

# The Forgekey Room

**Creator's Note:** This is an encounter designed for four, 11-12 level characters as part of a larger dungeon. It's my first attempt at releasing an encounter for others to use (or pull pieces from) so if you have suggestions or questions, feel free to reach out to me at [jtreff@alberonrpg.com](mailto:jtreff@alberonrpg.com)!

Dimensions: 50'x35' (rectangle)

Floors: 5'x5' square iron panels. On the 4' raised section on the northern end of the room, these panels have 2" solid iron edges and heavy iron mesh over a reinforcing 'X' brace. Beneath is water that flows slowly from a natural spring, though it currently boils from the temperature of the overloading Forgekey.

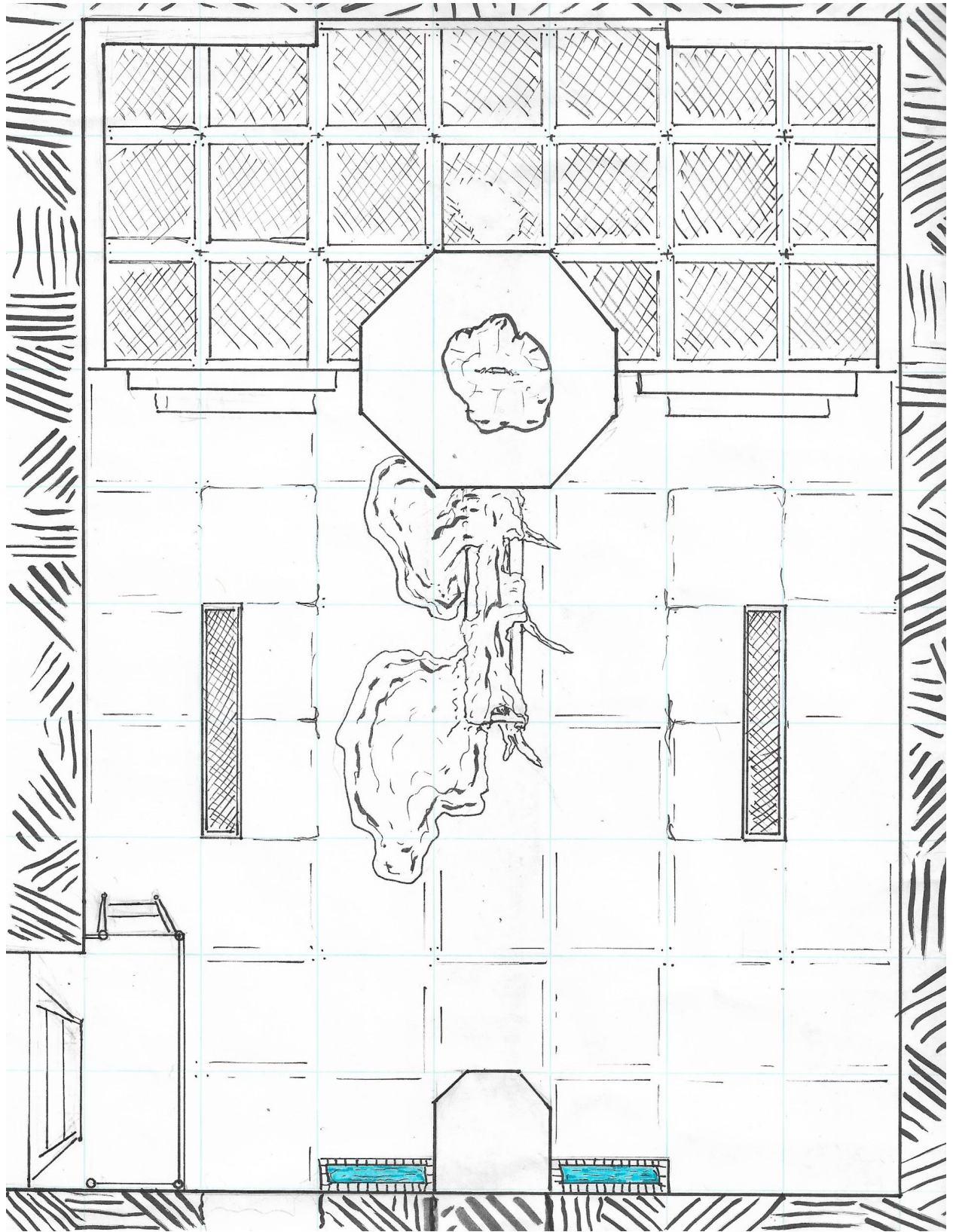
Walls: 14' tall natural stone, chiseled in to give it the facade of bricks.

Ceilings: Natural stone with three 3' wide beams of steel to provide further structural support. Every 10', a thin chain hangs down, designed to suspend a lantern.

## Setting

The Forgekey room was used by an artificer and their most trusted apprentices to power a forge with elemental magma. Here, they designed the first azers. The river that flows beneath the room acts as a heat-sink, but causes the room to be *lightly obscured* by warm mist at all times. In the world of Alberon, it is on the third level of Dinman's Ward, a sealed-off section with access in the Silver Ring of the dwarven citadel of Kol Taram, itself located in Northern Dominion.

