



Adventure #11

Last Session...

We ended last time with the party nearly dying at the hands (well, the head) of a flying, flaming skull. It shot a fireball at them while the heroes were clumped in a hallway, nearly incinerating them all. They finally bashed it to pieces and limped away from the other skeletons, and the party now desperately needs to rest and recuperate.

They maneuver down the passages, weighing their options as whether to leave the mine completely and rest outside or try to hole up within, even though their whereabouts will be generally easy to discern. It's ultimately decided that regrouping in the foothills outside, with potential wandering encounters for things even bigger and badder than flying skull is not the best option, so they relocate to the storeroom they'd previously discovered with all of the empty oaken barrels.



They need a long rest, 8 hours, and after deliberating on whether Cora the Halfling monk should scout ahead invisible (she's unhurt) they all decide to stay in the room and board it up and stay quiet. Cora takes first watch and after a while she hears bony marching and rattling armor and clanging weapons in the hall that slowly approaches and then fades. No one disturbs them. They take the time to identify some potions they've previously discovered, including two *healing* potions and one of *Heroism*.

Four hours into their rest they roll a random encounter. Fun.

Carp is on watch, and this time he hears combat somewhere out in the complex and the grunt of deep goblin voices. He doesn't speak goblin, so he gets Elgweh the elf to listen. They know that hobgoblins have associated with the Black Spider before, so maybe it is some of his heavily armed cronies stalking the halls.

“Come over this way!” says a goblin voice, in a much deeper pitch than your standard, small goblin. “Check this. You, keep watch that way.”

Bodies are gathering into the small foyer just outside the party’s hiding spot. There’s no way out, they’ll be completely blocked in, but at least they’re well barricaded with barrels pushed in front of the door.

“Patience, patience,” says a familiar voice in the Common tongue. Elgweh has heard that voice before. It’s the same voice spoken by the spidercrabhead calling itself the Black Spider.

The door rattles as a shoulder is shoved against it. Dust falls and the frame shudders, but it doesn’t open. “Someone’s in there!” says a goblin voice. Weight shoves against the door again. The party is all armed and ready now, prepared to launch an attack at foes even though several of the heroes are clinging to single hit points.

“I know you are in there,” says the rich, silky voice of the Black Spider.
“Come forth. I wish to offer you a proposal.”

“Propose from out there!” they shout. There’s no way they’re opening the fucking door.

“Very well. I see you are a formidable group. You have already dispatched some of the Forge’s guardians. Commendable. But there are more, and those that remain are even more dangerous. I offer you a proposition. Destroy all that are left in the mine. In the rooms to the east of your location lies the Forge of Spells. Kill all the guardians but leave the Forge to me. In return I will give you an item of power I possess. But you must promise to leave and NEVER return. If you refuse to agree we will enter and destroy you.”

Well, the party is in a bad spot. They can’t very well fend off a fresh wave of attackers if they manage to get through the door, and they’re a good 4 hours from being at tip top shape.

“What item of power will you share?” they demand.

“That remains for you find out. But trust me that you will all benefit from its magic. All you must promise me is to leave the Forge, and then leave here immediately and never return. I will honor my end and not harm you if you agree to these terms.”

“Is the dwarf Gundren Rockseeker still alive?”

A moment of silence. **“He is. Betray me and he will die.”**

“What else guards the Forge?”

“I know of one undead, a powerful wraith with no body. Mormesk.”

“How do we know you’re telling the truth?”

“Ahhh...you will have to trust me.”

They try to use some Insight to discern if this voice outside the door is telling the truth, and the best they can deduce is that yes it is, but it probably can’t be trusted. But they don’t have many good options. And they need to wait a LONG while before they’re able to confront any more foes.

“Do you agree to my terms?”

Ultimately they do agree, and the voice of the Black Spider says he will leave an emissary to wait outside the door until they are ready, but don’t make him wait too long. He realizes they need to rest after their last encounter with the skull, so the Black Spider is willing to cooperate to give them the best chance to fulfill their end of the bargain.

Fast forward four hours (so damn meta-gamey...**“We ACCEPT your offer...in exactly four hours, come back then**) ...and they open the door cautiously.



Not one but TWO blackspiderheadcrab emissaries of the Black Spider await them, eerily bobbing on segmented legs.

“Took you long enough,” one says.

They no longer think this is the Black Spider itself. They killed one of these things not long ago, and these are different colors but look otherwise identical. They must be some kinds of pets or familiars or automatons of the Black Spider who is observing them from somewhere else in the complex, probably wherever Gundren the dwarf is too.

“Lead the way then, heads.”

