

olitary and solemn it stands, an anomaly set apart from the wind-blasted mountain range beyond:
Almost cylindrical and ragged, a rock formation juts like a broken bone from the parched soil, rising to storm-blasted heights from the barren land, its mottled gray-white rock a distinct foreign body among the ochre crags. Its sole connection to the mountains remains a venerable bridge of weather-worn stone, ancient beyond compare, erected by architects long turned to dust by the arid gales. Somewhere beyond this bridge, atop that foreboding rock, lie the eroded ruins of Fort Rultmoork, where, according to legend, the very land died to the sound of a single falling tear.

A Word of Warning

Rultmoork is a challenging and deadly adventure intended for veteran players. Only the truly skilled and fearless should dare venture into this place. Make sure to read the entirety of the module carefully before running it — Rultmoork's challenges are complex and lethal.

Some groups enjoy the constant looming threat of character death, of genuinely hard and brutal challenges. For these groups, the *Hardcore Mode* options in the sidebar allow the GM to increase the individual challenges of Rultmoork even further.

Quick Reference

Green Text: Refers to rules and elements associated with stagnation.

Blue Text: Refers to rules and elements associated with flow and change.

Names

Baevonian: Lawful, organized people living in mountaintop fortresses (people from Baevonia).

Chonian: Nomadic equestrian people living in desolate scrub plains (people from Chonia).

Church of Still Waters: Quasi-immortal stagnation cult living in ruins of Fort Rultmoork.

Grekian: From Grekia, an ancient, semi-advanced civilization.

Vasi: Goddess of fresh water and its life-giving properties.

Farscryer Ylluliav Vleckmar: Former high priestess and chosen one of Vasi; now the lich-like undead mistress of Rultmoork.

Quick Reference (Cont.)

Locations

Dungeon of Rultmoork: The lowest levels of the temple, housing Vasi's Falls.

Fort Rultmoork: A small fortress, now ruins, long ago was a stopover on a major trade route.

Great Clepsydra: The gigantic water clock that directed and powered Vasi's Falls with the help of two relics, the *tears of Vasi*. Must be reactivated to restart rivers and defeat Ylluliav. Pronunciation: "Clep-Suh-Druh" \ 'klep-sə-drə\

Rultmoork's Rivers: These rivers are currently dried up. Two elemental gates power the Great Clepsydra with water; the water flows through the spire and creates Vasi's Falls. From there, it flows through the Well of Souls and springs forth as two rivers.

Temple of Rultmoork: The erstwhile high temple of Vasi beneath the Fort, now much of it buried in rubble.

Vasi's Falls: A sanctum of waterfalls which once held an endless supply of fresh, life-giving water; from this sanctum sprang the two life-giving rivers of the region.

Well of Souls: The subterranean pool fed by Vasi's Falls; the purified bodies of Vasi's clergy were committed to the waters of Vasi. Today it is filled with bodies; it must be cleansed to defeat Ylluliav.

History of Rultmoork & Vasi's Temple

Beneath the Grekian fortification Rultmoork lay the most blessed temple of Vasi in all the known world, constructed within the strange rock formation that has weathered the ages. It is here where her followers first allied with Vasi's elemental servants and bestowed the plates upon the **flow weavers** (pg. XX) that they still wear today.

This is also where, more than one thousand years ago, Vasi blessed her faithful with a divine gift: Two holy rivers, born of Grekian ingenuity and Vasian

faith. Vasi's Falls ran for generations, powered by the great water clock that used two sacred relics, the *tears of Vasi*, providing fresh water to thousands.

