

4 PCs



Level 3

A Giving Time

by Kevin Mickelson



BASIC 3

A GIVING TIME

A 5th Edition compatible adventure for four 2nd level PCs

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|----|
| Adventure Background | 3 | 4. Ramshackle Huts | 9 |
| Adventure Hook | 3 | 5. The Kennel Master | 9 |
| Adventure Synopsis | 3 | 6. The Throne Room | 10 |
| Part 1: Things Just Got Real | 4 | Turducken's Cavern Map | 11 |
| Part 2: The Monastery | 6 | Part 4: Turduck Or Not Turduck? | 12 |
| Part 3: Gnollbuddies' Home | 7 | Turducken Cave..... | 13 |
| Nocturnoll Keep Map | 8 | Conclusion | 14 |
| 1. The Courtyard | 9 | BASIC-Series Iconic Pregen PCs:..... | 15 |
| 2. The Watchtower | 9 | VTT Maps..... | 19 |
| 3. The Wall | 9 | | |

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Foreword by Kevin

Welcome back! BASIC-3, "A Giving Time" is similar to BASIC-2 in that it involves an open area with which it would behoove the GM to become familiar. However, unlike the previous adventure, it is the PCs who are playing the role of the attackers while the Noctur Gnolls are left to defend their holdings. Be sure that the gnolls use their defensive structures (like throwing spears from the catwalk around the wall) to their best ability.

If the PCs wake the whole camp it is likely that they'll find themselves overwhelmed. If they choose not to flee, it is suggested that the GM not let up the pressure. Sometimes players need to know when to retreat and try again.

Let the Noctur Gnolls show no mercy to those who would get between them and their prey!

Kevin Mickelson

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Read the following:

The sky has been gray and heavy with the promise of snow for the past few weeks, and the lingering warmth of autumn has all but faded. Winter is nigh.

Exallizar Preparatory Academy (the world-renowned school for young adventurers) has been bustling with activity in preparation for this year's inevitable first snowfall. The students (including your party) have been involved in cold weather training since shortly after the conclusion of the Hazelthorp incident.

As winter closes in, the increasing scarcity of resources promises a proportional increase in monstrous activity. It isn't a question of if the student adventuring parties will be deployed, but when.

ADVENTURE HOOK

An isolated monastery of pacifists sends out a cry for help and the student body is obliged to answer. If the players have done well in both the Gauntlet and in the defense of Hazelthorp (maintaining at least a B average), they are the first choice of those available for the job. If they haven't done especially well to this point, they are the ones who are able to prepare and ship out most quickly, and are reminded that this could be their chance to finally make a serious impact!

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

While the PCs are outside doing some cold weather team-building work, a bedraggled old mage is brought before them. It is explained that a group of hyena-headed humanoids have been attacking his monastery in the hopes of stealing their foodstuffs. The instructor gives her blessing and, in fact, insists that the PCs begin the assignment at once.

Shortly after their arrival, the PCs must immediately act to defend the monastery from the Noctur Gnolls when the mage who teleported them collapses from exhaustion. After the initial defense, they are brought inside and have it explained that the Noctur Gnoll's leader is a shaman who laid a curse on the old wizard that he can never fall asleep. The PCs must track down and slay a mythical beast known as the turducken for its meat if the curse is ever to be lifted. Not only will their performance be graded, but the mentally-exhausted wizard is their only ticket home!



PART 1: THINGS JUST GOT REAL

Read the following:

Bitter wind lashes your cheeks as all of you stand facing one another with weapons and eldritch power held in your hands. Dark clouds roll over your head and lightning crashes all too close. Far below the tall pillar of stone atop which you stand, an angry sea crashes against hungry rocks. The time has come to use all you've learned against those who have been your closest companions. The lightning flashes once more and a peal of thunder splits the air - the tension breaks, and you lunge to attack!

Each of the PCs begins play 30 feet away from each other toward one corner of the 40x40 square space. Have them roll initiative and enter combat against each other, and make sure they realize that this is serious and they should do all they can to win! Combat continues for four rounds before they are interrupted, and the illusionary terrain and injuries fade to reveal all of them unhurt in the training yard.

A powerful voice booms across the practice yard. "Hold fast! Lower your blades and cease your casting, scholars!"

You recognize the voice of Headmaster Benson, and so comply at once. Your illusionary wounds vanish and you help steady one another as the nightmarish black sky and sea air melt away to reveal a sky that is merely overcast and gray, revealing an early late autumn morning in the Exallizar training yard.

The headmaster strides toward you with a haggard looking old man hustling to keep up at his side.

"This," he says with a nod toward the other fellow, "is Ambrose Neidlum. He has a job for you to tend to at once."

So prompted, the older chap does his best to stand erect, though the deep bags under his reddened eyes suggest he is on the brink of exhaustion.

"Indeed, yes. Your headmaster says that you're the, erm..." He casts a glance at Benson.



If the players have maintained roughly a B average (1 A and 1 C, 2 Bs, or better).

"They're some of our finest. Your problems will soon be at an end," says the headmaster with a confident nod. A tiny glimmer of pride crosses his normally impassive face.

If the PCs aren't doing so hot academically, or you want to establish the new party as being slackers waiting for the chance to make good.

"Only ones who can be ready to go in the next thirty seconds. Don't worry - they know the stakes of failure."

The ambiguous endorsement is delivered with a deadpan stare. An uncomfortable silence lingers for a few moments before Ambrose breaks it with a cough.

