



Demons in the Prairie

an adventure for 5th edition D&D

Who should play this adventure?

This is a perfect adventure for new players and DMs that I originally wrote to introduce new players into this fantastic hobby.

The adventure will take a group of players at level 2 through a taster of most of what Dungeons and Dragons has to offer: exploration, npc interaction and of course combat.

I ran this for many groups and it was always a success. The story is simple but has a lot of space for roleplaying and the enemies are enough to get you to learn the game but not too hard that you can't make mistakes. These notes are written in a simple way that will not require you to do much preparation, just read them once and sit down at the table to play!

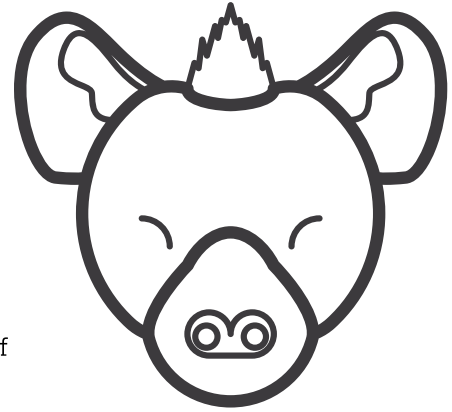
If you never tried yourself behind the screen of the Dungeon Master this may be the adventure for you to do it. If you are experienced already but have new players at the table, you may also find it useful.

Or maybe you just want to have some fun, that works too!

Find my other modules here: <http://bit.ly/32HkgvH>



Placing this adventure



This adventure is at home in any fantasy setting.

I would recommend running this adventure without worrying too much about the World at large. Use it as an opportunity to try D&D or to introduce new people to the hobby. Don't introduce elements of a big plot, keep it simple.

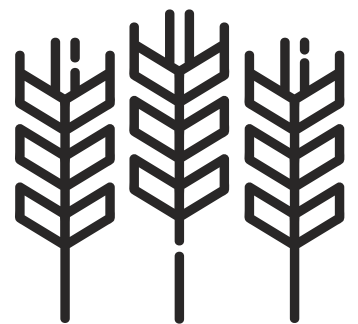
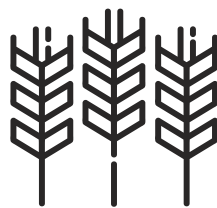
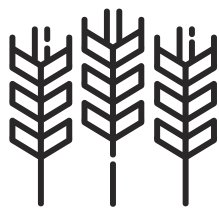
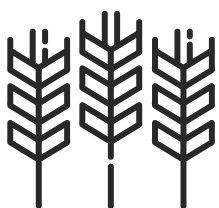
If magic happens and your table wants to keep playing after this adventure it will be incredibly easy to tie it to any campaign. You can worry about that later though, for now just focus on the fun.

The adventure starts is for level 2, which is a good place to start a campaign in my opinion. Level 1 can be a lot of fun but my feeling is that level 2 is easier and more forgiving on new players without yet being too complicated, and therefore a better place to start new people on the hobby.



What is this adventure about?

The players are part of a small mercenary group that does odd jobs around the kingdom. They recently visited the capital and found out that raiders are attacking the farmlands near the market city of Windhill, stealing from the farmers and kidnapping people. Rumors say that these are no mere raiders but monsters, demons or abominations of some sort. The king has offered a recompense for solving this problem, and the party simply has to go to the townmaster of the city of Windhill to be given more information.



Who - What - Where - Why

All modules should start by explaining the main actors on the scene and what *should* happen. I don't know what *will* happen, this is up to you and your players, but here's a basic flow of this module. To an extent it should go something like this:



1

The party gets to the city of Windhill, where they know they will be rewarded if they assist with their recent problems with raiders in the farmlands nearby. There may be trouble on the road!

2

Once they find out where the raiders are hiding, the party arrives to Skull Cave and finds it guarded by monstrous human/beast hybrids! what is going on in this place?



3

The party explores the catacombs below Skull Cave, finding some help on the way to their final confrontation with the source of the evil above: a Shadow Demon!



