

VERIntro 5-03

# Ruby Falls

## A Two-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>®</sup> Verbobonc Introductory Regional Adventure

Version 1

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Rumors speak of a ghost who gives out rubies. Is this true or just a gnomish prank? A merchant is looking for adventurers to find out this answer. This is a two-round Verbobonc Introductory regional adventure for first-level characters only.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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## RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table DM (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

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## PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

## PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

## LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round up to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

- Enlist a sixth player.
- Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

This is an introductory event and may only be played by first level characters.

## Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard two-round regional introductory adventure, set in Verbobonc. Characters native to Verbobonc pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per round. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per round. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per round.

## Verbobonc Town Project

Portions of this adventure take place in the town of Ruby Falls, which is part of the Verbobonc Town Project. Characters with Citizen of Ruby Falls certificates receive the benefits listed there for this adventure. See **Appendix Two: History of Ruby Falls** for more information on this town.

The judge is also encouraged to visit the Ruby Falls Yahoo discussion group at:

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/TownOfRubyFalls/>

The discussion group has additional resources that will prove helpful in detailing the portions of the town not covered in this scenario.

## Adventure Background

### Rubyfalls

Long ago the hamlet of Rubyfalls fell prey to an evil creature. The creature, a vicious demon with the name of Xarjent, feasted on all matter of beast within the Gnarley forest, but his favorite was gnomish children. Fortunately Garl Glittergold answered his clerics' pleas for help and sent a mighty gnome warrior by the name of Tumblebelly atop a golden wolverine to vanquish the demon. The battle lasted for hours and finally

concluded in the cave behind the waterfall of Rubyfalls.

The wolverine was the first to die as it forced the hero out of the way of a killing blow. The demon and the hero then charged each other for what would be their final act. The blood of all within the cave flowed from the cave into the waterfall and gave the water a ruby hue. A golden beam of light then came from the sky and sealed the cave forever. Many have tried to gain access to the cave but all have failed. From time to time when the sun shines its final light, villagers have seen the ghost of the gnome hero within the falls. The ghost has been known to hand out rubies to the brave souls that reach out to the ghost. Most of the rubies disappear by the next morning's light, though a few have been rumored to remain permanent.

### Cult of Xarjent

The cult is dedicated to bringing back Xarjent. Xarjent's eldest son Onynxe leads the cult of Xarjent. Onynxe could care less about his father's return, but would love to gain access to his father's items that are sealed behind the mouth of the cave. Onynxe's two lieutenants, Erazuz and Abzxat hate each other and they constantly strive to outdo each other. Both have been charged to find a way into the cave.

Erazuz has recently discovered an ancient ritual requiring the blood of six gnomish infants. Erazuz has no idea as to what the ritual will produce, but he is hopeful it will give him some insight.

Abzxat has learned of Erazuz's plan and has already taken steps to spoil it. Abzxat thinks that the rubies are a clue to the key, but he will need a good aligned person to retrieve one. Abzxat figures that he can find a group of good aligned adventurers to go to Rubyfalls. He will clue them in to the gnomish infant disappearances in hope that they will foil Erazuz's plan.

He figures that if this happens, the ghost will reward them with a ruby.

## Adventure Summary

The adventure starts out in the hamlet of Taymouth. The party is hired by Wendell the merchant (Abzxat) to travel to Rubyfalls and investigate the rumors of a ghost who hands out magical rubies and to bring him rubies if the rumor is true. Two days away from Rubyfalls, the party comes to the rescue of a courier that is under attack by orcs. One day away from Rubyfalls, it starts to rain hard and the party is forced to spend the night in a cave. Unfortunately the cave is the home to a darkmantle who is hungry and tries to eat the party. The party arrives in town the following afternoon. Upon arriving they are greeted by the town

representative, Fuzzysnoot. While talking to Fuzzysnoot, a gnomish woman approaches them and tells them that her infant son was kidnapped. Fuzzysnoot tells the party that this makes 5 kidnappings in the last 2 days. He asks the party to investigate in exchange for a free night's stay at Fall's Inn. Upon investigating the gnomish woman's house, the party finds a letter in Draconic. Upon deciphering the letter they find out that Erazuz has ordered the kidnapping of six gnomish infants and plans a dire ritual. The gnomish woman tells them of one other gnomish family that has a newborn. Just before the party arrives to the other family's house, they are ambushed by kobolds. After the party defeats the kobolds, they learn that the ritual is going on at sunset. The party is too late to stop the ritual. They are however attacked by more kobolds for their trouble.