"Ah...well that's good."

Despite being on the verge of collapse, Ambrose manages a hopeful grin. "We must be off at once. The longer I'm away, the more likely it is that the dratted beastmen will notice my absence and launch an attack."

You gather your items from where you stacked them nearby. Mostly mundane stuff you haul around to be used to the weight, but there are also a few goodies that you left laying there since they didn't seem fit for use in sparring. In particular...

At this point, offer all of the PCs the following options for extra items along with their regular starting gear.

The Cleric can choose from the following:

*Sacred sapling**

15 +1 crossbow bolts (these grant +1 to hit and +1 to damage)

A *ring of protection* (this grants a +1 bonus to the wearer's Armor Class)

Any 1 piece of loot from BASIC-1.

The Fighter can choose from the following:

*Curcubiter cap**

Replace his chainmail with +1 *chainmail* (this grants an additional +1 bonus to the wearer's Armor Class)

Replace his longsword with +1 *longsword* (this grants +1 to hit and +1 to damage)

Any 1 piece of loot from BASIC-1.

The Rogue can choose from the following:

5 *Jack-be-littles**

2 *potions of cat's grace* (these grant the drinker a Dexterity of 21 for 1 hour)

Cloak of elvenkind (Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice wearer are at disadvantage and Dexterity (Stealth) checks are made with advantage while hood is up)

Any 1 piece of loot from BASIC-1

The Wizard can choose from the following:

*Curcubiter seedlings**

An *elemental gem of either fire or water* (can be crushed to cast *conjure elemental*)

Bracers of protection (+2 bonus to AC if not wearing armor)

Any 1 piece of loot from BASIC-1

Magic Items

Sacred Sapling

As a Use an Object action, this sacred sprig of hazel can be planted in pliable soil. It provides blue light as a torch, and any creature hostile to the planter must succeed at a DC 15 Will save to approach within 10 feet. This effect lasts for one minute.

Curcubiter Cap

This shield is made from the top of a curcubiter plant, and a portion of the malevolence of that creature has been bound to the item. If you are attacked in melee while bearing a curcubiter cap and the attack misses your AC by 2 points or less, vines shoot from the shield to grapple the attacker. A DC 20 Strength save or Dexterity save is required to break free, and the vines vanish afterward. Only one creature can be grappled in this way at a time.

Jack-be-Littles (5)

At first glance these petite pumpkins seem harmless. However, if they are used as a thrown weapon they suddenly sprout frightening faces and scream through the air before exploding on impact. A target struck by a Jack-be-Little takes 2d6 points of fire damage.

Curcubiter Seedlings

A small handful of slightly withered pumpkin seeds. If planted in soft pliable ground, these seeds grow and sprout over the course of 1 round into 1d4 + 1 fully grown curcubiters that obey the commands of their planter. If the d4 roll is a 4, the seeds fuse together to instead spawn a single curcubiter max. Curcubiters and curcubiter max serve the planter for 10 rounds before withering away to nothing. A Curcubiter cannot approach to within 10 feet of a *sacred sapling*.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Any of the characters who received an A+ grade in BASIC-1 get to start play with any 1 piece of loot found within that module as well as one of the other listed options.



PART 2: THE MONASTERY

Read the following:

After gathering all of your items, the Headmaster directs you to link hands with one another while Ambrose stands in the middle of the circle. “Heed well. The old mage will take you to his monastery. Once there you will secure the holding from harm, strike back at the attackers in such a way as to prevent further incursion, and then, by this same magic, be returned. Remember your lessons and put an end to this nonsense.”

Ambrose begins chanting and moving his hands through eldritch patterns, and all at once the dusky courtyard of Exallizar is replaced by a dusky forest before an unfamiliar gated wall. A feeling of nausea creeps over you from the sudden displacement, and it takes your eyes a moment to focus clearly enough to notice that the stout wooden gate is under attack by a quartet of hulking furred humanoids!

All at once Ambrose gives a cry of pain and falls to the leafy ground. The beast-men turn their snarling dog faces in your direction!

Roll for initiative! All of the PCs are considered poisoned (thanks to their first-ever teleportation) for the first round of combat, and for an additional 1d4 rounds thereafter unless they succeed at a **DC 14 Constitution save**.



The four gnolls who are attacking the monastery spend their first turn dropping the battering ram they’ve been using, drawing their weapons, and entering a rage. They’ll use their remaining standard action to attack anyone who’s moved adjacent to them, but otherwise they’ll wait until next round to make a charge together.

If three of them are killed, the survivor will attempt to flee and warn the rest of the tribe. If pursued, he will turn and fight rather than be seen as a coward by his pack mates.

Once the gnolls have been chased off or killed, the PCs will likely turn their attention to Ambrose. His eyes roll crazily in his head as bitter sobs wrack his body, though there is no evidence of a wound. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check** will reveal that the cause of his distress is an extreme form of exhaustion brought on by lack of sleep.

Read the following:

The heavy gate creaks loudly once before swinging wide, to reveal several brown-robed acolytes who wear the symbol of the god of charity about their necks. An exceptionally square-shaped man hustles out, booted feet kicking up a small wake of leaves as he makes a beeline for Ambrose. You realize after a moment that this must be a dwarf - the first you’ve seen!

“Right old boy, just this way now, oop ya go!” The dwarf looks toward the young heroes and grins as he slings Ambrose across his shoulders. “Names Dirran, owdjadoo? Right this way!”

