

GEARS OF TREASON

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 11TH TO 13TH LEVEL



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GEARS OF TREASON IS A FIFTH EDITION adventure for three to six characters of 11th to 13th level, optimized for a party of four 12th-level characters. The grand council chambers of the dwarven city of Bharzul have become a deadly maze. Ysgrit Twendall, the Master of Machinations, has turned the chambers' defense systems against the council, taking them hostage in a coup attempt to secure her rule over the city. Can the party infiltrate the chambers, destroy the hostile machinations inside, and rescue the council members before it's too late, or will the gears of treason grind their bones into the ground? This adventure is set in the city of Bharzul in the world of Cartosia, but the names of people and places can be changed to place this adventure in any campaign setting that includes mech-fantasy components.

BACKGROUND

For generations, the dwarven city of Bharzul has thrived under the guidance of its council government, a coalition of masters representing the pillars of dwarven society: warfare, commerce, innovation, and architecture. This council, held within the grand chambers carved within the mountain's heart, has ensured Bharzul's prosperity and security through a balance of power, wisdom, and the industrious spirit of its people.

At the forefront of Bharzul's age of innovation stands Ysgrit Twendall, a genius inventor whose brilliance in mechanization and engineering has not only fortified the city but also ushered it into a new era of technological advancement. Yet, beneath Ysgrit's achievements lies a simmering discontent fueled by a belief that the council's traditional ways and shared governance hinder her visionary projects and, by extension, the city's potential for greatness.

Driven by a blend of cutthroat ambition and a genuine, albeit misguided, desire to propel Bharzul into unprecedented prosperity, Ysgrit has turned her greatest creations against those he once vowed to protect. The very defense systems that span the council chambers and the city—once symbols of safety and ingenuity—have been repurposed into instruments of coercion and control. With a network of clockwork sentinels and mechanical traps at her command, Ysgrit has barricaded herself within the council chambers, taking many of its council members as hostage.

Ysgrit's demands are as audacious as her plan: the dissolution of the council and the installation of herself as the sole ruler of Bharzul. If the council members do not acquiesce, they will be fed to the machines or crushed under the fist of Ysgrit's towering mech-suit. She believes that only

through singular leadership can the city fully embrace the technological renaissance she envisions.

Meanwhile, the city's guard finds itself overwhelmed, battling Ysgrit's clockwork creations that wreak havoc throughout Bharzul, leaving the council chambers—and the fate of the city—alarmingly vulnerable. In this hour of need, the call for heroes goes out, a plea for brave souls who can venture the treacherous, mechanized labyrinth of the council chambers, confront Ysgrit's genius turned mad, and restore balance to a city teetering on the edge of tyranny.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are numerous reasons the party may be compelled to infiltrate the council chambers and topple Ysgrit. A few of these reasons are outlined below:

A Visit Interrupted. The party is present at Bharzul's palace as the coup is launched and the council chambers are quarantined. The palace guards are occupied with the city's clockwork defenders throughout the palace that have turned hostile, causing a small faction of government administrators to plead with the party for aid in toppling Ysgrit, offering a substantial sum from the council treasury as reward.

The Architect's Heir. The only child of Markos Beornhardt, the Master Architect, is a friend or acquaintance of one or more party members. They seek the party's help, fearing for their parent's life and the safety of Bharzul. They believe that with the party's unique skills, they can navigate the deadly traps and confront Ysgrit, offering their own architectural knowledge as an aid.

Bound by Blood. One of the party members is the distant relative of Braggen Greysword, the Master of Arms, who is now imperiled by Ysgrit's betrayal. This blood tie compels them to intervene, armed with ancestral knowledge and a familial duty to protect their kin and, by extension, Bharzul itself.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Council Chambers of Bharzul serve as the political and administrative heart of the city, showcasing the pinnacle of dwarven craftsmanship and mechanical innovation. Here, the gears of governance have turned smoothly for centuries, each room a testament to the various facets of dwarven society's achievements. The chambers, designed with precision and durability in mind, are a network of interconnected rooms each purposed with the serious business of running a mighty dwarven city-state. While the outer rooms of the chambers technically remain unlocked and accessible despite some active defenses, rooms deeper

within the chambers, including where the hostages are being kept, have been locked down by Ysgrit. Unless otherwise stated, the chambers' features are described as follows:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The ceilings throughout the chambers are uniformly 15 feet high, displaying the meticulous stonework typical of dwarven construction. Engraved with historical depictions of Bharzul's past glories, the walls are made of solid granite, and inlaid with veins of precious metals that glint in the light. Floors are polished stone, fitted with metal inlays that occasionally serve as conduits for the mechanical defenses now turned against the council.

