

THE TOWN OF FALLCREST

Fallcrest stands amid the Moon Hills at the falls of the Nentir River. Here travelers and traders using the old King's Road that runs north and south, the dwarven Trade Road from the east, and the river all meet. The surrounding ridges shelter several small valleys where farmers and woodfolk live; few are more than six or seven miles from the town. In general the people outside Fallcrest's walls earn their living by farming or keeping livestock, and the people inside the walls are artisans, laborers, or merchants. People with no other prospects can make a hard living as porters, carrying cargo from the Lower Quays to the Upper Quays (or vice versa).

Fallcrest imports finished goods from the larger cities downriver and ironwork from the dwarf town of Hammerfast, and exports timber, leather, fruit, and grain. It also trades with the nearby town of Winterhaven. The surrounding hills hold several marble quarries that once produced a good deal of stone, but the area has little demand for ornamental stone these days, and only a few stonecutters still practice their trade.

FALLCREST

A small town built from the ruins of a larger city, Fallcrest is the crossroads of the Nentir Vale.

Population: 1,350; another 900 or so live in the countryside within a few miles of the town. The people of Fallcrest are mostly humans, halflings, and dwarves. No dragonborn or eladrin are permanent residents, but travelers of all races pass through on occasion.

Government: The human noble Faren Markelhay is the Lord Warden (hereditary lord) of the town. He is in charge of the town's justice, defense, and laws. The Lord Warden appoints a town council to look after routine commerce and public projects.

Defense: The Fallcrest Guard numbers sixty warriors (see the accompanying statistics block), who also serve as constables. Moonstone Keep is their barracks. The Lord Warden can call up 350 militia at need.

Inns: Nentir Inn; Silver Unicorn. The Silver Unicorn is pricier and offers better service; the Nentir Inn sees a more interesting clientele.

Taverns: Blue Moon Alehouse; Lucky Gnome Taphouse; Nentir Inn taproom.

Supplies: Halfmoon Trading House; Sandercot Provisioners.

Temples: Temple of Erathis; Moonsong Temple (Sehanine); House of the Sun (Pelor).

Fallcrest's Story

Up until four centuries or so ago, the Moon Hills and the surrounding Nentir Vale were thinly settled borderlands, home to quarrelsome human hill-chieftains and remote realms of nonhumans such as dwarves and elves. Giants, minotaurs, orcs, ogres, and goblins plagued the area. Ruins such as those on the Gray Downs or the ring-forts atop the Old Hills date back

to these days, as do stories of the hero Vendar and the dragon of the Nentir.

With the rise of the empire of Nerath to the south, human settlers began to move up the Nentir, establishing towns such as Fastormel, Harkenwold, and Winterhaven. A Nerathan hero named Aranda Markelhay obtained a charter to build a keep at the portage of the Nentir Falls. She raised a simple tower at the site of Moonstone Keep three hundred ten years ago, and under its protection the town of Fallcrest began to grow.

Over the next two centuries, Fallcrest grew into a small and prosperous city. It was a natural crossroads for trade, and the Markelhays ruled it well. When the empire of Nerath began to crumble about a century ago, Fallcrest continued to flourish—for a time. Ninety years ago, a fierce horde of orcs known as the Bloodspears descended from the Stonemarch and swept over the vale. Fallcrest's army was defeated in a rash attempt to halt the Bloodspears out on Gardbury Downs. The Bloodspears burned and pillaged Fallcrest and went on to wreak havoc all across the Nentir Vale.

In the decades since the Bloodspear War, Fallcrest has struggled to reestablish itself. The town is a shadow of the former city; little trade passes up and down the river these days. The countryside for scores of miles around is dotted with abandoned homesteads and manors from the days of Nerath. Once again the Nentir Vale is a thinly settled borderland where few folk live. This is a place in need of a few heroes.

Key Locations

Fallcrest is divided into two districts by a steep bluff that cuts across the town. The area north of the bluff is known locally as Hightown. This district survived the city's fall in relatively good shape, and it was the first area resettled. To the south of the bluff lies Lowtown, which tends to be newer and poorer. In the event of a serious threat, people retreat up to Hightown—the bluff and the town walls completely ring this part of Fallcrest, making it highly defensible.

The map on the facing page depicts all the numbered locations discussed in this section. Four of the locations include statistics for nonplayer characters who might come into conflict with the PCs.

1. Tower of Waiting

This old fortification was built on a small island in the Nentir to guard the city from any waterborne attack from the north. It fell into ruin even before the sack of the old city, and now is little more than an empty shell overrun by mice and birds.



FALLCREST

feet 0 50 100 200 500

DM Tip: According to local legend, the tower was once a prison for nobles who were too well connected to be killed out of hand or mistreated. The ghost of an evil princess who dabbled in demon worship haunts the tower. You can build your own small dungeon beneath the ruins, featuring a wrathful specter and minor demons.

2. Upper Quays

Boats proceeding down the Nentir must stop here and offload their cargo, which is then portaged through the town to the Lower Quays and loaded onto boats below the falls. Likewise, cargo heading in the other direction is carried up to these quays and loaded aboard boats bound upstream.

A surly dwarf pugilist named Barstomun Strongbeard runs the porters' guild, and he takes a cut of any wages paid to laborers carrying cargo up or down around the falls. Barstomun and his thugs are trying to extend their reach by intimidating merchants who send their goods overland and forcing them to hire guild porters for any cargo handling in town.

Barstomun Strongbeard		Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf		XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +4; low-light vision	
HP 67; Bloodied 33		
AC 16; Fortitude 18, Reflex 15, Will 15		
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects		
Speed 5		
m Fist Pummel (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
M Quick Punch (minor; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
Dodge and Throw (immediate reaction; encounter; after an enemy misses with a melee attack)		
+7 vs Fortitude; slide target 1, and target is knocked prone.		
Stand Your Ground		
When an effect forces Barstomun to move—through a push, a pull, or a slide—he moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack would knock Barstomun prone, he can immediately make a saving throw to avoid falling prone.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Dwarven
Skills Endurance +7		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 11 (+2)	Cha 8 (+1)

3. Five-Arch Bridge

Dwarf artisans from the citadel of Hammerfast built a fine stone bridge over the Nentir two hundred years ago. Although the bridge was destroyed when Fallcrest fell, the great stone piers supporting it remained intact, so a few years back the people of the town laid a new timber trestle over the old stone footings.

A small toll house guards the western side of the bridge. Five Fallcrest guards under the command of Sergeant Thurmina watch this post. They collect a toll of 1 cp per head (and 1 sp per mount) making use of the bridge in either direction. Thurmina is a gruff

woman who has been known to turn a blind eye to odd cargo moving over the bridge when paid to do so.

The river current begins to pick up on the south side of the bridge. Boats (or swimmers) venturing far from the banks are in danger of being carried over the falls.

4. Nentir Inn

A fine new building constructed of fieldstone and strong timber, the Nentir Inn stands on the west bank of the river. Merchants from Winterhaven or Hammerfast make up the clientele, along with travelers who happen to be passing through. A good room with two single beds goes for 5 sp per night. The Nentir Inn also boasts a lively taproom, which is popular with the folk who live in the vales on the west bank of the river.

The proprietor is a charming half-elf named Erandil Zemoar who showed up in Fallcrest one day about two years ago, bought land, and built an inn. The money that Erandil used to set up the Nentir isn't his; he charmed an aging noblewoman in the far south out of her fortune, and fled one step ahead of the authorities.

One of the Nentir Inn's current guests is an expatriate noble from the south named Serim Selduzar, who harbors ambitions against Fallcrest. This tiefling is clever and feigns good humor about his "present unfortunate circumstances," and he has a wickedly sarcastic streak to his wit. Serim claims to be the third son of a southern noble with little prospect to inherit. He tells inquirers that he is thinking of establishing a small manor somewhere nearby, but in truth he has set his sights on arranging the downfall of the Markelhay family and installing himself as the new Lord Warden. The tiefling is looking for capable associates to help him, and a band of enthusiastic adventurers would suit his purposes admirably. Given the chance, Serim befriends the player characters in the hope that he might dupe them into overthrowing the Markelhays for him.

5. Knight's Gate

Fallcrest's northern city gate is known as Knight's Gate, because the Lord Warden's riders normally come and go from the city by this road. The gate consists of strong outer doors of iron-reinforced timber and an inner portcullis between a pair of small stone towers. The portcullis is normally lowered at sunset, and the gates close only in times of danger.

The gatehouse barracks accommodates five Fallcrest guards plus Sergeant Nereth, who commands this gate. He is a stiff-necked fussy budget who rigorously enforces all rules; the guards stationed here can't stand their sergeant.