CHAPTER 0 – Introduction

Note: this first part can be skipped in the interest of time, but it contains an easy encounter to introduce new players to the combat rules of D&D. Ideally it should last just long enough for every player to have taken one, maximum two turns.

Read or paraphrase this to start the session

You are walking down the road that leads to the city of Windhill, the hot summer air making you sweat lightly under your clothes. Sunset is almost upon you as you make your way down a wide and well kept road, the tall grass around the sides of it whispering softly in the light breeze. As you come to a slight bend, you notice an abandoned cottage and some trees on the other side of the road from it.

THIS ENCOUNTER:

2 **demonspawn** (jackal) and 1 **demonspawn** (Hyena)

it's an **ambush!** so the party needs a Wisdom (perception) of 15 or higher to spot it. You can use their passive perception if you want.

It's a good time to teach them the basics of D&D combat.

They will fight until one is left and the survivor will then try to flee. They do not speak common and are not very bright, so not much can be done to communicate with them.

Treasure: the party can loot whatever weapons the monsters are carrying, plus 1d4 gold pieces contained in a bag that the gnoll was carrying. Inside the bag there are also a few bones from a human hand, a glass eye and a silver ring (5 SP).

Note: these items are little trophies the demonspawn was carrying and don't have any significance (unless you want them to!).



CHAPTER 1 – Windhill

Note: this first part can be skipped in the interest of time, but it contains an easy encounter to introduce new players to the combat rules of D&D. Ideally it should last just long enough for every player to have taken one, maximum two turns.



If you skipped Chapter 0, read this and then the next paragraph:

You are walking down the road that leads to the city of Windhill, the hot summer air making you sweat lightly under your clothes. Sunset is upon you as you make your way down a wide and well kept road, the tall grass around the sides of it whispering softly in the light breeze.

Otherwise, read from here:

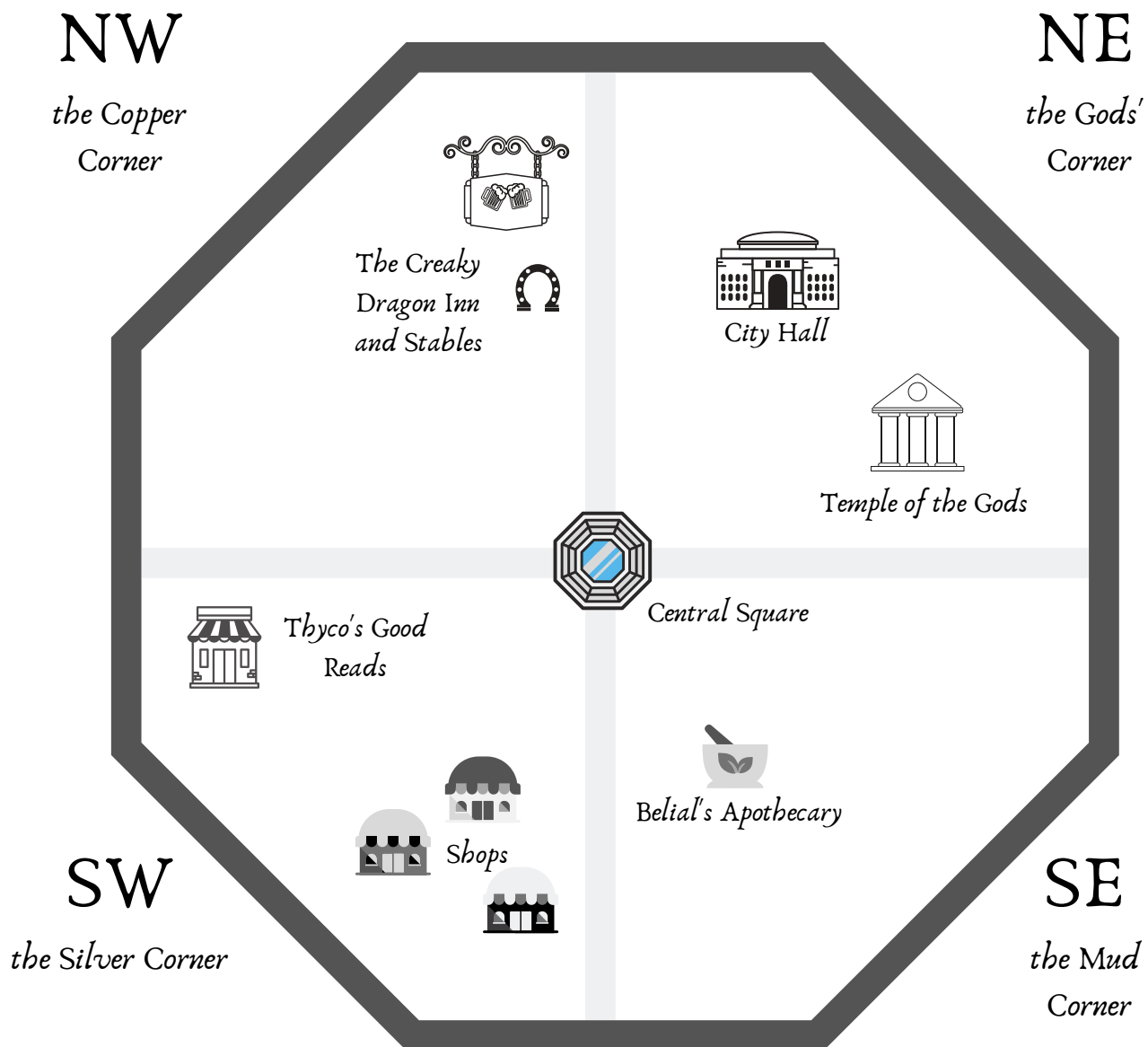
The flat landscape around you allows you to see Windhill from quite some distance, and by the time you reach its gates the sun has fallen completely behind the horizon. The city is small but full of life, and as you wait to be let in by a guard the smells and sounds of the city invite you in with the promise of a hearty meal and some relaxation after a long day spent on the road. Finally, you are let in the city proper and pass through its modest but well kept gates...

