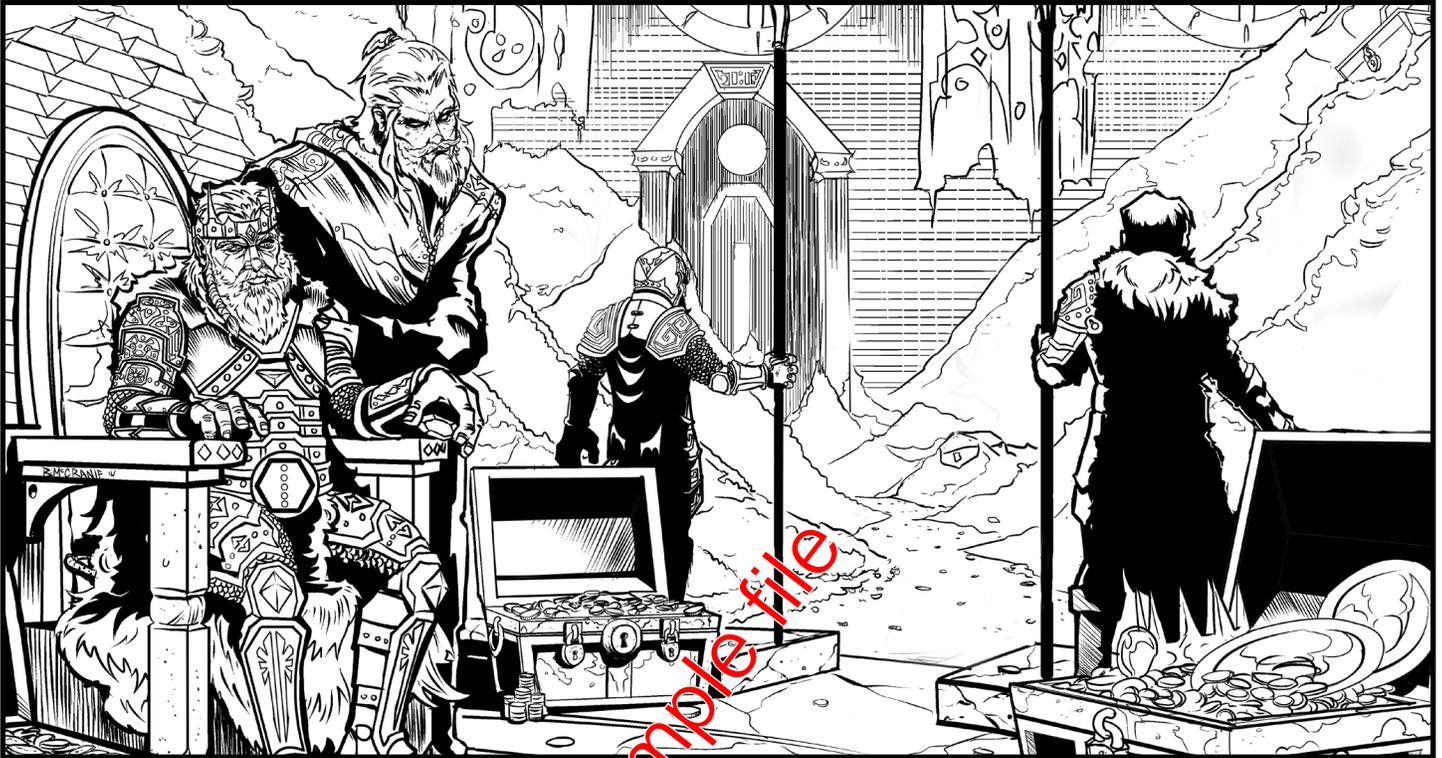


# Maximum Mayhem Dungeons #4

## Vault of the Dwarven King

Written by Alan Chamberlain and Mark Taormino

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-7



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## AUTHORS NOTE:

Thank you for purchasing this module and being a gamer. Maximum Mayhem Dungeons creates modern content in the original 1st edition format, because frankly what else do you need but some dice.

