

DUNGEONS & LAIRS #37: SALAMANDER FORGE

Salamander Forge is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3, 5, 8, or 11**. This document offers a general guideline on how to scale the adventure for each level. A sacred dwarven forge has been invaded by salamanders from the Elemental Plane of Fire. The characters must defeat the fiery foes to prevent them from using the forge's products for evil.

CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

Design and Writing. DMDave and Alexander LeFort

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PLUG-IN ADVENTURE

As a plug-in adventure, the adventure content serves as drop-in material for game masters who wish to add a dungeon to a preexisting campaign or need a side quest. If you need a hook for this adventure or already have a similar hook, the Salamander Forge Hooks table below offers details for introducing this adventure to your players. If your campaign does not take place in Omeria, of course, feel free to disregard the factions associated with each hook. **Gold Rewards.** To further incentivize the party to travel to the Primordial Forge and defeat the salamanders, the party's patron might offer them a gold reward. If you aren't sure how much to reward the party for completing the adventure, pay them a total of 750 gp per level of the adventure so long as their patron is wealthy enough to afford such a price.

OMERIA PLACEMENT

This adventure is well suited to any volcanic area. In Omeria, these can easily be found in the Peaks of Lament of Aegreya, Mount Fester in Yucraria, the Xenem Dynasty, or the Obsidian Plane.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

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

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

Salamander Forge Hooks

d8	Side Quest Type	Faction	Details
1	Fetch Quest	Company of the Many	The Company has been hired to provide cores of powerful fire elementals to one of their clients. The characters need to travel to the Primordial Forge to learn where to acquire such cores.
2	Recover Stolen Item	Witnesses of the Worm	A salamander named Oothiz recently stole a spear belonging to an Eternal, one of the highest-ranking members of the Witnesses. It was tracked to a dwarven foundry in a volcano. The characters should retrieve its spear and return it to the Witnesses.
3	Receive Information	The Sunken	The Primordial Forge is renowned for creating some of Omeria's most powerful weapons. The Sunken want the characters to explore the forge and discover the secret of the dwarves' power.
4	Rescue Mission	The Circle Unbroken	The Circle has received reports of the Lighted Crucible suddenly ceasing all communications with the outside world. This is highly concerning, and so they engage the characters to rescue the dwarves from whatever made them fall silent.
5	Find a Missing NPC	Bharzal's Blades of Doom	The doomblades had contact with a member of the Lighted Crucible who hasn't reported in recently. They hire the characters to see what's going on over there and find out where this missing member is. If it's too dangerous, the characters do not need to engage and the Blades will assume the worst. (The member did not survive the initial assault on the forge.)
6	Monster Hunt	Dream Enders	The Dream Enders have heard rumors of a dwarven forge being overrun by elementals. It is unclear whether they are connected to Casar's inevitable end, but they hire the characters to slay them just to be safe.
7	Supernatural Investigation	Answers for the Righteous	Recently, diviners of the faction registered a surge of energy connected to planar travel from the Primordial Forge's location. They hire the characters to find out more about this phenomenon.
8	Secure Aid	Gold Fingers on the Iron Hand	The Fingers know that the Forge has quality weapons and smiths. If they were allies, it would make the faction more efficient and deadly, and some quality smiths on their side could make some other jobs much easier. They hire the characters to make contact and figure out what assistance they can offer the dwarves to convince them to ally with the Fingers.

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

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

LEVEL SELECTION

Before play, be sure to know the level at which you wish to run the adventure. Overall, the locations and their descriptions in the adventure remain unchanged throughout the levels. However, most of the encounters, hazards, traps, and treasure scale with each level of the adventure. The keyed locations will present the differences between each level.

Also, the adventure works for more than just the listed levels. If you wish to run this adventure for levels other than 3rd, 5th, 8th, or 11th, the chart below shows you which version of the adventure you should select for each level. A given version of the adventure might be easier or harder for a given party. It's not recommended that you run this adventure for characters with an average party level of less than 3 as it may pose too much of a challenge. Similarly, a party with an average party level of 13 or greater might find the adventure too easy.

