 2 failures
- *Primary Skills* (easy): Diplomacy, Bluff, Insight
- *Secondary Skills* (moderate): Nature, Intimidate (2x on fail)
- *Other Skills.* DM's discretion

Artemis Lobo:

The merchant will initially argue that this is part of protecting the caravan and is included in their pay.

- *1st Success.* She will "offer" that the party can keep anything they loot from the goblins.
- *2nd Success.* She offers an extra 50gp per person upon sale of goods in Deep Waters.
- *3rd Success.* She says take it or leave it and won't offer more.
- *1st Failure.* She looks annoyed
- *2nd Failure.* She won't negotiate further and says that she will find locals to replace them if they won't do the work.

Sheriff Merton:

The captain will initially explain that he isn't authorized to supply them.

- *1st Success.* He acts sympathetic, but doesn't want to stick his neck out.
- *2nd Success.* He offers to loan the party up to 50gp per person worth of supplies. This also opens up access to the town armory which has a small stock of martial weapons and heavy armor.
- *3rd Success.* He says take it or leave it and won't offer more.
- *1st Failure.* He looks annoyed
- *2nd Failure.* He won't negotiate further and threatens to have them arrested if keep pushing.

Encounter 2: Goblin Raiding Party (Combat)

The party runs into a small, hostile goblin raiding group while searching for the camp. The lead goblin has two important documents on him:

1. A pretty good map of the forest with paths marked.
2. A note from the goblin Bigboss reminding him that the top priority is the successful recovery of the relic.

Combat

Terrain: This area consists of large trees (blocking terrain) and underbrush (difficult terrain) with a set of crisscrossing 5ft wide and 10ft wide dirt paths.

- 1 Goblin Sharpshooter [L2 Artillery]
- 2 Fire Beetles [L1 Brute]
- 3 Giant Rats [L1 Minion]
- 4 Goblin Cutters [L1 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 9): 1 healing potion & documents (goblin sharpshooter), 10sp (divided/various)
- Experience Points: 500xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Fire Beetle (100xp) and 90sp

Encounter 3: Locate the Camp (Skill Challenge/Combat, Milestone)

The party must complete a skill challenge to locate the goblin camp. Along the way, the party stumbles across a nest of Kruthiks with a partially consumed corpse. The body is that of a male human adventurer who got lost in woods and met his untimely demise. If the party asks around town, they will find out that the adventurer visited town about a week prior and was asking a ruined wizard's which he believed is located somewhere nearby. (Note: It's up to the DM whether this tower actually exists. It could be used as a follow-up adventure location. However, Artemis is not likely to wait around for the party once the goblins have been dealt with).

Skill Challenge

Note: +2 on skill checks if the party found (and uses) the goblin map from Encounter 2.

- *Skills:* Modified *Lost in the Wilderness* [DMG, pg. 79] (level 2, complexity 3)
- *Success:* The kruthik nest is located in a well-hidden cave. Once the party clears out the cave, they will be able to return to later if they need a safe place to hide, rest, etc.
- *Failure:* The kruthik nest is not useful and the party stumbles onto it unaware and suffers an automatic surprise round.

Combat

Terrain: The area consists of an open central area with the nest a scattering of large trees (blocking terrain) and underbrush (difficult terrain) and a narrow (5ft wide of 10ft wide) path.

- 3 Kruthik Young [L2 Brute]
- 5 Kruthik Hatchlings [L2 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcels 2 & 4½): a L4 magic item [arcane implement] and a small glass vial with 360gp worth of residuum (enough to create a L1 magic item) (These items are on the corpse. DM should select a L3/L4 arcane implement or other appropriate item) (DC 15 Arcana check required to identify residuum or Artemis Lobo will recognize it if it is show to her)
- Experience Points: 375xp (successful skill challenge) and 530xp (combat)

4 Player Party: Remove one Kruthik Young (125xp)

Encounters 4: Sentries (Combat)

Defeat outlying sentries so they don't alert the entire camp. Two groups of sentries patrol the edge of the clearing in a clockwise rotation. Each group makes a complete circuit every 30 minutes and the two groups are spaced 15 minute apart. Since the two sentry groups are well spaced out, they should be encountered separately (unless

the party does something really stupid). Only one group needs to be defeated in order to begin observing the camp (see E5).