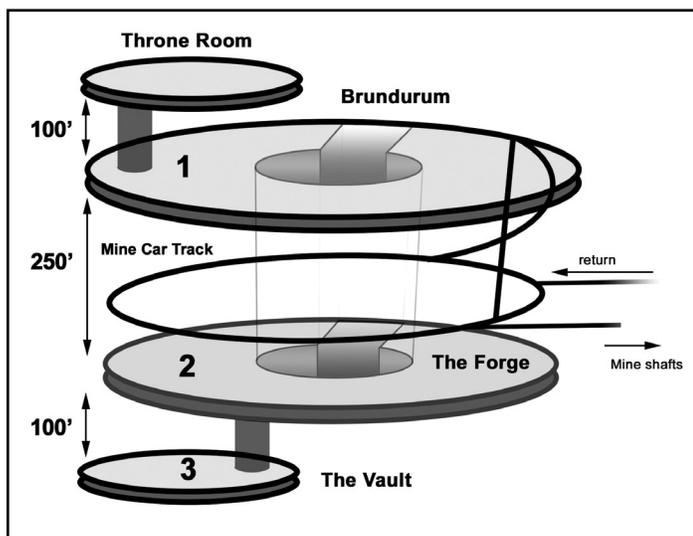
While I've always worked with a variety of artists this is my first collaboration with another author. As with all Maximum Mayhem modules, we try to break new ground within the confines of the module and game format. We hope you and your group enjoy it.

## GM BACKGROUND:

This module is designed for 6-8 characters of levels 4 to 7. The recommended party should consist of at least four Fighters, one Cleric, two Magic Users, and one Thief; however, you can do whatever you and your group feels is best. Scale the encounters up or down as needed.

You are given the full back-story of the city of Brundurum, not so it can be revealed to the players up front, but so you have a command of the history and are able to speak for NPCs and improvise in-game as needed. You are also supplied with an ample amount of NPC players throughout the game that you can incorporate into the party, use as fodder, or bring conflicts and drama to the group.

This module has four vertical levels players pass through as they descend into the mountain. The Main Map is played open with level 1 rotated 180 degrees. This was done to flatten the dimension, fit on one page and have the mine-car map be able to visually sync with the level 2 map. The diagram below shows the relationship between the levels vertically as they actually are. Levels 1 and 2 are stacked directly on top of one another with the lava pouring between them. It's not that complicated and won't affect gameplay, it's more for when that asshole Kenny wants to know why the map 1 compass is inverted. You can tell him "Shut up Kenny, no one cares about your undiagnosed OCD."



## SUMMARY:

Brundurum is a larger city than the few levels covered in the game map. Levels below the vault have been consumed in lava and the levels above are where the Dwarves used to live and they've all been evacuated. Even if the players could get up there, they would find nothing of interest or value. The mountain pass leads to the Tessa Valley to the north, where the refugee Dwarves are camped with what remains of their army which is around a hundred soldiers and some reservists. The Dwarves and goblins have been fighting back and forth in Brundurum for almost a year now, and many groups of "adventurers" have proceeded yours. Most areas have been burned out or destroyed several times over. The Goblins have held the levels for many months now setting up barricades and traps.



## THE HISTORY OF THE SMOKEY MOUNTAIN:

Dwarves have always inhabited the **White Mountains** of the North, and many consider it the birthplace of the race. The forge at **Yandroc** is said to be the actual location where **Moradin** handed down knowledge of smelting and metallurgy. The recorded histories in their library stretch back hundreds of years.

Frustrated by his lower-class status in the Kingdom, **Amon Brund** took his extended family and several other houses from the White Mountains and went West of the great **Pearl River** to make a new home in the **Dead Rock Hills**. Here he found the source of the continual cloud cover which were thermal vents from an inactive volcano. The central mountain was a plateau which was only slightly higher than the hills themselves and effectively hidden. Low and flat on top, the plateau appeared to have a peak formed by clouds. When Amon came up the Dwarf road for the first time, he declared, "**We shall call it The Smokey Mountain and we will make it our home.**"

## The Founding of Brundurum

The Brunds were advanced miners, forgers and builders. The eldest generation had all been trained in these crafts as apprentices to the great masters of the White Mountains. They took immediately to planning out a future city that would inhabit the mountain itself. Where the dwarfs of the White Mountains were isolationist and untrusting of other races, Amon Brund found it advantageous to work with the Gnomes of the Dead Rock Hills and the Goblins that already lived in its natural caves.

The Gnomes were naturalists that understood the plants, seasons and weather of the region and they taught the Dwarfs what to cultivate in the sparse and rocky environment.

The Goblins and Hobgoblins were natural tinkers and engineers who had already harnessed the geothermal and steam power of the mountain to pump water and heat their dwellings.