Quick as a wink, the dwarf hustles the old mage back into the gate, which the acolytes hold open long enough for you to enter.

If the PCs refuse to come inside, the acolytes are confused by their reluctance and strongly urge them to reconsider. Failing that, they direct them southward, where the Noctur Gnolls have established a war camp from which to plunder the monastery. However, when they finish they are advised to return, as the sickly Ambrose is their only ticket home...unless they care to hike over 200 miles with the full onset of winter just a few days away.

Gnoll

These hyena-headed humanoids have a dark black fur and hyper reflective eyes that they tend to keep hidden beneath wide brimmed hats.

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 6 (-2) | 10 (+0) | 7 (-2) |

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 10

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2)

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Read the following:

You are shown through a small garden of withered flowers and into a cozy antechamber with a crackling fireplace. Therein you find Dirran the dwarf, who just finished tucking furs around the pathetically whimpering Ambrose.

The squat fellow turns to regard your party, wearing an aggrieved expression on what would otherwise be a jolly face while plopping heavily down on to a bench.

“Thanks be to the gods that ye’ve arrived, lads (and/or) lasses. Och, poor Ambrose here could scarce cast magic afore ‘e left us just those few minutes ago. Tis a small miracle ‘e made it there ‘an back again!”

Dirran tugs at his beard in distress.

“A curse most foul has been laid on ‘is poor head by the dratted Noctur. The dog-faces ‘ave built the’selves a fort just a few miles north ‘a ‘ere, and they want ta sack us of all our coin and foodstuffs! They’re led by a cur goes by th’ name ‘a Ringdocus. ‘E and ‘is pack ‘a scavengers spy on us allatime, ye see. Only old Ambrose really kept ‘em at bay, but after this curse took hold of him he cannae sleep! It’s been near on a week now, and ‘e used ‘is last spells ta fetch ye here.”

The dwarf sighs.

“Lissen, I hardly know a thing ‘bout magic, but I know that Ringdocus was no match fer ‘ol Amrbose. Never woulda been able ta curse him if fair ‘an square! ‘E had a big black mask on, made a bone and leather, an’ great wide eyes! Ambrose mentioned ‘at it may’ve been ‘th dratted thing that cursed him, and it may also be ‘th only thing as can cure ‘im!”

“Will ye help us? A trip five miles ‘er so South’ll find ye outside their camp. Drive the Noctur Gnolls off anyway ye must, and fetch us back that mask.”

If the PCs have any questions, Dirran will do his best to answer.

He knows:

- There are around 20 Noctur Gnolls in the warcamp (less 3 or 4 depending on how many the PCs killed).
- The Noctur clan has exceptionally bad eyesight when the sun is out, and so they tend to sleep during the day with only a few guards patrolling the walls.
- Their fort’s major defensive armament is a single ballista that they keep trained on the wide hunting trail they’ve blazed, should any large group or large beast use the open space to cause them menace.
- The group of four gnolls that were trying to bash their way into the fortress were likely a group of spies that saw the flash from the mage’s teleportation spell, and decided to press their luck.

Once the heroes have asked any questions they like, Dirran hustles them out so they can attack before the gnolls realize that their scouts aren’t coming back.

PART 3: GNOLLBUDDIES' HOME

If the PCs approach during the day, there are three Noctur Gnolls standing guard - two patrolling the catwalk along the wall (area 3) and one sleeping propped against the ballista atop the tower (area 2). Be sure to remember that the fort is not so large a space that loud combat will go unnoticed. Smart players will use stealth and ambush tactics to lure the guards away from each other and dispatch them before they manage to make too much noise.

A Noctur Gnoll may spend a standard action to cackle-howl an alarm to call other members of its pack. This will rouse 1d4 sleeping gnolls from with the pack’s fortress. If more than 6 gnolls are awakened in this way, there has been enough movement and commotion that the rest of the camp comes awake, and will arrive in groups of 2d6 at a time each round until finally Ringdocus joins in, hurling spells from the rear.

The Noctur Gnolls only break and retreat if Ringdocus plus at least ten regular gnolls perish in the same battle.

SPECIAL NOTE



If the PCs decide that they can’t handle the gnolls’ fortress and return to the monastery saying as much, Dirran will move on to suggesting the turducken as a solution, trusting that Ambrose can help them if only he gets better.





NOCTURGNOLL KEEP



SCALE IN FEET

1. THE COURTYARD

Broken and discarded tools of war litter the ground, and ramshackle buildings stand sullenly in the palpable chill. A large round central structure tucked behind a tall guard tower, and flanked from three directions by a trio of smaller huts. The faint stink of unwashed beast lingers in the air.

The PCs must make a DC 5 Stealth check each round to avoid rousing any of the sleeping Noctur Gnolls. Failure means 1d4 gnolls wake and emerge from the nearest building, and will initiate combat as outlined above.

2. THE WATCHTOWER

Four crudely-hewn tree trunks form the primary structure of this guard tower, atop which rests a loaded ballista pointed in the direction of the front gate. When looking up at the tower from below, the bottom half of a rope ladder can be seen dangling about 15 feet over the ground.

A Noctur Gnoll snoozes at his post high above. The rope ladder has been partially tugged up, but enough has been left dangling that it would be easily lowered by a mage hand spell, carefully thrown grappling hook, an agile character standing on the shoulders of a strong character (**Dexterity (Acrobatics)** DC 10 for the agile character to balance, **Strength** check against a DC equal to the agile character's weight divided by 10). If the gnoll guard wakes, he will spend each round howling to try and wake the entire camp.

