

# The Chronicles of Karak





## CAST OF CHARACTERS

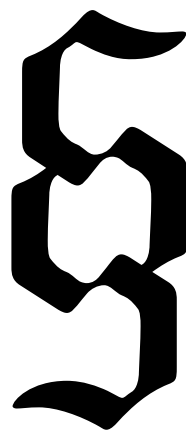
THRAK—Half-orc barbarian

DERITH NORTHBANE—Dwarven cleric

TAENHYRR—Dragon half-breed paladin

DROLGO NOAKES—Halfling rogue

OTIS BÖNERSON—Human wizard



## ENCOUNTER 1

### WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF KARAK

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Welcome to the world of Karak, the fabled land of mystery and majesty. Karak is a wondrous land comprised of three unique nations eternally conjoined within one encompassing range of steely mountains. Ah! truly this is a land of tales and wondrous happenings aplenty. Here is one of many worthy tales originating from this island country of Karak....

Deep within a heavily wooded copse, a singular horse-drawn carriage treads. Said carriage is notably flanked by five unsavory figures, all stooped and grunting with black, odious airs of malice and disquietude. They are foul goblins, indeed! Cursed be their kind, for they are unworthy creatures of the shadows, bereft of any and all common courtesy. In sooth, they are as a rule savage folk with no love in their coldly beating hearts.

Two individuals regain consciousness and find themselves within the carriage. The human is Otis Bönerson, newly-titled Lord of the Frigid Dale; the halfling is Drolgo Noakes, the only son of his people's best and most loved pipeweed farmers. They see each other for the first time during this brief moment, then deftly analyze their situation—a dire one to be sure! Soon after discovering that their arms are tied together, these two captives think of escape. They look down the path behind them, and suddenly their eyes open wide, for to their surprise they see a third captive dragging helplessly behind the carriage. It is a burly dragon half-breed, tied by his neck. He writhes in the dirt, his once pearl-white armor scuffed and wet with mud. Ah! how the mighty fall! Taenhyrr, the righteous paladin of dragonkind, struggles with his bindings to no avail.

As the carriage continues rolling, Drolgo thinks back in an attempt to recall recent events leading up to his capture: *Let me see. I was patrolling around the wall, near Miztos, where goblin raids have been rampant. I hate those goblins, I do! I cannot remember it, but we must have been attacked and captured by a goblin raiding party somewhere near the Miztos border.*

Drolgo attempts to untie his bonds, but is unsuccessful and makes a noise. He looks to the side in fear, but thankfully the nearby guard is unaware.

Otis Bönerson, the intrepid wizard lord, looks about him for a landmark, but there is none. He thinks to himself: *It is unfortunate that no written history exists of the lands beyond the wall. My extensive knowledge is of no use to us for the time being. If only I knew where we are being taken!*

Taenhyrr, seeing that his fellows in the carriage are awakened, attempts to create a distraction. He attempts to break free from bondage, but his wretched flailing in the dust merely infuriates the goblins. The carriage stops, and three goblin warriors approach him, red in the face with rage.

“Aw, what’re ye doing, ye dumb dragon? I knew we shouldn’t have picked ye up on the shore!”

Taking his chance, Drolgo the halfling deftly leaps out of the carriage, hands still tied behind his back. The goblin who was facing forward realizes a few moments later.

“What, what? We lost the small one! Keep an eye on this one, and the dragon....”

The goblin guard loses its nerve and takes a cathartic swipe at Taenhyrr, leaving a painful wound. Taenhyrr takes the hit bravely.

It was at this moment when fate intervened, bringing friends together in righteous campaign. A young half-orc named Thrak stumbles onto the scene, straying from his fellow rangers. Presently he spots his sworn enemy: goblins. His burly muscles twitch with carnal rage, and steam shoots out of his nostrils. Look at him go! Thrak tears through the forest at full tilt, yelling and sputtering for all he’s worth. The goblins turn their gaze up from Taenhyrr, and their beady eyes shrink in fear.

Otis Bönerson does not take his chance in folly, being a thinker. He analyzes his enemies, noting that one is heavily clad in steel goblin armor. Otis thinks: *That one ought to be led away rather than battled one-on-one. I’ll make my moves carefully.*

The goblins take another desperate swipe at Taenhyrr, leaving a second painful gash, then ready themselves for battle. The large one approaches the side of the road, brandishing its wicked curved blade. Let it be known that this nameless goblin captain was prepared to fight to the death.

Drolgo, from his hidden perch in the woods, throws a small rock in an attempt to confuse the goblins. Absolutely nothing happens. “Curses!”

he murmurs, and draws closer to the road while remaining hidden. Thrak breaks through the treeline. There's no stopping Thrak! He holds his battle axe high and swings with all his might at a very unfortunate goblin. Its head flies off into the air, scattering dark blood. Then Thrak's axe cleaves into the carriage's wheel, demolishing its wooden spokes and launching bits of gore and splinters onto the road. Thrak roars in triumph: "RAHHH!!" The remaining four goblins shriek, showing their sharp teeth.

Taenhyrr grins with draconic bloodlust, then attempts to break his bonds once more. He tugs with all of his might, but falls to the ground, wincing with pain from the deep cuts in his body. Blood spills out from him. His mind snaps. On all fours, he scrambles away with a thunderous roar, tearing the rope and yanking the broken carriage backwards. The horse lets out a choked whinny and topples down onto its side.

One nearby goblin watches in horror and runs at Taenhyrr, its desperate rage flaring. All is at a standstill. Many events happen within a short time.

Otis Bönerson briefly considers casting ray of frost, but remembers his bonds. *I cannot cast a spell while my hands are tied, though I would surely like to. Let's do away with this problem!* He approaches Thrak's bloody axe, and deftly wrings his bonds through the axe blade.

One nearby goblin notices the wizard lord's movements, but turns to face his aggressor. The goblin is no novice—Thrak takes a grisly blow to the chest!

"Guraagghhh!!"

The goblin captain licks his blade with devilish pleasure and suddenly swipes at Taenhyrr, leaving yet another gruesome wound. Taenhyrr is in trouble! Will he make it? Thrak slowly turns and looks at the captain as if to say "you're next," and with great force yanks on his axe to get it free.

"Guwaaahh!!"

A goblin steps into the broken carriage and attempts to apprehend the wizard, Otis Bönerson, before he can ready a magical spell. Bönerson dodges swiftly and prepares ray of frost. Mystical runes fill the air, but what of Drolgo?