Scaling the Adventure

Average Party Level	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
3	3rd-level	Hard
4	3rd-level	Medium
5	5th-level	Hard
6	5th-level	Medium
7	8th-level	Deadly
8	8th-level	Hard
9	8th-level	Medium
10	11th-level	Deadly
11	11th-level	Hard
12	11th-level	Medium



THE PRIMORDIAL FORGE

The Primordial Forge, deep in the heart of the great volcano, is revered by the dwarves. They believe it has been blessed by their deities to produce weapons strongest amongst those forged by mortal hands. It is maintained by the Lighted Crucible, a group of forge clerics who keep the forge running in good condition and receive requests for production from the royal court. Because of the divine nature of the Primordial Forge, requests of its fires and anvils are reserved for special occasions or times of war, so as to not ask too much of the gods.

This has changed, however. A faction of salamanders from the Plane of Fire known as the Kindled Flame had heard of the Primordial Forge and made plans to take it for themselves so they could harness its power for their own weaponry. Led by a salamander named Qothiz, the Kindled Flame needed to dramatically increase their weapons production to serve the needs of the emerging War of 10,000 Embers on the Plane of Fire. They installed a spy amongst the Lighted Crucible and gathered information to coordinate an assault. The salamanders, along with their azer servants, entered the volcano through a planar rift and raided the forge. The assault was a success, as most of the Lighted Crucible were slain and the forge was taken into the hands of the Kindled Flame.

Now, the Primordial Forge has been desecrated as its fires are stoked and its anvils are hammered relentlessly for the benefit of war-mongering invaders.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following features are common throughout all areas of the forge unless otherwise stated and are printed here for ease of reference:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The exterior walls of the forge have been carved out of the basalt of the encompassing volcano. Interior walls are 1 foot thick. Ceilings are 10 feet high.

Doors. All doors are made from heavy stone slabs and are unlocked. They have AC 16 and 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Light. The forge is well-lit throughout by torches mounted in sconces on the walls.

Extreme Heat. The salamanders' overuse of the forge has caused temperatures inside to rise a considerable amount. For every 30 minutes spent inside the forge, creatures not adapted to the heat must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Ambient Hammering. The Kindled Flame makes sure to work all of the forge's anvils at all times. As a result, loud, overlapping hammering sounds echo throughout the forge at all times, masking the sounds of combat.

Azer Smiths. The Kindled Flame has enslaved azer smiths to work the anvils within the Primordial Forge. Azer smiths use **azer** statistics, with the following modifications, making them CR 1:

- ▶ They carry no shields and their AC is 15.
- ▶ They have 13 hit points (2d8 + 4).
- ▶ Their Heated Body trait deals 2 (1d4) fire damage.
- ▶ They wield smithing hammers instead of warhammers that deal 1d4 base damage.



AREAS OF THE PRIMORDIAL FORGE

The following areas are keyed to the map of the Primordial Forge on the next page.

1. VESTIBULE

Double doors open into a vestibule hall lined with ornately carved pillars. Dwarven busts of great warriors are mounted to the north walls. Stone benches and steaming water fountains flank the room's perimeter.

The vestibule hallway continues towards the kitchen area beyond. The fountains are equipped with pumps connected to nearby groundwater in the event of fire-related emergencies. The water in the fountains is currently steaming hot due to the stifling heat of the forge.

Encounter: Forge Guards. The Kindled Flame has posted guards in the vestibule to serve as primary defenses. The guards attack the characters immediately. When only one guard remains, it attempts to flee through the kitchen to warn the occupants of the apprentice forge (area 5). The nature of the guards depends on the level of the adventure, as shown on the table below. The salamander recruit can be found in the Appendix.

