Gracklstugh Revised – Turmoil in the City of Blades

An Expansion and Restructuring of Chapter 4 of *Out of the Abyss*

by John French Williamson



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Many thanks to The Homebrewery for their incredible tool, without which I wouldn't have been able to put this supplement together.

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Introduction

Welcome to my revision of Gracklstugh for Out of the Abyss! This supplement is meant to be used in tandem with the Out of the Abyss campaign book from Wizards of the Coast; though it replaces much of the Gracklstugh chapter, it frequently references material contained therein.

This supplement is structured under the assumption that the adventurers have entered Gracklstugh as part of a trade mission from Blingdenstone.

See the appendices for more information on the trade mission (Appendix C) and various other background elements of Gracklstugh.

Adventure Overview

The party's goal in Gracklstugh is to acquire acid-resistant weapons and armor for 200 soldiers in Blingdenstone. They're transporting a sizable portion of Blingdenstone's wealth in salt and spell gems to trade, along with any personal items of value.

However, the gnomes as a whole are unfamiliar with the inner workings of Gracklstugh, so the party will need to enter the city, make the deal, and exit with their goods in hand of their own accord. Kazook Pickshine has provided a lead in Werz Saltbaron, a duergar smuggler who Kazook has been illicitly trading with in Mantol Derith, but otherwise the party must forge their own way.

Normally stoic and predictable, Gracklstugh has been unsettled of late. Currents of dissent have spawned and spread throughout numerous factions as Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V's mind has been slowly corrupted by his consort, Shal, a succubus disguised as a female duergar. As Horgar's fist tightens around the city, more and more dissenters slip through his fingers unnoticed.

One such faction is the Council of Savants, a derro governing body that has been infiltrated by cultists worshiping Demogorgon. Another is Themberchaud, the great Wyrmsmith of Gracklstugh, who has grown restless under the constant supervision and coddling of his handlers, the Keepers of the Flame. Beyond these two groups, numerous clans have begun to raise doubts about Horgar's leadership.

In order to complete their mission, the party will have to weave their way into the complex fabric of Gracklstugh's political landscape as the underlying conflict comes to a head. Will they find themselves on the right side?

Supplement Structure

This supplement is structured to be as clear and digestible as possible. It begins by providing an overview of what sort of changes I've made to the existing Gracklstugh chapter in a big-picture sense, explaining my overall intent.

It then provides a list of key factions and NPCs, then provides loose outlines for how this section of the adventure might play out while using this supplement.

It then proceeds through five chapters (as described in the outlines), noting changes to the existing Gracklstugh chapter from Out of the Abyss that I believe contribute to the overall goals of the supplement as described in this introduction.

Finally, it provides several appendices meant to offer guidance on how you might expand on these events even further, either in the moment or later in the adventure.

Note that at times you'll find intended redundancy, as I've tried to work against the problem of having to flip/scroll/ctrl+F through the document over and over again to see how everything fits together.

Implementing this Supplement

In my campaign, my party skipped Gracklstugh in favor of Blingdenstone. To make use of the duergar city, I combined some of the suggestions from the Battle of Blingdenstone section of the campaign book, sending them on a trade mission as part of the gnomes' preparation. I've provided basic details on this trade mission in Appendix C: Blingdenstone Trade Mission, should you wish to structure this part of the adventure in the same way.

That said, much of this revision can be used even if your players go to Gracklstugh first. Some suggestions for doing so are listed in Appendix D: Going to Gracklstugh First.

Finally, my players were long done with the Drow Pursuit by the time they reached Gracklstugh, having slain Ilvara and the others only a few days after escaping Velkynvelve, so this supplement does not account for the Drow Pursuit rules, and it ignores Xalith.

Author's Notes on the Scope of Changes from the Written Adventure

This supplement makes numerous changes to the Gracklstugh chapter of Out of the Abyss, many of which (may) extend into latter portions of the adventure. However, my goal in writing this supplement was to tweak and expand upon the existing content, rather than write it anew. The Gracklstugh chapter has a reputation for being bloated, disorganized, and confusing, but at its heart the content within is excellent, and to my mind it's underutilized.

The Gracklstugh portrayed in the book is huge and teeming with life and danger all around. It exists within a strict social hierarchy and within a complex political network of coexisting-and-competing clans, all of whom are kept in check through the machinations of the Deepking, who is (or was) a shrewd and calculating ruler, but who has since been corrupted by the whispered advice of his succubus consort, Shal. I envision him as a political mastermind a la Otto von Bismarck who has been corrupted over the last few months, as if Bismarck went senile.

As a result, most of the tweaks and additions you'll find within this supplement have been made to enhance the political aspect of Gracklstugh, ratcheting up the conflict between the clans as the Deepking has grown more paranoid and more careless in his maneuvers to retain and expand his power.

Though you will encounter many changes to the original text throughout this supplement, most are for flavor or to reinforce the key points below:

The Deepking's Edicts

The Deepking has recently been issuing edicts that punish entire clans for spurious reasons. In particular, Clan Ironhead (weaponsmiths) has been forbidden to take on any new smithing contracts of their own. Instead, they've only been allowed to assist with surplus work obtained by the Deepking's own clan, the Steelshadows.

The Deepking's Assassins

The Deepking is directly linked to the Empty-Scabbard Killers, a fabled band of psionic assassins recently taken over by the mind flayer Qualux, and has been using them more and more liberally in recent months to eliminate political and economic opponents to his throne and to the Steelshadow Clan.

Evidence of his involvement can be found in the Whorlstone Tunnels in the form of a personally-penned and signed hit list. To compound the matter, many of their recent targets have no noteworthy political or economic ties, suggesting that the Deepking's criteria for assassination has broadened significantly.

Notably, the Deepking, rather than the gate guard Gorglak, is behind the assassination attempt on Werz Saltbaron on the Darklake Docks.

The Secret of the Stolen Dragon Egg

The Gray Ghosts' theft of a red dragon egg from the Keepers of the Flame is a well-guarded secret within the Keepers, rather than common knowledge and a source of public shame.

As a result of various other destabilizing factors at play in the city, the revelation that this insurance policy against the red dragon Themberchaud has gone missing carries much more weight than originally suggested in the Gracklstugh chapter.

The Role of the Council of Savants

The Council of Savants directly sponsors the thieves' guild known as the Gray Ghosts, which is run by three members of the Council: Uskvil, Aliinka, and Zubriska.

Both of these entities (the Council and the Ghosts) have been fully infiltrated and indoctrinated into a cult of Demogorgon, run by two more members of the Council, Narrak and his second-in-command, Pliinki.

Evidence directly connecting these figures to the corruption in the city can be found in myriad forms in the Whorlstone Tunnels: missives, scribbled notes on rituals, items reported stolen, etc. Bringing such evidence to any of the other major players in Gracklstugh is enough to convince them of the Council's plans.

Illithid Presence

The Empty-Scabbard Killers have recently been infiltrated and overtaken by a mind flayer named Qualux. Hidden away in the Whorlstone Tunnels, Qualux has been feverishly working to create a colony beneath Gracklstugh, though as of now he is the only illithid in the city.

Changes to the Whorlstone Tunnels

The encounters within the Whorlstone Tunnels have been redesigned to reflect the more-defined roles of the Narrak's cultists working with the Gray Ghosts, as well as the increased presence of the Empty-Scabbard Killers and their illithid master. See "Chapter 3: The Whorlstone Tunnels" below for more details.

The Political Situation: Factions and Key NPCs

This section will provide details on the key NPCs and motivations of various factions within the city in an effort to illustrate the political situation.

Duergar Clans

The Deepking and Clan Steelshadow (Weaponsmiths)

Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V has kept his power largely through the weaponsmithing monopoly held by his family, the Steelshadow Clan. He uses the Empty-Scabbard Killers to covertly eliminate threats to his control over Gracklstugh's trade. Lately, due to the whisperings of his consort, the succubus Shal, he has grown more paranoid and thus more liberal in his use of the Empty-Scabbard Killers, raising the eyebrows (and potentially the arms, in the near future) of other factions in the city.

Clan Ironhead (Weaponsmiths)

As of a recent royal edict, Clan Ironhead is forbidden to take weapon orders directly, and instead may only take on surplus work from Clan Steelshadow. This has cut deeply into the pride and the coffers of Clan Ironhead, as there previously existed a healthy, good-natured rivalry between the two weaponsmithing clans.

Their leader, Thangus Ironhead, is an elderly duergar who dismisses this latest edict as part of the ebb and flow of existence under a monarch. His children and grandchildren are incensed at the insult and at Thangus's unwillingness to speak out against it during meetings of the Council of Lairds.

If the party looks to Clan Ironhead for weapons, they'll learn as much from Thangus. However, they'll also catch the attention of his granddaughter, Grinta Ironhead, who will track them down and suggest that if, *somehow*, the Deepking were unseated, Clan Ironhead would be free to complete their order, and they may even be willing to provide a discount to whoever might facilitate such a downfall.

Clan Thrazgad (Armorsmiths)

Clan Thrazgad is happy to take the order, but complains that their stores have been raided recently. They suspect either the Gray Ghosts or the derro, offering that either group can likely be found in the system of tunnels rumored to exist beneath the city. These supplies (enchanted acid-resistant metals) can be found in Area 14 of the Whorlstone Tunnels.

The derro, led by the cultist Narrak, have taken the ore to use in their rituals in worship of Demogorgon. Revealing to Clan Thrazgad that there was a savant behind it is enough to compel them to see to the removal of the Council of Savants, potentially entreating Horgar directly, entreating the Cairngorm Clan, or seeing to it themselves by way of the party.

Other Duergar Clans

Unless a conflict erupts, most of the city's clans stay neutral. Only Clan Ironhead has voiced opposition to Horgar's most recent edicts, though not in any official capacity. Other clans privately have strong feelings.

Clan Xardelvar (Xarrorns) in particular is concerned that Horgar will deem their work too similar to weaponsmithing and thus take it over. They'll support a revolt if it starts.

Clan Xundom (Kavalrachni) supports Horgar if a battle breaks out.

The remaining clans wait and see, pledging their support to the victor.

Cairngorm Clan

Led by Stonespeaker Hgraam. Loyal to Clan Steelshadow. This supplement does not change his role in the adventure (OOTA 65), though he can enthusiastically urge the adventurers to find out who mutated Rihuud.

Council of Savants

There are 36 derro savants on the Council, five of whom have noteworthy roles to play in this supplement. Their messenger, Droki, is included as well, though he is not a member of the Council.

Key NPCs

Aliinka

Twin sister of Zubriska and one of three leaders of the Gray Ghosts. Resides in the Halls of Sacred Spells, where she acts as the Council's investigator into rumors of thieves beneath the city.

Droki

Messenger for the Council of Savants, the Gray Ghosts, the Empty-Scabbard Killers, and various derro quasi-factions. Enigmatic and absurd.

Cast of Characters

Major NPC	Description	Main Description	Stat Block Source
Amber Thrazgad	Duergar leader of the Thrazgad Clan seeking recently-stolen ore	Pg 14, Pg 31	**duergar** (MM 122)
Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V	Ruler of the duergar in Gracklstugh responsible for wanton assassinations	Pg 4	Pg 16
Droki	Derro courier employed by several factions in Gracklstugh	Pg 20	**Droki** (OOTA 231)
Eldgrim	Duergar second-in-command of the Empty-Scabbard Killers	Pg 7, Pg 22	**duergar soulblade** (OOTA 227) w/ mods (page 20)
Errde Blackskull	Duergar captain of the Stone Guard searching for corruption	Pg 13	**duergar stone guard** (OOTA 227)
Gartokkar Xundom	Duergar leader of the Keepers of the Flame seeking a stolen dragon egg	Pg 15	**duergar** (MM 122) w/ **keeper of the flame** traits (OOTA 226)
Grinta Ironhead	Duergar weaponsmith upset with the Deepking's recent restrictions on weapon production	Pg 4, Pg 30	**duergar** (MM 122)
Narrak	Derro savant leader of the Cult of Demogorgon and member of the Council of Savants	Pg 6, Pg 23	**warlock of the fiend** (VGM 219) w/ **derro** traits (OOTA 224)
Qualux	Illithid leader of the Empty-Scabbard Killers trying to create a colony	Pg 5, Pg 23	**mind flayer** (MM 222)
Rihuud	Stone giant mutated by the Cult of Demogorgon	Pg 23	**stone giant** (MM 156) w/ mods (OOTA 60)
Shal	Succubus disguised as the Deepking's royal consort	Pg 15	**incubus/succubus** (MM 285)
Stonespeaker Hgraam	Stone giant leader of the Cairngorm Clan seeking answers about his nephew's mutation	Pg 14	**stone giant** (MM 156)
Themberchaud	Adult red dragon seeking independence from the duergar	Pg 15	**adult red dragon** (MM 98)
Werz Saltbaron	Duergar smuggler in Gracklstugh	Pg 13	**duergar** (MM 122)

Narrak

High priest of Demogorgon and shadow leader of the Council of Savants. Resides in the Whorlstone Tunnels (Area 12), where he's attempting to beckon Demogorgon to Gracklstugh.

Pliinki

Narrak's second-in-command, she loves and worships him. Resides in the Whorlstone Tunnels (Area 14), where she oversees efforts to repair an obelisk that the cultists believe may aid in their work.

Uskvil

One of three leaders of the Gray Ghosts and their master thief, tasked with their most difficult missions. Has had numerous residences within the West Cleft District, but now resides in the Whorlstone Tunnels (Area 14), where he assists Pliinki in her research.

Zubriska

Twin sister of Aliinka and one of three leaders of the Gray Ghosts. Resides in the Whorlstone Tunnels (Area 14b, see Whorlstone changes), where she manages Gray Ghost operatives throughout the city.

The Downward Spiral and the Cult of Demogorgon

Building on the content of "The Downward Spiral" (OOTA 55), I've expanded on the role of the Council of Savants pertaining to the madness and corruption spreading through Gracklstugh.

The first to convert was Narrak, who saw Demogorgon with his own eyes while sailing through the Darklake on other business. He returned to Gracklstugh and immediately began carving glyphs and idols in Demogorgon's image. He was discovered by one of his colleagues, Pliinki, who was entranced by the imagery and joined him. Together, they began planning out ways to win Demogorgon's attention, hoping to offer Gracklstugh to him as a sacrificial gift.

They went deep into the Whorlstone Tunnels to do their work, where they were discovered by members of the Gray Ghosts serving under three more members of the Council of Savants: Uskvil, Aliinka, and Zubriska. Narrak and Pliinki invited them to meet in order to hash out shared use of the tunnels, where the Gray Ghost leaders too were immediately entranced on seeing Narrak's carvings.

Since then, the five savants have won over all of the remaining 31 Council members via Gray Ghost operatives, slipping Y carvings into their pockets, beneath their pillows, onto the bottoms of their shoes. Now established in their roles as leaders, these five savants are working to destabilize the city in numerous ways and for numerous reasons.

Through Uskvil's efforts, they stole the Keepers of the Flame's red dragon egg, as well as Clan Thrazgad's acid-resistant ore. Both are held in the Whorlstone Tunnels, where Pliinki is trying to use the ore to repair the obelisk, and where she has tried to mutate the dragon within the egg as a gift for Demogorgon. Meanwhile, Narrak continues his work on corrupting the giants of the Cairngorm Clan.

Gray Ghosts

Guild of thieves dedicated to disrupting the stability of Gracklstugh through the theft of sensitive items and information. Lower-level members, such as Werz Saltbaron, are unaware of the extent to which the guild's leaders, Aliinka, Zubriska, and Uskvil, are in league with the Council of Savants and Narrak's cult of Demogorgon.

Empty-Scabbard Killers

This loose affiliation of psionic assassins is composed of outcasts from duergar society; those disgraced, deformed, or otherwise unfit, unable, or unwilling to adhere to Gracklstugh's strict societal rules. Notably, members of this order shed their surnames on joining.

The mind flayer Qualux is the newly-ascended leader of the Empty-Scabbard Killers. He was a tadpole when Orcus appeared in Cyrog's chamber (OOTA 158), carried away as one of the few still-living groups of illithids fled from the Demon Prince of Undeath. He was lost in the Darklake, dropped as the illithids swam across, and, drawn to psionic energy, he eventually swam and wriggled his way through the cracks and down into Whorlstone, where he wriggled into the ear of one of the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

The transformation was quick and brutal, and from it emerged Qualux, full of vigor and eager to create a new colony here beneath Gracklstugh. With such a vast population so near, he immediately set to work capturing and converting duergar assassins until he'd taken complete control of the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Presently, Qualux is eagerly awaiting the hatching of several tadpoles, with which he intends to create the colony's first generation of illithids, as well as the maturation of an elder brain he birthed from the remains of Lorthio, the assassins' former leader. See Area 8 of the Whorlstone Tunnels for more information on Qualux's laboratory and experiments.

