



# Heroes' Feast: Lair of the Red Dragon

**H**eroes' Feast: Lair of the Red Dragon is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for **three to five characters of 11th level to 14th level**. The adventure pits the characters against a deadly ancient red dragon. An ancient red dragon is a significant challenge for a party of this level and will require every

ounce of their strength and cleverness. If the characters rush into the encounter, they will surely be killed by the dragon. They must spend time researching their adversary to ensure survival against the menace.

## Omeria Placement

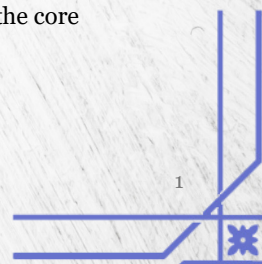
By default, this adventure takes place in Omeria in the northwestern part of The Summer Land. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the details of Presson's Enclave and its laws against conjuration, enchantment, and transmutation before you run this adventure in the campaign setting book *Pexia's Guide to Omeria*.

## Running the Adventure

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have these books, you can access a free basic ruleset from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.



*Spells* and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

## Skill Challenges

Skill challenges simulate an attempt to perform a task that takes longer and is usually harder than a single ability check. In its most basic form, the characters make a series of ability checks with the goal of earning a required number of successes before accumulating a maximum number of failed checks (similar to how death saving throws work).

Usually, the players decide which checks they want to contribute to the skill challenge. Typically, the characters may perform a given ability check only one time; if they attempt to repeat an ability check, they make the second check with disadvantage. The ability checks they make are lumped into two categories: primary and secondary. Both types of ability checks have their own DCs—more often than not, the secondary check DCs are 5 or higher than the primary check DCs. The skill challenges usually list the primary skills used for the challenge. All other skill checks contributed to the challenge are considered secondary. The characters are free to use any skill they like for secondary so long as they can give a good (and creative!) reason why it would help with the overall skill challenge. Any character can contribute a skill check to the challenge, and a character can make more than one check if they like.

So long as the characters achieve the required number of successes before achieving the number of failures for the challenge, the challenge is successful. The results for success and failure are detailed in the skill challenge's description.

## The Nature of Heroism

This adventure asks a lot of characters. After all, it's an 11th-level adventure that pits a party of underqualified heroes against one of the greatest threats in the entire game. Their chance for survival is slim to none. And you, as the gamemaster, should recognize this before you run this game. *The party will probably die.* But will their deaths be in vain?

*Heroes' Feast* is not a normal Fifth Edition adventure. Often, players joke about "it's what my character would do!" But if they knew that they were up against an adventure where they would likely die without any chance of resurrection, would they willingly go into it? Are they the heroes that they say they are, or are they nothing more than loot-hungry mercenaries?

Soon after you reveal the nature of this adventure's threat, present this idea to the characters.

"Would your character go on this quest? Would they die to fight an evil far more powerful than anything they've ever faced? Or would they turn it down and leave it to the next hero?"

Hopefully, this adventure will showcase true heroes, those willing to risk their lives and souls to defeat the dragon, while concurrently revealing the selfish and cowardly.

Furthermore, it will show those willing to think outside the box to defeat a great foe.

Take caution, traveler. There be dragons.

## Adventure Hook

The characters gather in the Summer Land town of Farncombe to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of the War of the Burning Plains. The event is called the Heroes' Feast. Sharing its name with the cleric spell of the same name, the Heroes' Feast sees a variety of cooks from across The Summer Land gather and prepare an extravagant meal for hundreds of Pressonians. As heroes of great renown, the characters are treated as the guests of honor, each one granted a seat at the head of one of the long feast tables.

The pleasant fall weather makes for an enjoyable evening. There's feasting, drinking, dancing, and carousing. Even Anorians and Roe'd'gope join in the festivities, putting aside their cultural differences to celebrate the defeat of the dragons.

When darkness falls, the Pressonians set ablaze a colossal wooden effigy of Tostrasz the Enormous, the ancient red dragon leader of the Great Chromatics. While the revelry continues, someone notices something strange silhouetted against one of Casar's fat autumn moons. At first, the Pressonians think that it's all part of the event. Surely, it must be. After all, no dragon has come this close to The Summer Land in over fifty years. But then panic sets in. It's a *real* dragon.

The great beast swoops down from the sky and belches a great column of fire. Instantly, its breath incinerates dozens of Farncombe's citizens. Straw-thatched roofs ignite. Startled horses yank at their tethers and kick at their masters.

Before anyone has time to react, the dragon is gone. It flies west into the Basilisk's Spine Mountains where its titanic roar echoes across the land.

## Background

The dragon's name is Auntyrakkan (pronounced "on-TEAR-a-kin", but colloquially known as "Auntie Rakin"). Auntyrakkan is one of only three ancient red dragons still alive on Casar. After the Pressonians defeated the Great Chromatics in the War of the Burning Plain, Auntyrakkan fled to Aegreya along with the other dragons. But Auntyrakkan's elemental blood boiled with rage and resentment. For decades, he felt that the retreat was foolish and that the dragons could have fought harder to hold onto their claim of The Summer Land. Finally, the dragon snapped and left its chambers in Vast'r Draconis. Ironically, Auntyrakkan had no idea that the Pressonians were celebrating Heroes' Feast. It was just a coincidence that he attacked when he did.

After Auntyrakkan attacked Farncombe, he returned to his old lair hidden in the heart of a volcano named the Living Summit in the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Much to his surprise, his old hoard still hid in its old cavern, most of it melted from long exposure to extreme heat. Settled back in, the dragon began his plot to take back his birthright: the lands of men.

## Scene 1 - Helping Farncombe

The adventure gets underway immediately after Auntyrakkan makes his attack on Farncombe. Using its legendary actions, the dragon can move up to 280 feet per round while flying. It's unlikely the characters can catch up to the dragon before it escapes. Furthermore, the village is in danger. The fires burn out of control and many of its people are injured. Livestock and mounts, both staples of Farncombe's meager economy, flee in terror.

The characters can help Farncomb's citizens in one of the following ways.

### Calming Animals

Many of Farncomb's animals panicked during the attack. If they aren't calmed, many will get injured or flee. A character can make a skill challenge to calm the animals (see Skill Challenges at the beginning of this book for details on how they work).

**Resources:** Each skill check related to this skill challenge takes 5 minutes to perform. Characters may perform their skill checks concurrently and may participate in different skill challenges in this scene. For every 5 minutes that the characters wait to participate in this skill challenge, increase the DC for each check by 1.

**Difficulty:** The DC for each primary skill and bonus skill is 15 and the DC for each secondary skill is 20.

**Complexity:** The characters must achieve 4 successes before they suffer 2 failures.

**Primary Skills:** Animal Handling, Athletics, Nature

*Animal Handling (DC 15).* You try to calm one or more animals. A character who makes this check while aided by another character who is proficient in Animal Handling makes the check with advantage.

*Athletics (DC 15).* Some of the animals require the characters to dash after them, leap over obstacles like fences or knocked-over carts, and sometimes grapple with them. First success with this skill grants a +2 bonus to all additional checks made related to this skill challenge.

*Nature (DC 15).* Spending a moment to consider the best way to help the animals. First success with this skill opens up the use of the Medicine skill.

*Medicine (DC 15).* Many of the animals are wounded and need medical attention.

**Success:** The characters save most of Farncomb's livestock and mounts. The character's reputation with the people of Farncomb increases by 1. This is important later when dealing with the citizens of Farncomb.

**Failure:** Many of Farncomb's animals flee or die during the disaster. Farncomb's economy suffers for years.

### Extinguishing Fires

Auntyrakkan's elemental-powered fire breath ignited many of Farncombe's buildings. These homes and businesses now

burn out of control. If the characters wish to stop the fires, they must perform a special skill challenge detailed below.

**Resources:** Each skill check takes 5 minutes to perform. Characters may perform their skill checks concurrently and may participate in different skill challenges in this scene. For every 5 minutes that the characters wait to participate in this skill challenge, increase the DC for each check by 1. If a spellcaster casts a spell that creates water or deals cold damage in a large area (such as *control weather* or *ice storm*) reduce the DC for each check by 5.

**Difficulty:** The DC for each primary skill and bonus skill is 15 and the DC for each secondary skill is 20.

**Complexity:** The characters must achieve 8 successes before they suffer 4 failures.

**Primary Skills:** Athletics, Perception, Persuasion

*Athletics (DC 15).* The characters must work quickly to extinguish the flames, using water, sand, or whatever else they can get their hands on. If the characters achieve a success with Persuasion, they may make this check with advantage.

*Perception (DC 15).* The characters identify the parts of the village they should target first. First success on this skill grants a +2 bonus to all checks related to this skill challenge.

*Persuasion (DC 15).* Using calm, concise directions, the characters can direct other volunteers to help them put out the fires. First success with this skill grants advantage on all future Athletics checks made to extinguish the fire.

