

FIREBALL ISLAND™

ISLE OF THE FIRE SPIRIT

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This module is compatible with Dungeons & Dragons, Fifth Edition.
An adventure for three to five 5th-level characters that is played on Fireball Island!

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FI1: Isle of the Fire Spirit

Adventure module FI1, “Isle of the Fire Spirit,” is an adventure for three to five 5th-level characters that is played on Fireball Island! Each player should use one of the figures from the Fireball Island game to represent their character (at least while traveling on the island). If there are five party members, your group will need a copy of the *Fireball Island: The Last Adventurer* expansion to obtain the fifth figure.

This adventure is written for the fifth edition of the world’s most popular roleplaying game. Where the names of monsters appear in **bold**, and where the names of magic items and spells appear in *italics*, that’s a sign that you can find more information about those things in your rulebooks.

Background

Centuries ago, an island in the Sea of Storms haunted by a mighty fire spirit caused no end of problems to the folk of nearby kingdoms. Deadly storms would arise out of nowhere around the island, with tales of typhoons and seaquakes brought back by sailors unlucky enough to have passed near the isle—when they survived that voyage at all. Sailors who were shipwrecked on the dark island and later rescued would rant about an elder demon that prowled its landscape. Called Vul-Kar, this demon was said to be able to create fireballs from its three-mouthed head, giving sailors cause to name the site “Fireball Island”—and to avoid it even more.

In time, a group of adventurers bravely infiltrated the island and determined that the demon was nothing more than an enormous stone idol, powered by a mighty fire elemental named Vul-Kar. The adventurers returned from their mission with a large ruby into which a wizard had bound Vul-Kar for use as a source of elemental power.

This “Heart of Vul-Kar” was secured at Jaguar Keep, a mercantile island outpost at the far edge of the Sea of Storms. Denied the elemental power

that had fueled it, the deadly weather around the Isle of the Fire Spirit abated. For centuries, the storms of the Sea of Storms were entirely mundane in nature, and the island was abandoned and forgotten. Until recently...

About a month ago, the Heart of Vul-Kar was stolen from its hiding place at the keep. Although no one knows who claimed the gem or where it was taken, many suspect that it has been returned to the Isle of the Fire Spirit, as the Sea of Storms has begun to live up to its name once more. Commerce on the sea is being disrupted once more. Jaguar Keep is threatened, since few merchant ships are willing to brave the seas to bring supplies and food. Although the keep has reserves, its leader Duke Varnarth is growing increasingly concerned. Because most of his usual adventurers were away from the keep when the Heart of Vul-Kar was stolen, he is now looking for brave souls willing to go to the Isle of the Fire Spirit and recover the heart again.

History and Mystery

Long ago, a powerful, reclusive wizard made a remote and then unnamed-island his home. Milton the Mad had tired of mortals, and sought to engage in magical research without disturbance. To dissuade would-be interlopers, Milton constructed an elaborate device that would generate stormy seas, foul weather, underwater earthquakes, and more around the island. This device was equal parts wizardry and science, and was powered by a fire spirit that Milton had trapped inside a large red gem.

This spirit was Vul-Kar, a legendary fire elemental. When Milton the Mad died, Vul-Kar remained imprisoned but was able to extend its power over the island. Over the centuries since the wizard’s passing, three separate cults established themselves on the Isle of the Fire Spirit to worship Vul-Kar, such was the lure of his power.

The leaders of the three cults kept a stable truce between themselves, with members of each cult keeping to their own complex of caverns beneath the island. A door in Vul-Kar’s idol could be opened only by using three magic medallions, each of which was entrusted to a cult leader and kept safe in the caves. Only by working together could the cult leaders enter the

central chamber beneath the idol, where Vul-Kar's heart was stored.

Eventually, a group of adventurers braved the storms to successfully reach the island. They infiltrated the chamber and stole the heart, whereupon the elaborate defense system fell dormant. After the heart was stolen, the cultists mostly abandoned the island as they searched in vain for the heart. Centuries later, one of those cultists—an elemental azer—found the gem in the dungeons of Jaguar Keep and returned it to the island. Now the idol—and the island—has awoken.

Campaign Hooks

The characters start the adventure in Jaguar Keep. There, they can find out about the duke's request in any number of ways, from signs on the street, to word in the taverns, to guards actively seeking adventurers for hire. However the characters got to Jaguar Keep, they are effectively trapped there now. No long-haul ships are coming to or leaving the island until the storms subside—and those who know the tale of the Heart of Vul-Kar fear that those storms might never end.

The characters can meet with the duke to strike a deal for their services. Varnarth is a competent and wise leader, and he is willing to agree to any reasonable arrangement. This includes the characters keeping any treasure they find on the Isle of the Fire Spirit (other than the heart), a 500 gp reward for ending the island's threat, and negotiable compensation for lost party members. He can provide passage to the island on a small ship captained by one of his best smugglers-turned-merchants—Jason, fourth of his name.

Entering Vul-Kar

Creatures of elemental fire are able to automatically access the interior of the great idol of Vul-Kar that stands at the summit of the island, as the azer did when it returned the stolen Heart of Vul-Kar. But for the characters to successfully complete their quest, they must find the three medallions once used by the cult leaders to enter the idol. Known as the Azure Serpent, the Crimson Eye, and the Golden Essence, the three

medallions are hidden in the network of caverns under the island. Only by bringing all three medallions to the idol can the characters enter the mouth of Vul-Kar and descend to where the heart lies.

Of course, no adventure ever goes as planned. When the heart was put back into Milton the Mad's device, it was installed poorly and damaged. Removing the now-fragile gem from the device causes it to break, releasing a portion of Vul-Kar's spirit. The characters must then face off against that angry spirit while escaping from the island!

Medallion Magic

The three medallions that allow access into the idol of Vul-Kar are powerful relics inexorably bound to the Isle of the Fire Spirit. From the time when a medallion is claimed in area 1c, 2c, or 3c, it remains in the Material Plane for one day, at which point it disappears and is magically hidden again in the same place.

Exploring the Island

This adventure divides the Isle of the Fire Spirit up into a number of different areas, including locations on the surface of the island (identified as regions A through E), three sets of caverns belowground (cave systems 1 through 3), and the great stone demon head that is the idol of Vul-Kar. The "Isle of the Fire Spirit" map shows the aboveground regions of the island, as well as the entrance points to specific areas in the three cave systems. The "Cave Systems" map shows the caverns and passageways beneath the island.

