



CHAPTER 1

# DISPLACED

THE MOUNTAINTOP BASTION  
THE SOILED SOIL  
THE ALCHEMICAL ENGINE





House Wenjansk remembers the warm shores. The sun was bright and the harvests plentiful. Far from the tainted runoff of the Duscarn Range, House Wenjansk wanted for little. Yes, there were bitter rivalries with the neighboring houses, but much was accomplished through diplomacy. War was always a threat and never a reality. Then the giants came.

In great longships, the Duscarn Giants crossed Lake Nodolny and raided Wenjansków. The lowland lords and their vassals alike were unprepared for the assault. Hundreds were killed, and the rest fled. Wenjansków fell in a matter of hours. Those wise enough to abandon their homes climbed into the hills and the mountains beyond. They ascended the treacherous peaks of the Duscarn Range, the supposed birthplace of the pursuing giants. No food could grow here in the corrupted sierra, and so those fleeing became desperately hungry. As many died escaping their city as died in the initial devastation.

But many survived, and those who did climbed higher and higher into the peaks, away from the giants who followed. The giants fell behind, and the exhausted band of survivors slowly conquered the peaks. Atop the distant Mt. Endryr, House Wenjansk found something they had never expected: a colossal bastion on the mountaintop. The castle had sturdy walls, a defensible position, and an alchemical engine that would ultimately save the starving refugees.

They had found Faltringor, the ancient stronghold of the creatures that later became the Duscarn Giants. House Wenjansk claimed their new home. Ten years have passed, and Faltringor is now a remote, self-sustaining city at the pinnacle of the Duscarn Range. The bulwark must stand, for the giants who destroyed Wenjansków seek to reclaim their former stronghold, a castle that has lain dormant for hundreds of years.









# Falthringor


**POPULATION:** Roughly 150 people live within the castle walls, and five times that farm the slopes below. Most residents are lowland humans, but upland halflings are also common. A handful of giants unaffiliated with their battle-frenzied kin from the lowlands have also pledged themselves to House Wenjansk.

**GOVERNMENT:** House Wenjansk rules Falthringor much as they once ruled Wenjansków. The top-ranking lord in the house—presently the patriarch Mariusz Wenjansk—is named the “High Kestrel,” a title equivalent to “king” in the greater kingdoms elsewhere in the realm. The High Kestrel appoints Lord Ratchets to manage the army, the economy, and the fields.

**ECONOMY:** There are none bold enough to trade with the residents of Falthringor. It is too dangerous to cross the Duscarn Range, even if House Wenjansk assures that any merchant will be protected. Nevertheless, there is a notable division of labor within the castle walls. Guilds oversee various crafts: chiefly smithing, brewing, and leatherworking.

**RELIGION:** Like the great houses scattered across the lowlands, House Wenjansk and their vassals practice a form of shamanism. Priests interpret the wisdom of nature spirits. House Wenjansk honors many beasts in their faith but gives primacy to birds of prey: the Great Falcon, the Canny Harrier, and the All-Seeing Owl.

**TECHNOLOGY:** The current residents of Falthringor are a medieval people. They use longbows and wear chainmail. They have no printing press, gunpowder, clocks, or windmills. The former residents of Falthringor, however, were experts in alchemy. Their *torrent opus* provides a seemingly unlimited source of fresh water for the castle and nearby hamlets. Most believe there are other useful treasures hidden deep in mountain tunnels, though the inner workings of these alchemical engines are likely to remain a mystery for quite some time.





12 ft

6 ft

4 ft



## THE PRESENT RESIDENTS OF **Faltringor**

Most who now call Faltringor home are the former residents of Wenjansków—the lowland city destroyed by the Duscarn Giants years ago—and its surrounding fields. The city was no great metropolis but was among the largest urban settlements in the agrarian lowlands.

