A force of orcs has taken over a small hilltop keep. The PCs are engaged by the local lord to rid his home of the intruders. Fortunately for the PCs, the keep’s main doors are still damaged from when the orcs took possession, and entry is relatively easy. Unfortunately, the orcs are determined to stay.

Tiles: This delve uses tiles from DU1: Halls of the Giant Kings.

EXPANDING THE DELVE
To turn this delve into a longer adventure, consider these additions.

✦ The false-floor pit in room 2 leads to a small system of caves occupied by an otyugh (MM 211) and several skeletons (MM 234), which ignore one another. The creatures stay deep in the caves and are encountered only if the PCs explore or remain in the caves for a long time.

✦ A trapdoor hidden under the bearskin rug in room 3 leads to lower levels dug into the hill. These levels contain more orcs and several prisoners.

ENCOUNTER 3–1: HOLDING CELLS

Encounter Level 2 (650 XP)

2 fire beetles (B)
3 orc raiders (R)

Setup

The orcs here are in disfavor with their chieftain, who thinks that if they are too weak to repel a raid, they are not worth saving. Thus, the other orcs in the keep provide no assistance in battle.

The PCs come up the entry stairwell to the keep. Place them outside the large double doors.

When the characters first see inside, read:

Two glowing beetles provide light in the room, highlighting several cages and two orcs. The rear of the room is in shadow.

Perception Check

DC 10: You can see a flickering light through the arrow slits of an alcove overlooking your position.

Tactics

The fire beetles use fire spray as often as possible, though they try to avoid hitting their allies. The two orcs at ground level use throwing axes until they run out of them or are engaged in melee.

The orc in the tower uses a candle to provide himself with a bit of illumination. He throws handaxes through the arrow slits until a target attempts to enter the tower. He then extinguishes the candle and stands at the top of the stairs with his greataxe drawn.

2 Fire Beetles (B)
Small natural beast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 Brute</th>
<th>XP 100 each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiative +1</td>
<td>Senses Perception +0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP 32; Bloodied 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC 13: Fortitude 13, Reflex 12, Will 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resist 10 fire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bite (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 2d4 + 2 damage.

Fire Spray (standard; recharge × 5) ✧ Fire

Close blast 3; +4 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Str 14 (+2)</th>
<th>Dex 12 (+1)</th>
<th>Con 12 (+1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 (+1)</td>
<td>17 (+2)</td>
<td>12 (+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (+0)</td>
<td>11 (+0)</td>
<td>10 (+0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (+1)</td>
<td>9 (+0)</td>
<td>8 (+1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Features of the Area**

**Illumination:** Each fire beetle provides bright light in a 5-square radius (as a torch) even after it is killed. The candle in the tower provides dim light to its occupant, and this light can be seen from a distance, but the illumination does not extend into the squares beyond the arrow slits. The rest of the room is dark.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling in this area is 20 feet high.

**Stairs:** The stairs leading up to the tower can be accessed from the east-west hallway that leads to area 2. (The wall shown on the tile doesn’t block the ground-level access to the stairwell.)

**Tower:** The tower is 4 squares tall; the orc inside stands 2 squares above floor level. Two sides of the tower face into the room, and the other sides face out into the keep grounds. While in the tower, the orc has superior cover (-5 penalty to attack rolls against him from outside the tower).

**Water Bucket:** One square along the south wall holds a bucket that the orcs use for drinking water. If the bucket is tipped over (a minor action), the spilled water creates difficult terrain in a 2-square radius (but it does not flow into the tower squares).

**Cages:** All the cages are locked and (with one exception) empty; the orc raider in the tower carries a key that unlocks them.

**Prisoner:** A dead male half-elf lies on his back in the 2×2 cage along the south wall. Anyone inspecting the body can make a DC 15 Perception check to discover a 100 gp ruby in the hollow heel of the elf’s left boot.