THE TOWN WALLS

Fallcrest's Hightown is guarded on two sides by a wall (the river and the bluffs protect the other two sides). It consists of two parallel barriers of stone block with a few feet of fill between them, and stands about 20 feet tall. Every hundred yards or so, a small tower strengthens the wall. Two pairs of sentries (Fallcrest guards from the castle) walk the wall tops at night, but unless danger is imminent, the towers are left locked and aren't manned. The gatehouses are permanently garrisoned.

6. Silver Unicorn Inn

For many years, the Silver Unicorn has billed itself as "the Pride of Fallcrest," charging high rates for its attentive service and well-appointed rooms. The recent opening of the Nentir Inn put a big dent in the Silver Unicorn's business, and the owner, a stern halfling matriarch named Wisara Osterman, strongly disapproves. She's certain that there is something shifty about Erandil Zemoar, but can't put her finger on it.

A room in the Silver Unicorn costs 2 gp per night.

7. Halfmoon Trading House

The Halfmoon family is a large, far-flung clan of halflings who keep small trading posts in several settlements throughout the Nentir Vale. This is the largest and most important of those establishments. It's under the care of Selarund Halfmoon, a friendly halfling

who dispenses a never-ending stream of advice to his customers, such as, "It never rains but as someone gets wet!" or "A nail ain't afraid of a hammer with no handle!" No one knows what he's talking about most of the time, but Selarund is more sly than he lets on and keeps a close eye on events all around the town.

The Halfmoon Trading House is an excellent place to buy any of the mundane tools, gear, supplies, or clothing mentioned in the *Player's Handbook*.

8. Moonstone Keep

The seat of Lord Warden Faren Markelhay, Moonstone Keep is an old castle that sits atop a steep-sided hill overlooking the town. The outer bailey includes barracks housing up to sixty Fallcrest guards. At any given time about twenty or so are off-duty. Other buildings in the courtyard include a stable, an armory, a chapel, a smithy, and several storehouses. The keep is the large D-shaped building at the north end of the castle.

Faren Markelhay is a balding, middle-aged human with a keen mind and a dry wit. He is a busy man and sees to local matters personally, so adventurers calling on him are likely to wait a long time for a short interview. However, he is eager for news of other towns in the Vale (and farther lands as well) and never turns away someone who brings him news or waits to see him.



WAYNE REYNOLDS

DM Tip: The Lord Warden is always on the lookout for traveling sellswords or adventurers who might take on a contract to clear out a nest of bandits, drive off a dangerous beast, or escort a valuable cargo to its destination. The kobolds of Kobold Hall have been causing trouble on the King's Road lately, and they're at the top of his list; if the player characters are looking for work, Lord Markelhay points them toward Kobold Hall first (see the adventure later in this chapter). He also has word of trouble in the town of Winterhaven, and he encourages player characters to consider helping the Lord Mayor of that town.

Lord Markelhay's wife is Lady Allande Markelhay (female human wizard 4). She is a cool and reserved woman ten years younger than her husband. A student of the arcane arts, she uses her powers to advise her husband. They have four children; the eldest, Ernesto, is currently away in the south, living in the court of another ruler.

9. The Tombwood

Along the southern slopes of Moonstone Hill grows a large thicket that has never been entirely cleared. Within its tangled paths lies the old castle cemetery (now heavily overgrown), as well as a battle-mound dating back centuries.

DM Tip: These old crypts are linked by secret passages to dangerous, sealed-off parts of the Moonstone Caverns beneath the town. You can create your own dungeon here.

10. House of the Sun

When Fallcrest was a larger city, it supported several good-sized temples located in the Hightown districts. With the town's depopulation, several of these were abandoned, including the House of the Sun, a temple dedicated to Pelor. The place also includes shrines to Kord and Bahamut. Recently, a zealous dwarf priest of Pelor named Grundelmar came to Fallcrest from Hammerfast and reestablished this old temple. Grundelmar is loud and opinionated, a real fire-breather who goes on and on about smiting evil wherever it might lurk.

DM Tip: Grundelmar is worried about conditions on the Trade Road, and he strongly encourages any would-be heroes to search out the bandit lair of Raven Roost and deal with the outlaws. This lair is a good opportunity to build your own dungeon.

11. House Azaer

A small, well-off trading company, House Azaer is owned by the tieflings of the Azaer family. They import goods (including arms and armor) from Hammerfast, Harkenwold, and the lands to the south, and organize caravans up to Winterhaven several times a year. House Azaer is an excellent place to purchase

nearly any mundane equipment from the *Player's Handbook*, although its prices are a little on the high side.

Amara Azaer is in charge of the house business in Fallcrest, and spends her time on the premises. Though young, the tiefling is quite sharp and doesn't miss an opportunity for profit in running the Azaer business.

12. The Nentir Falls

Here the Nentir River descends nearly 200 feet in three striking shelflike drops. On the small island in the middle of the falls stands the statue of an ancient human hero named Vendar, holding up his hand as if to challenge enemies approaching from downriver. Local legend tells that Vendar slew a dragon whose lair was hidden in caverns beneath the falls.

13. Temple of Erathis

This large, impressive stone temple is finished with Fallcrest's native marble. Its chapel is a large rotunda with a 30-foot-tall dome. The temple of Erathis is the largest and most influential temple in town. The place also includes shrines to Ioun and Moradin.

High Priest Dirina Mornbrow oversees two lesser priests and several acolytes—townsfolk who spend part of their day tending the temple. Dirina is a woman of about sixty who is convinced of the superiority of Erathis's dogma, and disappointed that more people in Fallcrest don't pay proper reverence to "our city's patron god." She is familiar with several divination and restoration rituals and can aid adventurers with ritual magic at need—for an appropriate gift to Erathis, of course. She has limited access to the following ritual scrolls: Hand of Fate (1), Cure Disease (4), Raise Dead (1), Remove Affliction (2).

14. The Bluffs

Fallcrest is divided in half by a great cliff snaking northwest to southeast across the town. The bluffs average 150 to 250 feet in height. They are not strictly vertical, but are too tall and steep to be easily climbed. Someone leaping (or pushed) off the upper edge would fall and roll about 2d6 [ts] 10 feet before sliding to a stop, likely on a precarious ledge.

15. The Catacombs

The limestone bluffs between Hightown and Lowtown hold a number of caves, which the folk of Fallcrest have used as burial crypts for centuries. As caves fill up, they are walled off and forgotten about. Naturally, stories abound in town about treasure hoards hidden away in the crypts, and the restless undead that guard them.

DM Tip: The stories are in part true; portions of the catacombs now in use are safe enough, but explor-

ers forcing their way into older portions might stumble into deadly traps, ancient curses, evil shrines, and more than a few malevolent undead.

16. Moonsong Temple

The third of Fallcrest's temples is devoted to Sehanine. It also includes shrines to Corellon, Melora, and Avandra. The Markelhays regard Sehanine as their special patron, and over the years they have given generously to the temple. The temple occupies a commanding position atop the bluffs, and its white minarets can be seen from any corner of Lowtown.

The leader of the temple is High Priest Ressimae Starlight, a wise and compassionate elf who finished adventuring decades ago and retired to a contemplative life. He is a musician of great skill who happily tutors the local children, even those who are poor and can't afford to pay for their lessons. He has limited access to the following ritual scrolls: Cure Disease (2), Raise Dead (1), Remove Affliction (1).

17. Fallcrest Stables

Lannar Thistleton owns this business, providing travelers with tack, harness, stabling, shoeing, wagons, and just about anything dealing with horses, mules, or ponies. He keeps a larger corral about a mile outside of town, and at any given time Lannar has several riding horses, draft horses, or mules in his paddock near Wizard's Gate. The halfling is an excellent source of rumors, since he sees the travelers coming or going by the roads. He is a friendly fellow of about forty, with a large brood of children at his home out in the countryside.

18. Wizard's Gate

Fallcrest's eastern city gate is known as Wizard's Gate, because it's the gate most convenient to the Septarch's Tower. The road to the east travels a few miles into the surrounding hills, linking a number of outlying farms and homesteads with the town.

The gate resembles Knight's Gate in construction, and is similarly watched by a detachment of five guards and a sergeant. The leader of this detachment is Sergeant Murgeddin, a dwarf veteran who fought in the Bloodspear War and was present at the Battle of Gardbury, where Fallcrest's army was defeated. A friendly drink goes a long way toward loosening Murgeddin's tongue about that long-ago war.

DM Tip: During the battle, Murgeddin saw the old Lord Markelhay flee into the catacombs under the Gardmore Abbey and never come out. The dwarf suspects that the ancestral sword of the Markelhays—Aranda Markelhay's magic longsword *Moonbane*—lies somewhere below the abbey. You can create your own dungeon in the ruins of the abbey.

19. Naerumar's Imports

Considered the finest of Fallcrest's retail establishments, Naerumar's Imports deals in gemstones, jewelry, art, and magic trinkets. The owner is Orest Naerumar, a tiefling who displays impeccable manners and discretion. Orest corresponds with relatives and colleagues in several towns and cities outside the Nentir Vale; given a few weeks, he can order in low-level magic items or other items of unusual value. Similarly, Orest purchases interesting items such as these, since other dealers in distant towns or cities might be looking for them.

