

PRISMA / ADVENTURE

Incident in a Mining Camp

A disappearance leads from Vordanne to Dustmere, where rescue, industrial power and public truth collide.



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AI-assisted English translation of the authored Russian adventure.

Complete English development reading edition. Contains GM information and spoilers.

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A Prisma adventure for 5th-level characters

Written by Kirill Sakhin. English translation and editorial preparation with OpenAI Codex assistance.

Full English reading edition · Editorial draft

This edition contains the complete adventure text, NPC profiles, branching outcomes, mechanics, and stat blocks. It is intended for the Game Master; players should stop here to avoid spoilers.

Introduction

Adventure Overview

Theme: This one-session adventure explores the tension between technological progress and its consequences. The characters investigate a mysterious disaster at a remote mana extraction facility, uncover the horrors of uncontrolled mana dust, and decide what to do with the truth they find.

Recommended level: 5th level.

Tone: Industrial fantasy with elements of a thriller and mild horror.

Faction connection: The characters are agents of the Bronze Wardens, an elite mercenary company that takes contracts from clients who can afford its services. Known for their neutrality and pragmatism, the Wardens often find themselves in morally ambiguous situations.

Adventure Hook

Lucien Halbrecht, heir to the Vordanne family that owns the magitech company Halbrecht Arcana Works, secretly contacts the characters. His fiancée, Alessandra d'Aventis, disappeared three days ago at a mining camp operated by Manafront Corp. The company has concealed the incident, and family orders and contractual obligations forbid Lucien from involving the Bronze Wardens.

Desperate, Lucien arranges a clandestine meeting at the Velvet Salon in the Bazaar District. There, he offers the characters a private fee for a confidential investigation. Unbeknownst to him, Elaris Vaen, an itinerant priest of the Halcyon Covenant and the true instigator of the disaster, is also at the Salon.

Adventure Structure

Act I: Whispers and Warnings

Scene 1.1: Bronze Wardens Headquarters

Location: The Gilded Bastion, headquarters of the Bronze Wardens.

An angular fortress of dark bronze and volcanic stone stands at the edge of the Silk Bazaar.

Protective runes and battered shields from past campaigns adorn its walls.

Outside, wanted notices and bounty posters change daily. Inside, mercenary captains and investigators argue over political neutrality and bribes.

Captain Iven Marran's Office

Papers crowd the dusty office. A whisky decanter and an elegantly carved glass sit on the desk. A handsome, oversized chair is the sole ornament in this bleak bureaucratic still life. Behind it hangs a map of Elyxion, covered in flags and annotations whose meaning is probably clear to Captain Iven Marran alone.

Among the papers lies a newspaper. Its front page carries an article under the bold headline, "TWENTY YEARS OF MAGICAL INDUSTRIALIZATION: GIFT OR CURSE?"

20 YEARS OF MAGICAL INDUSTRIALIZATION: A BLESSING OR THE WORST OF CURSES?
<i>By L. Ashford, Senior Correspondent The Vordanne Chronicle, 15 Green Fire, 1625</i>
<i>As Vordanne celebrates twenty years of magical industrialization, debate over its true cost continues to divide public opinion. Is this scientific discovery a blessing, or has it become the worst curse imaginable?</i>

NPC: Captain Iven Marran

Description: A human of about forty, with burn scars along his left cheek, sad blue eyes, and a bald head. He wears bronze armor over black leather clothing and a mechanical gauntlet acquired during earlier operations.

Motivation: He wants the Bronze Wardens to profit from the contract without drawing the faction into a political scandal or any other trouble. The prospective client's identity and request to meet at the Velvet Salon make him especially cautious.

Secret: He lost his son in the last war. Afraid of losing another loved one, he avoids becoming attached to anyone.

Encounter: Introductions and Iven's Initial Briefing

Iven tells the party that intermediaries have approached him on behalf of Lucien Halbrecht, heir to House Halbrecht, which owns several businesses selling magical technologies.

Lucien has asked him to send a team to a secret meeting at the Velvet Salon, an exclusive social club in the Bazaar District.

Iven can explain that the intermediaries disclosed neither the nature of the assignment nor its details. Given the client's identity and the secrecy involved, however, he assumes the matter is sensitive. Whatever happens, he asks the party to proceed cautiously and avoid being drawn into a scandal.

Scene 1.2: A Forbidden Request

Location: The Velvet Salon, Bazaar District, Vordanne.

Hidden behind an unassuming archway of black marble and a velvet rope, the Velvet Salon is one of Vordanne's most exclusive establishments. Admission depends less on wealth than on whom you know. Here, influence whispers louder than coin, and the city's most dangerous conversations unfold quietly over brandy and candlelight.

The Salon is known for its Gothic opulence: crimson velvet upholstery, brass-trimmed tables, magical oil lamps humming softly with stored mana, and graceful lacquered bookshelves that never seem to gather dust. Everything serves an atmosphere of dignified, restrained decadence.

The Salon observes a strict code of confidentiality. Words spoken behind its red curtains never leave the room. Its regular visitors include:

- Spies, former senators, and mages cast out of their communities.
- Representatives of merchant guilds and foreign embassies.
- On rare occasions, Bronze Wardens conducting unofficial meetings.

Layout and Access

Entrance Hall: Guests enter a quiet vestibule lined with red marble and enchanted mirrors that soften their reflections. They are politely but firmly asked to surrender weapons and arcane focuses; anyone who refuses is discreetly watched. Only guests with established connections or invitations may pass through the inner door.

Main Salon: The heart of the establishment is a lavish two-level room, with high, velvet-draped ceilings and glittering crystal chandeliers suspended by delicate arcane levitation.

The room has two distinct areas of activity:

Social Floor:

A lively, refined space with a central mana-lit bar, ornate poles for dancers, and numerous small tables where nobles, merchants, and artists drink, flirt, and trade gossip. Subtle music fills the air, often accompanied by live enchantments or minor illusionists hired to enhance the atmosphere.

Curtained Chambers, Outer Ring:

Curtained niches line the edges of the Main Salon. Each contains a round table and soft semicircular seating. Enchantments woven into the walls muffle sound and block magical surveillance. Here, a whisper can become a contract, or a threat.

Private Alcoves: Reached by a concealed staircase and a guarded corridor, these soundproof side rooms host especially sensitive transactions: blackmail negotiations, illegal guild contracts, and visits from operatives and spies. Their furnishings are spare and deliberate. There are no distractions, no drinks unless required, and always a single exit.

Upper Lounge: A balcony overlooks the Main Salon through one-way crystal glass. Members of noble families, foreign envoys, and senior syndicate figures withdraw here to watch the room below.

Each corner of the Upper Lounge resembles a private theater box, with comfortable chairs, subdued lighting, and brass speaking tubes connected directly to the staff. The area is closely guarded, and only the Salon's owner can authorize entry.

NPCs: The Concierge, Lucien Halbrecht, and Elaris Vaen

Amari Senge: The concierge is a young tiefling woman with pale red skin, dressed in an elegant frock coat, waistcoat, white shirt, and breeches. Smiling openly and almost excessively welcoming, she admits the characters. She also owns the Velvet Salon, though she does not mention it.

Elaris Vaen

Race: Half-elf.

Class: War Domain cleric of Seraphiel.

Faction: Halcyon Covenant.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Role: Instigator and antagonist.

Appearance

Elaris Vaen commands attention through quiet strength rather than ostentatious wealth. About forty, tall and lean, he has a composure that can disarm even a suspicious observer. His features are sharp and slightly angular, and his piercing blue eyes seem to look straight through people. Pale, almost spectral skin contrasts with his dark, elegant robe, embroidered with subtle arcane symbols of the Halcyon Covenant. Beneath his clothing, a silver pendant bearing Seraphiel's symbol hangs at his neck.

Vaen keeps his silver hair short and neat. Even in the most tense situations, he retains an almost otherworldly calm. His face betrays little; he often appears motionless, while his eyes convey fierce conviction and a deep, almost unsettling sense of purpose.

Personality: Calm, patient, charismatic, and driven by ideology: he considers magical industrialization a crime against humanity. A rational extremist, he feels empathy for future generations and readily manipulates others. To him, the Halcyon Covenant is an ethical movement, and he is a philosopher.

Motivations

- Show the world the horrors of mana industrialization.
- Undermine corporations such as Manafront Corp., which he sees as instruments of arrogance and spiritual decay.
- Recruit more influential allies into the Covenant's wider network.
- Force political consequences through actions such as the sabotage at the stricken mine. He considers a localized disaster justified if it prevents a far greater catastrophe.

Secrets

- He orchestrated the sabotage at Dustmere's stricken mine.
- He feels guilty about the deaths of innocents, but suppresses that guilt through unwavering faith in the lesser evil.
- He does not want to kill the adventurers unless they leave him no choice.

Encounter with Elaris Vaen

As the party enters the Velvet Salon, a low murmur of conversation mingles with the soft, melodic sound of mana-infused instruments. Well-dressed patrons gather in small groups across the Social Floor. Magical incense scents the air beneath the shimmering arcane lights.