---

**3 Orc Raiders (R) Level 3 Skirmisher**

Medium natural humanoid XP 150 each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Senses Perception</th>
<th>Low-light vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+5</td>
<td>Perception +1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HP:**

- Bloodied 46; see also warrior’s surge
- AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12
- Speed 6 (8 while charging)

**AC:**

- Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12
- 17 Strength (+4), 15 Dexterity (+3), 14 Constitution (+3), 8 Intelligence (+0), 9 Charisma (+0)

**Equipment:**

- Leather armor, greataxe, 4 handaxes

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil

**Languages:** Common, Giant

**Skills:** Endurance +8, Intimidate +5

**Stats:**

- Str 17 (+4), Dex 15 (+3), Wis 10 (+1)
- Con 14 (+3), Int 8 (+0), Cha 9 (+0)
**Encounter Level 4 (915 XP)**

1 orc eye of Gruumsh (E)
1 orc berserker (B)
10 orc drudges (O)
1 false-floor pit trap

**Setup**

The commotion from the adjoining area warns the orcs in the banquet hall to prepare for battle. The orc eye of Gruumsh and the chieftain work together out of necessity, not friendship, so no assistance will be forthcoming from the barracks (area 3).

The eye of Gruumsh watches from the pantry, peeking through the slightly open door, so don’t place his figure at the start of the encounter. Place the 2x2 pit tile (next to the cauldron) only if the trap is triggered.

When the characters open the doors from area 1, read:

>A cauldron in the middle of the room bubbles atop a blazing fire, and a banquet table to your right is covered in leftover food and wine. Many orcs stand around the room, snarling and ready for battle.

**Perception Check**

DC 12: *A door in the wall across the room is slightly ajar.*

**Tactics**

Thanks to the influence of the eye of Gruumsh, the orc drudges resist the temptation to charge into battle immediately. Instead, they attempt to hold back and let the PCs come to them so they can spring a few traps.

On its first turn, the orc drudge in the corner uses a minor action to pull the lever that activates the false-floor pit trap.

The orc drudge beside the cauldron readies an action to tip it onto a PC in the room or—even better—onto a PC in the bottom of the pit.

If these two drudges are engaged in combat before they can accomplish those tasks, they abandon their intended strategy and join the combat on their turns.

The eye of Gruumsh waits for the battle to commence before revealing his position. He uses his eye of wrath every round if possible. He uses swift arm of destruction only if the orc berserker is bloodied. He still might pull the lever or tip the cauldron if he can move close enough and if those tactics have not yet been used.

The berserker fights until the eye of Gruumsh uses swift arm of destruction or until the eye is defeated. At that point, he flees to area 3 to fight alongside his chieftain.

**Orc Berserker (B)**

Medium natural humanoid  XP 175

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Perception +2; low-light vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HP 66; Blooded 33; see also warrior’s surge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC 15; Fortitude 17, Reflex 13, Will 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed 6 (8 while charging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Greataxe (standard; at-will) ✦ Weapon

+8 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).

† Warrior’s Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ✦ Healing, Weapon

The orc berserker makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil  **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Endurance +10, Intimidate +6

Str 20 (+7)  Dex 13 (+3)  Wis 10 (+2)

Con 16 (+5)  Int 8 (+1)  Cha 9 (+1)

**Equipment** leather armor, greataxe

**10 Orc Drudges (O)**

Medium natural humanoid  XP 44 each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Perception +2; low-light vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC 16; Fortitude 15, Reflex 12, Will 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed 6 (8 while charging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Club (standard; at-will) ✦ Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 5 damage.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil  **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 16 (+5)  Dex 10 (+2)  Wis 10 (+2)

Con 14 (+4)  Int 8 (+1)  Cha 9 (+1)

**Equipment** hide armor, club

**TIPS AND REMINDERS**

Unless the orc eye of Gruumsh is forced to the perimeter of this area, every other orc in the banquet hall benefits from the eye’s wrath of Gruumsh aura—giving it one final melee basic attack when it is reduced to 0 hit points. Even if the eye of Gruumsh is not within 10 squares of every other orc in the area, its aura will affect the vast majority of the monsters here.
Chapter 3-2: Banquet Hall

Orc Eye of Gruumsh (E) Level 5 Controller (Leader)

Medium natural humanoid

XP 200

Initiative +6
Senses Perception +3; low-light vision

Wrath of Gruumsh aura 10; orcs in the aura can use death strike (see below).