Qualux's second, a hardy soulblade named Eldgrim, serves him unconditionally and functions as his proxy in all matters within Gracklstugh. Eldgrim and his best assassins carry unique Illithid equipment, hand-crafted by Qualux. See Areas 6-8 in the Whorlstone Tunnels chapter for more information.

Lately, the Empty-Scabbard Killers have received numerous contracts from the Deepking himself, presented by members of his personal guard to the fishmongers (see below) as envelopes bearing the royal seal. Qualux is pleasantly surprised by the Deepking's insane ramblings, seeing it as an opportunity to eventually supplant him, but for now he treats them as any other contract.

Contracts

Assassination contracts are delivered to Eldgrim by way of fishmongers in the Darklake District. Those seeking to offer a contract can learn the process with a successful DC 16 Persuasion check in any of the major public hubs in the Darklake District. Failing a check by 5 or more results in the guard being called on whoever asked.

To enact a contract, the contractor must approach a fishmonger in the Darklake District and ask to buy a Gracklstugh Grouper. They must reject the first three choices that the fishmonger points to, then accept the fourth and pay for it. They must then skin the fish, dry its skin, and write the name or sketch the likeness of the target on the skin, then return the next day and discreetly drop the Grouper skin into the pile of skins beside the fishmongers' fish-cleaning station, from which it can be sorted out at the end of the day.

They must return the next day and buy a Darklake Trout, agreeing to the seventh fish presented to them. They may then haggle over the price, multiplying any amounts stated by seventeen as the actual price for the assassination. Once they're agreed, the contractor must pay on the spot, then it's in the hands of the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Eldgrim, Master Assassin

The face of the assassins is a duergar soulblade named Eldgrim. He resides in Area 7 in the Whorlstone Tunnels, where he commands the day-to-day operations of the Empty-Scabbard Killers. Twice per day, for an hour apiece in the morning and evening, he surfaces to collect contracts as refuse on bits of fish skin, confirm prices for pending negotiations, and to roam the streets.

He most often dresses as a garbage collector, to better blend into the laborers around the Darklake Docks, but occasionally appears as a beggar, a nobleman, a drunken lout, a cleric of Laduguer, a wily merchant, and more. He spends these walks distributing the earnings of the order's work with other cassalabrak, most of them destitute, living in the city's streets.

However, this charity is pragmatic rather than altruistic. Qualux has commanded Eldgrim to win the favor of the poor so that when the time is right (when Qualux's tadpoles have hatched), he will face little resistance summoning these poor figures down into the Tunnels to organize a call for rights for cassalabrak, at which Qualux will strike and implant the tadpoles into their brains.

The Stone Guard

Led by Captain Errde Blackskull, these elite soldiers serve as the royal guard, the official security force, and the secret police of Gracklstugh.

Errde Blackskull

Members of her clan have been killed by the Empty-Scabbard Killers in recent weeks, and she has seen numerous instances of petty corruption throughout the city.

Learning that the Deepking and/or the Council of Savants is behind either of these occurrences is enough for her to pin her paranoia on them, seeing them as the source of all of the city's corruption.

The Keepers of the Flame

Loyal to Clan Steelshadow and the Deepking, they work to keep Themberchaud placated. Recently, they've been at war with the Gray Ghosts, who they believe stole a valuable red dragon egg necessary to replace Themberchaud in the near future.

Gartokkar Xundorn, the leader of this order, may enlist the characters to retrieve the egg. Though he does not share it, he knows that the Deepking is unaware that the egg is missing and suspects that if the Deepking learns of its disappearance, his rage may spell the end of the Keepers of the Flame.

Themberchaud

Themberchaud has grown wary of the Keepers of the Flame. He's been on the lookout for opportunities to free himself from their stewardship and establish his own dominion in Gracklstugh.

Outlines

Below are several loose outlines of events in Gracklstugh: a longer chronological outline and a few faction-specific outlines.

Chronological Outline

The party's exploits in Gracklstugh can be split into roughly five chapters.

Chapter 1 - Entry and Reconnaissance

The party arrives in the city and learns the lay of the land in one of the following ways:

- They're arrested and brought to Errde Blackskull.
- They catch the attention of Gartokkar (and subsequently Themberchaud) after the "Rampaging Giant" encounter.
- They save Werz Saltbaron from the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Chapter 2 - Into Laduguer's Furrow

The party is either sent or summoned into Laduguer's Furrow for one of the following reasons.

After acquiring their task(s), they're given badges that give them free reign of Laduguer's Furrow, and they're given information on the major smithing clans of Gracklstugh, allowing them to set meetings with those families to start their work orders (or learn what's stopping them).

- Find Droki and find sources of corruption for Errde Blackskull.
- Meet with Gartokkar and Themberchaud. Tasked with finding a missing red dragon egg stolen by the Gray Ghosts. Given the name Droki as a possible lead.
- Find the source of the Empty-Scabbard Killers. Werz believes that Droki may be a lead.
- Find the Thrazgad Clan's missing acid-resistant ore.

Chapter 3 – The Whorlstone Tunnels

The party is sent to find Droki and the Whorlstone Tunnels. While there, whether they're searching for it or not, they likely find the following items:

- The missing red dragon egg (Whorlstone Area 14, controlled by the Gray Ghosts)
- Evidence proving that the Gray Ghosts are led by the Council of Savants (the heads of Narrak and Pliinki, both recognizable as members of the Council, as well as correspondence from Uskvil and the twin sisters Aliinka and Zubriska).
- Evidence directly linking the Deepking to the Empty-Scabbard Killers (Whorlstone Area 7).
- The Thrazgad Clan's missing acid-resistant ore, stolen by the Gray Ghosts (Whorlstone Area 14; the Gray Ghosts tried to add it to the obelisk).

Chapter 4 – Insurrection!(?)

With these various pieces of evidence in hand, the party is free to bring them to whomever they wish, either solidifying or disrupting the Deepking's rule. Neutrality isn't an option, as they need weapons from either Clan Steelshadow or Clan Ironhead.

This section can be complicated, as it attempts to cover all options, though only a few will come to pass with any given group. Options for each piece of evidence include:

Council of Savants Letters

These letters detail instructions given to Narrak and Pliinki which can be directly linked to the theft of the missing red dragon egg, as well as numerous other disruptions within the city.

To the Deepking. Delivering the letters to the Deepking prompts him to organize a purge of the Council of Savants as well as all derro within the city. Horgar immediately issues a call to arms, then sends his personal guard and all clans who answer into the East and West Cleft districts as well as the Halls of Sacred Spells to eliminate the derro. Clans that fail to answer are subsequently purged.

Should Horgar succeed on either or both counts, the bodies are stuffed into the Whorlstone Tunnels, providing the fodder necessary to fuel a necromantic cult to Orcus if/when the party returns to Gracklstugh later in the adventure.

To Other Factions. Delivering the letters to any other interested party demonstrates that there is already a powerful ally against the Deepking in the Council of Savants.

Missing Dragon Egg

This egg is salvation to Themberchaud, insurance to the Deepking and the Keepers of the Flame, and leverage to other parties opposed to the Deepking.

To Themberchaud. Bringing the egg to Themberchaud delights him. He immediately destroys it, scoffing at the idea of the duergar replacing him. The scoffing turns to disbelief, then to rage, as he cannot fathom such an insult. He entreats the party to mount an insurrection against the Deepking, led by the dragon himself, ensuring them that they will have his protection should they encounter any difficulties while meeting with co-conspirators.

To Gartokkar. Bringing the egg to Gartokkar allows the Keepers to save face before the Deepking and members of the Council of Lairds. It earns the party the right to place their weapons order with Clan Steelshadow.

To the Deepking. Bringing the egg to Deepking Horgar initially wins the monarch's favor, but his praise of them is interrupted by a whispered word from his consort, Shal, which lands them in chains, as they know too much. This prompts a conversation with Errde Blackskull, revealing Horgar's insanity and corruption, if she wasn't already aware.

To Other Factions. Bringing the egg to any other party reveals the precarious position the city is in regarding Themberchaud, as it becomes clear that their leverage over the dragon was absent. This is enough to aid in convincing other parties to consider a change of leadership, but not enough to birth such ideas on its own.

Empty-Scabbard Killers Hit List

This list is the most damning piece of evidence recovered from the Whorlstone Tunnels. It directly targets several prominent duergar within the city, which is enough to spur them to revolt, but it also targets dozens of nondescript citizens, revealing Horgar's intense paranoia. Moreover, the fact (if discovered) that it's fallen into the hands of an illithid is enough to cause an enormous uproar within almost any faction in the city.

To the Stone Guard. Bringing the list to Errde Blackskull is enough to turn her paranoia on the Deepking, seeing him as the source of the city's corruption., and prompting her to suggest removing him from the throne.

To Gartokkar. Bringing the list to Gartokkar solidifies his support of the Deepking. He is the only figure who does not raise an eyebrow at the names on the list, as he supports the removal of all of them. If he learns of the illithid, he will command the party to slay it and never speak of it again.

To Themberchaud. Bringing the list to Themberchaud functions the same as bringing him the egg. Seeing himself on it, he is enraged by the audacity of the Deepking and immediately demands that the party gather supporters for his cause to usurp the throne.

To Werz Saltbaron. Bringing the list to Werz Saltbaron prompts a meeting with the Council of Savants who, while upset about the destruction of the Gray Ghosts in Whorlstone, are still able to see the party as a tool against Horgar. They will urge them to find allies to mount an insurrection against the Deepking.

To Duergar Clans. Bringing the list to any of the Clan heads is enough to raise the matter in the Council of Lairds, leading to a crackdown from Horgar that results in a civil war within Gracklstugh.

Chapter 5 – Aftermath

Depending on how chapter 4 plays out, there are a few possible outcomes:

Derro Genocide

If Horgar receives the Council of Savants letters, he leads his forces in a complete extermination of the derro, losing a large percentage of his army in the process, and leading to a protracted civil war between his remaining forces and the clans who failed to join in the genocide.

Status Quo Maintained

If the egg (and potentially the hit list) are returned to Gartokkar, and no one learns of the Gray Ghosts' involvement (Gartokkar may press this issue, but his word is not enough to send Horgar to war), then the status quo of Gracklstugh is maintained, for now.

Of course, feel free to have the seeds of dissent grow over time, resulting in a civil war while the party is out of town.

Immediate War

If either the egg or the hit list are brought to Themberchaud, he spurs an immediate conflict within the city, waiting only a few days for allies before he begins targeting specific figures who he believes have insulted him, hoping to bait Horgar into trying to take him down in his lair.

Eventual War

If the hit list is brought to Errde Blackskull, Grinta Ironhead, or any other prominent duergar, they will suggest insurrection, but the party may be able to talk them out of it in the short-term. Nonetheless, once the party receives their trade shipment and departs, the informed figures will begin plotting against the Deepking, leading to a conflict which will be ongoing or recently-concluded if/when the party returns to Gracklstugh.

Outline By NPC/Faction

Viewed another way, the party can find themselves progressing through Gracklstugh under the guidance of one or more of the following NPCs and factions, culminating in their return from the Whorlstone Tunnels having made four discoveries. With knowledge and items in hand, it's on the party to deduce or investigate to see who might be interested in each piece, fomenting the insurrection covered in "Chapter 4 - Insurrection!(?)" above.

- A missing red dragon egg
- Evidence that the Gray Ghosts are led by the Council of Savants. Comes in the forms of the heads of Narrak and Pliinki, as well as letters between those two and three prominent members of the Council of Savants: Uskvil, Aliinka, and Zubriska.
- Evidence directly linking the Deepking to the Empty-Scabbard Killers and their illithid master. Comes in the form of a hit list left on the desk of one of the assassins, written and signed by Deepking Horgar.
- The Thrazgad Clan's missing ore.

> ### Thrazgad Clan's Missing Ore
>
> The ore is unimportant compared to the other items and discoveries on this list. Its theft by the Gray Ghosts and its placement within the deepest chamber of the Whorlstone Tunnels are meant to be an insurance policy for you as the DM; if your players fail to engage on any of the larger leads within Gracklstugh, they will at least need to go into the Whorlstone Tunnels to retrieve the ore in order to complete their armor order, which in turn will lead them to finding the juicier items of interest.

Errde Blackskull and the Stone Guard

- The party is arrested in the Darklake District for one of the many potential infractions available and is brought to Errde Blackskull.
- They're interrogated about their objective in Gracklstugh. Errde offers them freedom in exchange for completing two tasks for her: Find Droki, who she believes to be involved with one or more nefarious organizations, and find evidence of corruption, which she believes is rapidly spreading throughout the city.
- Errde informs them of the major smithing clans in Gracklstugh as thanks for their cooperation, allowing them time to meet and place their order before sending them to the West Cleft district in search of Droki, which leads into the Whorlstone Tunnels.
- In Whorlstone, they find the missing red dragon egg, letters linking the Council of Savants to the Gray Ghosts, the Thrazgad Clan's missing ore, and a hit list linking the Deepking to the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Gartokkar and the Keepers of the Flame

- The party is in the Darklake District on their third day in Gracklstugh, either by avoiding arrest or while searching for corruption for Errde Blackskull.
- They fend off the rampaging two-headed giant, which draws the attention of Gartokkar of the Keepers of the Flame.
- They're invited to the Keepers' headquarters, just outside of Themberchaud's Lair. As Gartokkar greets them and moves to bring them inside, Themberchaud appears at the entrance to his cave and requests a private audience.
- Themberchaud enlists the party to be his agents in the city, doing what the Keepers say, but reporting back to him first.
- Gartokkar tasks the party with retrieving a red dragon egg that they believe was stolen by the Gray Ghosts and taken into the Whorlstone Tunnels. He tells them to search for Droki in the West Cleft district to the find the entrance to Whorlstone.
- In Whorlstone, they find the missing red dragon egg, letters linking the Council of Savants to the Gray Ghosts, the Thrazgad Clan's missing ore, and a hit list linking the Deepking to the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Werz Saltbaron and the Council of Savants

- The party follows Kazook Pickshine's lead to look for Werz Saltbaron by the Darklake Docks. As they approach, Werz is attacked by the Empty-Scabbard Killers, and the party rescues him.
- Werz meets with them later in The Shattered Spire, thanks them, and opens Kazook Pickshine's bag of holding for them, extracting the gems needed to trade with the smiths of Gracklstugh. He also informs the party about the main smithing clans and offers them forged badges that will let them through into Laduguer's Furrow. He asks them to find the Empty-Scabbard Killers and take them out before they come after him again, mentioning a derro named Droki as a potential lead.
- In Whorlstone, they find the missing red dragon egg, letters linking the Council of Savants to the Gray Ghosts, the Thrazgad Clan's missing ore, and a hit list linking the Deepking to the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Chapter 1 - Entry and Reconnaissance

This chapter will cover the party's arrival in Gracklstugh's Darklake District, their first interactions with one or more of the key NPCs and/or factions at play, and their acquisition of a task to go deeper into the city.

The party arrives in the city and learns the lay of the land in one of the following ways:

- They're arrested and brought to Errde Blackskull.
- They catch the attention of Gartokkar (and subsequently Themberchaud) after the "Rampaging Giant" encounter.
- They save Werz Saltbaron from the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

These options are not mutually-exclusive, nor are they required to happen in a particular order. Meeting Errde depends on their behavior, Gartokkar depends on their timing, and Werz depends on their exploration.

Your party may attempt to contact the smithing clans by other means, but it shouldn't prove too difficult to steer them into one of these three hooks. They could be arrested for a small misstep, for example, or during "routine domicile inspections", yet another of the Deepking's recent ordinances. The Rampaging Giant encounter could crash into wherever they're staying, or you could move the assassination attempt on Werz to another part of the Darklake District.

And of course, feel free to connect them to the events of later chapters with your own ideas.

Entering the City

The two most likely options for entering Gracklstugh are by land or by water via the Darklake. As the party enters and explores (or is escorted) through the city, remember to highlight the city's General Features (OOTA 51), Roleplaying the Duergar and Derro (OOTA 52), Secrets (OOTA 53), Grackle-lung (OOTA 54), and The Downward Spiral (OOTA 55):

- **Light.** It is dimly-lit with a hellish red glow from the forges, with patches of darkness here and there.
- **Noise.** It is extremely loud, giving disadvantage on Perception checks to listen.
- **Smog.** It's very smoky and hazy. Visitors are at risk of contracting Grackle-lung.
- **Grackle-lung (OOTA 54).** DC 11 CON save after each long rest. Gain 1 level of exhaustion on a failure. Must succeed on a CON check (DC 10 + current exhaustion level) to Dash or cast a spell with a verbal component. If exhaustion returns to 0, disease is cured and character is immune for 1 week.
- **Downward Spiral.** The splinter group worshiping Demogorgon has since influenced the rest of the Council of Savants, converting nearly all of the members of the Council into worshipers of Demogorgon.
- **Duergar Deviation.** The normally ruthless and pragmatic duergar have been affected by the demon lords' presence, particularly Demogorgon, and have begun to deviate from their cunning, stoic natures into pettiness, cruelty, and open corruption.
- **Derro Insanity.** Mercurial and insane, the derro are unaffected by the demon lords' presence, as they were already unhinged.
- **Invisible Sentries.** Due to the constant threat of invisible duergar listening in, very few secrets or negative words are shared in the city.
- **City Divided.** The derro are former slaves and remain as second-class citizens.
- **Frugal and Monolithic.** Duergar crafting is centered on purpose and function, rather than ornamentation.