Vasi's Falls are the result of the wonder of engineering, a gigantic water clock that was once known as the Great Clepsydra. This marvel was powered by the belief of the faithful and two relics, the tears of Vasi, which opened two gates to the Elemental Plane of Water. Their ceaseless flow created the artificial waterfalls known as Vasi's Falls, and from the falls sprang forth the region's two largest rivers. Until the temple was attacked in a regional conflict. To safeguard the sanctum from attackers, the Vasian priests closed and magically sealed the entrance to their underground sanctuary. Two years went by as war raged outside, the priests began seeing virtue in their unchanging, isolated existence, anathema to Vasi's doctrine. Ylluliav Vleckmar, high priestess and chosen Farscryer of Vasi, magically surveyed the outside world on a daily basis, and thus witnessed the widespread death and destruction that accompanied the fall of the Grekian empire. Worn down by the horrors she witnessed, she ultimately chose stagnation. Ylluliav came to see flowing water and life itself as a metaphor for the destruction wrought by change. With subtle sabotage, she commanded one of Vasi's elemental servants, a **flow weaver**, to remove one of the tears of Vasi from the Great Clepsydra. This weakened Vasi's Falls, source of the holy water for the priests. Worse, it decreased the flow of water into the Well of Souls, where the dead priests were returned to Vasi's embrace. No longer were the corpses properly carried away and thus proceeded to taint the water. A algae-based sickness killed the priests, until only Ylluliav remained. The tainted high priestess became an undead creature, her lifeforce linked to the very stagnation to which she had consigned Rultmoork. The rivers that gave life to the region dried up the night of Ylluliav's dark apotheosis.

Over the course of centuries, water became scarce and trade routes changed; as the Grekian civilization fell to war, Fort Rultmoork crumbled into ruin and was soon forgotten as the world went on without it.

Now, a millennium later, Vasi's faithful have rediscovered the Ruins of Rultmoork and want the hidden temple in the spire returned to its former glory.

History of Rultmoork | Player Handout #Y (pg. XX)



Magical Items at a Glance

ultmoork features several unique magical items that the party needs to find and use to return life to the land. There are two versions of reference sheets: One for the GM () that spells out all effects, and one for the players (). The version for the players tends to be a bit more cryptic to avoid spoilers and encourage experimentation. Here is a quick summary, in likeliest order of appearance:

LEXEME AMULET

Gxx **2**xx

Useful item, option to bypass deciphering Grekian

Properties. Amulet that allows for translation of the lost language Grekian.

Locations. Currently in two parts:

- Church of Still Waters (pg. XX);
 with cultist leader Arios
- the other part lies in the firepit in Area S-3 (pg. XX).

Properties

- recite **Tainted Prayer of Vasi** (pg. XX) to change flow tokens into stagnation tokens.
- · changes a creature in flow mode into stagnation mode.
- · seals a Water Barrier (pg. XX).
- · creates sludge of stagnant water.

Locations

- · Area S-3 (pg. XX): 2 (in backpack);
- · Area W-3 (pg. XX): 1 (the two flow conductors);
- · Area W-6 (pg. XX): 1 (lichen patch);
- · Area 2-2 (pg. XX): 1 (in the web of flow weavers);
- Dungeon Room 2 (pg. XX): 1 each per flow conductor and flow weaver;
- Dungeon of Rultmoork (pg. XX): any number (random encounters);
- · A tainted *tear of Vasi* can create a *stagnation token* once per day.

FLOW TOKENS (BLUE TOKEN OF VASI)

Gxx **2**xx

Consumable. Crystallized fresh water.

Properties

- recite Sacred Prayer of Vasi (pg. XX) to change stagnation tokens into flow tokens.
- · changes a creature in stagnation mode into flow mode.

 opens a Water Barrier (pg. XX) in the Dungeon of Rultmoork, but also makes the barrier a portal for twisted elementals.

Locations

- Area W-4 (pg. XX): 1 (urn);
- **Area 1-3**, pg. XX): 2 (in the pit);
- · Area 2-2 (pg. XX): 2 (in the NW and SW pillars);
- Area 3-2 (pg. XX): 3 (in the secret alcove);
- · An untainted tear of Vasi can create a flow token once per day.

SACRED AMPHORA OF RESTORATION

Gxx **2**xx

This item is crucial to beating the adventure.

Properties

- · changes stagnation tokens into flow tokens.
- · purifies tainted *tears of Vasi* and the Well of Souls (**Area 5-2**, pg. XX).

Location. It is lying buried and forgotten in **Area W-3** (pg. XX).