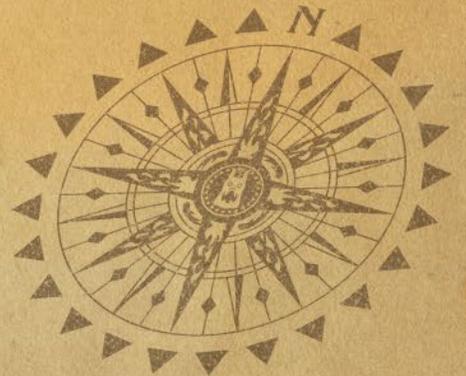
MAP 1

Isle of the Fire Spirit



MAP 2

Cave Systems



Island Setup

Set up the *Fireball Island: The Curse of Vul-Kar* game board as shown in the rules for that game. Do not put out any treasures. Do not put out the Heart of Vul-Kar, and do not use the Hello-Copter or the Maw. During the game, if any ember marbles or fireballs disrupt unstable spaces (the bridges or ladder), do not reset them. The characters have to deal with the damage as they can.

Arrival

You can make the trip to the island as eventful as you like, or you can skip right to the point of the characters' arrival. Either way, impress upon the players that the seas are rough, full of strange currents, covered with mysterious patches of fog, and showing other signs of unnatural stormy weather.

Hidden shoals and currents make landing on the island a tricky process. Captain Jason will approach only one of three sites: the Scar (area A), Skeleton Head Beach (area B), or the base of the cliffs beneath the Hell-Pad (area C). In the latter event, the characters will need to climb the 30-foot-high cliffs with successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks. The far side of the island is covered with thick fog that makes landing there impossible.

No matter where the characters land, read or paraphrase the following to first set the scene:

As your ship draws ever closer, the Isle of the Fire Spirit looms suddenly out of the unnatural mist. Trees and other foliage are set in patches across the dark rock of the island, whose open spaces appear to make up a network of broad paths all twisting up and toward a central summit. Atop that summit is a giant stone demon's head, set with great horns and featuring a broad maw with three mouths.

Events on the Island

Each time the characters move from one of the island's aboveground areas to another aboveground area (regions A through E), or each

time they emerge from one of the cave systems, roll a d12 to see what happens on the island.

Island Events

d12	Event
1-2	Rotate Vul-Kar one step clockwise
3-4	Rotate Vul-Kar one step counterclockwise
5-6	Ember marble strike
7	Azer patrol
8	Salamander hunter
9	Tiger attack
10-12	Launch fireballs

Rotate Vul-Kar

Rotating Vul-Kar on the game board sets the idol up for subsequent fireball launches.

Ember Marble Strike

Flick any one ember marble at the characters. You can adjust one tree first. Any character knocked over by an ember marble must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Azer Patrol

Each azer patrol features two or three **azers** (your choice) that wander the island in search of threats. The azers speak only Ignan, and attack intruders until destroyed.

Salamander Hunter

A lone **salamander** slips across the island in search of azer prey. It speaks only Ignan and is keen to test its combat ability on humanoids and other lesser creatures. The salamander fights until destroyed.

Tiger Attack

A **tiger** lands on a random character out of nowhere. If the tiger is hungry or territorial, it might fight to the death. Otherwise, it angrily flees when reduced to half its hit points or fewer.

Launch Fireballs

Roll one marble through Vul-Kar, plus one extra marble for each medallion the party has claimed. You can adjust two trees before rolling any marbles. Any character knocked over by a

fireball strike must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

In the aftermath, a character knocked over and rolled around by a fireball might notice something valuable in the underbrush (typically a treasure left behind by someone else previously knocked over and rolled around by a fireball). You can roll or select treasures from the Random Treasure table.

It's important that the characters find at least five treasures—three in red and two in yellow—which are used to gain access to the Golden Essence medallion in area 3c. If the characters are lucky enough to not be hit constantly by fireballs, you'll need to allow them to find treasures of the appropriate color in other locations. See area 3c for more information.

Random Treasure

d6	Treasure
1	<i>Park Map</i> —This common magic item is a yellow square of parchment that magically shows true north when underground.
2	<i>Emberglobe</i> —This common magic item resembles a yellow glass globe. When shaken as an action, it emits light as a hooded lantern for 3 hours. Once used, the globe cannot be used again until the next dawn. An <i>emberglobe</i> is fragile, and must be carried and packed away with care.
3	<i>Water Bottle</i> —When you use an action to drink from this uncommon magic item (available in red or yellow), you automatically succeed on saving throws to prevent exhaustion because of extreme heat for 24 hours. Once used, the bottle cannot be used again until the next dawn.
4	<i>Jet Pack</i> —This uncommon consumable magic item is a red flask whose contents can be imbibed as a bonus action. When you drink from the flask, your speed increases by 30 feet until the end of your turn.
5	<i>VIP Pass</i> —This uncommon magic item takes the form of an ornate red brooch. While you wear it, the <i>VIP pass</i> allows you to ignore the first 5 feet of difficult terrain when you move on your turn.

6	<i>Tote Bag</i> —This common magic item resembles a red backpack. Any Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check made to remove an item from the bag automatically fails.
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Denizens of the Island

In addition to dealing with natural threats, the characters can encounter representatives of two groups of creatures currently at large on the island. The azers of the Isle of the Fire Spirit are worshipers of Vul-Kar and have been waiting for his return. They live in cave system 3 but make regular patrols across the island. The other group consists of salamanders that recently came to the island from their home on the Elemental Plane of Fire when they sensed that Vul-Kar had awakened. The salamanders are found as lone hunters prowling the island in search of prey.

The shared history of both these creatures is defined by their hatred of each other. The salamanders are aware that azers once dwelled on the island as worshipers of Vul-Kar, and they suspect that the azers dwell here still, though they have not found them yet. The azers are so far unaware that the salamanders have arrived.

The other two cults formerly on the island died out long ago. Their caverns remain largely uninhabited, though traps and a few new residents make them far from safe.

Aboveground Areas

Each space on the island board is treated as an area 10 feet on a side. A character who has a speed of 30 feet can travel 3 spaces in a single move, or 6 spaces when taking the Dash action. The bridges and the ladder are difficult terrain.

Characters can leave the main path to find shortcuts across the island, or to avoid ember marbles and fireballs (see “Events on the Island”). However, the plants that cover all areas of the island contain a mild toxin that causes a violent rash in any creature that comes into contact with them. Any creature that leaves the path must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. That condition ends only after the character finishes a short rest.

A. The Scar

This shore of the island is unnaturally hot, and is dominated by a scar in the earth—a jagged rip where lava bubbles to the surface.

Each creature that passes through this area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion from the extreme heat. Other than the deadly heat and the lava, there is nothing of note in this area.

Extreme Heat

Along the Scar and in the chambers within and beneath the idol of Vul-Kar, extreme heat can impose exhaustion on characters. Whenever a saving throw is called for against the effects of extreme heat, a creature wearing heavy clothing, medium armor, or heavy armor has disadvantage on the saving throw. A creature with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeeds on the saving throw.

