An investigation concerning the recent disappearance of goblins from the surrounding lands leads to a proposal from the Wychlaran of Rashemen and a meeting with a dragon. Can the adventurers learn enough to unlock the mysterious disappearance of the goblins?

CREDITS

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Hand of the Wychlaran

That is all the information I can offer. I hope it is used wisely, for if this assistance comes back to harm me, I will personally see each of you suffers a slow death.

—Garox

INTRODUCTION

An investigation concerning the recent disappearance of goblins from the surrounding lands leads to a proposal from the Wychlaran of Rashemen and a meeting with a dragon. Can the adventurers learn enough to unlock the mysterious disappearance of the goblins?

Hand of the Wychlaran is a 6-hour Forgotten Realms™ adventure for five player characters (PCs) of 3rd level. It takes place in the High Country of Rashemen located in northeastern Faerûn but is suitable for use in any campaign setting.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Throughout its existence as a nation, Rashemen has prevailed in the face of invaders. Old enemies include ancient Narfell and Raumathar, lost Mulhorand, the Tuigan of the Hordelands, and Thay.

When Thay became embroiled in civil war, the Wychlaran, Rashemen’s witches, seized the opportunity to deal with a growing internal threat—the durthans. This dark group of women and hags, with powers similar to those of the Wychlaran, focused on corrupted spirits and wicked fey. Most durthans felt that the only way to protect Rashemen was to be as ruthless as its enemies. They built a secret sanctuary called Citadel Tralkarn within the Erech Forest.

In what is now known as the Witch War of Rashemen, the Wychlaran and their commander, the Iron Lord, fought against the durthans and their allies. In the end, the Wychlaran prevailed and the durthans were no more—until recently.

Within the past year, fragments of the durthan power structure have reformed under the direction of a twisted tiefling conjurer named Elanin Arthon who is rumored to have studied the art of demoonbinding once practiced in ancient Narfell. Elanin now calls fiends, dark fey, and evil humanoids to her side in hopes of building a force strong enough to finish the work the durthans started so long ago.

One such recruit, a hag named Azrella, has spent the past several months in the High Country of Rashemen gathering a force of goblins to please Elanin. Azrella has been using a recently rediscovered earth node to teleport the goblins to the Erech Forest to serve as soldiers in the growing durthan army and laborers in the reconstruction of Citadel Tralkarn.

The disappearance of goblins from the region is the catalyst for the events in Hand of the Wychlaran.

OVERVIEW

The goblins of the Nanraak tribe in the northern portion of Rashemen’s High Country are disappearing, and the hathran, Rendora, has been appointed by the Wychlaran to investigate the oddity. While the Wychlaran aren’t normally inclined to enlist the help of outsiders, Rendora has set up a meeting with a white dragon named Garox who is not fond of the witches. As a result, she needs individuals to attend the meeting in her place, and she has posted a summons for adventurers in the village of Valls. The meeting and its subsequent ramifications take place in three parts, each of which is outlined below.

ABOUT THE WYCHLARAN

The Wychlaran are a group of magic users that serve as the protectors of Rashemen. Female Wychlaran, called hathrans or learned sisters, wield spells of wild power tied to the land itself. Male Wychlaran, called Old Ones due to their lengthy life spans, are less common and excel at crafting items and performing rituals.

PART 1: THE GOBLINS

From their meeting with Garox, the PCs learn of a ruined tower, which has been the goblins’ destination. Rendora asks the PCs to travel to the location and discover what they can about the missing goblins.

A1. Valls The adventure begins with Rendora, a member of the Wychlaran, asking the PCs to meet with a white dragon and gather information about goblins that have recently gone missing in the High Country.

A2. Garox the White The PCs travel to a small grove east of Valls to see what information they can learn from the white dragon, Garox, concerning the disappearance of clans from the Nanraak goblin tribe.

A3. Return to Valls Upon returning to Valls, Rendora asks the PCs to continue the investigation, sending them toward the goblin village of Red Rocks.

A4. Devil’s Rest In this optional encounter, the PCs have a chance to examine a binding stone and attempt to fortify its failing magic. If they are unsuccessful, they release a fiend trapped inside.