Drolgo takes his position at Thrak's side as the half-orc dislodges his axe. Oh! Thrak yanks the axe out with a wide swing, cutting into the goblin

captain's chest. Hot blood sprays out, wetting the earth. But the goblin does not fall yet!

Taenhyrr, using the last of his waning strength, grapples the goblin captain from behind. They struggle on the ground, but Taenhyrr has the upper hand! Using his dragon-like claws, the paladin punctures the goblin's chest and digs towards its very heart.

“GURRAGGG!!”

The heart is exposed. As sanguine blood dribbles and splashes out, Taenhyrr grasps the heart and yanks it out. A bloodcurdling scream! and the goblin captain is slain.

The goblin beside Otis watches its captain fall, then with a pitiful cry leaps out and attempts to flee. Drolgo lands an opportunistic blow on its leg, opening a gash and unleashing a blood trail. What a grisly scene!

A goblin near Taenhyrr also runs. However, Taenhyrr lashes out, cutting its side open like a leather bag. The goblin sinks down onto its knees and stops moving.

Taenhyrr calls for Otis to leave his assailant unharmed, so Otis turns and casts ray of frost at the other fleeing goblin. A flash of light! and its body turns deathly white. The goblin turns its head around, and with a final curse, explodes into tiny bits.

Thrak smells the blood trail from a fleeing goblin and approaches.

“C'mere, boy!!”

He yanks the goblin's leg off and topples it onto the dirt. Then he pins the goblin with a heavy stomp and lets loose a savage blow, fully emptying its body of blood. Only one goblin remains!

Taenhyrr picks up the captain's scimitar and stabs menacingly at the last goblin's head. Its eyes go wide with terror as the blade sinks into the dirt just inches away.

“Next time I won't be so merciful.”

The goblin swallows: “I... I... I'm so sorry....” It drops into a sorry unmoving pile, organs slowly failing.

Combat ends.

Drolgo speaks: “Good job, guys. But who the fuck are you?”

A solitary figure appears on the scene. It is a dwarf wearing majestic clerical robes.

“Hark! I am Derith Northbane from Glenwood. I am traveling the path of righteousness. Ah!” he pauses, looking with intense interest at a certain dead goblin’s hindquarters. “Glory be! It looks as though a bloody occurrence has... occurred!”

“Yep,” says Drolgo.

“Bauuurrrhhgg!!” says Thrak.

Taenhyrr approaches Thrak with outstretched, profusely bleeding arms: “Thank you for saving us, friend. Why did you help us?”

Thrak pounds his fists together, splattering gore onto his loincloth: “I saw them and wanted to kill the little bastards! I need to murder something!!”

“Aha! Have you had some kind of experience with goblins in the past?”

“No.”

“Have you ever seen one before?”

“No.”

Drolgo chimes in, nodding with approval: “He seems like a pretty stable guy.”

Derith approaches, still eyeing the dead goblin’s portly haunches: “You know, I’ve been fighting these fuckers all day! Why, just this morning I killed... dozens, at least!”

Taenhyrr turns his attention to Otis and Drolgo. However, after a brief conference, it is clear that none of them remember any events leading up to their capture. “It is unfortunate,” cries Otis. “If only there were some clue....”

Taenhyrr looks at the ground where his blood is pooling. He sees the last goblin.

“I think we need to figure out what this guy knows.”

Thrak attempts to drag the final goblin away into the woods to perform unspeakable acts upon it, but the rest stop him. “Wait! We need this goblin



alive! We must ask him where they were taking us!” There is a noisome commotion as Taenhyrr tries to take the body from Thrak.

Two figures approach from behind, unseen and unheard. Both are wearing dark gray robes that mesh with the shadows of the forest floor. One is a half-elf, and the other is a gnome.

“Hallo!” cries the gnome, catching the party unawares. “We are M-I-6, that is to say, Division 6 of Miztos Intelligence. We would fain learn of how you escaped them goblins.” The half-elf appears stunned, looking over the bloody carnage with a faint look of concern. At length he says, “Truly, you are all powerful warriors.”

The gnome removes his hood, revealing his bushy mustache: “Hold, friends! I will explain all. You see, we’ve been on the track of these kidnappers for weeks! Them goblins are after figures of importance—in particular, those who preach unity amongst the people of Miztos and want to have peace with other realms.” The party nods uncomprehendingly.

The gnome keeps speaking: “Councilman Vandekamp—of the high council in Miztos, wouldn’t you know—has been captured. He is a good man who wants to lead a push outside of the walls—you know the walls, yes?—and thereby improve human relations between Miztos and Dolor. It strikes you as a worthy goal, I would hope? And so there you have it.”

Derith throws his arms up passionately: “I knew those goblin buggers were up to no good!” The dwarven cleric pauses, regaining some composure. “Anyhow, who are these M-I-6? I am very skeptical of you!”

The half-elf steps forward with crossed arms and a haughty manner: “Indeed. M-I-6 is a covert force. If we are doing our jobs rightly, you wouldn’t know about us.”

“The two of you?”

“Yes.”

“The two of you are a covert force?”

“Yes.”

Taenhyrr falls unconscious from blood loss after this extended, lore-rich dialogue. Meanwhile, Derith offers his services to heal the injured goblin in order to extract information from him.

“Ahh, yes I see... extensive, um... contusions. I think I might be able to do the trick.” A red glow emanates from the cleric’s hands, and within seconds all the goblin’s wounds are unnaturally healed.

The goblin opens its eyes: “Wh—what?! What are you doing?!”

“There, there... shh... It’s all going to be okay,” coos Derith as he licks his lips.

The goblin tries to crawl away, fearing the worst: “N-no!! Mercy! Stay back, you!” It points at Thrak. “That one—the skull-splitter! I don’t care what you want—I’ll tell you!”

Thrak stomps: “RRAAH!! I’ll break your fingers if you don’t speak!!” Otis and Drolgo look at him, hiding their hands behind their backs.

The goblin cries for mercy: “Half a mile, up the road! The Black Veil tribe... I work for Grizzle Black—the goblin. The chief of all the goblins! The strongest of all! Ahh!!” Derith punches into the goblin’s healed wound. “Ahh!!”

“I’d love to meet this Grizzle faggot...!”

Thrak stomps: “Goblin scum!! I’ll break your fingers if you don’t speak!!”

“I’m speaking! There are some humeys too.” The goblin points at Bonerson with desperate, pleading eyes. “Y-yes, humeys—there is a manor up ahead. They are in the manor, with Grizzle.”

Derith stands up. “Humans, eh? I never trusted the fuckers!” Bonerson sighs.