B. Skeleton Head Beach

Waves quietly lap against the shore, giving this area a peaceful quality in contrast to much of the rest of the island. The beach here is more fine gravel than sand, though its clean white color makes the area look almost charming. Here and there, rough lumps of what looks like glass are scattered across the sand.

Creatures. This beach is home to two **spawn of Vul-Kar**—elemental creatures created when a humanoid is killed and wholly consumed by one of Vul-Kar’s fireball strikes. Resembling disembodied humanoid skulls surrounded by roiling red flames, the spawn of Vul-Kar spend most of their time burrowing under the sand. Where a skull rests in one place long enough, the sand above fuses to create the patches of glass that cover the beach.

When the characters enter this area, the spawn of Vul-Kar use tremorsense to track their movements, then erupt from the sand and attack.

Treasure. If the characters take the time to comb through the sand, they find a treasure chest containing 400 sp, a +1 *scimitar*, a jewel-

encrusted goblet (400 gp), and a *gem of brightness*.

Spawn of Vul-Kar

Tiny elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 45 (10d4 + 20)

Speed 0 ft., burrow 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense, passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Illumination. The spawn of Vul-Kar sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet.

Magic Resistance. The spawn of Vul-Kar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The spawn of Vul-Kar uses Fiery Ray twice.

Fiery Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Fiery Blast (Recharge 5–6). The spawn of Vul-Kar blasts forth fire in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

C. The Hell-Pad

A crackling portal of fire covers the surface of this rocky plateau, encircling a large rune whose form is difficult to discern from a distance. A serpentine flame-covered creature lingers close by, guarding the portal.

This area is where salamanders come through from the Elemental Plane of Fire to go azer hunting (see “Events on the Island” above).

Creature. The one **salamander** on guard is bored and not expecting any trouble. The salamanders were a bit cocky when they arrived on the island, and as a result, they have no plans for alarms or check-ins that would let them know if anything has gone amiss.

The salamander fights any characters who approach the portal until it is reduced to 10 hit points or fewer. It then jumps into the portal to return to the Elemental Plane of Fire, leaving its companions to fend for themselves.

Portal. The fiery portal leads back to the Elemental Plane of Fire for characters who feeling like visiting. However, the things they might find there (including but not limited to a fiery death) are not part of this adventure. When seen up close, the Ignan rune inside the portal bears a mysterious resemblance to the letter H.

D. Rolling Bluffs

The vegetation is sparse along this side of the island, which opens up to a series of stepped bluffs. Those bluffs rise above the sandy beach—and straight toward the idol of Vul-Kar above you.

Creatures. This area is home to six swarms of wasps. Each swarm uses the statistics of a **swarm of insects**, but it has a flying speed of 30 feet and no climbing speed. If the characters pass through this area quickly, the wasps ignore them. If they linger, the wasps spot them and attack.

Treasure. Three wasps' nests can be found automatically among the vegetation by any characters who search this area. If the nests are broken apart, one of them contains a mummified hand with a *ring of free action*.

E. Serpent Cliffs

Trees and brush grow thick here, obscuring your view of anything more than a few feet away. The path runs through the underbrush, then zigzags up a cliff side to the summit above.

Creatures. Three monstrous poisonous snakes lair here, lying in wait to ambush any characters who pass. Each snake uses the statistics of a

giant poisonous snake, but has 44 (8d8 + 8) hit points and is CR 2. Their exotic hide provides excellent camouflage among the rocks and brush, so that only characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 17 or higher can avoid being surprised by the snakes.

Treasure. Any search of the brush in this area uncovers a snake idol lost by cultists long ago. This golden statue is ornately carved into the likeness of a serpent with two green gems for eyes. The idol is worth 500 gp and radiates transmutation magic to a *detect magic* spell, but that magic is a unique curse. When the possessor of the idol takes any damage, they drop the idol if it is held, or the idol somehow falls out of any container it is carried in. This effect can be ended with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. The curse also ends automatically if the idol is taken from the island.

Cave System 1: The Azure Serpent

This system of caverns beneath the island was the main temple for a serpent cult that once worshiped Vul-Kar. The cult's rituals were a mix of serpent worship and fire worship, the exact details of which have been lost to history. In the time since the cult vanished, some of these caverns have been repurposed by other creatures.

Two entrances open up into the cave system, leading into area 1a and area 1e. Both those entrances appear on the surface as broad clefts in the rocky landscape that descend down into darkness.

1a. Fresco Chamber

Dust covers the relatively even floor of this large domed cavern, whose walls are roughly hewn. A massive fresco dominates one wall of the cave, its once-vibrant prismatic hues also obscured by dust and mold so that the image can't be made out.

Ooze Fresco. A large dark area on the fresco that might appear to be a particularly nasty patch of mold is actually a **black pudding** clinging to the painted wall and obscured by dust.

Any contact with the wall (including brushing away the dust and mold to view the fresco) causes the ooze to quickly flow toward and onto the nearest creature, which is surprised. A character who tries to remotely clear the dust and mold with a tool, the *mage hand* cantrip, a bucket of thrown water, or some other method from more than 10 feet away causes the ooze to attack but is not surprised.

Once revealed, the fresco depicts a stunning scene of fiery destruction with the giant stone idol of Vul-Kar dominating the center. A ring of snakes, eyes, and golden fire around the idol create a mandala effect.

Treasure. Where the black pudding clung to the wall, it concealed a compartment built into the fresco. When the ooze is disposed of, the characters can open the compartment to discover a magic battleaxe called a *hello-chopper* that is a rare magic item.

This magic weapon requires attunement, and grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Additionally, when the weapon is used to attack an intelligent creature, its bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3 and it screams “Hello!” in the target creature’s native language. This feature of the weapon can’t be used again until the next dawn.

1b. Winding Passageway

The walls of this tunnel are uneven, but appear to have been shaped by some regular repetitive force. This has created a pattern of long vertical striations and triangular tessellations in the stone. Though the passage is dark, tiny orbs of yellow light suddenly appear in the distance, blinking on and off.

A close inspection or a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the carvings along the inside of the tunnel are intended to look like snake scales and ribs, creating a sense that those moving along the tunnel have been swallowed whole by a massive serpent.

Spider Door. The small yellow lights are tiny luminescent spiders that flit in and out of cracks along a particularly tight curve in the tunnel. The

spiders are harmless, but their presence hints at the location of the secret door they cluster around. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check allows a character to note the door by assessing the spiders’ movements, or to spot its seams along the rock wall.

The door opens to a tunnel that leads to a secret spider cave (area 1g), which is open to the surface of the island.