EMULSIFYING BRUSH

Gxx **2**xx

The brush is not required to solve the adventure.

Properties. Dissolve the invulnerability bestowing *Grekian Ore* (pg. XX) that e.g. **Grekian guardians** (pg. XX) benefit from.

Location. The brush can be found in **Area 1-3** (pg. XX).

TEARS OF VASI

Gxx **2**xx

Two sacred relics that once powered the Great Clepsydra. Can restart the two rivers.

Properties. The *tears of Vasi* need to be placed in the urns in **Area W-4** (pg. XX) and **Area W-5** (pg. XX) of the Great Clepsydra to restart the two rivers that once sprung forth from Rultmoork.

Locations

- Area S-3 (pg. XX): One tainted tear is currently held by the cultist's leader Arios the First (pg. XX).
- The location and condition (tainted or untainted) of the other one depends on whether the party discovered the truth during the *Visions of the Past* (p. XX): *Success.* **Area 4-5** (p. XX): untainted condition (hidden in a magical niche behind the portrait of Mother May'al).

 Failure. **Dungeon Room 5** (pg. XX): tainted condition (in the hands of Ylluliav Vleckmar).



he adventurers travel to the rocky spire of Rultmoork, either towards the base of the rock formation, or the ruins of Fort Rultmoork upon its top. The players can choose in which order to tackle the adventure.

Near the base of the rock formation is the entrance to the Dungeon of Rultmoork, but in order to enter it, the adventurers need to understand Grekian. Alternatively, the adventurers could potentially create a cipher for Grekian if they compare the runes on the arch with the Sacred Prayer of Vasi (pg. XX) in Common. Therefore, it is theoretically possible to deduce the correct riddle solution and gain entrance to Rultmoork's dungeon.

Taking the Spire's Top. The most obvious approach would be to scale the mountains and take the worn stone bridge to the ruins of the fort atop the spire, where a heretical cult of Vasi, the Church of Still Waters, worships stagnation, perverting the sacred flow. The cult unknowingly follows the same heresy as Ylluliav but is unaware of the existence of the sealed-in high priestess. The cult's heresy has successfully altered one of the two sacred tears of Vasi that once powered the Great Clepsydra. This turned the cultists immortal, but not invulnerable. The adventurers can interact with the cult in a variety of ways and learn

about the tokens of Vasi (pg. XX), magically crystallized water that can help the adventurers modify the magic and monsters of Rultmoork's waters, changing them between flow and stagnation. Among these cultists, the adventurers potentially also find the lexeme amulet (pg. XX), which can aid them in deciphering Grekian runes.

Exploring the Great Clepsydra. The party unearths the stairs that grant access to Vasi's water clock, the Great Clepsydra, now clogged and stagnant. To reactivate the magical wonder, the party needs to obtain the two tears of Vasi (pg. XX)—one is in the hands of the cult's leader, and one lies deep within the Dungeon of Rultmoork. In the Great Clepsydra, the adventurers may also find the sacred amphora of restoration (pg. XX), a relic of Vasi that allows them to purge stagnation. With the information gathered and unearthed in Fort Rultmoork's ruins and the Water Clock Level, the adventurers can pass through the sealed door and gain access to the dungeon proper near the base of the rocky spire.

Delving into the Deadly Dungeon. In the dungeon, magical Water Barriers (pg. XX) block the party's progress unless they have found a way to utilize Vasi's magic. The heroes have to brave the dungeon's horrors which are directed by the fallen high priestess Ylluliav Vleckmar (pg. XX),

the source of the stagnation heresy. Ylluliav has become a lich-like entity, whose very lifeforce is tied both to the Well of Souls and the Great Clepsydra. To defeat her, the adventurers need to restart the Great Clepsydra and also purify the place where she fell from grace, the Well of Souls.