**Success:** Although it's impossible to prevent all the damage the dragon did with its breath, the characters save enough homes and businesses to prevent a total disaster. The character's reputation with the people of Farncomb increases by 2. This is important later when dealing with the citizens of Farncomb. The character's standing with Farncomb

**Failure:** The village suffers severe property damage, leaving many of Farncomb's citizens homeless. With winter coming, this might be a death sentence for many of these poor folks.

### Healing the Injured

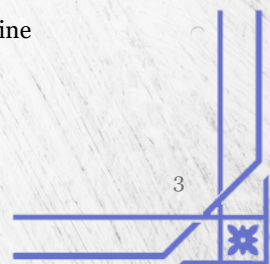
Over a dozen of Farncombe's citizens were injured during Auntyrakkan's strafe. And many more suffer from wounds. If they aren't helped, the loss of life will be great. The characters must perform a skill challenge to save lives.

**Resources:** Each skill check takes 5 minutes to perform. Characters may perform their skill checks concurrently and may participate in different skill challenges in this scene. For every 5 minutes that the characters wait to participate in this skill challenge, increase the DC for each check by 1.

**Difficulty:** The DC for each primary skill and bonus skill is 15 and the DC for each secondary skill is 20.

**Complexity:** The characters must achieve 6 successes before they suffer 3 failures. At least one success must be from a Medicine check.

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Insight, Medicine



*Arcana (DC 15).* Dragon fire does not function like normal fire does. First success with this skill grants advantage to Medicine checks related to this skill challenge.

*Insight (DC 15).* Good bedside manners go a long way. First success with this skill grants a +2 advantage to all medicine checks related to this skill challenge.

*Medicine (DC 15).* No matter how clever the characters are, they will need to perform some sort of healing on the injured. A character can reduce the DC for this check by using a spell or feature that heals wounds, such as the *cure wounds* spell or a Paladin's Lay on Hands. Each hit point healed in this way reduces the DC by 1.

**Success:** Healing the injured is the best way to improve the character's standing with the people of Farncombe. The characters' reputation with the people of Farncomb increases by 3. This is important later when dealing with the citizens of Farncomb. The character's standing with Farncomb

**Failure:** Many of Farncombe's citizens die from their painful burns. Dark days ahead as many of Farncombe's citizens participate in funerals for their kin.

## Scene 2 - Know Your Enemy

After the characters finish dealing with the disaster in Farncombe, they will likely set their sights on the cause of the destruction: the dragon, Auntyrakkan. If they don't immediately rise to the occasion, Farncombe's leader, a Panagiota "Pana" Vlahouli (LN female Pressonian human **noble**) challenges the characters to do what's right.

Of course, it's not easy tracking a flyer in the middle of the night. Even if the characters manage to handle all of Farncombe's problems in only 30 minutes, Auntyrakkan will be 15 miles away from the village by the time they start their search. And by morning, the dragon will be back inside its lair roughly 250 miles away from Farncombe.

## Tracking Auntyrakkan

If the characters are bound and determined to track the dragon immediately after its assault on Farncombe, they can track it by heading in the direction it flew and making a series of ability checks.

In the first hour that the characters start their search for Auntyrakkan, a character must make a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check, the character's choice. On a success, the characters are able to follow Auntyrakkan's path for 1 hour, at the end of which they must repeat the check. So long as the characters continue to succeed on checks made to follow Auntyrakkan, they can travel after the dragon for 1 hour. Each time the characters fail a check to find Auntyrakkan or any time 8 hours pass, increase the DC for each subsequent check by 1.

Moving at a normal pace, the characters must succeed on 60 checks to discover where Auntyrakkan went.

## Preparations (Downtime)

Wise characters will know that they must ready themselves against this threat if they are to stand a chance against it. Doing so will require multiple days of research, planning, and preparation. This involves downtime.

As discussed in other Fifth Edition books, downtime activities allow players and GMs to transform the time between adventures (and game sessions) into a compelling part of the campaign. The downtime activities featured here help the characters lay the groundwork for their inevitable fight with Auntyrakkan.

**Complications and Rivals.** Many of the downtime tasks presented in this section might introduce an ongoing complication to the adventure. Some of the complications take the form of rivals, others that stand to gain from the characters' failures. Ultimately, complications are used as a tool to advance and lead the ongoing plot of the adventure.

When a character performs a downtime task, consider what complications might arise from the task—even if it succeeds. Furthermore, consider who will benefit from the characters' downtime. Most of the downtime tasks explain when and where to introduce complications. However, if such details aren't given and you aren't sure when or where to introduce a complication, each time one or more characters participate in a downtime task, roll a d10. On a result of 1, a complication occurs. Use the task's respective complication table to determine the nature of the complication and whether or not it involves a rival.

## Downtime Activities

The characters are free to perform downtime activities found in other books. However, to successfully complete this adventure, they will need to successfully execute some of the downtime tasks described below.

The length of time required for all of these downtime activities varies, but typically takes a minimum of one workday. All the normal rules for downtime must be followed by a character undertaking the downtime activity, including spending 8 hours each day engaged in that activity for the day to count toward the activity's completion.

### Find the Dragon

Before the characters can face Auntyrakkan, they must first find the dragon.

**Resources.** Learning the whereabouts of Auntyrakkan's lair requires at least one workday of effort and incurs 200 gp spent paying for information and assisting those affected by the disaster.

**Resolution.** A character makes a Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Survival) check. The DC for the check equals 30. Subtract 1 from the DC for every day that has passed since the dragon's attack on Farncombe. The characters gain a +1 to the check for every workday they spend beyond the first and may also add the reputation they earned in Farncombe to the result.



On a success, the characters learn the exact location of Auntyrakkan's lair.

If the characters do not perform this downtime task or they cannot succeed at the task, they learn through word-of-mouth the location of Auntyrakkan's lair after 30 days.

**Complications.** In a perfect world, a danger like a dragon should unite the people and place no obstacles in the characters' path. Unfortunately, Omeria isn't a perfect world. Plenty of Pressonians wish to turn the entire affair into a political matter. Every workweek spent searching for the dragon (rounded up) brings a 10 percent chance of a complication, examples of which are on the Find the Dragon complications table below.

## Find the Dragon Complications

### d6 Complication

- 1 The characters accidentally offend locals affected by the dragon's wrath.\*

A shrewd politician believes that the characters had something to do with the dragon's sudden appearance and believes that the characters' quest is nothing more than a ploy to build favor in the area.\*

- 2

- 3 Dragon cultists confront the characters, demanding that they leave the dragon alone.\*

The characters discover more people affected by the disaster who want the characters to spend time helping them fix their destroyed farm.

- 4

- 5 An uptight politician believes that dealing with the dragon is a huge waste and believes that the characters' efforts are better focused elsewhere.\*

- 6 Worshippers of Yrena, the goddess of destruction, believe that the dragon's arrival is an omen that should be revered.\*

\*Might involve a rival.

## Research the Dragon

While the characters probably know they're facing a red dragon, they will need to learn what type of dragon that they're facing.

**Resources.** The characters need access to those who witnessed the dragon in action. The characters must then spend at least one workday and at least 50 gp spent on material, gifts, and reparations for the damage the dragon dealt during the assault.

**Resolution.** One of the characters makes a Charisma (Persuasion) check with a +1 bonus per 50 gp spent beyond the first 50 gp plus a +1 bonus for each additional workday spent interviewing Farncombe's citizens. The characters also add their reputation among Farncombe's citizens to the result. A character with a passive Intelligence (Arcana) score of 19 or better makes this check with advantage. Determine how much the character learns about the dragon using the Research Outcomes table.

## What About Magic?

The characters might want to use divination to find Auntyrakkan. Unfortunately, Auntyrakkan spent much of his youth protecting his lair from prying eyes and intruders. In addition to the other features noted in Scene 4, Auntyrakkan's lair is protected with permanent castings of both *private sanctum* and *forbiddance*. Sound can't pass through the barrier at the edge of the warded area. Thick smoke surrounds the mountain, preventing vision (including darkvision) through it. Sensors created by divination spells can't appear inside the lair, and creatures in the area can't be targeted by divination spells. Nothing can teleport into or out of the lair, and planar travel is blocked. The entire location is proofed against all forms of planar travel, and prevents creatures from accessing it by way of the Astral Plane, Ethereal Plane, the realm of the fey, the realm of shadow, or the *plane shift* spell. When a celestial, elemental, fey, fiend, or undead first enters the area or starts its turn there, the creature takes 27 (5d10) radiant damage. Creatures of these types already inside the lair are immune to this effect.

## Research Outcomes

### Check

#### Total Outcome

- 1-5 Nothing important learned.