1c. Vine-Covered Altar

The tunnel opens to a chamber some twenty feet wide and fifty feet long, whose smooth, perfectly straight walls are as well worked as the marble of the finest castle. The only irregular aspect to the room is at its far end, where something like a wide stalagmite punching up from the floor has been sheared off at a height of about four feet. The sides of the protrusion are uneven, rippled and knotted like the trunk of a mighty oak. Thick blue-green vines tumble out from the top of the stalagmite, spilling over its sides and sprawling out across the floor for several feet in all directions.

This area was the temple of the long-forgotten serpent cult that resided on the island. The apparent stalagmite was once the altar of this temple. It was cut from the trunk of an exotic tree that grew ages ago, and which maintains a horrid semblance of life from having been watered for long years by the venom of the cult’s serpentine pets.

Closer inspection of the altar reveals the word “Sllithalessayn” ornately etched into its surface (see below). Characters can also make out words carved along one side of the altar, but they are difficult to read beneath the close-growing vines. The vines are easy enough to clear away and are harmless, though their touch lightly stings bare skin. Once revealed, the carved words (written in Common) can be read:

*The Azure Serpent waits on high
Before the Crimson Eye can see.
Then one drop of Golden Essence
Graces thee to bend a knee within He.*

The verse reveals the pattern in which the three medallions must be placed to gain access to the interior of the demon head idol at the summit of the island (see “The Idol of Vul-Kar”).

Sllithalessayn’s Boon. The altar is still suffused with the power of Vul-Kar, who the serpent cultists named “Sllithalessayn” in their own dialect. Anyone who kneels within the room and utters that deity’s name is empowered by its lingering spirit, gaining advantage on saving throws against being poisoned and resistance to poison damage while on the island. However, if that character is slain on the island, their soul is trapped within the roots of the altar instead of passing on to its final resting place. The character’s soul can leave this area only if the character is returned to life.

Treasure. One of the knots on the altar is a false front that can be detected with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. A space behind the knot conceals the Azure Serpent medallion (see “Entering Vul-Kar” in the adventure introduction).

1d. Circular Room

This circular cavern is nearly sixty feet across. Its ceiling is high, but is covered in thick, nubby stalactites that make it appear much lower. The floor is bare except for a small hole about three feet across at the center of the room. A few coins and gems are scattered around the hole.

Creature. A **roper** resides within the forest of stalactites in the ceiling of the main chamber. It sustains itself here by extending its long tendrils down the hole in the floor to fish in the water-filled chamber beneath this one (see below). Of course, it prefers meat to seafood, and attacks any creatures that enter this area. If it can, it waits for an unsuspecting visitor to peer down the fishing hole before making a surprise attack.

Lower Chamber. The hole in the floor leads down approximately 10 feet to a sea cave 10 feet in diameter. Holes in the walls of the cave connect to narrow channels that lead out to sea, and which fill the chamber with saltwater that gently ebbs and flows.

Venturing into the lower chamber is a risky proposition. A character can squeeze down the tunnel, but the sea cave is almost entirely filled with water. The top of the cave features an airspace a few inches high, but that air disappears every other round as seawater rushes into the cave before being sucked out. Further, swimming toward the bottom of the chamber places a character near a strong outgoing current. A character in the current must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to escape, or runs the risk of drowning if they end up trapped in the current.

Treasure. The gems scattered around the hole in the main cavern are semiprecious stones worth 40 gp. Alongside the gems is a normal-looking stone strung on a leather cord, which radiates divination magic to a *detect magic* spell. This stone is a scrying device created by the sea hags in area 2a. Any character who possesses the necklace is watched by the sea hags, who know if that character approaches their grotto.

At the bottom of the sea cave are scattered 70 gp, a bronze ingot worth 125 gp, and a *brooch of shielding*.

1e. Hissing Room

Adjust the boxed text below depending on whether the characters enter this area from the surface or from area 1d.

As you approach this area, you feel and hear a sibilant hissing. The cavern ahead is alive with the sound of what must be thousands of serpents.

When seen, the circular cavern shows a stark contrast across its two halves. Near a tunnel that leads up and out to the surface, the stone is well worked, with smooth walls and floors. A few stalactites in the ceiling have been hewn off to create additional headroom. Niches have been carved into the walls, holding a broad assortment of decaying equipment, including shovels, picks, buckets, chains, and brooms. The section of the cave opening up off an interior tunnel leading into darkness is raw and wild, with sharp stalactites and uneven walls and floor. Oddly, none of the snakes you hear can be seen.

The decaying equipment belonged to the long-gone serpent cultists, who had grand plans for expanding their underground home.

There are, in fact, no snakes in the room. Any inspection of the walls reveals that the hissing sound comes from air escaping from narrow vents. Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check makes the unsettling discovery that the hissing sound carries the whispered name of “Slithalessayn.” In reality, the hissing is the whispered plaints of all the souls trapped in the tree altar in the temple in area 1c.

Treasure. Characters who search through the decaying digging equipment discover a flask containing a *potion of resistance* (fire) and two other items of potential use. A large bronze bucket with a handle can still hold water, making it useful for washing away the dust from the fresco in area 1a. An oversized full-face helmet still in working condition is fitted with a large leather bladder and a breathing tube. When properly inflated, the bladder allows a character wearing the helmet to breathe underwater for 5 rounds.

1g. Secret Spider Cave

This area is reached by way of the secret door in area 1b.

The passage wends some distance beyond the secret door, dropping sharply and narrowing in certain places to make movement difficult. The spiders grow more plentiful the farther you move—and begin to grow larger by the time the passage widens to reveal a deep open-air pit. The high, gently sloped walls of the pit rise up from a rocky stone floor. The sky above is shrouded by thick fog.

Scattered among the rocks ahead are a number of large eggs that glisten like mother-of-pearl. At the center of the floor, a raised ring of cracked stone resembles the top of a well—and is covered by enormous, bright-yellow spiders, each the size of a horse. The movement of yellow bodies has a kind of beauty to it, though the slow clattering of legs on stone is somewhat unnerving.

The promontory that holds this open-air pit juts out from the edge of the island, but is not visible from the water or the adjacent shore due to the omnipresent fog.

The six yellow spiders (use **giant spider** statistics) are not aggressive, and they do not attack unless threatened. However, the raised stone well is an ancient device that was once part of cult ceremonies on the island. Its workings are now brittle and temperamental, and any creature except the spiders moving through this area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or stumble on loose stone. The vibration from this stumble sets off the well, whose floor shoots up to become a raised altar—and which launches the spiders into the air. When they come down again, the enraged creatures immediately attack all interlopers.

Development. The far end of the cavern opens up to provide access to the fog-shrouded sea. An odd structure jutting out from the shore might once have been some sort of watercraft dock, but it is rusted and in disrepair.