Crossing the room, the adventurers hear a voice that holds its listeners' attention. Elaris Vaen sits at a small round table, surrounded by several interested guests. His tone is calm, but his words carry profound conviction:

"The growth of magitech, fed by our insatiable thirst for progress, has brought us prosperity. But at what cost? Mana dust clouding the air we breathe; the Withered wandering our streets: these are the true price of our greed. Uncontrolled magic and the pollution of nature can lead only to ruin. Do we believe ourselves invincible, or have we simply blinded ourselves to the reckoning that awaits?"

Lucien Halbrecht

Race: Human.

Class: Noble/industrialist.

Alignment: Neutral good.

Role: A desperate heir.

Appearance

Lucien Halbrecht is about thirty, a fit young man whose appearance reflects a comfortable life. Stress has threaded a little gray through his chestnut hair. He has sharp features, high cheekbones, a strong jaw, pale yellow eyes, and pale, slightly weathered skin. His dark, tailored suit is practical but elegant.

Beneath his outward calm lies the tension of a man whose world is falling apart. His hands often clutch whatever is within reach: a letter, a pocket watch, or a half-finished glass of whisky.

Personality and Motivation

Lucien is caught between his family's legacy and the upheaval in his personal life. As heir to the successful magitech company Halbrecht Arcana Works, he was raised to lead and prepared for a life of power, business, and social standing. Deeply involved in the mana crystal trade, his family has amassed enormous wealth over recent decades. Growing power has brought growing moral unease.

Lucien believes magitech can transform society, but he cannot ignore the horrors of its rapid expansion, particularly the mana dust and infection it has produced. He struggles to accept his family's corporate practices, especially the unsafe extraction methods that endangered his fiancée, Alessandra d'Aventis.

Alessandra's disappearance at the mining settlement has turned Lucien from a quiet business heir into a man desperate for answers. His love for her matters more than the

material wealth into which he was born. He is willing to risk his family's name to uncover the truth, even if it exposes the dark side of his own company.

Lucien has principles, though he often has to weigh them against the demands of his family's wealth and society's expectations. He is honorable, but his moral convictions remain at odds with the systems that shaped him.

Encounter with Lucien Halbrecht

Lucien approaches the characters and hires them to investigate Alessandra d'Aventis's mysterious disappearance. He fears for her safety but cannot act openly because of corporate and family restrictions. He offers payment and asks the adventurers to keep the investigation secret.

Objectives

Find Alessandra: His overriding goal is to find Alessandra d'Aventis and ensure her safety. This is why he entrusts the investigation to the party.

Uncover the truth: He wants to expose the dangers of extraction and, specifically, corruption within his family's company. Lucien wants everything brought to light, but knows this will have serious consequences for his business and personal life.

Maintain secrecy: Lucien wants the truth, but does not want it to reach the press before he can decide what to do with the adventurers' findings. He therefore asks them to investigate covertly.

Reward: 100 gp per character, negotiable up to 150 gp each with a successful DC 15 check.

Information

Alessandra worked in logistics for the mining village of Dustmere. She left for work there three days ago, and Lucien has heard nothing from her since.

Shortly before she disappeared, Alessandra expressed concern about the miners' working conditions and the brutality of the local guards.

The mine belongs to Manafront Corp. Lucien knows little about the company, but business reports and conversations in various circles suggest that, although profitable and successful, its ethics are questionable.

The mine director is Ronald Greaves, whom Lucien describes as cunning and arrogant.

The director's right-hand man is Brannik, the head of security. According to Alessandra, he was particularly cruel to the miners.

Lucien does not know exactly what happened at the mine. Whatever the characters discover, he asks them to avoid drawing unnecessary attention to themselves or the situation.

Scene 1.3: Arrival in Dustmere

Location: Dustmere, a small mining village southeast of Vordanne, a few hours' journey away.

A dreary, dust-covered village huddles against hillsides riddled with mine shafts. A faint golden haze hangs in the air: mana dust that settles on the skin and leaves a metallic taste in the mouth.

At its center lies a square of hard-packed earth, surrounded by simple houses and a few stone buildings. Above them rises the town hall, the mine's administrative building, bearing Manafront Corp.'s faded crest. Nearby stands the Rusty Pickaxe tavern, from which drift the smell of alcohol and the rumble of voices.

A hospital and a small chapel to Valar, god of craft and labor, stand close by. Coughs and groans emerge from the hospital. The chapel bell tolls softly, as though asking for protection from misfortune.

Mine entrances appear among the hills at the village's edge: grim mouths of reinforced timbers and darkness. One is boarded up and covered with warning signs. This is the disaster zone. The workers avoid unnecessary conversation and regard strangers with suspicion.

Main Points of Interest

Village Town Hall: Mine Management Offices

Description: The town hall is a grim stone building with Manafront Corp.'s faded crest above the entrance. Its severe architecture was clearly designed for something other than beauty. Thick walls, iron doors, and narrow windows reveal its priorities: control, accountability, and security.

Inside, the air smells of dust, ink, and old paper. Shelves hold shift logs; a board displays the extraction schedule. Desks are buried under papers and accounting amulets. Above this bustle sits mine director Ronald Greaves's office. Beside it is the office of Brannik, the ever-watchful, taciturn head of security.

The town hall's windows overlook the central square, offering an unobstructed view of the village.

Rooms

- Main entrance and reception lobby: ground floor.
- Clerks' rooms: ground floor.
- Meeting room: ground floor.
- Security office: ground floor.
- Greaves's office, with a secret room: upper floor.
- Archive: upper floor.
- Clock tower: an attic containing a small reserve of mining equipment.

NPCs

Ronald Greaves

Race: Human.

Age: 58.

Alignment: Lawful neutral.

Appearance: Tall and broad-shouldered, though his frame has softened with age. His face shows the years spent balancing corporate expectations, deadlines, and human casualties.

His skin is pale from long hours indoors. His graying hair, swept to one side, remains immaculate even when everything around him is falling apart. His piercing gray eyes are calculating but friendly: the eyes of a man who assesses people's value, less out of cruelty than because he believes he must.

He wears a severe black coat with silver fastenings and Manafront Corp.'s emblem neatly sewn onto one shoulder. A mana-powered chronometer is strapped to his wrist, and he always carries a heavy, ledger-bound volume beneath his arm.

Personality

Greaves is methodical, precise, and unfailingly pragmatic. He is not heartless; indeed, he considers himself a necessary buffer between Manafront's ruthless executives and the exhausted miners who keep the system running. Years of compromise have dulled his moral judgment. He no longer asks, "Is it right?" Only, "Can it be managed?"

He speaks in measured corporate language, full of euphemisms and assurances that cut both ways. He despises inefficiency, hates surprises, and fears publicity more than monsters.

Even so, guilt sometimes flickers in his eyes, often when he thinks no one is watching. Greaves knows that something terrible happened in the disaster zone. He is determined to keep it secret, both for Manafront's sake and to prevent the whole village from descending into chaos.

Motivations

Preserve order in Dustmere: He believes the town will panic if the truth comes out. He does not want to destroy lives; he wants to preserve the illusion of stability.

Protect his position: He has spent decades building his reputation. If the mine is accused of corruption or mismanagement, his career, and probably his pension, will be finished.

Control the account: If people must learn the truth, he wants to decide how it emerges and who takes the blame.

Secrets

- Greaves knows the appearance of the Withered was no accident. He suspects sabotage, but has no proof.
- He keeps incident reports and internal memoranda under lock and key in the town hall's restricted files.
- He discussed the growing instability of the mana channels with Dr. Fenya Vale. Both agreed to keep quiet about it.

Brannik

Race: Dwarf.

Age: 45.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Class: Fighter. See the appendix for his stat block.

Appearance: A stocky dwarf with a broad, muscular build that makes him imposing despite his short stature. His long, braided beard is carefully groomed, and a few silver strands show in his thick, dark-blond hair. Hard, steel-gray eyes continually scan his surroundings, reflecting his discipline and vigilance. Faint age lines, particularly around his eyes, lend him an experienced, composed air.

He wears a dark, practical uniform.

Personality

Brannik demands absolute control. His brutality comes from loyalty to the company. As head of security, he sees his job as enforcing discipline. He believes the miners and villagers need strong leadership, and that force and fear are the best means of keeping the peace.

He fears nothing except the collapse of order. He will do anything to keep the mine and village under control, believing the ends justify the means. His loyalty to Manafront Corp. has become personal, reaching far beyond professional duty. He has an unhealthy reverence for power and superiority, and deals swiftly with anyone who challenges his authority.

Brannik considers his actions necessary for stability rather than cruel. In his own mind, he is a protector who guides the miners, teaches them to respect authority, and keeps them in line. He has no sympathy for anyone who disrupts the system, especially if they threaten the mines' profitability or Manafront's power.

Motivations

Maintain control through fear: Brannik wants to keep Dustmere's miners and residents under his control. His chief aim is to eliminate challenges to his authority and preserve Manafront Corp.'s stability.