Doors. Sturdy iron-bound oak doors stand at the entrances to most rooms, reinforced with steel and adorned with the symbols of Bharzul's council members' respective offices. They have AC 19 and 18 hit points. Locked doors require a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. Some doors, in addition to being locked with their regular mechanisms, are reinforced by the chambers' defensive systems, causing metal barricades to interlock across the door frame in a criss-cross pattern. As a result of the barricades, these doors cannot be picked or broken open, and can only be opened by deactivating the door mechanisms in the Master of Machinations' chambers (area 4).

Light. The chambers are well-lit by a combination of everburning torches mounted in sconces along the walls and intricate crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceilings, all enchanted to provide a warm, steady light that mimics the comforting glow of sunlight.

Secret Passageways. Several hidden passageways connect various rooms throughout the chambers; some well-known for the purposes of keeping servant movements discreet, others known only to the council members as escape routes in times of emergency. Ysgrit is well-aware of these passages, and activated their associated locks so that they could not be used by any seeking an escape. Doors to the passageways can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and require a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. They have AC 20 and 50 hit points.

The following areas are keyed to the provided map of the Council Chambers:

I. WAR ROOM

The centre of this cavernous space is dominated by a massive stone table littered with carved miniatures representing armies and siege engines. To each side, enormous and detailed tapestries depicting the regalia of Bharzul drape from the walls, their colors vibrant against the room's stone. A bifurcated staircase rises to an elevated platform above that features a polished throne of marble, overlooked by two towering statues of dwarven warriors behind it. Two humanoid sculptures of brass and steel, with intricate etchings and featureless, mask-like faces that house glowing lenses stand before you, in front of the central table. A pair of bloodied corpses lie face-down on the floor.

Under normal circumstances, the council meets here daily to discuss current issues and make official decisions. The two bodies in this room belong to members of the city guard, who were killed hours ago after making an early, failed attempt at securing the chambers and as a result were slain by Ysgrit's clockwork defenders.

Encounter: Clockwork Assassins. The two metal humanoid sculptures present in this room quickly reveal themselves as part of the chambers' defense network. Moments after the party enters the room, they lurch jerkily to life and advance toward the party. They utter a scripted threat in unison, "Warning: Security breach in progress. Releasing countermeasures." They attack the party until destroyed. Each clockwork assassin uses **assassin** statistics, with the following modifications:

- Its type is Construct, making it immune to poison and psychic damage, as well as the charmed, frightened, and paralyzed conditions.
- It has AC 18.
- **New Trait: Magic Resistance.** It has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

The north doors in this room which lead to area 8 are locked and protected by the chambers' defensive systems (see 'General Features').

2. MASTER OF ARMS

This octagonal chamber functions as the Master of Arms' strategic planning room. The central table is a chaos of maps and documents, detailing military campaigns and city defenses. Swords, axes, and shields of exquisite make are displayed with pride on racks and pedestals along the walls, a testament to the martial prowess of Bharzul. An armor stand holds a suit of ceremonial plate, polished to a mirror sheen.

The numerous pieces of weapons and armor in this room are of impeccable quality, though non-magical. The maps and documents atop the table detail distant, proxy military campaigns and city defenses. A door in the east wall of the room opens into the Master of Arms' spartan-like personal quarters as well as an adjoining bathroom. Dressers and a wardrobe hold clothes and other mundane personal belongings. The bed is crisply made.

Secret Door. The wardrobe against the east wall conceals a secret door which opens into a passage leading to the front entrance of the council chambers.