### **Lowlanders**

The majority of Faltringor's residents are human, typically referred to as "lowlanders." This demonym now carries an ironic undertone, given the elevation of Faltringor. Any humans from the wide swath of land bounded by the Duscarn Mountains to the west, the Silliar Ghats to the north, and the Yartharen Sea to the



south and east are considered lowlanders. They typically have dark skin and coarse hair, features shared by the majority of humans in the sweltering lowlands.

The fertile lowlands are ruled by anywhere between eight and eleven great houses, depending on whom you ask. These great houses are the defining political powers of the region. Each house acts as the governing body, the military, and the organizing force that manages agricultural laborers across the verdant plains. In many houses, these laborers are serfs, barely freer than slaves. House Wenjansk prefers the term “vassals.” The common people may own land and have some say in governance, and the elders of House Wenjansk, in turn, provide both protection and law. There is still a wide gulf between the lords of the great house and the peasants, but vassals in and around Faltringor are treated far better than elsewhere in the lowlands.

The lowlanders pledged to House Wenjansk are sworn to uphold certain ideals: veneration of the bestial spirits, duty to one’s land or guild, a commitment to fight when necessary, and—more recent-



ly—gender parity. Collectively, these ideals are enumerated in the *Wenjansk Code*, a massive tome of laws, tenets, and history that is jointly compiled by the Lord Ratchets. These virtues have always been core to House Wenjansk’s identity among the great houses, but now they are also crucial to the livelihood of Faltringor and immediate surroundings. Even with the stronghold’s walls and life-giving *torrent opus*, day-to-day survival is never assured in the Duscarn Range. Avalanches, infectious diseases, and giant attacks are constant threats, so the unifying body of beliefs that bind the residents of Faltringor has never been more critical.



## LOWLANDER NAMES

D8	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAMES
1	Bazyli	Andrzeja	Bartek
2	Dymitr	Dagmara	Cebulsk
3	Idzi	Helena	Jacek
4	Kosma	Jadwiga	Kruk
5	Oswald	Ola	Matuisk
6	Roland	Patrycja	Pinkos
7	Tomasz	Teodora	Smolak
8	Wiktor	Zyta	Walek

## Upland Halflings

Many halflings from the nearby hills moved to Wenjansków a few decades ago when their homes were ransacked by House Wenjansk's rival great house: House Jutmek. These halflings are now twice displaced.

In their previous homes, the upland halflings maintained shockingly similar lifestyles to many of the lowlander agricultural workers living outside Wenjansków. Overwhelmingly, these halflings were subsistence farmers who had little in the way of formal government or religion. When necessary, small bands of halflings would form makeshift militias to protect themselves, but this was no match against a proper army of archers and cavalry. When House Jutmek came for their territory, they surrendered their valuable farmland and fled to Wenjansków.





Perhaps surprisingly, most of the relocated halflings had little difficulty assimilating into life on the outskirts of the lake-side city. They willingly became vassals of House Wenjansk and pledged to work the land in exchange for autonomy and protection. This agreement proved exceedingly prudent for both parties in the wake of Wenjansków's destruction: the halflings needed protection more than ever, and the lowlanders needed hardy laborers with experience farming at higher elevations. In general, the halflings fared much better in the mountains than most of the humans. As such, the halfling numbers have grown from roughly 10% to nearly 25% of the population.

All upland halflings are hermaphroditic. As such, any two halflings can mate and bear children. The halflings hold dear the notion that one's biological sex need not mandate one's gender identity. Some halflings identify as male, others as female, and some as nonbinary. Some lowlanders have theorized that the egalitarian spirit of the upland halflings is at least partially the result of their unique biology and gender expression. Undoubtedly, the halfling diaspora has influenced House Wenjansk's recent commitment to gender equality.