- 6-10 The dragon was enormous, measuring over 50 feet in length. Its size is Gargantuan, suggesting it was an ancient red dragon.

- 11-20 The dragon had sharpened spikes running down the length of its back and a large, floppy dewlap. This means it was probably the red dragon Auntyrakkan.

- 21+ It's believed that Auntyrakkan's hoard is still hidden in an active volcano in the middle of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. The volcano is named The Living Summit. The Living Summit is approximately 250 miles from Farncombe. Characters who receive this bit of lore have advantage ability checks related to the Finding the Dragon downtime task.

**Complications.** The greatest risk in research is uncovering false information. And there are plenty of rumors circulating about the dragon and its goals. Each workweek spent in research (rounded up) brings a 10 percent chance of a complication, examples of which are on the Research Complications table.



## Research Complications

### d6 Complication

- 1 The characters accidentally damage a rare book devoted to dragon lore. The owner expects reparations of 500 gp to repair it and won't settle for a *mending* spell.
- 2 The characters offend local dragon experts, who demand an extravagant gift for the slight.\*
- 3 Dragon cultists take notice of the characters and try to derail their quest.\*
- 4 A cultist of Yrena becomes obsessed with convincing the character that the dragon is the harbinger of doom, and nothing will stop it.\*
- 5 The characters' actions cause a stir among The Summer Land's politicians, who turn the dragon into a political issue.\*
- 6 Someone is willing to share useful information about the dragon, but only if the characters promise to bring them a special item rumored to be hidden within the dragon's hoard.

\*Might involve a rival.

## Amass an Army

The characters are free to face the dragon by themselves, but once they learn that they're going toe to toe with an ancient red dragon, they might want to recruit help.

**Resources.** The characters must spend at least one workweek putting out the call for heroes to help them in their fight against Auntyrakkan. They must also spend the gold cost for the type of heroes that they hire, as shown on the Amassing an Army table below.

**Resolution.** One of the characters makes a Charisma (Persuasion) check, with the DC for the check chosen by the character according to the type of troops they wish to hire.

The chosen DC can be 10, 15, 20, or 25. A success indicates that the characters hire the selected group to serve with them during the adventure. On a failure, the characters fail to find anyone worth bringing on their adventure.

The four types of armies the characters can amass are described after the table. Each character may only amass one army to a maximum of four armies per party, and the army departs at the end of the adventure. If at any point the characters can't or won't pay the army's per diem, the army leaves the characters until the characters pay the army their per diem plus any back pay.

## Amassing an Army

DC	Army Raised	Cost to Hire
10	Armed peasants	100 gp + 5 sp per day
15	Trained warriors	200 gp + 5 gp per day
20	Experienced veterans	500 gp + 10 gp per day
25	Dragon slayers	1,000 gp + 25 gp per day

**Leading an Army.** After a successful Amassing an Army check, you gain the help of a small contingent of soldiers that assist you on your adventures and serve as your

bodyguards. The stat block your soldiers use depends on the army you successfully raised. The army's statistics function like those for creatures, except it doesn't have actions of its own. It relies on a commander to use its action to command the soldiers to take one of its command actions. Any option that appears in the Command Actions section of the army's stat block requires an action to perform.

To act as the army's commander, you must join the unit, which you may do simply by moving into the same space as the unit. While you are part of the unit, your soldiers surround you at all times and move when you move. Whenever you take damage, your soldiers take damage instead. If this damage reduces the soldiers to 0 hit points, you take any remaining damage. While you are not part of the army, the soldiers take the Dodge action on their turn.

**Complications.** Raising an army is hard work, and it draws a lot of attention—both good and bad. Each workweek a character spends trying to amass an army (rounded up), there is a 10 percent chance of a complication, examples of which are on the Amass an Army Complications table

## Amass an Army Complications

### d6 Complication

- 1 Local politicians refuse to let the characters raise an army in the area, citing misuse of power.\*
- 2 The characters offend local militia members while searching for appropriate soldiers.\*
- 3 Dragon cultists take notice of the characters and try to derail their quest.\*
- 4 A band of peasants wants the characters to take them on their quest, whether the characters want them to go or not.
- 5 The leader of a war band agrees to travel with the characters, but only if they get to lead the quest.\*
- 6 Yrenese cultists disguised as a war band agree to go along with the characters; they might betray the characters at the worst possible time.\*

\*Might involve a rival.



## Scene 3 - Into the Spine

Once the characters learn the location of Auntyrakkan's lair within the Basilisk's Spine Mountains, they must begin their journey to its lair. It takes the characters 10 days of travel on foot from Farncombe to the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. If the characters are mounted and not slowed by an army, they can cut this time in half.

Once at the mountains, the characters find a path that cuts through the range's impressive peaks eventually terminating in Auntyrakkan's Lair within the Living Summit. The path is treacherous and slow going, requiring three additional days of travel. Smoke and toxic fumes make flight nearly impossible overhead. Unless the characters have a clever method for circumventing the path, they will have to approach the dragon's lair the old-fashioned way.

Each day of travel, the characters have an encounter along the way, all of which are detailed below. You are free to remove, alter, or add to these encounters as you see fit.

### Day 1 - Fire Giants

The characters encounter a gang of three distraught **fire giants**, who are initially indifferent towards the characters. Their names are Babikov, Simikan, and Yozhikovl. Their clan was using Auntyrakkan's Lair as their home. When the dragon returned to The Summer Land, it killed half their clan and forced the rest out. Now, the fire giants seek revenge. The fire giants aren't keen on working alongside humanoids, but if the characters spend at least 10 minutes talking with the fire giants, they can attempt to persuade the giants to travel with them with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. Offering the giants all of the treasure in the dragon's hoard as a reward for their assistance grants the characters advantage on this check. On a failed check, the fire giants wish the characters well but prefer to make their own plan to fight the dragon.

If the fire giants join the characters, the fire giants act during their own initiative order. Each fire giant can move and use its reaction on its own, but the only action it takes is the Dodge action unless a character uses their action or bonus action on their turn to command the fire giant to take another action. That action can be one in its stat block or some other action. A character can also sacrifice one of its attacks when he or she takes the Attack action to command the giant to take the Attack action. If all of the characters are incapacitated, the fire giants flee from combat.

If a fire giant's hit points are reduced to half or fewer or if another fire giant dies and the fire giant witnesses it, a character within 30 feet of the fire giant must make a DC 11 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check (the character's choice). If the check succeeds, the fire giant remains with the party until it takes damage again, in which case a character must make another check to keep them from fleeing. If the check is a failure or there is no character within 30 feet of the giant, the giant's morale breaks. A fleeing giant must spend its turn trying to move as far away from the combat as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of an

enemy. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the fire giant can use the Dodge action.

### Day 2 - Kobold Ambush

Kobolds who once served another dragon in the area are emboldened by Auntyrakkan's return. Auntyrakkan, knowing that heroes would eventually try to stop him, tasked the kobolds to guard the pass. There are literally hundreds of kobolds protecting the pass, far too many to run as a combat encounter. Instead, treat the kobold army as a hazard that the characters must overcome.

Unless the characters are particularly careful, the kobolds are waiting for them. They time their attack so it happens at night, giving them the advantage thanks to their darkvision and removing the penalty imposed by their Sunlight Sensitivity.

The kobolds cover a 15,000-square-foot area. A character with a passive Perception score of 17 or better spots the ambush before the characters walk into it. If the characters spot the ambush, they can try to circumvent the passage. Doing so requires one extra day of travel at the end of which one of the characters must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. If the check succeeds, the characters avoid the kobolds. Otherwise, they must spend another day looking for a detour or face the kobolds.

If the characters enter the area of the kobolds, the kobolds unleash the full might of their army. Use the Kobold Army rules below, which run similar to a complex trap.

#### Kobold Army

The kobold army consists of over one hundred normal kobolds, a dozen kobold sorcerers, assorted beasts and vermin, and plenty of traps. The army covers a 15,000-square-foot area covered with loose gravel, jagged rocks, random rises and falls, and other hazards.

**Trigger.** The kobold army attacks as soon as a non-kobold creature enters the area, and they continue their attack so long as the creatures remain.

**Initiative.** The kobolds act on initiative count 20 and 10.

**Active Elements.** The kobolds throw stones, crude spears, rusty daggers, and any other sharp or blunt object on which they can get their claws.

On initiative count 20 and again on initiative 10, the kobolds attack any creature that's not in full cover, with a +10 to the attack roll and dealing 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage, 5 (2d4) piercing damage, and 5 (2d4) slashing damage.

**Dynamic Elements.** The kobolds use foxholes, dug trenches, and hidden tunnels to try to outflank the characters and their allies. Each round, the kobold's attack bonus increases by 1 to a maximum of +15.

**Constant Elements.** Each creature that ends its turn in the kobold army's area is targeted by an attack: +10 bonus; 5 (1d10) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage on a hit (the GM's choice).