Combat

Terrain: This area consists of a border of dense foliage (difficult and obscuring terrain) with a cleared area towards the camp.

- 3 Goblin Blackblades [L1 Lurker]
- 2 Gray Wolves [L2 Skirmisher]

Rewards

- Treasure (na): 30sp (divided/various)
- Experience Points: 500xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Goblin Blackblade (100x) and 10sp

Encounter 5: Recon the Camp (Skill Challenge, Milestone)

The party must gather intelligence on the camp and then report back. Regardless of the success or failure of the skill challenge, the party should notice that there is a large, empty altar in the middle of the camp.

Skill Challenge

- *Level: 2, Complexity: 3*
- *Primary Skills (easy DCs):* Perception, Stealth (sneak closer for a better view), Athletics (climb a tree, etc for a better view), Nature (effectively use terrain to get closer for a better view)
- *Success:* Party gets good recon information (+2 to all checks during Encounter 9 and E19). Camp isn't alerted and no combat is required.
- *Failure:* Party gets poor recon information (no bonuses during Encounter 9 and E19). Additionally, the party sets off an alarm which alerts and mobilizes the entire camp. The second set of sentries show up one round later, with reinforcements soon to follow. The characters hear lots of shouting coming from the camp and, even if no character speaks Goblin, it should be obvious that it is in response to the alarm.
 - If the party is still in the area after 10 rounds, inform them that a large group of goblins has visibly assembled in the center of the camp and is heading towards them.
 - If the party is still in the areas after 20 rounds, overwhelming reinforcements arrive (10 Goblin Warriors, 4 Goblin Archers, 4 Goblin Skullcleavers, 1 Goblin Hexer, and 1 Goblin Underboss). The goblins will capture the party rather than kill them if possible (intending to ransom them back in exchange for the relic). See *Encounter Alt1: Captured*.

Combat

Terrain: This area consists of a border of dense foliage (difficult and obscuring terrain) with a cleared area towards the camp.

- 3 Goblin Blackblades [L1 Lurker]
- 2 Gray Wolves [L2 Skirmisher]

Rewards

- Treasure (na): 30sp (divided/various)

- Experience Points: 375xp (successful skill challenge) or 500xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Goblin Blackblade (100xp) and 10sp

Encounters 6: Tracked! (Combat)

Turns out the party didn't get away from the goblin camp cleanly and now they've got a small hunting party on their tail. If the party found a safe place to camp (Encounter 3), or they are in particularly bad shape (DM's discretion), they should be given a chance to take an extended rest before this encounter.

Combat

Terrain: This area consists of large trees (blocking terrain) and underbrush (difficult terrain) with a set of crisscrossing 5ft wide and 10ft wide dirt paths.

- 1 Goblin Hexer [L3 Controller (Leader)]
- 1 Goblin Blackblade [L1 Lurker]
- 1 Gray Wolf [L2 Skirmisher]
- 5 Goblin Cutters [L1 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 3): L3 magic item [weapon] (Blackblade), 10sp (divided/various)
(DM should select an appropriate and useful type of weapon. Suggestion: +1 Flaming short sword).
- Experience Points: 500xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Goblin Blackblade (100x) and 10sp

Interlude 2: Back in Town (Mountain Pass, Minor Quest)

The party returns to town and reports the findings. The other guard group has discovered that the road ahead and behind are now blocked by very large goblins force – too large for the party and other guards to defeat. The caravan is stuck in Mountain Pass until the situation has been resolved!

The guard captain and mayor both know about the relic (but not that it was missing/stolen) and either can make the connection between it and the increased aggression. The party reports their findings to the town council, but council seems uncertain about how to proceed. After a closed-door meeting with Artemis, the council agrees to have her act as a representative for the town and attempt to negotiate with the goblins and find out more about the relic and the theft. Artemis doesn't trust the "local yahoos" to keep her safe on the way to the goblin camp, so the party is tasked with that assignment.

The town council provides the party with some supplies which they expect will be returned if not used (see *Treasure*). Allow the party to rest overnight, purchase basic supplies, etc. if they want before heading back out.