## HALFLING NAMES

D8	MALE	FEMALE	UNISEX
1	Banran	Aldani	Cannenbuhr
2	Ekkirih	Arin	Deonant
3	Hiltibrant	Cotahilt	Enolt
4	Ingo	Everteh	Mendenno
5	Noathart	Hempi	Ren
6	Paltar	Sahsin	Smeoha
7	Stutran	Ualtni	Traostilo
8	Vuldar	Vehnent	Woto



## Duscarn Giants

The Duscarn Range is a dangerous place, even to the giants who claim it as their ancestral home. Many nomadic giants throughout the mountains fall to wild beasts, toxic soil, and extreme weather each year. As such, many sought refuge in Falthringor after House Wenjansk reactivated the *torrent opus*. House Wenjansk listened to their request for asylum, but High Kestrel Mariusz Wenjansk vacillated. On the one hand, giant attacks were the very reason he was forced to flee with his people to the mountains. On the other, these giants were ready to swear fealty and bore no direct relation to the relentlessly warlike tribe that ransacked Wenjansków.

Eventually, giants were granted asylum into Falthringor on the condition that they offer their labor and pledge themselves to the ideals of House Wenjansk. There is still much to be done in the mountaintop castle, and there is no substitute for the strength and craftsmanship of the giants. Additionally, they are hardy folk accustomed to the climate, and they require little in

the way of extra clothing, medicine, or supervision. If worse comes to worst, they can also be called upon to fight, though the High Kestrel has thus far resisted the temptation to pit his vassal giants against their own kin.

Legends speak of different giants elsewhere in the realm:





the unthinking forest giants in the woods of Onotanie or the wise stone giants who live alongside the coastal dwarves. Duscarn Giants seem to be unique among their kin. They have learned the lowlander tongue and speak eloquently, though with a persistently frustrating lack of urgency. They seem distinctly inept when it comes to tending fields. However, their artistry in various media—chiefly fiber arts, metalsmithing, and vocal counterpoint—is virtuosic compared to any works the humans or halflings can muster. Many lowlanders had assumed the Duscarn Giants to be brainless brutes, but close interaction immediately dispelled this notion.

Lowlanders have difficulty pronouncing many Duscarn names, and thus most giants in Faltringor are given nicknames associated with their chosen work.

### GIANT NAMES

D8	MALE	FEMALE	SOBRIQUET/NICKNAME
1	Abrudenjeskor	Beđiš	Cap
2	Brzchértí	Eéèl	Featherborn
3	Egrthúmlrn	Giibgigli	Hide
4	Krrtag-Dentlun	Nunjenskori	Longseer
5	Llatrung	Oh-Hjuntla	Ol' Iron Arm
6	Múrnlo	Rāi	Swift
7	Teçrimpsz	Stsilstso	Two-Voice
8	Yrrg-Chrê	Ungwêtla	Wise Ass



## THE FORMER RESIDENTS OF **Falthringor**

Falthringor was built many centuries ago. When the refugees from Wenjansków first discovered the mountaintop citadel ten years ago, they were perplexed. They did not know of any civilizations in the mountains, let alone a people from a millennium ago that could construct such a massive fortification in such an unwelcoming environment. As they explored the castle, however, they found texts and mysteriously preserved tapestries that explained the origins of the castle.

Long ago, the Duscarn were a human-like race who lived in the mountains beyond the lowlands. They had weak constitutions and short life spans compared to the humans who lived in the lowlands. Agriculture was challenging in the mountains, but the lowlanders—even then!—were exceedingly territorial. As such, the Duscarn did their best to eke out a meager survival in the harsh peaks.

Though the details from their own records are unclear, the Duscarn somehow became masters of alchemy, concocting potent elixirs that greatly enhanced their lifespans, bolstered their crops, and even sharpened their blades. The Duscarn grew powerful and arrogant. They built Falthringor in the mountains to keep out the lowlanders who had become envious of the now healthy and proud people.

Two things happened next, though in what order is not clear. They poisoned the land, tainting the soil in perpetuity, likely the result of some alchemical mishap. They also built the *torrent opus*, a colossal tower that could summon pristine water from the heavens and deposit an endless bounty in a cistern within the castle. This water allowed the Duscarn to farm the tainted land, and so they prospered despite the calamity.