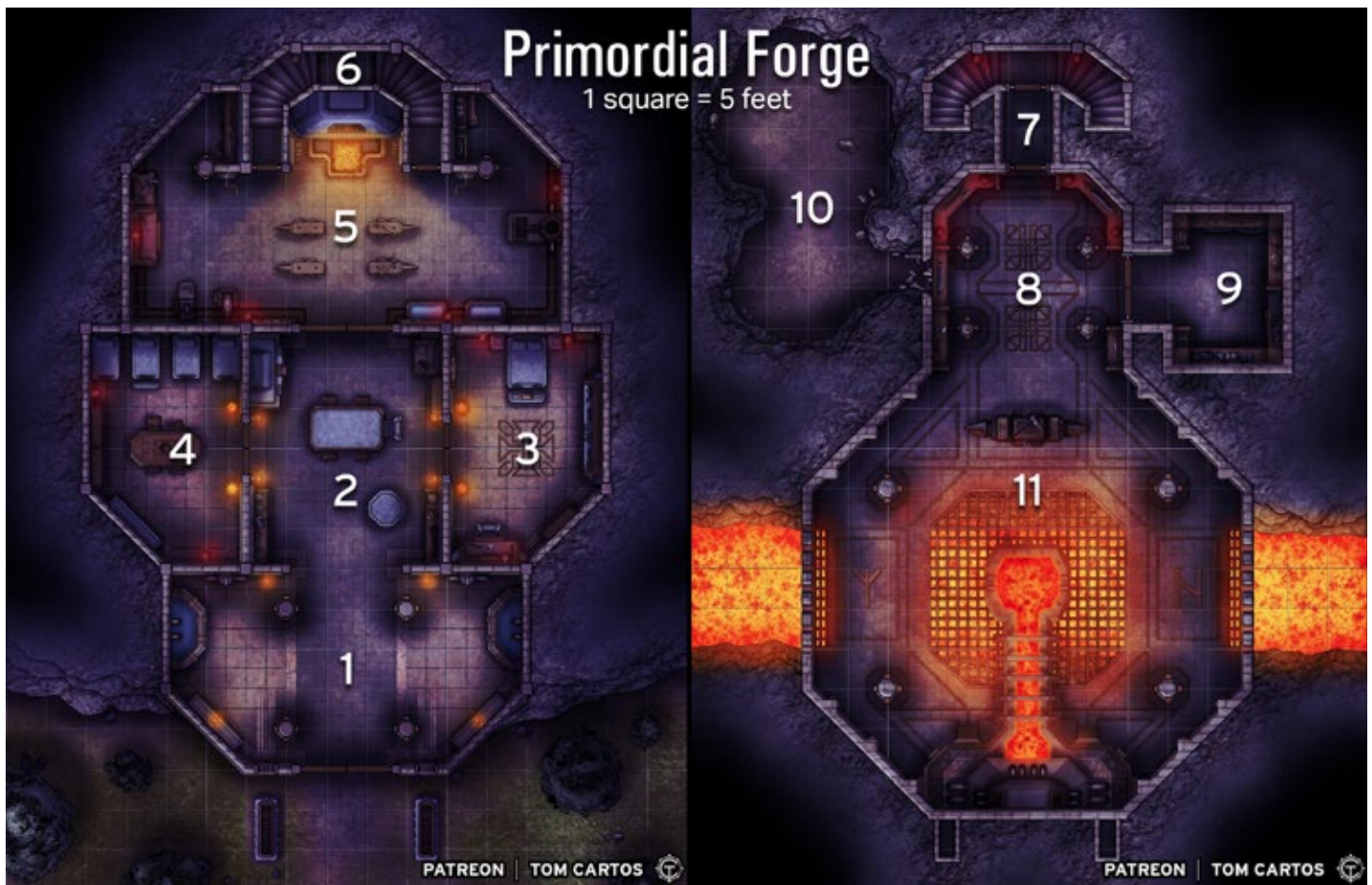
Version	Creatures
3	2 azers
5	1 salamander recruit and 2 azers
8	2 salamanders
11	3 salamanders

2. COMMON AREA

A stone meeting table flanked by chairs fills the middle of this common area. The walls are lined with shelves stacked with cookware and common household items. An oven lines the east wall, its latched door rattling violently as if something has been trapped inside. Doors exit to the north, east, and west.

The Lighted Crucible holds meetings and meals in this room. The Kindled Flame has little use for it during their occupation.

Hazard: Trapped Mephits. A few magma mephits arrived at the forge alongside the salamanders to help serve the Kindled Flame. While helpful initially, the mephits became a disobedient and distracting nuisance, causing one of the salamanders to toss them in the oven as punishment for their disobedience. The mephits are riled up and itching to let loose. If a character unlatches the oven, the mephits burst forth and spew fire in an angry rage. Any



creatures standing in a 15-foot cone in front of the oven must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking full damage on a failed save or half damage on a successful one. The mephits, once released, take little interest in the characters and attempt to flee the forge through its front doors. The number of mephits released, the difficulty of the saving throw, and the damage taken depend on the level of the adventure as shown in the table below.

Trapped Mephits

Version	Number of Mephits	Save DC	Fire Damage
3	2	DC 12	14 (4d6)
5	3	DC 14	21 (6d6)
8	4	DC 16	28 (8d6)
11	6	DC 18	42 (12d6)

3. HIGH CLERIC'S QUARTERS

A king-sized bed, a wardrobe, and a desk fill most of this room. A shelf along the east wall holds items that appear to be of ceremonial or sentimental value, including a horn, abacus, and a soapstone carving of a bear.