In addition, even if you don't wish to run some of the random encounters as written, consider dropping their details into your description of the city. Witnessing a derro riot, a patrol of kavalrachni, or a fly-over of Themberchaud can drive home the atmosphere of the city in a few words.

In particular, there are two points worth stressing: first, that Gracklstugh is a booming city, and second, that the duergar are slavers. Encounters such as the Deep Gnome Merchant, Orc Mercenaries, and multiple instances of the Slave Caravan are good options to highlight this aspect of the city.

Legitimate Traders

Bearing official documents from Blingdenstone, the party can convincingly make the case that they are on a legitimate trade mission, which should buy them some time in Gracklstugh without issue.

However, due to the demonic corruption in the city, even legitimate traders are being questioned by the Stone Guard, and their goods confiscated for inspection before being returned to them.

Entry By Land

Entering the city by land takes the party to the City Gates, where they are questioned by the Stone Guard while their goods are inspected.

It is up to your discretion whether or not the party's official documents from Blingdenstone are enough for them to pass easily into the city. If not, consider running this encounter at the City Gates:

Gorglak and Customs Inspection

The corrupt **stone guard** (OOTA 227) Gorglak is still present in this supplement, though his involvement is reduced.

If the party attempts to bring their goods through any of the city's gates, run the "City Gates" encounter (OOTA 57) with the following changes:

The party undergoes a 5~ minute interrogation and inspection of their wares, including their personal equipment. The party doesn't need to make any skill checks to prove their story; their documents are enough to convince the guards that they are traders from Blingdenstone.

Extortion. As this inspection nears its conclusion, Gorglak emerges from a secret door in the wall. He declares that the party is suspicious and warrants further inspection, and ensures that the guards will be officially reprimanded for failing to notice such an obvious fact. He then commands the twelve **duergar** (MM 122) in the gatehouse to open the gates and escort their goods to Overlake Hold for inspection.

Gorglak anticipates objections, and when they come, he suggests that the party could prove their good intentions in Gracklstugh by offering a gift to their esteemed Deepking, perhaps in the form of one of their visible or displayed magic items, which Gorglak ensures he will present to the Deepking on their behalf.

Further objections are laughed off, then cruelly dismissed as the six **duergar** (MM 122) forming a cordon behind the party step forward menacingly.

Hiding Items. Small items can be hidden away with a DC 15 Sleight of Hand check, but at great risk. Failing by 5 or more or the check alerts the duergar to the character's intention, at which point their goods are seized and they are arrested and taken to Overlake Hold for questioning.

Peaceful Outcomes

Outside of violence, the party has few options. If they have remained cordial throughout this conversation (DM discretion), a single (DC 25) or group (DC 20) Persuasion check can convince Gorglak to allow them to forgo further inspection and to accept gold (he requests 10-25gp per character; DM discretion) in lieu of an item. Otherwise, the party must oblige Gorglak or forfeit their goods to be further inspected in Overlake Hold for 1d4+3 days.

For all peaceful outcomes, the party is escorted to the Darklake District by Gorglak and twelve duergar.

Violent Outcomes

It's possible that the party will resort to violence. If so, remember that the duergar value them as tools or slaves, so those in melee range will deal non-lethal damage. As the duergar close in, they will give the party two chances to submit: on Initiative 10 of the first and second rounds of combat.

If Gorglak is alive, no duergar will retreat. If he dies, a duergar under 10 hit points at the start of its turn will turn invisible and flee away from the gate.

The gate itself is 40ft wide and 20ft tall, and is sealed. It has AC 22, 100 hit points, and a damage threshold of 15. It is immune to piercing, slashing, psychic, necrotic, and poison damage. The gate courtyard is 60ft wide (40ft for the gate, plus 10ft of rock wall on either side) and 120ft long, tapering to 30ft wide by the end farthest from the gate. The hidden duergar arrow slits extend 100ft along both sides, spaced 10ft apart.

Secret doors are set into either wall 50ft from the gate, requiring a DC 20 Perception to spot them (DC 15 if the spotter has seen them used). These doors grant access to narrow (10ft wide) corridors staffed by the archers behind the arrow slits.

A locked iron door (AC 19, HP 20, Pick DC 15) separates each corridor from the gatehouse-proper, which provides access to Gracklstugh's interior.

Guard Tactics

In total, the party faces:

In melee: 1 **stone guard** (OOTA 227), 6 **duergar** (MM 122). Gorglak falls in with the six duergar blocking the passage away from the gate, utilizing his Phalanx Formation feature. They adopt his Initiative and close in as a unit.

At range: 12 **duergar** (MM 122) wielding heavy crossbows are hidden behind full cover in the walls. Their line of sight is limited, such that a character who falls prone within 10ft of one of the walls has full cover from archers within that wall.

Reinforcement. Whenever a duergar in melee falls, one of the archers nearest the secret door stows its weapon, enlarges, and enters the courtyard via the secret door. On its next turn, the reinforcement draws a warhammer, which it wields with two hands (2d10+2 damage while enlarged, reduces their AC to 14).

The other archers shift down the line closer to the secret door on their turns so that they can easily enter the courtyard if needed.

Defeat

If defeated, the party will be loaded into their wagon and transported to Overlake Hold, where they will awaken in 1d4 hours in individual prison cells, dressed only in sackcloth clothing. Their equipment and trade goods will have been confiscated, and they'll be facing charges of attempted murder (murder if they killed any guards) and assorted other crimes against the throne, for which the punishment is execution.

See "Overlake Hold" for more information.

Victory

If the party defeats Gorglak's guards, there are two potential outcomes. If any of the duergar escape, they report to Overlake Hold as soon as possible, launching a search for the party within the city. Once per day or whenever the party goes out into any part of the city, there is a chance that they encounter a Duergar Patrol searching for them, depending on how many duergar escaped (10% chance per escaped duergar).

If the characters acquire badges of rank from Gartokkar, Errde Blackskull, or any other source, they can peaceably end any encounter with such patrols.

Duergar Patrol

A Duergar Patrol consists of 1d4+2 **duergar**, all but two of whom are invisible. Invisible duergar can sneak up on a character by making a Stealth check with advantage vs. the character's passive perception score.

Entry By Water

Approaching by water is a simpler affair. The party has the option to attempt to dock stealthily (OOTA 59: DC 14 group Stealth check or DC 15 group Survival). On a failure, a beleaguered dockworker comes forward and asks if they have anything to declare. The party can also choose to make their presence known, inviting a customs inspection.

A vessel can be moored at the Darklake Docks for 1gp/day, provided that the crew declare their cargo. Anyone refusing to declare cargo will be barred from docking. Attempting to bribe the customs officials results in the dockmaster summoning a Duergar Patrol led by a stone guard (OOTA 227) who arrests the party and brings them to Overlake Hold.

If the party attempts to fight, nearby duergar come running to aid the guards. 1d4 duergar (MM 122) arrive at the end of each of the first four rounds, unarmored (AC 10) and wielding war picks (1d8+2).

Similar to the City Gates encounter above, the guards will deal non-lethal damage to the party, hoping to arrest them. Notably, the civilians will always attempt to deal lethal damage, and if the stone guard and all members of the Duergar Patrol are killed, there will be no one to call them off.

The Darklake District

Most of the Darklake District can be run as written in the campaign book (OOTA 59-64), though this supplement aims to remove some of the randomness from this portion of the adventure. Notably:

The "Assassins Interrupted" encounter at the Darklake Docks (OOTA 62) features more follow-up with Werz Saltbaron, as he is a key NPC in this supplement.

The "Rampaging Giant" encounter only takes place if the party is in the Darklake District on their third day in Gracklstugh.

Rampaging Giant Encounter

Run this encounter (OOTA 59-60) if the party is in the Darklake District on their third day in Gracklstugh, placing it wherever they happen to be at the time.

If the party helps in any way, they catch the attention of Gartokkar Xundom, who happens to be in the Darklake District. Gartokkar applauds their efforts and pulls them aside to talk, flashing his Keepers of the Flame badge at any curious onlookers, who quickly shuffle away. He explains that he has a need for resourceful individuals like themselves and invites them to follow him to the Keepers of the Flame Barracks in the Flowstone District.

If the party has won Dorhun's favor by knocking out Rihuud rather than killing him, Gartokkar offers to escort them to Cairngorm Cavern after their meeting. In general, the party will have some wiggle room here, but not much. Gartokkar makes it clear that his matter is urgent, and he is not very patient.

If the party refuses Gartokkar outright, or fails to show up within a day, he sends a messenger to ask again, offering 50gp per character as a reward. If they refuse again, he sends a Duergar Patrol led by a keeper of the flame (OOTA 226) to apprehend them on the next day, planning to frame them as members of the Gray Ghosts.

See "Keepers of the Flame Barracks" in Chapter 2 for more information.

Blade Bazaar

Available Items

In addition to nonmagical weapons, armor, and shields, the party can also purchase Darklake Stout brewed in the nearby Darklake Brewery.

Smithing Orders

If the party tries to enlist any of the weapon merchants (all of whom are members of Clan Ironhead) to complete their orders for Blingdenstone, the merchants immediately hush them and make a show of saying that all large orders must be approved by Clan Steelshadow's laird.

Searching for armorsmiths yields the name of Clan Thrazgad and a suggestion that special orders should go through the clan laird.

Darklake Stout

Darklake Stout. 25gp per bottle. Each bottle holds 4 servings.

On imbibing a serving, the imbiber must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become Darklake Drunk for 2d4 hours, granting advantage on Strength and Constitution checks and saving throws, disadvantage on Dexterity and Wisdom checks and saving throws. In addition, once per period of drunkenness, the imbiber can use their action to Enlarge, adding 1d4 to damage rolls with melee weapons for 1 minute.

Fishmongers

The fishmongers of the Blade Bazaar's fish market are conduits to the Empty-Scabbard Killers. See "Contracts" under the Empty-Scabbard Killers faction in "The Political Situation: Factions and Key NPCs" for more details.

Droki

Remember that there is a 20% chance of spotting Droki running around each time the characters pass through the bazaar (OOTA 61).

Merchant Madness

See "Merchant Madness"(OOTA 61).

Ylsa's Deal

Given that the characters already know the way to Blingdenstone and that they have no need of a route to the Wormwrithings, the reward for Ylsa's task is instead that the party will have the favor of Clan Henstak should they need it in later negotiations.

They can trade it in to get advantage on any social skill checks during a single negotiation with another clan.

Furrow Gates

Guards posted at the gates into Laduguer's Furrow will answer basic questions about the city, though begrudgingly. They will not oblige any requests to contact any of the clans on behalf of the party.

A character hoping to meet with a specific duergar or member of a clan (for example, "a member of Clan Thrazgad" or "Gartokkar") can watch the gates for 1d4 hours, making a DC 15 Investigation check.

On a success, there is a 20% chance that such a figure enters the Darklake District (10% chance if it's a specific individual). Attempting this check a second time in the same day causes the gate guards to shoo the character away.

Darklake Brewery

Non-duergar are not permitted entry into the brewery. Darklake Stout can be purchased in the Blade Bazaar.

Darklake Docks

Assassins Interrupted

This encounter (OOTA 62) takes place when the characters first go to the Darklake Docks unescorted (that is, it does not happen while they're undergoing a customs inspection on their boat). The attack should begin just as the party first spots Werz, placing them 60ft~ away from him.

If Werz survives, he still asks to meet later in The Shattered Spire, and the guard still arrive 1 minute later to investigate the commotion.

Whorlstone Tunnels Access

The access tunnel (OOTA 62) exists as written, except that it was constructed by the Empty-Scabbard Killers. It now leads to Area 7 of the Whorlstone Tunnels, which is under control of the assassins (see "Chapter 3 - The Whorlstone Tunnels" below). The Gray Ghosts are unaware of the tunnel.

Overlake Hold

To start, note that **Overlake Hold is not the home of the Deepking.** The book contradicts itself here, placing the Deepking in both Overlake Hold and in "The Hold of the Deepking" further within the city. For simplicity, presume that the description of Overlake Hold as a temple is instead applied to the Hold of the Deepking, and imagine Overlake Hold as more of a large prison-and-guard-station.

Otherwise, much of Overlake Hold is the same as written in the book. Regardless of how the party finds its way here, Captain Errde Blackskull wants to speak with them. Even if they've been arrested on charges of murder, her own madness drives her to believe that those killed might've been guilty in some way of spreading corruption through the city. The only difference in her concerns and her requests is that, if the party has been arrested, she commands rather than asks.

Meeting with Errde Blackskull

As in the book (OOTA 62-63), Errde mentions her concerns about spreading corruption within the city and enlists the party to investigate, suggesting that fresh eyes might see what she cannot. Errde has the same tasks as in the book:

- Investigate corruption in the city.
- Find Droki, who Errde believes is linked to a foul conspiracy involving the Council of Savants and even worse actors.

And one addition, meant to round out their motivations for thoroughly exploring the Whorlstone Tunnels later in the adventure.

- Investigate rumors of the Empty-Scabbard Killers. Errde doesn't personally believe in their existence, but she says that some of her underlings have reported bodies with puzzling wounds. She asks the party to follow any leads them come across, if only to confirm the lack of evidence for her.

In exchange, Errde provides the party with badges that will allow them as far south as Laduguer's Furrow without being accosted by the guards.

She also offers to personally contact the appropriate clan lairds for their smithing orders and offers to keep their wares locked safely in Overlake Hold while they search for Droki.

The Ghohlbrorn's Lair

Outsider Rumors

See "Rumor Mill" (OOTA 64).

The Shattered Spire

Bar Fight

See "Bar Fight" (OOTA 63).

Gracklstugh Rumors

Characters seeking information can learn the following rumors with a DC 13 Persuasion or Investigation check.

- **Deepking.** More than a few people feel like the Deepking has been cracking down particularly hard on seemingly-random offenses as of late.
- **Murders.** Whispers of numerous murders have been passed around lately, though there's been no official word on it. Some believe that the Stone Guard are committing, and covering up, a purge of dissidents.
- **Rats.** A few degenerates and drunkards have sworn they saw rats running around with the tops of their skulls removed.
- **Stone Guard Corruption.** Many members of the Stone Guard have recently begun taking bribes.
- **Whorlstone Tunnels.** A vast series of tunnels is rumored to lie beneath the city, but most believe it to be an old, abandoned sewer system, if it exists at all.

Meeting with Werz Saltbaron

If the party saved Werz Saltbaron at the Darklake Docks, he's waiting for them here. He begins by thanking them profusely, ordering them free food and drink.

Werz's primary concern is eliminating the Empty-Scabbard Killers. He'd heard that there was an assassins' guild in the city by that name, but thought it a children's story until he saw it for himself. His only lead on finding them is an odd derro named Droki, who he believes serves as a courier for unscrupulous folks around the city.

In exchange for the party's help wiping out the assassins, he extracts their spell gems for them and gives them counterfeit badges that will allow them access beyond the Darklake District, where they can try to place orders for their weapons.

Werz can also provide the following information:

- **Duergar Clans.** Werz can provide basic information on the duergar clans, their industries, their sizes and prestige, and their holdings.
- **Gray Ghosts.** Werz acknowledges that there is a thieves' guild in Gracklstugh called the Gray Ghosts, and that he was dealt with their operatives from time to time. In truth, he is a full member of the Gray Ghosts, and he knows that the Council of Savants are behind the guild, but he doesn't share any of this.
- **Rumors.** Werz can also mention any of the rumors listed under "Gracklstugh Rumors" above.

Chapter 2 - Into Laduguer's Furrow

In this chapter, the party ventures into the heart of Gracklstugh in one or more of the following ways: they're sent by Errde Blackskull to find Droki, sent by Werz Saltbaron to find Droki, or summoned to the Keepers of the Flame Barracks to speak with Gartokkar Xundom, where they will also speak with Themberchaud.

Badges of Station

Regardless of who they're working with, for simplicity they should receive badges from their patron that allow them free roam of all neighborhoods beyond the Darklake District. Feel free to pepper in anecdotes of guards accosting them to view their badges, but don't bog them down with trips back to Overlake Hold.

Primary Goal: Find Droki

Once they receive their badges, the party has the freedom to decide where they want to go, how long they want to spend in the city, and what methods they wish to employ in their chief task: finding Droki, the derro courier thought to serve several nefarious factions within the city. Regardless of which patron(s) they're working with, the party will have heard suspicions that Droki is either directly involved with the task at hand, or that he has contact with those who are.

Though the party has been tasked with finding Droki beyond the Darklake District, the derro courier will not come into play until they enter the Whorlstone Tunnels in Chapter 3.