Witnessing the Horrors of the Past. While exploring the dungeon, the spirits of the adventurers are flung back through time, and the players take control of doomed priests of Vasi (pg. XX) in Visions of the Past (pg. XX), experiencing the fall of Rultmoork in hazy and dreamlike visions. In these visions of the past, the goal of the priests of Vasi is to unearth the source of mysterious deaths in the sealed complex. If these priests in ancient times fail to find out what caused the deaths, the adventurers in the present must face Ylluliav at the pinnacle of her power, in the tainted Well of Souls, to obtain the second tear of Vasi. If the priests of Vasi in the past succeed in finding out the truth, however, the adventurers in the present find the second tear of Vasi in an extradimensional compartment behind a portrait of a legendary priestess. If the adventurers started with the hook that lets them play through the visions first and succeeded in unravelling the truth, then the tear of Vasi is waiting for them in the depths of the Dungeon of Rultmoork.

Breaking Stagnation's Stranglehold. Either way, in order to restart the Great Clepsydra, the adventurers need to leave the dungeon with the second *tear of Vasi*. On their way out, they have to defeat two final guardians, the grotesque Listener and Watcher.

To end a millennium of stagnation and make the life-giving waters once more flow freely from Rultmoork, the heroes need to defeat Ylluliav Vleckmar. To do so, they have to restart the Great Clepsydra (pg. XX) with the two tears of Vasi (pg. XX) and cleanse the Well of Souls (pg. XX) with the sacred amphora of restoration (pg. XX). If they succeed, the blessed and purified rivers return life to the desolate plains.

Adventure Hooks/Getting Started

Different groups of players prefer different ways to get involved with adventures. Here are some suggestions covering the most common approaches. Feel free to construct your own if none of these work for your group.

A Mysterious Gleam. If your party prefers a player-driven/sandbox approach to adventures, they can see a bronze gleam reflected at the first light of dawn from a nook in the base of the spire of Rultmoork, roughly 25 feet from the ground. This gleam is a reflection of the sun from remnants of a mosaic in the nook; beyond the mosaic lies the entrance that leads to **Dungeon Room 1** (pg. XX).

Hired Adventurers. This works best for groups who prefer a direct approach. The church of Vasi hires the party to explore, pacify and reclaim Rultmoork. In trade for clearing out Rultmoork, the clergy offer two uncommon and two rare magic items for the party, and 1,000 gp per adventurer. See the adventure's conclusion for final details on the rewards.

Vision Quest. If your party prefers a plot-driven approach and the other angles would not suffice to engage them, consider running the **Visions of the Past** section (pg. XX) of this adventure as a hook instead: the adventurers dream of the fall of Rultmoork. While this takes the mystery out of how the temple fell prematurely, it does make things personal.

Wasteland Archaeology. Use this hook if your group prefers world-exploration and unearthing lore during their travels. The adventurers explore a particularly grueling wasteland littered with wind-razed ruins. In one of them, they see a faded wall-painting of the spire of Rultmoork at the peak of its glory, surrounded by vegetation, and with two vast, life-giving rivers springing forth from it. Further investigation eventually leads them to the spire of Rultmoork.

Archaeology in Action

Archaeology in Action. Rultmoork's erstwhile inhabitants spoke Grekian, and in an extinct dialect. As such, we have provided the Grekian runes (pg. XX) the party can find throughout the complex in the respective runic script (pg. XX), as well as in plain English (pg. XX).

If deciphering runes based on glyphs is something that your group enjoys, then give them the handout Grekian Words (pg. XX) and have them figure out the meaning of the letters.

The party can also retrieve a magical *lexeme amulet* (pg. XX) that translates Grekian for the adventurers.

Grekian Language and Magic. An important aspect of this adventure is dealing with the Grekian language, but it does pose a challenge, namely the easy accessibility of the *comprehend languages* spell, which would obviously trivialize the task posed by the runes. The default assumption is that the spell does not work on Grekian due to a divine decree.

Divine Decree. Something happened when Grekia fell. Ylluliav's heresy was only the tip of the iceberg, and the deities invoked per divine decree that magic would not be able to decipher Grekian. Since the fall of the Grekian empire is shrouded in mystery, the truth about this remains lost in the past.

