

LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE MODULE

FIFTH EDITION FANTASY #1

GLITTERDOOM



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Glitterdoom is an adventure designed for use with the 5th edition of the first fantasy roleplaying game. It is intended for 4-6 3rd level characters and can be completed in a single session. During the course of this scenario, the party accompanies a dwarven explorer dedicated to reclaiming an old dwarven

mine from the foul creatures dwelling within. The horrid residents of the forgotten gold mine are cursed dwarves, turned into a pitiful state due to their own greed and a divine curse known as the *glitterdoom*. This adventure also introduces a new dwarven sub-race and a new background for use in your 5th edition campaign.

BACKGROUND



The Steelhand Clan worked the high mountains for many centuries, excavating rich deposits of gold and iron to fashion magnificent smithy work and jewelry. The Steelhands were a small clan, and their minuscule numbers meant they had to work veins of gold and iron far removed from one another, bringing the mines' yields back to their small central hall. To protect both these far-flung mines and the dwarves who worked them, the Steelhands built defensive complexes atop each, using these redoubts as barracks for workers, storage for ore, and other mundane purposes.

The Knuckle was one of these holdfasts, positioned above a gold seam that snaked through the earth far away from the Steelhand Hall. It was one of the loneliest mines in the mountains, a place worked largely by young dwarves seeking to establish themselves within the clan hierarchy and willing to endure a long separation from their kin to do so. This solitude and their drive to earn their fortunes would prove to be a disastrous combination.

The Knuckle's gold vein was of modest yield, but as the miners followed the seam deeper into the earth, they uncovered another, much richer gold vein. The discovery of this unprecedented deposit of lustrous ore inflamed the miners' natural dwarven proclivity for avarice, manifesting in a rare form of psychosis known as *aurbrek* or "gold madness." The bane of dwarvenkind, this insanity gripped the miners, causing them to covet the gold above all else—even to the point of forsaking friendships and clan ties. The *aurbrek* manifested in either of two ways amongst the miners: an all-consuming mania to extract as much of the metal as possible, or a murderous urge to slay one's comrades so as to keep the gleaming ore for oneself.

Even the mine's resident priest, a cleric devoted to the dwarven god of secrets under the mountain and untapped riches, proved susceptible to the madness. Forsaking his deity for a darker god of old, the cleric—now known as Greedyguts—called down evil powers to smite his fellows and claim the mine's gold for himself. This divine curse, known as the *glitterdoom*, fell upon the miners, transforming them into hellish forms according to how the *aurbrek* afflicted them. In short order, the Knuckle was lost, drowned in a tide of blood and greed.

As the *glitterdoom* rampaged through the Knuckle, the dwarves back at Steelhand Hall faced their own catastrophe. A horde of goblins boiled up from its mountainous warrens seeking to reclaim the peaks for its own sly race. The horde descended upon Steelhand Hall and swiftly overwhelmed the small clan, slaying the dwarves to the last. With Steelhand Hall in goblin hands, there was no one left to retake the Knuckle and banish the curse that gripped it. In the following centuries, both Steelhand Hall and the mine have been forgotten, becoming yet another old dwarven hold lost to time and goblinkind.

Recently, however, a dwarf named Okkar Ironeyes has arrived in the mountains determined to discover the location of the Knuckle Mine and reclaim it for dwarvenkind. Following tattered maps and half-forgotten clues, Okkar searched the mountains for weeks before finally chancing upon the mine's holdfast. He broke open the long-sealed gates and found the horrors within have not faded with the passing centuries. Barely escaping with his life, Okkar now seeks assistance from bold adventurers to help drive out the denizens of the Knuckle and clean it of its lingering taint. Having heard tavern tales of the PCs' exploits, he approaches them with a generous offer: Help retake the Knuckle and a goodly portion of its ancient treasures is theirs for the taking.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Glitterdoom begins with Okkar Ironeyes approaching the party with his offer. The location in which Okkar and the party meet is left to the GM to determine. The dwarf may sidle up to them in their local tavern, knock boldly upon their inn room door, or approach them through other channels as befits the PCs' current whereabouts and situations. After introducing himself, he launches into his tale and proposition.