Suppress dissent: Any disagreement with his methods must be crushed through intimidation, threats, or outright violence.

Conceal the incident: After the disaster and Alessandra's disappearance, Brannik intends to protect himself and Manafront Corp. He will do everything he can to keep the dangers of the mines secret.

Secrets

- Before disappearing, Alessandra d'Aventis told Lucien that Brannik treated the miners cruelly, often using violence and intimidation to keep them in line.

- Alessandra then confronted Brannik over his mistreatment of the workers. He responded with contempt, locking her in a safe room in the Central Processing Plant to teach her how to behave toward her superiors.
- When the mana leak occurred, the situation spiraled out of control. Alessandra remained trapped in the facility, with no one able to stop the unfolding disaster.
- Alessandra d'Aventis is still alive, locked in the Central Processing Plant's safe room, out of sight. Brannik intended this as a disciplinary measure: by removing her from view, he thought he would teach her to respect the corporate hierarchy. His decision inadvertently saved her from the mana dust already turning miners into Withered.
- **Cover-up:** Brannik has concealed evidence of the mana leak and forces employees to maintain the corporate lie. He answers questions with deception and may use violence to prevent the truth from emerging. He will sacrifice anyone to protect the company's image and his own position.

The Rusty Pickaxe Tavern

Description

A squat wooden building sends smoke from a soot-blackened chimney. Dustmere's only tavern is where miners come to wash down the dust, vent their grievances, and perhaps find a few hours of relief before returning underground.

Inside, the air smells of ale, sweat, and frying fat. Years of games involving fists, tankards, and knives have scarred the wooden tables. A battered iron pickaxe, rusted almost through, hangs above the bar and gives the tavern its name. Light comes mainly from oil lamps and the hearth. The mood is lively, but grim.

Locals know better than to speak too freely: security staff drink at the same tables as angry foremen. Gold buys silence, however, and travelers occasionally find more than ale behind the back curtain.

NPCs: Tavern keeper Marnak Dorn, assorted miners, and security staff.

Hospital

Description: This small, understaffed building is a lifeline for miners injured in the dangerous depths or exposed to toxic mana dust. Inside, the air smells of herbs and antiseptics.

Beds line the walls of the main ward, separated by thin curtains for privacy. Papers and healing scrolls lie on every available surface. The stench of sweat and sickness lingers as a handful of doctors and nurses hurry about, treating the miners' wounds and ailments.

The staff are always overworked, but hospital head Matron Ilsa directs them firmly. The hospital can handle most injuries. Severe mana poisoning and arcane mutations may exceed its capabilities.

NPCs

Matron Ilsa

Race: Tiefling.

Age: 48.

Alignment: Neutral good.

Class: Cleric.

Appearance: A tall, graceful tiefling with violet skin that deepens subtly around her cheeks and neck. She usually ties her long, flowing white hair, streaked with silver, into a simple, practical braid to keep it clear of her work. Red eyes stand out against her sharp features. Her horns curve smoothly back from her forehead, somewhat more prominent than most tieflings' without being excessive.

Despite her somewhat intimidating appearance, she is dignified and compassionate, her expression always calm and thoughtful. Her plain white robes, accented with dark red, suit her role as a healer and leader. Her tail often sways gently behind her, betraying her unease when the situation becomes especially tense.

Personality

Behind Matron Ilsa's calm manner is a woman who has endured many trials. Life has never been easy for her, but her hospital work has sustained her. Her tiefling heritage often provoked prejudice when she was younger. Through hard work, she earned respect in a town dominated by corporate interests. Gentle, sympathetic, and compassionate, she is nevertheless far from naive. She knows the system is broken, and understands that her role is to heal within its imperfect confines.

She is devoted to her patients, often working beyond her limits to care for miners and laborers. She is also tired. Managing an overcrowded hospital, constant injuries, and the company's indifference to the miners' suffering has worn her down. Despite her exhaustion, she continues to care for everyone who comes through her doors.

Motivations

Heal and protect: A deep sense of duty drives Matron Ilsa to care for the miners and villagers. She wants no one to suffer from neglect, especially in a town where the mine's dangers threaten people every day.

Expose corruption: She knows Manafront Corp. is failing its people and resents its preference for profit over lives. She wants change, but fears speaking openly.

Keep the hospital running: Though overworked, Ilsa is determined to maintain the hospital, even at the cost of long nights and her own health. Her dedication is unmatched, but she fears what will happen if the village or mine becomes unsafe.

Secrets

- She witnessed Alessandra's confrontation with Brannik, but is afraid to admit it unless convinced that the party will protect her (DC 18).
- She suspects the incident in the mines may have created Withered, but will not say so until the party convinces her she will be protected (DC 15).
- She can explain that respirators offer protection against infection. Supplies are kept in the town hall's clock tower.
- She can suggest that information about the incident should be in the town hall archive or Greaves's office (DC 15).

Laboratory

Description

Dr. Fenya Vale's laboratory occupies a separate, isolated building near the center of Dustmere, in sharp contrast to the village's otherwise modest surroundings. Modern in design but functional and utilitarian, it has a metal shell and large arched windows. Ample light reflects off carefully arranged piles of arcane equipment and alchemical supplies.

A sturdy reinforced wooden door marks the entrance. Arcane sigils carved into its frame protect the building from unwanted magical interference. Inside, ticking mechanisms, clinking glass, and the quiet hum of mana-powered machines fill the room. Test tubes of glowing liquid, intricate crystal models, and ingenious diagrams are everywhere.

Here, Dr. Vale oversees the technological side of mining. She frequently conducts magical experiments to harness mana more effectively and discover more efficient extraction methods. The laboratory is cluttered, yet organized according to a system only Fenya understands: a fitting reflection of her scientific genius.

NPCs

Dr. Fenya Vale

Race: Solar elf.

Age: 150.

Alignment: Neutral.

Class: Artificer.

Appearance: Dr. Fenya Vale is a solar elf whose golden skin glows faintly in sunlight, a mark of her Solara heritage. Her silver-white hair flows like liquid light and is often tied in a loose braid while she works. Piercing golden eyes reflect her people's wisdom and longevity, along with the restless ambition that drives her to push the limits of magical and scientific inquiry.

She carries herself with the grace and elegance of the solar elves. Her dark leather robes are decorated with arcane sigils and magical symbols. Her tail is more delicate, its gentle movement betraying her elven nobility. A faintly glowing mana crystal pendant represents both her connection to the divine and her innovative pursuit of magical progress.

Personality

Dr. Fenya Vale is a brilliant scientist with an insatiable curiosity about research and mana-based magical technology. She wants to advance magitech and develop new extraction methods that will power the future. Her mind is always on her work, often at the expense of personal relationships, making her seem distant and withdrawn.

Though well-intentioned, she lacks the moral compass of someone deeply concerned with others' welfare. She considers progress an inherent good, even when it demands sacrifice and risk. Compassionate in principle, she is blind to the unforeseen consequences of her actions.

Her obsession with discovery sometimes leads her to actions others would consider morally questionable. To her, anything is justified if it advances knowledge.

Motivations

Scientific discovery: Dr. Vale pursues excellence in mana extraction and magitech, believing they will change the world for the better. She constantly seeks new ways to use mana and control its energy, even at the cost of traditional ethical boundaries.

Personal gain: She has a deep need for her peers' recognition and respect. She wants to be acknowledged as a visionary, but fears that her secrets, including her involvement in the mana leak, might ultimately destroy her career.

Help the miners: Though she pays little attention to her experiments' ethical implications, she does care about improving the miners' lives. She believes magitech can solve problems such as exposure to mana dust, but often focuses so intently on the larger picture that she overlooks the human cost.

Secrets

A miner abducted for experiments: After the disaster, Dr. Vale abducted a miner who had been exposed to mana dust and was showing early signs of becoming a Withered. She locked him in a secure cellar beneath her laboratory, hoping to study the transformation's early stages and find a cure for the Withering. She believes her experiments could reverse the process, but keeps the miner hidden to avoid unwanted attention.

Mana dust research: Dr. Vale privately studies mana dust and its effects on the body. She believes further research could resolve mana poisoning and the Withering transformation, but is reluctant to share her findings because the information could be dangerous. She fears Manafront would exploit her discoveries for profit rather than for people's benefit.

Information: With successful persuasion or intimidation (DC 15), she can explain mana dust's effects on the body and the transformation into a Withered. She can also reveal one of the Withered's abilities, chosen from its stat block.

Side quest: If the characters show sincere interest in her research and tell her they intend to enter the disaster zone, she asks them to bring back Withered tissue samples. She promises a magic item from her collection as a reward.

Church of Valar

Description

The Church of Valar is a quiet, modest sanctuary amid Dustmere's harsh industrial landscape. Its small stone building is functional and practical, with a hidden beauty in its simplicity. The chapel honors Valar, god of smithing and craft, whose teachings resonate with the village's hardworking miners and artisans.

Inside, calm and stillness offer a brief respite from the noise and dangers of mining life. A simple altar at the front is decorated with iron tools and forged metalwork.