The newly arriving Dwarves brought knowledge of the forge and how to work with metals and gems. The three races working together made amazing progress over the subsequent thirty years, building a city into the mountain's interior that would be the envy of dwarves and humans alike. Amon called the new kingdom **Brundurum** and crowned himself the **Dwarven King**.

The Mountain was on the outskirts of the Human Kingdom and less than a week's journey to **Axum**, their capitol and the seat of **King Domitan**. Amon understood that humans, while they loved jewels and gold, they made terrible miners and weren't afraid of hard work. They would pay handsomely for simple items like mirrors, glass and jewelry, so he struck up trade with human merchants and under the blessing of their king kept caravan after caravan pouring into Axum. For all the gold they could pull out of the ground, getting it back from the humans in the form of their platinum coins was the sweetest profit of all. Amon wouldn't allow the trade coins to be melted down and instead stored them in a special room where they massed.

## The Forging of Fireheart

In the thirty-first year since the kingdom's founding, a gem was discovered that would change everything. Deep beneath the mountain, below eons of volcanic rock, the dwarves unearthed the most perfect piece of Fire Agate ever seen. It was a single compact crystal the size of a dwarf's head. Even in darkness it had a red glow for there was essence of fire trapped within. Amon became attached to the crystal and though the goblins warned that it was a mystical Titan's heart that should be left in the mountain, he claimed it for himself and began to keep it close to him at all times. Days later, he called for his greatest blacksmith and sorcerer and ordered that a handle be made so that

the gem could be wielded as a hammer. The **Gnome King Myerrn** and the **Goblin King Perx** both begged Amon not to forge the gem into a weapon, but Amon's heart had been darkened by contact with the stone and he wouldn't listen. He named his new weapon the "**FireHeart Sledge**" and began to claim that dwarves were better than goblins and gnomes and that he should be the one and only King of the mountain.

## The War of the Fallen

When Merryn and Perx protested, he deemed them traitors and civil war broke out within the mountain. Wielding Fireheart, Amon could not be defeated and the dwarves subjugated both the Gnomes and the Goblins within the Smokey Mountain. Merryn was killed and the Gnomes all but exterminated while King Perx took his most loyal forces and retreated deep into the earth. Amon now controlled it all.

## The King's Vault

Deep in the mountain Amon had his finest engineers and captured Goblins construct a second, King's Vault within the vault chamber where Fireheart and other important items could be stored. The vault was to be impenetrable from all sides with a door three feet thick made of solid steel. The finest warriors in the Dwarf army would be stationed to guard it at all times and only Amon would know the combination to open the lock. Amon visited the vault daily to take council with the hammer and receive its rejuvenating benefits.

## The Coming of the Lava Titan

The Lava Titan first appeared to the goblins, wiping out half of their forces. The smoke from their burning villages spilled into Brundurum and alerted the dwarves.

Amon ordered all the lower levels of the city evacuated and the great treasure hoard be brought up above ground where he would have an adhoc throne room. Then he went to retrieve the hammer but the treasure room was being flooded with lava and his vault was only accessible across a bridge of rock. Before Amon could get to the vault, the Lava Titan rose from the earth and attacked. The King's eldest son was horribly burned and all of his guards killed with Amon barely escaping with his life.

The Dwarves gathered their forces to march down and do battle with the monster, but the bitter goblins ambushed their army and drove them back up. Without the hammer, Amon began to feel his age. With his army was depleted, he had no way to fight the goblins and even then any hope of defeating the Lava Titan. In his desperation, Amon decided that instead of his own soldiers, he would hire mercenaries and sellsorts from across the land to journey down into the mountain for him. Far below him, from the safety of his vault, Fireheart calls out to him, but he has no way to get there.

## GOBLIN KING PERX

When Amon Brund discovered the Smokey Mountain, he found a clan of advanced goblins already inhabiting the natural caves and tunnels. Their civilized nature and advanced society was due largely to their clan leader, the Hobgoblin Perx.

In the decade preceding the arrival of Amon and the Dwarves, Perx formed an elite core of warriors in order to establish a unified law and moral code amongst all his brethren. This involved taming the brutish bugbears that tended to dominate goblin society through force and terror. Perx safeguarded the weak and began to teach his fellow goblins the concept of equality. This allowed new voices and new ideas and soon Perx was overseeing a golden age of peace and technological advancement. They harnessed geothermal energy and the power of steam. Perx was even able to open trade with other races though with limited success.

