

APPENDIX F: ADDITIONAL RUMORS

Tales of the legendary Barrier Peaks have circulated for centuries, passing from person to person and town to town across the length and breadth of the land—and the only one who knows the full truth of those tales is you. None of the following rumors connect directly to this adventure. But you can use them as alternative false rumors for the “Rumors and Legends” section, or as true inspiration for side treks and new adventures.

ADDITIONAL BARRIER PEAKS RUMORS

d100 Rumor

- 1 An ancient castle lies buried in the foothills of the Barrier Peaks. Hidden somewhere in its vaults are a *suit of invisibility* and a *ring of teleportation*!
- 2 A group of charitable drow who worship Bahamut have taken refuge in the Barrier Peaks. They are said to help travelers in need.
- 3 Legend tells of a cave inhabited by minotaur shamans that have fled the command of Baphomet, and that seek to free all their people from the demon lord's control. Those that bring them the knowledge and supplies they require are rewarded with gold and gemstones.
- 4 They say shadar-kai appear from time to time in those mountains, kidnapping aloof adventurers for the Raven Queen.
- 5 The Tharguard dwarves of the Barrier Peaks were powerful smiths. Channeling magic within their forges, they crafted the finest weapons in the land—until they vanished centuries ago. Recently, though, the clamor of hammer on anvil has been heard in remote chasms in the peaks once again. The Tharguard have returned, but no one knows why.
- 6 A dead god was buried beneath the Barrier Peaks eons ago. The blood of this god permeates the stone of the mountains, and its magic is channeled by the flora and fauna of the peaks.
- 7 Hunters have found wildlife in the Barrier Peaks slain by the precise burn marks of magic. Whatever creature is killing these beasts, it has no need for food or trophies, as the carcasses are simply left to rot.
- 8 On nights of the full moon, airships piloted by lycanthropes roam the mountain passes of the peaks, looking for travelers to infect and add to their savage crews.
- 9 Folk foraging for truffles near the base of the Barrier Peaks swear they saw three metal golems marching abreast, set with glowing red eyes that shot fire, and levitating over any obstacle in their path.
- 10 There ain't nothing good in them mountains, I can tell you that much. I've heard that magic works wrong up there, and every few weeks, some unseen cave belches out a new monstrosity hungering for flesh.

d100 Rumor

- 11 Lightning struck one of the Barrier Peaks, bringing it to life. Though it's still rooted in the soil, a maw-like cave entrance now howls in frustration in the Primordial tongue.
- 12 It's claimed that one of the Barrier Peaks rises so high, it tore a hole in the sky, allowing elemental creatures of air to enter this world.
- 13 The Barrier Peaks are said to house a vile laboratory, capable of reanimating undead that are immune to a cleric's holy power.
- 14 A family of space harasters is looking for their long-lost child up in those mountains. Those otherworldly creatures won't rest until they're reunited.
- 15 I've heard tell of a terrible warrior who roams the Barrier Peaks—a beast of a man trapped in a suit of armor with gleaming golden eyes, and which spits fire and lightning from strange metallic wands. The only way to escape him is to put a body of water between the two of you, as he won't cross it.
- 16 Children speak of a ten-fingered raven that flies down from the peaks to open doors and whisper nightmares into the dark.
- 17 The owlbears that prowl the slopes of the Barrier Peaks are not what they seem.
- 18 A glowing dragon has crawled out from the roots of the Barrier Peaks. It searches now for an artifact that might save the creatures that live off its light.
- 19 Deep within the valleys of the Barrier Peaks grows an ancient fungus sought by a sect of mad druids. If they find it, they believe it will help them destroy the cities of the civilized races.
- 20 The tarrasque slumbers beneath the Barrier Peaks, and none know when the great beast might stir.
- 21 I've heard tell of an order of knights running a way station up in the Barrier Peaks. They promise rest and respite to anyone trying to cross the mountains. But most folks never make it to the other side.
- 22 There's a town of civilized mice somewhere in the peaks, where you can get a magic sword in trade for a cup of milk. Of course, the sword is the size of a needle, but any tailor will pay you good coin for it.
- 23 An old kenku who can interpret dreams and has knowledge of the future hides out in a cavern in the foothills of the peaks.
- 24 On some nights, a burst of yellow-white light flashes up above the peaks, visible for miles. Once in a while, a beam of emerald green descends from the heavens to the same spot.
- 25 There's something peculiar about a pool a few days' trek into the mountains. Magical trinkets and treasures have their effects amplified if submerged in it even a little while, but nothing good seems to come to anyone who wields that magic.