Should the PCs gain control of the ballista, it can be turned 360 degrees on its platform. It attacks as a ranged weapon, and has a -4 penalty to hit. Each ballista bolt deals 3d8 damage, has a critical range of 19-20, and a range of 120 feet. The watch tower has 14 ballista bolts leaning against the walls. Clever PCs who wish to somehow the ballista bolts should be encouraged and rewarded for their creativity.

The ballista itself is far too large to be taken down from its place without bringing the entire tower down in a heap.



3. THE WALL

The outer wall of the structure is fifteen feet tall and relatively well built. A 10-foot wide catwalk runs along the wall's perimeter, accessed by several ladders placed at various points.

Two gnolls patrol at a roughly equilateral distance from one another. They're rather bored, and a little care and a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** check can pass almost under their noses. Still, anyone who runs into plain sight might draw a gnoll's attention. Whether that attention takes the form of a howling alarm or a quiet and curious examination depends on the nature of the action that drew the attention.

If the PCs scout around the outside of the wall, they can spot an alternate way in. Near the middle of the west wall there is a ladder inside the fortress, beneath which has been dug a narrow ditch - almost as though a massive dog had tried to dig its way out. This hole is big enough for the PCs to squeeze through one at a time as a full round action.

4. RAMSHACKLE HUTS

This building is little more than lashed-together hides and bits of lumber. The stink of animal and blood grows stronger the nearer you approach.

These huts are a communal sleeping area for the warrior tribe, and each contains 6 sleeping gnolls (less any who have been alerted to the PCs' presence and left the building). There is nothing of value to be found from digging amongst the scattered skins and threadbare blankets.

5. THE KENNEL MASTER

This hut is a bit larger than the others, and has a door decorated with animal bones and other grisly trophies.

A Noctur Gnoll lives in here with his hunting "hound" - an exceptionally tough wolf, that will begin barking if the PCs linger for more than two rounds directly adjacent to the structure. If they remain another round without moving, the barking turns furious and grows a great deal louder, alerting the entire camp to the invasion. While the wolf is in the cage it poses no threat, but on the first turn that any gnoll arrives at the cage, it will use an action to open the cage, after which the wolf will attack the party as well.



Dire Wolf

Wolves are territorial and control a large territory. As large as an average dog, a hungry wolf is a threat to livestock and children. Most wolves avoid armed humanoid, but rabid wolves are aggressive even to larger creatures.

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 50 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 17 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 3 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 7 (-2) |

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 +3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone.



6. THE THRONE ROOM

Exterior

Two thin yet massive wooden doors are set into the round stone building in the center of the compound.

Interior

Here rests who must be Ringdocus, leader of the Noctur clan. The spindly gnoll is wearing his dread mask while splayed asleep across his crude wooden "throne" with a female gnoll snoozing nearby on the floor. A pile of bones rest against the southern wall.

A Noctur Gnoll lives in here with his hunting "hound" - an exceptionally tough wolf, that will begin barking if the PCs linger for more than two rounds directly adjacent to the structure. If they remain another round without moving, the barking turns furious and grows a great deal louder, alerting the entire camp to the invasion. While the wolf is in the cage it poses no threat, but on the first turn that any gnoll arrives at the cage, it will use an action to open the cage, after which the wolf will attack the party as well.

A **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** will allow someone to approach the throne, but it requires a **DC 25 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to slide the mask off the sleeping gnoll and escape unnoticed. Furthermore, any dwarf, elf, or human who approaches within 15 feet of the South wall causes the mound of bones to animate into three skeletons

If he wakes, Ringdocus snarls the command word to animate the skeletons then focuses on supporting his mate and the animated skeletons. His mate (use the stats for a regular gnoll) takes the fight to the party while snarling and barking for aid, and the skeletons do all they can to defend the shaman. The mask is only able to lay its curse when the one currently suffering from its effects die of exhaustion, and therefore will not come into play during this battle. Ringdocus fights to the death. There is a small chest hidden beneath the throne, which is revealed by a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Ringdocus

More lithe than the other black gnolls of his tribe, the sinister shaman is never seen without his wickedly curved dagger by his side.

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) |

Senses passive Perception 11

Language Abyssal, Gnoll

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Dark Devotion. Ringdocus has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Rampage. When Ringdocus reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Spellcasting. Ringdocus is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at-will): *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ringdocus makes two attacks, one each with his bite and *dagger of wounding*, and uses his *Incite Rampage* if he can.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d4 + 4)

Dagger of Wounding. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage. Each turn, a creature wounded by this dagger takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each time it has been wounded by the dagger. A **DC 15 Constitution save** ends this effect, as does a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check**. Any hit points lost to attacks from this dagger can only be healed after a short or long rest, and may not be healed through magic or other means.

Incite Rampage (recharge 5–6). One gnoll that Ringdocus can see within 30 feet can use its reaction to make a melee attack if it can hear him.

Skeletons

Skeletons are the animated bones of the dead, brought to unlife through foul magic. While they are mindless automatons, the magic that created them gave them evil cunning and an instinctive hatred of the living.