Many years later, their hubris got the best of them. They became gluttonous, imbibing stranger and more dangerous potions. Little by little, they transformed themselves from the meek species that first conquered the mountains into the violent and distrustful



Duscarn Giants of today. They warred amongst themselves and succumbed to infighting, destroying their powerful empire and falling into a perpetual dark age. Incalculable knowledge was lost, destroyed in battle, or forgotten in the depths of Faltringor. Soon,

they could no longer comprehend or reproduce the very alchemy that had turned them into the creatures they had become. At some point, they fled Faltringor and dispersed across the lowlands. The castle was abandoned and remained as such for hundreds of years.





# THE Torrent Opus

Atop Faltringor's highest tower, an arcane engine wrests moisture from the heavens. This *torrent opus* was one of the great alchemical achievements of the ancient Duscarn. With their unrivaled mastery of material sciences, the Duscarn were able to harvest endless quantities of impossibly pure water, store it, and then use it to farm even in the harsh landscape of their mountainous home.

When House Wenjansk arrived in Faltringor, the *torrent opus* was inactive. It is unclear whether some creature—perhaps one of the last Duscarn Giants to inhabit the stronghold—turned it off or whether some failsafe prohibits the alchemical engine from running perpetually. Regardless, it was trivially easy to reactivate, requiring only a twist of some gears at the base of the tower.

Now the *torrent opus* provides unlimited fresh water for the stronghold, and aqueducts built into the mountainside

disperse the water to farms along the craggy slopes. Farming Mt. Endryr is still a challenge, given the harshness of the soil and the bitter cold, but it is possible to reap impressive harvests with the warm and cleansing water emitted from Faltringor's great tower.

## The Cistern

The water from the *torrent opus* collects in a great cistern carved into the mountain. Though the *torrent opus* had not been active for centuries, the cistern was full when the House Wenjansk first arrived in the stronghold. This cistern is accessible via the maze of corridors and tunnels that lead down from Faltringor's great halls and towers. The cistern is always balmy, a feature that surprised the lowlanders once they reactivated the *torrent opus*. Inexplicably, the heavenly water that the alchemical engine summons is impossibly warm, and some arcane insulator within the cistern is able to sustain that heat.

Small vents throughout Faltringor disperse this warmth across the castle. As such, the cistern provides not just water for the stronghold



but also a small but nontrivial buffer against the frigid mountain-top winds.

In the early days after the lowlanders moved into the castle, High Kestrel Mariusz Wenjansk decreed that the cistern would be off-limits to all but him and the Lord Ratchets. In his view, the cistern was too great a strategic asset to risk. Were someone to tamper with the water supply, they would be forced to drain the entire reservoir. It would take weeks to refill, during which time they would have no fresh water, and the castle would quickly cool. It would likely not mean the end of the Falthringor, but it would be an enormous impediment for an already imperiled stronghold.

## **Beneath the Cistern**

Tunnels and passageways that extend deeper into Mt. Endryr are visible beneath the waters of the cistern. Theoretically, someone *could* swim down into the unexplored chambers deep below Falthringor. It seems inevitable that there are greater mysteries to uncover that may shed light on the final days of the Duscarn.

Alternatively, these passageways would be much easier to explore if the cistern were emptied. There is a central console near the cistern that could be used to deactivate the *torrent opus* and open up mountainside sluices, draining the cistern entirely. This would allow for safe traversal of the once flooded chambers deep below the fort.

**GM NOTE:** The “passageways beneath the cistern” is your catch-all excuse to add a dungeon crawl to your Falthringor adventures. If you have a crypt/laboratory/dragon lair/et cetera that you want to incorporate into your campaign without the party even leaving Falthringor, have them deal with the cistern. They’ll either have to sneak into the large chamber or convince the High Kestrel to give them access, and then they’ll have to decide whether it’s worth draining all the warm water. Either way, the mysterious fall of Falthringor’s original inhabitants is a perfect hook to help you plop any additional dungeon module you want into the castle’s basement.