A5. Red Rocks If the PCs were unsuccessful in learning of the tower from Garox, they find a handicapped goblin in the abandoned village of Red Rocks that can tell them of the tower to the south.

A6. Ruined Tower When the PCs finally reach the ruined tower, they need to deal with a pair of ettercap guards protecting the entrance to the tower’s dungeon level.
PART 2: TOWER DUNGEON

During the exploration of the tower’s dungeon level, the PCs discover a secret door to a natural tunnel that winds nearly a mile into the underdark.

B1. Cellar The hobgoblins in this area have modified the doors of six small cellar storerooms to act as arrow slits.

B2. Corridors This hallway junction contains two statues that flank a secret door leading to an earth node in the upper underdark.

B3. Crypt The looting of a crypt by the hobgoblins has caused the occupants resting within to rise. Once defeated, the PCs have the opportunity to help them achieve their former rest.

B4. Vault Azrella’s trained guard drakes and glyph of warding protect the treasure vault in this area.

B5. Hidden Library This hidden study contains mostly ruined books and is home to an ochre jelly.

PART 3: THE EARTH NODE

The PCs follow a natural tunnel to a large cavern, which contains an earth node linked via natural teleportation magic to the Erech Forest. Here they uncover the existence of the newly reformed dorthans and learn of Azrella’s part in recruiting goblins from the High Country to serve as laborers and soldiers. By defeating the durthan hag, they stop the disappearance of the goblins and find proof of the durthan’s return to share with Rendora.

C1. Tunnel Five goblins and their leader guard a small cave that leads to a larger teardrop-shaped cavern containing an earth node.

C2. Earth Node In the final encounter, the PCs must deal with the hag, Azrella, and a handful of her goblin recruits.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

It is possible the PCs have no previous knowledge of each other and have come together in the opening encounter in response to Rendora’s summons for adventurers. However, as an alternative, you can use the following adventure hooks.

Study. A member of the party (possibly a wizard or warlock) has led his or her companions to the High Country of Rashemen to study the numerous monoliths found throughout the region. See the Devil’s Rest encounter for additional information.

Rest. They party has arrived in the remote village of Valls to rest after a previous adventure together. In spite of their desire to recuperate, they find that they cannot ignore the summons of the Wychlaran.

Recruitment. A female member of the party wishes to join the ranks of the Wychlaran. She has traveled to Valls to prove her worth and gain the attention of the secretive organization.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

Hand of the Wychlaran was written with an emphasis on the history and lore surrounding the nation of Rashemen, which is located in the northeastern portion of Faerûn. You may move the adventure elsewhere by changing the names and locations mentioned throughout to fit your own campaign or world.

At its core, the adventure revolves around an evil group seeking minions to rebuild its power. Any evil organization can fill this role, and any good organization can replace the Wychlaran in their desire to stop them.
PART 1: THE GOBLINS

A1. Valls

Roleplaying Encounter

The tiny village of Valls (population 145) is nothing more than a gathering of rough timber homes covered with earth. Their design creates large grassy mounds with warm, dry interiors capable of withstanding Rashemen’s bitter winters. Amid the scattered mounds is a small stone and timber keep. The keep is old, its original purpose lost to time. In spite of its age, it is in good repair.

A silver-haired Rashemi merchant named Yorg Brandoran owns the building, which serves as Valls’ inn, tavern, and general store. Preferring to take a hands-off approach to managing his business, Yorg employs a small staff made up of serving girls, maids, bartenders, and a single shopkeeper. He spends his time socializing with his patrons and trophy hunting in the surrounding woods. When he makes a kill worthy of display, he adds it to his collection, which resides in the common room of his establishment.

The only other figure of prominence in the village is the hatharn, Rendora, a newly initiated Wychlaran who arrived in the area only a year ago. While not as powerful as the rest of her sisters, she has won the respect of the villagers with her wisdom and infallible calm. Rendora resides in an earthen home near the outskirts of Valls.

The remainder of Valls’ residents are primarily miners who dig for copper in the foothills of the nearby Sunrise Mountains.