Orest doesn't ask questions about where characters in his store found the goods they're selling to him, but he is not a fence—if he knows that something was obtained illegally, he declines to purchase it.

DM Tip: Orest normally arranges for halflings of the Swiftwater clan to transport special orders—jewelry, gems, or magic items of value. However, he sometimes makes other arrangements for items that seem especially valuable or dangerous. If the player characters are looking for something to do, Orest can hire them to carry or guard exceptionally valuable goods he's sending to a merchant in another town.

Orest Naerumar		Level 8 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling rogue		XP 350
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 79; Bloodied 39		
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 23, Will 22		
Resist fire 9		
Speed 6		
m Dagger +1 (standard; at-will)	Weapon	
+11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 1 damage.		
M Sly Flourish (standard; at-will)	Martial, Weapon	
+14 vs. AC; 1d4 + 9 damage.		
M Dazing Strike (standard; encounter)	Martial, Weapon	
+14 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage and target dazed until the end of Orest's next turn.		
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)		
Orest gains a +1 power bonus to his next attack roll against an enemy that hit him since his last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, Orest deals an extra 5 damage.		
First Strike		
At the start of an encounter, Orest has combat advantage against any creatures that have not yet acted.		
Sneak Attack		
Once per round, Orest gains +2d6 damage when he has combat advantage.		
Bloodhunt		
Orest gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls against bloodied foes.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Dwarven	
Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +14, Insight +11, Stealth +10		
Str 13 (+5)	Dex 19 (+8)	Wis 14 (+6)
Con 15 (+6)	Int 15 (+6)	Cha 20 (+9)
Equipment usually unarmored, might carry a level 6 through 8 magic dagger		

20. Kamroth Estate

This is the home of the self-styled “lord” Armos Kamroth, a wealthy landowner who collects rents from scores of farmers and herders living in the countryside nearby. Armos is a brusque, balding man of about fifty who makes a show of loaning money in good faith and exacting only what the law allows—but somehow he has quietly bought up dozens of free farms over the years and turned their owners into his tenants.

Armos is a miser of the worst kind and is secretly a devotee of Tiamat. He leads a small circle of like-minded folk who meet secretly in hidden vaults beneath his comfortable estate. Any news of treasure discovered by itinerant heroes inflames his avarice and leads him to begin scheming for ways to part the adventurers from their wealth.

Armos Kamroth	Level 5 Controller (leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human cleric	XP 200
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +6
HP 54; Bloodied 27	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 20	
Speed 5	
m Mace (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
R Lance of Faith (standard; at-will) Divine, Implement	
Ranged 5; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 damage, and one ally gains a +2 power bonus to his next attack against the target.	
R Cause Fear (standard; encounter) Divine, Implement	
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target moves its speed + 1 away from Armos. The fleeing target avoids unsafe squares and difficult terrain if it can. This movement provokes opportunity attacks.	
Divine Fortune (free; encounter) Divine	
Armos gains a +1 bonus to his next attack roll or saving throw before the end of his next turn.	
Healing Word (minor; 2/encounter) Divine, Healing	
Close burst 5; you or one ally can spend a healing surge and regain an additional 1d6 hit points.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Diplomacy +8, Religion +7	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 12 (+3) Wis 18 (+6)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 11 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment chainmail, mace, symbol of Tiamat worn under shirt	

21. Moonwash Falls

A small, swift stream known as the Moonwash flows through Fallcrest to meet the Nentir River. The stream is rarely more than 20 feet wide or 5 feet deep. The town’s children love to play in the pool at the base of the falls in the summertime.

22. Septarch’s Tower

This lonely structure is a tall, seven-sided spire of pale green stone that doesn’t match anything else in the town. In the days before the Bloodspear War, this was the seat of Fallcrest’s mages’ guild—an order of a dozen or so wizards and arcane scholars. Defensive enchantments prevented the orcs from sacking the tower, but the guild’s members died fighting for the city or fled to safer lands.

The tower is now the property of Nimozaran the Green, an elderly wizard who was once apprenticed to the last of the old guild mages. Nimozaran considers himself the “High Septarch of Fallcrest” and master of the guild, whose membership now includes only himself and a rather unpromising male halfling apprentice named Tobolar Quickfoot. Nimozaran expects any potential new guild members to pay a hefty initiation fee, and so far none of the few other arcanists living in or passing through Fallcrest have seen reason to join. He can teach a limited number of rituals, including Comprehend Language, Eye of Alarm, and Enchant Magic Item.

The topmost level of the tower is a room that includes a permanent teleportation circle. Characters using travel rituals can set this circle as their destination (although they’ll certainly startle old Nimozaran if they do).

23. Blue Moon Alehouse

This brewhouse on the banks of the Moonwash Stream is the best tavern in Fallcrest. The owner is a nervous, easily flustered fellow of fifty or so named Par Win-nomer. The true genius behind the Blue Moon is the halfling brewmaster Kemara Brownbottle. She is happy to let Par fret about running the taphouse, while she spends her time perfecting her selection of ales and beers.

The Blue Moon is popular with halfling traders whose boats tie up along the Lower Quay, well-off town merchants, and the farmers who live in the countryside south of Fallcrest. The old dwarves Teldorthan (area 24) and Sergeant Murgeddin (area 18) hoist a tankard or two here on frequent occasion, and both can provide beginning adventurers with good leads on potential adventures.

24. Teldorthan’s Arms

The dwarf Teldorthan Ironhews is the town’s weapon-smith and armorer. He is a garrulous old fellow who spends his time trading stories with his customers with a pipe clenched in his teeth, while his apprentices (two of whom are his sons) do the work. Make no mistake—Teldorthan is a master armorer, and under his supervision his apprentices turn out work of exceptional quality.

Teldorthan has in stock (or can soon manufacture) just about any mundane weapon or armor found in the *Player’s Handbook*, although he advises beginners to try a hammer: “If you can drive a nail, you can kill an orc! You can drive a nail, can’t you?”

DM Tip: Teldorthan recently lost a valuable strip of dragon hide he intended to make into scale armor. A trade caravan had sent it down from Winterhaven, but kobolds raided the caravan near the Cloak Wood and stole the wagon’s goods. The dwarf strongly suspects that the kobolds are hiding out in the ruined manor

called Kobold Hall, and he wants someone to recover his property. He is willing to pay the player characters to make the attempt. This offer leads characters into the sample adventure later in this chapter.

25. King's Gate

Fallcrest's southern gate was destroyed in the attack that devastated the city long ago, and it still has not been entirely rebuilt. One of the two paired towers is nothing but rubble, and several large gaps remain in the town walls south of the bluffs through which anyone could enter the city.

Despite its lack of functionality, the King's Gate is still used as a guardpost by the Fallcrest guards. Sergeant Gerdrand is in charge here; he is a tall, lanky man who doesn't say much, answering questions with a grunt or a shake of the head.

26. The Market Green

The majority of Fallcrest's folk live above the bluffs in Hightown and walk down to do business on the streets of Lowtown, which bustle with commerce. This wide square is an open, grassy meadow where Fallcrest's merchants and visiting traders do business in good weather. The town's children gather here for games of tag or kick-stones.

27. Sandercot Provisioners

The largest general store in Fallcrest, Sandercot's deals in just about anything—food, clothing, stores, rope, tools, gear, leather goods, and more. Compared to the Halfmoon Trading House, Sandercot's has slightly cheaper prices but goods of somewhat lower quality.

The owner is Nimena Sandercot, the widow of the late and unlamented Marken Sandercot. Marken associated with brigands and ne'er-do-wells, making a tidy sum by buying up goods stolen from his neighbors. His widow has continued the practice. Nimena puts on an air of rustic charm, but when it's time to talk "back-room business" she is ruthless, grasping, and greedy. She has three young sons, all of whom are quickly learning the family business.

Nimena is a willing fence for anything someone cares to sell, but she won't pay a copper more than she has to.

28. Lucky Gnome Taphouse

The Lucky Gnome is widely regarded as the cheapest and coarsest of Fallcrest's drinking establishments. It caters to the porters and laborers who work the nearby docks, and fistfights are a nightly occurrence.

The owner of the Lucky Gnome is an unsavory character named Kelson. Kelson runs the River Rats, a small street gang that plagues Lowtown, from the back room of his tavern.