Decreased Challenge. If you want to decrease the challenge of the decoding task, or if the party gets stuck, consider using the cultists in the ruins of Fort Rultmoork to provide one or multiple letters, or tell the party about the lexeme amulet.

Alternatively, here are suggestions to decrease the challenge, based on the different adventure hooks:

A Mysterious Gleam. The skeleton of a deceased explorer has a scribbled linguistic treatise (Handout: Grekian Words, pg. XX for hard difficulty, Handout: Lexeme Amulet Cipher, pg. XX for easy difficulty).

Hired Adventurers. The priests of Vasi provide a **linguistic** treatise (Handout: Grekian Words, pg. XX for hard difficulty, Handout: Lexeme Amulet Cipher, pg. XX for easy difficulty) that explains the basics of the language.

Vision Quest. The adventurers can spend a short rest and not gain any of its usual benefits, but instead make a DC 20 Intelligence or Wisdom check. On a successful check, the character remembers the meaning of the words.

Wasteland Archaeology. Long before running this adventure, sprinkle Grekian runes (pg. XX, Handout: Grekian Words) through various adventure locations to get the adventurers excited about discovering the meaning of these runes and the civilization that created them. Let the party slowly gather the runes representing the individual letters, and do not allow for simple checks to resolve deciphering the language.

Negated Challenge. If deciphering a letter-substitution key is not something your party would enjoy, give the party the English text when they consult the treatise instead.

GM Note. In playtests, having the party decipher the first 2–3 instances of Grekian script encountered, and then proceeding to use plain English, yielded the best results.

Ways to Enter Rultmoork

As noted before, there are two primary ways of starting the adventure, by introducing the **Dungeon** first (pg. XX), or by introducing the **Surface** section (pg. XX) atop the spire first.







oughly 25 feet above the base of the spire, a rocky and narrow nook conceals the passage leading down to the **Dungeon of Rultmoork**. The nook can't be seen from the ground, but as mentioned before in the **A Mysterious Gleam** adventure hook (pg. XX), it can be seen under the right circumstances. The rock of the gray and white mottled spire is rough and can be climbed with two **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) checks**. If a creature fails the first check, they fall and take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from falling. If a creature fails the second check, they fall and take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from falling.

Once the party has reached the nook, paraphrase the following:

The well-concealed, claustrophobic nook of rough stone opens to a wondrous sight: A clearly humanoid-made chamber of hewn rock, partially collapsed beneath the weight of ancient stones. A slightly damage mosaic of beautiful tiles on the wall sports bronze highlights on its wave patterns. More imposing still, an arch made of bronzegleaming metal holds a massive, closed set of double doors of the selfsame metal. Both the arch and the double doors sport strange runes and are untouched by the collapse.

Collapse. The collapse is massive, and any character with *Stonecunning*, a **DC 10 Intelligence (History)** or **Intelligence (Investigation) check** knows that it is structurally stable, but practically impossible to remove. Any dwarf or miner automatically knows this. The collapse does not block access to either the mosaic, or to the arch.

Mosaic. The mosaic seems to have depicted a complex wave pattern at one point. If a character scrutinizes it more closely, they gain the impression of the pattern moving on its own accord. Examination of the metal up close with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or at distance with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices bluish flecks in the highlights. The pattern's movement is an optical illusion, and not actually magic. The "bronze" highlights in the pattern sport bluish flecks. They are actually Grekian ore (pg. XX) and impervious to any form of damage.

Arch. The arch is not trapped or otherwise secured. The Sacred Prayer to Vasi (pg. XX) is etched into the arch in Grekian. If the party includes a follower of Vasi or have been hired by the clergy of Vasi, the adventurers might know the Sacred Prayer to Vasi. If they do, they can decipher Grekian based on the prayer. Closer examination of the metal with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices bluish flecks in the metal.

Reaching the Dungeon at a Glance.