Valls has no formal defense, and prior to Rendora’s arrival, goblin raiders sometimes plagued the village. However, since her coming the goblins have stayed away from the village, fearing the wrath of the Wychlaran.

If the PCs require equipment, they can find simple weapons, natural armors (cloth, leather, and hide), and mundane adventuring gear for sale at Brandoran’s.

ROLEPLAYING RENDORA

Rendora is young for a hatharn, and as a result, she has not developed the aloofness that many of her learned sisters characteristically display. She smiles and laughs in a girlish manner, but she tolerates no disrespect toward her land, her sisters, or herself. If the PCs are overly crude or rude, she thoroughly chastises them before dismissing them to seek aid elsewhere.

Rendora has a true and genuine love of her homeland and would do anything to protect it. While she knows her place as a leader of Rashemen, she does not talk down to the PCs or belittle their knowledge. She wants them to succeed, because if they do not, the failure is ultimately hers.

Read the following to begin the adventure.

A steel-colored sky covers the moist fall morning as daylight struggles to burn away the late clinging fog that surrounds the small mining village of Valls. Those gathered with you have answered the resident Wychlaran’s request for capable adventures—a request not many would knowingly refuse.

You are only alone with your thoughts for a matter of minutes before a green-robed figure appears through the fog, gliding gracefully toward the village well where you and the others have gathered. As is the custom in Rashemen, the witch, Rendora, wears a mask that covers her eyes and the upper portion of her face, leaving her mouth and chin exposed. Painted vines and a fiery teardrop gemstone adorn the green mask, outlining her brow and cheeks. In spite of the disguise, she seems to possess an undeniable air of wisdom, which marks her beyond a doubt as a member of the Wychlaran.

Without introduction, she addresses your gathering, sizing up each of you as she speaks. “Thank you for answering the summons I posted at Brandoran’s. The task with which I require your assistance is a dangerous one, and therefore, I will not force you to serve as a hand of the Wychlaran, as many of my learned sisters might. In addition, I am prepared to offer a reward should you successfully accomplish what I desire.”

Rendora pauses only briefly, continuing before you have an opportunity to put forth any questions. “Several months ago, clans of the Nanraak goblin tribe started disappearing from the region. In itself, this may not seem like a problem, but experience has taught the Wychlaran that anomalies are generally catalysts for greater events, and as a result, I have been charged with investigating their mysterious departure.

“My initial inquires have provided no clues to explain where the clans have gone, but in an effort to learn more, I have used my network of fey creatures and woodland spirits to arrange a meeting with the white dragon, Garox. Garox controls a sect of kobolds that belong to the Brood of Kashaan, a well-established force of the elder white dragon, KissethKashaan. I would like you to attend this meeting in my place.”

The PCs will likely have inquiries of their own before agreeing to meet with the dragon. Outlined below are several common questions and their responses.

Q: What is to stop the dragon from attacking us?

“In spite of his unseemly mannerisms, Garox holds a tight reign over his portion of the Brood of Kashaan. His spies keep a close watch on activities in the region, particularly the actions of the neighboring goblin tribes. In addition, the dragon has no desire to see a full Wychlaran inquisition enter the area. He grows wealthy and powerful by serving his elder, KissethKashaan. It is an arrangement he will not want to jeopardize, and I am confident that—given the correct tact—he can be convinced to share all he knows.”
Q: Why do you not meet with the dragon yourself?
“Were it any other creature, I could surely handle the task myself, but Garox is a gender chauvinistic, ill-tempered beast who cares more for might than magic. Were I to attempt an inquiry directly, the result would likely be disastrous, and I desire information—not bloodshed.”

Q: Can you offer any advice in dealing with the dragon?
“Garox considers himself a warrior. As such, he respects those with martial ability, but he does not take kindly to intimidation. In addition, he views all females as inferior and will likely not listen to anything they have to say. Finally, he is unimpressed by those with arcane ability.”

Q: What will be our reward for performing this task?
“If you are able to return to me with helpful information, I will gladly pay you 50 gold pieces.”