These chambers belonged to the High Cleric of the Lighted Crucible. When he isn't actively supervising activities elsewhere within the complex, Qothiz, the leader of the Kindled Flame, holds private meetings with other members within this room as necessary. The items on the east shelf have no significant material value and thus have been ignored by the salamanders.

4. GENERAL QUARTERS

Four stone beds line the north wall of this chamber. Dressers are lined against the east walls and a communal gathering table flanked by four chairs fills the middle of the room. Piled on top of the table and spilling onto the floor surrounding it are bloodied robes, holy books, and discarded weaponry, including maces, warhammers, and daggers.

The Kindled Flame stripped the bodies of the Lighted Crucible members before they disposed of their corpses in the fires of the master forge. They tossed the belongings in this room temporarily, with plans to eventually melt down the weaponry for future crafting.

Duristead's Equipment. The Kindled Flame kept a single occupant of the forge alive: a dwarf named

Duristead, who they chained up in the storage room on the lower level (area 9). A robe, mace, and holy book (which serves as Duristead's spellcasting focus) among the other equipment in this room belong to Duristead and are marked with his initials, D.H. If this equipment is returned to Duristead, the dwarf joins the party to fight alongside the Kindled Flame.

5. APPRENTICE FORGE

Four anvils are arranged in front of an impressive forge nestled in the north wall of this smithy that lights the room with an orange glow. The rest of the space is filled with wash basins, grinding stones, workbenches, and other supplies necessary for production. Weapon racks stocked with spears and glaives of salamander craftsmanship are organized near the east wall. Two doors adjacent to the forge exit to the north.

The dwarves of the Lighted Crucible used this forge to train apprentice smiths before they would be considered skilled enough to work with the Master Forge on the lower level. The Kindled Flame has ensured that both forges remain at maximum capacity at all times to facilitate the fastest production possible. The tools throughout this chamber are of exceptional quality, but ultimately of little other relative value. The weapons produced by the Kindled Flame thus far are similar; high-quality but nonmagical.

Encounter: Kindled Flame Members. If the occupants of this room have not been alerted by the guards posted in the vestibule (area 1), forging continues as salamanders of the Kindled Flame oversee the work of their subjugated azer smiths and ensure that production continues smoothly. If alerted, all occupants of this room attack the party and fight until they are destroyed. The nature of the Kindled Flame members depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. The salamander recruit can be found in the Appendix.

Apprentice Forge Encounter

Version	Creatures
3	1 salamander recruit and 4 azer smiths
5	3 salamander recruits and 4 azer smiths
8	2 salamanders and 4 azer smiths
11	3 salamanders and 4 azer smiths

6. STAIRCASE

This staircase connects the upper and lower levels of the forge. Its walls are covered in relief carvings that depict the line of succession across multiple generations of dwarven rulers.

7. HEAT TRANSFER ROOM

This small connecting chamber is used by the Lighted Crucible to keep the upper levels from getting too hot while the lava in the lower level of the forge flows. The salamanders, however, have left the doors in this chamber open, allowing the heat to move freely throughout the forge.

8. DISPLAY AREA

Empty stone shelves of detailed, patterned craftsmanship line the east, north, and west walls of this room, suggesting a display area that has been emptied of its contents. A pair of double doors exit to the east. To the south, the room widens toward the area of a second great forge.

The dwarves kept a selection of master-crafted weapons of ceremonial value on display in this room. The Kindled Flame collected the weapons and melted them down for components in a callous act of spite against the Lighted Crucible.

Sneaking Around the Lower Level. The display area connects to the storage room, the hatching cavern, and the master forge to the south. The master forge area is populated by the leader of the Kindled Flame, Qothiz, as well as other members who are working the forge. Qothiz and the other Kindled Flame members, however, are distracted by their work and the loud hammering of the anvil. The party can sneak between the hatching cavern, the display area, and the storage room without alerting the Kindled Flame in the master forge with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) group check.

9. STORAGE

Shelves along the perimeter of this room are stocked with ingots, tools, nails, and other smithing supplies. Chained to the middle of the floor is a burly-looking dwarf.

The materials stored in this room are mundane are of little value unless sold in large quantities that would be difficult to transport.

Duristead the Cleric. The lone surviving member of the assault, a cleric named Duristead (LG male dwarf priest), is chained captive in this room. Duristead is a muscular middle-aged dwarf with long braided black hair and a glass eye. The Kindled Flame have been keeping him alive in case they need any of his knowledge of the forge should issues arise. The key to unlocking Duristead's chains hangs on a nail in the north wall. His chains can also be unlocked with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 20 Strength check.