It would make sense for this place to be in a dungeon inhabited by azers, or other automata; It could also be a hidden section of a castle that once provided heat and hot water for a sprawling castle-complex, that has been opened after several hundred years for the first time only to discover that the sword, the power source, is acting strangely. Or, it could simply be another piece in a collector's museum, overloading the housing that requires an expensive, or hard to obtain magical component to repair.



## Important Features

Aside from the various aspects of the physical room itself, there are specific aspects of the room that bear mechanical consideration, as follows:

**Southwestern Entrance.** The entrance is a steel door on the southwestern corner of the map, and enters onto a 5' wide 10' platform with wrought-iron rails. From there, a six-foot standing ladder is used to descend to the floor.

**Elemental Water Basins.** On either side of the doorway, are basins of polished cobalt-blue granite that run 5' long and 1.5' wide. This stone (called Deepweeper Granite) is from the Elemental Plane of Water, and slowly drips with elemental water from the un-polished interior. Each contains 40 gallons of water and can refill one gallon a day. The water is always cool, potable, and slightly sweet-tasting.

**Floor Drains.** In the middle of the room are two 10' long by 1.5' wide steel grates that are designed to burn away should fire erupt, slowing the overflow of the room to allow for evacuation. Should a creature standing on a space with a drain take force, bludgeoning, thunder, or fire damage, the drain will burn away or collapse. That creature must make a DC:14 dexterity saving throw, or fall prone as their leg collapses into the rushing waters below, yanking them to the ground.

**Overflowing Elemental Magma.** Magma is slowly oozing from the trough in the center of the room, it's elemental nature causing it to cool far less quickly than it normally would. A creature that touches or begins it's turn in this magma takes 10d10 fire damage. This lava works as normal, and is extremely hard to take, however if removed from the trough, it wont cool for 30 days.

**Forgekey Housing.** This octagonal structure of gray stone rises up into a dome that nearly touches the ceiling, giving it the appearance of a large silo. The stone is a foot thick, and lined on the inside with lead. As the Forgekey has grown unstable in its containment field, it has slowly burned away to top of the housing allowing it to be accessible from the top. There is a 6' tall opening, 10" wide, that allows access to the Forgekey from the front (and allows the magma that drips from the blade to ooze out and into the trough.) The entire structure is hot. Touching the exterior stone results in 1d6 fire damage.

**The Forgekey.** This dwarven sword is an artifact of the early third age of Alberon, and was originally designed both as a weapon of defense, and as a power source for the Cold Forge, a magical forge that could be used to craft unique weapons with it's cold fire. This sword has a blackened, 30" long, double-edged blade that has negative space forged into each edge to create a scythe-like hook just before

the tip. The handle is composed of black iron bars that have been geometrically fused into two twisted lines to form the crossguard. The pommel is not whole; it is an empty loop, like the eye of a needle, but broader, more of a proper circle, large enough to put your first through. The entire form is of a uniform, gleaming black metal. The handle has no wrap. Also oddly, beneath the wicked double blade, elemental lava seems to also drift away from the blade and then up, toward the ceiling before seeming to fizzle away into nothing.

**Forgekey.** Very rare longsword (requires attunement.)

*You gain +2 to attack and bonus rolls made with this magic weapon. It has the following additional properties:*

**Living Forge:** While attuned to The Forge Key, you are considered proficient with smith's tools. Additionally, The Forge Key counts as both a forge and anvil for purposes of using smithing tools to craft or repair items.

**Dragonslayer:** When you hit a dragon with this weapon, the dragon takes an extra 3d6 damage. For the purpose of this weapon, "dragon" refers to any creature with the dragon type, including dragon turtles and wyverns.

**Elemental Fire:** Damage dealt by this weapon is considered fire damage.

**Cloak of Embers:** As a bonus action, you can summon a black cloak that smolders with red-hot elemental fire. This cloak sheds a dim light in a 10-foot radius. It will destroy any non-magical cloak that is currently worn. While the cloak is active, you have advantage on intimidation checks against creatures that can see you, and creatures that are vulnerable to fire damage roll attacks against you at disadvantage.

**Investitures of Flame:** (Once per Day) Flames race across your body, shedding bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet for the spell's duration. The flames don't harm you. For the next 10 minutes, you gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to fire damage and have resistance to cold damage.
- Any creature that moves within 5 feet of you for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there takes 1d10 fire damage.
- You can use your action to create a line of fire 15 feet long and 5 feet wide extending from you in a direction you choose. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 4d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Northern Exit.** The northern part of the room is up either set of stairs, and is a 6' raised platform that is on the same level as the southwestern exit. The grated floor here is all similar to the floor drains below, however the space is large enough to allow a creature to fall into the rapidly flowing water

beneath. They will not be carried away, as the water is filtered through iron bars with 3” gaps between them, but the pressure is difficult to escape. When a creature enters the water, and at the start of each of it’s turns, it must make a DC:14 strength saving throw. On a failure, they are submerged, or remain submerged. On a success, they are able to escape the water.