3. MASTER OF COIN'S CHAMBERS

The far wall of this octagonal chamber is lined with a bookshelf filled to brimming with leather-bound tomes. A large, ornate desk dominates the center, its surface cluttered with a scale, magnifying glass, and abacus, alongside a scattering of precious gemstones. A comfortable chair is pushed back from the desk as if its



occupant has just stepped away. To the side, two other smaller desks stand opposite a workbench littered with the tools of a jewelcrafter.

This chamber belongs to the Master of Coin, Fimulda Brightstone. The two smaller desks in this room are used by her assistant accountants. A door in the south wall of the room opens to Fimulda's personal quarters as well as the adjoining bathroom. Tucked inside the drawer of an end table beside Fimulda's bed is a thick journal, its binding worn and its pages dog-eared. The journal is protected by a *glyph of warding* (7th level, DC 18) on its back cover that casts a *fireball* (5th-level, DC 16) centered on its location when anyone other than Fimulda reads any of its pages. Characters who spend a few minutes reading through the journal, particularly its later entries, can learn the following:

- Fimulda, unlike the rest of the council, is allied with Ysgrit and supports his coup attempt.
- Several entries detail Fimulda redirecting funds to support Ysgrit's machinations, hinting at bribes to key officials to support his leadership claim and hushed acquisitions of rare minerals.
- Fimulda has created a contingency plan to leave the city if the coup fails and her alliance to Ysgrit is discovered.
- The most recent entry details Fimulda's second thoughts about the coup, fearing the consequences of potential failure.

Treasure: Display Cases, Loose Gemstones. A display case against the south wall of the room is unlocked and contains a necklace, two pendants, and six rings worth a cumulative 950 gp. Loose gemstones atop Fimulda's desk and workbench are worth a cumulative 350 gp.

Secret Door. A secret door in the north walls opens to a passage that connects this chamber with the hallway outside.

#4. MACHINATIONS' QUARTERS

Encounter: Steamwork Sentinels. Two steamwork sentinels—hulking constructs of brass and stone—stand outside the

door to this room. They attack any creatures that provoke them or come within 10 feet of them, and fight until they are destroyed. They use **shield guardian** statistics, with the following modifications:

- **New Ability: Scalding Steam Blast (recharge 5-6).** The Steamwork Sentinel releases a blast of scalding steam in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

This chamber is a nexus of invention, the walls lined with racks of complex tools and intricate mechanical devices. In its center, a drafting table holds an unfinished blueprint, its vellum pinned down by metal weights, adjacent to a large, unfinished framework of a mechanical contraption, perhaps a future sentinel or a clockwork servant. Against the far wall is a complex control panel of levers, buttons, and gears, its purpose and function inscrutable. The air is tinged with the scent of oil and metal.

A door in the south wall opens into the Master of Machinations' personal quarters and the adjoining bathroom. The panel against the far wall is the council chambers' control panel—a dizzying complexity of potential inputs, familiar only to the Master of Machinations. A character who makes a successful DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) check can interpret the correct sequence of inputs necessary to unlock the protective door mechanisms throughout the council chambers. A character who makes a successful DC 26 Intelligence (Investigation) check can additionally interpret the correct sequence of inputs necessary to deactivate all clockwork defenders within the council chambers and city, which is sufficient to alert Ysgrit and cause her to make her way toward her chambers to investigate. If the party has received the relevant information from Coppercoil, the familiar in the Master Architect's study, no check is required to unlock the door mechanisms.

Secret Door. A secret door in the northeast wall leads to a passageway connecting to the High Thane's study.