**Countermeasures.** The characters can defeat the kobolds in a number of ways.

**Run the Gauntlet.** A creature can try to run through the area. The part of the path the kobolds cover is a passage that is 125 feet long. Multiple traps and other dangers litter the path. When a creature tries to move through the area, it must make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the creature's choice). On a successful check, the creature can move up to half of its movement speed. On a failed check, the creature can't move through the area until the start of its next turn. It can, however, turn back and go the other way.

**Attack.** A creature in the area of the kobold army can attack the kobolds by dealing damage to them. A creature can use an action to make a ranged attack or melee attack or to cast a spell. Assume that any attack rolls hit but are not critical hits, and disregard any effect of the attack or spell for this purpose other than the damage it deals. If the total damage from all the attacks or spells used on the characters' turn is 20 or higher, the army is momentarily slowed. The kobolds have disadvantage on attack rolls made against the characters until the end of the creature's next turn, and the creature has advantage on checks made to Run the Gauntlet (see above). If the kobolds take 100 or more damage in a single round, roll a d20. On a result of 8 or higher, the kobolds flee. Otherwise, the kobolds continue the fight.

**Something Else.** Of course, the characters are free to deal with the kobolds in another creative way. They might use illusion magic to convince them that they are Auntyrakkan, or they might cause a sleet storm that momentarily disables the kobolds. Reward creative ideas.

### 3 - The Ruined Monastery

On the last day of the characters' travels, they come across a ruined Kuzhuk monastery. During his wrath, Auntyrakkan laid waste to the entire structure, killing nearly all the monks inside. Only a lone monk named Kharchu survived the attack. He spent the last few days burying his brothers and sisters. Despite his hardships, Kharchu is friendly and allows the characters to stay and rest amid the ruins. If the characters don't already know that Auntyrakkan is an ancient red dragon, Kharchu shares this information with them now. He also provides the characters with plenty of water and warns them of the hazards of the volcano.

Kharchu is a neutral good Khuzuk human **tribal warrior**.

### Regional Effects

In addition to the natural hazards caused by the active volcano, Auntyrakkan's regional effects grip the area. Apply as many of the following regional effects as you like. If Auntyrakkan is destroyed or flees the volcano, these effects disappear after 1d10 days.

- Small earthquakes are common within 6 miles of the dragon's lair.
- Water sources within 1 mile of the lair are supernaturally warm and tainted by sulfur. Not even magic will purify this water.
- Rocky fissures within 1 mile of Auntyrakkan's lair form portals to the Elemental Plane of Fire, allowing creatures of elemental fire into the world to dwell nearby. These creatures set fire to trees, houses, and anything else that will burn to their touch.
- Auntyrakkan can hear up to 30 feet through any open flame within 1 mile of its lair.
- As an action, Auntyrakkan can create an illusory image of himself within 1 mile of the lair. The copy appears within the flames of open flame through which Auntyrakkan can hear. Once created, the image lasts for as long as Auntyrakkan maintains concentration, as if concentrating on a spell. Auntyrakkan can sense and speak through the fire as if present at that position. If the fire is extinguished, the illusion disappears.
- Open flames within 6 miles of Auntyrakkan's lair are tinged dark red, hiss and crackle constantly, and throw off embers and showers of sparks.





## Scene 4 - The Living Summit

The Living Summit, a perpetually active volcano, tosses fire, ash, and toxic gas into the air. There is no question that this is the home of a deadly ancient red dragon. In fact, locals swear the volcano is more dangerous than ever, rejuvenated by the presence of its old occupant.

### One Mile from the Lair

The volcano's hazards arise within 1 mile of the volcano. The path to the cone is slow and one fraught with danger. It will take the characters 30 minutes to reach the foot of the mountain from this point. Double the time if the characters move at a slow pace, or halve it if the characters move at a fast pace.

During this grueling journey, the characters must contend with the following hazards.

**Difficult Terrain.** All of the terrain surrounding the volcano is considered difficult terrain, costing 2 feet of movement for every 1 foot moved.

**Heavy Winds.** Storms surrounding the mountain create strong winds and heavy precipitation at all times. All creatures have disadvantage on ranged attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing and sight. The winds extinguish open flames, disperse fog, and make flying by nonmagical means nearly impossible. Any flying creature other than Auntyrakkan within 1 mile of the volcano must land at the end of its turn or fall.

**Toxic Gas.** Toxic gas spews nonstop from the mountain extending 1 mile from it in all directions. When a creature comes into the area for the first time or starts its turn within 1 mile of the mountain, it takes 1 poison damage from the fumes and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target is poisoned for 1 hour. If the target succeeds on its saving throw, it automatically passes saving throws to avoid becoming poisoned by the toxic gas, but still takes damage as normal. Creatures immune or resistant to fire damage are not affected by this hazard, even if they aren't immune to poison damage or the poisoned condition.

### The Foot of the Mountain

Once the characters come within 300 feet of the mountain, they are subjected to the following effects (in addition to those noted above).

**Extreme Heat.** A creature must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour spent within 300 feet of

the mountain or inside it or gain one level of exhaustion. The DC is 5 for the first hour and increases by 1 for each additional hour. Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor, or who are clad in heavy clothing, have disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeed on the saving throw.

**Volcanic Storm.** A churning storm cloud hangs above the mountain, centered on the mountain. The storm affects everything within 300 feet of the mountain. Lightning flashes in the area, thunder booms, and strong winds roar. When the character and their followers first enter the cloud, each creature under the cloud (no more than 5,000 feet beneath the cloud) must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 7 (2d6) thunder damage and becomes deafened for 5 minutes.

Every minute the characters spend traveling under the cloud, roll a d10 to determine a random effect created by the cloud.

### Volcanic Storm

#### d10 Result

1 **Acid Rain.** Each creature and object under the cloud takes 3 (1d6) acid damage.

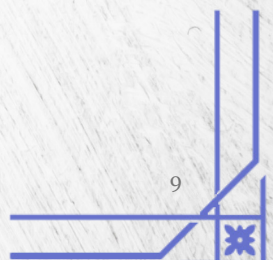
**Lightning.** Six bolts of lightning flash from the cloud, striking six random creatures or objects. A given creature or object can't be struck by more than one bolt. A struck creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 35 (10d6) lightning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

3 **Hailstones.** Huge balls of ice the size of fists drop from the sky. Each creature and object under the cloud takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

4-10 **Freezing Rain.** Gusts of freezing rain assail the area under the cloud. Each creature under the cloud takes 3 (1d6) cold damage and ranged weapon attacks in the area are impossible for the next minute. Checks made to concentrate on spells are made with disadvantage. The gusts disperse fog, mists, and similar phenomena, and it snuffs out torches and unprotected lanterns.

