



Digging Deeper

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The party has been hired by a group of miners in the small, unincorporated community of Mining Town, located in the mountains west of Melanoc. Three workers have disappeared in the mines in the past month, and they believe that a snake-like beast called the Grootslang is to blame.

Since the Bronzebeard clan, who own the mines, has refused to do anything about it, the workers have pooled their money and hired the party to hunt down and slay this creature. Alternatively, if the heroes have completed the adventure in the *Age of Ambition: Quick-Start*, they might be assigned this task by the Legion.

The Real Story

The truth is that there is no Grootslang.

As an unincorporated community, Mining Town has no mayor, no municipal council and no mining laws. The workers want to change this. Led by a miner named Golsa, they've started organizing a petition that they plan to send to the ruling council in Melanoc, demanding that the council issue Mining Town a writ of incorporation.

The Bronzebeard clan opposes incorporation. Without a municipal authority, their word is de facto law, and they can operate the mines however they please. Since this means generally unsafe working conditions, they have no desire to have an outside authority get involved.

The Golem

The lowest levels of the local mine have a problem with flooding. Water slowly seeps in through cracks in the rock, rendering them unworkable. This has become a bigger issue recently, as the upper levels of the mine are increasingly tapped out.

To combat the flooding, a pump has been installed in the mines, allowing the water to be removed. Unfortunately, the pump must be worked almost around the clock for the lowest levels to be accessible.

A month ago, the Bronzebeards purchased a discount golem from a shady merchant named Ye. They had this golem work the pumps, and at first it was an astounding success! The miners were able to delve deeper than ever before. But that's when the disappearances began.

The Overseer

The man who oversees the mines is an ill-tempered fellow named Turan Azaldi. While not truly part of the Bronzebeard clan, he nevertheless represents their interests in the mine's day-to-day operations. These days he also spends a lot of time standing next to the golem complaining. No one else has the patience to hear him out.

The primary subject of Turan's complaints is his disapproval of the workers' attempt to petition for the town's incorporation. Although he didn't know it at first, the golem was listening.

The Disappearances

The first miner to disappear was an older worker named Sam. He had been attempting to collect signatures (or marks, for the illiterate) supporting incorporation during the day's short lunch break. Turan caught him doing this and sent him back into the mines early as punishment. The overseer ranted and raved to the golem before he left the mines to take his own lunch break. No one ever saw Sam again.

A week later the second miner disappeared after Turan assigned her the night shift for making a speech in favor of incorporation. By the time the third miner disappeared a few days after that, Turan had started to realize what was going on. Every time he'd rant to the golem about a miner, the worker would never be seen again.

Quietly, he approached the Bronzebeards with this information. They assured him that he shouldn't worry too much about it. They would get an expert kalid mage to come fix the golem... eventually. In the meantime, all he had to do was to cover up the disappearances.

To cover it all up, Turan started the rumors about the Grootslang. He expected it to only be half taken seriously. Instead, the workers became terrified. His plan backfired when they pooled their money and hired an outside party to hunt the creature down.

Enter the Party

When they first arrive in Mining Town, the party will be greeted by Golsa. She's a short but burly miner who spends much of her day hauling ore. Golsa will introduce herself, greet the party warmly and give the heroes a tour while explaining the situation. Make sure to mention the following:

- ☞ Three miners have disappeared in the past month. All three were last seen in the mines.
- ☞ Turan Azaldi, the mine overseer, tried to suggest that the missing miners simply quit their jobs and left Mining Town without telling anyone, but she knew all three; they wouldn't do that.
- ☞ Rumors about a snake-like beast called the Grootslang have started circulating and the miners are terrified. Neither the Bronzebeard clan, nor the overseer, are willing to do anything about it.
- ☞ The workers have pooled their money and can offer the party 15 bp, which is bit below the usual rate for such work. A successful **Chr/persuade vs. Det/persuade** flip, however, can talk Golsa up to 20 bp, provided the party is willing to put in a good word about Mining Town's incorporation
- ☞ While giving the party the tour, she'll make sure to point out some of the unsafe working conditions, explain the petition to incorporate and also note the new golem who stands just inside the mines, silently working the pump. The rhythmic sound of its pumping echos throughout the tunnels.