## The Slopes

Falthringor was not large enough for the initial band of travelers that escaped Wenjansków, and it certainly isn't large enough for today's burgeoning population. As such, many of House Wenjansk's vassals farm the slopes beneath Falthringor. It is still frigid this high above sea level, but agriculture is possible. Yaks and goats can survive if they eat grasses that are cleansed with water from the *torrent opus*, and hardy tubers thrive if given adequate care and irrigation.

Even with the alchemical aid that Falthringor provides, life in the mountains is a challenge. The *torrent opus* may neutralize the tainted soil, but farming on a windswept mountain is still no easy feat. Farmers must be careful when burning what sickly wood grows in the Duscarn Range lest they inhale too many noxious fumes from the contaminated timber. House Wenjansk believes this danger will diminish as

they continue to irrigate Mt. Endryr with pure water.

Those outside Falthringor's walls must always be prepared to confront giants. Soldiers are deployed as necessary, but the farmers who live in the tiny mountainside hamlets know that every archer or spearman has orders to retreat into the castle if necessary. Those on the slopes know they are better off looking to the spirits for protection than the errant soldiers that House Wenjansk deploys.

Luckily, the Duscarn Giants have thus far opted not to undermine Falthringor's food production with targeted attacks on outer farms. Their formal raids solely target the stronghold itself. It is unclear whether this is purely a tactical blunder or whether the Duscarn Giants have some deeper reason for ignoring what would seem to be the optimal siege tactic.







## TRAVELING TO **Faltringor**

Only exceptionally motivated travelers will dare make the trek to Faltringor. It's a dangerous journey, and few outsiders have ventured to the castle since the initial exodus of the lowlanders ten years ago. There are, however, a number of reasons that a party of adventurers may want to head to the city.

1. The discovery of the stronghold was an extraordinary **archaeological reveal**. Curious minds may hope to find alchemical wonders in the fortress's hidden subterranean corridors, or they may just crave anthropological insights regarding the origins of the Duscarn Giants.
2. House Wenjansk is still—at least theoretically—a major player in the **politics of the lowlands**. The other great houses may send emissaries to trade, negotiate with, threaten, or spy on the High Kestrel and the rest of House Wenjansk.
3. Faltringor is the *only* **safe haven** throughout the Duscarn Range. If the adventurers are traveling through the mountains for any purpose, they will likely need to make their way to the fortress to resupply or hide from greater threats.
4. The other great houses were lucky that House Wenjansk led the violent giants away from the lowlands. Still, there is growing concern that the giants will become more brazen in their future attacks should they gain a **permanent foothold** in the Duscarn Range. Noble adventurers may seek to aid House Wenjansk in the defense of their keep to avoid this worst-case scenario.



**D6 DUSCARN RANGE  
DANGERS**

**DESCRIPTION**

**1**      Avalanche

Violent seismic activity causes frequent avalanches. The initial danger is trauma from the slabs of ice and snow, but avalanches also make the terrain more difficult to traverse for days or weeks to come.

**2**      Tainted soil

All of the dirt and mud packed beneath the snow is forever corrupted by Duscarn alchemy. Obviously, travelers should not consume the foul plants that grow here, but they may also contract diseases purely through proximity.

**3**      Alchemical runoff

Reactivating the *torrent opus* set in motion several dormant alchemical machines throughout the Duscarn Range. Some of these emit toxic drainage erratically. Perceptive travelers may notice the well-concealed runoff pipes jutting out from various peaks.

**4**      Malachite lizards

Only the hardiest creatures can survive in the Duscarn Range. Among them are the hulking malachite lizards. These venomous quadrupeds camouflage themselves among the tainted soil and can grow up to fifteen feet snout-to-vent.

**5**      Perilous chasm

Earthquakes can cause expected travel routes to transform unexpectedly. A reliable mountain pass may become a gaping crevasse in mere minutes. Bypassing the chasm may add days to an expedition, though the party *could* try to cross the gap instead .