Derith throws his arms up passionately: “Why didn’t you tell us sooner?! You goblin scum!!”

Thrak attempts to carry the goblin away into the woods, but fails. Meanwhile, Drolgo searches the broken carriage, unveiling a wooden chest containing the three captives’ equipment and belongings. “Behold!” cries Drolgo, holding the chest aloft. “In addition to potions and armaments, there is a fat stack of hund-os and a bag of weed. Gods be praised—I needed this muchly!”

Derith rejoices and promptly casts a great heal spell on all injured party members. Taenhyrr stands up and shakes the blood off of his armor.

“Onward to victory!”

## ENCOUNTER 2

STAN, GRIZZLE BLACK, AND A CLATTERING OF FEETSES

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Taenhyrr ties the injured goblin by the neck to drag behind the horse. Then the party takes action to locate Councilman Vandekamp, readying their minds and bodies for what lies ahead. Sounds of the forest play in their ears from all angles as they move. At length the woods thin out around them, and a flock of birds in the distance spirals away from the ground as if escaping from some hidden danger. The party is watchful...

Drolgo offers his roguish services to scout ahead for signs of ambush. It is not long before the halfling espies a sizeable mansion. The building is two stories tall with stone walkways and a disused, stagnant fountain near its door. Two goblins patrol the entrance, and two vicious guard dogs.

The party falls in behind Drolgo, keeping low behind the forest brush. “How many are there?” asks Derith.

Taenhyrr prods the goblin for clues: “How many? Speak!”

“Ahh!” cries the goblin. “There are—eight more, at least—depending on who’s out hunting.” The goblin’s eyes shoot back and forth nervously.

Without any further council, Thrak cuts the goblin loose, leaving a deep gash in its back.

“GAAHHH!!” Thrak lifts the screaming goblin into the air, soaking himself in fresh blood. Before the party can react, Thrak tosses it bleeding onto the road just inside the mansion’s gate.

“Help! Help me! Intruders! Intruders!” The goblin calls to the guards.

Derith leaps into view, drawing the guards’ attention. As they ready their sinister crossbows, the cleric taunts them: “This is what I do to your kind, you goblin scum! And you’re next!” Then he vaults himself into the air and grabs hold of the wounded goblin’s posterior. A lusty pink cloud conceals his actions from view, but the sound of piteous crying is heard by all.

The enemy guards call for reinforcements and fit bolts into their crossbows, enraged by the dwarf's flagrant act of debauchery. The party waits just out of view, strategically concealed by the brush. They wait for their chance. Suddenly, two axe-wielding goblin champions storm into the scene from inside the mansion. They charge Derith's position!

Taenhyrr readies his battle-axe and swipes through the first goblin's spine, demolishing his life, but not before Derith takes a damaging blow to his nether regions. The dwarf stands his ground, relishing every single moment of his present tactics.

Taenhyrr is alert. He looks to the side, where he sees both guard dogs sprinting for a bite of Derith's sweet meats. The paladin feels an ecstasy of divine intervention as he lets loose a savage roar, causing the dogs to tumble onto the ground. One of the dogs leaps for Derith, but the gods intervene! The creature is completely befuddled by holy light, and in its confusion it bites the other dog's neck, killing it instantly! The crossbow goblins curse violently and let their bolts fly.

Two steel bolts whizz through the air, missing Derith by several inches! He taunts the goblins wildly: "Haha! You both missed me! Hahahahaha!!"

Otis steps out of cover and casts ray of frost. With a sharp crack, the spell connects, dealing heavy frost damage to the nearest crossbow goblin.

Meanwhile, Drolgo sneaks closer to the farthest crossbow goblin, evading all detection. He attempts a backstab with his shortsword. Success! The halfling viciously stabs a vital organ, very nearly killing his mark. The goblin falls to its knees in pain.

Thrak takes his position beside Derith and slashes the second goblin champion. A bloodthirsty cry sounds through the air as the enemy's warm blood gushes and spills.

Derith strikes out with his scythe, slicing the same goblin through its legs for light damage. The goblin takes an unsteady step back as the cleric shouts a warcry: "Pussy! I'll get you, fucker!!"

Drolgo takes another swipe with his shortsword. He falters and misses!

The dying goblin turns to face him: "You couldn't even mercy kill me, you heartless bastard! If I go out, you're coming with me!! Sword for sword, motherfucker!!" The goblin pierces Drolgo through with an iron scimitar.

The brave halfling falls to the ground, barely clinging to life.

The party watches in shock, and the thrill of battle overcomes them.

Eyes red with passionate fire, Derith dodges the goblin champion's strike, using his scythe to parry. The scimitar falls short and buries deep into the cleric's prostrate victim. With a splurt the goblin is instantly killed.

The remaining dog comes to its senses and lunges for Taenhyrr. The paladin blocks readily.

Meanwhile, the frozen crossbow goblin stands up and shoots a bolt at Otis, nicking the shoulder. The wizard's second spell is interrupted! The resulting ray of frost shatters on a distant tree, missing its mark. Drolgo's assailant moves in for the kill!

Watching this, Thrak roars and tackles the goblin champion in front of Derith and batters it with his fists. The ends comes swiftly for this goblin warrior. The black cloud of death descends over its eyes forever, and the goblin afterlife receives its goblin soul.

Derith slowly approaches the frozen crossbow goblin. He sneers: "I told you I was coming! You scum!!" The goblin is thoroughly killed, but not before a second act of debauchery is performed upon its cold, stiffening flesh. A shrill cry sounds through the forest, then a chilling silence. It's not over, yet....

Drolgo rolls onto his side as his assailant's blade comes crashing down. A miraculous save! The halfling's armor deflects the blow, granting invaluable time.

The dog lunges at Taenhyrr, ripping flesh to the bone. He shrugs off the damage as Thrak moves in, bathed with gore.

Otis launches another spell. The ray of frost enters through the last goblin's open mouth, splitting its head clean off. The body tumbles like a ragdoll; the head lies in the grass, mouth open and steaming.

Only the dog remains.

Taenhyrr misses the dog once again, and his axe goes wide. Bönerson takes a nick to the shoulder: "Ow!!"

With a casual grunt, Thrak slays the dog.

Combat ends.

Drolgo lays on his back, gasping for air. The party hears him try to speak: “I... I want da cash....”

Presently, Derith fastens his belt buckle and basks in righteous glory: “What’s the plan, my dudes? Let’s take a short rest!”