Incense fills the air. The quiet murmurs of miners seeking spiritual guidance can often be heard. Small but well maintained, the chapel offers prayer, reflection, and hope to people whose lives are shaped by the mines' relentless demands.

NPCs

Father Edran Stonehammer

Race: Dwarf.

Age: 63.

Alignment: Lawful good.

Class: Forge Domain cleric of Valar.

Appearance

Father Edran Stonehammer is a dwarf with graying hair and a well-groomed beard reaching his chest. His stone-gray eyes hold the wisdom of many years, softened by a gentleness at odds with the industrial harshness of the town he serves. Plain brown-and-gold robes mark his devotion to Valar, god of the forge and craft.

His weathered face bears the traces of a life serving others. Lines surround his eyes, while his calm expression reveals a deep understanding of the problems facing his neighbors. Scarred by years of manual labor before his religious calling, his hands are gentle and steady as he conducts ceremonies or guides his congregation.

Personality

Father Edran is compassionate, pragmatic, and deeply devoted to his faith. His duty to Valar is unwavering. He sees the god's teachings as more than a means of maintaining order: craftsmanship is divine, and honest work can bring spiritual and personal growth.

His faith does not make him naive. He understands Dustmere's harsh realities and the toll the mines take on its people. In offering spiritual comfort and guidance, he often takes a practical approach, grounding his advice in experience.

Father Edran believes hardship often demands sacrifice. He preaches patience, discipline, and honesty, but remains deeply concerned about the miners' spiritual welfare and the physical and moral damage their work inflicts.

Motivations

Help Dustmere's people: Father Edran wants to serve the villagers and offer spiritual guidance, especially amid the mine's harsh working conditions and constant danger.

Preserve the integrity of Valar's teachings: He believes these teachings are the key to helping miners find peace and balance. Hard work, honor, and craftsmanship are sacred acts. He wants people to understand that their labor is a spiritual practice as well as a physical one.

Protect the miners: Father Edran is deeply troubled by mana dust and the exploitation of miners for corporate gain. He does not shrink from confrontation when his people need help, but his position as a priest requires him to work within his authority to bring about change.

Secrets

Concern about mana dust: Father Edran knows the dangers of mana dust and the risks it poses to miners' health. Though he believes in progress, he worries that the company values profit more than the miners' welfare.

Tensions with Manafront: Father Edran has strained relationships with Ronald Greaves and Brannik.

Miners' Housing

Description

The miners' homes are simple, utilitarian dwellings built for function rather than comfort. Made of stone and wood and frequently battered by the weather, they have small windows and thick wooden doors to keep out cold and dust. Each typically contains a small hearth, a plain wooden table, a few simple chairs, and a small bed.

Work clothes hang from lines or lie in crates. The homes are often overcrowded, with several generations living under one roof. Hardship and fatigue mark their residents' stern faces. These poor living conditions testify to the harshness of a life spent in the mines.

NPCs: Various miners' families, including the family of the miner abducted by Dr. Fenya Vale. This may lead to a side quest.

Working Mines

Description

Dustmere's working mines sustain the village, bringing prosperity and danger alike. Their entrances are marked by rusting metal gates, wooden beams, and large reinforced doors locked at night.

Thick ropes and rail tracks descend deep underground, carrying tools, supplies, and extracted mana dust sealed in containers.

Inside, flickering lanterns light rough, damp walls. Dust weighs heavily in the air, mingling with the faint smell of ore and earth. Pickaxes and other tools echo through the tunnels as workers extend the passages and extract mana dust. Accumulations of dust make the lower levels particularly dangerous, though the miners have learned to navigate these hazards cautiously.

These mines are the heart of Dustmere's economy, but the constant threat of collapse or mana corruption hangs over them.

NPCs

Foreman Ulrich Dorn

Race: Human.

Age: 38.

Alignment: Lawful neutral.

Class: Laborer, potentially trained as a fighter.

Appearance

Ulrich Dorn is powerfully built, muscular, and imposing, like a man who has spent his entire life in the mines. Tall and broad-shouldered, he is often covered in dirt, soot, and mining dust. Years of work have left his clothes torn. His dark chestnut hair is usually cut short, though gray strands are beginning to appear. A scar crosses the left side of his face, a reminder of the many dangers he has encountered underground.

Ulrich's dark brown eyes are cold and calculating, often showing weariness alongside determination. He stands like a leader, upright and purposeful, carrying the weight of responsibility.

He usually wears a leather vest reinforced with metal plates. A whistle on a cord always hangs around his neck, ready to summon the workers. A large pickaxe generally rests over his shoulder, both the tool of his trade and a symbol of his authority among the miners.

Personality

Ulrich Dorn is pragmatic, tough, and resilient. Devoted to the miners, he considers himself their protector and representative in dealings with Manafront. Firm and sometimes stern, he is no cruel taskmaster. He understands the risks of the job and the hardships the miners face, and tries to keep them safe despite mounting pressure from the company.

Ulrich acts decisively, with the businesslike approach needed to manage mining operations under such harsh conditions. Beneath that manner lies a man struggling with the job's ethical compromises. He knows that safety is often sacrificed for profit. The growing exposure to mana dust and its side effects weighs heavily on his conscience.

A man of few words, Ulrich nevertheless cares sincerely for his workers. Their welfare is always his first concern. The tension between his loyalty to the miners and his obligations to Manafront Corp. is a constant source of inner conflict.

Motivations

Protect the miners: Ulrich's foremost goal is to keep his miners alive and safe. He always looks for ways to reduce the dangers they face underground, even if that requires disobeying company orders.

Loyalty to the miners: He feels a profound duty toward those who work under him. Many are like family, and he will do everything possible to ensure their survival, even if it means

challenging Manafront.

The burden of leadership: Ulrich feels trapped by his role as foreman. Although he leads the workers, he remains subject to corporate interests demanding high production and extraction quotas. He often has to make difficult decisions, balancing safety against production targets.

Secrets

Knowledge of mana dust's dangers: Ulrich knows exactly how dangerous mana dust is. He has seen miners become Withered after prolonged exposure, but lacks the power to stop extraction. His guilt weighs heavily on him.

Caught between Manafront and the miners: Loyal to the miners, Ulrich nevertheless owes his position to Manafront Corp. He fears that if he resists too strongly, the company will replace him, or do worse, leaving the miners with no support at all.

A possible underground union: Ulrich secretly helps organize a miners' union, though it is still in its infancy. Knowing that open resistance could have disastrous consequences, he proceeds cautiously. He believes the miners deserve better, and collective action may be their only means of securing change.

Possible assistance: If the characters earn Ulrich's trust (DC 20), he can make arrangements with guards who owe him favors to admit the party secretly into the disaster zone. This may allow the characters to avoid confrontations in the subsequent scenes there.

Act II: Descent into the Depths

Scene 2.1: Entering the Disaster Zone

Location: The abandoned, stricken mine.

Exterior Description

One of Dustmere's many mines has been sealed and closed indefinitely after a mana leak deep within its tunnels. No one in Dustmere knows the whole truth, though Ronald Greaves suspects deliberate sabotage. In fact, the Halcyon Covenant sabotaged the centrifugal harvesters deep underground, causing them to release an uncontrolled quantity of mana dust into the air. Exposure turned the miners into Withered, their bodies slowly decaying into monstrous forms.

After the incident, Greaves and Brannik closed the mine and ordered a quarantine. They do not fully understand the disaster's precise cause, but are determined to conceal it from the miners. Greaves fears mass panic if workers realize that exposure to the dangerous dust could turn them into Withered as well.

Interior Description

The stricken mine resembles Dustmere's other mines, with reinforced walls and dusty corridors. Metal gates and magical seals warn that entry is forbidden and the site is under quarantine. The structure is relatively simple: wooden beams and stone supports stabilize its tunnels. Inside, the air is heavier than in the village's other mines, saturated with mana dust and an unnatural, mysterious hum that still lingers.

Deep underground, the Central Processing Plant is the site of the disaster. Here, mana extraction ran out of control, spreading dust and triggering the Withering transformation. The mine remains dangerous, with pockets of unstable mana and collapsed areas where ley-lines have been disrupted.

Potential Encounters

Brannik's security staff heavily guard the entrance, with orders to prevent unauthorized access and strictly enforce the quarantine. They are alert, but not incorruptible. Some have accepted bribes from looters seeking access to the mine's storage room, where valuable resources or tools may remain.

One looter uses mana dust recreationally and wants to collect more. The others simply want to steal valuable materials left behind. The characters may encounter both looters and guards as they try to enter.

Ways In

- **Stealth:** Make a check opposed by the guards' active Perception, then by the looters' active Perception.
- **Bribery:** 10 gp.
- **Combat:** See the guard and looter stat blocks in the appendix.

The appendix also provides a battle map for this encounter.

Hazards in the Stricken Mine

Mana dust exposure: Once characters without protective equipment, specifically respirators, enter the deeper mine, they are automatically exposed to mana dust. This section begins 100 feet beyond the storage room. Each exposed character must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of mana dust addiction.