HP 64; Bloodied 32; see also warrior's surge and death strike

AC 19, Fortitude 17, Reflex 14, Will 15

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

✦ Spear (standard; at-will) ✦ Weapon
   +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

✦ Warrior's Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ✦ Healing, Weapon
   The eye of Gruumsh makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.

✦ Death Strike (when reduced to 0 hit points)
   The orc makes a melee basic attack.

✦ Eye of Wrath (minor; at-will) ✦ Fear
   Ranged 5; +8 vs. Will; the target takes a –4 penalty to AC (save ends).

✦ Swift Arm of Destruction (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚅)
   Ranged 5; one orc within range makes a melee basic attack (as a free action) and regains 15 hit points on a hit or 5 hit points on a miss.

✦ Chaos Hammer (standard; encounter) ✦ Force
   Area burst 1 within 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target is not knocked prone.

Alignment Chaotic evil
Languages Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +10, Intimidate +10, Religion +7

Str 17 (+5) Dex 14 (+4) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5) Int 11 (+2) Cha 17 (+5)

Equipment leather armor, fur cloak, spear

False-Floor Pit Level 1 Warder

Trap

A covered pit is hidden near the center of the room. Timber covered with flagstones is rigged to fall when a creature walks on it, dropping the creature into a 10-foot-deep pit.

Perception

✦ DC 20: The character notices the false stonework.

Trigger

After it is activated, the trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's four squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 1d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied, and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures

✦ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check. The floor falls into the pit.
✦ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check. The floor becomes safe.
✦ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.
✦ A character can climb out with a DC 15 Athletics check.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Glowing embers beneath the cauldron produce dim light in a 5-square radius. The rest of the area is dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling in this area is 20 feet high.

Table: The banquet table provides cover for adjacent creatures as long as it is upright. A character can tip over the table with a DC 17 Strength check. If it is tipped over, it occupies the row of squares adjacent to its original position, and it blocks line of sight and line of effect.

False-Floor Pit Trap: Meal scraps and liquids from the cauldron are thrown into an adjacent pit that is covered by a false floor. The false floor is safe to walk on unless the lever in the corner of the room is pulled, which activates the trap.

Pantry: This small chamber off the western wall contains shelves of opened food and hanging herbs. Hidden in the pantry is a level 6 magic item and a bag of 60 gp, concealed here by the eye of Gruumsh. The orc begins the encounter in this room, peeking out through the slightly open door.

Cauldron: If tipped over, the cauldron attacks a 2×2 area adjacent to it (+6 vs. Reflex; 2d4 fire damage, and the target is knocked prone).

Fire Pit: After the cauldron is tipped over, the space it occupied is now filled with cinders and hot ashes (you can use the 2×2 fireplace tile to represent this feature). A creature that enters the fire pit or starts its turn there takes 2d4 fire damage.
**Encounter Level 6 (1,250 XP)**

1 orc chieftain (C)  
1 dire wolf (W)  
2 orc berserkers (B)

**Setup**

The orc chieftain holds court in the barracks, accompanied by his remaining loyal followers. Most of the orcs in the keep rotate sleeping shifts in the eight beds, and the chieftain shares the bearskin rug with his faithful dire wolf.

Having heard the conflict in the banquet hall, the orcs here are prepared. The dire wolf stands growling on the bearskin rug near the orc chieftain. The orc berserkers stand nearby, ready for battle. If the orc berserker from area 2 fled here, place it as you see fit.

When the characters open the door, read:

> This room looks like the sleeping quarters for the orcs. A crackling fireplace spreads light throughout the room.

> A large wolf, bony spines protruding from its back, growls deeply, baring its fangs. Orcs in leather armor stand across the room with greataxes, ready to attack.

> Another orc in fine chainmail stands near the wolf. He twirls his greataxe and snarls in Common, “Smash them!”

**Tactics**

The orc berserkers rush forward at the first opportunity, charging if possible. They try to stay within 5 squares of the chieftain to benefit from his blood of the enemy aura. They use warrior’s surge as soon as they’re bloodied. If a PC is foolish enough to stand next to the roaring fire, a berserker attempts to bull rush him into it (+7 vs. Fortitude).