OKKAR'S STORY

Okkar explains he is a sojourner dwarf (see *Appendix A*), a member of that sub-race of displaced and nomadic dwarves searching for lost halls in the hills and mountains to settle and end their wanderings. Okkar has taken it upon himself of late to seek out Steelhand Hall, a dwarven stronghold believed to have been lost to orc or goblins some centuries ago. His quest led him to a mine known as the Knuckle, where Steelhand dwarves once pried gold from the ground. The Knuckle was lost around the same time as Steelhand Hall fell, and a few vague rumors of a terrible fate befalling the mine survived to the present day. Okkar hoped that clues to Steelhand Hall's whereabouts might exist inside the old mine.

Entering the Knuckle's upper level, Okkar was confronted by what appeared to be dwarven ghosts, their bodies encrusted with mineral deposits. Okkar tried to fend off their attacks, but the ghosts' touch drained his spirit and caused his flesh to temporarily become calcified. Outnumbered and facing certain death, Okkar fled the Knuckle. His flesh recovered after several days and he's now determined to return to the mine. However, he realizes he needs help in retaking the Knuckle from whatever accursed things dwell inside it.

Okkar's offer is straightforward: He wants the party to accompany him back to the Knuckle and help root out the horrors within, clearing it of evil and perhaps locating clues to the location of Steelhand Hall. In return for its assistance, the party is entitled to equal shares of whatever treasures lie within. Once the mine is cleared, Okkar also intends to evaluate the possibility of re-opening the Knuckle and calling upon fellow diaspora dwarves to work it.

If the party accepts his offer, he allows a few days if necessary to prepare, but wants to depart as quickly as possible. Should they refuse to aid the dwarf, the adventure is at an end. Okkar alone knows the location of the Knuckle and will not share it with the party.

OKKAR IRONEYES

Okkar Ironeyes is a male sojourner dwarf, 150 years of age. His skin is ruddy from the sun and wind, and bears numerous small scars and wrinkles. A hammer-shaped brand adorns his left cheek, which Okkar believes that, as a symbol of his deity, protects him in his journeys. His hair and beard are dark brown, speckled with dirty blond strands, and his eyes a clear amber color. Okkar can be stoic and sullen in general, but he grows more animated and enthusiastic when speaking of his search and the possibility of finding a permanent home for his people.

Okkar accompanies the party to the Knuckle as an NPC and is considered another PC when dividing XP. If reduced to 0 hit points, treat Okkar as a PC, allowing him to make death saving throws to survive and stabilize.

OKKAR IRONEYES

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful good

AC: 17 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points: 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Strength +4, Constitution +4

Skills: Athletics +4, Survival +3

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 11

Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Goblin

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Gear: traveler's clothing, explorer's kit, two crossbow bolt cases, 40 bolts, 2 flasks of oil, *potion of healing*

ACTIONS

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

Light Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

THE KNUCKLE MINE



The Knuckle gets its name from the protruding knob of rock in which the holdfast was constructed. The upper level serves as a defensible redoubt and living quarters, while the actual mine is located beneath this section.

GENERAL FEATURES

Conditions: The Knuckle hasn't been disturbed for centuries, and most surfaces bear a thick carpet of dust. Occasional drafts blowing up from the mine do move the dust about some, so the layers of grime are uneven within the Knuckle. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check notices that tracks appear throughout the upper level of the Knuckle, often disappearing into solid rock. These trails are made by both Greedyguts and the stoneghosts and lead no place in particular.

Ceilings: Unless otherwise noted, rooms and passages in the Knuckle have ceilings of flat, worked stone measuring 8' in height.

Light: The Knuckle's upper level is unlit. Torch sconces line the walls every 30' on the upper level, holding burnt-out brands that exhausted their fuel long ago. The mine is dark with the exception of the altar candles in area 2-1. There are no torch sconces on the lower level.

Doors: The doors of the Knuckle are fashioned from stone with recessed handles carved into their stony faces. Cunningly designed counterweights are hidden within the walls adjacent to each door, making them as easy to open as wooden portals. Each is unlocked except where noted otherwise.