Kelson		Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human rogue		XP 200
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6	
HP 52; Bloodied 26		
AC 20; Fortitude 16, Reflex 21, Will 16		
Speed 6		
m Dagger (standard; at-will)	Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
M Deft Strike (standard; at-will)	Martial, Weapon	
Kelson can move 2 squares before the attack. +11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 6 damage.		
M King's Castle (standard; encounter)	Martial, Weapon	
+11 vs Reflex; 2d4 + 6 damage; Kelson can also switch places with a willing adjacent ally.		
First Strike		
At the start of an encounter, Kelson has combat advantage against any creatures that have not yet acted.		
Nimble Reaction		
Kelson gains a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.		
Second Chance (immediate interrupt; encounter)		
When an attack hits Kelson, he forces the enemy to roll the attack again. The enemy must use the second roll.		
Sneak Attack		
Once per round, Kelson gains +2d6 damage when he has combat advantage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Streetwise +7, Stealth +12		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 11 (+2)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 15 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, dagger, one level 4 through 6 magic item		

29. Lower Quays

Keelboats and similar craft put in here to unload their cargo and portage it up to other boats above the falls. As described above for the Upper Quays, the porters' guild jealously defends its monopoly on moving cargo around the falls, and it frequently attempts to intimidate local merchants into paying for portage services—whether needed or not. In addition to the porters' guild, another gang of troublemakers lurks around the Lower Quays: the River Rats. These street toughs and thieves look out for the chance to pilfer from the warehouses or roll a drunk in a dark alleyway.

Boats belonging to a number of different travelers tie up here, the most common of which are the keelboats of the halfling Swiftwater Clan. The Swiftwaters carry cargo all the way down to the Nentir's mouth, hundreds of miles downriver. They're more than willing to take passengers for a small fee. Irena Swiftwater is the matriarch of the clan. She is a sharp merchant who passes herself off as an absent-minded reader of fortunes and maker of minor charms.

THE NENTIR VALE

Fallcrest lies near the middle of the broad borderland region known as the Nentir Vale. The vale is now mostly empty, with a handful of living villages and towns scattered over this wide area. Abandoned farmsteads, ruined manors, and broken keeps litter the countryside. Bandits, wild animals, and monsters roam freely throughout the vale, threatening anyone who fares more than a few miles away from one of the surviving settlements. Travel along the roads or river is usually safe—usually. But every now and then, travelers come to bad ends between towns.

The Nentir Vale is a northern land, but it sees relatively little snow—winters are windy and bitterly cold. The Nentir River is too big to freeze except for a few weeks in the coldest part of the year. Summers are cool and mild.

The “clear” parts of the map are covered in mixed terrain—large stretches of open meadowland, copses of light forest, gently rolling hills, and the occasional thicket of dense woodland and heavy undergrowth. The downs marked on the map are hilly grassland, with little tree cover. The hills are steeper and more rugged, and include light forest in the valleys and saddles between the hilltops.

Interesting locales in the Nentir Vale are described below.

Fiveleague House

Fiveleague House is more properly known as the Fiveleague Inn. It’s a strongly built innhouse surrounded by a wooden palisade. Fiveleague House caters to travelers and merchants coming or going from Hammerfast, a day’s journey (five leagues) farther east. The proprietor is a big, bearlike human named Barton. Barton makes a good show of joviality, but he’s secretly allied with the bandits of Raven Roost and sends them word of travelers worth robbing who will be continuing west toward Fallcrest.

Gardmore Abbey

The Gardbury Downs take their name from this striking ruin, a large monastery that has lain in ruins for almost one hundred fifty years. The abbey was dedicated to Bahamut and served as the base of a militant order of paladins who won great fame fighting in Nerath’s distant crusades. As the story goes, the paladins brought a dark artifact back from a far crusade for safekeeping, and evil forces gathered to assault the abbey and take it back. Extensive dungeons lie beneath the ruins, which might still conceal the hoarded wealth of the old crusading paladins.



The Sword Barrow

This large burial mound stands near the middle of the Gray Downs, a desolate region. The old human hill-clans who lived in the Vale raised the barrow centuries before civilized folk settled in Fallcrest. The hill-folk are long gone, but their grim barrows remain. The Sword Barrow gained its name because scores of rusted blades of ancient design are buried around its edges, blades pointing inward; a visitor can turn up several in a few minutes of looking around. The blades seem completely ordinary, not hinting at the old warding magic that surrounds the place.

Hammerfast

A dwarven hold cut from the rock of a deep vale in the Dawnforge Mountains, Hammerfast is the largest and wealthiest town in the region. The Trade Road runs through the citadel gates and continues eastward beyond the Dawnforge Mountains. Hammerfast is governed by a council of masters, each the leaders of one of the town's powerful guilds. The current High Master is the leader of the merchant guild, a dwarf named Marsinda Goldspinner. The dwarves of Hammerfast look to their own first and don't give away anything for free, but they are honest and industrious.

Harken Forest

This large woodland stretches from the Nentir River to the mountains and extends for miles to the south. It separates the Nentir Vale from the more populous coastal towns of the south. A strong goblin keep called Daggerburg lies somewhere in the southwest reaches, not too far from Kalton Manor; the goblins sometimes raid the river-traffic moving along the Nentir, or send small parties of marauders to Harkenwold's borders.

An elf tribe known as the Woodsinger Clan roams the eastern portions of the forest. They occasionally trade with the humans of Harkenwold and keep an eye on travelers along the old King's Road. They have a long-standing feud with the Daggerburg goblins, and the goblins keep to the western parts of the forest to avoid swift and deadly elven arrows. However, the goblins are growing more numerous and have become bolder in recent months.

Harkenwold

Half a dozen small villages lie along the upper vales of the White River. Together, they make up the Barony of Harkenwold—a tiny realm whose total population is not much greater than Fallcrest's. The people of Harkenwold are farmers, woodcutters, and woodworkers; little trade comes up or down the old King's Road.

The ruler of Harkenwold is Baron Stockmer, an elderly man who was known for his strong sword arm in his youth. He is a just and compassionate ruler.

Kalton Manor

Back in the days when Nerath was settling the Nentir Vale, minor lords in search of land to call their own established manors and holds throughout the area. Kalton Manor was one of these, a small keep raised by Lord Arrol Kalton about two hundred years ago. Lord Arrol intended to settle the lower vale of the White River, but it was not to be—monsters from the Witchlight Fens drove off the tenants Arrol had brought with him. At the end, Arrol and a handful of his servants and family lived alone in a half-finished keep slowly falling into ruin until they disappeared as well. Stories tell of hidden treasure—the old Kalton fortune—hidden in secret chambers beneath the ruined keep.

Keep on the Shadowfell

Long ago, soldiers from Nerath built a strong fortress over the Shadowfell rift to protect it. The old keep lies in ruins now, and a new generation of cultists has secretly taken up residence here. They seek to undo the magical wards sealing the Shadowfell rift and open the way for undead horrors.

The keep is described in detail in the adventure *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell*.

Kobold Hall

Like Kalton Manor, the wreck now known locally as Kobold Hall was the estate of a minor lord who came to Nentir Vale to establish his own demesnes. Ruined during the Bloodspear War, the old castle has been abandoned for almost a century. Kobold tribes from the Cloak Wood now lurk in its depths.

The short adventure at the end of this chapter is set in Kobold Hall.

Nenlast

This tiny human village lies at the east end of Lake Nen. The folk here make a meager living by trading smoked fish to the dwarves of Hammerfast. They also deal with the Tigerclaw barbarians of the Winterbole Forest. When the wild folk choose to trade, they come to Nenlast to barter their pelts and amber for good dwarven metalwork.

Raven Roost

This small keep stands at the southern end of the Old Hills. Once it was the seat of a small manor, but it fell into ruin long ago and has recently been taken over by a gang of bandits. The leaders of the bandits are a trio of shadar-kai named Samminel, Erzoun, and Geriesh. They secretly deal with Barton, the proprietor of Fiveleague House, giving him a cut of the take when he tips them off about wealthy travelers on the Trade Road.

Ruins of Fastormel

Once a prosperous town on the shores of Lake Nen, Fastormel was destroyed by the Bloodspear orcs and has never been resettled. The town was ruled by a Lord Mage (the most powerful wizard in town claimed the ruler's scepter), and the Mistborn Tower of the last Lord Mage still stands amid the ruins of the town. The tower is shrouded in a strange silver mist that never dissipates, no matter what the weather would otherwise dictate.

The Stonemarch

A rugged land of stony hills and deep gorges cut by white-rushing rivers, the Stonemarch is home to tribes of dangerous humanoids and giants. Orcs, ogres, giants, and trolls haunt the farther reaches of these barren lands. Fortunately for the residents of the vale, the monsters rarely come east over the Cairngorm Peaks. A great orc-warren known as the Fanged Jaws of Kulkoszar lies in the northern part of the wasteland; here the chief of the Bloodspear tribe rules over hundreds of the fierce warriors.

Temple of Yellow Skulls

The ruins of an evil shrine stand in the middle of these desolate hills. Legend tells that a rakshasa prince summoned demons to this place and bound them to his service by imprisoning their vital essences in gold-plated human skulls. None of these have yet been recovered from the ruins, but the story persists. Deep caverns beneath the ruins lead all the way down to the Underdark, and from time to time dangerous monsters of the deep places emerge here and prowl the nearby lands.