Getting to the Nook

2 consecutive DC 20 Strength (Athletics) checks to climb to the nook, fall on failed check

3 (1d6) falling damage on failed first check

7 (2d6) falling damage on failed second check

Mosaic, Arch, Doors

DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (up close) to notice blue flecks in metal

-or-

DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check (at distance) to notice blue flecks in metal

Arch

Possibility to learn Sacred Prayer to Vasi (pg. XX); in Grekian (see handout, pg. XX)

Possibility to decipher Grekian based on Sacred Prayer to Vasi (pg. XX)

Collapse

DC 10 Stonecunning, Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes collapse is structurally stable, but impossible to clear. Dwarves automatically know this.

Riddle Answer.

"Kev"

GM Note. Reciting this prayer does not open the doors, but the prayer does prove to be useful when dealing with Rultmoork's magic items.

Double Doors. Closer examination of the metal with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices bluish flecks in the metal. The massive double doors are coated with Grekian ore (pg. XX) and are impervious to damage. The Grekian runes spell a riddle, which, when answered, cause the doors to open outwards.

Riddle Upon the Double Doors.

Axes and swords Will not help you through Yet it and a little push will do Some in the fort would have fought and soon died Were it not close at hand to let them inside

Answer: Key

Beyond the double doors are the stairs leading down to **Dungeon of Rultmoork** (pg. XX).

Ancient stone steps descend into a darkness infused by ethereal mists.

As the adventurers walk down:

No sounds other than your footfalls issue forth as your boots press into the thick dust on the stone stairs, venturing where no others have dared tread in living memory.

You have entered the Dungeon of Rultmoork.

GM Note. Continue with the Dungeon of Rultmoork, **Dungeon Room 1** (pg. XX); make sure to read the global dungeon rules (pg. XX) prior to playing this section.



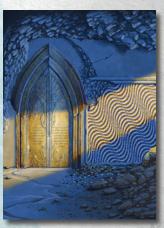
Player Handout #Y (pg. XX)

Sacred Prayer of Vasi

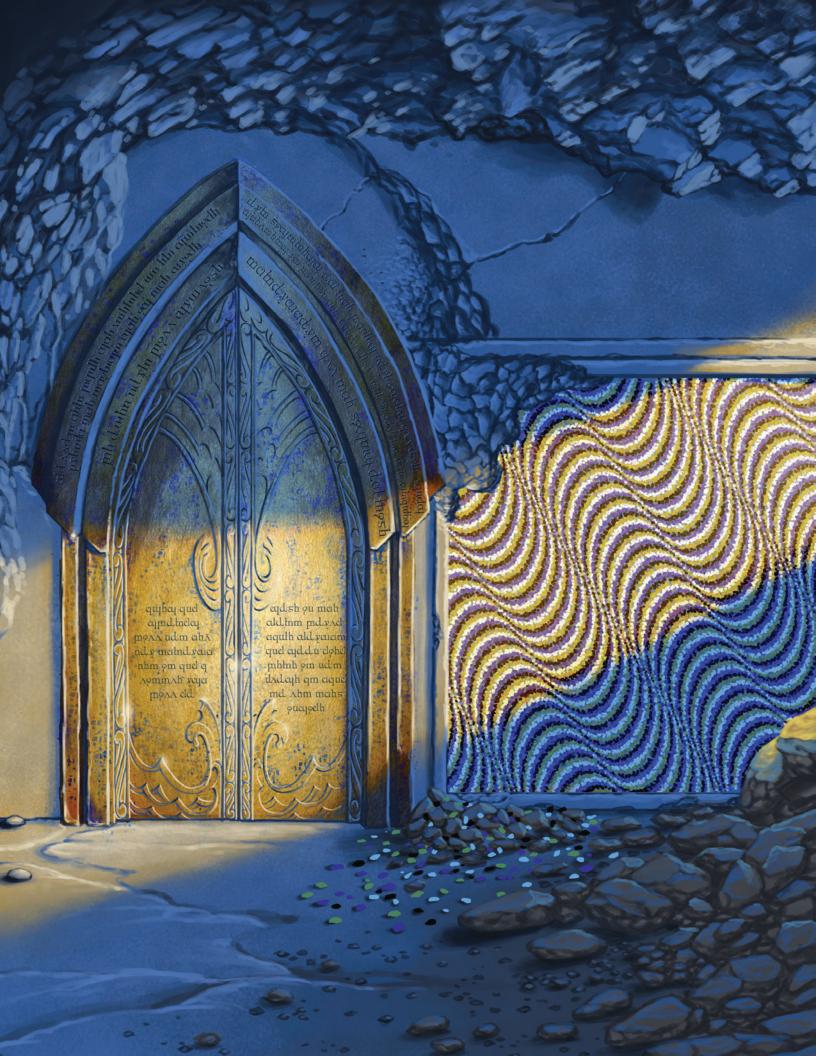
Follow Her Wave sheltered by Her stride Quench the thirst She is the guide.