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 6 (-2) | 8 (-1) | 5 (-3) |

Damage vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

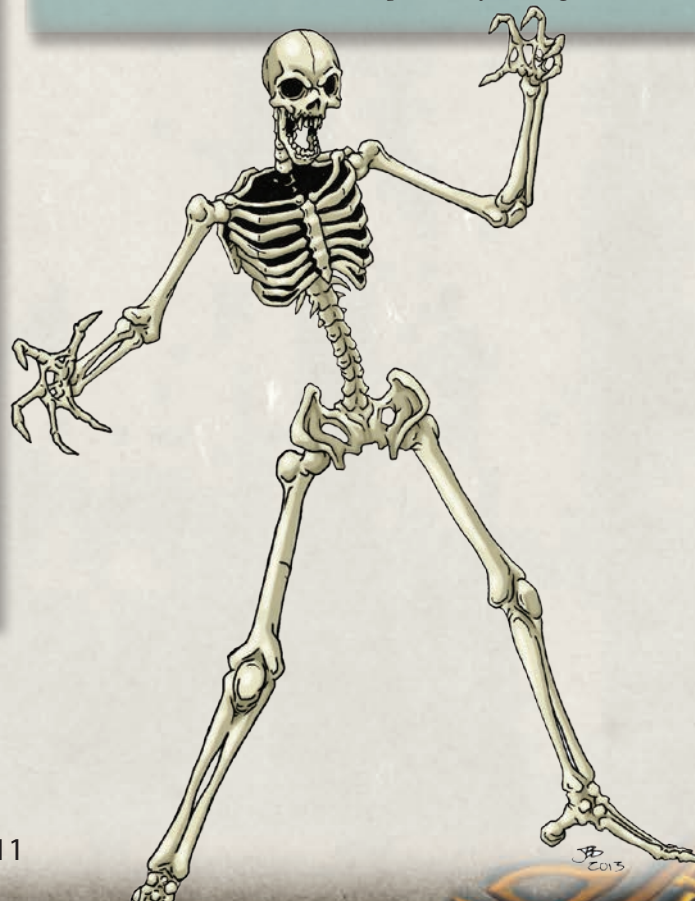
ACTIONS

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Treasure

1,425 GP in platinum, gold, and gems, along with a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and two *potions of cure light wounds*.





SCALE IN FEET



TURDUCKEN'S CAVERN

Read the following:

After the trek back, you present the mask to the grateful Dirran. The dwarf assures you that he's studied all of Ambrose's books and has the matter well in hand, but an hour later there has been no improvement in the mage.

If the characters with **Intelligence (Arcana)** offer to help research a solution:

Dirran accepts the aid you offer, but after another hour of work there has still been no progress in reversing the mask's curse. None of your combined knowledge reveals a way to reverse the curse!

Dirran tugs at his beard and drops the mask angrily on to a table. "It's no good, this! There's just one thing fer it...a curse ta fight a curse. An there's just one thing fer that...the turducken."

He turns misty eyes on you gathered heroes.

"We 'appen ta 'ave a local one. I hate ta impose again, but there's nothin' else fer it! Make haste to 'th West fer a mile or so and then find a hill. Ye'll see its cave from down below an ye look up. If ye kill the turducken an bring 'th dead thing back, we'll cook it up 'an feed it ta Ambrose. All know the curse that comes from eating too much 'a that meat!"

PCs who succeed at a **DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check** realize that the dwarf is correct. He can offer the PCs two potions of cure light wounds if they ask, and cautions that the turducken's warble is known to be debilitating, but can provide no further aid.

PART 4: TURDUCK OR NOT TURDUCK?

The sun has begun to dip low in the sky as you approach the hill Dirran indicated. Sure enough, while standing at the base you can look up to clearly see a hole set in the side of the cave. All is silent.

The hill is easy enough to climb (**DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** to avoid tumbling back down), and the PCs soon find themselves standing on a ledge before the cave entrance.

TURDUCKEN CAVE

The cave is dark as pitch inside, the feeble rays of the sun managing only to illuminate a few feet in. A moment after you all come to rest before the doorway and look in, a bizarre quakadoodlegobble echoes through the cavern.

The turducken waits in the dark for anyone to blunder into its cave, and then immediately makes use of its Warble before tearing off into the dark at stunning speed. It makes a series of hit-and-run attacks on whichever PC manages to attract its attention the most due to noise or bright lights. It happily lures the PCs around the twists and turns of its fiendish lair, and makes full use of its bestial cunning to divide and conquer.

The turducken fights to the death.





Turducken (Neutral)

The turducken is a chimeric beast along the same lines as an owlbear or hippogryph. They only appear near human settlements around harvest time each year, and it is rare to find more than one at a time. A majestic comb crowns its head like a jaunty pompadour, matching nicely with its rather dapple waddle and aerodynamic beak. When swimming, the four front legs fold in close to the body to allow the webbed feet from the rear to paddle. Elusive beasts, turduckens trust in their natural camouflage to keep them out of sight when hungry humans are about. If it becomes evident that escape will be impossible the turducken will launch itself heedlessly into battle against its pursuers, upon whom it will unleash the primal fury that has slumbered within the hearts of turkeys, ducks, and chickens for generations.

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 120 (16d6 + 64)

Speed 60 ft., fly 40 ft., swim 20 ft.

| | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 18 (+4) | 3 (-4) | 20 (+5) | 6 (-2) |

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Flyby. The turducken does not provoke an attack of opportunity when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The turducken can make two attacks, one with its spur claws and one with its beak.