Q: What is it that you wish to learn from the dragon?
“In particular, I desire information concerning the disappearance of several nearby clans of the Nanraak goblin tribe, but any additional information would be welcome.”

Q: What should we do when we complete the task?
“When you have learned all that you can from the dragon, come back to Valls and await my return at Brandoran’s. I will be traveling to the east to commune with the fey, and I will find you when I return.”

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE
If the PCs agree to meet with Garox, Rendora provides them with a hard-drawn map to a clearing in an old pine grove a half-day’s walk south of Valls. Continue the adventure by proceeding to encounter A2.
A2: GAROX THE WHITE

Roleplaying Encounter (XP varies)

Even though the meeting with Garox is a roleplaying encounter, there is a possibility of the discussion dissolving into combat, and therefore, a tactical map is provided.

This encounter includes the following creatures.

Garox, young white dragon (G)

Read the following when the PCs arrive at the grove.

After several hours of walking through lightly wooded hills, you arrive at a clearing within a small stand of pines that is adjacent to the base of a steep granite cliff. The area is roughly forty feet in diameter and ringed with trees. In the middle of the clearing, a small mound rises above the forest floor.

As you scan your surroundings for Garox, a wind rises, throwing dust and debris into the air. You look up in time to see a large white dragon pumping its wings furiously as it descends to the ground, landing atop the mound.

When settled, Garox makes his way boldly toward you. In a booming voice, he says, “So, you are the witch’s lackeys. It is just as well she did not come in person. It has been some time since my last good meal!”

Garox speaks first, hoping to rattle the PCs enough to gauge their mettle by their responses. With the dragon’s opening remarks, ask the players to roll initiative and establish a fixed order for questions.

Speaking with Garox

To gain Garox’s assistance, the PCs must convince him that aiding the Wychlaran is in his best interest. To do so, they need to make three successful skill checks during their interaction with the dragon before they accumulate three failures. The PCs can use any skills they desire with a DC of 10 to 15 for the check, providing they can reasonably explain how they are using it.

If the players are having difficulty remembering the information Rendora relayed, or if they are simply having trouble coming up with conversational ideas and skills to use, let them roll a DC 10 Intelligence or DC 15 Wisdom check (success or failure of the check does not count toward the success or failure of the encounter). If they succeed, reveal one of the key points below and let them attempt the associated skill check. Doing so will keep gameplay moving when it might otherwise stall.

Garox is particularly surly toward females and those who wield arcane magic (divine casters are exempt from his loathing). Any skill check made to interact with the dragon by a PC who meets the aforementioned criteria suffers disadvantage. A PC may overcome this penalty and disguise his or her identity with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check (success or failure of the check does not count toward the success or failure of the encounter).

DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) Recognize Garox’s annoyance at the Wychlaran’s constant meddling and sympathize with the dragon concerning it.

DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) Outline the drawbacks of more Wychlaran coming to investigate the disappearance of the goblins in the High Country.

DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) Explain that if the disappearance of the goblins is linked to a significant threat, the Wychlaran would suffer the consequences of dealing with the problem instead of Garox’s sect.

DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) Appeal to the Dragon’s vanity or his vanity concerning the Brood of Kashaan.

DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) Garox will not succumb to any form of intimidation. After the first attempt, he responds as below. Any further attempts at intimidation anger the dragon to point where he attacks (see Fighting the Dragon for additional information).

Read the following if the PCs try to intimidate Garox.

“You are fools if you think I will suffer your pathetic attempts to unhinge my nerve! Consider this your only warning. If you try the same again, your torn limbs will find their way to the cook pots of my sect!”

If the PCs succeed, Garox concedes to their reasoning and shares what he knows. Once the dragon has shared his knowledge, he departs, returning to his sect.

Read the following if the PCs convince Garox to help.

“Very well. While I do not like the thought of doing anything that may benefit the witches, your reasoning is sound.

“My spies have reported the goblins moving southeast toward the main pass in the Sunrise Mountains. Thus far, they have been unable to determine why, but they have located a ruined tower that appears to be the goblins’ destination. My scouts say that ‘spider people’ guard its entrance, but their knowledge of other races is often limited.