Thunderspire

This striking peak is the largest of the Old Hills. Beneath Thunderspire lies the ancient minotaur city of Saruun Khel. The minotaur kingdom fell almost a hundred years before Fallcrest was established, when a struggle for succession led to a vicious civil war. In the upper halls of the minotaur city the mysterious order of wizards known as the Mages of Saruun have established a secretive stronghold; merchants passing along the Trade Road sometimes take shelter here.

The labyrinth of Saruun Khel is the setting for adventure *H2: Thunderspire Labyrinth*.

Winterhaven

Hard under the Cairngorms at the west end of the Nentir Vale lies the remote town of Winterhaven. Like Fallcrest, Winterhaven is a small town surrounded by a few miles of farmland and pastures. Winterhaven serves as the characters' base of operations during the adventure *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell*.

When you begin a new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign, it's a good idea to encourage the players to create characters grounded in your setting. Before your first game session, ask the players what sort of characters they would like to play. Armed with this information, you can build ties between the characters and the town of Fallcrest. The players will care a lot more about what's going on in and around the town if they see reasons why their characters would care.

If you don't like the ideas offered here, no problem—you're free to make up your own connections for the player characters, or have no connections at all. It's often fun for a player to roleplay being "the outsider."

Races

Dragonborn: No dragonborn are native to Fallcrest, but travelers occasionally pass through and take up work for a time, especially as bodyguards or caravan guards. The Halfmoon halflings, House Azaer, and the importer Naerumar have work available for a capable adventurer.

Dwarf: A fair number of dwarves live in Fallcrest, so a dwarf character could easily be a native of the city—perhaps a relative of Teldorthan Irontooth. If not, the nearest dwarven homeland is Hammerfast, a week's travel distant. Merchants and crafters from Hammerfast travel to Fallcrest to trade or work, lodging in one of the local inns for a few weeks.

Eladrin: Eladrin are not often seen in Fallcrest. Some of the old manors in the Moon Hills and the nearby parts of the Vale were once the homes of well-off eladrin families; a player character eladrin might hold the title to an abandoned estate a mile or two out of town, which provides a good reason to call on Lord Markelhay (and earns the enmity of Armos Kamroth, who wants the land for his own).

Elf: Elves are also scarce in Fallcrest, but a small number reside in and around the town. Ressimae Starlight of the temple of Sehanine might be a relative or an old friend of an elf character. Elves from outside Fallcrest might belong to the Woodsinger clan from the Harkenwold Forest.

Half-Elf: A small number of half-elves reside in Fallcrest or the vicinity. Most are well-off farmers or herders living in the Moon Hills near the town; the rest are expert artisans—jewelers, tailors, or woodworkers—in the town. A half-elf player character can be the child or relative of a Fallcrest family.

Halfling: Halflings are the most numerous people in Fallcrest aside from humans, and they come from any walk of life. A Fallcrest native might be related to the Halfmoon family, the Ostermans of the Silver Unicorn, or the Thistletons of Fallcrest

Stables. Halflings descended from the traders who pass through Fallcrest can be members of the Swiftwater clan.

Human: Most of Fallcrest's people are human. Characters with rural backgrounds likely grew up on the farms in the nearby Moon Hills. Characters with an urban upbringing might be the children of well-off landowners such as the Kamroths, or ruffians and sellswords who had a hard childhood in Lowtown.

Tiefling: Two tiefling families and a few individuals live and thrive in Fallcrest, including the Azaers and the Naerumars.

Classes

Cleric: Since there are temples of Erathis, Pelor, and Sehanine in town, a player character cleric devoted to one of these deities would naturally have allies and colleagues here.

Fighter: Fallcrest is a trading town, and merchants need bodyguards or caravan guards when they set out for distant towns. The Halfmoons or House Azaer might employ a fighter. Fighters from better-off families might be retainers in the service of the Markelhays—young “court blades” who are a cut above the typical garrison guard.

Paladin: As with clerics, paladins devoted to Erathis, Pelor, or Sehanine have natural allies in the temples of Fallcrest. In addition, paladin characters might also be aspiring knights sworn to the service of the Markelhay family.

Ranger: Many of the countryside folk living around Fallcrest are foresters and hunters; a ranger character could easily belong to one of these families. Rangers who aren't natives might hail from the Barony of Harkenwold or the remote village of Nenlast to the northeast.

Rogue: Members of groups such as the porters' guild or the River Rats are natural associates of a player character rogue. Capable people are in high demand anywhere, and a rogue might also fit in as an agent of a merchant house such as the Halfmoons or the Azaers.

Warlock: The folk of Fallcrest regard warlocks as they do wizards—mysterious figures to be treated cautiously. Well-off merchants or nobles often retain a “house mage” to advise them in magical matters, so a warlock could easily work for the Markelhays, Amros Kamroth, or other wealthy individual.

Warlord: Like fighters or paladins, warlords might be attached to the Markelhay household. Those of lower stature can serve as sellswords or agents of merchant companies such as House Azaer.

Wizard: A player character wizard might be an apprentice to Nimozaran, of the Septarch's Tower. Lady Markelhay is also a skilled mage and might take a wizard character into her confidence.



KOBOLD HALL

The ruined manor now known as Kobold Hall was once a minor lord's proud holding, a walled keep overlooking the old King's Road. That was years ago, and the lord's name and the glories he earned are long forgotten. Today, the place is called Kobold Hall after the malicious humanoids that infest the place. The Cloak Wood has overrun the grounds, with trees growing in the midst of abandoned gardens and courtyards.

Several kobold tribes dwell within the ruins, hiding in the multitude of tunnels, ruins, and cellars found here. The tribes squabble with each other, raid surrounding settlements, and attack caravans on the old King's Road. Lately, the kobolds have become more aggressive. The Skull Kicker tribe has taken over or driven off the rival tribes. Emboldened, the Skull Kickers stole a wagon loaded with valuable cargo from a caravan on the King's Road. As the adventure begins, the characters find themselves in the small town of Fallcrest. Explain to the players that their characters know each other and are looking for adventure.

Use one of the hooks below to set up the backstory for the adventurers, or create your own. You don't need a lot of details; you just need enough to explain why the PCs are together and why they are heading out to investigate Kobold Hall.

If you use one of these hooks, the PCs might also gain experience points for completing a quest. When the party finishes a quest, divide the XP award among all the characters who participated in the quest.

Hook: Dragon Hide

The player characters are hired by Teldorthan Goldcap, the dwarf armorer. Among the cargo in the stolen wagon was a cured green dragon hide destined for Teldorthan's shop. The dwarf intends to turn the hide into a fine suit of scale armor. Teldorthan hires the adventurers to enter the kobold lair and get back his dragon hide. If they succeed, he gives them 200 gp.

Alternative: The PCs hear about the loss of the wagon and the dragon hide and approach Teldorthan to see if there's a reward for its return.

Quest XP: 500 XP for recovering the dragon hide and returning it to Teldorthan Goldcap.

Hook: Kobold Bounty

The Lord Warden of Fallcrest has had enough of kobold raids along the old King's Road. If the PCs approach him looking for work, he readily offers them a bounty for clearing out Kobold Hall. The Lord Warden promises a bounty of 10 gp for each dispatched kobold and an additional 100 gp if the PCs bring proof that the ruins have been cleared out, such as the bone mask worn by the kobold leader.

Alternative: The Lord Warden specifically seeks out the PCs to ask them to undertake this mission.

Quest XP: 750 XP for bringing the wyrm priest's bone mask to the Lord Warden as proof of the demise of the kobold threat.

Hook: Terrible Secret

Nimozaran the Green, High Septarch of Fallcrest, believes that something more terrible and dangerous is behind the kobold attacks. They seem too organized and too aggressive, compared to other kobolds the old wizard has dealt with in the past. He asks the PCs if they are willing to enter the creatures' lair to discover the secret of Kobold Hall. He offers them the use of his tower's teleportation circle if they accept the quest.

Alternative: The PCs approach the old wizard to offer him their services in exchange for his good will and any magical aid he might be willing to offer.

Quest XP: 500 XP for bringing back news of the presence of a white dragon in the ruins to Nimozaran.

Players' Introduction

When the PCs decide to explore Kobold Hall, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You travel 15 miles from Fallcrest into the wilderness to find the once-sprawling manor now known as the ruins of Kobold Hall. Inside the keep, you find a trapdoor at the base of an old guard tower. It must lead beneath the ruins.