Peck. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Spur Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Running Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. The turducken can charge past a creature and attack with its claws as long as it does not end its movement next to the target. Moving out of an enemy's reach while making this attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Warble (Recharge 5–6). As a bonus action, a turducken can generate a mind-affecting effect by warbling “Gobuakuk!” All other creatures in the 60 foot radius must make a **DC 15 Wisdom save** or be filled with hunger as if they haven't eaten for 3 days. This hunger deals 1d6 points of damage, and the creature is considered poisoned (disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks). This effect cannot be cured except by eating during a short or long rest. On a successful save the creature is not affected by the attack.

Feast. Turducken are prized by the finest chefs in the land. A cook who prepares turducken meat with a **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check** can unlock its hidden potential. Anyone who eats 1/4 pound of meat cooked in such a way receives a +1 bonus on all saves for 2 hours, and doesn't need to eat for 24 hours. If a creature eats more than one serving in a day, it must make a **DC 20 Constitution save** or fall unconscious for 1d4 hours. A creature which eats a turducken leg prepared in this way will regain 1d8 hit points. Turducken meat never spoils.



Special Note

Neither a *sacred sapling* nor *curcubiter seeds* can be planted in or near the turducken's cave due to the stone ground.

CONCLUSION

Once the PCs have returned with the turducken, Darrin has a few of the acolytes rush it down to the kitchen, where he begins work at once. To everyone's surprise, the dwarf is something of an artisan in the kitchen, and asks the PCs if they'd like to help with side dishes. If they're going to eat turducken, they **MUST** have side dishes!

Soon everything is laid out, and after saying a quick prayer to the god of charity, Darrin force-feeds Ambrose a double helping of turducken flesh. The old man passes out almost at once, and sleeps through the night and half of the next day. Meanwhile, Darrin and the acolytes spend time sharing tales with the PCs and asking them about themselves, quite kindly disposed toward the heroes who rescued their mentor. If the PCs offer to share the gold they looted from the gnoll camp, the occupants of the monastery are nearly beside themselves with joy.

Once Ambrose awakens, he thanks the PCs profusely and teleports them back to Exallizar with a new spring in his step. Have the Headmaster, Proctor Duly, or any other NPC the players have expressed a liking for come to deliver their grade.

A: The PCs retrieved the cursed mask, killed or drove off the Noctur Gnolls, gave a total of at least 100 gp to the monastery, and offered to help Dirran come up with a cure, even though the effort was a failure.

B: Any three of the above

C: Any two of the above

D: Any one of the above

F: None of the above



Ronius

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 18 (scale mail, shield)

Hit Points 28 (3d10 + 6)

Speed 20 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) |

Saving Throws: Strength +6, Constitution +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +6, Intimidation +3, Survival +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Fighting Style: Protection. When a creature attacks a target other than Ronius that is within 5 feet of him, he can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. He must be wielding a shield to use this ability.

Second Wind. When a creature attacks a target other than Ronius that is within 5 feet of him, he can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. He must be wielding a shield to use this ability.

Action Surge. Ronius can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action beyond his regular action and any bonus action. After using this feature, he must finish a short or long rest to use it again.

Martial Archetype: Champion. Ronius focuses on raw physical development, and trains rigorously in order to deal devastating blows to those who would threaten him or his friends.

Improved Critical. Ronius scores a critical on a roll of 19 or 20 when he attacks with a weapon.

ACTIONS

Javelin. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 1d6 + 4 piercing damage.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d8 + 4 slashing damage.

Equipment. Backpack, belt pouch, crowbar, alchemist's fire, javelin (5), lantern, longsword, oil (3), portable ram, rope (50 ft.), scale mail, shield, tinderbox, waterskin.



Meeris

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 21 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 20 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) |

Saving Throws: Wisdom +7, Charisma +4

Skills Insight +7, Medicine +7, Persuasion +4, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 15

Spellcasting. Meeris is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *bless* (D), *cure wounds* (D), *detect evil and good*, *healing word*, *protection from evil and good*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (2 slots): *aid*, *hold person*

Divine Domain: Life. Meeris is a cleric of the Sun Goddess, and has chose the Life Domain as her divine domain. She may has any spell marked with a (D) in her spell list once per day without using up a 1st level spell slot.

Disciple of Life. Meeris is a very effective healer. Whenever she casts *cure wounds* or *healing word* she heals an additional 3 hit points.

Channel Divinity. Meeris can channel the power of the Sun Goddess directly, and may do this in two ways, using either *Turn Undead* or *Preserve Life* (see below). After using one of these effects, she must complete a short or long rest before using Channel Divinity again.

ACTIONS

Channel Divinity: Preserve Life. As an action, Meeris can present her holy symbol and speak a prayer of healing. She restores 15 hit points, divided up as she wishes amongst any creatures within 30 feet of her. This can restore a creature to no more than half its total hit points, and does not work on constructs or undead.

Channel Divinity: Turn Undead. As an action, Meeris can present her hoy symbol and speak a prayer which censures the undead. Any undead creature within 30 feet must make a **Wisdom saving throw (DC 15)** or it is turned for 1 minute, or until it takes damage. A turned creature must use its turns to get as far away from Meeris as possible, and can't willingly move within 30 feet of her. It also cannot take reactions. It may only use the Dash action to try and escape or, if there is nowhere to go, the Dodge action.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 piercing damage.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Sacred Flame. *Ranged Magic Attack:* automatic hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 radiant damage, **DC 15 Reflex save** negates. The target gains no benefit from cover on this saving throw.