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 7): 2 healing potions
(If the potions are returned unused, then add a 150gp garnet to the final, end of adventure reward in I5)

- Experience Points: 100xp (L1 minor quest)

4 Player Party: Decrease garnet value to 120gp

Encounter 7: Protecting the Negotiator (Combat, Milestone)

Goran Ving sends underlings after that party to kill them and Artemis before they reach the goblin camp. This should be set up as an ambush a little ways outside of town. One of the bandits is carrying a small leather sack. Inside it is reasonably large quantity of gold coins and a short note. The note that reads, "Here is the agreed upon payment. Make sure those trouble makers don't reach the goblin camp". It also includes a clear description of each party member. (Note: Artemis is a non-combatant. She finds a spots to hide for the duration of the combat. The bandits shouldn't target her).

Combat

Terrain: This area consists of large trees (blocking terrain) and underbrush (difficult terrain) with a set of crisscrossing 5ft wide and 10ft wide dirt paths.

- 4 Human Bandits [L2 Skirmisher]
- 1 Mangy Dog (Giant Rat stats) [L1 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 8): 100gp and a note (one bandit), 200sp (divided/various)
- Experience Points: 525xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Human Bandit (125x) and 25gp

Encounter 8: Forest Dwellers (Combat)

Party has a "random" encounter with some nasty and aggressive animals that live in the forest. (Note: Per E7, Artemis is a non-combatant. She hides during combat and shouldn't be targeted by the drakes).

Combat

Terrain: This area consists of large trees (blocking terrain) and underbrush (difficult terrain) with a set of crisscrossing 5ft wide and 10ft wide dirt paths.

- 2 Guard Drakes [L2 Brute]
- 3 Spiretop Drakes [L1 Skirmisher]

Rewards

- Treasure (parcel 5): 200gp amethyst
(The gem spills out from the gut of one of the drakes when it is killed and should be easily noticed)
- Experience Points: 550xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Spiretop Drake (100xp) and decrease gem value by 50gp

Encounter 9: Negotiating with the Goblins (Skill Challenge, Milestone)

The goblins are suspicious of Artemis, but she is persuasive so they don't immediately attack. Artemis manages to arrange a meeting with the goblin Bigboss (unless the party attacks or goes out of their way to create a very antagonist situation).

The party will assist (or hinder) the Artemis' attempt to broker a deal with the goblins. Eventually, she will find out more details about missing relic, learn that goblins are planning to attack Mountain Pass to recover it and will manage to negotiate a temporary truce, promising that the relic will be found and returned. A failure in the skill challenge won't prevent Artemis from reaching such an agreement, but will increase tensions and ensure that the goblins aren't favorably disposed towards the party.

Skill Challenge

Note: If the party was previously captured by the goblins, the DM may wish to assign a -2 on these skill checks.

- *Skills:* Use *The Negotiation* [DMG, pg. 76] (level 1, complexity 3)
- *Adjustments:* Intimidate skill can be used, but is a difficult check
- *Success:* Party helps the negotiations. They are well treated and can take extended rest.
- *Failure:* Party impedes negotiations. They are thrown in prison and mistreated while negotiations continue. The party cannot take an extended rest prior to Encounter 10 and each character loses 2-4 healing surges depending on both party and individual results during the skill challenge (every character should have at least 1 healing surge left for E10, though).

Rewards

- Treasure (na): none
- Experience Points: 300xp (success) or 0xp (failure)

4 Player Party: As above (no change)

Encounters 10 & 11: Cleansing the Ruins (Combat, Milestone)

Eventually the negotiator is successful. However, even after the successful negotiation, the party has to do something for the goblins to prove their sincerity. There is a small, ruined temple nearby which is inhabited by undead. The goblins are deathly afraid of these creatures, especially without their sacred relic to protect them. The party must clear out the temple (and can keep anything they find there as the goblins believe the place is cursed). (Note: These encounters can be combined to create a particularly challenge fight. In this case, the temple doors should be open and the E11 monsters should join the fight after a couple rounds of combat).