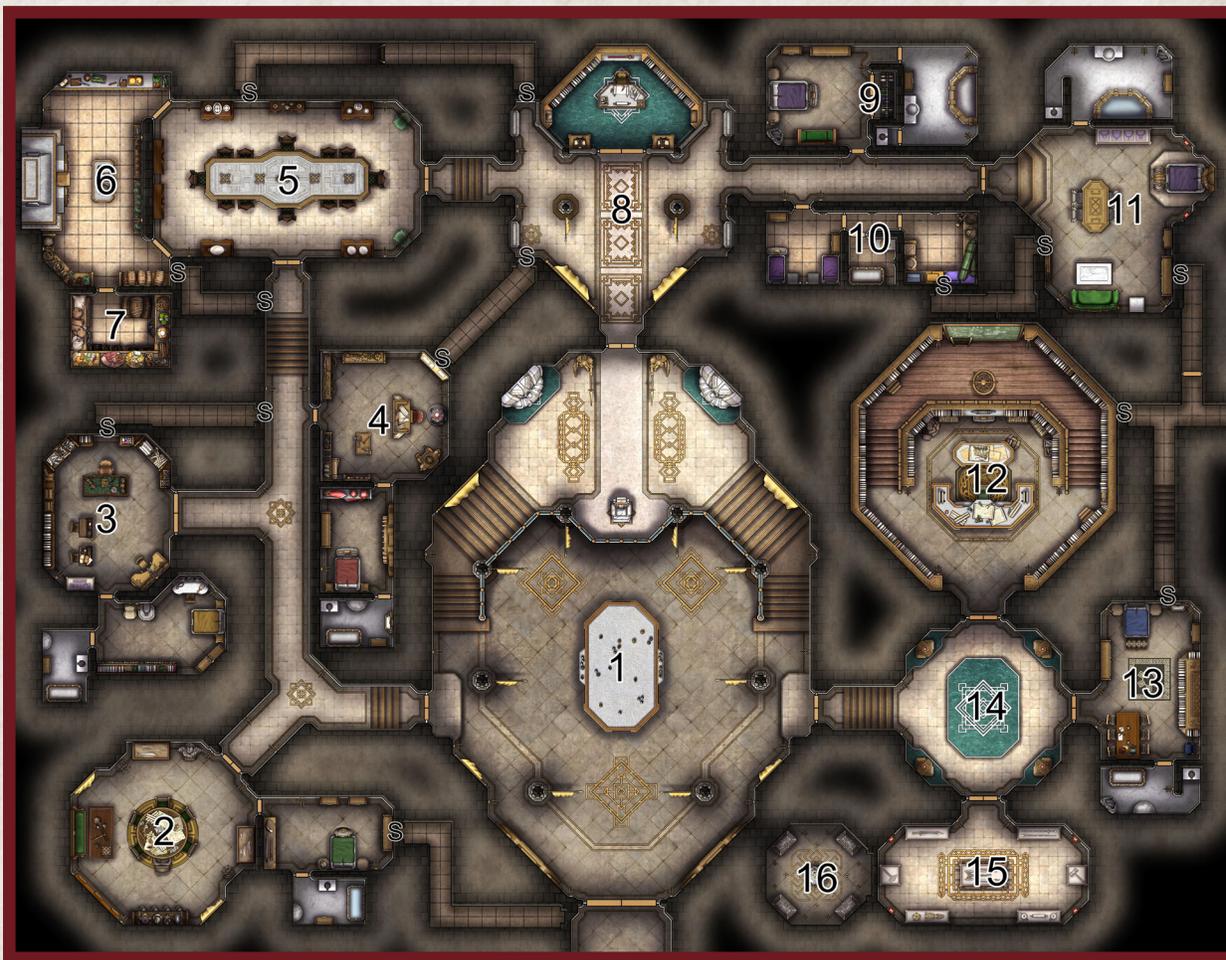
5. DINING ROOM

The south and east doors that open to this room are locked and protected by the chambers' defensive systems (see 'General Features'). When the characters enter, read aloud:

This expansive dining hall, resplendent with dwarven opulence, is arranged to host grand feasts and solemn deliberations alike. A long table of polished stone, inlaid with silver and gold, commands the room, surrounded by high-backed chairs cushioned in deep green.

Fine platters and goblets are arrayed in meticulous order atop sideboards, ready to serve the council's needs. Seated around the table are six dwarves, their faces a mixture of confusion and alarm as their gaze meets yours.

THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS



Ysgrit has confined the council members to this room while she searches the High Thane's study for legal documentation which could support her claims. They have been here for hours now, deliberating potential avenues of negotiation with Ysgrit and evaluating the option of non-compliance. After witnessing the death of the Master Architect, however, they are split on the matter of submitting to Ysgrit's demands. Some fear for their lives, while others are willing to die to defend their principles.

The dining room holds the following council members:

High Thane Lodbrook VII. A venerable dwarf with a thick grey beard, Lodbrook VII carries the weight of leadership in his weary eyes. Clad in ceremonial garb that bears the marks of many a commemorative ceremony, he sits with a quiet dignity that commands respect. His hands, adorned with signet rings, rest calmly on the table, betraying none of the concern he feels, though his gaze frequently sweeps the room, taking stock of his council and the party. Lodbrook uses **noble** statistics, but is unarmed.

Master of Coin Fimulda Brightstone. Fimulda is a stout figure, her hair woven with strands of gold, mirroring the wealth

she oversees. She has an analytical demeanor, her eyes sharp and calculating, missing nothing that transpires in her presence. Quick to haggle even in dire circumstances, she is constantly seeking angles to exploit. Fimulda uses **noble** statistics, but is unarmed. If the party is aware of Fimulda's involvement in the coup, a character who makes a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check can get her to talk.

Master of Arms Braggen Greysword. Braggen's presence is as formidable as his reputation; his well-worn battle attire and the numerous scars that crisscross his exposed arms speak of countless battles. In moments of contemplation, he unconsciously rubs the pommel of his sheathed sword, eager to return to action. His eyes hold a martial fire, and he exudes a readiness to leap into the fray. Braggen uses **gladiator** statistics. If the party has not yet confronted Ysgrit, Braggen is willing to aid the party in combat, unlike the other council members who are either long past their prime or lack any significant combat experience.

Keeper of the Scrolls, Dornal Ironscript. An elderly dwarf with a bald head ringed with white hair, Dornal is rarely seen without a scroll or tome at hand. His eyes, magnified by thick spectacles, flicker with a scribe's passion for

knowledge. His fingers are stained with ink, and he often appears lost in thought, mumbling to himself about historical precedents and legal loopholes. Dornal uses **noble** statistics, but is unarmed.

Warden of the Mines, Thulma Hardpick. Thulma's hands are as rough as the stone she oversees, her physique bearing the muscular testament of a life spent in the mines. Her clothing, though of fine make, is practical and includes several tools of her trade. She has a no-nonsense attitude, her steely gaze and terse speech suggesting impatience with her current idle situation. Thulma uses **noble** statistics, but is unarmed.

Envoy of Stone, Harbek Marblevein. Harbek's polished attire and the diplomatic pins on his cloak indicate his role as an emissary. Despite his situation, he maintains a stoic composure, his well-groomed beard and braids impeccably in place. His hands, often used to gesticulate while negotiating, now lay folded in his lap, though his observant, keen eyes continue to seek out potential allies or ways out of his current situation. Harbek uses **noble** statistics, but is unarmed.

The council members can share the following information with the party:

- Ysgrit seeks to force the council members to sign a document declaring the Master of Machinations the new High Thane, as well as greatly restrict their existing authority so that she can rule effectively independently.
- The Master of Machinations is a popular public figure in Bharzul and has the support of enough key individuals and factions within the city that a signed document, even through coercion, would likely be supported by the populace.
- Ysgrit killed the Master Architect a few hours ago, after the Architect tried to call what he thought was Ysgrit's bluff and refused to submit himself to the dining room.
- If the party hasn't already encountered Ysgrit, the council can explain that Ysgrit searches through documents in the High Thane's study for a historical case demonstrating legal precedent for her coup attempt in an attempt to boost its legitimacy.
- The party should not kill Ysgrit if it can be avoided. She should face public justice for her crimes.

Secret Door. A secret door in the north walls opens to a passage that connects this chamber with the High Thane's Study.

6. KITCHEN

A large central island and additional northern countertop are laden with an assortment of fresh produce and a variety of cooking implements, all arrayed with care. To the side, a grandiose oven, cold and dark, awaits the skilled hands of a chef. Rows of hanging copper pots and pans gleam above the wooden counters, reflecting the flickering light from a pair of wall-mounted sconces. Shelves brim with spices and ingredients.