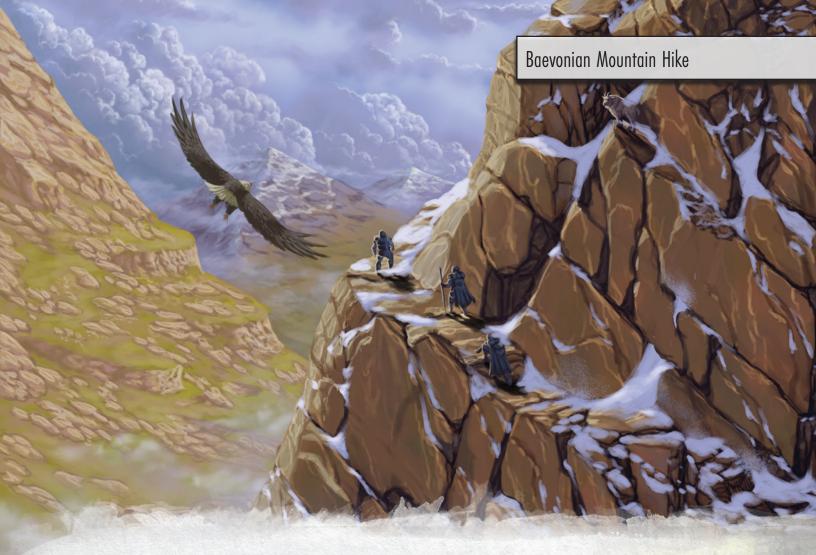
Our Mistress of the Waves nourishes all our lands shelters us within Her hands from the cradle to our graves.

We obey your will sublime throughout all the mists of time.



Player Handout #Y (pg. XX)





his trek happens whenever the party moves to the top of the spire, or back down again. The ruins atop the curious rock formation are the most likely place for the adventurers to visit first, but in order to reach them, they have to scale the inhospitable, steep mountain pass.

Mountain Hike. The hike from the valley to the bridge takes two days and is very strenuous. After a day of hiking, a character must succeed on their choice of a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the character gains one level of exhaustion. If the party takes their time, they take twice as long, but gain advantage on the check or saving throw. Feel free to use your own random encounters during the trek.

Baevonian Mountain Hike at a Glance

Mountain Hike

DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check; one level of exhaustion on failure

DC 15 Constitution saving throw; one level of exhaustion on failure

Table X-Y: Baevonian Mountains Encounters

1d20	Encounter
1-5	golden marmosets
6-10	mountain goats
11-15	stone troll (pg. XX)
16-20	roc hatchling (pg. XX)

Golden Marmosets. This family of mischievous monkeys has distinctive red-gold fur. They scamper up steep cliffsides and overhangs with ease, snatching foodstuffs and shiny baubles from overburdened pack animals.

Mountain Goats. Grazing upon a shrub in the path ahead, a trio of scruffy and stubborn goats don't appear to be in the mood to relinquish their meager feast.

Stone Troll Den. Too late do hapless mountain travelers realize that the boulder partly blocking this shallow cave mouth is a **stone troll**, patiently waiting for a reason to end its hibernation.

Roc Hatchling. Amidst a bale-sized tuft of branches cries a roc hatchling! The poor baby has fallen from its nest and mistaken you for its latest meal. Does that mean its mother isn't far away?