The party rests. During this time, Taenhyrr’s wounds heal fully, as do Otis’s. Derith discovers two health potions inside a goblin’s dirty trousers. One of these he offers to Drolgo, the other to Thrak. Despite the presence of disgusting corpses, there is a general feeling of goodness.

Drolgo consumes his health potion. The color in his face returns to him, and with an easy motion he stands again, eyes shining. His life is saved!

Taenhyrr finds a ring of keys next to one of the goblins’ bodies. Drolgo takes the keys, and with that, the campaign resumes.

Drolgo snoops around the perimeter of the mansion. As quietly as possible, he inspects the grounds for clues, where he observes a broken carriage not unlike the one he was captured in. Then he peers through a back window. Within the enemy’s base he counts a number of barrels and boxes strewn about the dusty room.

The halfling ruminates: “It looks to be a storehouse. By all accounts it must be where these goblins keep their hostages’ belongings.” The party nods approval.

Everyone makes their way back to the front door. At this juncture, Derith goes ahead and casts thaumaturgy upon the mansion’s walls, producing illusory tremors and a thunderous voice in the sky: “Come out you faggots! I am the god of hellfire and will ravish you if you do not release your prisoner. You goblin scum! Surrender now or face the consequences!”

There is a loud clatter as boxes tumble and fall onto the floor. Strangely, one of the boxes seems to fall below ground level. “There may be a hole,” ponders Derith.

Before long, two human bandits in black robes approach the door. Otis and

Drolgo watch them through the front window, keeping low and out of sight. Taenhyrr and Thrak take their positions on both sides of the door, prepared to strike should the enemy come near. All is at a standstill.

The party listens closely. It is not long before they hear, “What the hell was that?!”

“The storeroom is all fucked! We’re... gonna have to tell the boss.”

Drolgo fancies that he hears a faint voice say, “I hope Grok’s okay,” before silence pervades.

“So, where are all the goblins?” queries Derith. “Those were humans, no doubt. I never trusted—”

From inside the mansion, a screech: “EEE!! The god of brimstone!! This can’t be happening! The others are all—dead! Dead!” There is a shuffling of goblin feet upstairs, but one of the two humans stays their retreat: “God of brimstone? That’s a load of hogwash! Go out and get those fuckers!”

Thrak and Taenhyrr move back, and the others all freeze in anticipation.

Derith casts guidance on Taenhyrr, enabling him to achieve great feats. “I feel the clarity,” he says.

The doors open outward. Taenhyrr and Thrak await the enemy on both sides, and Otis remains near the front window. Derith and Drolgo conceal themselves close at hand.

Two unknown persons appear in the doorway, shrouded in fog.

Thrak thinks: *I’m going in. Let’s bottleneck the bastards!* “Oogabooga-boogabooga!” Thrak attacks viciously, splattering the enemy’s entrails onto the door. “Guess what! Surprise! It’s massa!” The man is effortlessly cut in half. “That’s what happens when you open the door! BAAHHH!!”

Taenhyrr attacks immediately afterwards, and a weird mirror event transpires. As the enemy watches his friend cut in half lengthwise, he is himself cut in half widthwise. Blood is splashing copiously. Taenhyrr lets out a terrifying roar, blasting hot air into the mansion’s dark recesses.

The party sees four more enemies, all goblins. Thrak smells their fear.

The goblin captain commands his underlings: “Men of the Black Veil never back down! Never surrender!” Derith thinks quickly: *The Black Veil? I’ve heard of them faggots.*

A crossbow bolt comes flying, but it bounces off of Thrak’s axe. An unforeseen second bolt strikes, piercing the flesh. The goblin captain is using a chu-ko-nu!

“Curse these broad shoulders....” says Thrak, spitting blood.

Thrak dodges an axe swing as he takes the bolt. The other goblin slashes Taenhyrr. The goblin cackles: “Hitter, hitter, chicken shitter!!” Taenhyrr takes heavy damage and falls to one knee: “G-GRAHH!!”

Derith extends his arms with feeling: “Sacred flame!!” He casts sacred flame at the goblin in front of Taenhyrr, yet misses. “Ah!—right, well... I guess I’m fucked.” To lessen his shame, he casts thaumaturgy to create a fart noise behind Thrak.

Drolgo takes a strategic shot between Thrak’s legs, but it lands in the stairs. The arrow misses.

Otis’s ray of frost also misses and destroys the door. Things are not going well!

The goblin captain loads more bolts into his chu-ko-nu and fires! Thrak takes a critical strike to the chest! The half-orc barbarian stumbles and falls, gripping his wounds desperately. Blood spurts out from all of his orifices.

“AHAHA! Another one falls to the Black Veil!” The goblin captain vaunts.

Twitching on the floor, Thrak yanks out the arrow and pours a health potion into the arrow hole. As his blood magically drifts back into his orifices and his organs weave back into shape, Thrak’s health is totally restored. Taenhyrr cries, “The Thrak is back! We’re in this together! Keep swinging, Thrak!”

Taenhyrr makes use of his axe and swings, wounding an enemy goblin.

Derith cries, “Sacred flame! Nigga on the right!” The enemy in front of Taenhyrr is engulfed in searing hot flames, crisping it into a goblin-based snack food. The enemy dies.

“Suck on my nutty ball sack!” A faint image of Stan, the cleric’s deity, ap-



pears in the aether with his holy red spear: “Smoked, bitch!”

Derith performs a jig and says, “That’s my homeboy right there!” The enemy captain is spooked as he hears another faint fart noise, but from where...?

Meanwhile, Drolgo goes for another nut shot, landing an arrow in an opposing warrior’s taint, causing him to double over in pain. Otis casts ray of frost at the same enemy, exploding it into tiny, glittering pieces. The enemy’s ranks are thinning, indeed!

Thrak takes a light blow from the enemy, but he doesn’t let that stop him. The chief shouts, “Fuck you Thrak,” but every single one of his bolts miss their mark! The captain’s luck may be up!

“Let’s kill these fuckers!!” cries Derith.

Thrak yanks his axe out of the floor, slashing through his immediate aggressor’s nutsack. The goblin falls onto the floor, convulsing and beet-red, where Thrak chop-sueys him. Another kill. He shouts at the captain: “RAHH!! You’re next!!”

Taenhyrr makes use of his newfound clarity to rush the captain and push him prone. Success! The captain falls and drops its chu-ko-nu. Taenhyrr turns and yells, “We need to interrogate him! Disarm him! Thrak, you can have your turn after we interrogate him!”