This kitchen was prepared for the day's activity, but has since been abandoned by Ysgrit's coup. There is nothing of significant value here.

Secret Door. Barrels in the southeast corner of this room conceal a secret door which opens into a passage leading to the hallway connecting the dining room to the rest of the council chambers.

7. PANTRY

The pantry is a treasure trove of provisions, its shelves groaning under the weight of culinary riches. Sacks of grain and flour are stacked neatly against one wall, while barrels likely filled with ale or pickled delicacies stand alongside. An assortment of cured meats hangs above, their savory aroma mingling with the scent of aged cheeses and fresh produce arranged in baskets below.

The pantry is well-stocked with only the finest ingredients for Bharzul's most prominent officials.

Treasure: Expensive Wine. A rack in this room holds twelve bottles, each containing red wine of a rare and expensive vintage worth 50 gp.

8. STUDY

Grand tapestries hang from the walls of this stately chamber. At the far end of the room, a pair of double doors are ajar, revealing a small, studious space beyond. At the center of this space is a large desk scattered with papers, quills and tomes, in front of a bookshelf running the length of the wall behind it. A hulking figure of iron



High Thane Lodbrook VII in his battle regalia.

and brass stands just beyond this far doorway, rifling through the books on the shelves. It turns to look at you with an expressionless face. An echoing, metallic voice reverberates from it, "Yield before the new High Thane," it says, "or die."

This area is the High Thane's study and associated antechamber, which primarily holds the entire legal history of Bharzul's high court.

Encounter: Ysgrit, Master of Machinations. Ysgrit searches the study for documented legal precedent that might lend legitimacy to her coup and the coerced signatures of her fellow council members. She is encased in a suit of her own invention, an exoskeleton of iron and brass that grants her the strength of a hundred dwarves. As an inventor who prides herself on intelligence and reasonability, it is possible, though extremely difficult, to convince Ysgrit to stand down through a series of intellectual arguments represented by three successful DC 18 Intelligence (Persuasion) checks. The party can accrue a total of four failed checks, or any single failure by 5 or more, before Ysgrit refuses to entertain any more discussion. If the party does not yield, she attacks. When reduced to 0 hit points, her suit is rendered too damaged to function. After being destroyed, the suit can be pried open with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, or alternatively Ysgrit can open it herself from the inside. Once his suit has been destroyed, Ysgrit surrenders. Ysgrit herself uses **noble** statistics (though she is not armed) while her suit is represented with **iron golem** statistics, though its size is Medium. Ysgrit is aided by two mechanical gargoyles which use **gargoyle** statistics, though their type is Construct.

Secret Doors. Secret doors in the southwest and northwest walls open to reveal passageways connecting to the Master of Machinations' quarters and the dining room, respectively.

9. GUEST CHAMBERS

This grand bedroom, clearly meant for someone of importance, is divided into two distinct areas by a change in the floor's stonework. To the left, a lavish bed, its thick purple blankets neatly arranged, dominates the space, flanked by elegant wooden nightstands. Against the south wall, a plush, green chaise lounge invites restful contemplation. The adjoining bathroom is dominated by a large, lavish bathtub opposite a marble vanity.

These chambers are typically reserved for the High Thane's consort or children, when they choose to visit. Neither are currently visiting, so the room is unoccupied. There is nothing of value to be found here.

10. SERVANT CHAMBERS

These three adjoining rooms include a shared bedroom with two beds, a bathroom, and a storage room. Most of the serving staff live in different part of the palace, but the High Thane's servants are typically kept close by for availability at any time of the day or night. Ysgrit, however, ushered them

from the council chambers in the minutes leading up to his coup. There is nothing of significant value to be found in these chambers; the storage room contains mostly linens, cleaning supplies, and spare toiletries.