Encounter 10 (Outside the temple)

Terrain: Clear area with a 30ft x 30ft building (with a closed set of double doors) near the far edge of the map

- 3 Skeletons [L3 Soldier]
- 2 Decrepit Skeletons [L1 Minion]

Encounter 11 (Inside the temple)

Terrain: 30ft x 30ft building with a 5ft x 10ft wide alter at the far side

- 1 Gravehound [L3 Brute]
- 3 Zombies [L2 Brute]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcels 1, 4, 6): L2 magic item [holy symbol or amulet/cloak], a L5 magic item [armor] and 180gp silver candlesticks*
(These items are inside the temple. The DM should select appropriate holy magic items. Suggestions: +1 Symbol of Life or +1 Cloak of Resistance, and L4/L5 +1 armor).
- Experience Points: 500xp (E10) and 525xp (E11)

4 Player Party: Replace one Skeleton (150xp) with two Decrepit Skeletons (25xp each) [E10], Remove one Zombie and decrease value of silver candlesticks by 30gp [E11].

** Encounter Variant: Move one of the magic items to Interlude 3 as a reward from the town council.*

Interlude 3: Report to the Council (Mountain Pass, Milestone, Minor Quest, Level Up)

When the party returns to town, they will report their findings to the town council. The council will ask them to locate the relic and return it to the goblins (and promised to reward the party if they succeed). The party should also have a chance to rest. Once they do, they will attain level 2 assuming that they have successfully completed most of the previous encounters.

Rewards

- Treasure (na): None
- Experience Points: 125xp (L2 minor quest)

4 Player Party: As above (no change)

Encounter 12: Asking Around (Skill Challenge)

The party speaks with people in town to try and gather more specific information.

Skill Challenge

- *Level: 2, Complexity: 2*
- *Primary Skills:*
 - Streetwise (Easy DC): Gather useful information from townsfolk
 - Insight (Medium DC): Intuit useful clues while talking to townsfolk
 - Diplomacy (Medium DC): Develop good rapport with townsfolk, which encourages them to be helpful
 - Intimidate (Hard DC): Intimidate someone into talking who happens to useful info
 - Perception (Medium DC): Notice something out of the ordinary: +2 on next check
 - Perception (Hard DC): Spot useful clues while talking to townsfolk
- *Success:* The party gets good information. There's a group of mercenary thugs that showed up recently and are staying in a rented house at the edge of town. They've been causing minor problems (bar fights, etc.) and talking about how folks in town better learn to respect them because they're going to be important once the new mayor takes over. People assume that they're just a bunch of blowhards who will be moving on shortly. The party can ask specific questions and get the following info: a detailed layout of the house, the thugs' equipment,

the thugs' typical schedule and possibly a cover story if they want to sneak one person inside (e.g., delivering food, etc).

- *Failure:* The party gets no useful information. Eventually Captain Merton obtains some basic info about the thugs and passes it on to the party, but doesn't provide any details about the house

Rewards

- Treasure (na): none
- Experience Points: 250xp

4 Player Party: As above (no change)

Encounter 13: Following a Lead (Combat, Milestone)

The party checks out the thugs' house mentioned by people in town (or Sheriff Merton if the party fails to gather useful information during E12). The thugs are holed up in their house waiting for word from Ving. The thugs aren't particularly diligent about watching out for trouble, but at least one is awake at all times and weapons are always nearby. If the thugs hear the party approach, they will threaten them from the windows and open fire with crossbows if the party continues to approach.

The party can wait to catch them out of the house, but the thugs are well supplied with food and booze, so it will take at least a day or two of waiting and surveillance. Also, if the party starts an unprovoked fight, escalates a basic bar brawl into deadly combat, or endangers civilians, they will draw the attention of the town guard and end up at least spending the night in jail.

In a locked chest (or on one of the defeated guards), the party discovers a scroll with mysterious writing. Although it's not in a language any of the characters know, it seems oddly readable. An Arcana check will reveal the following: easy DC – the scroll is a spell of an unknown type; moderate DC – the scroll seems to be a teleportation spell of some unknown sort; hard DC – the scroll contains a special, modified version of the *Linked Portal* ritual. Any attempt to read the scroll (including an Arcana check), will trigger the ritual (no components required) and transport the whole party immediately to E14.