The party arrives too late at night to speak with the Town Master right away, so they will have to wait for the morning for that. They can use their first night as they please however most shops will be closed.

The only NPC that will already be available will be **Gavan in the Town Square** (see below).

Advice for running the first night: let the players relax, say yes to what they ask you to do no matter how crazy it sounds and use this bit of time to get everybody's creative juices flowing. Have one or two scenes and then invite them to go to the Inn for the night, especially if you are running a one shot and you want them to stay on track to finish in one go.

CITY LAYOUT AND PLACES OF INTEREST



The city is perched on a small hill, and its walls are shaped like an octagon. Two main roads go from the 4 gates to the main square in the center, and divide Windhill in four areas:

NE: Gods' corner, with the temple of the gods and the City Hall. Also houses for the rich.

SE: Mud corner, with houses for less affluent citizens. Belial's apothecary is there too.

SW: Silver Corner, with many merchants and stores. Thyco's Good Reads is here too.

NW: Copper corner, with the Creaky Dragon Inn and many houses for the common folk.

The Creaky Dragon Inn

A Large building close to the northern gate, where the party comes from. Stables are attached to it and the party's horses can be left there for a small fee. A large wooden model of a Blue Dragon is perched on top of the main entrance, and the light evening breeze makes it creak and squeak as it moves slightly.

NPCs

Basilus Klis: a lanky old elf that owns the Inn and also works as a bartender. He is sarcastic and short tempered, but since this is still the best Inn in town there are plenty of patrons every night. He will serve the party drinks and food, and not have too much time for conversation.

Bryce: a bulky human bard, playing a lute for the audience. Can be convinced to talk very easily but may require a donation or a drink. He is jovial and willing to listen to the party's stories too, and this can be a moment for the party to introduce their characters motivations and backstory. He will also relay the stories he heard so far in town:

"A demon or a devil opened shop in the south eastern part of town, would you believe that? I don't, that's ludicrous, but it may be that somebody peculiar has arrived in town, and these folks are just not so well travelled as us adventurers!" (the townsfolk are talking about Bella, see below under Belial's Apothecary).