If your party is struggling to identify where or how to find Droki, remind them that their patron(s) suggested that he likely lives in the West Cleft District and/or serves factions rumored to operate beneath the city.

Sandbox Structure

As a result of their freedom of movement, this chapter might breeze by as the party heads straight for the West Cleft District in search of Droki, then finds the Whorlstone Tunnels. Or, they might linger here for days, meeting with various heads of clans, testing Themberchaud's patience, spying on various important figures within the city, seeking an audience with the Deepking or with the Cairngorm Clan, or pursuing other agendas.

Secondary Duergar Clans

Undoubtedly, the most challenging element of this chapter is accounting for all nineteen duergar clans. Only three (Steelshadow, Ironhead, and Thrazgad) are tied directly into the story of this supplement, but it's certainly possible that your players will seek out audiences with other clan lairds to solidify their positions and alliances within the city, either in this chapter or later in Chapter 4.

To account for this, Appendix B "Duergar Clans, Military, and Other Factions" has bare-bones details on each clan, their numbers, their industries, and their general feelings toward the key events in this supplement, which should prove enough to improvise a few minor interactions, should your players seek out audiences with these clans.

Districts and Places of Interest

West Cleft and East Cleft Districts

Derro Territory

See "West Cleft and East Cleft Districts" (OOTA 65-66) for background details and information on accessing the Whorlstone Tunnels.

Northfurrow District

Clan Ironhead's Compound

Here, the party can meet with the clan's laird, Thangus Ironhead, and learn about the Deepking's edict preventing the Ironheads from accepting new work orders.

As they leave, Thangus's granddaughter, Grinta, approaches them to suggest that if *someone* were to unseat Horgar, they might win a discount from the clan.

Halls of Sacred Spells

See "Halls of Sacred Spells" (OOTA 65) for background information.

The party can access the Halls via *dimension door, passwall*, or similar magic, or by searching the West Cleft District for an entrance tunnel with a DC 15 Perception or Investigation check, made once per hour. All entrance tunnels empty into the central worship chamber.

Derro are hostile toward non-derro visitors. Use the rules from "Entering Derro Territory" (OOTA 64-65) to determine if and when the party is attacked by derro.

Derro savants within the Halls are neutral toward the party, though they will become hostile if interrogated too harshly, if the party ventures beyond the central worship chamber, or over any number of other slights that you deem appropriate.

At any given time, there are 2d8+4 **derro** (OOTA 224) and 2d4+2 **derro savants** (OOTA 225) in the central worship chamber, and another 2d10 derro savants elsewhere in the Halls.

Southfurrow District

Cairngorm Cavern

See "Cairngorm Cavern" (OOTA 65) for details.

Clan Thrazgad's Compound

Here, the party can meet with the clan's laird, Amber Thrazgad, who informs them that the clan recently had several crates of high-quality ore stolen from their warehouses. They expect the Gray Ghosts to be behind the theft, and can point the party toward the derro courier Droki as a place to start the search.

In exchange for recovering their ore, Amber Thrazgad offers the party a 20% discount on all future armorsmithing orders.

Flowstone District

Keepers of the Flame Headquarters & Themberchaud's Lair

See "Themberchaud's Lair" (OOTA 65-67) for information on potential meetings with two key NPCs: Gartokkar Xundom of the Keepers of the Flame, and Themberchaud the Wyrmsmith.

Note that these interactions remain unchanged from the book except that the secret of the missing red dragon egg is known only to the Keepers of the Flame and to the thieves who stole it, the Gray Ghosts.

See Chapter 4 - Insurrection!(?) for more information on both of these factions and their potential reactions to discoveries the party makes within the Whorlstone Tunnels.

Hold of the Deepking

See "Hold of the Deepking" (OOTA 82) for details on the structure and the presence of the Stone Guard.

Audience with the Deepking

In Chapter 2, the party's only point of entry with the Deepking is narrow; if they've learned the secret of the missing red dragon egg from Gartokkar Xundom, they may choose to bring this information to interested parties, one of whom is the Deepking. Bringing such news to the gates of the Hold of the Deepking is enough to earn them an audience with Horgar, during which he is willing to hear out their requests for smithing orders. In exchange for his approval of their orders, he will command them to recover the dragon egg by any means necessary, sending them to Errde Blackskull in Overlake Hold to check for leads, which in turn leads to them searching for Droki.

See Chapter 4 - Insurrection!(?) for more information on Deepking Horgar and his potential reactions to discoveries the party makes within the Whorlstone Tunnels.

Horgar's Cape of the Mountebank

This cape functions as a normal *cape of the mountebank* (DMG 157); however, if worn by a creature attuned to *Brimtongue*, this cape gains a number of charges equal to its wearer's proficiency bonus, granting the ability to expend 1 charge to cast *dimension door* as a bonus action. It regains all expended charges each day at dawn.

Brimtongue

Weapon (warhammer), legendary (requires attunement)

In existence since prehistory, *Brimtongue* was wielded as a gavel by a lesser devil who tried to depose Asmodeus through a trick of the law, but Asmodeus caught on and tortured the it so severely that he bent its will eternally to his side. Now, bound to the hammer, that devil's spirit serves Asmodeus faithfully. If no creatured is attuned to Brimtongue, it appears in plain sight of a creature of Lawful Evil alignment and of at least 5th level/CR 5 after 1d10 years.

Brimtongue appears as an onyx, two-headed warhammer inscribed with faint Infernal runes. When an attuned creatures speaks its command word, the runes glow a fiery red-orange, and the hammerheads spout off tongues of flame intermittently. You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. It has the following additional properties:

Hurl through Hell. Whenever you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack made with this weapon, it must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 17 or the wielder's spell save DC, whichever is higher) or be hurled through the Nine Hells for 1 minute in a manner similar to the *banishment* spell. Fiends may choose to stay in the Nine Hells indefinitely. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied, and takes 1d10 psychic damage for each round it spent hurling through hell (minimum 1d10 psychic damage).

If the target hurtles through hell for the full minute, it appears before Asmodeus in the deepest level of the Nine Hells and must negotiate its return to the Material Plane.

Brimtongue can only send one creature hurtling through hell at a time. In addition, while a creature is hurtling through hell, *Brimtongue's* hammerheads erupt with flames. These flames shed bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet. While the warhammer is ablaze, it deals an extra 2d6 fire damage to any target it hits. These flames extinguish as soon as the hurtling creature has completed its journey (either by reappearing in the space it left, or by reaching Asmodeus).

Sentience. *Brimtongue* is a sentient lawful evil weapon with an Intelligence of 14, a Wisdom of 13, and a Charisma of 19. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet.

The weapon can speak, read, and understand Infernal, and telepathy to a range of 120 feet. Its voice is even-keeled and enticing, sometimes sultry, and it never loses its temper.

Personality. *Brimtongue* is fiercely loyal to its lord, Asmodeus, the ruler of the Nine Hells. It speaks with honeyed words, urging the wielder to contact Asmodeus by any means necessary in order to enter into a pact with him, citing all the rewards Asmodeus has granted to other wielders in the past.

Brimtongue's wants all creatures to enter into agreements with its true master, Asmodeus. If opposed, it tries to take control of the wielder, forcing it to contact Asmodeus. Though it cannot force the wielder to agree to anything, it will continue to compel the wielder to contact Asmodeus again and again until an agreement is met.

Alternatively, the wielder can sate the weapon's desire by sending others to Asmodeus, most commonly by Hurling them through Hell.

Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (+2 plate, dual wielder)
Hit Points 190 (20d8 + 100)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +5, Con +9, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +10, Arcana +7, History +7, Religion +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Intimidation +10, Persuasion +10
Damage Resistances fire, poison, psychic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Infernal, Undercommon
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Duergar Resilience. Horgar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Horgar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Dual Wielder. Horgar has +1 AC (included above) while wielding a separate melee weapon in each hand, as well as all of the other benefits of the Dual Wielder feat.

Magical Equipment. Horgar wears a set of *+2 adamantine dwarven plate* (AC bonus included above). Any critical hit against him becomes a normal hit, and if an effect moves him against his will along the ground, he can use his reaction to reduce the distance he is moved by up to 10 feet.

In addition, he wears an enhanced *cape of the mountebank* (see Actions) and wields two magical weapons: *Brimtongue*, a sentient, lawful evil warhammer, and a *dwarven thrower*. He adds +3 to his attack and damage rolls (included in the attacks) when attacking with either of these weapons, in addition to the effects listed in the weapons' descriptions below.

Brimtongue (Hurl Through Hell). Whenever Horgar hits a creature with a melee weapon attack made with this weapon, that creature must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 17) or be hurled through the Nine Hells for 1 minute, in a manner similar to the *banishment* spell. Fiends may choose to stay in the Nine Hells indefinitely. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied, and takes 1d10 psychic damage for each round it spend hurtling through hell (minimum 1d10 psychic damage). If the target hurtles through hell for the full minute, it appears before Asmodeus in the deepest level of the Nine Hells and must negotiate its return to the Material Plane. *Brimtongue* can only send one creature hurtling through hell at a time.

While a creature is hurtling through hell, *Brimtongue's* hammerheads erupt with flames, shedding bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light an additional 40 feet. While the warhammer is ablaze, it deals an extra 2d6 fire damage to any target it hits (included in the attack). These flames extinguish as soon as the hurtling creature has completed its journey, either by succeeding on its saving throw or by reaching Asmodeus.

Dwarven Thrower. This warhammer has the thrown property with a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet. When Horgar hits a creature with a ranged attack using this weapon, it deals an extra 1d8 damage (included in the attack) or, if the target is a giant, 2d8 damage. Immediately after the attack, the weapon flies back to his hand.

Actions

Cape of the Mountebank (Recharge 5-6). While attuned to *Brimtongue*, Horgar can cast *dimension door* as a bonus action, replacing two of his attacks. Both of his remaining attacks must be made with the same weapon.

Enlarge (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Horgar magically increases in size, along with anything he is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, Horgar is Large, doubles his damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If Horgar lacks the room to become Large, he attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

Multiattack. Horgar makes four attacks; two with *Brimtongue*, and two with his *dwarven thrower*.

Brimtongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 12 (1d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage (or 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage if enlarged) plus 7 (2d6) fire damage if a creature is currently hurtling through hell.

Dwarven Thrower. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit* 12 (1d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage, or 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage if thrown or enlarged, or 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage if thrown while enlarged.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Horgar magically turns invisible until he attacks, casts a spell, or uses his Enlarge, or until his concentration is broken, up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment he wears or carries is invisible with him.

Legendary Actions

Horgar can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Horgar regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Brimtongue (1 Action). Horgar makes one melee weapon attack with *Brimtongue*.

Cape of the Mountebank (2 Actions). Horgar uses his *cape of the mountebank* to cast *dimension door*, provided that it is currently charged.

Dwarven Thrower (1 Action). Horgar makes one melee or ranged weapon attack with his *dwarven thrower*.

Chapter 3 - The Whorlstone Tunnels

This chapter details several key changes to the Whorlstone Tunnels made to accommodate the altered plot elements within Gracklstugh. The party is still sent here to find Droki, but their potential reasons for doing so have expanded beyond those offered in the campaign book.

There are four discoveries that the party can make in the Tunnels, three of which (the dragon egg, evidence of the Cult of Demogorgon working with the Council of Savants, and Horgar's hit list in illithid hands) are key to the events in Gracklstugh, and one of which (missing Thrazgad ore.) is tertiary, but serves as insurance for getting the party all the way to the end of the Tunnels (see the "Outlines" section earlier in this supplement for clarification on this point). How (and whether) the party makes these discoveries depends on their reason(s) for entering the Whorlstone Tunnels.

Red Dragon Egg

They'll find the missing red dragon egg in Area 14 (The Obelisk), where it is being experimented upon by the **derro savant** (OOTA 225) Pliinki.

Infiltration of the Council of Savants

They'll find overwhelming evidence that the Council of Savants, Gray Ghosts, and Cult of Demogorgon are intertwined, in the forms of the activities, letters, and potentially the heads of:

- Narrak (Areas 10-12, Cultist Pens, Quasit Playground, Cultist Hideout)
- Uskvil and Pliinki (Area 14, The Obelisk)
- Zubriska (Area 14b, Thieves' Hideout)

Horgar's Hit List

They may find evidence directly linking the Deepking to the Empty-Scabbard Killers, which comes in the form of a hit list left on the desk (Area 7, Assassins' Headquarters) of the master assassin Eldgrim, written and signed by Deepking Horgar.

Missing Thrazgad Ore

They'll find several crates of the Thrazgad Clan's stolen acid-resistant ore in Area 14 (The Obelisk), where Pliinki has tried, unsuccessfully, to add it to the Obelisk.

Author's Notes

The changes I've made to the Whorlstone Tunnels are centered around three key principles:

- Establish and/or enhance the presences of the major players within the city's underclasses: the Gray Ghosts, the Cult of Demogorgon, and the Empty-Scabbard Killers
- Insert discoveries of evidence and information that reveal the truth of events within the city.
- Revamp the encounters to fit these changes to the narrative and to the layout of the dungeon.
- Notably, I've also constructed these encounters for a party of level 5-6, as I've written this supplement under the assumption that they've at least been to Blingdenstone prior to visiting Gracklstugh.

Preparing to Run Whorlstone

This version of the Whorlstone Tunnels has been divided up into distinctly-held territories by the Cult of Demogorgon and the Empty-Scabbard Killers, and into unclaimed territories in which these two groups often clash in small skirmishes. The Cult of Demogorgon holds far more territory, but it is split into two hubs of activity (Areas 10-12 and Areas 14, 14a, and 14b), necessitating travel through unclaimed territory to move from one hub to the other, risking attack from the Empty-Scabbard Killers or from any number of the unaligned predators lurking within the Tunnels.

Below, I'll list the territory held by each group, as well as the locations of fortifications around each territory, then I'll list contested or unclaimed territories, as well as noteworthy predators that may appear via Random Encounters as the party explores the Tunnels. Be sure to check the augmented Whorlstone Tunnels map attached to this supplement for a clear representation of these territories.

Lastly, I will present each keyed area of the map, noting any changes from the campaign book. For the most part, added keyed areas will be extensions of existing areas, such as Areas 6a, 6b, 6c, etc.

Multiple Sources

I draw on multiple sources (*Out of the Abyss, Monster Manual*, and *Volo's Guide to Monsters*) throughout the changes to Whorlstone. I strongly suggest preparing your notes ahead of time so that you're not flipping through three books at once.

Cult of Demogorgon Territory

The cult of Demogorgon is spread across two hubs within the Tunnels: Narrak's Cultists and the Gray Ghosts. Altogether, they control the entire northern half of the Tunnels, which contains Areas 10-14.

Cultists

Area 12 (NW) is Narrak's headquarters, which loosely extends to Areas 10-11. Area 13 is their dumping pit, where they drop the dead bodies of Empty-Scabbard Killers that they kill and then perform experiments on. These zombies/bodies should have multiple heads.

Gray Ghosts

Area 14 (NE) is their headquarters, where they're working on the obelisk. Includes 14a (doors), 14b (Zubriska's barracks), and 14c (thief barracks).