## Introduction

*Your travels in Verbobonc have taken you northeast along the Low Road, which runs adjacent to the mighty Velderdyva River. With the exception of seeing an occasional Rhennee Barge and the presence of the Mounted Borderer patrols, all is uneventful. Early one morning your journey has brought you to the hamlet of Taymouth. Hungrily you make your way to the Tays's Creek Inn. The smell of freshly cooked bacon and eggs greets you as you enter.*

A middle-aged woman hastily seats the adventurers at the same table. Allow the adventurers to introduce each other.

## Encounter One: A Proposition

*A middle aged man wearing fine merchant garb approaches your table and states that he is in need of adventurers and offers to pay for your breakfast in exchange for listening to his proposition.*

Wendell waits for the party to agree before sitting down. Wendell is actually Abzxat (Male Half-Fiend Sor 8). He has established himself as a merchant in Taymouth for three weeks now. Abzxat wears a hat of disguise and is currently under an *undetected alignment* spell.

*"My name is Wendell, I am a merchant who has a fascination for fine jewels and gems. I was recently talking to a young woman by the name of Ulna who was traveling to Verbobonc city from her home in Rubyfalls. She told me tales of ghosts, gnomes and magical rubies. I tried to loosen her tongue with a bit of Elven Wine, but she politely refused wanting only*

*clean water in a clean glass. Anyway to make a long story short, I have several responsibilities that prevent me from traveling to Rubyfalls myself. I would like to hire you to travel to Rubyfalls and to investigate this strange tale. If the tale proves true and not some gnomish prank to attract visitors, I will pay you each 200gp for a magical ruby. If the tale proves to be false, then return and I will pay you for your time. So what do you say?*

If the party does not agree, Wendell (Abzxat) will thank the party, pay for their rooms and meals and wish them a pleasant day.

Assuming the party accepts, Wendell (Abzxat) will thank the party, pay for their rooms and meals and answer any questions that they may have.

Some questions the characters are likely to ask include:

What are your responsibilities?

*I am responsible for ensuring the accuracy of inventory and the timeliness of shipments from Taymouth to Verbobonc City.*

What types of shipments?

*Oh, many different types, but mostly exotic herbs and spices.*

How do we get to Ruby Falls? Do you have a map?

Wendell provides the party with Player Handout #1.

Can you arrange transportation for us to Rubyfalls?

*Unfortunately, all of our boats and mounts are in use at the moment by Jensen's Runners at the moment. The soonest they would be available to head to Rubyfalls would be next week.*

Listen, we really need some getting-started money. Can you give us an advance?

If pressed, Wendell (Abzxat) will agree to pay the party 50gp up front.

A successful Gather Information check (DC 5) on Wendell reveals that everyone vouches for him and confirms his information.

## Encounter Two: The Causeway

Any character that is awake at dawn will notice that all of the birds fall silent for a few moments. It is unknown as to why they do this. The party will have to travel southeast to get to the River Road (Low Road). From there they will have to cross a stone

causeway that fords Tays Creek. The causeway is submerged six inches.

*After a great rest and even greater meal, you travel southeast out of town until you reach River Road (Low Road). As you approach Tays creek, you notice that there is not a bridge. You will have to cross a stone causeway that is submerged about six inches.*

The causeway is 30 feet across. Each person must make a DC 12 Balance check to travel half of their normal movement in one round. If they fail their roll by 4 or less, they are unable to move that round. If they fail their roll by 5 or more, then they fall and are carried 10 feet downstream into a two-foot pool. From there the characters are able to cross normally, but they will be soaking wet. Character with movement rates of 20 or less will have to make more than one roll.

## Encounter Three: When Orcs Attack

It is roughly 75 miles from Taymouth to Rubyfalls. This encounter happens 2 days away from Rubyfalls.

*You have been traveling all day with nothing to see but the mighty Volverdyva River to your left and the Great Gnarly Forest to your right. Just when you are rounding a corner in the road, you notice up ahead four orcs chasing a teenage boy atop a riding horse.*

The horse and rider are 40 feet away and the orcs are 60 feet away.

### APL 2 (EL 2)

👁 Orcs (4) See *Monster Manual*

If the party wins, the rider will return. He thanks the heroes and introduces himself as Tom. Tom tells the party that he works for Jensen's Runners and that he was delivering an inventory list from Dyvers to Verbobonc City.