Resting in the Knuckle: Stoneghosts are attracted by living creatures in the Knuckle if they remain in one place too long. As a result, any party attempting to complete a short rest inside the Knuckle finds itself attacked by 1d6 stoneghosts (see area 1-1), disrupting the rest. PCs can take a short rest outside of the Knuckle without incident.

THE KNUCKLE

The Knuckle is located in a cleft of a knobby stone outcropping atop a mountain less than a week's journey from the party's current location. The exact distance and the location of the Knuckle, as well as additional challenges the party and Okkar might face on their journey, are left

to the GM to determine. Once the PCs reach the mountain and party climbs the slope, read the following:

The tall trees fall away as you emerge from the high tree line. Before you is a slope of broken shale, fallen scree, and struggling scrub pines tenaciously clinging to the windswept peak. The mountain's face juts abruptly outward, forming a knobby, knuckle-like protrusion of stone. A deep crack in the stone holds a pair of large, intricately carved doors. A 10' wide stairway of long, broad stairs ascends to the doors. Flanking the stairway and doors in the angled rock walls are the dark, narrow apertures of loopholes.

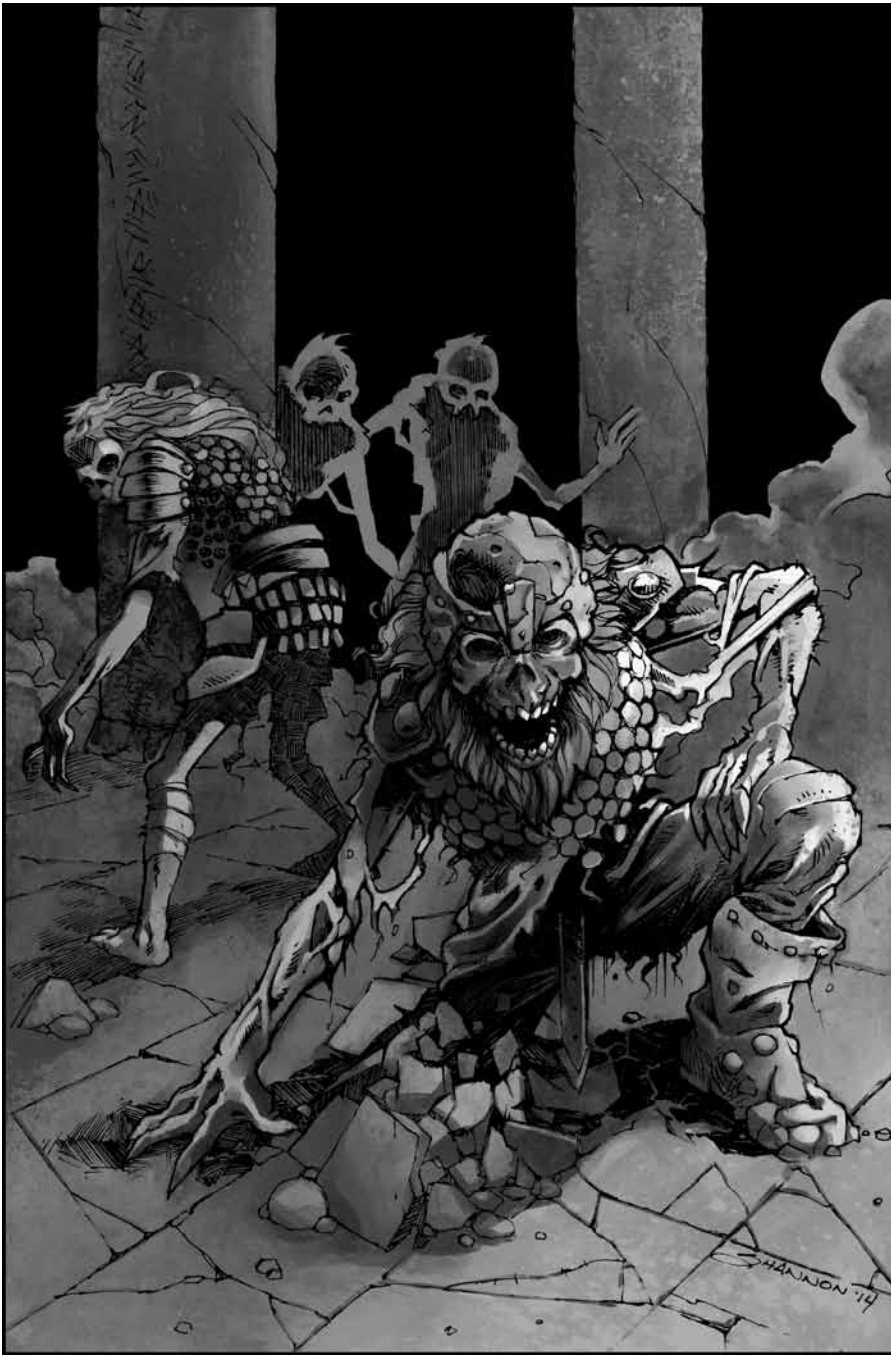
The steps on the stairs are low and broad, designed to accommodate the mule trains that brought supplies to the Knuckle and carried ore away. The loopholes on either side of the stairs are located 15' above the ground. A PC can climb the stone wall to peer in with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check or by being boosted up by his comrades. The loopholes lead to areas 1-3 and 1-8, which appear empty and dark (the stoneghosts in 1-8 are melded into the stone when the PC first arrive and are not visible through the loopholes).