Derith walks inside the building, slowly and with despotic poise. He says, “Taenhyrr, I don’t know how to disarm him but I’m going to use sacred flame!!” The captain performs a deft combat roll, dodging the cleric’s spell. “Ahh! I fucked up!!”

Taking his chance, Drolgo readies an action to stab the captain if it gets up.

Otis attempts to charm the captain using his spell, charm, but the spell fails. “If only I was good and not bad,” he despairs.

The captain attempts to stand, triggering Drolgo’s readied action. The halfling lacerates with precision, cutting into the captain’s leg and causing him to profusely bleed. The captain bends to its knee and says, “Might I offer a truce? It seems that you have gotten me...”

Combat ends.

Derith says, “You must join us and take down the enemy.”

“I am not in fighting shape,” counters the captain, “but I have no good will for this Grizzle....”

Taenhyrr shakes his fist: “Who are the Black Veil?! Tell us!!” Meanwhile, Thrak marks his body with the blood of his kills.

The captain swallows, then responds with narrow eyes: “If you’re looking for Grizzle, he’s upstairs with the captive. The bugger locked himself into a room when we wouldn’t accept his payment. Tried to swindle us, that rat!”

“Payment... for what?”

“The kidnapping.”

“Who’d you kidnap?”

“Some councilman. Bandicam...”

“Councilman Vandekamp! I knew it!” Taenhyrr’s expression becomes shrewd. “We do have the ability to heal you—if you help us. Does he have any weaknesses?”

“Grizzle? He welched on the agreement. A very stingy goblin, and that’s a fact.”

Derith loses his patience and kicks the captain hard: “What are you fucking hiring kidnapppers for?! You Black Veil!!” The captain explains that Grizzle and the Black Veil are not hiring kidnapppers, but are themselves kidnapppers. The explanation falls on deaf ears. It might be said that nobody really understands what they are trying to accomplish.

Drolgo demands, “Are there any secret stashes?”

The captain scowls meditatively. He replies, “Only his belt—the only item of worth in this shithole. He wouldn’t even pay us in full, and yet he’s wearing that—garish, golden thing. That skunk!”

Otis recalls hearing a box fall below ground level. “There may be a basement in the storage room.”

Taenhyrr shouts at the captain: “What is your name? Speak!”

“My name is Bookwald. What does it matter?”

Taenhyrr lords over the captain: “I’mma call you Bookworm. Bookworm! What are my allies going to find—down in the basement?”

The captain snickers but does not respond. Meanwhile, Derith, Drolgo, and Otis relocate to the storage room. What awaits them there?

Dark clouds of dust shroud the room in mystery. The motley trio see naught but tumbled crates.

However, upon further inspection, there is a trap door. Derith descends immediately: “Bring that captain swine down with you! I’m going to cast thaumaturgy and make light.”

The eager dwarf generates a bright flash of illumination, revealing to him and him alone the contours of a spine-chilling secret basement. At the end of the long hallway there is a stone statue with a gem in its hands. Derith sprints there and attempts to snatch up the gem.

What’s this? The dwarven cleric experiences a hair-raising feeling of a giant thing nearby—a dire bugbear! The monstrous enemy leaps into view, slamming its man-sized weapon down! It cracks the floor into splinters just inches away from Derith’s supple form.

Thrak and Taenhyrr, together with the captain, hear a thunderous boom. Otis tries to convince them to come and aid their impetuous dwarf companion, but there is a disagreement. The captain will surely attempt an escape if they let him stand up again. Something must be done with him.

Thrak’s mind snaps. He immediately drags the captain outside, and his instincts take over. The barbarian picks up a severed goblin arm and bores it into the captain’s rear end. Then he dunks the captain’s groaning head into the fountain. The body goes limp; Captain Bookwald of the Black Veil is destroyed forever.

Drolgo says, “Yo, our dwarf buddy fell into this hole in the ground, and we should go over there. Help me, Taenhyrr.”

“Yes.”

Drolgo somersaults into the trapdoor and lands in the basement.

Derith speaks to him: “Comrade! There’s some pussy down here, and he

needs a dickin’!” Then he grasps the gem in his greedy paws. Unbeknownst to Derith, he has set off a devious mechanical snare. A stone wall descends from the ceiling, trapping him together with the bugbear. Dire straits, indeed...!

Otis descends the ladder, whereupon Drolgo tells him an account of the room, emphasizing the presence of sinister booby traps. There are two unconscious bodies lying on the floor. Otis lights a torch and examines the bodies, but alas! Nothing can be done for them at present.

He calls out to Derith, asking if he can see any mechanism that will help him escape. But it is too late!

The bugbear says, “Grok smash!!” and swings its morning star, doling out devastating damage. Derith collapses. The world spins around him, and then darkness... The dwarf is down and out, unconscious, forevermore. It is an unfitting end for the brave cleric! If only there were some way to rewind time.... Lo! The bugbear sees an image of Stan swathed in ethereal sweat droplets. The deity winks, and then—

Time rewinds, reanimating Derith’s corpse and facilitating his escape.

He makes a break for it: “Jesus Christ, fellas! You will not believe it! There’s a big bugbear! In the big bug basement!” The gem—and bugbear—will have to wait for another time.

Derith runs to the opposite room where he finds a sack containing one hundred gold coins. He hands this to Drolgo, who accepts it readily. The party sees numerous bundles of fine clothing, but they do not gather them. The nobles who wore them are now presumably long deceased—murdered by bloodthirsty goblin scum. Their ghosts are not yet free from this land.

The party ascends a staircase to the building’s second story. They are determined to administer justice to Grizzle. In the next room, the party discovers a map of the goblins’ forest with red x marks scrawled upon it. “Sites of ambush, no doubt,” says Drolgo. Grizzle’s quarters are near, for the party can hear his growling, frustrated voice muttering nearby. The walls seem to say, “Ohh, I don’t know what to do. Damn those humans!”

Taenhyrr approaches the only door. The paladin attempts to parlay: “You’re trapped with nowhere to go, Grizzle Black! I am an agent of Miztos Intelli-

gence. Our agents have you surrounded. Release your prisoner!”

The goblin’s response is negative, indeed: “You can’t have him. I’ll... I’ll kill him!”

“We’re willing to work with you on this. Just tell us what you want.”

The goblin is shrewd: “The offer was only fifty gold. I heard this one is worth more than that. I heard many things.”

“We’ve got more than enough gold. How does... eighty gold strike you?”

Over the course of several minutes, there is a back-and-forth of tense bartering. But alas! When Taenhyrr is about to slide the coins to Grizzle, it all comes to a halt. There is an abrupt clattering of footsteps, and Grizzle’s sinister voice rings high and shrill: “Here, human! Go to your friend!” The party hears the thump of a window being forced open.