DM's Introduction

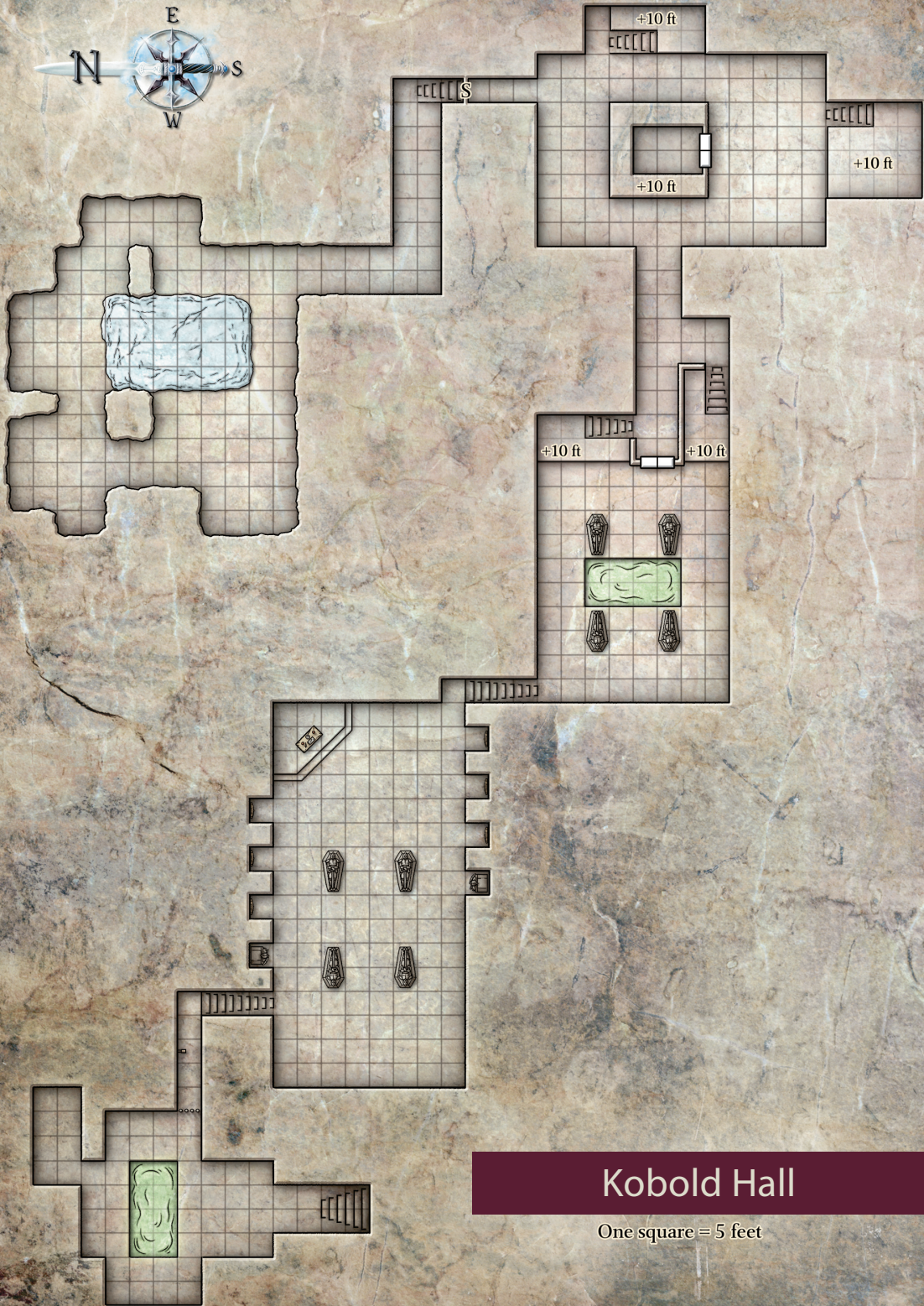
"Kobold Hall" is a simple D&D adventure for five 1st-level player characters. It is short on plot and decision points; it's simply five combat encounters in a row. The adventure is intended to give you something easy to run the first time you try your hand as the Dungeon Master, while allowing the other players at the table to explore their characters' abilities and learn the game.

Try to bring the kobolds and the environment to life. The first encounter is a simple fight, but the next four use interactive environments and traps to show off elements of the D&D game.

Be sure to read each encounter thoroughly before running the adventure, particularly paying attention to the traps and terrain. You should also closely examine the monster statistics blocks. They've got some nasty tricks up their sleeves for the player characters!

Altering Treasure

As with any published adventure, it is possible that the treasures found here aren't optimal for your party. It's a good idea to replace such items with goods that appeal to the party. The levels of the two items found as treasure in this adventure are given to make it easier to find replacements.



Kobold Hall

One square = 5 feet

AREA 1. SLUDGE PIT

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

Setup

This area serves as a guardroom for the kobolds. A pit filled with sludge provides an obstacle for intruders. When the PCs arrive, they see one kobold. The others stay hidden until the PCs move deeper into the area.

This encounter includes the following creatures.

2 kobold slingers (S)

3 kobold skirmishers (K)

As the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

Dominating the room ahead is a long trench filled with a glowing green substance. Beyond the trench, a small, reptilian humanoid stands in a shadowy chamber, gaping at you. It carries a sling, and quickly reaches into a pouch at its belt for a stone. It hisses and shouts, "Intruderssss! Intruderssss!"

3 Kobold Skirmishers (K)	Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid	XP 100 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +0; darkvision
HP 27; Bloodied 13	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 14, Will 13; see also <i>trap sense</i>	
Speed 6	
m Spear (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage; see also <i>mob attack</i> .	
Combat Advantage	
+1d6 damage on melee attacks and ranged attacks against target the skirmisher has combat advantage against.	
Mob Attack	
+1 bonus to attack rolls per kobold ally adjacent to the target.	
Shifty (minor; at-will)	
Shift 1 square as a minor action.	
Trap Sense	
+2 bonus to all defenses against traps.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Acrobatics +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 8 (-1)	Dex 16 (+3)
Con 11 (+0)	Int 6 (-2)
	Cha 15 (+2)
Equipment hide armor, light shield, spear	

Features of the Area

Pit: The pit is 10 feet deep, filled up to 4 feet with a thick, green sludge. Any PC who falls into the pit is immobilized. A DC 13 Strength check allows a PC to break free. The sludge is difficult terrain. Creatures can walk in it, but a creature that ends its move in the sludge is immobilized as described above.

Climbing out of the pit requires a DC 10 Athletics check. A creature that falls in takes 1d10-2 damage, since the sludge provides cushion against a fall.

Portcullis: The passage to the east has a portcullis designed to bar larger creatures. Small creatures ignore it, but it stops larger folk. Forcing the portcullis

up requires a DC 15 Strength check. The lever to open it is down the hall from the portcullis.

2 Kobold Slingers (S)	Level 1 Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP 100 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; darkvision
HP 24; Bloodied 12	
AC 13; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12; see also <i>trap sense</i>	
Speed 6	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
r Sling (standard; at-will) Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage; see also <i>glue shot</i> .	
Glue Shot (standard; at-will)	
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Shifty (minor; at-will)	
Shift 1 square.	
Trap Sense	
+2 bonus to all defenses against traps.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Acrobatics +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 9 (-1)	Dex 17 (+3)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)
	Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, dagger, sling with 20 bullets and 3 glue shot sling bullets (see above)	

Tactics

The kobold slinger attempts to lure the PCs into the room, where the others hide. The slinger fires at the PCs, while the two skirmishers split up to circle around the pit and attack.

Meanwhile, the kobolds behind the portcullis wait until the PCs are in sight of their position. Once the PCs have moved up, they attack.

The kobolds are alert to area attacks. They never cluster together unless they can gain flanking attacks.



AREA 2. THE TOMB

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

Setup

This chamber was once a tomb. The kobolds use the traps here to defend their lair.

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps.

3 kobold skirmishers (K)

2 dart traps (1 and 2)

As the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

The room ahead has four stone coffins, all of which show signs of vandalism and abuse. To the left is a series of six niches, set apart into two groups of three. Two more niches along the walls each hold a suit of armor.

On the opposite end of the room is a raised section of floor with a makeshift altar to Tiamat set atop it. Three kobolds carrying spears stand in front of the altar.

3 Kobold Skirmishers (K)

Small natural humanoid

Level 1 Skirmisher

XP 100 each

See page 212.

Dart Trap

Trap

Level 1 Blaster

XP 100

Darts fire from the suit of armor, filling the chamber with danger.

Trap: When one of the traps is triggered, a dart flies from the suit of armor's visor.

Perception

DC 20: The character notices the firing mechanisms in the .

DC 25: The character notices a trigger stone.

Trigger

If a character enters a trigger square or starts its turn in a trigger square, the dart trap attacks.

Attack

Immediate Interrupt Ranged 10

Target: Character who enters or starts its turn in a trigger square

Attack: +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 2 damage, and target is Immobilized until the end of target's next turn.

Countermeasures

An adjacent character can disable a trigger stone with a DC 20 Thievery check.

An adjacent character can disable a firing mechanism with a DC 25 Thievery check.