Combat

Terrain: The house has two 20ft x 30ft rooms – a bedroom and a living room – separated by a closed wooden door. The bedroom has beds against the walls and 2 windows. The living room has an external door, 2 windows and table and chairs in the center of the room. If the party catches the thugs outside, they are likely in the street or in a bar.

- 2 Human Bandits [L2 Skirmisher] (note: replace daggers with crossbows: +6 vs AC; 1d8+1 damage)
- 2 Human Guard [L3 Soldier] (note: replace halberd with spear. Stats are unchanged.)
- The house is trapped with a Spear Gauntlet Trap [L2 Obstacle]. Trapped squares are next to the door and windows and the control box is on the internal wall between the two rooms.

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcels 3 & 7): L4 Weapon, Healing Potion, 120gp and a strange arcane scroll

(DM should select an appropriate and useful type of weapon. Suggestion: +1 Terror long sword.)

- Experience Points: 675xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Human Guard (150xp) and remove 35gp

Setup for Encounters 14-17

The scroll takes the party to an abandoned part of the mine which Ving is using as a base of operations and where he is keeping the relic hidden. The party must recover the relic, determine that Ving is responsible for the theft and return to town. The only way to enter or exit the base is by using a special “key”. A new set of guards arrive once a week and pass the key to the old guards who use it to teleport out. As a result, the current guards do not possess a key and are effectively trapped inside until relieved of duty. There is an emergency key stored with the relic which the party can use to escape.

Encounter 14: Teleported! (Combat)

The party arrives in a cavern guarded by a group of homunculi (2 Iron Defenders and 2 Clay Scouts). In addition to the teleport circle, the cavern has two apparent exits: a locked iron door on the far side of the cavern and a passageway (leading to the rest of the mine) that is blocked by tons of rock and is permanently impassable.

Note: Each of Iron Defenders wears a key attached to a collar around its neck. One key opens the door in this chamber, while the other is for a door in the next room (see E15). The collars are inscribed with the seal from Ving’s signet ring, which is how he controls the Iron Defenders. If the party takes the time to examine them closely they will see this and recognize the seal from when they met Ving at the town council meeting.

Combat

Terrain: The cave is dimly lit with a relatively smooth floor. It is 30ft wide by 50ft deep with a 20ft high ceiling.

Tactics: The homunculi attack if anyone approaches within 10ft of the door without providing the pass sign (which the party obviously won’t know). The Iron Defenders stay next to each other and use Guard Person on each other. The Clay Scouts apply Guard Object on the door and keys. They begin hidden (via Stealth) and move into flanking positions if possible.

- 2 Iron Defenders [L3 Soldier] (note: *Guard Creature* on other Iron Defender)
- 3 Clay Scouts [L2 Lurker] (note: *Guard Object* applies to the door and keys)

Rewards

- Treasure (na): Two keys (no gp value)
- Experience Points: 675xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Clay Scout (125xp)

Encounter 15: Guard Room (Combat)

The door opens onto 30ft long passage that terminates a second door (closed, but unlocked). Beyond the door is the central guard chamber. The two closed doors prevented the guards from hearing the fight in the teleportation chamber. The guard room has heavy iron doors in three of the walls. The first, which the party enters through, leads to the teleportation chamber. The second leads to a small living area (beds, toilet, food stores, etc). The third, locked with a dual key lock, leads to the relic.

4 Player Party: Remove Iron Defender (150xp)

**Encounter Variant:* Replace one or both Pit Traps with extra Iron Defenders

Encounter 17: Outside the Mine (Combat)

The party can use the key found with the relic teleport just outside the mine. Although the base has no obvious entrance Ving has assigned another set of guards keeping on watch outside just in case. These guards aren't expecting anyone to come from the inside though, so if the party is reasonably quiet, they can get the drop on the guards.

Combat

Terrain: The party appears near a rocky outcropping wall away from the mine's main entrance. The Terrain is steep and very difficult behind them. The terrain in front of them includes sparse trees and foliage and a couple of boulders. The guards are using these to hide from people approaching from the direction of the main mining area. However, the party is coming from the opposite direction.