d100 Rumor

- 26 A large, finely crafted metal elk roams the Barrier Peaks. It's a phylactery gone rogue, and the souls consumed by the lich that crafted it can converse with those that stumble across it.
- 27 Beneath the Barrier Peaks lies a vast maze patrolled by undead minotaurs.
- 28 They say there's a cave in one of the high passes that even the gods can't see inside. But if you leave a silver piece at the entrance every sunset for a year and a day, you'll be granted a wish.
- 29 There's a strange curse or hex up in those peaks, and people who wander there should be wary. First, they get real tired and can't keep food down to save them. After a fortnight at the most, any cuts or scrapes don't mend right. It's not long after that they fall into a sleep and never wake up.
- 30 There's an ancient book hidden in a library in the peaks. Anything you write in that book, no matter how big or small, comes true in this world in the end.
- 31 One adventurer I heard of came back safe from an expedition to the Barrier Peaks—then promptly grew extra arms, turned purple, and lost his ability to speak. Folks say that the monsters in the peaks are all made that way. Adventurers transformed into beasts from the other realms by a curse that not even the most devoted clerics can heal.
- 32 In ages past, a star fell from the heavens and crashed within the Barrier Peaks. The first expedition to reach the site of this fallen star died inside a strange maze made of metal and light, guarded by golems with unnatural cunning.
- 33 A bizarre combination of beholder and flumph is said to float through the caves of the mountains, its eye rays inducing laughter and generosity . . . or turning one into a squirrel. What mad wizard would create such a thing?
- 34 Silent metal spheres lurk in the subterranean depths of the mountains, following adventurers who explore those depths.
- 35 Within a cave in a secluded valley, time twists and distorts. Travelers have returned from that place with stories of their companions frozen motionless for long minutes, or of repeating the same actions many times over before managing to escape.
- 36 In a mysterious village in the Barrier Peaks foothills, the inhabitants slaughter one another to the last each night. Yet the next day dawns with all the villagers alive, as if nothing had happened.
- 37 A beholder is trapped within a cavern of the mountains, as the result of some strange draw from a *deck of many things*. To pass the time, the creature stages plays with the monsters and prisoners it keeps.
- 38 The strangest noises come rumbling down from the Barrier Peaks at times. Screeches and howls, and enormous echoing thumps. It's enough to give a person the shudders.

d100 Rumor

- 39 Some say those peaks are so sharp that the gods cut their feet on them. That's why the rivers of the mountains run red every few years.
- 40 Some fool claimed that goblins kidnapped him and his cattle from the foothills of the Barrier Peaks, dragged them high up into the mountains—and then let them all go back home again like nothing had happened.
- 41 Strange metallic constructs haunt the Barrier Peaks, and only one wizard is said to have discovered the secret of controlling them.
- 42 A metal-walled cave in the mountains is sealed behind a magic door that opens and closes whenever a worthy traveler draws near. But who judges those travelers' worthiness, none can say.
- 43 A horrible whispering can be heard up in the mountains. Folks claim it's the ghosts of ancient explorers, trying to entice others into joining them in death.
- 44 The Barrier Peaks are home to an ancient league of aboleths, whose members conspire to punch a hole to the Far Realm in the fabric of reality.
- 45 A mysterious armored beholder roams the caverns of the Barrier Peaks, silent in its execution of all who intrude into its realm. Its eyestalks send forth rays of light that shine out suddenly in the darkness—and turn creatures they catch into dust!
- 46 A mysterious order of monks guards a lone keep high in the Barrier Peaks, said to imprison an immortal knight.
- 47 Old Otus came through town the other day, needing fresh supplies. He said huge frogs with tentacles ate his camp! Can ye believe that?
- 48 Beneath the Barrier Peaks is an ancient iron god once worshiped by the gnomes. Inside its metal form reside nightmarish creatures without souls.
- 49 Adventurers that have returned recently from the Barrier Peaks have lost the ability to talk about their emotions. Whenever they attempt to, they are simply struck dumb.
- 50 A group of rats that once belonged to a demented wizard have formed a tiny village within one of the lower crags of the Barrier Peaks. If you hear singing and the clinking of tiny mugs on a windless night, you'll know you're close.
- 51 Folk dwelling in the foothills of the peaks have been caught wandering as if in a trance into the mountains. When rescued, all reported the same thing: a long, bony finger beckoned them into the darkness, where writhing tendrils waited to snatch them up.
- 52 In more than one spot within the peaks, a strange hum emits from the earth without warning, and anything smaller than a fist begins to float a few inches off the ground.