**6**      Giant attack

The Duscarn Giants are committed to retaking their long-lost fortress, and they are not terribly discerning when it comes to small folks. Anyone shorter than ten-or-so feet tall is a potential target.



## HIGH KESTREL

# Mariusz Wenjansk

Most High Kestrels face their fair share of challenges. Kajetan Wenjansk had to fortify his borders against raiders from House Jutmek. Remigiusz Wenjansk was confronted with a combination of famine and plague throughout his reign. High Kestral Mariusz Wenjansk (he/him), however, has had to fight to keep his house from crumbling entirely.

Like most High Kestrels, Mariusz inherited the title upon his father's death.<sup>1</sup> As the eldest son of an only child, Mariusz's ascension was not in contention. His early rule saw the integration of the upland halflings into Wenjansków's farms, amendments to the *Wenjansk Code*, and thriving relations with the other great houses. Had Mariusz died prematurely, he would have been remembered as one of the greatest High Kestrels House Wenjansk had ever known, if only for the fortuitous circumstances of his reign. The sacking of Wenjansków and subsequent dispersion called all of that into question.

<sup>1</sup> The intricacies of succession within House Wenjansk are explored in greater detail in *Falthringer 02: Fortified*.





Mariusz is no great genius. He is a man who places too much trust in his Lord Ratchets and too little in his vassals. Many common folk would die for High Kestrel Mariusz, but he mostly sees them as self-interested and fickle. It is well known that Mariusz is largely irreligious despite the fervor with which most of his subjects revere the Great Falcon, the Canny Harrier, and the All-Seeing Owl. He often acts rashly, and when he cannot make a decision, he is overly deferential to his Lord Ratchets, who frequently pursue ulterior motives. He drinks to excess, keeps a mistress, and plays a dangerous game by picking favorites among his children.

Nevertheless, High Kestrel Mariusz Wenjansk saved his people. None could have predicted the giants would cross Lake Nodolny, and Mariusz was quick to signal the retreat. He led his people into the unclaimed hills and found a new stronghold to call home. The future of House Wenjansk is not certain, but Mariusz has done everything he can to keep his people safe.

Despite his age, Mariusz still trains daily with his guard force. He is healthy and valorous, and when the giants approach his fort, he stands tall atop the ramparts. Many question whether Mariusz is the best role model, the wisest tactician, or the most adept politician, but all give him the credit he deserves. He is an incredible force, and House Wenjansk stands today because of his leadership. The histories will remember that.





## Lord Ratchet Foldet

The *Wenjansk Code* supplies surprisingly few guidelines regarding the appointment of Lord Ratchets. Typically, a High Kestrel retains some of the Lord Ratchets from his predecessor and then bestows new titles to close confidants, but few laws codify this process. Many were still surprised when the High Kestrel bestowed a title on Foldet (they/them), one of the first upland halflings to swear fealty to House Wenjansk. Foldet is a plucky halfling who argued convincingly on behalf of their kin. They made the claim that House Wenjansk would be stronger with the agricultural aid of the halflings and that it would be a strategic slight against House Jutmek, the great house that had uprooted them from their previous home.

Foldet gradually became a close ally of the High Kestrel, providing an outsider's point of view that was sorely lacking within Mariusz's inner circle. They were named Lord Ratchet a scant few months after the halflings were granted asylum and have remained true to Mariusz in the twenty or so years since. Their friendship with Mariusz influenced the High Kestrel's progressive views on gender and likely his ultimate decision to welcome giants into Falthingor. Though Foldet seems to many like a true champion of House Wenjansk, they ultimately have never been able to free themselves from their bias toward their halfling kin. Despite years of service, their total loyalty to the great house is far from guaranteed.

## Lady Sylwia Wenjansk

No special title is granted to the wife of a High Kestrel. They are expected to act as the ruler's spiritual guide and to bear children, but that is all. Lady Sylwia (she/her) has accomplished precisely one of these goals; Mariusz has three healthy children, but he is still a heathen. Sylwia is a religious woman, frequently meeting with the priests. She laments her husband's lack of faith and has done her best to nurture a sense of spiritualism in her children.