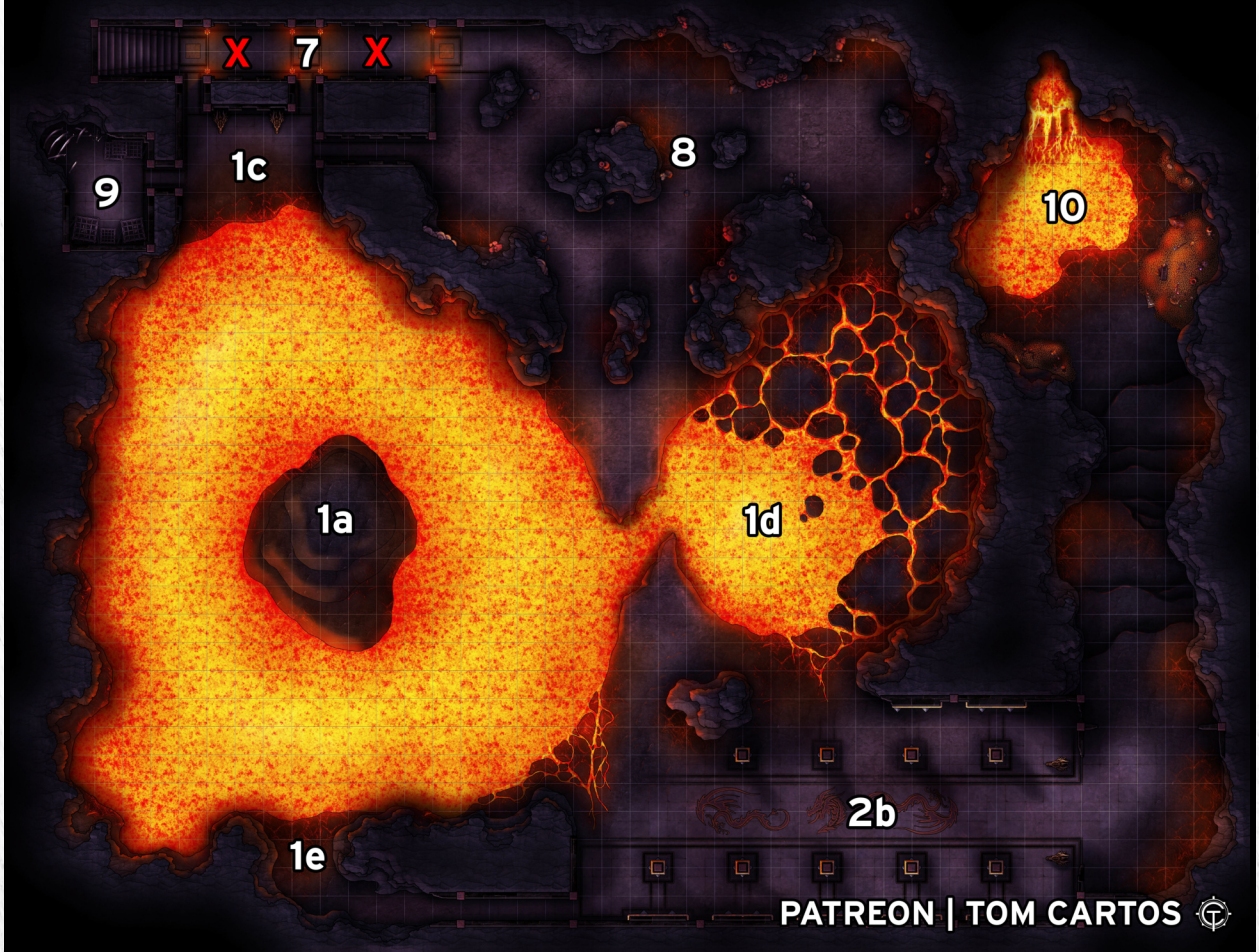
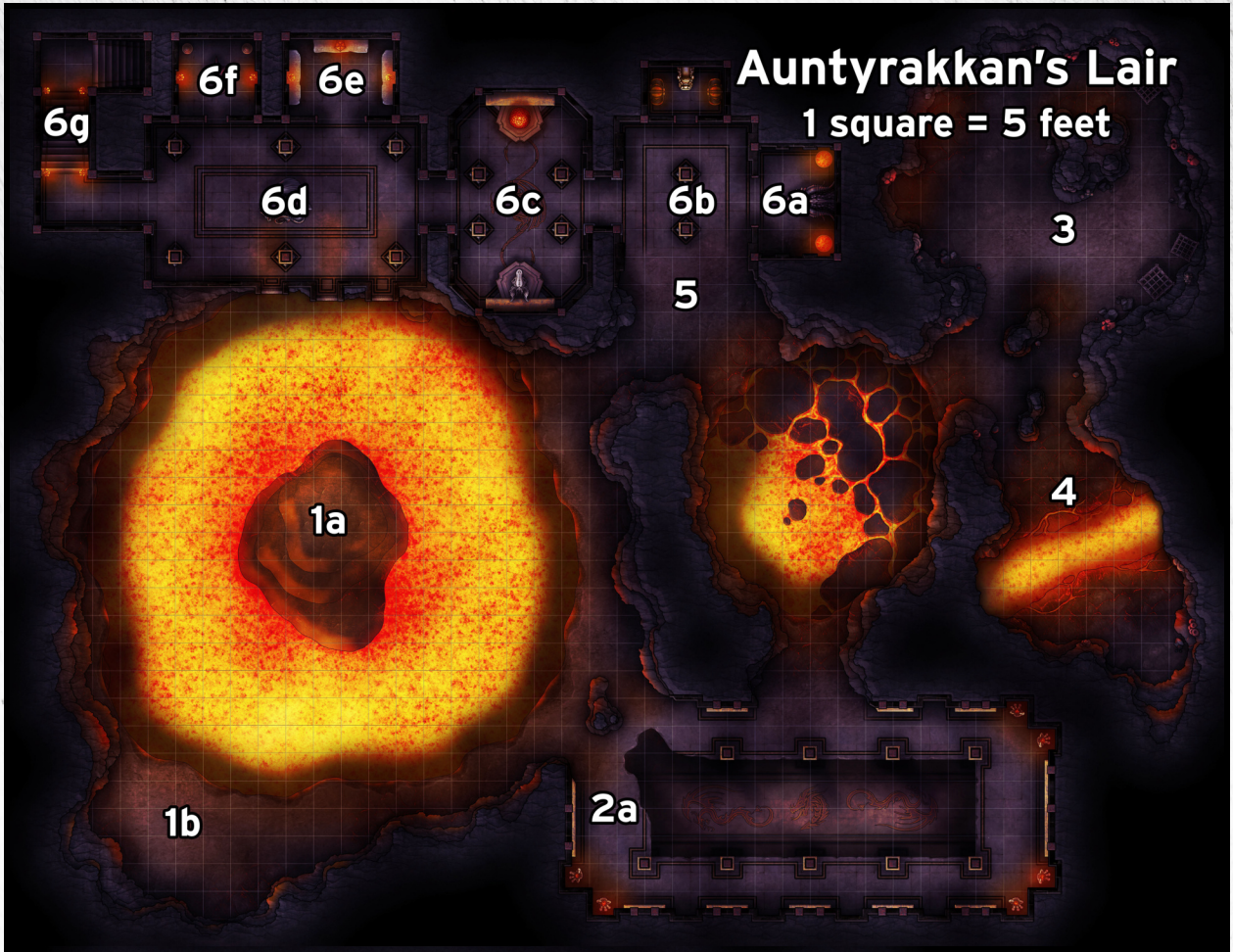
### The Caldera

There is only one way into the Auntyrakkan's lair: through the caldera. The steep sides of the caldera drop away from the edge of the cone, making a 60-foot descent to the lava below. The rough rock of the caldera is not overly difficult to climb, but the area grows increasingly hot as creatures descend: once inside the volcano, increase the DC for checks made to resist extreme heat by 5.

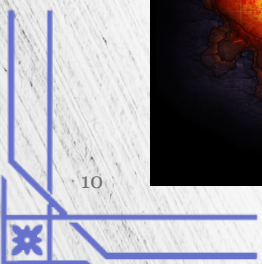


# Auntyrakkan's Lair

1 square = 5 feet



PATREON | TOM CARTOS



# Scene 5 - Auntyrakkan's Lair

Auntyrakkan's Lair is hell on earth. Magma constantly churns below the mountain, spewing hot lava, fire, and toxic fumes into the air all around it.

## General Features

With the exception of a few areas, the entire complex was made naturally by the magma rising from the heart of the mountain. As a rule of thumb, ceilings are as high as an area is wide. The entire area over the caldera is open to the sky above (but not subject to the volcanic storm effects, described in Scene 4).

### Dragon Sense

Auntyrakkan can sense the presence and location of any creature within his lair, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a *mind blank* spell or similar magic, such as a *ring of mind shielding*.

### Illumination

Thanks to the hot lava that courses through the volcano's interior, most of the dragon's lair is bathed in bright, orangish light.

### Intense Heat

The heat in the volcano has similar effects to those described on page 9, except the DC for Constitution saving throws made to avoid the heat's effects start at 10.

### Lava

Hot lava bubbles throughout the complex. The lava sheds bright light 30 feet in all directions and dim light for an additional 30 feet. A creature that touches the lava takes 5 (1d10) fire damage and catches fire. Until a creature uses its action to douse the flames, the creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

A creature takes 33 (6d10) fire damage when it enters lava for the first time on a turn or when it ends its turn there.

Lava is thick, too. Moving through lava requires 3 feet of movement for every 1 foot moved. Auntyrakkan and creatures native to the Elemental Plane of Fire can move through the lava without any issue.

### Magical Defenses

Auntyrakkan's lair is protected by both the *private sanctum* and *forbiddance* spells, creating the following conditions:

- Creatures can't teleport into the lair or use portals, such as those created by the *gate* spell, to enter the area.
- The spell proofs the area against planar travel, and therefore prevents creatures from accessing the area by way of the Astral Plane, Ethereal Plane, realm of the fey, the realm of shadow, or the *plane shift* spell.
- Celestials, elementals from any plane other than the Elemental Plane of Fire, fey, fiends, and undead that enter the lair for the first time or start their turn in the lair take 27 (5d10) radiant damage.

- Sound can't pass through the barrier at the edge of the volcano.
- Thick smoke surrounds the lair, preventing vision (including darkvision) through it.
- Sensors created by divination spells can't appear inside the lair or pass through the barrier at its perimeter.
- Creatures in the area can't be targeted by divination spells.

None of these effects can be dispelled by any creature other than Auntyrakkan.

### Sounds

The hiss and rumble of flowing lava and the crackle of fires can be heard throughout the lair.