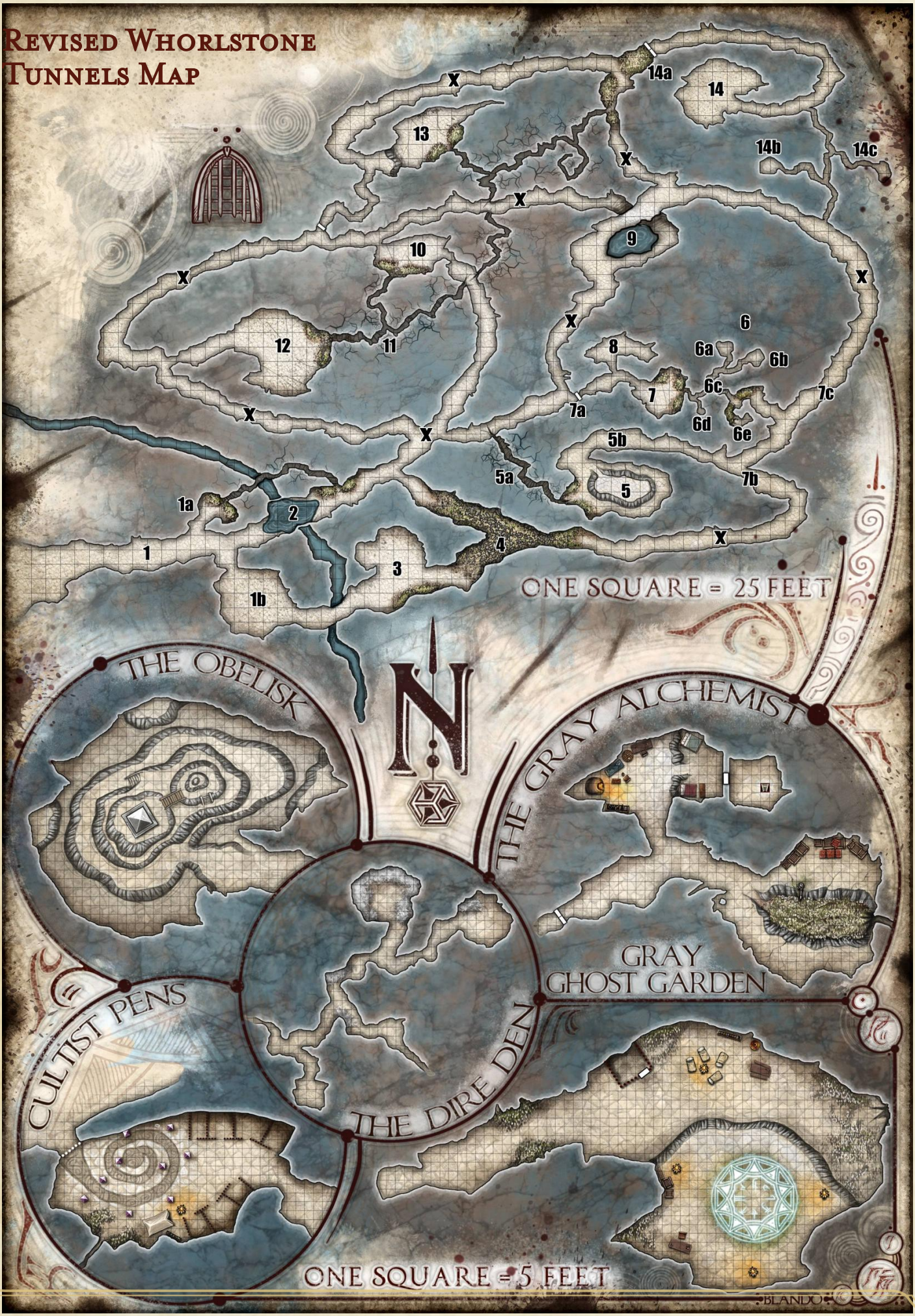
Traveling

Traveling between these two hubs is dangerous, as it either takes them past the zombies in Area 13 (north and central (narrow) paths), or by the hydra in Area 9.

Whorlstone Tunnels Roster

Area	Creature(s)	Behavior
1A	**Droki** (potentially)	If able, Droki flees to complete his rounds
1B	2 **ghasts**, 4 **ghouls**	The undead attack and fight to the death, targeting spellcasters.
3	1 **spawn of Kyuss**, 4 **zombies**	The undead attack and fight to the death.
4	1 **shambling mound**, 2 **swarms of insects (centipedes)**	The swarms attack first, followed by the shambling mound in the second round.
5-5B	Randomly-determined. See "Raucous Mesa" below.	They fiercely guard access to the Raucous Mesa's unique properties.
6A	5 **soulblades**, 2d4 **cranium rats**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
6B	4 **soulblades**, 2 **intellect devourers**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
6C	1 **swarm of cranium rats**, 1d4 **cranium rats**	They swarm the character with the highest Intelligence score, attempting to feast on its brain.
6D	2 **soulblades**, 1 **intellect devourer**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
6E	1 **mindwitness**, 2 **soulblades**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
7	Eldgrim (well-equipped **soulblade** leader with 70 hit points), Ulara, Ivar, and Shari (3 well-equipped **soulblades** with 36 hit points)	Behavior depends on what the characters volunteer about their motivations. Ultimately, Eldgrim wants to preserve Qualux's vision for an illithid-ruled Gracklstugh.
7A	2 **soulblades**, 1 **intellect devourer**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
7B	2 **soulblades**, 1 **intellect devourer**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
7C	2 **soulblades**, 1 **intellect devourer**	They interrogate or attempt to subdue any intruders and bring them to Area 7.
8	Qualux (well-equipped **mind flayer**)	Qualux assesses any intruders for their potential as thralls. If met with hostility, he ferociously defends his territory.
9	1 **hydra** with eight heads	The hydra attacks any creature it detects.
10	5 **derro** and 5 caged creatures: 2 **girallons** and 3 **apes**	The derro free the girallons first, then the apes, and sic them on intruders.
11	6 **quasits**	If 4 are slain, the remaining quasits flee from the characters, either to Area 10 or 12.
12	Narrak (derro **warlock of the fiend**), 1 **ettin**, 1 **death dog**, 1 **derro savant**, 4 **derro**	Narrak fights from a distance on his rise while the ettin charges into the fray. The derro attempt to free the death dog before attacking from distance.
13	Ulnara (**derro savant**), 1 **ogre zombie**, 4 **zombies**, 1 **crawling claw**	Ulnara goes invisible and tries to set up a lightning bolt. The undead attack the nearest target.
14	Pliinki (**derro savant**), Uskvil (**master thief**), 2 derro **spies**, 6 **derro**	Pliinki performs experiments between the obelisk and the dragon egg. Uskvil hides behind the obelisk, waiting to ambush intruders. The two spies hide above the chamber's entrance. The remaining derro assist Pliinki in her work.
14A	4 **derro**	If able, the derro sound an alarm by pulling a chain connected to a bell in Area 14.
14B	Zubriska (derro **swashbuckler**), 4 derro **spies**, 4 **derro**	These derro lounge in their cave, playing cards and killing time. If they've been alerted to intruders, they take up defensive positions.
14C	3d4 **derro**	The derro are lounging and awaiting orders from their superiors.

Revised Whorlstone Tunnels Map



Empty-Scabbard Killers Territory

The Empty-Scabbard Killers operate in the southeast portion of the Tunnels (Areas 6-8), accessing Gracklstugh via a trapped tunnel in Area 7 (Assassins' Headquarters) that connects to the Darklake Docks (See "Whorlstone Tunnels Access" in Chapter 1 of this supplement). They've barricaded themselves against incursion from the north (Area 14b), the south (Area 4), and the west (main crossroads, NE of Area 3).

Layout Change. Note that the layout of their territory is slightly different than on the map. The tunnel to the Darklake Docks is now accessible via Area 7 rather than Area 8, allowing the assassins to freely travel to and from the surface without disturbing their master's work in Area 8.

Telegraphing Qualux. Finally, to avoid blindsiding your party with a surprise mind flayer (unless that's in your wheelhouse), consider allowing one of their telepathically-inclined allies (Glabbagool, Stool, etc.) to detect the strong psionic presence that exists within the Empty-Scabbard Killers' territory, perhaps detecting it somewhere around 300-500ft away.

Contested or Unclaimed Territory

Most of this territory lies in the southwest portion of the Tunnels, with the exception of the pool in Area 9, which the established factions avoid whenever possible.

Areas 1-4 (Unclaimed)

These areas are of little importance to either the Cult of Demogorgon or the Empty-Scabbard Killers, as neither has the forces to hold them, nor is there anything of great value to both parties.

Area 5 (Contested)

The Raucous Mesa is heavily valued by both factions and has become their primary battleground. Due to its maddening effects, no one can hold the mesa permanently. Instead, they lurk in the adjacent tunnels, hoping to disrupt each other's use of the mesa's unique properties.

Area 9 (Unclaimed)

Despite resting in the heart of the Tunnels, the Fountain of Evil is given a wide berth by both factions, as each has lost members to its inhabitant, a ferocious hydra with 8 heads. The hydra does not venture beyond its pool, as it has ample food from unaware creatures roaming too close to its shores.

Random Encounters

Whenever the party completes a rest or traverses one of the longer tunnels (marked with an **X** on the map, 9 locations in total) within Whorlstone, roll on the table below to determine what, if anything, they encounter. Note that some of these creatures are quite imposing, highlighting the dangerous nature of life beneath Gracklstugh.

Whorlstone Tunnels Random Encounters

d20	Result
1-10	No encounter
11	1 **cave fisher** (VGM 130) lurking overhead.
12	1d4 **death dogs** (MM 321) created by Narrak's experiments.
13	1d2 **carrion crawlers** (MM 37) crawling along the walls.
14	1 **flumph** (OOTA 68 for description, MM 135 for stats)
15	1 **swarm of insects** (centipedes, MM 338)
16	1 **trapper** (VGM 194) that attacks the last rank in the marching order.
17	1d4 **derro** (OOTA 224) cultists. The last alive tries to flee toward the closest of Areas 10-14.
18	1d2 **soulblades** (OOTA 227). They warily call out to the party. If they sense hostility, they turn invisible and flee toward Area 7.
19	1 **roper** (MM 261) disguised as a stalagmite against one wall of the passage.
20	1 **catoblepas** (VGM 129) whose distinct stench can be smelled from 100 feet away.

Droki

Minor changes from the original (OOTA 68-69). Aside from delivering to the Empty-Scabbard Killers rather than the Gray Ghosts in Area 7, **Droki's** (OOTA 231) role in the adventure is the same.

1. Entrance

Unchanged (OOTA 69-70).

1a. Pool Bypass

Unchanged (OOTA 70).

1b. Buppido's Lair

Minor changes to the original (OOTA 71-72). Buppido accidentally contacted Orcus while trying to make sacrifices to Diirinka. Orcus has blessed this chamber and Area 3 to the east, bestowing them with a desecrating aura that causes any who die here to rise as moderately-powerful undead. Notably, Pelek's ghost still appears after the fight in this chamber.

If the **derro** (OOTA 224) Buppido is still alive when the party enters this chamber, he raises four **skeletons** (MM 272) and four **ghouls** (MM 148) to fight alongside him.

If Buppido is dead when the party arrives, Orcus's presence is stronger. The party instead finds two **ghasts** (MM 148) and four **ghouls** (MM 148) lurking among the remains.

2. Diseased Pool

Unchanged (OOTA 72).

3. Zombie Hall

Major changes to the original (OOTA 72). This chamber is home to four **zombies** (MM 316) and a **spawn of Kyuss** (VGM 192) indistinguishable from the other zombies from more than 30 feet away. The spawn of Kyuss lingers near the entrance to the Fungi Thicket (Area 4), drawn toward the swarms of insects within the thicket.

Treasure

In a satchel around one of the zombies' necks is a magical quill pen and inkwell that allows the writer to cast *speak with dead* once per day.

4. Fungi Thicket

Minor changes to the original (OOTA 73). At the tunnel intersection, the party is attacked by two **swarms of insects** (centipedes, MM 338) followed by a **shambling mound** (MM 270) on the second round of combat.

5. Raucous Mesa

Major changes to the original (OOTA 74). The mesa itself functions as before, but the chamber is now a battleground for the Cult of Demogorgon and the Empty-Scabbard Killers. Both factions prize the mesa's unique ability to provide insight into the secrets of Gracklstugh's present and recent past, but neither is able to hold the mesa for an extended period of time without going mad, so they frequently skirmish for its use.

On approaching the mesa via either the chasm (Area 5a) or the tunnel (Area 5b), roll d20 for signs of activity from either the Cult of Demogorgon or the Empty-Scabbard Killers.

Approaching the Raucous Mesa

d20	Result
1-5	Both tunnels are empty
6-9	1d4+1 **derro** (OOTA 224) in the chasm
10-13	2 **soulblades** (OOTA 227) in the tunnel
14-15	1d4+1 **derro** (OOTA 224) and 2 **soulblades** (OOTA 227) in battle on the mesa
16-17	2d4 **derro** (OOTA 224) and 1 **derro savant** (OOTA 225) in the chasm
18-19	1d4+1 **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and 1 **intellect devourer** (MM 191) in the tunnel
20	2d4 **derro** (OOTA 224) and 1 **derro savant** (OOTA 225) in battle with 1d4+1 **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and 1 **intellect devourer** (MM 191) on the mesa.

5a. Cultist Chasm

New. Derro from the Cult of Demogorgon utilize this chasm to reach the Raucous Mesa.

5b. Assassins' Tunnel

New. Soulblades from the Empty-Scabbard Killers utilize this tunnel to reach the Raucous Mesa.

6. Assassins' Den

Major changes to the original (OOTA 74). This den has been cleared of spiders and converted into barracks for the rank-and-file soulblades of the Empty-Scabbard Killers. Recently, it's also become home to creatures created by Qualux's experiments in Area 8.

The duergar within these dens are hostile but not immediately violent. They will harshly interrogate intruders, demanding that they state their names and business. If the party offers that they are here to investigate anything related to the derro's activities in Whorlstone, the duergar try to escort them to meet with Eldgrim in Area 7. Otherwise, they command them to leave immediately, attacking if they refuse.

Strong *faerzress*. The area is also now suffused with *faerzress*, which has allowed Qualux to cobble together so many formidable creatures with his scant resources. The *faerzress* disrupts the traveling of sound from one cave to the next, potentially distorting sounds of combat. At the start of a combat encounter, roll a d10. On a 9 or 10, the next nearest chamber hears the combat, otherwise the sound does not carry.

6a. Northwest Barracks

New. This chamber is home to five **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and 2d4 **cranium rats** (VGM 133).

6b. Northeast Barracks

New. This chamber is home to four **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and two **intellect devourers** (MM 191).

6c. Cranium Rat Den

New. This chamber is home to a **swarm of cranium rats** (VGM 133) and 1d4 **cranium rats** (VGM 133).

6d. Small Den

New. This chamber is home to two **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and an **intellect devourer** (MM 191).

6e. Mindwitness Chamber

New. This chamber is home to two **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and a **mindwitness** (VGM 176) that is Qualux's greatest triumph to date, created from a captured spectator that wandered south from Area 14 when the Cult of Demogorgon swept through the Whorlstone Tunnels.

7. Assassins' Headquarters

Major changes from the original (OOTA 75-76). The fungi pit is now a cultivated garden with a clear path leading east toward Area 6 (Assassins' Dens). There is no longer a sprinkler tank. Lastly and most importantly, the small chamber from Area 8 containing access tunnel to the Darklake Docks is now accessible via Area 7 instead. It is located approximately 50 feet (10 squares) east and 25 feet (5 squares) south of its location on the map (OOTA 75), accessible via a locked iron door which can be broken down with a DC 20 Strength check or picked with a DC 15 Thieves' tools check.

This rearrangement allows for the duergar to manage their affairs without disturbing their master, Qualux, in Area 8. In addition, there is a desk to the immediate west of the iron door, upon which lies the Deepking's hit list.

Guard Posts. There are additional areas marked on the map (7a, 7b, 7c) which denote guard posts, each staffed by two **soulblades** (OOTA 227) and an **intellect devourer** (MM 191). The intellect devourers can detect the presence of intelligent creatures up to 300 feet away, whereupon they warn their duergar handlers. The duergar go invisible and assess the situation. If they spot a lone humanoid, they'll attack and attempt to implant the intellect devourer into its brain. Otherwise, they will hail the travelers and demand that they state their business, much the same as the soulblades in Area 6.

Eldgrim

The day-to-day operations of the Empty-Scabbard Killers are handled here by their master assassin, Eldgrim, an eyepatch-wearing duergar **soulblade** (OOTA 227) with 70 hit points.

Illithid Equipment. Eldgrim wields a *mind blade* and a *shield of far sight* (VGM 81), gifts from his master, the **mind flayer** (MM 222) Qualux. Note that the shield very clearly bears a derro eyeball in the center, through which Qualux can see and use his Mind Blast.

Guards and Fortifications. Eldgrim resides in the eastern section of the headquarters most of the time, accompanied by three **soulblades** (OOTA 227) with 36 hit points and wielding *mind blades* (VGM 81), named Ulara, Ivar, and Shari. Note that the western gate (Area 7a) is closed and its guards are outside of the headquarters, watching the tunnels.

Negotiations. Even if the party has killed soulblades on their way in, Eldgrim tries to speak with them, urging them to stay their weapons and hear him out. If given the opportunity, Eldgrim will ask why they've come meddling in Whorlstone, or in all of Gracklstugh for that matter. If the party ask about the Empty-Scabbard Killers, Eldgrim freely admits that yes, they've found the fabled assassins, and no, no one will believe them.

Combat. If combat breaks out, Eldgrim shouts out for his master to aid him. Qualux does so, emitting a Mind Blast on the first round, then entering the fray from Area 8 at the start of the 3rd round.

The Stone Guard

If the party is here investigating murders on behalf of the Stone Guard, Eldgrim frowns and his eyes roll back slightly as he focuses intently on a rapidly-delivered telepathic message from Qualux, informing Eldgrim to try to draw the intruders close together for a Mind Blast through the shield.

Werz Saltbaron

If the party is here following up on Werz's request to save him from the assassins, Eldgrim laughs and calls that matter small potatoes, offering to permanently whitelist Werz for a small fee (100gp).

Other Matters

If the party is here to investigate other matters, such as the missing dragon egg, the two-headed giant Rihuud, or the Thrazgad Clan's missing ore, they may be able to make an ally out of Eldgrim, who suggests that he's certain that the Gray Ghosts have those items, and he'd love the chance to crush them.

Eldgrim's Deal

If the party doesn't come to blows with Eldgrim, he offers a deal: they part ways peacefully, and in exchange, he'll tell them what he knows about Whorlstone and about the derro residing within. He doesn't know what they're up to exactly, but he does know that they have two bases of operation: one to the northeast, and another to the northwest.