Lady Sylwia is oblivious to her husband's infidelity, or perhaps she turns a blind eye. In either case, she is a woman filled with shame. She fell ill during the flight into the mountains and has never fully recovered. It's unclear whether that is for lack of proper healing or lack of motivation. In truth, Lady Sylwia never became the woman she had hoped she would become. She has become increasingly reclusive throughout her stay in Falthingor.



## PLOT HOOK:

# Cure the Land

The Duscarn Range was fouled by the arrogant alchemists that ruled the land a millennium ago. The great thinkers of Falthingor have yet to unravel the exact cause of this contamination, but it seems likely that any cure will be alchemical in nature. The *torrent opus* renders the land farmable, but only with considerable effort. It also makes Falthingor a target. If the mountains were rid of their taint, it seems much more likely that House Wenjansk could come to a peaceful resolution with the Duscarn Giants, that more great houses could move into the mountains, and that plentiful harvests could allow for an unparalleled division of labor for future generations.

**GM Note:** “Curing the land” is a big, nebulous plot arc that you will probably want to stretch out over the course of many sessions or perhaps even an entire campaign. You absolutely *can* expedite this quest by having the players delve into a dungeon, fight a boss, and flip a switch in a single sitting. Still, something as meaningful as *terraforming an entire mountain range* will resonate more strongly if it’s an extended challenge.

Instead of providing our typical step-by-step guide explaining how players might go about achieving this goal alongside a table or two of challenges, we will instead help you think through designing this quest from a number of different angles. What follows is three versions of this plot hook to suit your preferred time scale: one that will take at most two to three sessions, one that will constitute a complete narrative arc with multiple embedded quests, and one that will function as an overarching hook around which to structure an entire campaign.

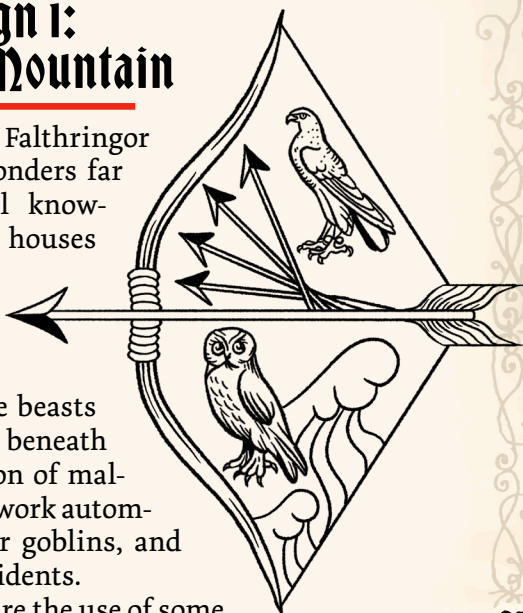


## Quest Design 1: Delving Into the Mountain

The Duscarn ruins beneath Falthringor are filled with alchemical wonders far exceeding the technological know-how of all the lowland great houses combined. Even after centuries of decay, there are likely to be lingering machines with engines that a clever tinkerer can reignite. Strange beasts prowl deep in the dungeons beneath the cistern: some combination of malachite lizards, Duscarn clockwork automations, magma golems, Silliar goblins, and spirits of the fort's former residents.

Curing the land will require the use of some ancient treasure deep in the dungeon, beyond traps and monsters. Consider the following options:

1. An **agricultural processor** that transforms waste into a fertilizer that will neutralize the contaminants in the soil
2. An additional **alchemical engine** that must be affixed to the top the *torrent opus* to augment its curative properties
3. A **vault of seeds** for crops with roots that will purge the soil of its rot
4. A star map that explains **arcane rituals** that must be conducted in tandem with certain astral phenomena
5. An incredibly destructive **earthquake generator** that will crumble the Duscarn Range, revealing healthy soil buried underneath the mountains
6. Directions to a second fortress hidden miles below, where a society of **Duscarn refugees** still practice alchemy to this day





## Quest Design 2: Unite the Great Houses

Each Lord Ratchet has proposed a different solution. One says House Wenjansk ought to dig great trenches and flood the various canyons, and another says new soil must be carried up from the lowlands. Some have even suggested building a brand-new alchemical engine, a feat far beyond the capabilities of anyone living in Falthringor today. It isn't clear which of the proposed solutions will work, but it is obvious that any successful plan will require unfathomable manpower. The few hundred residents of Falthringor and the surrounding hills simply can't accomplish this feat alone. They'll need a lot of help.