## Encounter Four: The Cave

This encounter should occur one day away from Rubyfalls.

*The dark clouds have hid the sun most of this day. As the wind picks up, you know that it can only mean one thing. You feel a few drops come down and for a while it is tolerable, but if starts to quicken as you look for shelter.*

There is a small cave in a hill to the right just inside the tree line. Inside the cave the party sees that they could

light a fire to stay warm and that there is only one defendable entrance. On a successful Spot Check (DC 20), they will notice 4 stalactites. A successful Knowledge [Dungeoneering] check (DC 16) reveals that something is not quite right about the fourth stalactite. Finally, a DC 16 Knowledge [Arcana] check reveals this monster to be a darkmantle.

If more than one person leaves the cave, the darkmantle will cause darkness and attack. Otherwise it will wait till more than one person is lying down then it will cause darkness and attack.

### APL 2 (EL 1)

Darkmantle (1) See *Monster Manual*

## Encounter Five: A Cry for Help!

*After walking most of the day in the thick mud from last night's hard rain, you finally make it to Rubyfalls a couple of hours past the noonday's sun. As you come off the River Road (Low Road) and cross over a bridge onto Main Street, you can see the falls to your left. In front of the falls is a small island with what appears to be two statues. A little ways from the falls you can see a building with a sign reading Fall's Inn and Tavern. Eager to take the load off your feet and get some warm food in your belly you make your way to the Inn.*

*You are quickly seated next to the fireplace with a mug of cold ale and a plate of warm food. The only other customer is a well-dressed gnome sitting by himself at a small table in the corner.*

The bartender, a halfling named Varian, asks the group if they are here to visit Ghost Island. If so, Varian tells them that Ghost Island is the Wonder of Rubyfalls. He explains that Ghost Island is more than a historical site; it is what brings the townspeople together in times of trouble. He will also briefly tell them the town's history (see Appendix Two: The History of Rubyfalls).

If asked about the statues, he will tell them that they are a tribute to the Gnomish warrior and his mount.

If asked about Ghosts or Rubies, he will tell them that he has heard many of the tales, but never has he seen them himself.

*Halfway through your meal the door to the Inn slams open. In walks a gnomish woman with tears in her eyes. The well-dressed gnome stands up and walks to her. "What is wrong Owgar?" The woman looks up to him and says, "Lanook, my daughter is*

*missing. I put her in her cradle and left only for a minute, when I had returned she was gone." Upon hearing this Lanook turns pale. He eyes your group and tells her to wait there. The gnomish man walks to your table and introduces himself. "Greetings travelers and welcome to Rubyfalls. My name is Lanook Fuzzysnoot, town spokesman in the absence of the mayor. I am in dire need of your help. Over the past two days, a total of five gnomish infants have been kidnapped. The town guard and I have been unable to find any clues whatsoever. Surely a fine young group of adventurers such as yours would have no problems in getting to the bottom of this. I can only offer you free stay in the Inn and free meals while you are looking into the matter... and of course my gratitude. Will you go to Owgar's home and see if you might find a clue to this unfortunate crime?*

Lanook (male, gnome Brd 2) waits patiently for their answer.

If the party says no, then Lanook looks disappointed but thanks them for their time. The adventure is over and the party is unable to retrieve any rubies. The group may return to Taymouth but will be unable to find Wendell (Abzxat). Abzxat will have learned of the group's failure and will be looking for a new group of adventurer's under a different disguise.

If the party says yes, then Lanook will look quite pleased and thank them. Owgar will then take them to her home.

## Encounter Six: Scene of the Crime

The characters will arrive at Owgar's burrow with about two hours left of sunlight.

*Owgar's home is actually a burrow at the base of a giant oak tree. You soon realize that anyone larger than a gnome would probably have to crawl to get inside.*

Searching the baby's cradle (Search DC 12) will reveal a small scale in the folds of the baby's blanket. Knowledge [Nature] (DC 12) reveals this to be a kobold scale.

A search outside the house (Search DC 15) will reveal a leather pouch that had been dropped. Inside the pouch is a letter (Player Handout #2.)

Upon hearing or reading the contents of the letter, Owgar will inform the party that there is only one other gnomish family with a newborn, the Greenbottoms. She will quickly give the group directions to their burrow.

## Encounter Seven: Ambush

Erazuz is aware that someone may be tracking him, so he has left a small group of kobolds in the last gnome home to attack whoever it may be.