“The tower is located east of Devil’s Rest and a short distance south of the goblin village of Red Rocks. Your witch will know of the area.

“That is all the information I can offer. I hope it is used wisely, for if this assistance comes back to harm me, I will personally see each of you suffers a slow death.”
If the PCs fail, Garox grows impatient and annoyed and decides to leave.

**Read the following if the PCs fail to gain Garox's help.**

“I agreed to this meeting because I thought it may have some worth. I can see now I was wrong. Tell your witch she will have to find her answers herself!”

Garox begins to flap his outstretched wings and then takes to the air with a powerful leap, quickly rising above the trees before flying off to the south.

**Fighting the Dragon**

While brash and arrogant, Garox isn't actively seeking a fight and will not attack unless goaded. The dragon realizes that killing the PCs would likely draw the unwelcome attention of the Wychlaran, and he is reluctant to jeopardize his current arrangement as liaison to his elder, Kissethkashaan.

However, if the PCs are too brash, Garox succumbs to his temper and attacks. If this happens, he tries to remain on the mound, using his reach and Cold Breath to harry his attackers. Garox fights until he defeats the PCs or until they reduce him to 50 hit points, at which time he takes to the sky and flees.

If the PCs engage the dragon in combat and manage to chase him off, they earn full XP as if they had defeated the dragon, but no treasure, as the dragon did not bring any to the rendezvous. In addition, Garox sends his spies to keep track of the PCs' movements. At your discretion, he may return later with his kobold minions to seek retribution for his earlier defeat in battle.

**Maps**

All of the tactical maps in Hand of the Wychlaran use a scale where one square or one inch equals five feet.

**General Features**

- **Light.** Daylight.
- **Mound.** The rounded mound in the center of the battlefield is worn enough to navigate easily, and its 6-foot-tall height gives creatures making melee attacks from it a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls.
- **Trees.** The dense pine trees provide three-quarters cover.

**Awarding XP**

If the PCs convince Garox to tell them what he knows, award 200 XP per player. If they fail to sway the dragon, award no XP. If they fight and defeat the dragon, award XP as normal.

**Continuing the Adventure**

Regardless of their success or failure with the dragon, the PCs should return to Valls and report to Rendorra. Proceed to encounter A3.

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**Garox, Young White Dragon**

*Large dragon, chaotic evil*

| Armor Class | 17 (natural armor) |
| Hit Points | 133 (14d10 + 56) |
| Speed | 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 30 ft. |

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**Saving Throws**

- Dex +3, Con +7, Wis +3, Cha +4

**Skills**

- Perception +6, Stealth +3

**Damage Immunities**

- Cold

**Senses**

- blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages**

- Common, Draconic

**Challenge**

- 6 (2,300 XP)

**Ice Walk.** The dragon can move across and climb icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice or snow doesn’t cost it extra movement.

**Actions**

- **Multiattack.** The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) cold damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Cold Breath (Recharge 5-6).** The dragon exhales an icy blast in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
A3. RETURN TO VALLS

Roleplaying Encounter

When the PCs return to Valls, they find Rendora away on her expedition. She does not return until the following day. If desired, the PCs can use this time to take a long rest.

SPEAKING WITH RENDORA

The PCs should be waiting at Brandoran’s for Rendora, and she locates them immediately upon her return. Regardless of their success or failure in speaking with Garox, she requests their aid in continuing to investigate the disappearance of the goblins.

If the PCs learned of the ruined tower south of Red Rocks from Garox, read the following.

Rendora smiles warmly, “This is excellent news indeed! The fey with whom I communed suggested I explore the goblin village of Red Rocks, but with the exact location of the ruined tower known, the task will not be necessary. You have done well, and I will not deny you your reward. However, I would like to offer you the chance to earn additional compensation and continue helping the Wychlaran—if, of course, you are interested.”

Rendora pays the PCs 50 gp as promised. When the exchange is complete, she explains she must meet with a fellow member of the Wychlaran in three days to discuss her findings. Not wanting to waste time, she asks the PCs to travel to the ruined tower in her absence and see what they can learn about the disappearance of the goblins. If the PCs can find an answer to the mystery, she agrees to pay them an additional 100 gp.