d100 Rumor

- 53 My brother's best friend's uncle got lost up in the high trails of the peaks, swearing up and down that he'd fallen through a wall of wind and found a garden behind it full of strange plants. We all thought he was half mad, but he had the weirdest blue vine growing through the soles of his boots. We had to burn it off, and I tell you, that plant screamed.
- 54 A rare type of creature escaped a wizard's tower in the Barrier Peaks, resembling tiny plant people. Their bodies have begun washing up in the foothill rivers, still clutching little spears.
- 55 Somewhere deep within the peaks lies the lost tower of Mundar, named after a gnome wizard who loved children and created many magnificent magical toys. Those who claim to have found the tower tell tales of giant teddy bears and toy soldiers that guard against those who would ransack its workshop.
- 56 Even the best trackers are afraid of those mountains. They'll tell you that if you count the number of peaks before dark and make the same count the next morning, you'll never get the same number.
- 57 The Barrier Peaks house a guild of cunning gnomes, who love to test their creations on the settlements in the foothills below.
- 58 A sage dwelling in the foothills of the peaks was found dead, the top of her head cut off and her brain cleanly removed. Then a hunter returned from the high mountains says he saw a scuttling, crab-like monster there, with a brain floating in a transparent blister atop its head.
- 59 A farmer says he saw a metal humanoid wandering through the foothills while he was tending his sheep. The thing was screaming at the top of its lungs, babbling in some language he couldn't make out. It threw fire from its fingertips when it spotted him, and he says he was lucky to get away alive.
- 60 Folks say that when the spring warmth melts the snow on the Barrier Peaks, strange metal objects are washed downriver and eaten by fish. The halflings call this season "Fisher's Fortune" in their small river villages in the foothills.
- 61 It's said that the spirits of twin children haunt the Barrier Peaks—poor tykes who froze to death looking to pick flowers for their mother. Each seeks the other now, lost forever and begging strangers for aid. Tales talk of how one spirit will lead explorers to safety, while the other guarantees malicious calamity.
- 62 A few folks have reported seeing strange lights just above the peaks. Some claim they're the work of occultists performing diabolical rituals, while others say they're lost souls trying to lure folks to their doom.
- 63 The tarrasque dwells within the deepest caverns of the Barrier Peaks—but the creature is undead, held in a perpetual state of decay.

d100 Rumor

- 64 Rumors tell of an iron fortress nestled deep within the Barrier Peaks. No one knows how it got there, but some histories tell of how it appeared about the same time that a comet crashed into the mountains. The gods delivered this fortress, some say, and no mortal can enter without their permission.
- 65 A small group of humans and dwarves went into the Barrier Peaks seeking archeological finds. News was promising at first, including reports of a cave that held artifacts from ages long past, and the remains of creatures unlike anything ever discovered before. Then all word from the expedition suddenly ceased . . .
- 66 Symbols appear in the Barrier Peaks, scribed into the deepest caves and on the highest mountains alike. These glyphs glow and pulse, and come from no language ever spoken by mortals.
- 67 An old roc's nest clings to one of the higher slopes of the Barrier Peaks, with an old iron footlocker hidden within it. A reclusive mystic is said to have stored secretive writings in that chest, behind powerful magic wards.
- 68 Some sort of frog-god fell from the skies an aeon ago, and it waits now for one worthy enough to carry its religion to the world. Whoever finds this being and bows before it will become a demigod, leading the world into a new age of prosperity and order.
- 69 One of the highest of the Barrier Peaks has mysteriously lost its snowpack. No snow clings to its crags now, even in the middle of winter.
- 70 A trading caravan traveling through the Barrier Peaks returned without any of its merchants. All the pack animals and supplies were accounted for, none the worse for wear—except the caravan had lost every trace it carried of silk or cloth.
- 71 I've heard tales of a haunted monastery up in the peaks. Something about vengeful dead coming down to steal corpses, and taking them back to their forsaken abode.
- 72 No, it's not all woe and misery in the Barrier Peaks. There's a lost tavern up there, filled with perfectly preserved dwarven ale from the past millennia.
- 73 I've heard an old woman sometimes appears on the trails of the peaks, staring at you with huge black eyes. She might offer you some berries to eat, but those who take one are never heard from again!
- 74 A swarm of rust monsters wanders up in those mountains. Hundreds of them. Maybe thousands. What kind of metal they're finding up there to let them sustain those numbers, no one knows.
- 75 All this talk about yetis in the Barrier Peaks is just a rumor. I say there's a pack of wizards pretending to be yetis, trying to scare folks away from the peaks' real secret!