*Following Owgar's directions it takes about an hour to get to the gnomish family's home. Everything seems fine as you near the small burrow until...*

Have the characters make Spot checks (DC 16) with failure indicating that they are surprised by the kobolds that come out of hiding by slinging rocks for their surprise round. Any characters that approach the kobolds have a chance of setting off the pit traps.

### APL 2 (EL 3)

🗹 **Camouflaged Pit Trap (2):** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall); Search Dc 24; Disable Device DC 20. Market value 1,300 gp each.

👹 **Kobolds (4):** See *Monster Manual*

Once the party defeats the kobolds, they will find the gnomish parents tied up in the burrow. The parents will tell the party that the kobolds mentioned something about taking the children to the falls.

## Encounter Eight: The Final Encounter

No matter what happens, the party will be unable to stop the ritual. They can however save the children.

*As the day's last light fades, you near the bridge to Ghost Island. You can make out what appears to be five kobolds standing above 6 tiny figures and a black-scaled kobold floating in the air by the falls edge next to the two statues. With a final somatic gesture the black-scaled figure splashes a golden chalice towards the falls allowing a red-tinted liquid to merge with the flowing water. A bright red flash blinds you for only a second. When your sight returns you can see the figure turn in the air to face towards your group. He now has what appears to be a scepter of some kind. "Slay them and feed the gnomish vermin to the falls." With that he vanishes.*

Erazuz (male, half-dragon Clr 8) has recalled back to his lair to study the scepter that appeared. The gnomish infants are at -1hp. Check for stability at the end of every round.

### APL 2 (EL 3)

☛ Kobolds (4): See *Monster Manual*

☛ Vex: hp 7; see Appendix One

## Conclusion

After all of the kobolds are dead or defeated and after the babies have been saved, the Ghost of the Gnomish Hero walks out of the falls.

*Now that the battle is over and the gnomish children are safe, you take the time to enjoy the view of the falls and of the two statues. The first statue is of a large wolverine. The second statue is of a man-sized gnome wielding a battle-axe. You notice a golden orb appear out of the waterfall and slowly move towards the statues. The orb touches the gnomish statue and the statue's eyes open. A calm feeling comes over you as you feel your wounds heal. Still glowing gold and without any words the statue reaches out and places a small ruby in each of your hands. You hear a strong voice in your head say, "I have a feeling that one day you will need this." The statue looks down at the gnomish infants as you hear the voice tell you, "You are now the heroes of Rubyfalls." Suddenly the presence is gone as you hear many footsteps approaching.*

Lanook and the town guard have arrived. Lanook thanks you as he directs the guardsmen to return the children to their parents. The next day is a day of celebration as the town throws a great feast in the party's honor. That night the party is approached by Lanook and a bard by the name of Shieldheart who asks the party what their intentions with the ruby is.

Now the group must make a decision. The choices are:

- 1) Return to Taymouth and claim their reward from Wendell. If this is the case, Lanook and Shieldheart will inform the group that their spy's have informed them that Wendell is not who he claims to be and that he is actually an agent of evil. Shieldheart offers to pay the party for the ruby. If the party refuses this offer, go to number 2.
- 2) The party keeps the ruby, unfortunately it disappears with the next day's light.

## Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus role-playing) to each character.

<b>Encounter One</b>	
If the party accepts the proposal	60xp
<b>Encounter Two</b>	
Successfully navigating the causeway	60xp
<b>Encounter Three</b>	
Defeating the orcs	120xp
<b>Encounter Four</b>	
Defeating the darkmantle	120xp
<b>Encounter Five</b>	
Investigate the missing children	60xp
<b>Encounter Six</b>	
Find and decipher the letter	60xp
<b>Encounter Seven</b>	
Defeat the kobolds	120xp
<b>Encounter Eight</b>	
Save the children	120xp
<b>Story Award</b>	
Good role-playing and combat heroics	180xp
<b>Total possible experience</b>	<b>900xp</b>

## Treasure Summary

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

**Encounter One: Introduction**

If pushed Wendell will pay an advance 0-50gp

**Encounter Three:**

The Orcs equipment 100 gp.

**Encounter Seven:**

The Kobolds' equipment 100 gp.

**Encounter Eight:**

The Kobolds' equipment 100 gp.

**Sell Ruby to Shieldheart:**

Shieldheart pays the party 150-200 gp.