Repeat this saving throw every 10 minutes spent in the mine, increasing its DC by 1 each time.

Navigating the mine: The mine is a network of tunnels that do not always connect. Without the miners and foremen who work here, it is easy to become lost, especially as light sources disappear farther down.

To find a way through, the character leading the group must succeed on a Survival check. Make this check with advantage if the party previously visited the other mines.

- **DC 20:** The party finds the Central Processing Plant and reaches its level before another Constitution saving throw is required.
- **DC 15:** The party finds the Central Processing Plant, but the journey takes 30 minutes. Make a DC 13 saving throw with disadvantage; failure gives 2 levels of addiction.
- **DC 10:** The party wanders through the tunnels and finds the Central Processing Plant only after an hour in the mine. Make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw with disadvantage; failure gives 4 levels of addiction.

Scene 2.2: The Central Processing Plant

Location: The Central Processing Plant.

Description

As you descend deeper into the mine, the narrow tunnels open into a vast circular chamber. The air is heavy with shimmering motes of mana dust, catching the dim, flickering light of broken magical lamps. A faint hum of residual magic resonates through the stone walls.

Five tall centrifugal harvesters stand in a row across the chamber, their metal surfaces tarnished and scorched. Some have failed, but three are still running. Their collectors, where mana dust should be gathered, are broken. Dust drawn from the air is spilling straight back into it.

Cracks spread across the floor, littered with shattered crystals and overturned mining equipment. Only an eerie sound disturbs the oppressive silence, echoing faintly in the darkness: wet footsteps, a dragging movement. Something, or someone, is still here.

On the chamber's far side, a small reinforced door is set into the wall. Its seal is intact, but the surrounding stone bears the marks of a desperate struggle.

Significance: This chamber contains the source of the disaster: the uncontrolled release of mana dust and the miners' transformation into Withered. The decaying bodies of exposed miners fill the chamber. They now roam the mine as horrific creatures distorted by decomposition.

In the locked room within the Central Processing Plant, the characters find Alessandra d'Aventis unconscious but alive. Trapped there, she may still be rescued if they arrive in time.

The characters can also find clues identifying the Halcyon Covenant's sabotage and evidence that this was a deliberate attempt to expose the dangers of mana harvesting, rather than an accident.

Encounter, Withered: Newborn Withered. The appendix provides a map and stat block.

Possible Clues

- A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Arcana) check examining the centrifuges reveals deliberate sabotage rather than a natural failure.
- Casting *speak with dead* on any dead miner reveals a fragmented account: they came, opponents of progress... an explosion, then nothing.
- If Alessandra is rescued and revived, she reports seeing black-robed figures shortly before the centrifuges exploded. They said that the false light had come to an end. This clue calls for a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check.

Encounter, Brannik: After completing the investigation and returning to the surface, the party may meet Brannik and his men at the entrance storage area. Depending on the party's earlier conduct, they have come to inspect the situation, responded to the noise of fighting with the guards, arrived to intimidate the characters, or intend to kill them if they threatened Greaves or Brannik.

If combat breaks out and the party previously established good relations with the miners, Matron Ilsa, Ulrich Dorn, or Dr. Fenya Vale, each ally arrives to help. The miners and Ulrich reduce the number of enemies; Ilsa and Vale join the fight.

Map: Stricken mine entrance and storage area.

Act III: The Bitter Truth

Scene 3.1: The Covenant's Hand

Location: An old woodland grove near the mine.

The characters may find this place by:

- Following tracks from the mine with a successful DC 15 Survival check; or
- Asking in Dustmere about priests or people in dark robes. Matron Ilsa, Brannik if no confrontation has occurred, and various miners may have seen them; or
- Questioning Ronald Greaves after the confrontation with Brannik, using persuasion or intimidation (DC 15).

Description

Not far from Dustmere, beyond stony mining paths and a stretch of ancient woodland, lies an old grove. Its dense, twisted trees remain untouched by the expanding mana extraction industry. Cooler air carries a faint scent of earth and damp moss. Thick branches block most of the sunlight, leaving the grove in perpetual half-light.

Canvas tents and makeshift shelters encircle a small ritual circle marked with chalk, stones, and simple wooden totems. Small mana lamps glimmer dimly between the trees, giving the

camp an eerie appearance at night.

The strangers here belong to the Halcyon Covenant, a sect opposed to mana industrialization and determined to expose its dangers. They rest, perform rituals, and plan their next moves here. Natural cover and concealment enchantments protect the well-hidden camp from accidental discovery.

The grove itself seems to hum faintly with concealed magical energy, as if nearby ley-lines still resonate underground. This is one reason the Covenant chose it for their camp and rituals.

Encounter: Elaris Vaen

Elaris argues that the sabotage was righteous and necessary to awaken the world to the dangers of its greed for magitech.

He confirms that neither he nor his followers caused Alessandra's disappearance. That was Brannik's doing.

Elaris addresses Arthur de'Vis, a player character, drawing attention to his sword. He explains that its name means "Cursed Sword" in Elvish, and that the devils of the Red Vaults use such a sword to corrupt mortal souls. He offers to reveal the sword's patron if Arthur and his companions leave Elaris and his followers in peace.

Interaction Options

- **Persuasion:** Convince him to stop trying to sabotage Dustmere (DC 20).
- **Intimidation:** DC 25.
- **Combat.**

If a fight occurs, the appendix provides the battle map and stat blocks.

Scene 3.2: Return to Vordanne

Location: The Gilded Bastion, headquarters of the Bronze Wardens.

Lucien is reunited with Alessandra or mourns her death. The adventurers receive their reward regardless of the outcome.

If Alessandra is rescued, she becomes an active advocate for miners' safety in Vordanne's social circles, a new ally for reformist forces.

If Alessandra dies, Lucien withdraws from public life. His grief becomes bitterness toward both the Covenant and Manafront, making him a dangerous political wildcard.

Consequences of the Characters' Choices

- 1 Did the characters reveal what happened in Dustmere, including the mine disaster and the Withered?
- 2 Did they reveal the Halcyon Covenant's role in the incident?
- 3 Did they stand up for the miners, help Ulrich Dorn, and oppose Brannik?

Endings

1. The Burning Truth

Conditions:

- The mine incident is exposed.
- The Halcyon Covenant's role is exposed.

Outcome:

The truth damages Manafront Corp.'s reputation and that of the entire magitech industry. People fear the Withering transformation and protest in the streets.

The news wins the Halcyon Covenant more sympathizers. Meanwhile, magitech corporations strengthen security at their facilities and begin persecuting religious ministers near magitech sites.

Ronald Greaves is dismissed as director of the Dustmere mine. Dr. Fenya Vale becomes acting director until a permanent replacement is chosen.

If Brannik was defeated but survived: Law enforcement arrests him for his crimes against the miners.

If the miners and Ulrich Dorn received support: Manafront Corp. is forced to make concessions and allows Ulrich to establish Dustmere's first miners' union.

These developments increase the price of magitech items in the city by 10%.

2. A Blow Against Magitech

Conditions:

- The mine incident is exposed.
- The Halcyon Covenant's role remains concealed.

Outcome:

The truth damages Manafront Corp.'s reputation and that of the entire magitech industry. People fear the Withering transformation and protest in the streets.

Ronald Greaves is dismissed as director of the Dustmere mine. Dr. Fenya Vale becomes acting director until a permanent replacement is chosen.

If Brannik was defeated but survived: Law enforcement arrests him for his crimes against the miners.

If the miners and Ulrich Dorn received support: Manafront Corp. is forced to make concessions and allows Ulrich to establish Dustmere's first miners' union.

These developments increase the price of magitech items in the city by 10%.

The Halcyon Covenant's position remains unchanged, but its followers feel freer to act and become more radical. If Elaris Vaen survived, his cell grows.

3. Religious Vendetta

Conditions:

- Details of the mine incident remain undisclosed.
- The Halcyon Covenant is accused of sabotaging the magitech facility in Dustmere.

Outcome:

Reports of religious terrorists spark a surge in anti-religious movements in Dustmere and Vordanne. People attack clergy and churches, forcing some churches to close.

The price of clerical services and goods in the city increases by 10%.

The Halcyon Covenant suffers reputational damage and loses some members. Those who remain become more radical and prepare attacks, including against the adventurers. If Elaris Vaen survived, he retreats further into the shadows and prepares the next stage of the Covenant's campaign, driven more by revenge than ideology.

Ronald Greaves remains director of the Dustmere mine.

If Brannik was defeated but survived: He remains head of security, but Greaves keeps him under control.

If the miners and Ulrich Dorn received support: Greaves improves working conditions, but no formal Dustmere miners' union is established.

4. Status Quo

Conditions:

- The mine incident remains concealed.
- The Halcyon Covenant's involvement remains concealed.

Outcome:

The status quo endures in Vordanne and Dustmere. Corporations continue extracting mana dust and earning profits, while the Halcyon Covenant continues plotting against them.