"Monsters snatching people up and raiding the farms, or so they say. Who knows what's happening, I know that I will only travel during the day, and in numbers if I can."

"The yield is meant to be one of the best in many years, at least if there are enough farmers left to harvest it by the end of the season!"

These rumors can also be heard, in a similar version, from the many patrons of the Inn.



The Central square

A round square in the middle of town. A large stone statue of Frejia, the goddess of health and harvest is located in the middle of a stone basin. A jet of water springs from the horn of plenty she is carrying and fills the basin underneath. Benches and small trees are located around the statue.



NPCs

Gavan: a homeless dwarf. He was kidnapped by the raiders and brought to Skull cave, but managed to escape. He was very drunk at the time (and is when the party meets him) so he barely recalls getting there and back. He will describe the place as *"a dark place under a hill, I barely made it out alive after slaying many of these monsters... as I was leaving, I could feel the eyes of a stone giant looking at me, but I ran faster!"*

He did not really kill any monster, but simply snuck out of Skull Cave and got lucky. He saw Skull cave from afar when he was running away and thought it was a stone giant.



The City Hall

A big circular building in the Gods' Corner with a glass ceiling. The entrance leads into a first courtyard that goes all the way around and where scribes and officials receive people. From there it's possible to enter the inner audience room, where the Town Master receives important visitors and people seeking audience. This room has a glass ceiling and is in fact a small garden.



NPCs

Tomas Brahe, the Town Master. A middle aged human. He is a good person that truly wants to stop the raiding and kidnappings, but has a short temper and is impatient. He does not know where the raiders are based but stresses that the players should find from investigating around town.

Thuckse, Tomas' personal guard. A female half-orc. She lets people in and out of the audience room. She is in her 30s, a formidable warrior wearing plate armor and carrying a huge two handed sword.

The Temple of the Gods

A tall octagonal building of white marmor with steps leading to the entrance and columns all around the perimeter. Inside, each of the seven walls that are not the one with the entrance are dedicated to a different one of the seven main good-aligned Gods.



NPCs

Vilte, the priestess and oracle. An elderly half elf. She is a welcoming person and will assist the party in finding where the raiders are based if they make a donation. She also has a pet raven. She can commune with the gods and receive a message from Odin or any other deity of your choosing:

*"In the grasslands darkness gathers and must be slain
Find your courage and the sword made of light
Go to the place where the dead are resting in the plains
And put an end to the demon's blight."*

You can roleplay this bit by having the priestess chant and burn incense first, then have her eyes go completely white and say the above with a different, more manly voice.

Vilte can cast any spell from the cleric list that you think it's appropriate or needed. If the party asks to be blessed you can decide that Vilte wants to do this, depending on how she is asked and how the party behaves.

If Vilte blesses the party, they get 1 inspiration dice, a d8. Any time in the next 24 hours, that dice can be rolled and the result can be added to any roll made with a d20.



Belial's Apothecary

A modest building in the Mud corner, tucked away between two houses but near the main square. Inside, a pleasant smell of herbs and spices fills the air and shelves and shelves of remedies, plants and trinkets are on display. The name comes from the former owner.

NPCs

Bella, a Tiefling in her 30s, blue skinned and wearing golden spectacles. She is calm and professional, and very very rarely loses her composure as if all the years of teasing and discrimination towards her made her grow a thicker skin. She had to open her shop in the mud corner as the locals mistrust tieflings in this more rural part of the world, but she is determined to continue her business in Windhill.



Thyco's Good Reads

An old and dusty store full of books and maps of all kinds. A silver bell rings when customers enter. The books sells common books however you can decide that magic scrolls are for sale if you want to.

NPCs

Thyco, an old man with white hair and goatee wearing formal clothes and an apron, jovial and willing to sell maps of the area west of Windhill, that the party will likely need to arrive to Skull Cave. If the party tells him that they are going there to slay a demon he will gift the map for free.

He is knowledgeable of the area west of Windhill and will immediately know the party needs to know to Skull Cave if they ask him about an ancient burial site.