### Random Encounters

For every 30 minutes the characters spend inside Auntyrakkan's lair, roll a d20 and consult the following table. Explanations of some of the encounters appear after the table.

d20	Encounter
1-2	1 fire elemental
3	1d8 magmin
4	1d4 salamanders
5	Crust break
6	Flame gout
7	Lava rain
8	Smoke cloud
9	Sulfur cloud
10-20	None

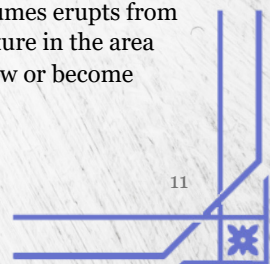
**Crust Break.** A random character steps on a thin spot on the floor. The character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall through the floor. Roll a d4. On a result of 2-4, the character falls 1d4 x 10 feet into an empty magma chamber, taking 1d6 damage for every 10 feet the character falls. On a result of 1, the character falls into lava and takes damage as described earlier.

**Flame Gout.** A bubble of gas spontaneously ignites, creating a burst of flame in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Lava Rain.** Lava droplets form on the ceiling and fall in a 20-foot-diameter area. Each creature that enters the area or starts its turn in the area takes 9 (2d8) fire damage. The drops ignite exposed flammable objects. The rain ends at the end of a round 2d4 rounds later.

**Smoke Cloud.** A 40-foot-diameter cloud of smoke fills the area, causing everything in the area to become lightly obscured. The smoke dissipates after 1d4 minutes unless wind disperses it first.

**Sulfur Cloud.** A discharge of noxious fumes erupts from a nearby vent in a 10-foot square. Each creature in the area must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute.



## Where is Auntyrakkan?

Auntyrakkan doesn't stay in one place while inside his lair. When the characters first approach The Living Summit, roll a d6 to determine Auntyrakkan's starting location. Although this is where the dragon starts, it's bound to move around the lair while the characters are inside.

## Auntyrakkan's Location

### d6 Auntyrakkan's Location

- 1-3 Auntyrakkan rests in the lava by his hoard in area 10.
- 4-5 Auntyrakkan tries to repair the damages to his gallery in area 2b.
- 6 Auntyrakkan relaxes in the lava in area 1d.

## Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to Auntyrakkan's lair, on page 10.

### 1. Caldera

The only way into the volcano is here, in this large, open chamber, the volcano's caldera. Hot lava boils up from the magma chamber 2 miles below the surface of The Living Summit and pools here.

The walls around the caldera are easy enough to climb, requiring no checks. From the cone, it's a 40-foot climb down to ledges surrounding the caldera (areas 1b and 3), then another 30 feet down to the magma pool on the lowest level of the lair.

**Encounter: Auntyrakkan.** If Auntyrakkan (**ancient red dragon**) starts in this location, he spends his time relaxing in the pool of lava in the eastern chamber. If Auntyrakkan is forced to fight here and his normal tactics fail (see Fighting Auntyrakkan on page 14] for details), he tries to grab whatever creature poses the largest threat to him in his claws. He then dives into the lava pool with the target in his hands, hoping to eradicate it. While in the lava, Auntyrakkan can use his action or two legendary actions to fling lava at nearby targets. When he does, he creates a wave of lava in a 10-foot square next to the "shore." Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one.

### 2. Gallery

During the reign of The Great Chromatics, Auntyrakkan stored his favorite works of art in this gallery, using his innate magic to protect them from the destructive nature of his own lair. When The Great Chromatics fled to Aegreya, brave looters stole his collection. Later, earthquakes and fires destroy parts of the gallery, leaving some of it in ruin.

The gallery is divided into two floors. The bottom floor still bears carved runes depicting red dragons along the tiles. A mezzanine encompasses the top portion of the gallery. It is here where Auntyrakkan's paintings used to hang. The only thing that remains are empty alcoves and iron hooks.

**Encounter: Auntyrakkan.** If the characters encounter the dragon here, he is reminiscing over times past, when he and his siblings ruled this portion of Omeria. Unless the characters attack him, he shares anecdotes about his brothers and sisters and how humans once feared them. Once he's done sharing his stories, the dragon switches to his normal tactics (see Fighting Auntyrakkan on page 14 for details).

### 3. Prison

This cavern was once used to store Auntyrakkan's enemies, those he felt were worth interrogating.

**Medusa Statue.** The shattered remains of a statue lies on the floor. A character who observes the statue and succeeds on a DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes that the statue was of a medusa. Its head still bears snakes (albeit ones made from stone) and is lying face down. If the statue's head is turned around, its eyes act exactly like a **medusa's**. The magic in the statue's eyes only works in this chamber. If removed from here, they lose their magic.

Casting *dispel magic* against 6th-level spells removes the petrification effects of the statue, as does destroying it. The head has AC 18, 25 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

### 4. Lava Flow

A fast-moving stream of lava cuts this small chamber in half.

### 5. Passageway

This natural stone passageway grants a view of the lava pools 30 feet below. The corpse of a fire giant lies on the ground, its head missing (Auntyrakkan bit it off during his fight with the giants).

**Treasure: Hellreaver.** The fire giant wielded a magic greatsword named *Hellreaver*. When the characters first see the sword, it's sized for a fire giant and unwieldable. However, if a character attunes to it, it reduces to Medium size. *Hellreaver* is a *nine lives stealer greatsword* with only 2 charges remaining. The sword is warm to the touch, even when outside of the volcano, and features leering faces engraved onto its surface. Celestials find the sword's presence revolting.

### 6. Upstairs Hallway

Stairs at the east end of the hallway (6g) connect this area to area 7.

This long hallway runs the length of the upper level of Auntyrakkan's lair. Once upon a time, all of the alcoves contained deadly traps designed to deter intruders. The fire giants who took up residence here disabled most of the traps, making it safe to pass through the area. Now, only the hazards normal for the volcano exist here.

Each of the old traps are detailed below. A quick examination of each trap and a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals how the respective trap once functioned before it was disarmed.

**Lalorath Statue (6a).** A carved black dragon head stands at the far western side of the hallway. Two iron

braziers flank the head. The head once spewed acid, but now just stands there with its mouth agape.

**Brizzar Statue (6b).** The statue in this alcove is carved to look like Aegreya's current leader, Brizzar the Slow. It once blew a cone of cold into the chamber, but like the other traps, it was disabled.

**False Dragon Egg (6c).** A large, scaled egg radiating intense heat sits atop a dais in an alcove at the center of the hallway. The egg is a fake. There were once electroduces connected to the egg that would shock anyone that touched it. They, too, have been disabled.

**Tyro Statue (6d).** This statue is carved to look like Auntyrakkan's green dragon sister, Tyro. Before it was disabled, a mechanism inside the statue caused its wings to spread out like fan blades. The statue then rotated on its pedestal, slicing any creature in the chamber.

**Rubble (6e).** This alcove had a statue that used to animate as a stone golem but it was destroyed by the fire giants. Only small bits of its original frame remain.

**Thranstirndrion Statue (6f).** Auntyrakkan's dead brother, Thranstirndrion, is represented by this dark purple statue. The statue used to emit a cloud of toxic gas.

## 7. Downstairs Hallway

The stairs in area 6g lead down to this hallway.

This hallway runs three-quarters the length of the lair's downstairs. Because the fire giants were too large to comfortably fit into the stairway and hall, they mostly avoided it.

**Pit Traps.** Two pit traps hide in the floors of the hallway, both marked on the map by an "X" in a white square. When a creature weighing 50 pounds or more stands on the 10-foot-square lid of a trap, the lid buckles under and deposits the creature into a pool of lava. A target takes 33 (6d10) fire damage from the lava when it first falls in and each time it starts its turn in the lava. A target in the pit can climb out by succeeding on a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Noticing the pit traps in advance requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character can use its action to hammer in a spike or similar wedge to each trap door, preventing it from opening with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics or smith's tools) check (player's choice).

**Treasure: Gold Sconces.** Because the fire giants ignored this hallway, they didn't take the gold sconces on the wall. Each sconce is worth 1,000 gp. There are eight in all. A character must use its action to make a DC 20 Strength check, prying it from the wall with a success. Alternatively, a character with proficiency in any sort of artisan's tools related to construction can remove the sconce with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using the chosen tool.

## 8. Natural Caverns

This series of caverns was formed by magma flows. Obsidian shimmers in the walls, giving the entire area an eerie beauty. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check discovers signs that the fire giants once lingered in this area. Judging by the animal bones, they likely used it as a mess hall.

## 9. Pantry

The charred remains of animals big and small crowd this small passage. During Auntyrakkan's former tenure as lord of The Living Summit, he used this area to store animals he intended to eat. The fire giants did the same.

**Treasure: Dead Adventurer.** A dead adventurer's charred remains lie against the wall. The hero met their fate after she erroneously challenged the giants. The giants responded by holding her head under lava for 30 minutes. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check made near her corpse reveals a *ring of fire resistance* (what little good it did her).