He adds that the Gray Ghosts have operated in the northeast for years, but that the expansion to the northwest is recent, and with it has come reports of hideously mutated creatures and a much larger derro presence in the Tunnels.

He also warns against traveling through Area 9, mentioning the hydra living there. However, he will not permit the party to rest within their compound, declaring that the deal is to live and let live, nothing more.

The Deepking's Hit List

Sitting in plain sight atop a pile of fish-skin assassination contracts is the most recent list of targets from Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V, written in his own hand and bearing the royal seal of Gracklstugh. It reads:

> "Faster this time. Faster! I want to hear heads rolling by the time the ink dries on the tip of my quill! Or veins bursting black with poison, or lungs filling with water, or faces melting in forges... I don't care how you do it, just do it faster!
>
> THANGUS IRONHEAD!!!!! HOW DARE HE TRY TO ENCROACH ON MY FAMILY'S BUSINESS???? BOIL HIM! BOIL HIM IN OIL AND FEED HIM TO ROACHES!
>
> WERZ SALTBARON THAT SNIVELING SQUEALING WRITHING LITTLE RAT! BIND HIS FEET AND THROW HIM OFF HIS BELOVED DOCKS!
>
> Captain Blackskull... I've smelled treason on her since she was but a lass. She's always had an eye on my throne, but she'll never get it! All she'll get is what's coming to her. Yes, that's what she'll get!
>
> His Arrogance, His Rotundity... the Pampered, the Portly, the Scheming Red... Freeze the Wyrmsmith until his heart turns crystalline, then smash it to bits!
>
> LINGRICK XARDELVAR MY MOST GASEOUS ALLY!!!!!!"

Beyond these names are dozens more with one or two words of description, most of which are petty insults: "Commoner," "Ugly," "Poor," "Wretched," and so on. Others have notes on how they looked at Horgar wrong one day, or how they smelled odd, or how Horgar just knows that they're up to something.

8. Qualux's Quarters

Major changes from the original (OOTA 76-77). The **mind flayer** (MM 222) Qualux's private quarters are a testament to his tireless work ethic. Within are workbenches for creating Intellect Devourers and other, larger creatures (there is a diagram for the Mindwitness in Area 6e pinned to the wall).

Immature Elder Brain. In the far west corner is a 10-foot-radius circular brine pool containing a fledgling Elder Brain born out of the brain of Lorthio, the former leader of the Empty-Scabbard Killers. Qualux hasn't yet submitted to its will, as he's waiting for it to grow larger.

Tadpole Eggs. The tiniest of tadpole eggs rest in the pool as well, as Qualux desperately awaits their hatching so that he can be among his own kind again. There are 4d4 eggs in the pool, which will hatch in 2d4+10 days. The elder brain will mature in 2d4 months.

Telepathic Presence. Qualux maintains *detect thoughts* at all times, and as such can only be surprised by those affected by *mind blank*, *nondetection*, or similar effects. He telepathically greets intruders traversing the access tunnel from the Darklake Docks while they're still in the tunnel above his chamber, asking their names and purpose. Otherwise, he leaves the matter of visitors via Whorlstone to Eldgrim.

Colony Above All. Qualux ferociously defends the makings of his fledgling colony, refusing to flee under any circumstances. Due to the myriad threats all around his compound, he dresses each day for battle, wearing a suit of plate *mind carapace armor* and wielding a *mind lash* (VGM 81).

Treasure

In addition to Qualux's listed equipment, tools, and experiments, a character who thoroughly searches the room can find scattered remnants of Lorthio's possessions, amounting to an *alchemy jug*, two herbalism kits, one poisoner's kit, and ten healer's kits.

In addition, Qualux has placed 2d4 potions of uncommon and/or rare quality in the brine pool with the young elder brain, hoping that the close proximity to their magical essence might accelerate the brain's maturation.

9. Fountain of Evil

Minor changes from the original (OOTA 77). In place of the Water Weird, this cavern is now home to a **hydra** (MM 190) with eight heads, rather than five.

Remains. There are the remains of several dead derro cultists and a few dead duergar around the hydra's pool, particularly along the southern and eastern shores. A character can discern the pattern of attacks with a DC 14 Investigation check, suggesting that they were killed by something reaching far out of the water.

The hydra is sensitive to movement in its cavern (passive Perception 16) and bursts out of the water to attack anything that comes within 30 feet of its pool.

Taming the Beast. Believing it to be portentous of Demogorgon's favor, the leader of the Cult of Demogorgon, Narrak, has sought to tame the hydra. He's sent underlings bearing various meats to offer to it, but so far none have been successful and many have lost their lives.

A creature who offers the hydra meat (in the form of any living or recently-dead creature with flesh and blood) can placate it for 1 minute by succeeding on a DC 20 Animal Handling check, during which they must come within 30 feet of the pool, risking attack on a failure. A success allows safe passage through this area for the duration.

10. Cultist Pens

Minor changes from the original (OOTA 77). There are now five **derro** (OOTA 224) cultists in this chamber, and five creatures in the cages: three **apes** (MM 317) and two **girallons** (VGM 152). The cultists have been experimenting on the apes, adding limbs recovered from bodies left in the Dumping Pit (Area 13).

The cultists move to free the girallons to sic on intruders, then the apes. Any ape left in its cage is neutral toward the party and can be coaxed out with a DC 15 Animal Handling or Nature check.

11. Quasit Playground

Minor changes from the original (OOTA 77-78). There are now six **quasits** (MM 63) in these tunnels. The remaining quasits flee after four are reduced to 0 hit points.

12. Cultist Hideout

Minor changes from the original (OOTA 78-79). Despite the major changes to the implications of Narrak's presence and work, this encounter plays out the same, except that the cultists are more powerful.

Narrak is a **warlock of the fiend** (VGM 219) with **Narrak's** (OOTA 232) Insanity, Magic Resistance, and Sunlight Sensitivity traits, as well as his One With Shadows action.

Narrak's guards and underlings are the same, except that one is a savant, resulting in: Grula-Munga the **ettin** (MM 132), a **death dog** (MM 321), a **derro savant** (OOTA 225), and four **derro** (OOTA 224).

Evidence of Experiments and Involvement

In addition to the experiments and rituals detailed in the campaign book, the party can discover:

- Letters to and from members of the Council of Savants, including Pliinki, Aliinka, Uskvil, and Zubriska, detailing plans to steal the red dragon egg, steal the Thrazgad Clan's ore, and mutate the giants of the Cairngorm Clan. These letters and missives frequently mention "the Obelisk" and ask for progress on "the Prince's gift", referring to Pliinki's attempts to spawn a second head on the red dragon embryo.
- A private journal detailing Narrak's encounter with Demogorgon, his return to Gracklstugh and the creation of the Cult of Demogorgon, and his plans to lure Demogorgon to the city to offer it as a gift.
- Plans to tame the hydra in Area 9 (granting advantage on Animal Handling checks to placate it).

13. Dumping Pit

Minor changes from the original (OOTA 80). This chamber is now home to a **derro savant** (OOTA 225) named Ulnara, an **ogre zombie** (MM 316), four **zombies** (MM 316), and a **crawling claw** (MM 44).

14. Obelisk

Major changes from the original (OOTA 80-81). As the original hub of activity, this chamber is now occupied by greater Cult of Demogorgon forces. They include:

- Pliinki, who is still a **derro savant** (OOTA 225). She remains on the mesa near the obelisk.
- Uskvil, a **master thief** (VGM 216) with the **derro's** (OOTA 224) Insanity, Magic Resistance, and Sunlight Sensitivity traits. He hides out of sight of entrance, behind the obelisk.
- Two **spies** (MM 349) with the **derro's** (OOTA 224) Insanity, Magic Resistance, and Sunlight Sensitivity traits. They lurk above the entrance, where the spectator in the original adventure hid.
- Six **derro** (OOTA 224) on the mesa with Pliinki, scattered on either side of the bridge.

Pliinki. Like all derro, Pliinki is insane, but what separates her from the pack is her dedication to her work. If the party can concoct a way to aid her in her work, perhaps by obtaining more powerful spell reagents or by deducing something about the obelisk, she may stay her forces. Otherwise, she attacks them for disrupting her work.

Alternatively, if the derro in this chamber are aware of the party's presence via warnings from Area 14a, 14b, or 14c, they all hide out of sight, waiting to strike as the characters are halfway up the mesa.

Missing Ore

Eight 5x5-foot crates of Thrazgad Clan acid-resistant ore are on the rise with the obelisk. Two have been pried open and a few nuggets of ore lay scattered between the crates and the obelisk.

Pliinki and her assistants tried to add the ore to the obelisk, but to no avail. Now it sits discarded and forgotten.

Stolen Egg

The egg is still on the rise opposite the obelisk, but it is now surrounded by workbenches upon which lay scattered notes, ritual circles drawn in ink, blood, and ichor, vials and burners, and various spell reagents (some of the Thrazgad ore, hair and nail clippings, lizard scales, fungi picked from the walls, what appears to be the heart, brain, and kidneys of a small humanoid, and assorted other viscera).

Pliinki has been trying to mutate the red dragon embryo within this egg to give it a second head, hoping to one day present it as a pet and eventually a grand mount for Demogorgon. The notes on the workbenches suggest that Pliinki believes she's recently had success, but she needs to allow the effects of her work to gestate. A rough timetable suggests that the egg will hatch in several weeks.

For more information on what becomes of the egg, see "Pliinki's Experiments" in Appendix A: Developments.

Proof of Corruption

This chamber is teeming with evidence of corruption and foul deeds connected to the Council of Savants. Both Pliinki and Uskvil are recognizable members of the Council, and their efforts are well documented in notes and in letters to and from Narrak and other members of the Council above in the Halls of Sacred Spells. It is undeniably clear that the entirety of the Council endorsed and embraced the work that Pliinki and Narrak were doing.

14a. Doors

Major changes from the original (OOTA 81). These doors are now guarded by four **derro** (OOTA 224) who, on seeing non-derro approaching, alert the cultists in the Obelisk chamber with a very long rope attached to a bell, strung up high on the wall in brackets so it remains taut.

The end of the rope dangles within view from approaching tunnels, caught in the light of a small campfire maintained by the four guards. It can be spotted with a DC 12 Perception check from great distance (60+ feet away), or without a check if a character walks closer.

14b. Zubriska's Hideout

New. This cave, the larger of two which compose the original territory of the Gray Ghosts, is now home to Zubriska, a member of the Council of Savants and one of the leaders of the Gray Ghosts along with Uskvil and Aliinka. Zubriska is a **swashbuckler** (VGM 217) with the **derro's** (OOTA 224) Insanity, Magic Resistance, and Sunlight Sensitivity traits.

Gray Ghosts. This cave also contains bunks for a dozen more derro, all members of the Gray Ghosts. In addition to Zubriska, there are four **spies** (MM 349) with the **derro's** (OOTA 224) Insanity, Magic Resistance, and Sunlight Sensitivity traits, and four **derro** (OOTA 224) lounging in this cave, chatting and playing cards. If they've been alerted to the party's presence, they instead take up defensive positions with their weapons ready, striking on Zubriska's word.

Combat Tactics. In combat, Zubriska dives into the fray while the spies support from the shadows. The derro attack from a distance. Once half of them die, or if Zubriska dies, remaining enemies attempt to flee to the Obelisk chamber to warn Pliinki.

Reinforcements. If the Gray Ghosts in Area 14c hear sounds of combat, they come running, expecting an attack from the Empty-Scabbard Killers. They arrive in 1d4+2 rounds.

14c. Thief Barracks

New. This small cave is outfitted with bunks, chests for personal belongings, and small tables and chairs. It's large enough to accommodate twenty derro. Presently, there are 3d4 **derro** (OOTA 224) lounging within, awaiting orders from their superiors.

If the Gray Ghosts in Area 14c hear sounds of combat, they come running, expecting an attack from the Empty-Scabbard Killers. They arrive in 1d4+2 rounds.

Chapter 4 - Insurrection!(?)

The goal of this chapter is to address the evidence and knowledge discovered by the party within the Whorlstone Tunnels. With these details in hand and in mind, the party is free to bring them to whomever they wish, either solidifying or disrupting the power and status of several key factions and NPCs in Gracklstugh.

Inaction isn't an option, as the current status quo does not allow for the party to acquire weapons, desperately needed in Blingdenstone, from either Clan Steelshadow or Clan Ironhead.

Due to the open-ended nature of this portion of the adventure, this chapter may call on your improvisation skills. It's up to your discretion whether and by how much the party can charm and/or dissuade the various factions and NPCs to bring about their desired outcome. What I've included below are simply the most likely outcomes; don't feel obliged to follow them.

Discoveries and Developments

Exposing the Cult of Demogorgon

With numerous letters, stolen items, and the presence of several members of the Council of Savants themselves in the Whorlstone Tunnels, the party is more than equipped to prove the following to any interested factions:

- The Council of Savants is directly linked to the Gray Ghosts, with three Council members leading the thieves' guild. They ordered the thefts of the red dragon egg and the Thrazgad Clan's crates of ore, among other smaller heists around the city.
- Moreover, the Council and the Gray Ghosts have been fully infiltrated and indoctrinated into a cult worshiping Demogorgon. This cult, led by Council members Narrak and Pliinki, is behind the transformation of the stone giant Rihuud and is responsible for exacerbating the general encroaching madness throughout the city. It appears that they were trying to lure Demogorgon to Gracklstugh to offer the city to him as a sacrifice.

To the Deepking

Delivering the evidence to the Deepking prompts him to organize a purge of the Council of Savants as well as all derro within the city. Abetted by the succubus Shal whispering into his ear, Horgar immediately issues a call to arms, then sends his personal guard and all clans who answer into the East and West Cleft districts as well as the Halls of Sacred Stones to eliminate the derro. Clans that fail to answer are subsequently purged for disloyalty.

See "Cult of Orcus" in Chapter 5 for details on the consequences of such a purge.

To the Council of Savants

Confronting the Council in the Halls of Sacred Spells with evidence of their deeds can go one of two ways. Fully indoctrinated into the Cult of Demogorgon, the savants are heavily inclined to slay the party on the spot for, to their minds, severing their connection to the Prince of Demons.

The only way to avoid bloodshed is to attempt to convince the Council that the party, too, wishes to bring Demogorgon to Gracklstugh, and that Narrak and Pliinki were ineffectual leaders. To do so, the party must give them a target (the Deepking is a natural choice) on which to direct their seething hatred.

To the Cairngorm Clan

Stonespeaker Hgraam of the Cairngorm Clan is another interested party, given the recent mutation of Rihuud. On receiving proof of the Council of Savants' involvement, he will react stoicly, asking the party what they think should be done, claiming that the stones have spoken highly of them.

Hgraam will not entertain the notion of removing the Deepking, given their oath to the Steelshadows. However, he has his own suspicions about Horgar's instability, and as such is willing to withhold information from Horgar if convinced that it will help to maintain peace within the city. In particular, he worries that a conflict involving the derro may result in great losses for his clan, given their close proximity to derro territory.

To Other Factions

Delivering the evidence to other key factions and NPCs is up to your discretion, depending on how you feel the recipient regards the derro. Some clan lairds, for example might see it as Horgar does, calling for war, while others might view the corrupted Council as a tool to unseat the Deepking.

Recovering the Missing Dragon Egg

With the missing dragon egg in hand, along with sketches depicting the desired outcome of Pliinki's experiments, the party has several options. The egg is salvation to Themberchaud, insurance to the Deepking and the Keepers of the Flame, and leverage to other parties opposed to the Deepking.

To Themberchaud

Bringing the egg to Themberchaud delights him. He immediately destroys it, scoffing at the idea of the duergar replacing him. The scoffing turns to disbelief, then to rage, as he cannot fathom such an insult. He entreats the party to mount an insurrection against the Deepking, led by the dragon himself, ensuring them that they will have his protection should they encounter any difficulties while meeting with co-conspirators.

Themberchaud's desired vengeance is swift and unmerciful. He entreats the party to infiltrate the Steelshadow Clan's compound and assassinate the heir to the throne, Horgar's daughter Olga, in what he views as poetic justice; two heirs slain.

He gives them a *potion of dragon's breath* from his treasure hoard and urges them to use it to deliver the killing blow, goading Horgar to siege his cavern, where he has an enormous tactical advantage. Once Horgar's armies have been destroyed, Themberchaud plans to emerge and claim the Hold of the Deepking for himself.

To Gartokkar

Bringing the egg to Gartokkar allows the Keepers of the Flame to save face before the Deepking and members of the Council of Lairds. It earns the party the right to place their weapons order with Clan Steelshadow.

To the Deepking

Bringing the egg to the Deepking initially wins the his favor, but his praise of the party is interrupted by a whispered word from his consort, Shal, which lands them in chains, as they know too much. This prompts a conversation with Errde Blackskull, revealing Horgar's insanity and corruption, if she wasn't already aware.