CHAPTER 2 – Skull Cave

The party will reach Skull cave in about 1 day of travel. It is up to them if they want to arrive there during the day or at night. In both cases they will find 2 demonspawn (Hyena) “guarding” the cave outside.

Read or paraphrase this:

You follow the road that leads west and around a few farms, some of which you find abandoned, many crows circling ominously around the fields and cottages that are shrouded in eerie silence. As you go further out in the grasslands west of Windhill, you eventually start following a smaller, older road that leads away from human settlement and into a sea of pale, tall grass. It's almost a day of travel before you can see a small hill in the distance that, from the shape of its dome, resembles a human skull.

The Grass is cleared around the hill, and you can see in the distance two humanoid figures that look like hyenas sitting around a campfire, roasting some food and not paying attention. They have not seen you yet.

If the party arrives during the day: Inside the cave there will be **1 demonspawn (Lion)**, **2 demonspawn (Hyena)** and **2 demonspawn (Jackal)**. They will, however, all be sleeping and could be sneaked on easily (DC 10 stealth check). They will also not join the battle outside unless one of the demonspawn outside is able to run into the cave to rouse them.

If the party arrives during the night: Inside the cave there will be **1 demonspawn (Lion)**, **1 demonspawn (Hyena)** and **2 demonspawn (Jackal)**. They will be wide awake and will join the battle outside of the cave once 3 turns have passed, whether the demonspawn outside manage to get inside to call them or not

THIS ENCOUNTER:

2 demonspawn (Hyena)

The party has an opportunity to ambush them. If they kill them quickly they won't be able to call for help from inside the cave.

If any of the demonspawn is still alive at the start of turn 2, they will try to run inside to call the others out.



A tunnel leads downstairs from the entrance of the cave, on steps carved in the stone. Only a few feet underground the cave opens up and reveals a small settlement and base of operations for the demonspawn. A large pen on one side of the cave holds some farmers prisoners, and another tunnel on the opposite site leads further downstairs.

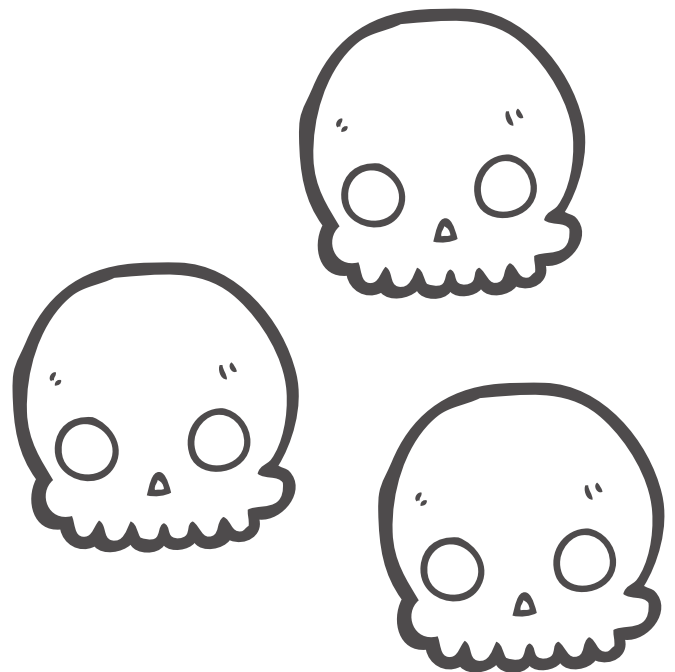
The demonspawn will not follow the party downstairs out of evident fear.