## 10. Auntyrakkan's Hoard

The path descends 30 feet down to the deepest part of the lair. Here, Auntyrakkan keeps his hoard. The lowest layer of the hoard contains gold coins that fused with the rock. These were part of Auntyrakkan's original hoard. Above that, the treasures the fire giants collected from the various rooms of the lair lie. It also includes the treasures gained during raids in the foothills surrounding the Spine. Finally, Auntyrakkan's latest hoard covers it all. Below is an itemized list of the treasures.

**Encounter: Auntyrakkan.** If the characters encounter Auntyrakkan here, he's pretending to sleep atop his hoard. If the characters examine Auntyrakkan, they realize he's not actually sleeping with a successful DC 21 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Perception) check (the characters' choice). Auntyrakkan continues to keep up the ruse until someone attacks him or tries to steal the treasure from his hoard. Auntyrakkan prefers not to fight here as this place has only one exit. He will try to escape to the caldera if possible, taking the characters with him. If the characters don't follow, he stages an ambush in his gallery.

**Treasure: Auntyrakkan's Hoard.** Auntyrakkan's hoard consists of the following items:

- Coins: 3,300 cp, 19,000 sp, 22,000 gp, 3,000 pp
- 2 gems each worth 10 gp
- 4 gems each worth 50 gp
- 5 gems each worth 500 gp
- 11 gems each worth 1,000 gp
- 2 gems each worth 5,000 gp
- 1 art object worth 25 gp
- 2 art objects each worth 250 gp
- 1 art object worth 750 gp
- 7 art objects each worth 2,500 gp
- The blackened skull of a young dragon that has been etched with designs and decorated with gems (worth 7,500 gp)\*
- 1 *oil of sharpness*
- 1 *potion of speed*
- 1 *potion of stone giant strength*
- 1 *potion of supreme healing*
- 1 suit of *elven chain*

\*This item in particular is Auntyrakkan's favorite.



Of course, removing the treasure won't be easy. Extremely heavy—and hot—with a variety of magical protections securing the compound, the only way to get it out is through patience and planning. Furthermore, it won't be easy to trade. Many of the coins in the pile are marked with the stamps of ancient Presson's Enclave and are no longer in circulation. Other coins were stolen from locals, either from the fire giants or the dragon itself. When word spreads that the dragon is dead, people will come asking for reparations. It's just as the famous bard Sir Christopher Wallace once said: "more gold, more troubles."

## Fighting Auntyrakkan

The **ancient red dragon** is a vile bastard if there ever was one. He gives no quarter and asks for none in return. Auntyrakkan targets any creature capable of shutting his powers down first, particularly high-level spellcasters. He does this by separating them from the group, either by enticing them to come forward or by grabbing them with his claws and taking them to the sky. Auntyrakkan also recognizes that most creatures aren't immune to fire. The dragon enjoys diving into the caldera to hide or holding grappled creatures under the lava until they're completely incinerated. If the target's allies can watch this happen, even better.

Also take a look at the Ancient Red Dragon Tactics in the Appendix.

However, Auntyrakkan is hot-tempered and easily provoked. A creature can use its action to make a Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check contested by Auntyrakkan's Wisdom (Insight) check. If Auntyrakkan fails the check, he momentarily abandons his clever tactics and goes straight for a kill, leaving himself open to attacks. Going within 5 feet of one of his treasure hoards produces a similar effect.

**Personality Traits:** "All that I survey, I could easily destroy. From time to time, it is important to remind these small creatures of the true extent of my power."

**Ideals:** "Greed. If I desire a thing, then it must be mine and mine alone. (Evil)."

**Bonds.** "I collect information about the worlds of the Material Plane, and I would love to visit another world someday."

**Flaws.** "I am easily provoked and constantly lose my temper, causing me to abandon all reason and sound judgment."

## Aftermath

If the character's survive their encounter with Auntyrakkan, their tale will be told in prose and song for centuries to come. Of course, if they don't survive, they will simply become the first entry on a long list of foolhardy adventurers brave (or insane) enough to challenge the dragon's might. Ω

## Credits

**Writing and Design:** DMDave

**Art:** Dean Spencer, Matias Lazaro, Paper Forge, Shutterstock

**Cartographer:** Tom Cartos

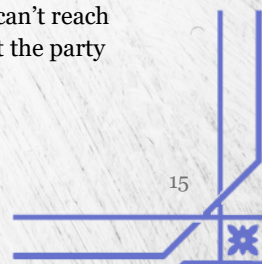




# Appendix

## Ancient Red Dragon Tactics

1. **Soften the characters up with the lair and region.** A red dragon's lair is one of the most hellish places in the world. By the time the party reaches the dragon, they should be depleted. And if the terrain and traps don't do the trick, its minions will.
2. **Ancient red dragons have insane AC.** The ancient red dragon has an AC of 22. If it Dodges, that effectively becomes 27, and if it gets behind cover it increases to 29 (half) or 32 (three-quarters). Even a character with a +11 to hit only has a 50% chance of missing it. Despite this, I prefer to use Dodge with them (I explain why later).
3. **Ancient red dragons have extremely high hit points.** At 546 hit points, ancient red dragons have one of the biggest hit points chunks in the entire game. They're okay with taking a few hits.
4. **Almost all of its saving throws are good.** The ancient red dragon has excellent saving throws against Dex, Con, Wis, and Cha. Plus, it's got three uses of Legendary Resistance. Its only "weak" spots are Strength (which it still gets +10) and Intelligence (+4). Avoid Strength-based magic by staying out of range and off the ground.
5. **Use Legendary Resistance against "blocking" spells.** Any spell or effect that would rob the ancient red dragon of its action economy or flight is a huge danger to the dragon. This is the only time it will use its Legendary Resistances, especially if the effect lasts for multiple rounds. Otherwise, it toughens it out.
6. **Use Lair Actions.** The ancient red dragon gets to take Lair Actions on Initiative Count 20. The first one it uses depends largely on the makeup of the party and their positions relative to it. It likely opens with the volcanic gas action, since it potentially poisons weak-looking targets such as rogues and wizards. It'll use magma if it thinks it can take out a caster in one hit with it.
7. **Take early Legendary Actions.** Once another creature takes its turn, the dragon can use its Legendary Actions. If there is a dangerous-looking rogue hiding somewhere, it uses its Detect to find the rogue to rob the rogue of advantage before it can Dodge. Otherwise, it attacks any creature within 20 feet of it with its tail. If it's in a poor position at the start of combat, it instead uses its Wing Attack to knock targets down and move into a better position. It might use this move, too, in case its turn is coming up soon and it wants advantage on attack rolls against prone targets.
8. **Open with Frightful Presence.** On the ancient red dragon's first turn, it should open with Frightful Presence and move into a better position. A creature doesn't even need to see the ARD to be affected by its Frightful Presence. This is a great effect to deter characters with poor Wisdom scores early in the fight. Even with a +11 to the Wisdom saving throw, a character needs to roll a 10 or better to avoid becoming frightened.
9. **Follow up with Multiattack.** After the targets become frightened, as part of the same action, the ancient red dragon attacks any character within range. Note: it should not move closer to the party. If it can't reach anything, it Dashes out of reach. Don't let the party surround your dragon!



10. **Move move move.** Ancient red dragons have 80 feet of fly speed and incredible AC (they don't fear attacks of opportunity.) Plus wing attack gives them an extra 40 feet of movement, for a grand total of 200 feet per round. The dragon should always move on its turn so that it has at least 150 feet between itself and the party. This will keep it safe from the majority of ranged attacks.
11. **Dodge every turn.** In the early rounds of the combat, have the ancient red dragon move and Dodge every turn. While this might seem like a waste of its action economy, it keeps it safe from rogues whose sneak attack won't function if the dragon isn't near one of the rogue's enemies (which it should be if you're moving!) and it gives it advantage on Dexterity saving throws.
12. **Use Lair and Legendary Actions to deal damage.** Once the dragon establishes the move and Dodge combination, ducking behind full cover when it can, have it use its Lair Actions and Legendary Actions to deal damage to the characters who come too close to it. Use Tail Attack if a target somehow gets within 20 feet of it, or Wing Attack if it gets surrounded.
13. **Alternate between magma and gases Lair Actions.** So long as the dragon keeps moving, it won't need to use its tremor lair action. Instead, focus on using the magma and volcanic gases to target spell casters and other ranged attackers.
14. **Beware forcecage.** The spell *forcecage* materializes as a 20-foot cube when cast in its cage form. Establish early on that the ancient red dragon is far too large to fit in such a cage (they usually measure 50-feet across and are over 120-feet long). Because if it gets trapped in one, it's dead. You might also give the ancient red dragon a spell like *dimension door* to ensure it doesn't get caught by the cheese. Also, be sure to keep at least 135 feet away from casters capable of casting this spell.
15. **Drop the party to half then switch to offense.** Once the dragon eliminates its biggest threats and its action economy is greater than the remaining members of the party, have it switch to offense mode. Unless its Fire Breath is charged, it will target any creature with poor AC first, using all of its Multiattack to hit the creature, then switching to tail attacks with Legendary Actions. It focuses on this target until the target is dead, then moves to the next.
16. **Use the terrain.** If the party is weakened (half or more are dead), use the dragon's action to grab a bookish-looking character, such as a wizard, who is likely to have poor Athletics and Acrobatics. Once grappled, the dragon can jump into a pool of lava or drop it from 200 feet in the air, both attacks dealing more damage than its normal repertoire.
17. **Not too proud to flee and regroup.** Unless the ancient red dragon is a total hot head (no pun intended), it knows when to run away. If it takes 50 damage or more from a single source in one turn or its hit points drop below 50%, it needs to use its full movement to get away as fast as it can so it can heal. Ancient red dragons didn't get ancient by doing stupid things. They're too smart and too wise for that.