Equipment. Belt pouch, crossbow bolts (20), holy symbol, holy water, mace, light crossbow, scale mail.



Kale

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 20 (3d6 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) |

Saving Throws: Intelligence +6, Wisdom +3

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Investigation, +6, Religion +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Spellcasting. Kale is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *light*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *sleep*

2nd level (2 slots): *flaming sphere*, *shatter*

Arcane Recovery. Kale has learned enough to retain some of his magical energy by studying his spellbook. Once per day when he finished a short rest, he can recover two expended 1st level spells slots, or one expended 2nd level spell slot.

Arcane Tradition: School of Abjuration. Kale has decided to focus his studies on abjuration magic, which blocks, banishes, and protects.

Abjuration Savant. Kale has decided to focus on the abjuration school of magic. The gold and time that he has to spend in order to copy an abjuration spell into his spellbook is halved.

Arcane Ward. When Kale casts an abjuration spell (such as *mage armor*) he can create a magical ward on himself at the same time, which lasts until he finished a long rest. This ward has 12 hit points, which are lost before Kale's own hit points. If damage reduces the ward's hit points to 0, Kale takes any remaining damage. While it has 0 hit points the ward no longer absorbs spell damage but still exists, and regains 2 hit points each time Kale casts an abjuration spell. Kale can only have one ward active at a time, and cannot create another until after he finishes a long rest.

ACTIONS

Acid Splash. Ranged Magic Attack: automatic hit, range 60 ft., one target, or two adjacent targets. Hit: 1d6 acid damage, DC 14 Dexterity save negates.

Flaming Sphere. Ranged Magic Attack: automatic hit, range 60 ft., any adjacent creatures. Hit: 2d6 fire damage, DC 14 Dexterity save reduces damage by half. Kale creates a five foot wide sphere of fire somewhere in range, which he can move up to 30 feet each turn as a bonus action. Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of the sphere takes damage as described.



Magic Missile. Ranged Magic Attack: automatic hit, range 120 ft., up to three targets. Hit: 1d4 + 1 force damage.

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning damage.

Ray of Frost. Ranged Magic Attack: +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 1d8 cold damage, and target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the start of Kale's next turn.

Shatter. Ranged Magic Attack: automatic hit, range 60 ft., all creatures in a 10-foot radius. Hit: 3d8 thunder damage, DC 14 Constitution save reduces damage by half. A creature made of stone, crystal, metal or any other inorganic material has disadvantage on this saving throw.

Equipment. Backpack, acid flask (2), alchemists' fire (2), belt pouch, tinderbox, waterskin



Willow

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 21 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

Saving Throws: Dexterity +6, Intelligence +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Slight of Hand +6, Stealth +8

Senses passive Perception 11

Thieves' Tools. Willow can use her thieves' tools to add double her proficiency bonus (+4) to any ability checks made to disarm traps or open locks.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Willow can add an extra 2d6 damage to one creature that she has hit with an attack if she had advantage on the attack roll, or if that creature is within 5 feet of another enemy, or the target is incapacitated.

Cunning Action. Willow's quick thinking and agility allow her to act and move quickly. Each round in combat, she may take a bonus action, choosing from the Dash, Disengage, or Hide actions.

Roguish Archetype: Thief. Willow has decided to focus on larceny, such as picking locks, picking pockets, and sneaking around.

Fast Hands. Willow can use her bonus action from Cunning action to make a Dexterity (Slight of Hand) check, use her thieves' tools to open a lock or disarm a trap, or take the Use an Object action.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Willow extra movement, and when she makes a running jump, she can cover a number of feet equal to her Dexterity modifier (4 feet).

ACTIONS

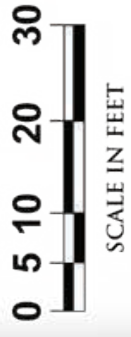
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.

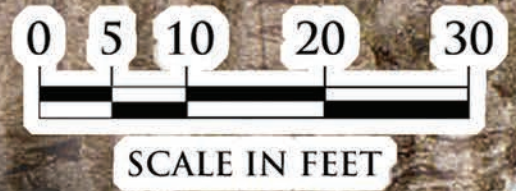
Dagger. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.

Equipment. Backpack, belt pouch, caltrops (bag of 20), chalk, crowbar, daggers (5), lantern, mirror, oil (7), pitons (5), rope (50 feet), sack (empty), studded leather, thieves' tools, tinderbox