The public remains unaware, but strange rumors begin to spread among miners: missing workers, an unexplained mana sickness, and whispers of a gathering darkness deep in the mines.

If Brannik was defeated but survived: He remains head of security, but Greaves keeps him under control.

If the miners and Ulrich Dorn received support: Greaves improves working conditions, but no formal Dustmere miners' union is established.

Reference: Guidance and Mechanics

Random NPC Names

Human Names

- Lucius Greyhill
- Edwin Thorn
- Fiona Blackstone
- Celine Ferris
- Basil Ravenshaw
- Vera Cross
- Harlan Brightrunner
- Leona Valmont
- Eli Mercer
- Cyril Devereaux

Dwarf Names

- Thrain Earthbrow
- Rurik Stoneshield
- Kara Ironfist
- Dorrin Deepforge
- Gilda Coppervein
- Corin Hammerstriker
- Felinor Frostbeard
- Balin Stoneheart
- Eldrin Fireforge
- Tilda Ironside

Elf Names

- Aeloria Lighthaven
- Vaelan Starfire
- Lirel Moonwhisper
- Tendrilith Sunstrike
- Elandris Starleaf
- Aendir Stormhold
- Sereniel Dawnwhisper
- Kalend Nightbloom
- Valendris Earthglades
- Talindra Swiftshadow

Tiefling Names

- Zariel Ashbane
- Maris Nightflame
- Kaelin Twilightwhisper
- Tazra Fireheart
- Lilith Shadowtide
- Balthazar Inferno
- Soren Emberbloom
- Xandria Darkflare
- Ezren Dreadfury
- Vira Felstorm

Halfling Names

- Daren Berryspark
- Tilly Bramblefoot
- Finley Tumblehill
- Pip Bramblerose
- Milo Stonebranch
- Coraline Goodfellow
- Bramble Swiftfoot
- Rory Goldleaf
- Merry Windwalker
- Lark Meadowbreeze

Other Names and Affiliations

- Valara Dawnwanderer (Halcyon Covenant)
- Fergus Shatterstone (Dustmere miner)
- Eris Thorncloak (independent agent)
- Jareth Nightstone (mercenary)
- Boris Ironclaw (mercenary leader)
- Selen Firestar (magitech researcher / innovator)
- Aurelia Brightville (magitech engineer)
- Lorien Blackwater (black-market dealer)
- Kaelen Goldcrest (merchant)
- Sira Windfury (alchemist)

Conditions

Unconscious

- An unconscious creature is incapacitated, cannot move or speak, and is unaware of its surroundings.
- It drops anything it is holding and falls prone.
- It automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against it have advantage.
- Any attack that hits it is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet of it.

Frightened

- A frightened creature has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while the source of its fear is within its line of sight.
- It cannot willingly move closer to the source of its fear.

Exhaustion

Certain special abilities and environmental hazards, including malnutrition and prolonged exposure to extreme cold or heat, can cause exhaustion. Exhaustion has six levels. An effect gives a creature one or more levels as specified in its description.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

If a creature already suffering from exhaustion is affected by another effect that causes exhaustion, its current level increases by the amount specified in that effect's description.

A creature suffers the effects of its current exhaustion level and all lower levels. For example, a creature at level 2 has half speed and disadvantage on ability checks.

An effect that removes exhaustion reduces its level as specified. If the creature's level falls below 1, exhaustion ends.

Finishing a long rest reduces exhaustion by 1 level if the creature has eaten and drunk. Being raised from the dead also reduces a creature's exhaustion by 1 level.

Invisible

- An invisible creature cannot be seen without magic or a special sense. For hiding, it is considered heavily obscured; other creatures are effectively blinded with respect to it. Its location can be detected by sounds it makes or tracks it leaves.
- Attack rolls against it have disadvantage, and its own attack rolls have advantage.

Incapacitated

- An incapacitated creature cannot take actions or reactions.
- It automatically fails checks to resist being grappled or shoved.
- A creature loses concentration on a spell if it becomes incapacitated.

Deafened

A deafened creature cannot hear and automatically fails ability checks that rely on hearing.

Petrified

- A petrified creature, along with any nonmagical objects it wears or carries, is transformed into a solid, inert substance, usually stone. Its weight increases tenfold, and it stops aging.
- It is incapacitated, cannot move or speak, and is unaware of its surroundings.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage.
- It automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws.
- It has resistance to all damage.
- It is immune to poison and disease. Any poison or disease already affecting it is suspended, rather than removed.

Restrained

- A restrained creature's speed is 0, and it cannot benefit from bonuses to speed.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage, and its own attack rolls have disadvantage.
- It has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.

Blinded

- A blinded creature cannot see and automatically fails ability checks that rely on sight.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage, and its own attack rolls have disadvantage.

Poisoned

A poisoned creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Charmed

- A charmed creature cannot attack its charmer or target the charmer with an ability or magical effect that causes harm.
- The charmer has advantage on ability checks made to interact socially with the creature.

Stunned

- A stunned creature is incapacitated, cannot move, and speaks falteringly.
- It automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage.

Paralyzed

- A paralyzed creature is incapacitated and cannot move or speak.
- It automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage.
- Any attack that hits it is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet of it.

Prone

- A prone creature can move only by crawling unless it stands up, ending the condition.
- It has disadvantage on attack rolls.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage if the attacker is within 5 feet. Otherwise, they have disadvantage.

Grappled

- A grappled creature's speed is 0, and it cannot benefit from bonuses to speed.
- The condition ends if the grappler becomes incapacitated.
- It also ends if an effect moves the grappled creature beyond the reach of the grappler or the grappling effect, such as being pushed away by the *thunderwave* spell.

Mana Dust and Addiction

Mana Dust: Substance

Form: A rare, fine, glowing powder, inhaled or ingested.

Effects, lasting 10 minutes:

- Advantage on Arcana and magic-related Perception checks.
- Spellcasters gain +1 to spell attack rolls, and their spell save DC increases by 1.

Addiction saving throw: A Constitution saving throw with a DC of 12 + 1 for each use during the past week.

Failure: Gain 1 level of addiction.

Addiction Levels

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on skill checks while not under the effects of mana dust.
2	Disadvantage on saving throws while not under the effects of mana dust.
3	Gain 1 level of exhaustion without mana dust.
4	Gain 2 levels of exhaustion without mana dust. If this addiction level is gained rapidly, such as in the mine, take 1d8 psychic damage when gaining it.
5	Cannot recover spell slots without exposure to mana dust. If this addiction level is gained rapidly, such as in the mine, take 2d8 psychic damage when gaining it and immediately make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to determine whether the first stage of Withering begins.

Recovery: Abstain for 2 weeks and make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw once per week. *Greater restoration* or specialized medication immediately reduces addiction by 1 level.

Transformation into a Withered

Stages of Withering

Stage	Symptoms	Mechanics	Reversibility
Thirst	Hyperfocus on mana dust	Addiction penalties	Fully reversible
Drought	Paranoia, dehydration	Exhaustion 3; disadvantage on all social skills	Difficult to reverse
Wilting	Madness, seeking mana	Exhaustion 4; vulnerability to radiant damage; resistance to healing	Very difficult to reverse
Withering	Complete transformation	Becomes a monster controlled as an NPC	Irreversible

Trigger: At addiction level 5, make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw each day. On a failure, advance one stage along the transformation track.

Appendix: Stat Blocks

Encounter Before Entering the Mine

Brannik's Tough Fighter

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 18 (chain mail, shield)

Initiative +0 (11)

HP 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	18	+4	+6
DEX	11	+0	+0
CON	14	+2	+4
INT	11	+0	+0
WIS	10	+0	+0
CHA	9	-1	-1

Resistances Poison

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

Traits

Dwarven Resilience. Brannik's tough fighter has advantage on saving throws against spells and against being charmed, paralyzed, or poisoned.

Phalanx Formation. The fighter has advantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws while within 5 feet of a duergar ally carrying a shield.

Actions

Multiattack. The fighter makes two Shortsword or Javelin attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The duergar magically becomes invisible for 1 hour, or until it attacks, casts a spell, uses Enlarge, or loses concentration, as though concentrating on a spell. Any equipment it wears or carries becomes invisible with it.

Bonus Actions

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it wears or carries. While enlarged, it is Large, doubles the damage dice of Strength-based weapon attacks, already included in the attacks above, and has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws. If there is insufficient room to become Large, it reaches the largest size the available space permits.

Looter

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 15

Initiative +3 (13)

HP 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	15	+2	+4
DEX	16	+3	+5
CON	14	+2	+2
INT	14	+2	+2
WIS	11	+0	+2
CHA	14	+2	+2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Equipment Scimitar, studded leather armor, light crossbow

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

Actions

Multiattack. The looter makes two attacks with its Scimitar or Light Crossbow in any combination.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. *Trigger:* A melee weapon attack hits the looter while it is holding a weapon.

Response: The looter adds 2 to its AC against that attack, potentially causing it to miss.