## Army Statistics

### Armed Peasants

*Gargantuan army*

**Army Size** 20 Medium humanoids

**Armor Class** 10 + the commander's proficiency bonus

**Hit Points** 80

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** —

**Army.** The peasants can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the peasants can move through any opening large enough for a Medium humanoid. The peasants can't gain temporary hit points. A creature can use its action to join the army as its commander. The peasants surround the commander and move with the commander at the commander's speed or the peasants' speed, whichever is slower. If an attack reduces the army to 0 hit points, the commander takes any extra damage.

**Commander's Bond.** The army adds its commander's proficiency bonus to any ability check or saving throw that it makes.

**Morale Check.** Whenever the peasants start their turn with 40 or fewer hit points, the peasants' commander must make a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. On a success, nothing happens and the peasants do not need to make another check until they take damage again. On a failure, the peasants' morale breaks and they flee. After the peasants flee, a creature allied with the peasants can spend 1 hour convincing the peasants to return to its side. At the end of the hour, the creature must make a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check (the creature's choice). On a success, the peasants stop fleeing, but if the peasants take damage again while still at 40 hit points or fewer, they might flee again. On a failure, the peasants cannot be convinced to rejoin the combat.



## Command Actions

**Multiattack (Requires 1 Commander).** The peasants make two club attacks. If the peasants start their turn with 40 hit points or fewer, they can't use this action.

**Clubs (Requires 1 Commander).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* the commander's proficiency bonus + 4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the same space as the peasants. *Hit:* 6d4 + 4 + the commander's proficiency bonus bludgeoning damage.

**Defense (Requires 1 Commander).** Until the start of their next turn, attacks made against the peasants are made with disadvantage and the peasants gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws.

## Trained Warriors

*Gargantuan army*

**Army Size** 20 Medium humanoids

**Armor Class** 12 + the commander's proficiency bonus

**Hit Points** 200

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** —

**Army.** The warriors can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the warriors can move through any opening large enough for a Medium humanoid. The warriors can't gain temporary hit points. A creature can use its action to join the army as its commander. The warriors surround the commander and move with the commander at the commander's speed or the warriors' speed, whichever is slower. If an attack reduces the army to 0 hit points, the commander takes any extra damage.

**Commander's Bond.** The army adds its commander's proficiency bonus to any ability check or saving throw that it makes.

**Morale Check.** Whenever the warriors start their turn with 100 or fewer hit points, the warriors' commander must make a DC 9 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check (the commander's choice). On a success, nothing happens and the warriors do not need to make another check until they take damage again. On a failure, the warriors' morale breaks and they flee. After the warriors flee, a creature allied with the warriors can spend 1 hour convincing the warriors to return to its side. At the end of the hour, the creature must make a DC 9 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check (the creature's choice). On a success, the warriors stop fleeing, but if the warriors take damage again while still at 100 hit points or fewer, they might flee again. On a failure, the warriors cannot be convinced to rejoin the combat.

## Command Actions

**Multiattack (Requires 1 Commander).** The warriors make two spear attacks. If the warriors start their turn with 100 hit points or fewer, they can't use this action.

**Spears (Requires 1 Commander).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* the commander's proficiency bonus + 5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the same space as the warriors. *Hit:* 4d8 + 5 + the commander's proficiency bonus piercing damage.

**Arrow Volley (Requires 1 Commander).** The warriors fire a volley arrows at a point that the commander can see within 80 feet of the unit. Each creature in a 15-foot sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for the saving throw equals 9 + the commander's proficiency bonus. On a failed saving throw, a target takes piercing damage equal to 4d8 + 1 + the commander's proficiency bonus. On a successful saving throw, a target takes half as much damage.

**Defense (Requires 1 Commander).** Until the start of their next turn, attacks made against the warriors are made with disadvantage and the warriors gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws.



# Experienced Veterans

*Gargantuan army*

**Army Size** 20 Medium humanoids

**Armor Class** 14 + the commander's proficiency bonus

**Hit Points** 400

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** —

**Army.** The veterans can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the veterans can move through any opening large enough for a Medium humanoid. The veterans can't gain temporary hit points. A creature can use its action to join the army as its commander. The veterans surround the commander and move with the commander at the commander's speed or the warriors' speed, whichever is slower. When the commander would

take damage, the army takes damage instead. If an attack reduces the army to 0 hit points, the commander takes any extra damage.

**Commander's Bond.** The army adds its commander's proficiency bonus to any ability check or saving throw that it makes.

**Morale Check.** Whenever the veterans start their turn with 200 or fewer hit points, the veterans' commander must make a DC 9 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check (the commander's choice). On a success, nothing happens and the veterans do not need to make another check until they take damage again. On a failure, the veterans' morale breaks and they flee. After the veterans flee, a creature allied with the veterans can spend 1 hour convincing the veterans to return to its side. At the end of the hour, the creature must make a DC 9 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check (the creature's choice). On a success, the veterans stop fleeing, but if the veterans take damage again while still at 200 hit points or fewer, they might flee again. On a failure, the veterans cannot be convinced to rejoin the combat.

## Command Actions

**Multiattack (Requires 1 Commander).** The veterans make two longsword attacks or use Arrow Volley twice. If the veterans start their turn with 200 hit points or fewer remaining, they can't use this action.

**Longswords (Requires 1 Commander).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* the commander's proficiency bonus + 7 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the same space as the veterans. *Hit:* 8d8 + 7 + the commander's proficiency bonus slashing damage.

**Arrow Volley (Requires 1 Commander).** The veterans fire a volley arrows at a point that the commander can see within 80 feet of the unit. Each creature in a 15-foot sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for the saving throw equals 9 + the commander's proficiency bonus. On a failed saving throw, a target takes piercing damage equal to 4d10 + 1 + the commander's proficiency bonus. On a successful saving throw, a target takes half as much damage.

**Defense (Requires 1 Commander).** Until the start of their next turn, attacks made against the veterans are made with disadvantage and the veterans gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws.



# Dragon Slayers

*Gargantuan army*

**Army Size** 20 Medium humanoids

**Armor Class** 15 + the commander's proficiency bonus

**Hit Points** 500

**Speed** 30 ft. (or 60 ft. mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	14 (+2)	14 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** —

**Army.** The dragon slayers can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the dragon slayers can move through any opening large enough for a Medium humanoid. The dragon slayers can't gain temporary hit points. A creature can use its action to join the army as its commander. The dragon slayers surround the commander and move with the commander at the commander's speed or the dragon slayers's speed, whichever is slower. If an attack reduces the army to 0 hit points, the commander takes any extra damage.

**Commander's Bond.** The army adds its commander's proficiency bonus to any ability check or saving throw that it makes.

**Unbreakable.** Dragon slayers do not need to make morale checks.

## Command Actions

**Multiattack (Requires 1 Commander).** The dragon slayers make two greatsword attacks or use Arrow Volley twice. If the dragon slayers start their turn with 250 hit points or fewer remaining, they can't use this action.

**Greatswords (Requires 1 Commander).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* the commander's proficiency bonus + 8 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the same space as the dragon slayers. *Hit:* 16d6 + 8 + the commander's proficiency bonus slashing damage.

**Arrow Volley (Requires 1 Commander).** The dragon slayers fire a volley arrows at a point that the commander can see within 80 feet of the unit. Each creature in a 15-foot sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for the saving throw equals 10 + the commander's proficiency bonus. On a failed saving throw, a target takes piercing damage equal to 4d10 + 2 + the commander's proficiency bonus. On a successful saving throw, a target takes half as much damage.

**Defense (Requires 1 Commander).** Until the start of their next turn, attacks made against the dragon slayers are made with disadvantage and the dragon slayers gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws.



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