“Thrak, kick the door down!” cries Taenhyrr. The barbarian slams his leg into the door with herculean muster, parting its hinges from the wall and toppling it wholesale onto an enemy on the other side. The goblin coughs blood and tries to pull away.

Derith cartwheels to the doorway and conjures the sacred flame of Stan. The goblin pulls away from the door’s debris in the nick of time, just barely avoiding the fire.

Taenhyrr strikes at the goblin, but his axe gets caught in a chunk of debris. The goblin cries out in fear: “No more! No more!” But the goblin’s plea goes unanswered. It’s kill or be killed!

Otis leaps upon the table and fires a powerful ice ray, exploding the goblin at once.

There is a muffled sound as Grizzle catapults himself out the window. A copper hook on the windowsill clasps shut, revealing to all a secret mechanism for escape. Grizzle is a crafty goblin, indeed!

The only remaining goblin cries: “Please have mercy! I want to live!”

Taenhyrr looks to the side, where he sees the councilman bound and gagged yet unharmed.

Thrak says: “A perfectly good bed. We can give the councilman a show.”

The final goblin drops its weapons. “You could probably still catch grizzle....”

Taenhyrr jumps out the window, taking heavy damage. All of his bones crumble into a fine powder. Everyone else takes the stairs.

They see the two M-I-6 agents, who are dragging Grizzle between them. The agents happily proffer the golden belt in exchange for services rendered. “It is a fine prize,” says Drolgo. Grizzle Black of the Black Veil has been defeated!

The time has come at last. The party returns to the darkness of the store-room, where a fateful encounter awaits them.

## **ENCOUNTER 3**

### **GROK COUNTS TO GREEN**

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**L**o! Our most able host of champions once more approaches the ladder with hearts full to burst with meritorious vigor. Derith gazes thoughtfully into the dungeon below. His mind spins, and a white-hot flush of emotion stirs within his heart. He remembers a childhood raised by a human and dwarf together in unholy matrimony. Derith remembers the pain and hardship, and a single tear falls down his cheek. But he checks himself and returns to the present moment.

Derith speaks: “I remember I went down there this one time. That basement...There’s a big gerbil-bear thing down there—with a big axe!”

Taenhyrr recoils in awe of the dwarf’s astounding feat of clairvoyance. The paladin opens his mouth to speak, but before he says a single word—a shrill cry!

“Aaaiiii!!”

An unknown woman’s voice rings shrill from the basement below. “Oh god!” cries Derith. “We gotta get down there!”

“It might be the monster doing a voice,” ventures Drolgo. His eyes are shiftily with fear, which is not uncharacteristic of him, and yet it proves suspicious all the same. The party brushes aside his suggestion, all feeling hot

with anticipation at the idea of a woman being nearby.

“Hold on just one cotton-picking second!” Derith faces the halfling rogue with stout defiance. But before any further events can transpire, lo! everyone hears the womanly voice a second time: “N-no! Not the leg! Help me! Aaaaa!!!”

Derith thinks quickly, then speaks: “I need to do guidance on somebody. Who shall it be?”

“My legs are still broken from the fall out the window,” says Taenhyrr.

“Rakka-lakka nig-nog,” says Thrak.

“Ah!” Derith makes his choice. “I would like to cast... Thrak! Get over here! I’m going to cast guidance all over your face!”

Thrak’s eyes open wide with sensuous, unabashed pleasure: “Guide me! Guide me!”

After a brief moment the act is done, and Thrak feels energized down to his core. At this juncture, the party descends the ladder and they venture into the basement. Otis wields a torch to cast away the darkness, yet nary a secret detail is revealed unto their eyes. It is an advanced darkness, and they are ensconced within its clutches.

“Before we go further,” says Derith, “I would like to cast Sha-lay-lee. I need my shillelagh. I channel you into my shillelagh!!!” With a flash, the cleric feels the power of Stan gnarl and curl in a way reminiscent of a hard stick, whereupon he (and he alone) is granted the personal buff “Ease of Walking.” With this advantage he walks forward and the party follows. Lo! a secret is finally visible, and everyone looks upon it eagerly.

There is a fireplace, and a gem upon a statue.

Derith closes his eyes. “That gem... I remember it fucking my asshole clean open.”

A second secret is revealed: two bodies are lying on the ground; one is male, and the other is female.

“Can I communicate with this person on the ground?” queries Derith. He kneels down: “Hey. Hey buddy. Who hurt you? What’s going on?” The male body does not stir.

The female body twitches, then breaths slowly: “Euughh... It came out of the shadows, and—ah!! It took my leg!”

Taenhyrr produces a small female doll: “Show me on the doll where he hurt you.” The woman reaches up feebly, and she points behind the eager paladin. Her eyes are open wide with terror. She cries, “H-him!!”

CRASH! The bugbear reveals itself. It gapes disbelievingly upon seeing such an uncommonly motley fellowship. Derith’s polearm mastery prompts him to strike, but he hold back, now intent to listen. Otis prepares a spell should the bugbear lash out, and tension fills the air.

The bugbear raises its weapon: “Grok hungry. Grok not like people upstairs.” It takes a step forward, its round eyes like those of a dead fish. Drolgo cringes when he sees blood dripping from the bugbear’s mouth, but Taenhyrr senses a potential ally and attempts to parley. He reaches into his pouch.

“Take some of my rations,” offers Taenhyrr. He holds out a package of meat, which the bugbear accepts hungrily. Derith and Drolgo also provide their rations, for they can see that the bugbear has no desire to fight: “Take some of mine as well!”

The bugbear shows its teeth: “Grok-grok. Yum-yum. What help you need?”

Otis looks upon the gem and senses magical energy emanating from it. “My good bugbear, do you know of this treasure?”

Grok smiles heartily and pats his belly: “Yes! That Grok’s favorite gem.

Derith closes his eyes and takes a step forward: “We have to touch the gem, Grok.”

But the bugbear shakes his head sadly: “Grok too lowly touch gem. Grok proletarian bugbear; no, no touch gem.”

Taenhyrr shouts manically: “You’re free now, Grok! You have to touch the gem!”

“Yes, that’s right!” Derith takes another step forward: “Touch the gem! This is your only chance! You have to touch the gem!”