Speaking With the Overseer

If the party loiters in Mining Town, they will be approached by Turan Azaldi. He will ask about their business and say that the workers are “prone to flights of fancy.” He’s sure the missing workers simply quit.

Regardless, he will offer the party 20 bp if come to him first with whatever they find and then keep any dangers secret. He will explain that the Bronzebeards want to maintain the mine’s good reputation. If the party turns down Turan’s offer, they will have made an enemy.

✦ Turan Azaldi uses the Engineer stats found on page 289 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

Exploring the Mines

The heroes can explore the mines at their leisure. Some sections are still active and filled with workers going about their daily tasks. Other parts have been mined out and now sit largely abandoned. No one is willing to enter the lowest level, where they believe the Grootslang lives.

The GM is free to turn the mines into a mini-dungeon, but the story only progresses when they explore the lowest level.

Some challenges they may face include:

- ✦ Some tunnels may be filled with poison gas (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 275).
- ✦ If the party made an enemy of Turan, he may try to collapse a tunnel behind them (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 270).

The Lowest Level

The lowest level of the mines is filled with about 2 in. (5 cm) of water. At the end of an abandoned tunnel, the bodies of all three missing miners stick up above the water’s surface.

- ✦ Heroes investigating the bodies may make either a **Per/medicine-10** or **Per/investigate-10** flip. Regardless of success or failure, they will note that the miners died from repeated blunt trauma. The wounds are not consistent with the bite of a snake or giant beetle. Heroes who fail, will be distracted when the giant beetles attack (see below).
- ✦ Several giant subterranean beetles lurk in the tunnels nearby, attracted by the scent of the decomposing bodies. They will attack while the heroes investigate. There are a number of beetles equal to the number of PCs. They use the stats below.

Giant Beetle							
Str	Dex	Spd	End	Int	Per	Chr	Det
5	6	5	6	1	6	5	5
Atk	Def	Will	Arm	HP	Move	Size	Luck
7	6	5	4/2	10	8	-1	5

Mandibles: +7 vs. Defense (7/6/5/4/3 pi).

♥♦: The target takes an extra 3 corrosive damage.

Bestial: See the core rulebook, page 284.

Burrow: See the core rulebook, page 285.

Tracking Down the Culprit

Other clues as to the fate of the three miners are waiting to be found. Eventually they should lead the party back to the overseer and the golem. Some potential clues are noted below:

- ✦ Several large footprints can be found on the lowest level of the mine, where the ground rises about the water level. These prints are too large to belong to any of the miners; they match the golem.
- ✦ Questioning the miners will reveal that just before each disappearance, the mine went totally silent. Observant characters will note that this means the golem stopped pumping water.
- ✦ If all else fails, on the second day, Golsa will be sent into the mine early as punishment for organizing the miners. This gives the heroes a chance to catch the golem red-handed!

Confronting the Overseer

If the team reveals to Turan that they know the golem is responsible, he will want the party silenced. This means commanding the golem to attack, but persuasive heroes might be able to talk their way out of a fight.

- ✦ Convincing Turan that they will remain silent calls for a social challenge (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 190).
- ✦ Turan Azaldi uses the Engineer stats found on page 289 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. The golem uses the stats below.

Defective Stone Golem

Str	Dex	Spd	End	Int	Per	Chr	Det
13	4	5	9	3	5	5	8
Atk	Def	Will	Arm	HP	Move	Size	Luck
3	5	6	5/5	22	6	0	5

Slam: +3 🟢 vs. Defense (12/11/10/9/8 sm).

♥♦: The target gains a Dazed consequence.

Construct: See the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 285.

Word of Animation: A golem is animated by a mystic word written on a slip of paper and wrapped around a kalid part. This is strapped to its forehead and can be targeted with a Called Shot (see the core rulebook, page 162). On a critical hit, the word is removed and the golem ceases to be animated.

Loose Ends

If word gets out that the Bronzebeards were covering up for a murderous golem, this would be a significant blow to their influence.

- ✦ Players who want make a change in the world can leverage the complicitness of the overseer and the Bronzebeards to place a “Support for Mining Town Incorporation” consequence. Once three of these are placed, the council will issue a writ.
- ✦ Characters looking for money or favors, on the other hand, can hush up the whole incident to gain a Favor from the Bronzebeards.
- ✦ Engineer characters may want invent a mechanical steam pump to replace the golem and ensure that this never happens again.