NOCTURGNOLL KEEP





TURDUCKEN'S CAVERN

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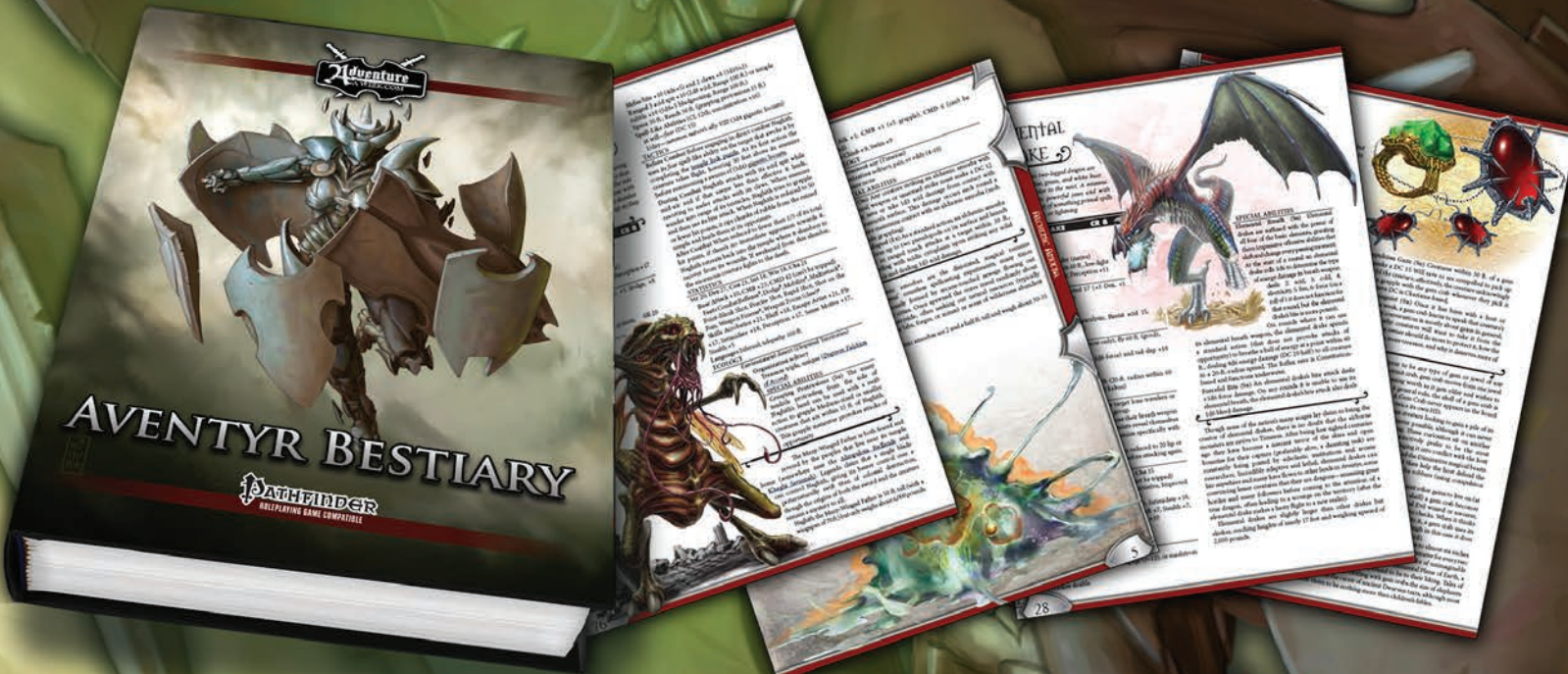
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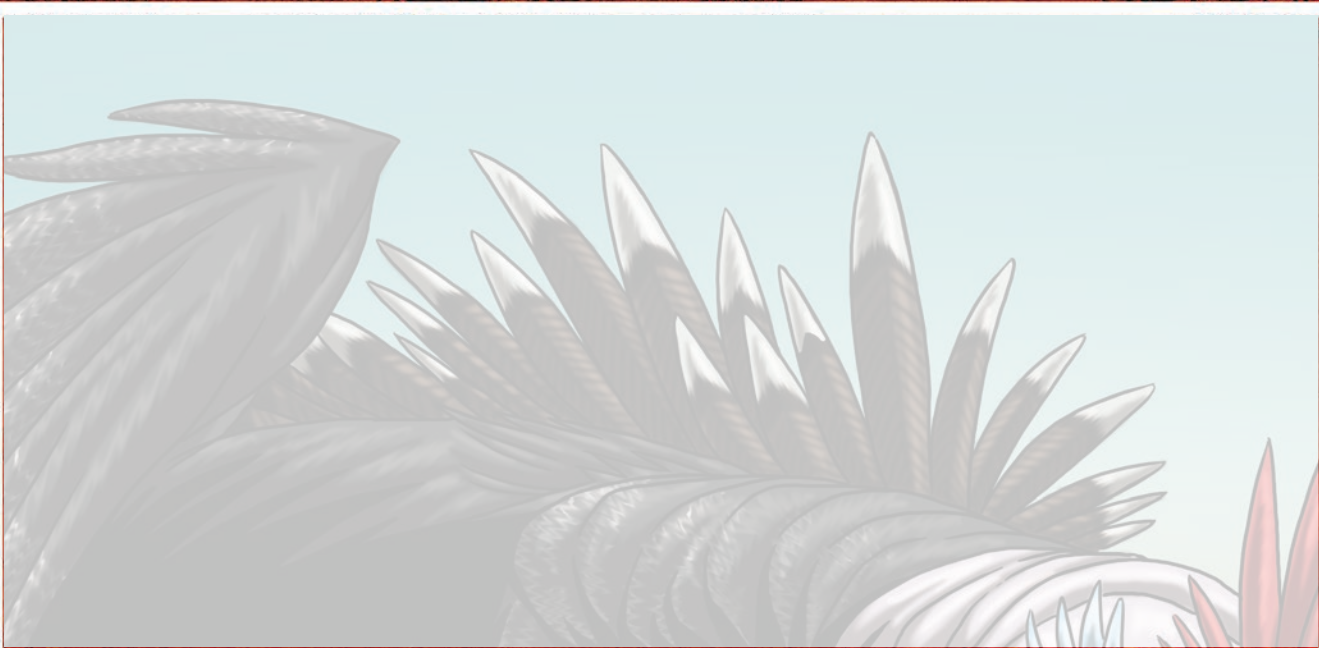
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