A suit of armor can be destroyed. Each has AC 12, 30 hp, and resist 5 to all damage.

Tactics

The kobolds attempt to use the traps to their advantage. They try to lure characters into chasing them across the room, taking advantage of the fact that creatures of Small size are too light to trigger the trap.

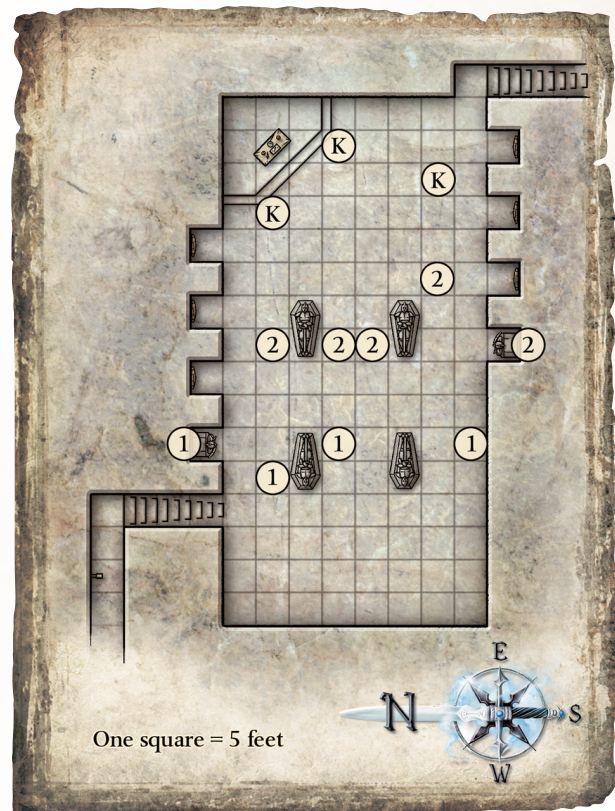
Features of the Area

Coffins: The stone coffins are difficult terrain that provide cover.

Armor: These two suits of plate armor stand at attention. When the dart traps activate, their helmet visors swing open to reveal a dart-firing mechanism.

Trigger Points: Several squares on the map are marked with the number 1 or 2. The 1s correspond to squares that trigger dart trap 1. The same applies to trap 2. The two suits of armor are likewise marked 1 and 2 to indicate the location of each trap's firing mechanism.

Altar: The kobolds have lovingly crafted this crude altar to the evil dragon god. A small bag on the altar holds 60 gp, an offering to Tiamat.



AREA 3. SKULL-SKULL!

Encounter Level 2 (675 XP)

Setup

This chamber has been turned into an arena for games of skull-skull, the sport of Kobold Hall. The player characters enter the chamber while a game is in progress and find that the game is an exercise in mindless violence, as befits kobolds.

This encounter includes the following creatures.

- 2 kobold slingers (S)
- 2 guard drakes (D)
- 4 kobold minions (M)

As the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

This chamber looks like it was once a tomb, but the kobolds have transformed it into what you might almost call a playground.

Four stone coffins lie here, with a sludge-filled pit between them. On the opposite end of the room is a pair of wooden double doors. Flanking the double doors are two raised platforms, both 10 feet above the floor. Two kobolds stand on each platform.

Arrayed on the coffins are several animal skulls, all of them arranged in small piles. One kobold holds a sludge-drenched stone tied to a long rope that is secured in the ceiling.

2 Guard Drakes (D)		Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 125 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +7	
HP 48; Bloodied 24		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12		
Immune fear (while within 2 squares of an ally)		
Speed 6		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 9 damage while within 2 squares of an ally.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+2)

4 Kobold Minions (M)		Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid		XP 25 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 11; see also <i>trap sense</i>		
Speed 6		
m Spear (standard; at-will)		Weapon
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
r Javelin (standard; at-will)		Weapon
Ranged 10/20; +5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Shifty (minor; at-will)		
Shift 1 square.		
Trap Sense		
+2 bonus to all defenses against traps.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Stealth +5, Thievery +5		
Str 8 (-1)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, light shield, 3 javelins, 1 spear		

2 Kobold Slingers (S)		Level 1 Artillery
Small natural humanoid		XP 100 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; darkvision	
HP 24; Bloodied 12		
AC 13; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12; see also <i>trap sense</i>		
Speed 6		
m Dagger (standard; at-will)		Weapon
+5 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
r Sling (standard; at-will)		Weapon
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage; see also <i>glue shot</i> .		
Glue Shot (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Shifty (minor; at-will)		
Shift 1 square.		
Trap Sense		
The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Acrobatics +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 9 (-1)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, dagger, sling with 20 bullets and 3 rounds of glue shot (see above)		

Skull-Skull Stone **Level 1 Blaster**
Trap XP 100

This sludge-covered stone is tied to a long rope that hangs from a hook in the ceiling.

Trap: When a kobold throws the stone, it attacks a target and then returns to the kobold on the opposite platform.

Trigger

A kobold uses a standard action to attack with the skull-skull stone. It can be used by two different kobolds in each round.

Attack

Standard Action **Melee**

Target: One character in the marked area on the map.

Attack: +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8+2 damage and push 2 squares.

Countermeasures

A character in the marked area can ready an action to attack the rope (AC 14, 10 hp, and resist 5 to all damage).

A character can make ranged attacks against the rope.

Tactics

The kobolds try to batter the PCs into submission while avoiding melee.

The kobold minions split up, two on each platform. Two take turns activating the skull-skull trap, one throwing a spear on a turn when it isn't activating the trap. The other two minions remain on the stairs, out of sight, ready to replace a fallen comrade and keep the trap operating.

The slingers fire at the PCs, hoping to use their special shots to harass characters and make them easier targets for the rock.

The kobolds' pet guard drakes remain on the other side of the door. They rush up the stairs to attack a PC who climbs up to the platforms. Otherwise, they attack anyone who breaches the door.

Features of the Area

Pit: The pit is 10 feet deep, filled up to a depth of 4 feet with a thick green sludge. The sludge has two important traits.

First, it is sticky. Any character who falls into the pit is immobilized. A DC 13 Strength check allows a PC to break free.

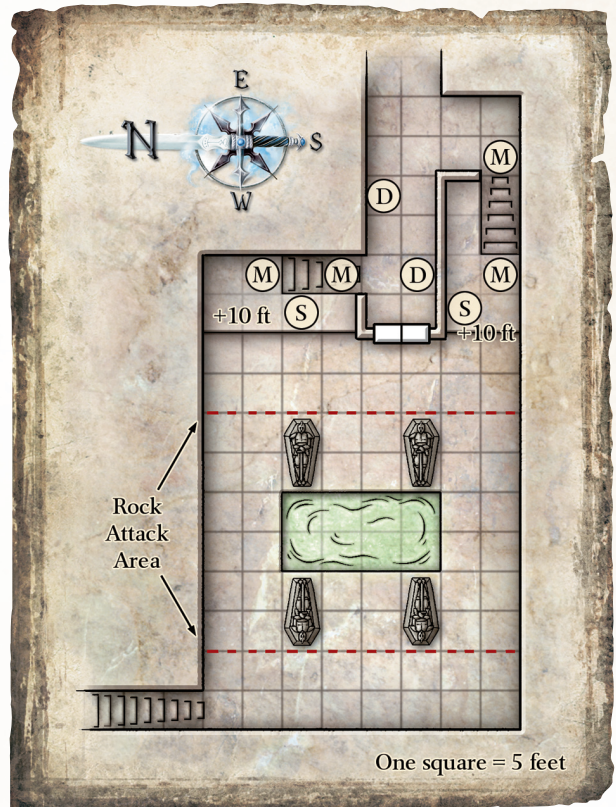
The sludge is difficult terrain. Creatures can walk in it, but a creature that ends its move in the sludge is immobilized as described above.

Climbing out of the pit requires a DC 10 Athletics check. A creature that falls in takes 1d10-2 damage, since the sludge provides cushion against a fall.

Door: The door has 20 hit points. Bashing it down requires a DC 16 Strength check.

Skull-Skull Stone: This weird device counts as a trap. The kobolds normally swing it down to hit a skull on the coffins below. The object of the game is to get a skull to stick to the rock, and then grab the skull as it comes back to the thrower. When the PCs arrive on the scene, the kobolds are happy to use the rock against them.

Platforms: There are no railings for the raised platforms. Climbing the wall up to the platform from the floor requires a DC 15 Athletics check. Scattered on the floor in a small pile in the northern platform are 100 gp in coins, a ruby worth 50 gp, and two garnets worth 25 gp each.



AREA 4. THE BIG BOSS

Encounter Level 4 (850 XP)

Setup

The kobold chieftain rules from this chamber. Paranoid at the thought of intruders, the chieftain and his minions erected an elaborate, crushing boulder trap in this room. When the PCs enter, the chieftain activates the boulder and hides in his lair. Meanwhile, kobolds pour forth to attack the PCs.