Depending on previous dealings with Errde, she might grant them freedom, place their weapon order for them on behalf of the Stone Guard, and/or enlist them to remove the corrupt Deepking from the throne.

To Other Factions

Bringing the egg to any other party reveals the precarious position the city is in regarding Themberchaud, as it becomes clear that their leverage over the dragon was absent for some time. This is enough to aid in convincing other parties to consider a change of leadership, but not enough to birth such ideas on its own.

Keeping the Egg and/or Letting it Hatch

It's possible that the party will attempt to keep the egg or otherwise deliver it a caretaker who will bring it to hatching. If this occurs, consider what consequences they might face, particularly from Gartokkar Xundom and the Keepers of the Flame.

For more information on the wyrmling-to-be, see "Pliinki's Experiments" in Appendix A: Developments.

Implicating the Deepking

Perhaps most importantly, the party must decide what to do with the Deepking's hit list if they discovered it on Eldgrim's desk in the Whorlstone Tunnels.

It's by far the most damning piece of evidence, as it directly targets several prominent duergar within the city, which is enough to spur them to revolt, but also targets dozens of common folk, revealing Horgar's intense paranoia.

Finally, revealing that the list had fallen into the hands of an illithid will spur almost any faction to action.

To the Stone Guard

Bringing the list to Errde Blackskull is enough to turn her paranoia on the Deepking, seeing him as the source of the city's corruption, and prompting her to suggest removing him from the throne.

To Gartokkar

Bringing the list to Gartokkar solidifies his support of the Deepking. He is the only figure who does not raise an eyebrow at the names on the list, as he supports the removal of all of them.

Illithid Presence. On learning of the illithid presence, he will command the party to kill all of them and burn the evidence (if they haven't already), then to never speak of it again. In return, he will offer them permanent badges of station, allowing them lifelong freedom of movement through Gracklstugh.

To Themberchaud

Bringing the list to Themberchaud functions the same as bringing him the egg. Seeing himself on it, he is enraged by the audacity of the Deepking and immediately demands that the party gather supporters for his cause to usurp the throne.

To Werz Saltbaron

Bringing the list to Werz Saltbaron prompts a meeting with the Council of Savants who, while upset about the destruction of the Gray Ghosts in Whorlstone, are still able to see the party as a tool against Horgar. They will urge them to find allies to mount an insurrection against the Deepking.

To Other Factions

Bringing the list to any of the Clan heads is enough to raise the matter in the Council of Lairds, leading to a crackdown from Horgar that results in a civil war within Gracklstugh.

Chapter 5 - Aftermath and Conclusion

With the key information disseminated and the various pieces of evidence revealed, the party must now deal with the fallout, whether they choose to directly engage with it or not. This chapter will address the potential consequences and outcomes of the most likely scenarios to arise from the party's actions in Gracklstugh.

Note that these options are meant to address the more-immediate outcomes of events in Gracklstugh, focusing on the days and weeks after the party returns from the Whorlstone Tunnels. For a longer view (months and years), see Appendix A: Developments.

War in Gracklstugh

Many of the potential outcomes to events in Gracklstugh end in war between at least two (and most likely more) factions. How this war plays out is up to your discretion.

You could linger for several sessions, waging a campaign between the clans, or you could settle entire battles with a few dice rolls (see Appendix F: Simplified Mass Combat Rules), or you could simply narrate what begins to happen and ask the players where and when they wish to participate, then run those specific encounters, inserting them into the story in a meaningful way without bogging down the adventure's overall narrative.

As your players shape their plans for the fate of Gracklstugh, consider discussing how to handle these large-scale events out-of-character so that this portion of the adventure concludes to the group's mutual satisfaction.

Immediate War

Due to their volatile natures, the factions listed below are likely to go to war within a day or two of learning pertinent information about events in the city, leaving the party little to no time to prepare or react.

Themberchaud the Wyrmsmith

If either the egg or the hit list are brought to Themberchaud, he spurs an immediate conflict within the city, waiting only a few days for allies before he begins targeting specific figures who he believes have insulted him, hoping to bait Horgar into trying to take him down in his lair.

Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V

If Horgar receives the Council of Savants' letters and notes, he leads his forces in a complete extermination of the derro, losing a large percentage of his army in the process, and leading to a protracted civil war between his remaining forces and the clans who failed to join in the genocide.

Eventual War

These figures are more level-headed and conniving, but still have strong motivation to go to war. They may (as you see fit) attempt to enlist the party's aid in launching a campaign against their enemies, most likely with the goal of unseating the Deepking and/or defeating the Council of Savants.

Duergar Factions

If the hit list is brought to Errde Blackskull, Grinta Ironhead, or any other prominent duergar, they will suggest insurrection, but the party may be able to talk them out of it in the short-term. Nonetheless, once the party receives their trade shipment and departs, the informed figures will begin plotting against the Deepking, leading to a conflict which will be ongoing or recently-concluded if/when the party returns to Gracklstugh.

Qualux and the Empty-Scabbard Killers

Though unlikely, it's possible that the party will align with Qualux to overthrow the Deepking. If so, note that Qualux is a calculating figure, and that he will refrain from acting until his first generation of tadpoles hatch and are implanted into hosts. He would prefer to wait until the elder brain matures, but he will consider seizing a good opportunity before then as long as he has other illithids at his side.

Status Quo Maintained

Gartokkar Xundom and the Keepers of the Flame

There is a narrow window of opportunity in which nothing will change in Gracklstugh, at least in the near future. If the party brings the egg and the hit list to Gartokkar and no one else, and they refrain from implicating the Council of Savants in any nefarious dealings, he will reward them by arranging for their weapon and armor orders to be filled. He will undoubtedly press the issue of whether the Gray Ghosts are connected to the Council of Savants, but his word alone is not enough to send the Deepking to war.

Spoils of War

Given the potential for various factions within Gracklstugh to be bent into servitude or to be outright routed, consider what treasure might be plundered from each faction.

Hold of the Deepking

Horgar's Personal Effects

The Royal Vault

Entrance. The entrance to the Deepking's royal vault is hidden beneath his throne. A character can spot a hatch beneath the throne with a DC 15 Investigation or Perception check while on the royal dais. The throne weighs 2,000 pounds and requires a DC 20 Strength check to move off of the hatch.

Trapped Hatch. The hatch is locked (DC 20 thieves' tools check to pick, DC 25 Strength check to break open) and guarded with a *symbol* spell (DC 19 Intelligence saving throw vs. Insanity) which allows only Horgar and those he declares to pass (only his consort Shal at present).

Trapped Staircases. The hatch beneath the throne opens onto a staircase that descends 50 feet over two landings. Both landings bear additional *symbol* spells, requiring DC 19 saving throws (Wisdom vs. Fear on the first landing, Constitution vs. Death on the second landing), then stops at another door, guarded with an arcane lock also fitted to only allow "the ruler of Gracklstugh" and those he appoints. This door opens into a modest vault with 5 chambers.

Vaults. Each chamber of the vault is locked as well, with *mass suggestion* spells (DC 19) that compel all but "the ruler of Gracklstugh" and those he's appointed to rethink their intrusion, leave the vault, and turn themselves in to the Stone Guard at Overlake Hold.

Each chamber bears an insignia on the door indicating the type(s) of items within.

Vault 1

The door to this vault bears the symbol of Asmodeus, recognizable with a DC 20 Arcana or Religion check. Any non-worshiper of Asmodeus who enters this chamber triggers a summoning glyph that spawns a **horned devil** (MM 74) to guard the chamber's contents.

To gain entry, a creature must sign a contract swearing allegiance to Asmodeus for the rest of their natural lives, or defeat the devil.

The chamber conains:

- A crushed-velvet case with an indentation for Horgar's sentient warhammer, *brimtongue* (see below).
- A *flail of wounding* (use the statistics for the *sword of wounding*, DMG 207).
- A polished zurkhwood armor rack fitted to hold Horgar's *+2 adamantine dwarven plate* (DMG 150, 152, 167).
- A polished zurkhwood coat rack on which to hang *horgar's cape of the mountebank*.

Vault 2

The door to this vault bears the symbol of a squid on the door.

It conains:

- 1 *pearl of power* (DMG 184).
- 1 *trident of the lake* (+2 trident, grants water breathing and ability to speak Aquan while attuned).
- 1 *ring of resistance, cold* (DMG 192).
- 1 *ring of swimming* (DMG 193).

Vault 3

The door to this vault bears the symbol of a dwarf withstanding the breath of a dragon.

It conains:

- 1 *dragon scale mail, red* (DMG 165).
- 1 *dragon scale shield, red* (+1 shield, resistance to fire; immunity to fire if also attuned to *red dragon scale mail*, attunement).
- 1 *dragon slayer longsword* (DMG 166).

Vault 4

The door to this vault bears the symbol of a pile of coins.

It conains:

- 15 1,000gp gems - 5 Emeralds, 5 Opals, 5 Yellow Sapphires
- 32,000gp
- 10,000pp

Vault 5

The door to this vault bears the symbol of a dwarf felling a giant in battle.

It conains:

- A crushed-velvet case with an indentation for Horgar's *dwarven thrower* (DMG 167).
- 1 *giant slayer battlaxe* (DMG 172).
- 4 *potions of stone giant strength* (DMG 187).

Duergar Clan Compounds

Rather than detail the holdings of each of the nineteen duergar clans, consider randomly generating a treasure hoard for each relevant clan:

- Smaller/less-prestigious clans possess a CR 0-4 hoard (DMG 137).
- Middling clans possess a CR 5-10 hoard (DMG 137).
- Large/prestigious clans possess a CR 11-16 hoard (DMG 138).

Halls of Sacred Spells

Characters who loot the entirety of the Halls of Sacred Spells can find the following:

- 600gp total
- 3 malachite (10gp gems), 6 chrysophrase (50gp gems)
- 3 *potions of healing*
- 1d4 jars of *keoghtom's ointment* (DMG 179)
- 1d4 items from Magic Item Table B (DMG 144)

Cairngorm Cavern

Characters who raid Cairngorm Cavern can find the following:

- 6 spinels (100gp gems)
- 1 set of magical stone dice which allow a creature to cast *legend lore* once per day without requiring components.
- 1 *stonespeaker crystal* (OOTA 223) if the party has not yet received one.

Appendix A: Developments

This appendix offers suggestions for how to expand on the events covered in this supplement.

New(?) Leadership

Depending on who emerges victorious, Gracklstugh should have a decidedly different feel. Consider these options:

Insane Deepking

If Horgar retains power, he cracks down even harder in the party's absence. If they return, 10-20% of the population has been killed, exiled, or driven to flee the city. Gracklstugh's already-severe guard presence is elevated to a greater extreme.

Sane Deepking

If Shal's true form is revealed and Horgar's madness is cured, Gracklstugh could become a bastion of safety and prosperity within the Underdark, albeit under the traditionally-stern rule of the duergar.

New Deepking

If Horgar is ousted and another clan laird takes his place, consider how that laird and clan might rule. Do they emulate Horgar? Seek to distance themselves from him? Become expansionist? Isolationist? Invite trade or forbid it? Are the party members lauded, or are they seen as meddlers?

Themberchaud

Given the ego of red dragons, consider how the austere aesthetics of Gracklstugh might change under Themberchaud's rule. Would there be gaudy statues erected in his honor? Banners? Piles of gold and other treasure? How might the remaining clans view life under their draconic lord?

Council of Savants

Consider how a large council of derro might rule. Given that there's not much provided on their culture, this is an opportunity to experiment. Perhaps they strive for a socialist or communist utopia, or perhaps theirs is a kleptocracy. There are several options for styles of rule in the Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG 17-19).

Illithid Colony

If Qualux survives and has time to expand beneath the city, consider how much of Gracklstugh's population he's claimed if/by the time the party returns. Consider what personality the elder brain has, now that it has matured, and consider how the illithids receive the party based on their prior interactions.

Other Developments

Allies and Enemies

Depending on how the conflicts play out, it's possible that the party will have made great allies or terrible enemies during their time in Gracklstugh, potentially gaining the city as a stronghold and base of operations (or, even better, gaining potential reinforcements should they ever need an army), or losing a valuable source of information and safety (or, worse, incurring the wrath of powerful, vindictive individuals such as the Deepking or Themberchaud).

Cult of Orcus

Through the misguided necromantic experiments of the derro Buppido, Orcus already had a small presence in the Whorlstone Tunnels before he arrived in the Underdark. Now, with his presence spreading through the network of *faerzress*, his legions grow in strength and number beneath the great duergar capital, fueled by the bodies of those killed during the party's exploration of the Tunnels and, potentially, by those killed during the war(s) for Gracklstugh.

Rumors of powerful undead roaming the streets could reach the party in the latter half of the adventure, calling them back to Gracklstugh to investigate.

Pliinki's Experiments

If the red dragon egg is not destroyed, it will hatch in 4d4+4 weeks of its own accord and assume the name Gorgthrax. It is forever drawn to Demogorgon, hoping one day to serve him as a mount.

If hatched in the party's care, it will attempt to escape as soon as possible, sensing that it cannot overpower them.

If hatched among weaker caretakers, it will kill them, feasting on their essence, and arise as a **young red dragon** (MM 98), retaining any of the demonic influences present in its wyrmling form, scaling up the save DC as appropriate.

Gorgthrax has the statistics of a **red dragon wyrmling** (MM 98) with the following additions.

Languages. Abyssal, Draconic, Undercommon

Magic Resistance. Gorgthrax has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Two Heads. Gorgthrax has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

Rapid Maturation. Gorgthrax matures four times faster than normal dragons, reaching the status of Young Dragon at fifteen months, Adult Dragon at 25 years, and Ancient Dragon at 200 years.

Insanity Gaze (Recharge 5-6). Gorgthrax turns his magical gaze toward one creature he can see within 120 feet of him. That target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of the confusion spell until the end of Gorgthrax's next turn.

Fire Breath (Recharge 3-6). Same damage, but recharges twice as often as long as both of Gorgthrax's heads are conscious.

Appendix B: Duergar Clans, Military, and Other Factions

Duergar Clans and Factions

This section contains a breakdown of the duergar clans by size, industry, and holdings, most of which may only become relevant to the adventure if (1) a large-scale war breaks out within the city, and (2) you wish to heavily involve the party in that conflict.

My personal suggestion is to use these details for flavor rather than for substance, due to the sheer amount of work that would be required to create and play through a (potentially) 20+-side war within the city, even with the Simplified Mass Combat Rules provided in Appendix F.

Nonetheless, it's better to be somewhat-prepared than not at all, so enjoy, and feel free to shift these locations and numbers, or to assign particular allegiances to and between clans, or to connect various clans to non-clan factions within the city, such as the Council of Savants, the Cairngorm Clan, Themberchaud, etc.

Numbers by Faction

The book offers (OOTA 56) that there are 10,000 duergar, 2,000 derro, 50 stone giants, and an unknown number of slaves (quaggoths, grimlocks, orcs, shield dwarves, deep gnomes, and a few kobolds and goblinoids).

Duergar Military. There are four corps of the military (Stone Guard, Darkhafts, Kavalrachni, and Xarrorn), and the regular duergar form a formidable militia. The book provides that there are 500 Stone Guards, but does not provide numbers for the rest. I've arbitrarily decided that there are another 500 duergar spread across the remaining three corps as described below, leaving 9,000 non-military duergar loyal to their clans.

Duergar Clans

There are 19 clans total and 9,000 duergar to split between them. Their names, industries, numbers, central locations, and clan lairds and prominent members are detailed here.

For simplicity, assume that a generic member of any given clan behaves like their clan laird.