Grok staggers backwards and lifts his mace into the air. He scans the party with wide-eyed diffidence and lets his mouth go slack with fear. The left-



over blood in his mouth spills onto the floor, releasing a terrible stench. Tension fills the air. Otis quickly casts Charm Person upon Grok, but the spell is instantly nullified by the bugbear's deep-seated inferiority complex. Grok is uncharmable!

"Join us or die!" cries Derith.

The bugbear shuts his eyes and wheels himself further into the corner: "I think Grok may Grok—this way." He crushes a pile of barrels in his wake, flooding the basement with warm water.

Derith shouts, "He took our food. Let's get it back—from his corpse!" Grok cowers and shields his eyes in fear. The cleric feels a sudden pang of pity and tacitly rescinds his warcry. The party does not engage in battle, but they are not safe yet.

"Does anyone have any sort of perception?" queries Derith. "Let's get the gem." Otis acknowledges that he does indeed have perception and offers to help.

Otis and Derith rub their magical catalysts together, which blasts understanding into Otis's magical eyes. Grok watches sadly as the wizard takes an up-close-and-personal look at the gem.

The gem is revealed to be an octahedron. Furthermore, there is ample evidence suggesting it is capable of storing energy of a mystical nature. It has not yet reached its full potential. While Otis observes this, the statue which holds the gem faces him. It grips the gem firmly within an indentation; no other object but the gem could fit. There is no doubt the statue houses some sort of devious mechanism, but what could it do?

"Let's touch the gem all at once," suggests Derith.

Taenhyrr interjects: "No, it must be the most righteous of us: Drolgo—the one with no blood on his hands."

"I didn't really want to touch the stone," replies the rogue, "but... anything for the team." He considers for a moment, then adds, "What if we quickly replace the gem with a stone of the same weight? I have sleight of hand, you see." But upon clearer inspection, this strategy is impossible.

The decision is made: Drolgo will touch the gem. The act is done forthwith, and lo! in one frightful instant a gigantic stone wall descends, entrapping the party and preventing their escape to the ladder. They all hear Grok wail

like a child from the other side: “Grok scared. Someone help Grok.”

Taenhyrr hearkens to the bugbear’s plea and roars with the force of all his ancestors’ bellies. The resulting blast shakes the foundations of the room, causing chunks of dirt to crumble and fall from the ceiling. But the stone wall is unmovable, for as Otis observes with his magical eyes, the stone surface is thoroughly ensorcelled, laced with runes and enchantments.

He reads aloud the inscription upon the stone wall:

*When you’re feeling adrift,  
lost in the ocean’s cerulean waves,  
give your head a little lift,  
add a drop of sun’s golden rays.  
Combined you’ll find an end to your strife,  
and return yourself to the hue of life.*

Derith calls to the other side: “Grok, we’re gonna need you to pee on the wall.” The bugbear stumbles over himself and reaches the stone wall opposite them. “Guh,” says Grok. There is a wet, high-pitched hissing on the other side of the wall as the bugbear helpfully acquiesces. But nothing avails; the urine cannot penetrate the thick, enchanted stone. “It was worth a try,” says Derith.

Grok speaks: “Maybe poem—mean something?”

Soon the inscription’s true meaning is revealed, and Taenhyrr announces, “Aha! The hue of life is none other than the color green. It is the result when you mix blue, the color of cerulean waves, with yellow, the color of the sun’s golden rays. Let’s look for green.” Otis scans the stone wall and recognizes a row of six hexagrams. “This may be what we’re looking for,” he says. “Six is the number of primary and secondary colors. Perhaps the integral clue is on the other side of the wall.”

Derith calls to Grok: “Grok, are there gem-shaped groupings arranged in a line?”

“Y-yes.”

“What are their colors? Do you see any green ones?”

The bugbear is silent for several minutes. At length he replies, “Oh! Green.

This is good. Grok can count to green. Red, green, green, purple, purple, green.”

At this pivotal moment, Thrak channels his guidance and thrashes the wall with all his might. He grips the rightmost hexagram and twists it. The hexagram is a dial!

“Get turnt! Get turnt! Get turnt! Get turnt!”

There is a mechanical whirring as the dial locks into place, revealing to all that its position corresponds with the color green.

“Thrak! You’re doing a great job, buddy!” rejoices Derith. “Turn that bitch!”

As Thrak twists the dials one by one, Grok backs away from the wall opposite. He speaks: “You sure Grok safe? Little man shout at Grok. Grok w-want god-man say Grok safe.”

Taenhyrr calls to him: “Not he nor anyone here will cause harm unto thee, Grok. We hath sworn the oath.”

But Derith mutters with dark intent: “Actually, Grok, I had my fingers crossed. Turn that bitch to three. Thrak—this is you!”

The final dial locks into place. The wall raises up, and the party sees Grok staring at them like a cornered animal, with two limp bodies dangling over his shoulders. Suddenly, a mechanical voice blares loudly: “Psssst! Ha-ha! Marcus, you’ve done it—good for you, lad! Psssst!” After a brief pause, the party looks to Grok, but he is bewildered too. The strange message is a mystery to all.

Presently, Taenhyrr holds an arm out to shake hands with Grok, but the bugbear stays guarded: “Grok hold people. Grok no trust you, skinny-man.” He looks at Derith with quivering trepidation, but thankfully there is no further bloodshed.

Freedom at last. The party rolls barrels over to the ladder, creating a path up for Grok, who upon reaching the top of the ladder breaks through the window and launches into the forest. The party follows him, and to their relief, the two bodies were actually left behind. In the warm sunlight it is now apparent that the man is a gnome and the woman is a halfling. The woman’s right leg is gone, now a bleeding stump. Derith goes wide-eyed and drinks the blood directly from the wound: “Shh! Ah! It’s been so long since I’ve had a woman’s blood in me. Oh, god!!”

Then Otis and Derith work together to heal the wound, which staunches the bleeding. The woman wakes up and looks at her surroundings. She sees fresh blood dripping from Derith's jaws and goes silent.

Taenhyrr tries to console her: "He just wanted your... food."

"I'm a person, not food!"

Derith sticks his tongue out: "I'm on the verge of eating you, so you'd better tell us why you're here!"

The halfling frowns in disgust and turns away. She looks at Drolgo and at once all her previous mannerisms disappear. She scolds him: "Drolgo Noakes! You dirty snake!" The rogue steps back: "M-me?"

"You don't even remember me, do you, Drolgo!"

Taenhyrr pins Drolgo by the neck to the wall. He shouts, "What did you do to her! How dare you!"

The woman continues her story: "I took the fall for your dirty pipeweave operation! You love 'em and leave 'em, don't you? Don't you! My name is Lorilla Tulenthnipper. Why don't you say something!"