The Catacombs

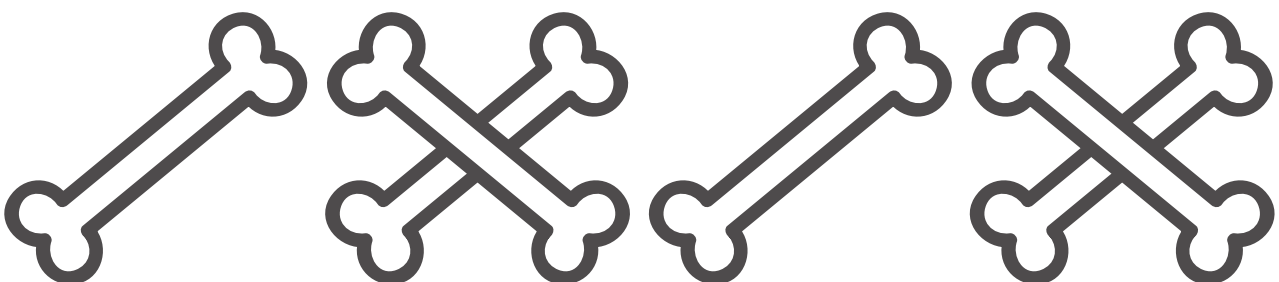
Under the first level of the cave lie the catacombs, an old complex of tombs and burial chambers where a now extinct tribe of humans used to bury their dead.

Read or paraphrase this:

You descend a few more steps of stairs until you finally reach a stone arch ornate with runes carved in the rock, a language too old for any living today to understand. Once you pass the arch, the walls to your left are lined with shelves and alcoves filled with skulls, bones and urns filled with ashes. The floor is dusty, and soon the hallway arrives to a small circular room with a pedestal in the middle.



If the players decide to investigate the tracks, an ability check with DC 15 will reveal that whoever left them clearly did not have any flesh on their feet (it was the **skeletal demonspawn** serving the demon in this lower level).



The small circular room has two obvious doors, one on the opposite side of the entrance and one to the right. If the party presses the pedestal down, a secret door opens to the left that can be found, but not opened, with a Wisdom (Perception) ability check (DC 15) as long as a player specifically examines the left wall or looks for secret doors. Inside the secret room there are 4 potions of healing (2d4+4 HP) and a scroll of fireball. The door in front is large and heavy, and cannot be opened as it lacks a handle or a keyhole.

The pedestal has a series of statues on top of it showing tribesfolk worshipping 3 larger animals: a dog, a vulture and a snake. Frescos on the ceiling show:

**A Dog
leading the
tribe to the
gods**

**A Vulture
attacking
the cattle**

**A Snake
biting a
tribesman**

These statuettes can be pulled like levers, with the following effects:

Pulling the vulture triggers an arrow trap. Every creature in the room has to do a Dexterity saving throw (DC 13), taking 3d4 damage on a fail.

Pulling the snake triggers a poisonous gas trap. Every creature in the room has to do a Constitution saving throw (DC 13), taking 1d12 damage on a fail.

Pulling the dog opens the door to the right, which leads to a short corridor and eventually to a small chamber with a large stone sarcophagus and the statue of a female human warrior holding a stone longsword in an offering pose.



Kar-Jel's room

Once the party enters the room to the right, whatever font of light they are carrying dims and a ghost appears, emerging from the statue: it's a famed warrior named Kar-jel that lead the tribe to many victories centuries ago.

She will ask the party to clear the caves of the demon's presence, and if they agree to bring it back, will offer the sword **Lightbringer** to them. This sword is the stone sword that the statue is holding, that will transform into a metal one if the party agrees.

If the party says they will bring it back, but don't mean to (ask the players), make them roll a Charisma (Deception) ability check, DC 15. If they are not successful, Kar-Jel does not give them the sword but still opens the door to the temple.

This sword is a +2 longsword that deals an additional 2d8 radiant damage vs demons and undead. It also be commanded to radiate bright light in a 60 feet radius and dispel magical darkness. This costs 1 bonus action.

Kar-jel will also open the door to the temple from the previous room,

If the party goes back to the previous room after meeting Kar-Jel, the door that was previously closed is now open and leads into an old temple.