Encounter After Leaving the Mine

Brannik

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 20 (plate armor, shield)

Initiative +0 (11)

HP 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 25 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	18	+4	+7
DEX	11	+0	+0
CON	17	+3	+6
INT	12	+1	+1
WIS	12	+1	+1
CHA	14	+2	+2

Resistances Poison

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon

CR 6 (XP 2300; PB +3)

Traits

Dwarven Resilience. Brannik has advantage on saving throws against spells and against being charmed, paralyzed, or poisoned.

Phalanx Formation. Brannik has advantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws while within 5 feet of a duergar ally carrying a shield.

Actions

Multiattack. The duergar makes three Psychic-Attuned Hammer or Javelin attacks and uses Call to Attack.

Psychic-Attuned Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage while enlarged, plus 5 (1d10) psychic damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Call to Attack. Up to three allied duergar within 120 feet that can hear this duergar may each use their reaction to make one weapon attack.

Invisibility (Recharge 4-6). The duergar magically becomes invisible for 1 hour, or until it attacks, casts a spell, uses Enlarge, or loses concentration, as though concentrating on a spell. Any equipment it wears or carries becomes invisible with it.

Bonus Actions

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it wears or carries. While enlarged, it is Large, doubles the damage dice of Strength-based weapon attacks, already included in the attacks above, and has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws. If there is insufficient room to become Large, it reaches the largest size the available space permits.

Reactions

Clear Instructions. When an ally this duergar can see makes a d20 roll, the duergar can roll a d6 and add the result to its ally's roll. The duergar itself takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage.

Brannik's Tough Fighter

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 18 (chain mail, shield)

Initiative +0 (11)

HP 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	18	+4	+6
DEX	11	+0	+0
CON	14	+2	+4
INT	11	+0	+0
WIS	10	+0	+0
CHA	9	-1	-1

Resistances Poison

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

Traits

Dwarven Resilience. Brannik's tough fighter has advantage on saving throws against spells and against being charmed, paralyzed, or poisoned.

Phalanx Formation. The fighter has advantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws while within 5 feet of a duergar ally carrying a shield.

Actions

Multiattack. The fighter makes two Shortsword or Javelin attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The duergar magically becomes invisible for 1 hour, or until it attacks, casts a spell, uses Enlarge, or loses concentration, as though concentrating on a spell. Any equipment it wears or carries becomes invisible with it.

Bonus Actions

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it wears or carries. While enlarged, it is Large, doubles the damage dice of Strength-based weapon attacks, already included in the attacks above, and has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws. If there is insufficient room to become Large, it reaches the largest size the available space permits.

Brannik's Recruit

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 16 (scale mail, shield)

Initiative +0 (11)

HP 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	14	+2	+4
DEX	11	+0	+0
CON	14	+2	+4
INT	11	+0	+0
WIS	10	+0	+0
CHA	9	-1	-1

Resistances Poison

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Traits

Dwarven Resilience. Brannik's recruit has advantage on saving throws against spells and against being charmed, paralyzed, or poisoned.

Actions

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it wears or carries. While enlarged, it is Large, doubles the damage dice of Strength-based weapon attacks, already included in the attacks below, and has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws. If there is insufficient room to become Large, it reaches the largest size the available space permits.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The duergar magically becomes invisible for 1 hour, or until it attacks, casts a spell, uses Enlarge, or loses concentration, as though concentrating on a spell. Any equipment it wears or carries becomes invisible with it.

War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, or 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.

Woodland Encounter

Elaris Vaen

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 16

Initiative +3 (16)

HP 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	8	-1	-1
DEX	16	+3	+3
CON	16	+3	+3
INT	17	+3	+6
WIS	14	+2	+5
CHA	11	+0	+3

Skills Perception +5, Arcana +6, Religion +5

Resistances Necrotic damage

Immunities Charmed, frightened

Senses Truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Draconic, Dwarvish

CR 6 (XP 2300; PB +3)

Traits

Incorruptible Vessel. Elaris Vaen cannot be possessed by celestials, fiends, or undead.

Actions

Multiattack. Elaris Vaen makes two Grave Burst attacks.

Grave Burst. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 3) necrotic or radiant damage, his choice.

Divine Revelation (Recharge 5-6). Elaris channels divine power into the mind of a creature he can see within 60 feet, exposing it to agonizing divine revelations. The target makes a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, it takes 36 (8d8) psychic damage and is incapacitated for 1 minute, during which it vomits and babbles incoherently. On a success, it takes half the damage only. An incapacitated target may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Spellcasting. Elaris casts one of the following spells without material components, using Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks):

- **At will:** *detect evil and good, mage armor (self only), mage hand.*
- **2/day each:** *protection from evil and good, remove curse, speak with dead.*
- **1/day each:** *banishment, dispel evil and good.*

Covenant Minister

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 13

Initiative +0 (10)

HP 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	16	+3	+3
DEX	10	+0	+0
CON	12	+1	+1
INT	13	+1	+1
WIS	16	+3	+3
CHA	13	+1	+1

Skills Perception +5, Medicine +7, Religion +5

Equipment Mace, chain shirt, holy symbol

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages Common

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

Actions

Multiattack. The minister makes two attacks, using Mace and Sacred Flame in any combination.

Mace. *Melee Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (2d4) radiant damage.

Radiant Flame. *Ranged Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

Spellcasting. The minister casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks):

- **At will:** *light, thaumaturgy.*
- **1/day:** *spirit guardians.*

Bonus Actions

Divine Aid (3/Day). The minister casts *bless*, *dispel magic*, *healing word*, or *lesser restoration*, using Wisdom as its spellcasting ability.

Covenant Acolyte

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

AC 12

Initiative +1 (11)

HP 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	15	+2	+2
DEX	12	+1	+1
CON	14	+2	+2
INT	10	+0	+0
WIS	10	+0	+0
CHA	11	+0	+0

Equipment Mace, heavy crossbow, leather armor

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

Traits

Pack Tactics. The acolyte has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the acolyte's allies is within 5 feet of that creature and is not incapacitated.

Actions

Mace. *Melee Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Mine Encounter

Newborn Withered

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

AC 13

Initiative +3 (16)

HP 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	14	+2	+2
DEX	16	+3	+5
CON	16	+3	+5
INT	5	-3	-3
WIS	12	+1	+1
CHA	6	-2	-2

Skills Perception +3

Resistances Necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Immunities Charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Understands Common

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

Traits

Mana Sense. The newborn Withered can detect magic and spellcasters within 120 feet, even through walls and solid barriers.

Magic Resistance. The newborn Withered has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rift Frenzy. When the newborn Withered has fewer than half its hit points remaining, 22 HP or fewer, it enters a frenzy:

- It gains advantage on attack rolls.
- Its attacks deal an additional 1d6 damage.
- It loses its Magic Resistance trait.
- Attack rolls against it have advantage.

Actions

Multiattack. The newborn Withered makes two Claws attacks or uses Mana Siphon once.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Mana Siphon (Recharge 5-6). *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage. If the target is a spellcaster, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or lose one available spell slot of the lowest level, as though that slot had been expended to cast a spell. In that case, the newborn Withered gains temporary hit points equal to $5 \times$ the level of the lost slot, to a maximum of 10.

Laboratory Stat Blocks

Dr. Fenya Vale

Medium humanoid, neutral

AC 15

Initiative +2 (12)

HP 81 (18d8)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	9	-1	-1
DEX	14	+2	+2
CON	11	+0	+0
INT	17	+3	+6
WIS	12	+1	+4
CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Perception +4, Arcana +6, History +6

Equipment Wand

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Draconic

CR 6 (XP 2300; PB +3)

Actions

Multiattack. Dr. Fenya Vale makes three Arcane Burst attacks.

Arcane Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) force damage.

Spellcasting. Dr. Fenya Vale casts the following spells, using Intelligence as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks):

- **At will:** *detect magic, light, mage armor* (included in AC), *mage hand, prestidigitation*.
- **2/day each:** *fireball* (4th-level version), *invisibility*.
- **1/day each:** *cone of cold, fly*.

Bonus Actions

Misty Step (3/Day). Dr. Fenya Vale casts *misty step*, using Intelligence as her spellcasting ability.

Reactions

Protective Magic (3/Day). Dr. Fenya Vale casts *counterspell* or *shield* in response to the corresponding spell's trigger, using Intelligence as her spellcasting ability.

Dr. Vale's Assistant

Medium humanoid, neutral

AC 14

Initiative +1 (12)

HP 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	10	+0	+0
DEX	12	+1	+1
CON	12	+1	+1
INT	16	+3	+5
WIS	12	+1	+3
CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Investigation +5

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Draconic

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Actions

Arcane Discharge. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) lightning damage. If the target is a creature, it cannot take reactions until the start of its next turn.

Spellcasting. The agent can cast the following spells, using Intelligence as its spellcasting ability:

- **At will:** *dancing lights, mage hand.*
- **1/day each:** *comprehend languages, identify* (cast as an action), *mage armor.*

Bonus Actions

Misty Step (3/Day). Dr. Fenya Vale casts *misty step*, using Intelligence as her spellcasting ability.