**Total Possible GP:** 300-500gp

# Appendix One: NPCs

## APL 2

### Encounter Seven

**Vex, male kobold Sor2:** CR 2; ECL 2; Medium-size Humanoid (kobold); HD 2d4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Melee unarmed strike -1 (1d3-1); SA spells; SQ light sensitivity, summon familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 8 (-1), Dex 14 (+2), Con 10, Int 12 (+1), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 16 (+3).

*Skills and Feats:* Knowledge [Arcana] +6, Knowledge [Planes] +3, Listen +1, Spellcraft +6, Spot +2; Toughness.

*Spells Known* (4/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – *daze, detect magic, ray of frost, read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *mage armor, magic missile*.

*Possessions:* Sacrificial dagger.

**Light Sensitivity:** Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell. A dazzled creature takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Spot checks, and search checks.

Familiar: Toad - +3 hp

## Appendix Two: History of Rubyfalls

Ruby Falls is a small village located between the Kron Hills and the Gnarley Forrest. Although the town is mostly made up of gnomes, there is a good deal of humans and dwarves as well. The town is known for its copper mine, lumber and friendly people. Ruby Falls welcomes all strangers of all races. Normally the mayor is out of town building relations with other towns. When the mayor is gone, Daviot the Half-Orc leads the town in its day-to-day activities. The main attraction to this humble town is not the fine ale and beautiful gnomish women. Nay, it is the tale of Ruby Falls. The town's only landmark is a waterfall on the northern edge of the village. This is the tale that brings the travelers to the remote village.

In the year 567 CY, or so the story goes, the gnomish villages in the Kron Hills were the targets of some unknown evil. The evil, a hideous creature of unstoppable power, would steal into the homes of the villager and kidnap their children, leaving the grieving parents behind. Any who got in the way were killed. With each visit, the evil grew stronger.

The Gnomish clerics met together in a village on the eastern side of the Kron Hills. After prayer and fasting, they petitioned their gods for help and intercession. On the fifth day, a vision appeared to the youngest gnome cleric at the gathering. He saw the Kron Hills before him. One of the hills southwest of the village raised itself up on what appeared to be four horse's legs. The hill became real bright, reflecting the evening sun as it came closer and closer to the village. On the right side of the hill was what appeared to be a flickering streak of silver lightning, as if the hill were waving a sword. As it got closer to the village, another hill, reddish-brown in color, appeared in the village and started to destroy buildings and crops, killing some of the Gnomish inhabitants. The hill opened up and swallowed two children, and then when it noticed the shining hill, it ran east. The reddish-brown hill stopped at a waterfall that tumbles from a stream that borders the Kron Hills and the Gnarley Forest, and the shining hill fought the reddish-brown hill. With each boulder the reddish-brown hill threw at the shining hill, the shining hill broke them to pieces. Finally, the shining hill charged the reddish-brown hill and pushed it into the waterfall. The falls turned red, the reddish-brown hill being destroyed and the shining hill turning into silt.

The next day, the evil attacked the village. After it destroyed several more buildings and a couple of

fields of crops, it attacked the small contingent of militia that had gathered to fight it. Many of the militia died in the fight, but the evil was severely wounded. Looking to flee, it grabbed two nearby children that had gathered to watch the conflict.