- 3 Human Rabble [L2 Minion]
- 3 Human Bandits [L2 Skirmisher]
- 1 Human Berserker [L4 Brute]

Rewards

- Treasure (na): 70sp (divided/various), teleportation key
- Experience Points: 643xp

4 Player Party: Remove one Human Bandit (125xp) and 10sp

Interlude 4: Exposing the Thief (Mountain Pass, Minor Quest)

The party gets back to town and reports on their findings to the Council. They are asked to bring Ving to justice and then return the relic to the goblins.

Note: It is possible that the party will want to keep the relic or will head directly to the goblin camp to with it. If they go to the goblin camp, skip I4 and E18 and continue with E19. If they keep the relic you can choose from a variety of possible paths. Here are few options: end the adventure early, try to get them back on track by reminding them of the blockades on the road, have either the goblins or town guards track them down, etc.

Rewards

- Treasure (na): None
- Experience Points: 125xp (L2 minor quest)

4 Player Party: As above (no change)

Encounter 18: Ving's House (Combat, Milestone)

The party accompanies Sheriff Merton and some of the town guard to confront Ving in his home, but he using some of his thugs to cover his escape. The town guards confront the initial set of thugs and Merton tells the party to chase down Ving. However, another set of thugs are waiting for the party and Ving makes his escape while the party is dealing with them.

Note: The listed combat is just for the party's opponents. The town guards are simultaneously fighting a number of other thugs. The guards will defeat their opponents about the same time with the party's combat. If the party has been defeated, then allow the guards to rescue them and dispatch the remaining guards.

Combat

Terrain: Interior of Ving's house: a couple of spacious, high ceilinged rooms connected by open doorways. There is a balcony level that spans both rooms accessed via a staircase in the far room.

Tactics: The Dwarf Bolter is located on the balcony overlooking the first room. The Human Guard blocks the ground floor door between the two rooms. Two Human Rabble block/guard the staircase while the rest begin in the first room and charge the party as soon as they enter. The Imp begins invisible and targets the party's rear line.

- Imp [L3 Lurker] (note: previously summoned for Ving by the Human Mage)
- 1 Human Guard [L3 Soldier] (note: replace halberd with spear. Stats are unchanged.)
- 1 Dwarf Bolter [L4 Artillery]
- 6 Human Rabble [L2 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 9): 1 healing potion, 10gp
- Experience Points: 625xp

4 Player Party: Remove five Human Rabble (31xp each) and 10gp

Encounter 19: Goblins Divided (Skill Challenge or Combat, Milestone)

Ving has taken off towards the goblin camp to try and rally them into attacking the town. The party follows Ving to capture him and return the relic to the goblins. When the party arrives, the camp is split into two factions. Tensions are running high and the party's arrival with the relic leads to hostilities. The Party will need to rally Bigboss Nookl's supporters against the faction supporting Ving and the sub-boss. This can be accomplished either via a skill challenge or combat.

Skill Challenge

Note: If the party was successful during E9, then all checks during this challenge are at +2. If the party returns the relic then they automatically succeed on the skill challenge.

- *Level:* 2 (party level), *Complexity:* 5
- *Primary Skills:*
 - Bluff (Moderate DC): Trick some of the wavering goblins to support Nookl.
 - Insight (Moderate DC): Use a keen understanding of goblin psychology to convince some of the wavering goblins to support Nookl.
 - Diplomacy (Moderate DC): Persuade some of the wavering goblins to support Nookl.
 - Intimidate (Hard DC): Scare some of the wavering goblins into supporting Nookl.
- *Success*:* The party convinces a large number of wavering goblins to support Nookl. A melee breaks out, but most of the goblins are busy fighting each other and the party is faces Ving on his own.
- *Failure:* The majority of the goblins continue to waver between the two sides. The party will need to face down Ving with a contingent of supporters.

** Note: A success in this encounter might also provide the party with some Goblin Cutter allies for the final fight if it looks like it facing Ving alone will be too hard.*

Combat

As an alternative, the party can sway the goblins by defeating some of Ving's most ardent supporters.

Terrain: The goblin encampment is a mass of narrow paths between tents and crude huts with a large open area around the relic altar.