## Azer of Blades

This encounter was designed for the Alberon setting, where Azer’s could be crafted by artificers by trapping elemental fire, and so the creature in this encounter is classified as an azer. If this does not fit your setting, it can simply be called “The Guardian of Blades.”

The Azer of Blades consists of a 20’ long metallic, segmented, snake-like torso with ten insectoid legs that seem to propel it along in an insectoid fashion. Each of the ten legs has a 14” long steel scythe at its tip that can retract into the metal leg. The head is a simple continuation of the torso that grows more narrow as the segments near the front, where it tapers to a metallic point with three glowing runes on either side that produce the eerie effect of eyes. On the bottom of this creature is a large iron hatch within which burns the furnace of Elemental Fire that powers the Azer of Blades.

As the Azer of Blades moves, bits of burning coal rain down from the joints between the segments, leaving a smoldering trail of dying embers in its wake.

### Azer of Blades

*Large elemental, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 20

**Hit Points** 190 (20d10 + 90)

**Speed** Walk 45’, Climb 45’

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws:** Str +9, Dexterity +9, Con +11

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +9, Athletics +9, Acrobatics +9

**Damage Immunities:** Poison, Psychic

**Damage Resistances:** Fire, Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks

**Condition Immunities:** Poisoned

**Senses** Darkvision 60’, PP: 16

**Languages** Understands Ignan, but cannot speak

**Challenge Rating:** 13 (10,000xp)

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

**Heated Weapons.** When the azer hits with a metal melee weapon, it deals an extra (2d6) fire damage (included in the attack).

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The azer may make three scythe attacks

**Scythe.** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (6d6+4) slashing and (2d6) fire damage.

**Furnace Blast. (Recharge 5,6)** The guardian unleashes a 15' cone of fire, originating on the guardian's chest as it rears up. Any creature in range makes a DC: 17 dexterity saving throw. A target takes 12d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The fire spreads around corners. It ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

## Running the Encounter

This encounter was designed to draw the party toward the drifting, glowing blade. In our game, the item was the legendary Forgekey, but for your game it could be any device of great power, especially one with fire-related effects. Whatever your power source, use your description to draw the group in. As you describe the room, think of the five senses:

**Feel:** The air here is brutally humid, making the air itself feel dense. Skin will quickly grow damp, hair will feel heavier and curl more. The stone tiles of most of the room are sturdy and grounding; the drains on the floor as well as the grating near the north exit will bend slightly where the x-brace doesn't fully support the metal.

**Hear:** The predominant sound is running water, from the river that runs beneath the ground here; it echoes up the drains on the bottom level, and rushes distantly from the northern section that has grates open 8' above the water. The burbling of the magma that oozes over the stonework here and there, though ever so slowly, is audible within ten feet. Every so often, a bit of magma drips into the drain, producing a loud hiss briefly, before it is swallowed by the boiling current.

**See:** The lighting in front of the Forgekey, where the magma rests, is brightly lit in a warm, red glow that shifts slightly as the temperature underneath warms and cools into yellows and oranges. The northernmost ten feet of the room is bathed in dark shadows cast by the Forgekey housing. A steam hangs heavy in the air, causing the whole room to be lightly obscured (characters here have a disadvantage on perception checks that rely on sight in this room)

Smell: The scent of the room is that of hot stone and faint salt, owing to the nature of the magma. In a very real way, it smells like a sauna, as the magma does not contain sulfur or other impurities, owing to its elemental nature.

Taste: The air is humid enough that breathing in carries the taste of hot stone that is almost like a refreshing earth, but the taste is so faint, most can't detect it.

The Azer of Blades lurks in the shadows behind the Forgekey Housing, waiting for any that dare approach to take it. Once the steam has cooked away the organic material, the Guardian burns whatever remains in its internal furnace, keeping the room immaculate. It is most effectively used as an ambush from the ceiling, but can just as easily make its way out of the shadows as the party watches, horrified, as scythe after scythe propels a twisting machine of shrieking sparks and steel toward them.

The Azer of Blades has one prerogative: let none other than the owner of this place access The Forgekey. They will eviscerate everything else. Its primary abilities are dexterity, strength, and constitution, and with an AC of 20 it's designed to stand in and trade blows with even the hardiest barbarian.

The Azer of Blades is wise enough to recognize threats, and will always move to make one attack against whatever creature did the most damage to it on the previous round. The lone exception to this is if any creature tries to restrain, immobilize, or otherwise limit the Azer's movement. In this case, the Azer will move to this target and attack until they are unconscious before moving on to deal with active threats.

The Azer of Blades will typically use its Furnace Blast attack only if it can catch three or more creatures within its radius. If all creatures manage to succeed on a round of saving throws, the Azer of Blades will not use the attack again, instead opting to stick with more sustainable damage.

Its largest disadvantage to this encounter (as a DM) is the action economy. One creature against four players is a ton of attacks/reactions to weather, all for a measly three attacks, so the creature will almost always lock all three of its attacks on the same target in order to maximize its chances at reducing incoming attacks.