CHAPTER 3 - The Boss fight

Read or paraphrase this:

The door that was previously closed is now open, but only thick darkness can be seen inside this room, as if a dark velvet curtain was pulled in front of the door.

whoever is wielding the sword can dispel the darkness by lightning up the sword. Once they do so, read:

As Lightbringer begins to cast its brilliant light, the darkness slowly disappears, almost melting away in front of your eyes. You see a large room with many columns to the sides and an altar at the end of it, scenes of devotion painted on the walls all around. At the end of the room, six skeletal figures, misshapen and grotesque, are chanting and glowing with magical energy, seemingly concentrating on a swirly mass of darkness that is growing on the altar. After a few moments, three of them stop chanting and turn to look at you.

If the party does not have Lightbringer they can dispel the magic darkness with any spell that allows them to do so.

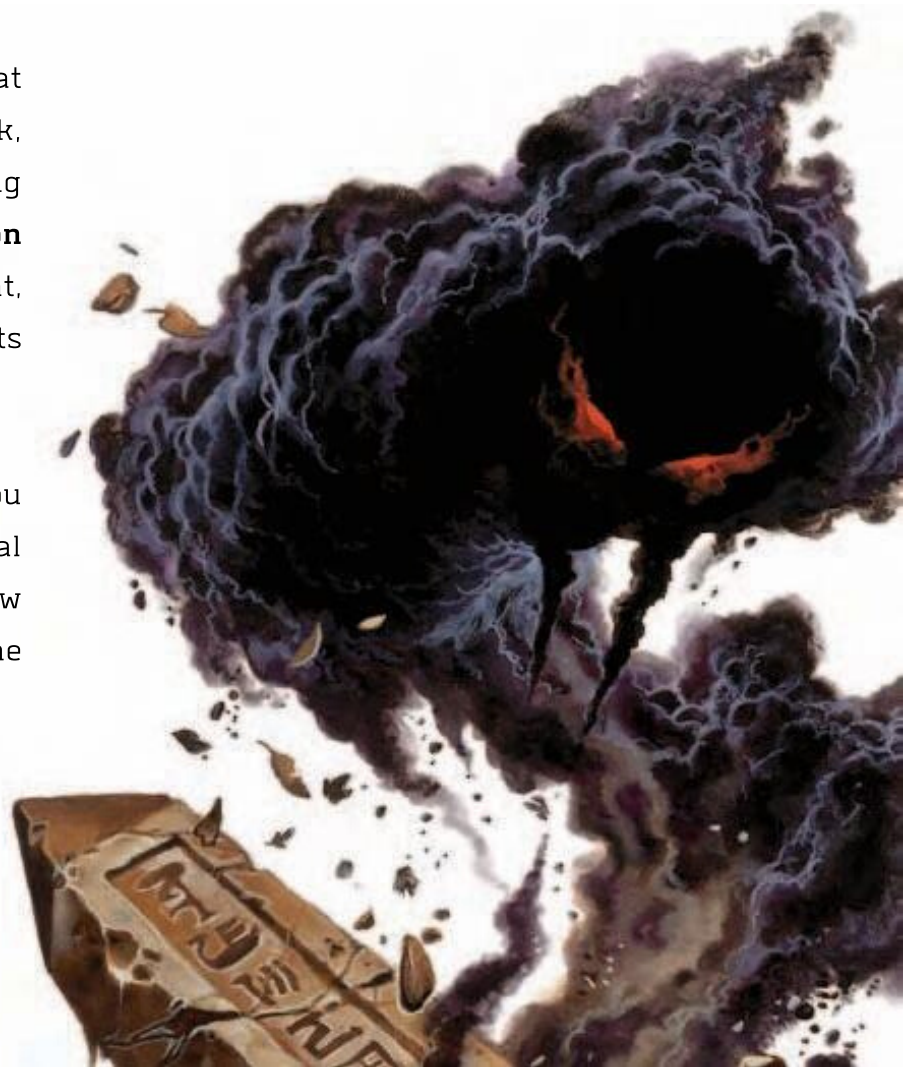
Alternatively, Kar-Jel will dispel the darkness after the party spends some time in the darkness hearing the skeletal demonspawn chanting.

Paraphrase the text if that is what happens.

The three **skeletal demonspawn** that noticed the party immediately attack, whilst the other three keep chanting until attacked. The **Shadow Demon** enters the fight on the 3d turn of combat, not fully formed. As it enters, it uses its Shriek ability first.