d100 Rumor

- 76 In ages past, the gods cast a flaming star down upon the Barrier Peaks. And all the time since, the peaks have been infected with horrors too shocking to fathom.
- 77 A mummy lord resides in an ancient tomb of the Barrier Peaks, guarding a huge treasure that once belonged to a family of vampire slayers.
- 78 Most kobolds are mere nuisances. But the members of the Brightclaw Clan of the Barrier Peaks wield strange metal crossbows that hum and glow with esoteric symbols. I saw my dwarf guide disintegrated by a red beam emitted from one of those unnatural magical things!
- 79 An ancient deity dwells within the Barrier Peaks, and speaks to its followers only in dreams. Those who meet this deity become blessed with eyes that glow in different colors, depending on who they speak to and what they say.
- 80 Somewhere within the Barrier Peaks, a massive city built into the cliffs is populated by a society of aarakocra and genasi. These creatures guard a passage into the Elemental Plane of Air, aided by tamed elementals.
- 81 A vault full of strange flying devices is hidden within the Barrier Peaks—and rumors say that a dragon has recently claimed the place.
- 82 A lost temple of the storm god is said to be hidden in the Barrier Peaks, and is home to a magical gem that can control the weather. Countless of the god's faithful have made expeditions to seek the site—and none have ever returned.
- 83 A sheer wall of ice at the height of the Barrier Peaks has a surface that is marred by peculiar shapes. Tales tell that those shapes are magical molds through which creatures of elemental cold are spawned.
- 84 The top of one of the Barrier Peaks is fake. An illusion! Tales tell of a village up there, populated by halflings who love the cold.
- 85 I heard there be rabbit-men in the peaks, with spears that throw fire.
- 86 Caverns abound in the Barrier Peaks that are filled with rubies—all of them crystallized out of the blood of innocents and cursed to bring an early death to those that carry them.
- 87 The entire range of the Barrier Peaks is actually the ribs of some great, sleeping skeletal beast. Those quakes that tremble through the mountains from time to time? That's it starting to wake up. It's coming.
- 88 People know the Barrier Peaks but often forget what it is they were named for. Those mountains make a protective wall guarding civilized lands from the nightmares and dark magic that spawn on their far side. And every time some explorer cuts a new trail across the peaks, that barrier weakens.

d100 Rumor

- 89 Folk talk about the Barrier Peaks as home to wraiths and other apparitions, but I say those mountains are a laboratory for the mind flyers. I've walked those trails. I've heard the blood-curdling screams that come from deep within those mountains. And I've seen the empty look in those that survive the journey to the peaks and back.
- 90 On a stormy day, elemental power surges in the Barrier Peaks, and the clouds between the mountains become thick enough to walk on.
- 91 A cabal of gnome mages built an arcane engine in the Barrier Peaks meant to open up a gate to another world.
- 92 Metal creatures up in the higher passes of the peaks make strange musical sounds. But most of those who investigate that music never return to talk of it.
- 93 The higher reaches of the Barrier Peaks stay frozen even into summer. Digging in these spots can turn up the corpses of explorers who died there, along with all their gear—and the spirits of those angry dead.
- 94 I once heard a loudmouth explorer show off what they called a "power coin" in an adventurer's tavern. It looked like blue glass to me, but they swore it could charge up magical devices.
- 95 Somewhere deep in a cave in the Barrier Peaks flows a waterfall of molten gold.
- 96 A deranged transmuter had a secret lab somewhere in the Barrier Peaks, folk say. No one's found it yet—but adventurers have spotted a creature in the mountains partway between a sloth and a porcupine, attacking with razor sharp claws and poisoned quills.
- 97 Many of the stones in the Barrier Peaks are hollow, and those stones sing their secret knowledge during storms. Those songs can lead discerning listeners to hidden treasures . . . or unseen dangers.
- 98 A hidden glade of petrified trees in the Barrier Peaks is tended by a stone giant dreamwalker.
- 99 Some say the paths and tunnels of the Barrier Peaks take weeks or months to traverse, while others claim to navigate the same routes in mere days. Stranger still, charting your route in the peaks is most unreliable. Many's the explorer that's used stars and compass to plot a course, only to find themselves back at the beginning edge of the place where the trip began.
- 100 The Soul Catcher, they call it. Its victims stagger out of the Barrier Peaks with nary a scratch on their bodies, but their hearts aren't right anymore. The lucky ones are caught by the healers and confined to places where they can't hurt anyone. The ones who aren't so lucky . . . Well, you tell me. What would you call an adventurer who can't feel the slightest tinge of remorse or guilt or fear?