High Kestrel Mariusz Wenjansk believes it's time to finally unite the great houses. He can't spare his army or advisors so long as Falthringor remains beset by giants, so he has deputized the adventurers to negotiate on his behalf. If the party can convince even just *four* of the eight or so great houses to join in the quest to heal the Duscarn Range, he believes the rest will follow. He makes a few suggestions about how the adventurers might start.

1. The seat of **House Degimalz** lies far to the northeast, in the dangerous Silliar Ghats. Simply *getting to them* will constitute a meaningful peace offering, as the other great houses typically do not send diplomatic emissaries to the secluded Degimalz capital.
2. **House Jutmek**—historic rivals to House Wenjansk—respond only to strength. The adventurers will gain a great deal of negotiating power if they can prove their might in the Jutmek coliseum.
3. The various lords and ladies of **House Enthira** play dangerous games of subterfuge and backstabbing politics. The adventurers might be able to infiltrate their court and influence the conspiratorial nobles at their elaborate balls.
4. The leadership of **House Teeçzik** is fervent in their devotion to the Discerning Hound. The adventurers might find it easier to commune with the canine spirit in an effort to sway the devout great house.



## Quest Design 3: The World Tour

It is no simple quest to heal the soil of an entire mountain range. It will require lengthy periods of fact-finding in far-flung libraries and temples, magical artifacts from across the realm, and contributions from mages, scholars, and mythical beasts. This is not a quest that will be solved in days or weeks but in years—a mission to which adventurers will have to dedicate a considerable portion of their lives.

Should the adventurers pledge themselves to this great and honorable task, the leaders of House Wenjansk will supply whatever resources they can: gold, weapons, transportation, and royal writs. The Lord Ratchets will provide a lengthy set of tasks for the adventurers:

1. Learn about **alchemy and soil** at the Grand University of Material Sciences
2. Collect the **blessings of the four seasons** from the fae Principality
3. Command the earth titan **Maoim-Slèibhe** to destabilize the soil
4. Assemble a team of **kinesis mages** to reshape the winds
5. Help House Wenjansk win the **war against the giants**, even it means requesting aid from far-off kingdoms
6. Travel to the **realm of spirits** and consult with the Great Falcon
7. Complete the **abandoned alchemical engines** scattered throughout the Duscarn Range
8. Defeat the **spirit of corruption** that has made its home in the ashes of Wenjansków

These are unreasonable tasks to ask of any but the most committed heroes. Accomplishing all eight will require traveling to the farthest corners of the realm and beyond. The High Kestrel knows he will likely die before seeing this goal completed, but also that if the adventurers succeed, they will forever change history.



There is no expectation that the adventurers *will* succeed, or even that they will commit themselves fully to the task; after all, most adventurers end up getting sidetracked, and that's okay! This is aspirational, and even accomplishing a small portion of these quests may go a long way toward healing the scarred sierra.

**GM NOTE:** These are just examples. When you plop Falthringer into your campaign world, the specific steps necessary to cure the land will depend on the rest of your worldbuilding. Ideally, though, a lengthier campaign will include more than just defeating a cabal of assorted boss monsters across the world. Try to concoct tasks that will necessitate a variety of roleplaying *modes*: exploration, puzzle-solving, negotiation, stealth, dungeoneering, and—of course—combat. If you design a “world tour” quest deftly, you’ll have sowed the narrative seeds for dozens upon dozens of tabletop sessions.