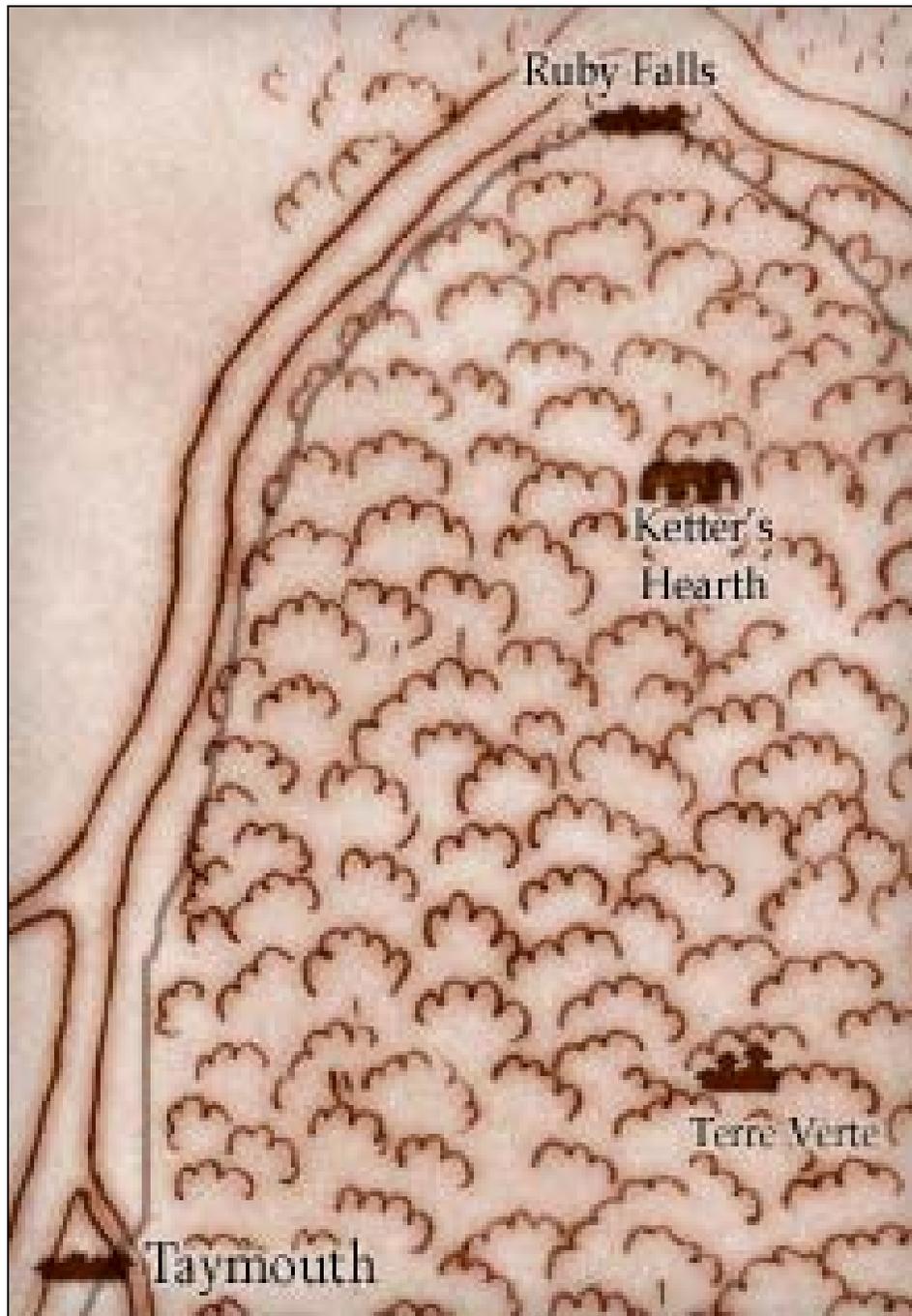
From out of the southwest a tall gnome, wearing gleaming full plate armor and riding a huge golden wolverine, rode into the village. The armor was emblazoned with three rubies on the breast of the armor. In both hands, the gnome bore a great double-bladed axe. The evil and this unknown warrior stopped at the base of a waterfall that issued forth from a stream that flowed from between the Kron Hills and the Gnarley Forest. Casting aside the children, the evil attacked the gnome with the full fury of its might, but the warrior parried and deflected each attack.

Finally, the warrior and his steed charged the evil, driving it back into the sheet of the waterfall. As the evil stumbled against the onslaught, the gnome swung his axe and cut deeply into the chest of the evil. Knowing that his reign of terror was over, the evil pulled the gnome and his steed into the waterfall with it. As he did, the flow of water turned deep red. Though the body of the gnome warrior and his steed were found, the evil was not. They were buried in the cave behind the waterfall, as a testimony to their stand and the site on which they fell.

Since that day, the evil has been gone from the land. Occasionally, or so the tale goes, on certain bright and clear sunset evenings by the waterfalls, there appears to be a figure in shining armor on a huge wolverine in the waters of the waterfall. They appear to turn and ride into the falls, and once again the falls sparkle with what appear to be drops of blood. It is also at this time that some say that a ruby will appear in the hand of those that reach into the falls to shake the hand of the warrior that saved the gnome villages from the evil.

While some scholars attribute the evil to the depredations of the first rising of the Temple of Elemental Evil, others are not so sure.

## Player Handout #1



## Player Handout #2

Vex,

Bring to me six gnomish infants from the cursed town of Rubyfalls. I have need of their blood for a ritual most vile. This will surely put me in favor with Onynxe over that dretch Abzxat.

Erazuz, Faithful of Onynxe.