Cave System 2: The Crimson Eye

This system of caverns was a temple complex for another of the vanished cults that worshiped Vul-Kar. They believed that the so-called demon could see all, and their rituals involved eyes, light, and darkness in addition to fire. In the time since the cult vanished, some of these caverns have been repurposed by other creatures.

Two entrances open up into the cave system, leading into area 2a and area 2e. Both those entrances appear on the surface as narrow cave mouths hung with vines that conceal whatever lies beyond.

2a. Sunken Grotto

Read the boxed text below if the characters enter this area from the surface. If they enter from area 2b, start with the hag attack (see below), then paraphrase the boxed text when the characters can see the cavern:

This noisome sunken cavern is uncomfortably warm. One half of the cave is a stony floor, with the other half sloping down to a lake of dark water. The walls of this grotto are carved with the images of thousands of stone eyes, many of which are clearly monstrous.

The eyes on the wall are largely decorative, and carved by many different hands over generations. Any character studying the walls who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that many of the eyes are clustered together in a repeating pattern: 1–5–4–3–2. (This pattern can help the characters in area 2c).

Tunnel Exit. Any character who scans the water and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the upper lip of an almost-submerged tunnel on the far side of the cavern from the entrance. This tunnel slopes down and is entirely underwater as it leads to area 2b.

Characters wanting to continue through this cavern complex must swim along the tunnel. Remember that a creature can hold its breath for

a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds), and that each foot of movement costs 1 extra foot while swimming.

Creatures. Beneath the dark water that fills the grotto, three **sea hags** lie in wait. If the hags are not aware that the characters are coming, they attack as soon as the first character enters the water. But if one of the characters is carrying the necklace found in area 1d, the hags know that the party is coming and prepare an ambush. Changing their forms to those of normal humanoids, each hag floats face down in the water. When any character draws close to investigate, the hags resume their true forms and the characters are surprised as the hags attack.

Hags' Lair. The hags' lair lies at the end of a small side tunnel that branches off the main tunnel between area 2a and area 2b. Unless the side tunnel is being specifically looked for, it is noticed only by a character who swims past it and who has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher. The lair is a small, dark, air-filled cave.

Treasure. Characters who search the hags' lair find a leather sack containing 53 gp and two pearls (40 gp each), two *+1 arrows*, and a fine jade figurine.

The jade figurine is a common magic item called a *spirit lamp*. As a bonus action, a character can cause the figurine to shed bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet, or can deactivate the light.

2b. Darkness

If the characters enter this area from area 2c, read the text from the sarcophagus chamber below. If the characters enter this area from area 2a, read or paraphrase the following:

You break the surface of the water into absolute blackness, as if some sort of magic has removed all light from the area. You can tell from the echoes that you are in a small chamber, perhaps only ten feet across and with a ceiling just a few feet above you.

This small cavern is under the effect of a powerful permanent magical darkness. The

magic runs from the chimney at the top of the chamber (see below) to just under the surface of the water. It can be dispelled with *dispel magic* (DC 18).

The water here is 10 feet deep, so characters will have to tread water while they discover the chimney and determine how to access it.

Chimney. In the roof of the cavern, a 3-foot-diameter chimney leads up 10 feet to the interior of a false sarcophagus. (What the characters perceive as a stone door atop the tunnel is the sarcophagus lid.)

A character can shimmy up the chimney with a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Opening the lid from inside the tunnel requires a successful DC 12 Strength check, and helpfully renders the characters immune to the trap on the sarcophagus lid (see below), since they are protected by the permanent darkness effect of the cavern below.

Sarcophagus Chamber. When the characters can see the sarcophagus chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

The stone in this natural cavern has been somewhat finished. The floor is level, and an attempt has been made to work the walls into something more like a room and less like a cave. The only feature in the cavern is a stone sarcophagus whose lid shows a humanoid figure dressed in armor of an old style.

The figure is unremarkable, as befits it adorning a false sarcophagus. With a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check, a character notes discrepancies in the style of carving and the age of the stone that suggest the sarcophagus is false, and is meant to look older than it is.

Opening the sarcophagus from the outside requires a successful DC 14 Strength check, but doing so triggers a magical trap. When the seal is broken, a brilliant light erupts and each creature in the area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

If the characters open the sarcophagus from above, they discover that it has no bottom, and that it opens up to an unnaturally dark chimney

leading down. If anything is dropped down the chimney, the characters hear the splash of water just over ten feet below.

2c. Shrine to Vul-Kar

This smooth-walled chamber is clearly some sort of shrine or temple. A fresco showing the demonic idol of Vul-Kar takes up one of the side walls. In front of the fresco are five stone braziers, each engraved with a single eye on one side and a sword on the other. A tunnel exits into darkness across from you.

The painted idol on the fresco is unremarkable at first glance. Any close inspection or investigation reveals nothing of note, but see “Treasure” below.

Magic Braziers. Each brazier contains a single dark, skull-sized stone—a chunk of magic charcoal that lights immediately if exposed to any flame. Once a brazier is lit, it can be extinguished only with a *dispel magic* spell (DC 20), or left to go out on its own after 1 hour. The magic charcoal does not burn down.

If all five braziers are lit, they channel magic once used by the cultists to empower their weapons. However, the braziers must be lit in the proper sequence: 1–5–4–3–2. (The characters can learn this sequence in area 2a.) Once all five braziers are lit, those that were lit at the correct point in the sequence immediately fade down to a warm glow. A few seconds later, those that were lit at the wrong point in the sequence flare up, and the character who lit the last brazier takes 3 (1d6) fire damage for each incorrectly activated brazier.

Once this damage is dealt, the incorrectly lit braziers also fade down, and all the braziers burn for 1 hour before going out. Any nonmagical weapon that is placed in a burning brazier for 1 round or more temporarily becomes a magic weapon, gaining a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls and dealing an extra 1d4 fire damage on a hit. This benefit lasts for as long as the braziers burn.

Treasure. While all five braziers are lit, one of the eyes on the fresco image of the idol transforms into the Crimson Eye medallion (see

“Entering Vul-Kar” in the adventure introduction). The medallion can easily be detached from the wall, even if the fresco was defaced.

2d. Watchful Skulls

A wide chamber opening up off the main tunnel has three skulls resting in niches along one wall. Most unnervingly, the skulls turn as if to watch you as you approach, though they make no sign of being able to leave their niches or of preparing to attack.

Creature. As the characters focus on the skulls, they might not notice a **ghost** opposite them, concealed in a small cleft in the rock near the ceiling of the tunnel. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the creature.

The neutral ghost was once a wizard who came to study the Isle of the Fire Spirit—and was killed by the dark magic of the cultists who dwelled in these caverns. The ghost retains knowledge of one of its former spells—*animate objects*, which it uses to manipulate the skulls that are its only companions. It spends some of its time roaming around on the island, but mostly dwells in this cavern playing with its friends.