II. HIGH THANE'S CHAMBERS

This stately octagonal chamber serves as a private quarters, a retreat from the burdens of leadership. An elegant bed with a plush purple comforter is pushed against the far wall, a stark contrast to the room's austere stone. In the middle of the room, a sturdy table with seating for four suggests intimate meetings or quiet meals. The south wall hosts a green suede sofa behind a low-rise marble table. A body lies face down on the floor in a pool of blood.

The most spacious, luxurious chambers belong to the High Thane. A door in the north wall opens to a spacious bathroom. A wardrobe and dresser in this room hold extravagant silks threaded with gold as well as other fineries. The body on the floor belongs to the Master Architect. He was killed in this room after opposing Ysgrit as the High Thane and a few other council members looked on. Further inspection of the body reveals much of his head has been crushed.

Treasure: High Thane's Chest. The chest in this room is locked, and can be opened with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Inside is a ceremonial robe, a bejewelled, ancestral hand-axe worth 100 gp, a personal ledger containing the High Thane's notes on council proceedings and other realities of rulership (which may be valuable to a rival politician as insight on the High Thane), a signet ring, and a prayer relic.



The late Markos Beornhardt, Master Architect of Bharzul

Treasure: Necklaces. Four unlocked display cases against the north wall each hold one of the High Thane's favourite necklaces. Each necklace is worth 150 gp.

Secret Doors. Secret doors in the east and west walls lead to passages connecting to the servant's quarters and the Master Architect's Study, respectively.

12. MASTER ARCHITECT'S STUDY

A U-shaped desk of polished marble fills the center of this room. Behind it, a bifurcated staircase rises to a balcony that overlooks the space, its shelves a repository for countless scrolls and tomes. A chalkboard atop the balcony is decorated with mathematical equations and architectural drawings.

Here, the Master Architect does much of their work, contributing to the oversight of all infrastructure in the city.

Encounter: Clockwork Assassins. Two clockwork assassins (see area 1) are present in this room. They fight until destroyed.

Coppercoil the Familiar. Hiding under the desk in this room to avoid the attention of Ysgrit's clockwork defenders is a small mechanical **pseudodragon** named Coppercoil, familiar of the late Master Architect. Coppercoil is capable of speech, with a voice that has a metallic ring to it. It is curious, observant, and has a penchant for hiding in nooks or under furniture when not needed, which is how it thus far avoided detection during the coup. Once the clockwork assassins have been dealt with, Coppercoil cautiously pokes its head out from under the desk and introduces itself to the party, understanding that they are here to help. If the party mentions the control panel or the locked doors throughout the chambers, Coppercoil helpfully offers that it was present during the control panel's installation many years ago. Though it does not have full knowledge of its workings, it knows enough to enter the correct input sequence to disable the door lock mechanisms. Coppercoil is happy to accompany the party throughout the chambers, but should the party take any loot that doesn't belong to them, it will be quick to report the theft to dwarves when the time is right.

Secret Door. A secret door hidden behind a bookcase in the east wall leads to a passageway connecting to the High Thane's quarters and the Master Architect's quarters.

13. MASTER ARCHITECT QUARTERS

A richly varnished wooden table stands in the south of this room, its surface scattered with maps, tomes, and various measurement instruments. To the east, a grand bookcase stands, its shelves a meticulous array of knowledge bound in leather. A luxurious bed dominates the northern end, its bedding neatly turned down, an iron-bound chest resting at its foot.

These quarters belong to the Master Architect, who prefers to hold small meetings here with his direct reports to discuss matters of infrastructure maintenance and expansion within Bharzul. The bookshelf holds a wealth of architectural and historical works. A door to the south opens to the adjoining bathroom.

Treasure: Architect's Chest. The chest in this room is locked, and can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Inside the chest is the Master Architect's rock collection, a leather-bound sketch book, a few personal mementos, and a pouch of small jewels worth a cumulative 300 gp. Characters who take some time to review the sketch book find inside a map of the council chambers, which includes reference to all of the secret passageways that connect its rooms, with the exception of the secret door that leads to the hidden vault (area 16). Though the party will not know it, the secret passageway connecting the kitchen to the hallway leading to the dining room is unknown to all council members except for the Master Architect, and represents a path around the barricaded doors to the dining room.