Reactions

Protective Sigil. The agent adds 2 to its AC against one attack that would hit it. It must be able to see the attacker and have a free hand.

Matron Ilsa (Father Edran Stonehammer)

Medium humanoid, neutral good

AC 13

Initiative +0 (10)

HP 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

Ability	Score	Modifier	Save
STR	16	+3	+3
DEX	10	+0	+0
CON	12	+1	+3
INT	13	+1	+1
WIS	16	+3	+5
CHA	13	+1	+1

Skills Medicine +7, Religion +5, Perception +5

Equipment Chain mail, holy symbol, mace

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Infernal

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

Actions

Multiattack. Matron Ilsa makes two attacks, using Mace and Sacred Flame in any combination.

Mace. *Melee Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (2d4) radiant damage.

Radiant Flame. *Ranged Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

Spellcasting. Matron Ilsa casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks):

- **At will:** *light, thaumaturgy.*
- **1/day:** *spirit guardians.*

Bonus Actions

Divine Aid (3/Day). Matron Ilsa casts *bles*, *dispel magic*, *healing word*, or *lesser restoration*, using Wisdom as her spellcasting ability.

Maps from the original adventure

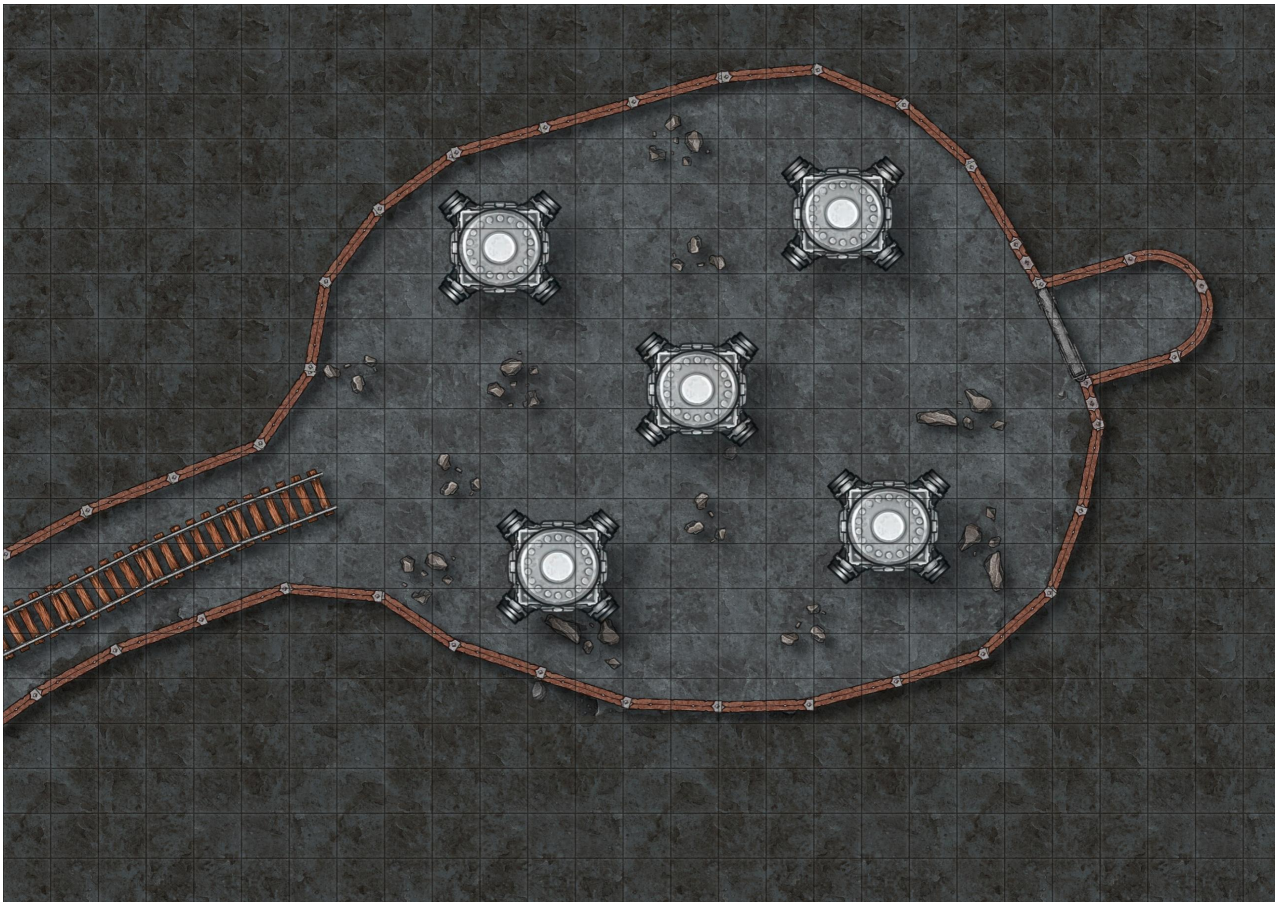
The three encounter maps below reproduce the images embedded in the authored adventure, pages 31-33. Room descriptions and encounter rules remain in the text.

Mine approach



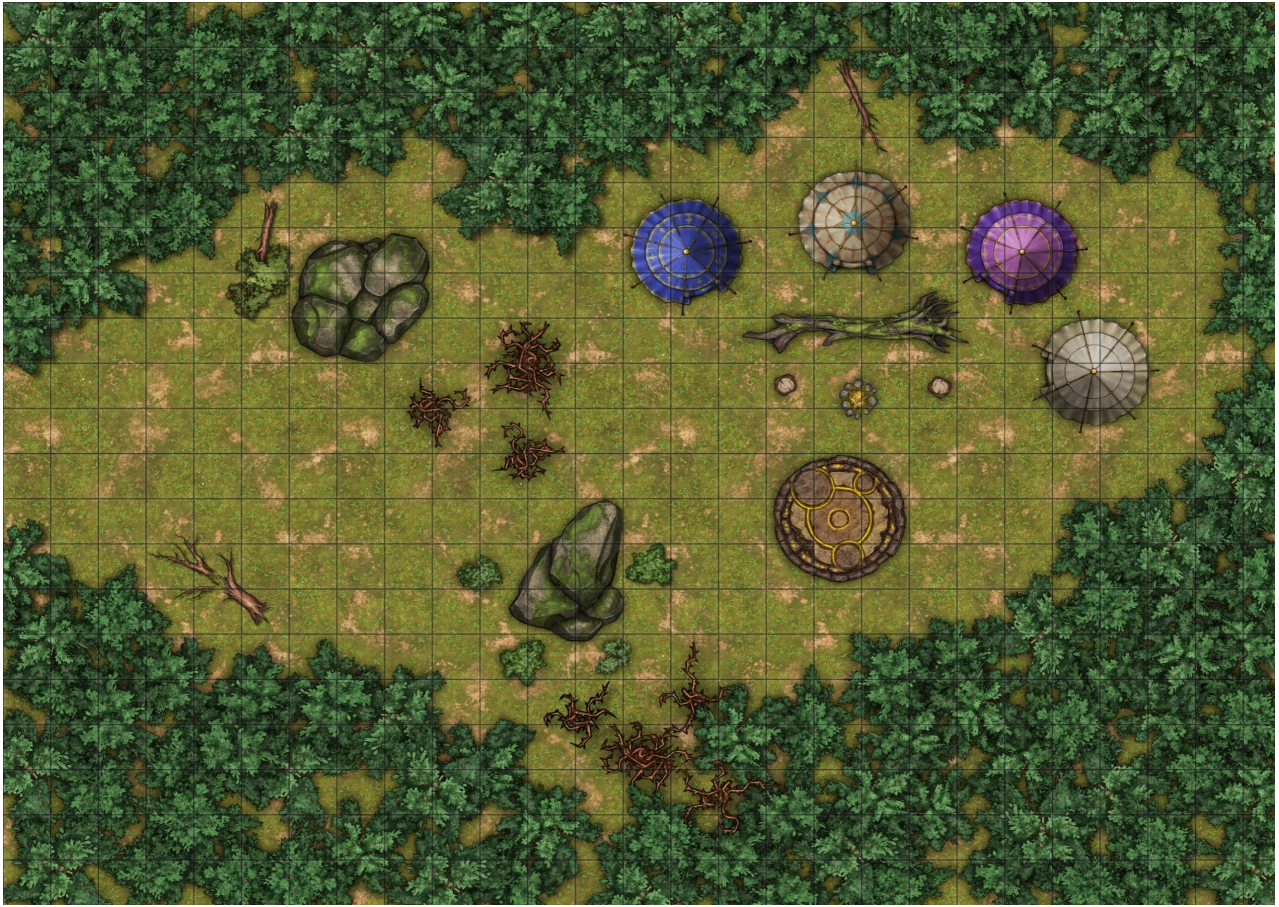
Original mine-approach encounter map.

The Withering chamber



Original chamber encounter map, with five sealed structures and a rail approach.

Elaris's camp



Original forest-camp encounter map.

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