This encounter includes the following creatures and trap.

- 2 kobold slingers (S)
- 1 kobold wyrm Priest (W)
- 2 kobold dragonshields (K)
- 1 spiretop drake (D)
- 1 rolling boulder (T)

As the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

You arrive at a chamber with a 20-foot-tall ceiling. Before you is a 10-foot tall wall that leaves passages open to both the right and left. Suddenly, the sound of cracking timbers echoes through the hall. The floor shakes, dust cascades down from the ceiling, and something big and heavy hurtles toward you!

Kobold Wyrmpriest (W) Level 3 Artillery (Leader) Small natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15; see also *trap sense*
Speed 6
m Spear (standard; at-will) **Weapon**
 +7 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.
R Energy Orb (standard; at-will) • see text
 Ranged 10; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 3 cold damage.
C Incite Faith (minor; encounter)
 Close burst 10; kobold allies in the burst gain 5 temporary hit points and shift 1 square.
C Dragon Breath (standard; encounter)
 Close blast 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 3 cold damage. *Miss:* Half damage.
Shifty (minor; at-will)
 Shift 1 square.
Trap Sense
 +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11
Str 9 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 17 (+4)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 12 (+2)
Equipment hide armor, spear, bone mask, +1 *staff of the war mage*

2 Kobold Dragonshields (K) Level 2 Soldier Small natural humanoid XP 125 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 18; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13; see also *trap sense*
Resist 5 cold
Speed 6
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) **Weapon**
 +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the kobold dragonshield's next turn.
Dragonshield Tactics (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts away or an enemy moves adjacent; at-will)
 The kobold dragonshield shifts 1 square.
Mob Attack
 The kobold dragonshield gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls per kobold ally adjacent to the target.
Shifty (minor; at-will)
 Shift 1 square.
Trap Sense
 +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +9, Thievery +9
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 13 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, short sword

Spiretop Drake (D) Level 1 Skirmisher Small natural beast (reptile) XP 100

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 29; **Bloodied** 14
AC 16; **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover); see also *flyby attack*
m Bite (standard; at-will)
 +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.
m Snatch (standard; at-will)
 +4 vs. Reflex; 1 damage, and the spiretop drake steals a small object from the target, such as a vial, scroll, or coin.
M Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)
 The spiretop drake flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The drake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+3)
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 11 (+0)

AREA 5. THE TRUE THREAT

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

Setup

This chamber is the lair of the young white dragon Szartharrax. Although he is still small by the standards of his kind, Szartharrax is far and away the most dangerous monster in Kobold Hall. He is the reason the Skull Kickers managed to assert themselves over the other kobold gangs in the area; Szartharrax decided to back them and ate the rival chieftains, which persuaded the rest of the scaly little monsters to swear allegiance to the Skull Kickers. Szartharrax has an appetite for gold, and the white dragon has been demanding tribute from his loyal servants. Fear of the dragon's anger is driving the kobolds to attack caravans and launch raids against the nearby settlements.

Szartharrax is a tough opponent; the adventurers will have to fight well to survive.

This encounter includes the following creature.

1 young white dragon (D)

As the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

You follow a long, winding passage from the kobold chieftain's throne room down and down into the earth. Eventually, the finely worked stone tunnels give way to natural passages. Finally, you come upon a large cavern. The air is unnaturally cold in here. In the center of the room is a large pool of frozen dark water. The cavern is quiet.

Tactics

The dragon begins the encounter hiding in the area marked on the map. Since he is hidden behind the large pillar, make a Stealth check for the dragon, and then have the players make Perception checks for their characters. Player characters whose Perception checks are lower than the dragon's Stealth check are surprised. Roll initiative and begin the combat.

The dragon starts by flying to a spot just in front of the party and using his icy breath against as many player characters as he can catch in the area at one time. He then immediately spends 1 action point to use his Frightful Presence ability. In subsequent

Young White Dragon (D)

Large natural magical beast (dragon)

Level 3 Solo Brute

XP 750

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

HP 232; **Bloodied** 116; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 18; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

Resist 15 cold

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6 (ice walk), fly 6 (hover), overland flight 10

Action Points 2

m Bite (standard; at-will) **Cold**

Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 plus 1d6 cold damage (plus an extra 1d6 cold damage on a successful opportunity attack).

m Claw (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.

M Dragon's Fury (standard; at-will)

The dragon makes two claw attacks. If the dragon hits a single target with both claws, it makes a bite attack against the same target.

C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ☼☼☼) **Cold**

Close blast 5; +4 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 cold damage, and the target is slowed and weakened (save ends both).

C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) **Cold**

The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) **Fear**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +4 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. *Aftereffect:* The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Alignment Evil

Languages Draconic

Skills Athletics +15

Str 18 (+5)

Dex 10 (+1)

Wis 12 (+2)

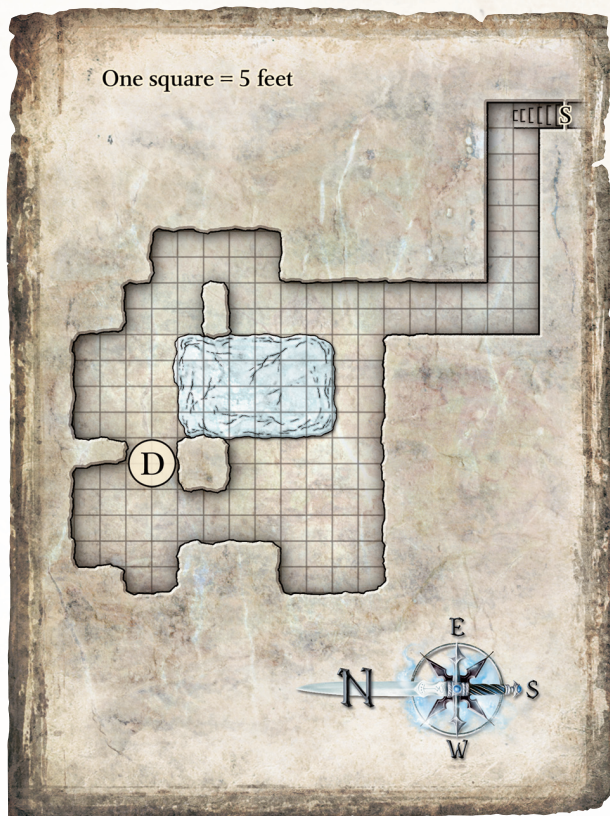
Con 18 (+5)

Int 10 (+1)

Cha 8 (+0)

rounds, the dragon tears the adventurers apart with his Dragon's Fury attack. If Szartharrax gets the chance to make any opportunity attacks, he uses his bite instead.

Szartharrax avoids heavily armored characters, preferring instead to pick off lightly armored foes. If the dragon becomes bloodied, he goes into a rage. He attacks the nearest PC, ignoring any intelligent tactics in favor of brute force.



Features of the Area

Pool: The pool of water is 2 feet deep and frozen solid. The ice is difficult terrain, but the dragon ignores it if it walks through it (thanks to its ice walk ability).

Conclusion

If the PCs manage to slay the dragon, they find a small cave up ahead that has a locked treasure chest (DC 20 Thievery check to open). The chest contains the piece of dragon hide that Teldorthan wanted recovered, 100 gold pieces, a pearl worth 20 gp in a small felt bag, and a +1 *lifedrinker longsword* (level 5 item).

+1 Lifedrinker Longsword: This longsword provides its user with a +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. On a critical hit, it deals an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. In addition, when the user drops an enemy to 0 hit points with a melee attack with this weapon, the user gains 5 temporary hit points.

Further Adventures

The party slew the dragon and defeated the kobolds, but the PCs have only just begun their adventuring careers.

Slaying a dragon is no easy feat, and Szartharrax might have powerful allies who want revenge. Perhaps his mother or sibling hunts down the characters and their friends.

This adventure might also point to bigger things. The characters find a letter in Szartharrax's treasure chest. Written in Draconic, it is an offer of alliance from a goblin warlord who wishes to unite the monsters in the area against the people of Fallcrest. If you plan to run the *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell* adventure, that goblin could be Irontooth. The letter sends the PCs off on their next adventure.

Finally, there is nothing like a good, old-fashioned dungeon crawl. Having defeated the kobolds, the characters can explore Szartharrax's caves to uncover auxiliary passages leading deeper into the earth. Use the random dungeon generator or create an adventure of your own that involves the rest of the dragon's minions. Perhaps a kobold cleric and his undead minions uncovered a shrine to Tiamat, and Szartharrax needed Teldorthan's hide to finish a terrible rite to the dragon god. Using the encounters in this chapter as a guide, there's no better time than now to start creating your own adventures. Recruit some vicious monsters, draw some encounter maps, create a story to lead the PCs to the adventure, and keep playing!