The ghost has little interest in fighting and mostly wants to be left alone. Unless it is spotted, it remains hidden, watching the characters and hoping they pass by. If anyone touches the skulls, the ghost attacks to protect its friends, using horrifying visage to try to drive the characters away.

If the characters become aware of the ghost but avoid fighting it, it can be convinced (or bribed with magic items) to give up secrets about the island. It knows and can warn the characters about the following:

- A gelatinous cube lurks in area 2e.
- The correct sequence for lighting the braziers in area 2c starts with the first brazier.
- Evil creatures lurk in the water in area 2a.
- The pattern of eyes on the grotto wall in area 2a provides a clue to lighting the braziers in area 2c.

2e. Shiny Cavern

Use the following boxed text if the characters enter this area from area 2d:

Something glints at the end of the tunnel, but whether it’s daylight or an artificial light source is hard to tell.

After the characters reach the cavern from area 2d, or if they enter the cave from outside, read the following:

You almost have to cover your eyes as you enter this cave, whose faceted walls have been polished to a glasslike finish, reflecting any light source as a dazzling gleam. Even the floor and ceiling gleam brightly, with the floor showing an extra degree of slippery-looking shine. Even more oddly, a treasure chest is hanging in midair in the center of the room.

Creatures. This cavern has been cleaned to a spotless shine by the **gelatinous cube** that dwells here. Any organic matter that blows or wanders into the cavern from outside is quickly absorbed into the cube.

A few months back, the gelatinous cube scooped up a **mimic** that had foolishly decided to set up house in the cave. However, the mimic’s immunity to acid damage means that it’s found itself quite at home inside the cube, where it shares the ooze’s meals of sea birds and other creatures that wander through the area.

If the cube is attacked or if any creature walks into it, the ooze disgorges the mimic, which joins the fight at once.

Treasure. The gelatinous cube holds numerous rocks and bits of ore, many bones and clam shells, 18 cp, 33 sp, 11 gp, a small emerald (60 gp), and two *potions of water breathing* in crystal vials.

Cave System 3: The Golden Essence

This system of caverns presently has two different groups vying to take it over: the azers (areas 3a and 3b) and the magma mephits (area 3e). The members of both groups think themselves the superior worshipers of Vul-Kar.

Two entrances open up into the cave system, leading into area 3a and area 3e. Both those entrances appear on the surface as jagged cracks in the rocky landscape with darkness beyond.

3a. Azer Fete

This area is home to the most religiously zealous of the **azers**, whose fervor for Vul-Kar knows no bounds. The other azers working in area 3b mostly leave their frolicking kin alone.

This rough, twenty-foot-high cavern is shaped mostly of unhewn stone, and set with crystals glittering like diamonds in the light being shed by its inhabitants. Four of the fiery elemental creatures known as azers gambol and dance around this area, showing off a strange amount of exuberance for their kind.

One part of the cavern wall has been smoothed down to become the foundation for a crude painting depicting the great idol of Vul-Kar at the summit of the island. On the other side of the cavern, two more azers crouch near a niche cut into the wall, beckoning as they smile at you with toothy, fiery grins.

If the characters enter this area from the surface, add the following:

The sound of distant hammering emanates from an open passageway on the far side of the chamber, its echo suggestive of metal on metal.

Bring Out Your Dead. The two azers beckoning the characters know enough broken Common to communicate if no one in the party speaks Ignan. They ask if the characters have come to collect the bones of fallen comrades, whereupon they beckon into the niche to reveal

a large pile of humanoid bones, collected from the remains of unfortunate visitors to the island.

Each of the azers holds up different skulls and asks if this is the person the characters are looking for, speaking wistfully of how no one has been lucky enough to have been incinerated by Vul-Kar recently. These two azers have no useful information, and cheerfully ignore the characters if they walk away.

Guided Tour. Any character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, or who has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher, notices one of the gamboling azers pause near the painting on the wall and subtly beckon them over. If the characters approach, this azer introduces itself as Frzzlbrn, and explains that it knows where some really cool treasure is. The creature isn't sure how to get to the treasure, but it offers to split the wealth with the characters if they help. (If no one in the party speaks Ignan, Frzzlbrn can also know enough broken Common to get by. Alternatively, you can have fun with roleplaying by having her communicate and negotiate with the characters through mime or pictographs scratched into the cave wall.)

The painting of Vul-Kar on the wall is a crude rendition, rendered mostly in black ash except for one red circle at each of the idol's three mouths and two yellow circles for eyes. If asked about the painting, Frzzlbrn doesn't know who made it, but has been told that it's almost as old as the idol itself.

If the characters agree to help Frzzlbrn, the azer claps its burning hands together, turns and genuflects to the painting, then leads the characters to area 3c.

Development. If the characters attack or threaten any of the azers in this area, they trigger a mass exodus to area 3b. Two rounds later, the more focused azers from that area, armed and hostile, enter this area and attack. Three of those azers appear in the first round, with two the following round, and two more the round after that.

The azers fight to the death but do not pursue fleeing characters to the surface.

3b. Forge

If the characters approach this area from area 3c, read the following boxed text first:

The glow of firelight shines out from a cavern ahead, and the sound of hammering rings out loudly.

When the characters can see into this area, read the following:

A wave of heat blasts out from this large, irregularly shaped cavern. The ceiling rises twenty feet up at its highest point and is lined with stalactites, their tips so fine that they resemble needles. The cavern is bathed in a gold-orange glow emanating from a bank of forge furnaces along one wall. A number of fiery azers work the forges, across from which a smooth section of wall has been painted with a dark rendition of the idol of Vul-Kar.

The rendition of Vul-Kar here differs in style from the one in area 3a but has the same color scheme—one red circle at each of the idol's three mouths and two yellow circles for eyes. None of the azers know who made it or when.

Creatures. Seven **azers** toil here, with six working on various smithing tasks while one stands sentry. Whichever direction the characters approach from, the sentry approaches them cautiously as soon as they are spotted. Even if the characters enter the room without being accompanied by Frzzlbrn, the azers here are curious but not immediately hostile. With a successful DC 12 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check or a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check (conducted by pantomime if the characters can't communicate with the azers), the characters are escorted across the cavern and allowed to continue on to area 3c.

Within the limits of their ability to communicate, the azers try to alert the characters to the presence of the mephits in area 3e, and describe their ongoing battle with them. They hope that by allowing the party free passage, the characters might end up fighting the

mephits, to the azers' advantage. They have no knowledge of the treasure that Frzzlbrn claims to know of, but advise the characters in whatever way they can to leave the holy statue in area 3c alone.

If the characters attack them, the azers snatch up weapons. They fight to the death, pursuing characters into area 3a but not outside or into area 3c.