Duristead offers to help the party liberate the forge if his equipment is recovered and can share with them the following information:

- ▶ The Lighted Crucible was caught completely off-guard by the Kindled Flame’s attack; they presume a planar rift must have been opened somewhere nearby within the volcano that brought them to the Material Plane.
- ▶ The salamanders are desecrating the divine nature of the forge by overworking its anvils.
- ▶ Everyone present in the forge when the Kindled Flame attack was killed except for him. The Lighted Crucible fought valiantly and slew a few salamanders, but stood no chance against the superior numbers of the salamanders.
- ▶ The Kindled Flame threw the bodies of the dead into the fires of the Master Forge. Duristead believes that his equipment along with any other valuables taken from other Crucible members is being stored in one of the rooms on the upper level.

10. HATCHING CAVERN

Six spheres of smoldering obsidian, each two feet in diameter, are clustered together on a bed of hot coals at the north end of this hollowed-out cavern. Pickaxes, chisels, and other excavating tools are littered about near the south wall.

The Kindled Flame hollowed out this cavern shortly after their arrival to use it as a place to incubate

some of their eggs. They have plans to continue excavations to allow for the cavern to eventually be expanded into general living quarters.

Encounter: Egg Supervisors. The Kindled Flame keeps guards here to continue excavation efforts of the cavern and to watch over the eggs, which need to have their coals replaced with ones fresh from the forge every hour. The guards attack the characters immediately. When only one guard remains, it attempts to flee to warn the Kindled Flame members in the Master Forge area (area 11). The nature of the guards depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. The salamander recruit can be found in the Appendix.

Hatching Cavern Encounter

Version	Creatures
3	2 azers
5	1 salamander recruit and 2 azers
8	2 salamanders
11	3 salamanders

11. MASTER FORGE

A forge, grand in size and carved with decorative dwarven script, looms large at the far end of this chamber, radiating a thick wave of heat. A trough filled with bubbling magma extends out from the forge over a grated opening in the middle of the room, underneath which is more magma that runs through a channel in the rock below. In front of the trough is a massive anvil trimmed with gold. Weapon racks against the walls are lined with more salamander weaponry.

The Lighted Crucible used this forge only in sanctioned circumstances so as not to offend the gods by which the forge was blessed. The Kindled Flame cares little for the supposedly divine properties of the Master Forge; they use it just the same as they would any other forge to produce weapons as quickly as possible.

Encounter: Qothiz and Minions. The leader of the Kindled Flame, a brawny salamander named Qothiz, oversees the smithing at this forge. Azer smiths toil away at the anvil and trough without rest, fighting in support of the salamanders upon the orders of Qothiz. If Qothiz is slain, the other creatures in the room attempt to flee or surrender, promising to return to the Plane of Fire. Qothiz’s statistics and the nature of his minions depend on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. The salamander recruit can be found in the Appendix.

Version	Creatures
3	Qothiz uses salamander recruit statistics. He is joined by 1 additional salamander recruit and 2 azer smiths
5	Qothiz uses salamander statistics. He is joined by 1 salamander recruit and 2 azer smiths
8	Qothiz uses salamander statistics. He is joined by 1 additional salamander and 2 azer smiths
11	Qothiz uses salamander statistics. He is joined by 2 additional salamanders and 3 azer smiths

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the characters successfully free the Primordial Forge from the Kindled Flame, their patron or faction will pay them the agreed upon reward. As long as Duristead survives, he will rebuild the Lighted Crucible over the next few months. Grateful to the characters for their assistance, he will offer to craft or upgrade one item per character each. At level 3 and 5, this is likely to be a *weapon +1* or *armor +1*, or a *weapon +2* or *armor +2* at level 8 and 11, but feel free to customize the blessing according to your party. A weapon forged here might deal an additional 1d6 fire damage on a hit, or armor could grant resistance to fire. Due to its sacred nature, Duristead will not take smithing commissions after the initial gift. However, if the characters require a powerful weapon against a major villain later, this may constitute the gods' will in the dwarf's eyes. Ω

Salamander Recruit

Medium elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Damage Vulnerabilities cold

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Ignan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Heated Body. A creature that touches the salamander or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Heated Weapons. Any metal melee weapon the salamander wields deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage on a hit (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The salamander makes two attacks: one with its spear and one with its tail.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) fire damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the salamander can't use its tail on another target.



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