- 1 Goblin Sharpshooter [L2 Artillery]
- 2 Goblin Skullcleavers [L3 Brute]
- 1 Goblin Hexer [L3 Controller (Leader)]
- 2 Goblin Cutters [L1 Minion]

Rewards

- Treasure (na): none
- Experience Points: 625xp

4 Player Party: Decrease skill challenge complexity to 4 and subtract a Goblin Sharpshooter (125xp)

Encounter 20: The Final Showdown (Combat)

The party finally has the opportunity to confront and defeat Ving.

Combat

Terrain: The goblin encampment is a mass of narrow paths between tents and crude huts with a large open area around the relic altar.

- Goran Ving (L4 Solo Skirmisher)
- Goblin Blackblade (L1 Skirmisher)
- 4 Goblin Cutters [L1 Minion] (note: only present if party failed E19 skill challenge)

Goran Ving (L4 Solo Skirmisher)
HP 220; Bloodied 110; see <i>Bloodied Blow</i> AC 20; Fortitude 18; Reflex 16; Will 18 Saving Throws +5 Speed 6 Action Points 2
⚔ Warhammer Strike (standard, at-will) Weapon +12 vs. AC; 1d10+4
🔨 Hammer Throw (standard, at-will) Weapon Range 5; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+4
⚡ Double Strike (standard, at-will) Weapon <i>Ving wields his hammer with lightning speed</i> Ving makes two attacks with his warhammer. Either Warhammer Strike or

Hammer Throw may be used (or one of each attack).
† Dirty Fighting (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a threatened square) Weapon <i>Ving takes a cheap shot at any foes that comes into range.</i> +9 vs. AC; 1d6+4.
† Ringing Blow (standard, recharge ☒ ☒) Weapon <i>With a blow to the head, Ving disorients a foe.</i> +10 vs. Fortitude; 3d8+4 and target is dazed (save ends). <i>Failed Save.</i> The target is stunned (save ends).
↵ Hammer Sweep (standard, recharge ☒ ☒) Weapon <i>Ving sweeps his weapon at all nearby foes.</i> Close burst 1; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 and targets are knocked prone or pushed 1 square (Ving's choice for each target).
† Bloodied Blow (free, when first bloodied; encounter) Weapon Ringing Blow and Hammer Sweep recharge and Ving can use either one immediately against the target that bloodied him (if in range).
STR 16 (+4), CON 15 (+2), DEX 10 (+2), INT 14 (+2), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 18 (+5)

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 1, Parcel 6, Parcel 8): one healing potion and either two magic items (L5, L5) or 3 magic items (L2, L3, L4)
 (All items are found in Ving. To slightly increase the encounter difficulty, allow Ving to make use of the items' properties and abilities. DM should select appropriate magic items. Suggestions:
 A) L4/L5 weapon: +1 Lifedrinker warhammer, L4/L5 armor: +1 Deathcut Leather
 B) L2/L3 weapon: +1 Resounding warhammer, L2/L3 armor: +1 Delver's Leather, L3/L4 misc: Everlasting Provisions
- Experience Points: 1075xp (with Goblin Cutters) or 975xp (without Goblin Cutters)

4 Player Party: Remove the Goblin Blackblade (100xp) and healing potion.

Interlude 5: Victory (Mountain Pass, Milestone, Major Quest, Level Up)

The party returns the relic, ends the conflict between the goblins and miners and is richly rewarded by both sides! The party should level up at this point.

Rewards

- Treasure (Parcel 2, Parcel 5): Bag of Holding filled with raw copper (290gp value)
Note: If the party does not return the relic or defeat Ving, they do not receive a reward from town.
- Experience Points: 625xp (major quest)

4 Player Party: Decrease value of raw copper by 60gp and experience point reward to 500xp

Encounter Alt1: Captured (Variable)

Note: Use this encounter if the party gets itself captured by the goblins.

If the party is defeated by the goblins at any point, they will probably be captured rather than killed. It is possible that the goblins will ransom them back to the town or to Artemis (in which case, subtract the cost of the ransom from their guard pay and/or final reward). Alternately, provide the party with a chance to escape their confinement (escape from restraints moderate DC Thievery check moderate DC Stealth check or combat).