Secret Door. A secret door in the north wall leads to a tunnel that connects to the Master Architect's study as well as the High Thane's chambers.

14. ANTECHAMBER

The floor of this antechamber is a mosaic of polished stone tiles depicting a geometric pattern at its center. The room's perimeter is punctuated by four stout pedestals, each cradling a resplendent gem that gleams with an inner light.

This antechamber is an architectural display of artistry. The four gems mounted in the room's pedestals are a function for a portion of the council chambers' defense systems. A casting of detect magic reveals an aura of evocation magic emanating from each of the gems, as well as reveals an aura that emanates from the entire surface of the floor.

Trap: Electrified Tiles. Many of the floor tiles in this room are poised to unleash blasts of lightning as a feature of the council chambers' defense systems. Creatures in this room take 50 (10d10) lightning damage for every ten feet of movement across the floor, flying or otherwise, unless they are able to interpret the pattern of magical tiles so that they can avoid the hazardous tiles. A character who makes a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check is able to sense the patterns of magical energy in the room strongly enough to make their way safely throughout. Alternatively, destroying any one of the four gems throughout the room is sufficient for severing the magical current and disabling the trap. Each gem has AC 20 and 30 hit points. Destroying a gem causes a brief flash of light and a loud cracking sound as the magical energy dissipates.

15. TROPHY ROOM

The doors to this room are locked and protected by the chambers' defensive systems (see 'General Features'). When the party enters, read aloud:

Several glass display cases are arranged neatly throughout this room, each holding one or more glittering artifacts—there are weapons, trinkets, and other curios.

Each display case is locked, and can be opened with a successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Alternatively, the glass of each case can be broken, it has AC 10 and 15 hit points. Each case, however, is also protected with its own *glyph of warding* (7th level, DC 18), and breaking a case's glass causes its corresponding glyph to trigger a *lightning bolt* (7th-level, DC 18) spell in front of it. Discovery of the theft of any items in this room will make the party enemies of Bharzul.

Treasure: Prized Artifacts. The items in this room include a *helm of comprehending languages*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, an *immovable rod*, a +2 *flametongue*, a *pearl of power*, a +2 shield, and a *spellguard shield*.

Secret Door. A secret door in the west wall of this room can be seen only when the 200-pound display in front of it is pushed out of the way. The door opens into a hidden vault beyond.

16. HIDDEN VAULT

A quartet of imposing stone chests rests on raised daises at each cardinal point of this room, their lids carved with solemn effigies of ancient dwarven lords. Directly in the middle of the room, a plinth is marked with dwarven script that spirals the length of its surface. The air is stale, as if this room has been undisturbed for many years.

The four chests in this hidden chamber hold an emergency fund of wealth for particularly dire circumstances facing the city. The fund has remained untouched since its inception many, many years ago. The script on the plinth in the middle of the room is an ancient dwarven poem about the weight of responsibility that comes with wealth, and the duty of the affluent to bolster the community and support the arts of war and peace.

Treasure: Bharzul Emergency Fund. Each chest in this room is locked, can be opened with a successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, and holds 10,000 gp.

AFTERMATH

Once the party successfully confronts Ysgrit and disables the mechanical guardians throughout the chambers, the immediate threat to the council and the city of Bharzul is lifted. The council, once free from their confinement and the threat of the coup, will be extremely grateful. They may reward the party with gold, items from the treasure stores, or even land and titles within the city. If Ysgrit is taken alive, her trial will become a major event in Bharzul. The party may be asked to testify, and their influence could determine whether Ysgrit faces execution, imprisonment, or perhaps a chance at redemption through service to the city she sought to control. If Fimulda's alliance with Ysgrit is discovered, she may face her own trial. The party's findings in her journal could be the key evidence needed to convict her or, if they choose to keep it secret, they could use it as leverage for their own ends. The populace of Bharzul will react to the foiling of the coup. Ysgrit was popular, but deliberate messaging on behalf of the council, which the party may choose to assist with, is likely sufficient to quell any major discontent.

REFERENCES

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 (“SRD 5.1”) by Wizards of the Coast LLC and available at <https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document>. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

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