The doors bear skillful geometric carvings that are aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Both doors are closed, and Okkar reveals he left them open when he fled the place after his initial foray into the Knuckle. He also tells the party that he encountered the strange dwarven ghosts in the hall just beyond the front doors and that they should be wary. Okkar can describe area 1-1 but has no other knowledge of the layout or contents of the Knuckle.

AREA 1-1—MULE TRAIN LOADING

ZONE: *Several thick pillars support the ceiling of this chamber, hewn from the mountain stone. Both floor and ceiling are flat and level, worn smooth by dwarven skill and prolonged use. Two closed doors, one large and one smaller, stand in the east and west walls. Scattered piles of aged bones, some quite large, are strewn about the room in haphazard fashion and intermixed with rotted leather scraps.*

Four **stoneghosts** dwell in this area. Two are merged with the indicated pillars using their *stonewalk* ability, while the other two are lurking beneath the stone floor. They attack once at least half the party has entered the chamber. The two in the floor rise up from beneath to block the party's retreat, possibly surprising the PCs from behind, while the other stoneghosts emerge from the pillars and rush the party. During the battle, the undead use their *stonewalk* ability to slip back into the surrounding stone and emerge



STONEGHOSTS (4)

Medium undead, chaotic evil

AC: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 45 (6d8+18)

Speed: 30'

STR	DEX	CON
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)
INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills: Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities: radiant, thunder.

Damage Resistances: cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons.

Damage Immunities: necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities: paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Senses: darkvision 60', passive Perception 11

Languages: Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stonewalk: A stoneghost can move through solid rock and earth with no penalty to speed and leaving no sign of its passage. A stoneghost cannot carry other creatures or objects through the stone while *stonewalking*.

Trapped: Stoneghosts cannot leave the confines of the Knuckle's upper level due to the *glitterdoom* curse.

ACTIONS

Calcifying Touch: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer one exhaustion level as his flesh becomes calcified and desiccated. Exhaustion levels are healed normally.

*Stoneghosts appear as calcified mountain dwarves still dressed in the work clothes they wore in life. Veins of iron pyrite run through their flesh and speckle their dead, gray eyes. Stoneghosts are the cursed forms of those dwarves who slew their comrades, transformed into undead creatures by the effects of the *glitterdoom* curse.*

in a new location, keeping the party uncertain as to where the next attack will originate.

The bones are a mix of the dwarves and mule bones, identified as such with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Even a casual inspection of the bones reveals that dwarven skeletons appear to have died by violence at one another's hands. The leather scraps are the decaying remains of pack saddles, saddle bags, work clothes, and other mundane equipment.

The western door is slightly ajar and pushes open easily. The eastern door is locked and requires either the correct key (see areas 1-6 and 2-1) or a DC 15 Dexterity check to open. It can be bashed open with a DC 20 Strength check.