If the PCs accept, Rendora sketches them a map to the ruined tower, which is two-and-a-half day's travel to the southeast of Valls. If they refuse to be of further assistance, they suddenly find themselves no longer welcome in Valls.

If the PCs were unsuccessful in learning anything from the dragon, read the following.

Rendora sighs, “Dragons are dragons, and their actions can be unpredictable. At least you and your friends survived the encounter. I truly regret you weren’t successful in your task. I was certain Garox held useful information.

“In the end, I suppose it does not matter. My meeting with the fey was productive. They suggested I travel east past Devil’s Rest to explore the recently abandoned goblin village of Red Rocks. The fey have seen an increased number of goblins heading toward that general area, and they believe a search of Red Rocks may help to solve the mystery.

“Unfortunately, I have a meeting with a fellow sister in three days to discuss my current findings, so I will not be able to investigate myself for some time. Since I am reluctant to let idle days slip by while I travel, I would be willing to give you the opportunity to earn the fifty gold pieces I originally offered—as well as an additional one hundred—if you travel to Red Rocks and discover what is happening to the goblins. Will you continue to assist the Wychlaran?”

If the PCs accept Rendora’s quest, she draws them a map to Red Rocks and asks that they meet her back in Valls in six days. Red Rocks is one-and-a-half day's travel to the east of Valls. If the PCs refuse to help Rendora, they find the people of Valls inhospitable to their future needs.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

If necessary, let the PCs rest or buy provisions before heading out on their quest to investigate the missing goblins. Regardless of their destination, their journey takes them past Devil’s Rest. Proceed to encounter A4.
A4: Devil’s Rest

Skill Encounter (XP varies)

Nearly a full day’s walk to the east of Valls, the PCs pass a large boulder known as Devil’s Rest. While this encounter isn’t necessary for the completion of the adventure, it does provide an entertaining diversion for the players. If you are running short on time, you can skip this encounter and proceed to encounter A5 or A6 as appropriate.

DM Tip
Keep an eye on the mood of your players. Many groups can get restless if long stretches pass without combat. If your players look as if they need to kill something, drop in a random encounter or two from the list below before or after Devil’s Rest. Award XP for the fight as normal.
Statistics for the creatures below can be found in the Monster Manual on the referenced page.
- 3 bugbears (MM page 33)
- 1 ettin (MM page 132)
- 1 hill giant (MM page 155)
- 2 ogres (MM page 237)
- 1 troll (MM page 291)
- 3 dire wolves (MM page 321)

Read the following when the PCs approach the site.
The hour is early when you arrive at the location marked on your map as Devil’s Rest. The 3-foot-tall brown stone in the center of the area appears stained with dried blood. Chiseled runes span its circumference.
Old fire pits and debries dot the vicinity. It appears the site is frequently used as a campsite for travelers.

In ages past, devils and demons roamed the countryside of Rashemen, and groups of Raumathari fiend hunters, called Olkin, hunted the creatures. The Olkin knew the immortal nature of their prey, and as a result, each hunting party included a member versed in arcane magic and a member knowledgeable in the worship of nature. When the hunters successfully captured a fiend, they would strap it to large boulder similar to Devil’s Rest. The Olkin’s casters would then perform a complex ritual that wove together both natural and arcane magic, binding the immortal soul of their prey in the stone.

Hundreds of these binding stones exist throughout the lands of Rashemen, but many have failed over the centuries. Devil’s Rest still holds the soul of its captive, but its magic is slowly fading. If left unattended, it will fail, releasing its prisoner back into the world. It is possible for someone with arcane knowledge to fortify the binding magic, thus delaying the fiend’s eventual release.

If the PCs examine the stone, have the players involved roll Intelligence (Arcana) checks and present them with the appropriate information below.

DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) The runes surrounding the stone seem to be a mix of ancient symbols that incorporate both arcane magic and the worship of nature.

DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) The dried blood atop the boulder is permanent and irremovable by conventional means. It is likely the result of a ritual used to bind an entity within the stone. Such a ritual would have required two individuals, one practiced in the worship of nature and one schooled in arcane magic, to complete.

DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) The arcane portion of the magic used in the ritual is beginning to weaken and will eventually fail, but it may be possible to bolster the binding and stabilize the power of the stone.

Any PC proficient in the Arcana skill has the ability necessary to attempt to stabilize the waning magic of the stone. While the process is not a formal binding ritual, it does function in a similar fashion. Let all PCs participating in the ritual take turns making DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) skill checks. The PCs need to collectively accumulate three successful checks before three failures in order to complete the hour-long process and repair the binding magic.

If the ritual is a success, the PCs feel the magic of the stone solidify upon completion, ensuring the fiend trapped within remains a prisoner for centuries to come. If the ritual fails, the magic of the bond breaks down completely, releasing the fiend trapped within. See The Devil’s Release below for more information.

The Devil’s Release
If a PC attempts to repair the waning magic of Devil’s Rock and fails, he or she releases the fiend trapped within. This encounter includes the following creatures.

1 barbed devil (D)

If the ritual fails, read the following.
As you complete the lengthy ritual, you anxiously watch the threads of magic surrounding the stone. To your horror, they begin to unravel and fade. Within moments, the bloodstain atop the boulder starts to smoke, releasing red vapors that quickly coalesce to form a wicked looking fiend resembling a tall humanoid covered in sharp barbs, spines, and hooks. With a guttural chortle, it moves toward you, flexing its razor-sharp claws.

Tactics
After centuries of imprisonment within the stone, the barbed devil wants nothing more than to vent its rage upon the PCs. It fights with glee, knowing that even if it meets it end, it will return to its home in the Nine Hells.

General Features
Light. Daylight.
Trees. The dense pine trees provide three-quarters cover.
Devil’s Rest. The large stone known as Devil’s Rest is 3 feet tall and provides half cover.
A Warding XP
If the PCs successfully complete the ritual, award 200 XP per player. If they fail and must fight the barbed devil, award XP for the combat as normal.

Continuing the Adventure
The PCs’ actions at Devil’s Rest do not have an impact on the adventure overall. They may depart the site at any time and continue on their way. Proceed to encounter A5 or A6 as appropriate.

Barbed Devil
Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)
Speed 30 ft.

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<td>12 (+1)</td>
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<td>14 (+2)</td>
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Saving Throws Str +6, Con +7, Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Deception +5, Insight +5, Perception +8
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren’t silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Barbed Hide. At the start of each of its turns, the barbed devil deals 5 (1d10) piercing damage to any creature grappling it.

Devil’s Sight. Magical darkness doesn’t impede the devil’s darkvision.

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

Actions
Multiattack. The devil makes three melee attacks: one with its tail and two with its claws. Alternatively, it can use Hurl Flame twice.

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

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Hurl Flame. Ranged Spell Attack: +5 to hit, range 150 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that isn’t being worn or carried, it also catches fire.
A5: Red Rocks

Skill Encounter (XP varies)

A half day's walk past Devil's Rest, the PCs finally arrive at the abandoned goblin village of Red Rocks.

Read the following when the PCs reach Red Rocks.

The goblin tribe that once inhabited Red Rocks has left to serve the durhans in the Erech forest. Only a single resident of the village remains. The handicapped goblin, Mot, was shunned by Azrella's hobgoblin lackeys and forced to remain behind. He has been surviving on insects, rats, and any other food he can find remaining in the abandoned village. In spite of his goblin nature, Mot will not attack the PCs. For game purposes, treat him as a non-combatant.

Read the following as the PCs search the village.

Your exploration of Red Rocks has turned up nothing more than cracked pottery and empty lean-tos. You are ready to give up hope when a crash behind you draws your attention. You turn to see a gaunt-looking goblin flailing on the ground amid a pile of broken glass and clay pots. When the creature sees it has attracted your attention, it shrieks feebly and fumbles desperately for something at its side. You watch for a moment before you notice the goblin is missing a leg. As you draw nearer, you can see the creature working feverishly to reattach a crudely carved wooden branch to the stump below its left knee.