- **Clan Anvilthew (Toolmakers), 400 Members.** Located in the central Southfurrow District. Led by Einkil Anvilthew, 329 year old male duergar who is curious about everyone he meets, and who believes strongly in redemption.
- **Clan Blackskull (Stonemasons), 750 Members.** Located in the mid-east Darklake District. Led by Adrik Blackskull, an elderly (553 years old) male duergar who is a blustering old blowhard who believes in claiming power through station. His grandniece, Errde, is captain of the Stone Guard.
- **Clan Bukbukken (Farming), 400 Members.** Located in the west Northfurrow District. Led by Gurdis Bukbukken, 484 year old female duergar who is argumentative about everything, especially the best fungi farming practices, and who is prone to bouts of whimsy after a few drinks.
- **Clan Burakrinwurn (Dock Operators), 270 Members.** Located in the central Darklake District. Led by Bruenor Burakrinwurn, 639 year old male duergar who is blind and nearly deaf, suspicious of everyone and everything, and who values rooting out lies.
- **Clan Coalhewer (Coal Miners), 1,000 Members.** Located in the east Northfurrow District. Led by Delg Coalhewer, 262 year old male duergar who is ponderous and believes in charity where possible.
- **Clan Firehand (Smelters), 900 Members.** Located centrally in the Flowstone District. Led by Gunnloda Firehand, 489 year old female duergar who is irritable and agitated, and who believes in speaking in plain, fair terms at all times.
- **Clan Hammercane (Construction Engineers), 260 Members.** Located in the central Southfurrow District. Led by Riswynn Hammercane, 451 year old female duergar who is friendly and strongly believes that logic is the key to satisfaction in life.
- **Clan Henstak (Food), 500 Members.** Located in the west Darklake District. Led by Helja Henstak, 354 year old female duergar who is very anxious, particularly about food stores, and strongly believes in moderation and rationing. Her daughter Ylsa, aged 219, is a merchant in the Darklake District.
- **Clan Ironhead (Weaponsmiths), 550 Members.** Located in the mid-west Northfurrow District. Led by Thangus Ironhead, 512 year old male duergar who is patient and believes heavily in tradition. His granddaughter Grinta, aged 166, is hot tempered and strives for change.
- **Clan Muzgardt (Brewers), 220 Members.** Located in the east Darklake District. Led by Kathra Muzgardt, 574 year old female duergar who is arrogant and extremely greedy, and who believes that money is the key to power and satisfaction.
- **Clan Parlynsurk (Clothing Manufacturers), 500 Members.** Located in the mid-west Darklake District. Led by Mardred Parlynsurk, 360 year old female duergar who is friendly and believes in neutrality in most matters, preferring to focus on her work.
- **Clan Saltbaron (Salt Miners), 330 Members.** Located in the central Northfurrow District. Led by Orsik Saltbaron, 363 year old male duergar who is honest and believes in independence and allowing others to find their own paths. His nephew Werz, aged 271, is a merchant on the Darklake Docks.
- **Clan Steelshadow (Weaponsmiths), 800 Members.** Located in the east Flowstone District. Led by Deepking Horgar Steelshadow V; his temperament is detailed elsewhere. Horgar's daughter Olga, aged 188, also aids in the administration of the family business. She is quiet, but relishes the domination her family holds over other clans.
- **Clan Thordensonn (Jewelers), 300 Members.** Located in the west Flowstone District. Led by Dagnal Thordensonn, 585 year old male duergar who is curious and honorable.

- **Clan Thrazgad (Armorsmiths), 450 Members.** Located in the west Southfurrow District. Led by Amber Thrazgad, 158 year old female duergar who is boisterous and wisecracking, and who believes in a strong sense of community. A large store of acid-resistant ore was recently stolen from them.
- **Clan Thuldark (Metalworks and Jewels), 330 Members.** Located in the west Flowstone District. Led by Flint Thuldark, 257 year old male duergar who is nervous and sullen, and who believes in respecting others for their work.
- **Clan Xardelvar (Gas Miners), 380 Members.** Located in the west Flowstone District. Led by Vondal Xardelvar, 317 year old male duergar who is hot tempered and believes in honor.
- **Clan Xornbane (Scouts and Prospectors), 300 Members.** Located in the northwest Darklake District. Led by Audhild Xornbane, 308 year old female duergar who is highly intelligent and prone to flowery language, and who believes in suffering to prove one's worth.
- **Clan Xundom (Steeder Breeders), 360 Members.** Located in the west Flowstone District. Led by Baern Xundom, 392 year old male duergar who is stern and believes in responsibility and obedience. His brother Gartokkar, aged 386, is the leader of the Keepers of the Flame.

Revised Gracklstugh Map



Duergar Military

1,000 trained duergar loyal to their military corps and the Deepking above their own clans.

The Stone Guard

500 **duergar stone guards** (OOTA 227).

- 250 patrolling Gracklstugh.
- 100 within the Hold of the Deepking, serving as an honor guard for Horgar Steelshadow V.
- 50 standing guard outside of the Hold of the Deepking, all invisible, but audible as they march around.
- 50 in the turrets and battlements of the Hold of the Deepking.
- 50 stationed in and around Overlake Hold, reporting to Captain Errde Blackskull.

Darkhafts

50 **darkhafts** (OOTA 226) who patrol the city in secret. To differentiate them from other duergar, consider giving them the ability to summon psionic Greataxes into their hands as a bonus action, dealing psychic damage.

Kavalrachni

200 **kavalrachni** (OOTA 226) ready to be called into action.

Xarrorn

200 **duergar xarrorn** (OOTA 228) ready to be called into action.

Other Factions

Clan Cairngorm

50 **stone giants** (MM 156) loyal to the Steelshadow Clan.

Keepers of the Flame

50 **keepers of the flame** (OOTA 226) serving Gartokkar Xundom.

Empty-Scabbard Killers

50 **duergar soulblades** (OOTA 227) serving the mind flayer Qualux.

Council of Savants and Derro Masses

The Council of Savants is a body of 36 **derro savants** (OOTA 223), though there are other savants among the derro. Let's say that 5% of the derro are savants (so 100). The rest are relegated to the West and East Clefts, where they live in squalor.

Themberchaud

Note that the **adult red dragon** (MM 98) Themberchaud is devastating vs. duergar. None of the duergar military units can succeed on their Dexteriy saving throws against his breath weapon, even with their maximum possible die roll, meaning that they'll take at least 18 damage from the breath, and an average of 63, obliterating them. With a 60 foot cone, he can take out dozens at a time, especially if they're in formation.

Appendix C: Blingdenstone Trade Mission

As part of the preparations for the Battle of Blingdenstone, the deep gnomes have sent the party on a trade mission to Gracklstugh to acquire acid-resistant weapons and armor for 200 deep gnome soldiers to use against the Pudding King and his army of oozes, as well as acid-resistant oils for their own equipment and for their skin, should they be able to find them.

The full details and values of the party's goods, and of the goods they seek, are listed below.

Wealth of Blingdenstone. The party has been entrusted with a significant portion of Blingdenstone's wealth, the details of which can be found below.

Why Send the Party? Senni Diggermattock suggested using the party as emissaries to add clout to their trade negotiations, hoping that their presence would make Blingdenstone seem bigger and better-connected than it actually is (and therefore more resistant to invasion).

Role in the Adventure. In general, it's worth noting that this trade mission serves as bookends to the situation in Gracklstugh, rather than as the focal point of their time in the city. They come to the city seeking out a trade deal, and by the end of the events there, they should be able to find someone to craft what they need in short order, either as part of a trade, as payment for some other services rendered, or (however unlikely) out of gratitude for their aid.

Shipment Details

The party's goods consist of four heavy blocks of salt from the Whiteshell Mine, and a *bag of holding* full of *spell gems* (OOTA 223) of various levels, offered up by Kazook Pickshine of the Pickshine Mines.

Delivery to Werz Saltbaron. On handing over the bag, Kazook warned the party that it was magically sealed and could only be opened by Werz Saltbaron, a duergar merchant with whom Kazook has done business in Mantol Derith. Kazook told them that Werz tends to hang around the Darklake Docks, and that he'd be able to connect them with weapon and armor smiths.

Magically-sealed Bag. The bag is under the effects of an *arcane lock* spell, with Werz Saltbaron designated as a creature able to open it. If pressed, Kazook warns the party that tampering with the bag will impart a curse on them, but this is false.

List of Goods

In total, the party is transporting **15,000gp** of goods to trade.

- 4 500 lb. blocks of Whiteshell Salt, valued at 5sp/lb., 250gp per block. Consider this the fancy sea salt of the Underdark, hence the increased price.
- 1 *bag of holding* containing 105 *spell gems*, 100 of which the party knows about. Werz knows about the other 5 from a previous negotiation with Kazook Pickshine, and takes them as his fee for facilitating the party's negotiations.

Spell Gems

Note that the values here are somewhat arbitrarily assigned.

- 1st-level gems are worth 50gp full, 25gp empty.
- 2nd-level gems are worth 250gp full, 125gp empty.
- 3rd-level gems are worth 500gp full, 250gp empty.

60 1st-level *spell gems*. Total value: 2,500gp in filled gems, plus 250gp in empty gems.

- 10 empty
- 20 *cure wounds*
- 5 *alarm*
- 5 *comprehend languages*
- 5 *detect poison and disease*
- 5 *identify*
- 5 *sleep*
- 5 *tenser's floating disk*

30 2nd-level *spell gems*. Total value: 5,000gp in filled gems, plus 1,250gp in empty gems.

- 10 empty
- 5 *arcane lock*
- 5 *locate object*
- 5 *gentle repose*
- 5 *enhance ability*

10 3rd-level *spell gems*. Total value: 5,000gp in filled gems.

- 5 *sending*
- 5 *revivify*

Werz's Gems.

- 3 2nd-level (empty)
- 3 3rd-level (empty)
- 3 4th-level (empty)
- 1 5th-level (*modify memory*)

Desired Goods

Below are the items deemed necessary by Sark Axebarrel and Dorbo Diggermattock for the Battle of Blingdenstone.

I've increased the base prices by 10% to account for the use of acid-resistant materials.

Weapons

Total Cost of 1,540gp for weapons.

- 200 Spears - 1.1x200 = 220gp
- 200 cases (20) of Crossbow Bolts - 1.1x200 = 220gp
- 200 War Picks - 5.5x200 = 1,100gp

Armor

Total Cost of 13,200gp for armor.

- 200 Chain Shirts - 55x200 = 11,000gp
- 200 Shields - 11x200 = 2,200gp
- 6-12 Acid-Resistant Oils for the party - 1,200gp

Appendix D: Going to Gracklstugh First

Below are a few suggestions for how to use this supplement if your party goes to Gracklstugh first.

Clans Ironhead and Thrazgad

To connect the party with the plots of Clans Ironhead and Thrazgad, drop relevant rumors into existing locations and encounters in the Darklake District.

For example, a character in The Shattered Spire might overhear a few members of Clan Ironhead complaining about the Deepking's latest edict, or Captain Errde Blackskull might mention that Clan Thrazgad recently reported a robbery.

As reward for completing tasks for these clans, they could promise favors or discounts for the party in the future, which they can later call in to aid in the Battle of Blingdenstone, or in whatever other way you see fit.

Insurrection

If you'd rather not drop the characters into the middle of a massive revolt so early in the campaign, consider delaying certain revelations.

For example, the hit list revealing that the Empty-Scabbard Killers are heavily-utilized by the Deepking could be a bit more discreet, requiring analysis by whomever of the key NPCs the party has most aligned with (Errde Blackskull, Grinta Ironhead, Themberchaud, etc.).

Then, when the party returns (on their trade mission from Blingdenstone or under whatever other circumstance you deem appropriate), that NPC could ask to meet, revealing what they've learned about the list and informing the party about the Deepking's latest and most severe edicts, in turn leading to the NPC suggesting an insurrection.

Reverting Whorlstone Tunnels

Depending on your party's level on reaching Gracklstugh, you may want to swap the stat blocks of some of the creatures in the Whorlstone Tunnels for weaker (or their previous) versions to keep the encounters competitive while still presenting an opportunity for victory for the party.

Appendix E: Demogorgonic Abomination

In the event that one or more members of the party are captured or defeated by any members of Cult of Demogorgon during their time in Gracklstugh and the Whorlstone Tunnels, consider extending this race option to them in place of immediate character death.

Race: Demogorgonic Abomination

Captured and experimented upon by the Cult of Demogorgon, you awaken with the following traits, which replace your existing racial traits. Your creature type is **humanoid**.

- **Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Charisma score increases by 2.
- **Age.** Abominations have unpredictable life spans. They cannot die of natural causes, but their volatility often leads to short lives.
- **Alignment.** You retain your position on the Good-Neutral-Evil spectrum, but become Chaotic if you weren't already.
- **Size.** Your size is medium.
- **Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision.** Thanks to your abyssal influence, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness. only shades of gray.
- **Languages.** You learn Abyssal in addition to any languages you previously knew.
- **Tentacle.** You have a long, barbed tentacle in place of a left arm, which imposes disadvantage on attack rolls you make with two-handed weapons. It may impose other penalties or advantages at your DM's discretion. You are proficient with your tentacle, which is a melee weapon that deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage, grappling the target on a hit (Escape DC = 8 + Strength Modifier + Proficiency Bonus).
- **Vestigial Head.** You have a second, smaller head that lacks a brain or any other senses, except for one working eye from which you can emit a Maddening Gaze once per long rest. Choose one target that you can see within 60 feet of you. It must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + Charisma Modifier + Proficiency Bonus) or suffer the effects of the *confusion* spell until the end of your next turn.
- **Volatile Physiology.** Your body is unstable, imposing disadvantage on Constitution checks and saving throws. In addition, whenever you are reduced to 0 hit points or would be killed outright, roll on the Volatile Reactions table below, potentially negating the triggering effect. You may also choose to trigger a volatile reaction when you score a critical hit or reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points. This effect can occur a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, refreshing after a long rest.

Volatile Reactions

d100	Result
1	You explode in a burst of acidic viscera and psychic waves, completely destroying your body and leaving no remains. Each creature in a 30 foot radius sphere must make a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 acid damage. Each creature must also make a Wisdom saving throw or take 1d6 psychic damage. The DC for these saving throws equals 8 + Charisma Modifier + Proficiency Bonus. The damage for these effects increases by 1d6 for each character level you gain above 1st.
2-34	You emit pulses of uncontrollable magical energy. Roll on the Wild Magic Surge table (PHB 104) a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier. For each effect, roll 1d6. On an even number, the effect is centered on you or has a target of self. On an odd number, it is centered on or targets a random creature within 120 feet of you.
35-49	You emit an illusion of Demogorgon erupting out of your chest and roaring with might. Each creature within 120 feet of you who can see you must make a Charisma saving throw (DC = 8 + Charisma Modifier + Proficiency Bonus) or be frightened of you for 1 minute. As long as you are in its line of sight, it must use its action each round to dash away from you by the safest, most direct route. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns.
50-64	You emit a psychic blast. All creatures within 120 feet of you must make a Charisma saving throw (DC = 8 + Charisma Modifier + Proficiency Bonus) or be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns.
65-79	You regain hit points equal to five times your character level.
80-84	You transform into an **ape** (MM 317) for 1 minute, absorbing your equipment into your form. You retain your alignment and your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as any languages you know. You revert from this form if reduced to 0 hit points, and the damage carries over into your original form, as in the Druid's Wild Shape feature.
85-89	You transform into a **girallon** (VGM 152) for 1 minute, absorbing your equipment into your form. You retain your alignment and your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as any languages you know. You revert from this form if reduced to 0 hit points, and the damage carries over into your original form, as in the Druid's Wild Shape feature.
90-94	You transform into an **ettin** (MM 132) for 1 minute, absorbing your equipment into your form. You retain your alignment and your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as any languages you know. Your arms become thick, barbed tentacles, replacing the ettin's weapons with a Tentacle attack: +7 to hit, 10ft reach, 2d8+5 bludgeoning damage. You revert from this form if reduced to 0 hit points, and the damage carries over into your original form, as in the Druid's Wild Shape feature.

95-99	You transform into a **chimera** (MM 39) for 1 minute, absorbing your equipment into your form. You retain your alignment and your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as any languages you know. You revert from this form if reduced to 0 hit points, and the damage carries over into your original form, as in the Druid's Wild Shape feature.
100	Your body reconstitutes itself, permanently returning to its previous form.

Appendix F: Simplified Mass Combat Rules

Below is my roughshod attempt at simplifying the Mass Combat Rules provided by Wizards of the Coast here.

I strongly suggest utilizing standard combat rules for any encounters involving very powerful creatures, such as Themberchaud, Qualux, or the Deepking, to avoid an anticlimactic end for them.

If you do include these figures in large encounters, note the bonuses they add to their side below.

Resolving Battles

Large conflicts involving duergar clans, factions of the military, derro factions, or the Cairngorm Clan can be simplified to a few contested dice rolls, as described below.

- Battles are represented by d20 rolls. The losing side loses 10 warriors for each point they lost by, and the winning side loses half that.
- If a side wins by 10 or more, they lose no warriors.
- On a tie, each side loses 1d4 x10 soldiers.
- Each round of combat takes 1 minute.

Clan/Combatant Bonuses

The clans and factions mentioned here have specific bonuses. Otherwise, they function as normal under the rules above.

- Clans Ironhead, Steelshadow, and Thrazgad have +3 to rolls due to better equipment.
- Clan Xardelvar has +5 to rolls due to Xarrorn reinforcements.
- Clan Xundom has +7 to rolls due to Kavalrahcni reinforcements.
- Derro masses have -2 to their rolls.
- Giants have +10 to their rolls, and they only lose 1 giant per 2 points they've lost by. They do not lose any giants on a tie.

Other Bonuses & Penalties

- The players can add +1-3 or subtract 1-3 from a side per DM discretion, based on what effects they use.
- Unique units (Xarrorns, Kavalrachni, Stone Guards, Soulblades, etc.) gain +5 to their rolls.
- Clans defending their compounds gain +5 to their rolls.
- A commander (Eldgrim, Errde Blackskull, capable clan lairds, etc.) adds +1-5 more to rolls, per DM discretion.

NPC-Specific Bonuses

- Qualux adds +10 to rolls.
- The Deepking adds +13 to rolls.
- Themberchaud adds +15 to rolls.