The spiderheads are slow, but they inch up the hallway and clamber eastward down the tunnel where Elgweh’s bat familiar briefly scouted last session. The

group slowly follows, weapons drawn, and soon they find a new chamber dominated by two doors, one of them much stranger than the other. And upon their arrival at the entrance to the chamber, the door and wall begins humming and glowing with a faint electrical buzz.







They throw a rock at the door at it pings off, sizzling slightly. They use mage hand to slightly edge the door open, and the cleric blasts it all the way open with thaumaturgy, and they see something shocking beyond. First and foremost is a brazier with a tall green flame, but immediately behind it is a one-eyed spherical monster!”

“HELLO,” it burbles, but speaks telepathically into their minds.



“Uh...hello?” they say.

The thing doesn't launch an attack or act aggressively, it just bobs there staring at them with multiple eyestalks.

“I AM THE GUARDIAN OF THE FORGE. ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE FORGE AND I WILL DESTROY YOU. HELLO!”

[DM Note: This guy was fun to roleplay. I gave him this weird little burbling voice that I made up on the



fly, and it seemed to mesh well with his personality, which was a totally neutral “Just doing my job, man.” I think because of that the PCs were hesitant to go ballistic with him right off the bat]

Well, the PCs banter back and forth with this weird little monster for a while. It reveals that it is Muko the Spectator, and it was assigned to guard the Forge of Spells long ago by the dwarven wizards, and it is waiting for them to assign it a new task. They try to tell the spectator that the dwarves have been dead for hundreds of years, but it doesn't seem particularly swayed by that argument. It is quite chatty and amiable despite its horrific appearance. They suspect that it is a purely magical being from another plane of existence that does not need food or water or even entertainment to subsist, it just floats there and contemplates the mysteries of the universe.

But during the conversation Elgweths spots a hint of motion from the lower tier, down the stairs leading toward another ruined doorway on the bottom level, but this one seems more mundane and not electrified. He asks someone to cast a light spell down there, and they suddenly see a wraith-like figure raises its arms over its face, shrieking, and then it sinks into the floor.



Returning to the spectator, they get the Dwarf cleric Thorin to step up, and the spectator is pleased to see one of its old masters, and the dwarf is able to convince the creature that it is finally released from its servitude. There is no messy battle, no screams or flying spells or disintegrations, there's just a pop as the spectator vanishes and returns to whatever world from which it originally hailed.

The heroes are free to enter the chamber of the Forge.

The place is a mess, the walls blackened and tables shattered by an ancient battle. The green flame silently licks toward the ceiling from the brass bowl but sheds very little heat. They find a door in the back corner, and upon opening see two items that MUST be magical: a mace and breastplate suspended in the middle of the floor by a shaft of light.

But they don't have time to enjoy their newfound discovery. Cora hears creaking bones out in the hallway and sees three blackened skeletons exit the ruined door from the lower tier. At the same wraith from earlier suddenly rises through the floor, utterly surprising them.

“YOU CANNOT HAVE MY TREASURES!”



Elgweth the elf tries to parlay with the wraith before it attacks them. The wraith, Mormesk, looks like the shadowy vestige of a human, and it admits to once being a wizard in service to the dwarves. It demands tribute from the PCs or it will kill them – give him magic items or scrolls or spells and they can leave with their lives. Well, the PCs aren't too keen on bargaining with this fellow, he kind of seems like an impatient asshole, and Elgweth wastes no time in slashing his magical dagger through the thing's wispy rags. Shadowstuff is ripped away and it screeches in pain, and then surges toward the elf, its icy touch draining life and color from the elf's face.

Elgweth is not dead, but he realizes with horror that this thing really could kill them all if they don't get rid of it.



Elgweth slashes with his dagger (and the sneak attack damage is just insane, the Elf was dealing 18 points of damage, and I arguably have to say I don't agree with sneak attacking an incorporeal shadow, it just doesn't make sense)

The dwarf cleric Thorin grabs the mace, which is definitely enchanted, and lays into the spirit as well. Between multiple attacks hitting it from all sides, the thing is unable to land another touch on anyone, and it finally screeches –

“YOU CAN'T HAVE MY TREASUUUUURRRRRRESSSSSS!” as it sinks back into the floor, possibly dead, they're not sure.

But the heroes aren't out of the fire quite yet. Actually, the frying pan might be waiting. They hear crackling fire and the creak of bones, and peeking through the door, they see THREE hideous skeletons wreathed in flame, each one about to toss a ball of fire at the first person who steps into view.

Cora slams the door.



We actually had to stop there. It was a short session and I didn't get as much done as I would have liked, but it was still pretty fun. The next segment could possibly be their final delve into the Lost Mine of Phandelver...