Mot is capable of speaking goblin and a broken version of common. When the PCs approach, he is terrified, and they will need to calm him down before he is able to answer any questions. Once calm, the PCs can try to question him.

In spite of his obvious fear, Mot is nervous about saying where the other goblins have gone. The PCs need to earn his trust before he agrees share what he knows. To do so, they need to make two successful skill checks during their interaction with the goblin before they accumulate three failures. The PCs can use any skill they desire with a DC of 10 to 15 for the check, providing they can reasonably explain how they are using it.

If the players are having difficulty coming up with conversational ideas and skills to use, let them roll a DC 10 Intelligence or DC 10 Wisdom check (success or failure of the check does not count toward the success or failure of the encounter). If they succeed, reveal one of the key points below and let them attempt the related skill check. Doing so will keep gameplay moving when it might otherwise stall.

DC 10 Charisma (Deception) Encourage Mot to provide aid under false pretenses or by making promises you aren't certain you can keep. For example, tell Mot no harm will come to the other goblins of Red Rocks if he tells you where they've gone.

DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) Threaten to harm Mot if he does not tell you what happened to the other residents of Red Rocks. The goblin only responds to this skill once, after which he becomes so distraught that he has trouble forming words and sentences. Subsequent uses of this skill automatically fail.

DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) Try to make a deal with the goblin, offering him food or other provisions if he shares what he knows. If a PC gives Mot food in advance, they gain advantage on this check.

DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) Reassure Mot that no harm will come to him if he helps you find the other goblins.

If the PCs earn Mot's trust, he tells them of the ruined tower to the south and of the other goblins leaving with hobgoblin soldiers. Mot does not know of Azrella's plot, and therefore, he can reveal no information concerning it, but he can draw a crude map to the ruined tower.

If the PCs fail three or more checks while dealing with Mot, the stress of the questioning reduces him to a bumbling mess, and he is unable to provide them with any useful information.

Awarding XP

If the PCs convince Mot to share the location of the ruined tower to the south, award 100 XP per player. If they fail to earn his trust, award no XP.

Continuing the Adventure

If the PCs fail to learn the location of the ruined tower from Mot, they can still find it by following the tracks the other goblins made when leaving the village. Allow them to locate and follow the trail without any checks. The tower lies one day's walk south of Red Rocks.
A6: RUINED TOWER

Encounter Challenge Rating: 4 (900 XP)

When the PCs arrive and enter the ruined tower, they are attacked by two ettercaps that Azrella brought through the earth node several weeks ago to serve as sentries.

This encounter includes the following creatures.

2 ettercaps (E)

As the PCs approach the area, read the following.
In the distance you spy what was once a tower. Part of its outer wall has crumbled, exposing its interior.

TACTICS

The ettercaps are currently hiding 10 feet up the wall on each side of the tower’s exposed entrance, hoping to surprise intruders. If the PCs successfully learned the location of the tower from Garox in encounter A2, they know there are spider people guarding it, and they have advantage to spot the ettercaps as they approach.

The ettercaps are loyal to the hag and do their best to defeat the PCs, fighting to the death. They work together to immobilize stronger opponents with their Web ability and then concentrate on eliminating weaker unarmored foes.

GENERAL FEATURES

Light. Set by the DM according to the time of day.
Trees. The dense pine trees provide three-quarters cover.
Tower Wall. The standing wall of the tower is about 15 feet tall and made of granite blocks. Climbing the wall requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Climbing the wall requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. A creature that fails the check by 5 or more falls and suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage, landing prone.

DEVELOPMENTS

Fighting here alerts the hobgoblins in area B1, giving them time to prepare for intruders.

ETTERCAP

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

| Armor Class 13 (natural armor) |
| Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8) |
| Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft. |
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 7 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 8 (-1) |

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spider Climb. The ettercap can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the ettercap knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The ettercap ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ettercap makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Web (Recharge 5-6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one Large or smaller creature. Hit: The creature is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 11 Strength check, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 10, 5 hit points, is vulnerable to fire damage, and immune to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage.
PART 2: TOWER DUNGEON MAP

1 square = 5 feet