When Amon and the Dwarves arrived, Perx refused to honor the old racial and tribal hatreds and instead tried to work with his new neighbors. He was rewarded for his decency with many years of peaceful cohabitation and more riches than any goblin had ever seen. The discovery of the Heart Stone and Amon's subsequent betrayal would put an end to this exotic alliance.

Because of Perx's influence not all the goblins and monsters encountered in the mountain are mindless and chaotic evil.

**Goblin King Perx: Hobgoblin, 6th Level Fighter and his stats are (AC: -5, HD: 6+2, HP: 50, STR: 18, DEX: 18, CON: 16, INT: 8, WIS: 9, CHA: 12, AL: Lawful Neutral) He carries a Sword +3 and a Shield +3 and wears Chain Mail +2 giving him an AC of -5. He also wears a Ring of Protection +3.**

## GNOME KING MYERRN

When the Dwarves first arrived, the Gnomes welcomed them and freely shared their knowledge of cultivating the Rocky Hills. **Myerrn** and the Gnomes helped the Dwarves get through their first winter by sharing their food and livestock.

After a few years, Amon convinced Perx to crown himself King of the Goblins and he put out the call for a Gnome King to step forward. The Gnomes had little conception of this type of society or the position of King so it was given to Myerrn on a whim because he was such a good and thoughtful Gnome and he happened to be standing nearby when Amon raised the question. Myerrn was indecisive and had no mind for strategy and his lackadaisical attitude about ruling undermined Amon's attempted seriousness about his own royalty. Myerrn was killed early in the conflict, some say by Amon's hand..

## DWARF PRINCE WAARK BRUND

Being third in line to the throne and having no formal responsibilities suited **Waark** just fine and he spent most of his adult life in pursuit of wine, women and song. The King himself could care less what Waark did as long as he was happy. They had more money than the gods and no worries for the future.

Then came **Fireheart**. His father turned to dark magic and away from science, waging war on the Gnomes and Goblins and destroying everything that was good and special about Brundurum in the process. Waark's older brother, the middle child **Brukurf** was so effected by the horrors of war that he dropped his weapons and wandered off into the mines, never to be seen again. With all the Goblin's warnings ignored, and with the Gnomes all but gone, a Lava Titan rose up and attacked the city. Amon was cut off from Fireheart and while his eldest son, the **Crown-Prince Amon Jr.** was badly burned and lost his legs. Waark couldn't handle it, so he took as much wine and shine as he could carry and he wandered off into the rocky hills fully intending to drink himself to death.

The drink worked for a while, but Waark found himself getting very angry. This was after all his father's fault. His greed and power-lust had summoned up the Titan's HeartStone as a final temptation and Amon had succumb and damned his family, his kingdom and all that knew them. Worst of all, Amon used secrets contained within the sacred Codex to make the handle for his weapon.

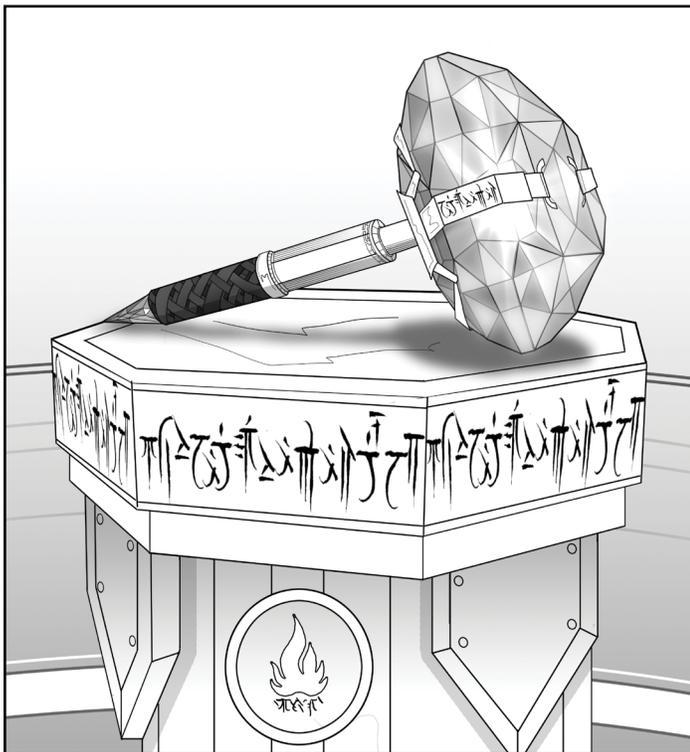
Waark was born and raised in Brundurum and he knows the city inside out; every nook and cranny, every secret door and passage. He knows some of the mine-car system and what dwells in the depths of the mountain. Hint: It's a Lava Titan!