The chieftain is unafraid of the PCs, heedlessly provoking opportunity attacks whenever he needs to move into a better position. He uses warrior’s surge as soon as he can, and the first time an ally is reduced to 0 hit points while adjacent to an enemy, the chieftain uses inspire ferocity to grant that ally a melee basic attack.

The dire wolf fights alongside its master if possible. It attacks targets that have one or more of its allies adjacent to make use of its combat advantage ability.

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**Encounter 3–3: The Barracks**

**Orc Chieftain (C) Level 8 Elite Brute (Leader)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Senses Perception +5; low-light vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood of the Enemy aura 5; bloodied allies in the aura deal 2 extra damage with melee attacks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP 216; Blooded 108; see also warrior’s surge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC 22; Fortitude 22, Reflex 19, Will 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving Throws +2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed 5 (7 while charging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Points 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ G greataxe (standard; at-will) ✦ Weapon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+11 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✰ Inspire Ferocity (immediate reaction, when an ally within range drops to 0 hit points; recharge ⚅ ⚅)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranged 10; the ally makes a melee basic attack.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✰ Warrior’s Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ✰ Healing, Weapon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The orc chieftain makes a melee basic attack and regains 54 hit points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Endurance +12, Intimidate +13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Str 20 (+9) Dex 14 (+6) Wis 12 (+5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con 18 (+8) Int 10 (+4) Cha 19 (+8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment chainmail, greataxe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2 Orc Berserkers (B) Level 4 Brute each**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Senses Perception +3; low-light vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood of the Enemy aura 5; bloodied allies in the aura deal 2 extra damage with melee attacks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP 66; Blooded 33; see also warrior’s surge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC 15; Fortitude 17, Reflex 13, Will 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed 6 (8 while charging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ G greataxe (standard; at-will) ✦ Weapon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+8 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✰ Warrior’s Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ✰ Healing, Weapon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The orc berserker makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Endurance +10, Intimidate +6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Str 20 (+7) Dex 13 (+3) Wis 10 (+2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con 16 (+5) Int 8 (+1) Cha 9 (+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment leather armor, greataxe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIPS AND REMINDERS**

Keep track of the chieftain’s aura, which increases the damage dealt by the melee attacks of bloodied allies.

After the chieftain uses inspire ferocity, remember to roll for the recharge each round.
Dire Wolf (W)  Level 5 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount)  XP 100
Initiative +7  Senses Perception +9; low-light vision
HP 67; Bloodied 33
AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 16
Speed 8
Bite (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 4 damage against a prone target.

Combat Advantage
A dire wolf gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the dire wolf’s allies adjacent to it. If the dire wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

Pack Hunter (while mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ✦ Mount
The dire wolf’s rider gains combat advantage against an enemy if it has at least one ally other than its mount adjacent to the target.

Alignment Unaligned  Languages –
Str 19 (+6)  Dex 16 (+5)  Wis 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6)  Int 5 (-1)  Cha 11 (+2)

Features of the Area
Illumination: The fireplace provides bright light for the entire room.
Ceiling: The ceiling in this area is 20 feet high.
Beds: A character can jump onto a bed with a DC 20 Athletics check (DC 10 with a running start). Anyone under a bed has superior cover (–5 penalty to attack rolls against him). With a DC 12 Strength check, a bed can be tipped over to provide cover.
Fireplace: Anyone pushed into the fireplace takes 1d6 fire damage and gains ongoing 3 fire damage (save ends).
Treasure: Six unlocked chests (tucked under beds) contain 2d10 + 40 sp each—the wealth of the orc followers. Untrusting, the chieftain carries his considerable wealth of 400 gp on his person. The footlocker at the foot of each bed contains nothing of interest.

Beware the Orc Chieftain
As a level 8 elite brute, the orc chieftain is an extremely dangerous foe for 3rd-level PCs. His high number of hit points and his potential for dealing damage means that he probably can outlast any PC facing him. Stress the fact that most attacks barely seem to faze the chieftain, and don’t hesitate to mention “and he’s not bloodied yet” to drive home the fact that he has a lot of hit points. The PCs should figure out that they’ll need to team up against the chieftain to have a chance of defeating him.