"I'm—erm—very sorry for what happened in the past," chokes Drolgo. He tries to get free, but Taenhyrr holds him fast. Meanwhile, Derith crawls on all fours, and says, "Drolgo, I have an idea. Why don't we shut her up? We might as well SOIL HER BODY MORE!"

"I like it!" cries Thrak. He and Derith wiggle their fingers eagerly.

"They're just delirious," says Drolgo. "Pay them no mind." At this juncture, Taenhyrr lets go of Drolgo and instead executes justice upon Derith and Thrak. He hurls them away, freeing the injured halfling.

She turns her head up: "Thank you for taking those two hounds off of me." There is a sharp emphasis on the word 'hounds' which provokes the ire of everyone, even noble Taenhyrr, and the party encircles her.

She blurts out desperately, "I have information about your father, Drolgo! We were captured and taken to someplace. The enemy said they were going north. The name sounded like 'dum' or 'dun' and was vaguely Dwarfish." Drolgo listens attentively, and then something clicks. He realizes his desire to locate his missing father; this was just one of many things he had recent-

ly forgotten. He opens his mouth to thank Lorilla, but before he can speak, Councilman Vandekamp appears on the stairs with the two M-I-6 agents at his side. Vandekamp rushes over and shakes hands with everyone.

“Oh, oh, thank you for handling that thing in the basement! What a foul creature! What that beast would have done to me later—why, I shudder to think. Ah! sweet freedom!”

“You’re welcome,” says Taenhyrr.

“You know,” adds the councilman, “this place is so very interesting—this old manor. Left over from the Salari, I do believe.”

“What is that?”

“You don’t know about the Salari? I will tell you. They were Karak’s earliest and most advanced civilization, those who built the huge wall separating Dolor, Miztos, and Valan from the Great Wilds, which as you know remains uncharted to this day. The Salari are the founders of this whole world. It is said that their civilization’s downfall is what led us to this current state of unrest.”

The party listens attentively.

“Now, if you would, look at the stones of this manor we are in! Does the architecture not match the Salari wall? You needn’t answer—the answer is so obvious! This is a Salari city we are in, but fate would have it that only a single building remains. The forest has reclaimed all the land nearby, and with it came the goblins and—and bugbears.”

Taenhyrr recollects his thoughts, and he demands, “Halfling woman! Speak the name of the city you mentioned.”

She looks up, startled: “Oh—you know, I can’t really remember. It was ‘dum’ or ‘dun’ something.”

Taenhyrr turns to the councilman: “Seeing as you know the landscape, do you know of this place? We would search for our halfling friend’s father there. He was captured by the Black Veil.” The councilman consults the elf M-I-6 agent, who promptly reports, “Ah! Well, yes, councilman Vandekamp. There is an old dwarven fortress recently taken over by Black Veil. The name is Dol Drum.” Drolgo swallows at the name, and his feet shift restlessly.

Derith cracks his neck: “I think we have all the information we need from these fuckfaces.”

“So,” he adds, “what’re you gonna give us? This one would be good.” He and Thrak steal a glance at the halfling woman and wet their lips.

“In fact I have an opportunity,” declares Vandekamp. The party groans unhappily.

“You see, the city here—or what’s left of it—is relatively unsafe. Miztos needs personnel to serve as some sort of council for this place. Now, in my eyes, you have all verily proven yourselves capable protectors. What do you say? While we expand out of Miztos and populate this area, will you form the council and be protectors of the realm?”

Derith scowls: “Hmph! I see how it is. You want us to do all the work so you can sit back and receive all the money for yourself. You councilmen are all the same!” The elf M-I-6 agent moves to silence the cleric for good, but Taenhyrr intervenes: “Hold, Derith. We will speak later and we appreciate the offer. In the meantime, councilman, have your men prepare defenses and a palisade wall.

“That I shall do. Ah! But before I leave you, o noble champions, there is one more thing I should like to tell you—a personal request from mineself. You see, we have a man on the inside who infiltrated Black Veil, but he’s gone silent for several weeks. His name is Finbin Brown. If you find yourself near Grimfast, the town closest to Dol Drum, please do keep an eye out for our missing man.” With that, the councilman departs into the forest. The gnome M-I-6 member leaves with the wounded halfling on his shoulder: “Until we meet again, thank you!”

The party is left alone with the unconscious gnome, who was left forgotten. The gnome wakes up rather abruptly and announces to all, “The name’s Bogram. Bogram Brambleback. I do believe I was captured. Does my name not ring any bells to you? Have you not read my book, ‘Bogram’s Guide to Karak’?”

Derith responds harshly: “We don’t care for your book, plebeian.”

The gnome is unmoved: “Be that as it may, I’d like to make a guide for travelers. That guide was only a preface, really. I could write fifty—sixty more chapters.” He looks at Drolgo and spies the glowing red light emanating from his pouch. “I do believe this is the reason I came here. Is that a Salari

power crystal?" The gnome's eyes twinkle behind his curly, brown locks.

Before providing an answer, Taenhyrr consults Otis privately: "What do you perceive of this man?" The wizard's magical eyes reveal that the gnome is genuinely inquisitive; he is not a common thief, nor is he an enemy spy.

"The Salari power crystal," muses the gnome, "is so amazing. Scholars have surmised that Salari civilization functioned on power crystals alone. Agriculture, craft, industry—even everything in the house!"

Thrak is amazed: "House crystal! How do we charge it? H-how?"

Bogram beams his widest smile: "That's the key. I was drawn to this place because it might have been the answer that question. You see, I believe the crystals were charged at arcane fonts or springs, which pop up in places like these, where the earth's ley lines meet up and release their mana. It's the best place for a Salari township, wouldn't you say?"

Derith reclines on the floor and replies, "Maybe if we drench it in your blood, the crystal will charge."

"No, no," says Bogram. "If that were true, I'd have tried already! The gem can't be charged here at all, I'm afraid. The font was destroyed some time ago, along with the other building here. I suppose I'll have to keep searching. I do think I could travel up north next."

"This guy's gonna try to steal our power crystal," says Derith.

"A very convincing trickster," says Thrak.

The party takes a long rest in the manor to heal their weary bones. It is decided that Bogram will join the fellowship on their trek to the north—toward Dol Drum, where Drolgo's father is held prisoner. It will be a trying adventure, but with their combined strength, they may just prevail!

The gnome laughs merrily as they set off: "Thank ye muchly for letting me tag along, fellows!"

"No harm at all, little buddy!"