If the session is running late and you want it to end, make Lightbringer deal 4d8 radiant damage to the Shadow Demon when it hits and disintegrate the skeletal demonspawn on any hit.

Once the party returns the sword, they can lead the freed townsfolk back to safety and get their recompense.



Appendix: enemy statblocks

All enemies in this adventure are animals turned into monstrous humanoids. Gnolls are a good example of how they may look like (in fact the hyena demonspawn are basically gnolls), so imagine a similar mix, with different kinds of animals, for the other kinds of spawns.

Skeletal demonspawn are either of the other ones, but mostly skeletal with some meat and hide rotting and still clinging in places. They are also deformed and misshapen, as the corruption from the shadow demon is still affecting their dead bodies.

Demonspawn (Jackal)

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
+1	+2	+0	-2	+0	-2

 14 AC

 18 HP

Medium humanoid
Speed 40 feet
Darkvision 60 feet
Passive Perception: 13

actions

Dagger: melee attack
+4 to hit
1d4+2 piercing damage

Shortbow: ranged attack
+4 to hit
1d6+2 piercing damage

passive

Cunning action: Can dash, disengage or hide as bonus action

Sneak attack: follow rules for the rogue class

Demonspawn (Hyena)

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
+2	+1	+0	-2	+0	-2

 15 AC

 22 HP

Medium humanoid
Speed 30 feet
Darkvision 60 feet
Passive Perception: 11

actions

Club: melee attack
+4 to hit
1d4+2 bludgeoning damage

Javelin: ranged attack
+4 to hit
1d6+2 piercing damage

Bite: melee attack
+4 to hit
1d4+2 piercing damage

passive

Multiattack: The demonspawn (Hyena) makes two melee weapon attacks when it attacks.

Rampage: If the demonspawn (Hyena) scores a critical hit, it can use a bonus action to move half its speed and/or make a bite attack.

Demonspawn (Lion)

Str | **Dex** | **Con** | **Int** | **Wis** | **Cha**
+4 | **+2** | **+3** | **-1** | **+1** | **+2**

 **16** AC
 **35** HP

Medium humanoid
Speed 30 feet
Darkvision 60 feet
Passive Perception: 13

actions

Greatsword: melee attack
+6 to hit
2d6+4 slashing damage

Roar: target 1 creature, Charisma saving throw (DC 12), Feared on fail for 1 minute (repeat save at the end of every turn). If a creature saves against this they are immune from its effects for 1 hour.

passive

Multiattack: The demonspawn (Lion) makes two melee weapon attacks when it attacks.

Aura of courage: +3 to AC to self (already calculated in the 16 AC) and allies within 30 feet

Skeletal Demonspawn

Str | **Dex** | **Con** | **Int** | **Wis** | **Cha**
+2 | **-1** | **+1** | **-3** | **-3** | **-3**

 **12** AC
 **11** HP

Medium undead
Speed 20 feet
Blindsight 60 feet
Passive Perception: 8
Weakness: radiant damage

actions

Claws: melee attack
+4 to hit
1d4+2 piercing damage

Shadow Demon

Str | **Dex** | **Con** | **Int** | **Wis** | **Cha**
+4 | **+2** | **+3** | **-1** | **+1** | **+2**

 **16** AC
 **55** HP

Large Demon
Speed 30 feet
Blindsight 120 feet
Passive Perception: 13
Weakness: radiant damage

actions

Claws: melee attack
+7 to hit
2d6+3 necrotic damage

Shriek: (recharge 5-6) Targets all creatures in an area of 60 feet, Wisdom saving throw (DC 13), Paralyzed on fail until end of the demon's next turn.

passive

Multiattack: The Shadow Demon makes two melee weapon attacks when it attacks.

Sunlight sensitivity: Disadvantage on attacks and saving throws when in bright light.

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Feel free to reach out for questions, feedback or just to say hi!

I write modules for Table Top RPGs mostly out of passion and the desire of seeing more people getting into this fantastic hobby. Please consider leaving a review somewhere or following me on twitter.