Treasure. The ironwork the azers are creating here consists mostly of mundane items and Vul-Kar-themed art objects of no value. However, anyone searching the forges if the azers are all destroyed finds a *+1 flaming dagger*. This uncommon magic item bursts into flame when its wielder hits with it, dealing an extra 1d6 fire damage to the target of the attack. Once used, this property of the dagger can't be used again until the next dawn.

3c. Treasure Room

This dark, roughly circular cavern features walls, ceiling, and floor all made of rough volcanic glass. The chamber is dominated by a sculpted copy of the demon head idol of Vul-Kar, standing ten feet high in the center of the area.

If the characters are with Frzzlbrn when they enter this area, she tells them that she keeps having dreams about the statue, though she's not sure why. Any examination of the statue reveals five small, shelf-like depressions set into it—one in each of its three mouths and two at its eyes. With a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, a character notices that a flat area on the back of the statue resembles a small circular door. However, that door has no handles or hinges, nor any locks that might be picked.

The solid stone statue has AC 17, 100 hit points, a damage threshold of 8, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and resistance to piercing and slashing damage. Any attempt to smash the statue brings the azers from area 3b into this area 3 rounds later—three in the first round, then two in each of the following rounds. If the characters don't cease their attempts to destroy the statue, the azers attack at once.

Opening the Statue. Five of the small treasures gathered from the island (see the Random Treasure table in the “Events on the Island” section) can be placed in the depressions as indicated by the paintings in areas 3a and 3b—one red treasure in each of the statue’s three mouths, and two yellow treasures as eyes. When this is done, the stone door is drawn inward, then slides aside to leave an opening three feet across.

Characters can squeeze through the door and down a narrow passage that ends at an alcove—and is protected by a trap. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notes a pressure plate that can be avoided by carefully crawling over it, or which can be disabled with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to jam something into it. If the plate is not spotted, the first character down the passage triggers the trap and takes 7 (2d6) fire damage as flames erupt from small ports set along the passage walls.

Inside the alcove are six bricks of brimstone and ten lumps of magically long-burning coal, all of which would be greatly prized by the azers in area 3b, as well as a gold medallion.

Development. If the characters are here with Frzzlbrn, the azer volunteers to be the one to enter the statue. Its immunity to fire damage means that it just giggles when the trap is set off. Frzzlbrn is excited by the coal and the brimstone, and encourages the characters to come with it to deliver the treasure to area 3b.

Treasure. If the characters give the brimstone and the coal to the azers, they are rewarded with a *+1 flaming dagger*. See area 3b for information on that magic weapon.

The medallion found in the statue is the Golden Essence medallion (see “Entering Vul-Kar” in the adventure introduction).

3d. Wasp Spa

As the characters approach this area, a faint glow from ahead reveals the presence of light in the cavern.

A humanoid body lies in a heap at the base of one wall of this natural cavern, with a torch burning near its feet that fills the area with light. The stone walls here are pockmarked with two-inch-wide holes. In the center of the cavern stand three levers jutting up from the floor in a row, their handles set with yellow, red, and blue crystals. The yellow lever is presently angled away from the other two.

When these caverns were home to Vul-Kar’s cultists, this chamber was a sacred spa of sorts. Manipulating the levers would vent in steam that would fill the area during special rituals. Alas, over long years, the vents have been taken over by a particularly nasty species of cave wasp.

Fallen Adventurer. The figure on the floor is unconscious but alive, and will respond if anyone calls out or shakes him awake. Scowling Jed is a human adventurer who has been trapped on the island for a month, and who is now covered in welts after pulling the yellow lever and being attacked by wasps (see below).

Jed is quite mad. He came through area 3e without disturbing the magma mephits there, and knows nothing about the azers. He can either join the characters as an extremely chaotic wild card (use **scout** statistics for him if so). Or he could bolt, perhaps showing up again later in other areas as you determine.

Creatures. A character can move any one of the levers as an action. Doing so opens up a random assortment of wall vents, disturbing the wasps and releasing five swarms of the creatures into the room. Each swarm of wasps uses the statistics of a **swarm of insects**, but it has a flying speed of 30 feet and no climbing speed.

3e. Mephit Cave

This dark, blocky natural stone cavern features a rocky, uneven floor. The air here is heavy and scented with brimstone.

Creatures. It takes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the nine **magma mephits** that occupy this cave. The mephits have long battled the azers for the right to control this cave system, but a number of recent losses

means that they are happy to let the characters pass through without a fight.

If any of the characters can communicate with the mephits (which speak only Aquan and Ignan), the creatures spin wild lies about the azers being weak monsters with heaps of treasure in an attempt to inspire the characters to fight them.

Development. If the characters entered this area from the surface, then attack the mephits, one mephit flees into area 3d while the others fight to the death. If the characters then enter area 3d, the lone mephit uses its action to push a different lever each round, releasing wasps that it hopes might finish the characters off. The wasps ignore the mephit as long as they have larger targets to attack. The mephit continues this tactic until destroyed.

The Idol of Vul-Kar

The great stone demon's head rises nearly a hundred feet high to dominate the rocky summit of the island. Seen close up, the three mouths of the demon's maw are nearly clenched shut, with only tiny cracks visible between its viciously hewn teeth. The demon's countenance carries an unmistakable malevolence, and you cannot shake the feeling that you are being watched.

The idol is idle aside from the times when it spontaneously rotates or spouts out fireballs as part of random events on the island. The demon's head shows no signs of any hatch or opening that might allow access to a space within it. The roughly hewn idol can be climbed with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Any character doing so notices well-defined circular indentations in the idol's brow, upper lip, and lower lip. Each indentation is about the size of a human hand.

The three medallions must be placed into the indentations in the correct order—from top to bottom, the Azure Serpent, the Crimson Eye, and the Golden Essence (see area 1c). When they are, the idol begins to rumble, then opens its three-mouthed maw wide, revealing a chamber within.

As long as all three medallions are in their indentations, the mouth remains open and Vul-

Kar stays dormant. If any medallion is removed (requiring an action), the mouth clamps shut, and the idol can randomly rotate and spit fireballs as before. Characters inside the idol for some reason when the doors close can force them open with a successful DC 20 Strength check, but they close again as soon as any trapped characters have slipped outside.

Heat Hazard. All the areas within and below the demon head idol are intensely hot. Each area details the risks to creatures exposed to the heat, which increase as they descend. See the "Extreme Heat" sidebar earlier in the adventure. The heat hazards in all the following areas disappear when the Heart of Vul-Kar is freed (see area F3 below).

F1. The Head of Vul-Kar

The small chamber that opens up beyond the idol's maw is some twenty feet across. Its interior walls are smooth and shiny, and radiate a heat as intense as any kiln. Misshapen lumps of gold are scattered across the stone floor.