The one thing he lacks to get at the hammer is the combination to the King's Vault which his father never entrusted him with. He has recovered several combinations from fallen parties and none of them have opened the vault. So while he is skeptical that your combination will work he will still want it.

Waark will join the party only if he is convinced that you don't intend to return the hammer to his father.

**Prince Waark Brund: Dwarf, 8th Level Fighter and his stats are (AC: 1, HP: 45, STR: 12, DEX: 14, CON: 13, INT: 16, WIS: 14, CHA: 16, AL: Neutral) He carries a Dagger +3 and wears Banded Mail +3. He is also armed with a Shortsword +2 and has a Cloak of Invisibility.**

*Waark enters the story in E 2.10, but his entrance can be forced early as a lifeline to a failing party or as a jolt to lost or weary players.*



### **FIREHEART SLEDGE:**

The massive gem that forms the head of the FireHeart Sledge Hammer is a single piece of concentrated Fire Agate. It's crystal perfection makes it super hard and dense and practically indestructible. The handle is forged with magic and designed to cool into place around the gem. It cannot be removed by any power the group possesses. The grip is wrapped in coarse black leather and it has a pommel made from a smaller piece of Fire Agate that comes to a sharp point at the end.

#### **FireHeart Powers:**

+ 5 Hammer, Regenerates 1hp per round on the bearer, immune from all fire and heat and all frost and freezing spells reduced to 50%

**Fire Wave** - A blast of from the HeartStone's core cause 6d6 damage to all within a 100 foot radius. Can be used once per day.

**Shock Force** - A hit to the ground that causes a deadly shockwave which will cause 8d8 damage to all within a 200 foot radius. Can be used once per day.

Fire heart is a Neutral Evil aligned weapon and it will try to draw down it's user's alignment to match. It will drive any Chaotic Evil aligned characters insane (with warning) and make them berserk. Characters must Save. vs Death Ray or go berserk and attack nearest Player. To wield FireHeart you must bond with it in mutual dependence. You cannot later discard it without suffering extremely ill effects or death. It will grow in strength with the player and his level, allowing you to hold onto it for the full extent of the characters life.

## **"WILD CARD" VARIABLE ITEMS/LOCATIONS**

If your Players are concerned with their Knowledge, Perform, Profession, or Craft skills, there are several variable items and locations in Brundurum for you to arbitrarily exploit. You can decide what these special areas contain or do not contain based on the ingredient/potion needs of the party, a specialized quest of one of the players, or to help them advance their skills.

### **THE CODEX OF MORADIN E3.02**

When Amon left the White Mountains he did so with a carefully crafted copy of the Codex of Moradin. Copying the ancient texts was considered treason by his superiors, so Amon had it made in secret by several different scribes and compiled after he left.

The Codex describes all the basics of dealing with metal from working with ore, smelting, forging, and crafting all the way to detailed recipes for Dwarven steel and the plans for many weapons. It resides in the King's Vault with Fireheart.

For players who want to advance their blacksmithing abilities, the codex contains many secrets and specialized knowledge not available anywhere else.

### **GNOME HERB SHOP E1.16**

The herb shop contains a wide variety of plants and extracts. It has all the standard spices and herbs as well as exotic unknowns. The shopkeeper is an encyclopedia of all things horticulture.

### **THE VULCANOLOGIST E1.15D**

This dwarf lab was set up to study the mountain and the Lava Titan in particular. The blacksmith turned scientist has all the ingredients for smelting and forging here as well as large amounts of different types of ore.

### **GOBLIN WIZARD E1.15G**

The evil Tekitus is exploiting the increasing powers of magic since the rise of the Lava Titan. His alchemy lab is fully stocked with everything one might need to create a poison or make a potion. There may be a stolen book of secret formulas here as well.

### **SHRINE TO MORADIN E2.08**

The golden shrine of Moradin around which you fight the goblin elite was built on top of the Goblin's original temple to Nomog-Geaya and as such it is the only temple in Brundurum where religious rights such as resurrection can be performed.