A narrow passageway set with steep stairs is cut into the stone on the far side of the chamber, the stairs twisting as they descend. A faint red glow emanates from below.

The extreme heat in this room rises up from the even hotter chambers below. The heat rises with each fireball that spits out from Vul-Kar, but the stone walls of the chamber retain much of that heat even while Vul-Kar is dormant. When a creature enters this area for the first time, and for each hour it remains here, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Treasure. The lumps of gold scattered about the floor are ancient offerings to Vul-Kar, all now melted by the heat. If collected, they are worth 100 gp.

F2. The Gorge of Vul-Kar

The chamber below opens up to a circular underground space roughly fifty feet in diameter. The stairs continue along the far wall, descending through the floor. An irregularly shaped but smooth hole is cut into the floor at the center of the chamber. Steam roils up from the hole, filling the room with an even more oppressive heat.

The room is even hotter than the chamber above. When a creature enters this area for the first time, and for each hour it remains here, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

F3. The Heart of Vul-Kar

The stairs descend a hundred feet or more before opening up to a one-hundred-foot-diameter chamber that pulses with intense heat. Four gold-hued tubes etched with obscure markings lead from cardinal points along the walls to a large shimmering sphere of force that floats five feet off the floor. The sphere glows red, and has the faint outline of a huge gem-cut ruby floating within it.

Periodic bursts of pressurized steam escape the sphere, rising up to a chimney shaft leading into the chamber above. Over the hiss of steam, the chamber is filled with a deep, rhythmic sound, like the beating of a massive heart.

This area is the center of Milton the Mad's island defense system. The red-glowing force sphere holds the Heart of Vul-Kar, and channels the intense heat generated by the ruby. Two of the pipes channel seawater into the sphere, while the other two channel highly pressurized steam into a complex network of underground tubes radiating out from the island and under the nearby seabed. The effects of the magically pressurized steam generate the adverse environmental conditions around the island.

The intense heat in this area can quickly become deadly for the characters. When a creature enters this area for the first time, and for each hour it remains here, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

The force sphere radiates intense conjuration magic to a *detect magic* spell or similar effect. Any character who casts *detect magic* or who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check to study the sphere notes that its magic is unstable, suggesting that the Heart of Vul-Kar was damaged when it was recently placed back into the sphere.

Disabling the System. To disable the island's defense system, the characters need to destroy the force sphere. The sphere is a magical creation that can be dispelled with the *dispel magic* spell (DC 15) or a similar effect. (Although Milton the Mad was a supremely powerful wizard, the magic in this area was weakened when the Heart of Vul-Kar was stolen and returned.)

Damaging any of the tubes in this area causes an imbalance in the system that can also destroy the sphere. The tubes are nonmagical but are crafted of a strong, exotic metal. Each tube has AC 20, 18 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and resistance to piercing and slashing damage. Destroying a tube causes a catastrophic failure of the force sphere, resulting in an explosion of pressurized steam. Each creature in the chamber when the sphere fails must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Destruction of the Heart. Regardless of how the characters disable the system, doing so unexpectedly destroys the Heart of Vul-Kar as a result of the previous damage done to the gem. With this destruction, the spirit of Vul-Kar is freed and escapes to the chamber above. Read or paraphrase the following:

The glowing sphere of red force implodes, revealing the huge ruby held within it—just as that ruby explodes into flame. The great gem turns to charcoal and ash as a pulse of fire erupts from inside it. That fire grows to take on the form of a monstrous horned creature of flame that shrieks in rage as it rises before you. Then it quickly surges upward, roiling toward the chimney in the stone ceiling above and disappearing through it.

The intense heat in this chamber and the chambers above starts to ebb—but seawater

begins to rush in through the intake tubes. The characters need to fight their way back up to the surface before seawater fills the chamber—while also dealing with a very irate fire elemental.

Getting Out. This chamber is below sea level, and the seawater pouring into the area is under intense pressure as it sprays the characters. In **round 1**, the tubes are torn away to allow water to erupt freely from holes in the stone walls. Each creature that starts its turn in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. In **round 2**, the water pressure begins to tear away the stone of the walls, increasing the flow and increasing the DC to avoid being knocked prone to 14.

In **rounds 3 and 4**, the water filling the room rises above the outflow channels, which no longer spray forth. However, the water is now chest-deep for any Medium creature in the area, causing its walking speed to be reduced by half. A Medium creature in heavy armor has its walking speed reduced to one-quarter. Small creatures in the area must swim.

In **round 5 and beyond**, the chamber is filled with water. Any creature still in the chamber must swim and hold its breath until it escapes up the stairs or the chimney. A creature floating on top of the water can climb up the chimney with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

The Spirit of Vul-Kar

With the destruction of the ruby that once bound it, the corporeal spirit of the fire elemental Vul-Kar is freed. Though its legendary strength is far diminished, it manifests enough of its elemental spirit to remain on the Material Plane. It also seethes with a rage that compels it to attack all those it deems responsible for its centuries of enslavement—notably, the characters.

When first released, the **spirit of Vul-Kar** retreats from area F3 to area F2 above. It uses the Ready action to prepare its multiattack for the first characters to enter area F2 while fleeing the inrushing water below. The spirit of Vul-Kar pursues the characters anywhere they might flee, including out onto the island. It fights to the death, knowing that destruction on the Material Plane will allow it to return to the Elemental

Plane of Fire to gather its strength and plot its unremitting revenge.

Spirit of Vul-Kar

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (–1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Ignan

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Fire Form. The spirit of Vul-Kar can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the spirit or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage. In addition, the spirit can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Illumination. The spirit sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If the spirit fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet the spirit moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 cold damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The spirit of Vul-Kar makes three flame tendril attacks.

Flame Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 5 (1d10) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Conclusion

With the Heart of Vul-Kar destroyed, the chaotic weather calms down and the threat of the Isle of the Fire Spirit is ended. Upon returning to Jaguar Keep, the characters need to explain to Duke Varnarth why they were unable to bring back the Heart of Vul-Kar. Unless you decide otherwise, the change in the weather on the Sea of Storms convinces him that they speak truthfully of the elemental ruby's destruction, and he pays out the promised reward.

As long-haul ships begin to return to Jaguar Keep, the characters are free to head out to seek new adventures! As for the Isle of the Fire Spirit, you get to decide whether its former threats quickly pass to legend again—or whether new threats might arise there. New masters (including the azers) might take over the island, trying to resurrect Vul-Kar's cult. Or perhaps more of Milton the Mad's dangerous inventions still survive in hidden caves not yet found. The powerful fire elemental Vul-Kar might also remain an ongoing threat, seeking vengeance against the characters, the sailors of Jaguar Keep, or all humanoids everywhere in response to its long incarceration.



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