

THE LEGACY OF THE WHITE DRAGON

-An introductory adventure for 1st level characters-



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POWERFUL LIMBS STRETCH AND SHIFT. AN ENORMOUS SET OF DULL GREY WINGS UNFOLD AND SHAKE AWAY THE SETTLED DEBRIS, AS A PAIR OF PALE BLUE EYES BLINK OPEN AMID THE MOUNTAIN THAT IS THIS COLOSSAL CREATURE.

*“ENOUGH OF THIS RACKET,” A BOOMING VOICE GROWLS.
“WON’T YOU LEAVE A DRAGON TO DIE IN PEACE?”*

BY LUCIELLA ELISABETH SCARLETT

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INTRODUCTION

More than fifteen hundred years ago, the white dragon Ilzhrothir Diamondfang emerged from his egg. He slowly grew from a small and weak wyrmling into a ferocious creature the size of a castle. His strength was legendary, and though he fought many foes he was never defeated. He amassed a huge fortune in diamonds, gold and silver, along with the frozen forms of the thousands of enemies.

As he entered into the twilight years of his life, Ilzhrothir found himself facing one final foe: old age. His limbs began to slow, and soon his wings were barely strong enough to support him. He cursed his own weakness and threw himself into wild battles as though determined to hasten his own end, but eventually even this fury began to fade into resignation. One final desire refused to wane: the desire to bring his colossal hoard with him into the next world – rather, the desire to build a new lair within death itself. As though summoned to his side by this final obsession, a mysterious voice came to whisper into the white dragon's ear...

This adventure can be run as either a single session game or as the introduction to an ongoing campaign. It is targeted at a group of 3-5 first level characters.

It is possible to run this adventure using only the free [Basic Rules](#) available online.

READING THE ADVENTURE:

Sections nestled in boxes are intended to be read aloud or paraphrased. Sections marked with [square brackets] may require customization. Names of monsters marked in **bold** can be found in the Monster Manual (abbreviated as MM), the Basic Rules (BR) or Appendix 1, as noted in each entry.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

The adventure begins with the party's arrival into the village of Silverwell. They have a chance to roleplay with the inhabitants and to learn about the bandit attacks in the nearby region named Rothir's Pass. The village headman offers a reward if the party can do something about this threat.

As soon as the characters arrive at Rothir's Pass and find their targets, they witness the bandits in combat with a pair of demons, and can choose whether to intervene. The path continues deeper into the caves, to an encounter with the bandit boss, Hilda, and finally with the white dragon himself, who emerges from the snow to tell his tale.

SETTING AND STYLE NOTES

The story events take place in late winter. Spring has already fallen further south, but in the north, it is still frigid and snowing. Long distance travelling is unsafe during this season, especially without a guide, but the locations described in the adventure are relatively close and can be reached without difficulty.

If you wish to continue from this point into a full campaign, spend some time considering where the adventure takes place, where the party would head next and the identity of the mysterious stranger that guided Ilzhrothir's actions, as well as any relevant lore or mythology in relation to the afterlife in the chosen setting.

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

If this adventure is being run with new players (including as a new DM), it is worth spending some time teaching the basics of the game and agreeing rules of conduct, especially if the intent is to continue into a longer campaign. This section provides some guidelines on the sorts of things DMs may wish to consider as part of their first session.

HOW TO PLAY

Provide a quick summary of how the game and each key stat or ability works:

- D&D is an interactive story: the DM acts as the narrator, creating the world and most of the characters that live within it, including antagonists. Players create the protagonists of the story and decide on their actions.
- Each character has strengths and weaknesses, described by the six ability scores (provide an overview of each).
- In addition to these core stats, characters are categorized into classes, which define their key strengths and abilities. For example, fighters and barbarians are better at dealing and withstanding physical damage, while wizards and sorcerers are physically weaker but can cast spells.
- The flow of the game is as follows: 1) the DM describes a scene, 2) the players decide what their characters say or do, and 3) the DM describes the result. If there is a degree of risk, the DM may call for a particular skill check, which is made by rolling a 20-sided die and adding the relevant modifier.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Find out what you and your players expect from each other during the game, and which sorts of conduct are encouraged and which are frowned upon. As an example, the following would be reasonable:

- All players are expected to listen to the Dungeon Master and to each other. Mobile phones are not to be used at the table.
- Roleplay is highly encouraged. Players should limit metagaming and table talk.
- Practice respect: allow everyone to speak equally and without interruption.
- Players are a team and should avoid acting against each other's interest. If in doubt, pause to ask the other players if they are comfortable with your words and actions. Bullying is not tolerated.
- General rules of the game are as per the *Player's Handbook* [note: outline any established house rules], but the DM has discretion at all times to make a ruling. The DM will act fairly and will not favor particular players over others.

You may wish to also address the following:

- When does each game session occur, and what happens if one or more players cannot make this day? How many players are needed at a minimum?
- Are players willing to complete "homework" such as reading background information about the world or writing session summaries? Or should this be avoided?

DM Tip:

It can be disappointing if players appear uninterested in the game or are unreliable in committing their availability. At times this may be due to problem players, but it may also be due to differing expectations: do your players actually want to explore the world, or do they simply want to have fun playing and socializing with friends? Do they enjoy roleplaying, or prefer combat? Did you come into the game with the same expectations?

Being a DM can be a lot of effort, but it should still be fun for both DM and players. If you are not enjoying yourself, either end the game, ask someone else to take a turn at being DM, or see if you can find a new group to play with.

PLAYER COMFORT LEVELS

Ask your players some general questions about topics that may be uncomfortable or triggering, but also be sure to seek specific feedback on any sensitive topics you intend to include in your game. These may include (but are not limited to) sexual assault, torture, physical or emotional abuse, self-harm, discrimination and slurs, structural oppression, and more.

Remember that for many players, roleplaying games are a form of escapism. Do not sacrifice your players' comfort for the sake of telling a story. For example, the *Player's Handbook* provides guidance on how NPCs may react to player characters on the basis of race, which could be uncomfortable for players who have experienced racism in real life. Likewise, LGBTQIA+ players that create queer characters are unlikely to appreciate homophobic slurs, misgendering or other forms of discrimination even if it is considered "realistic" for your setting.

Some players may be ok with or even prefer for certain forms of discrimination to exist within your world so long as you stay within certain boundaries – for example, a female player may create a character who is the female heir to a normally patriarchal clan, and may wish to explore the way she is breaking from the expectations of her society. This doesn't mean she wishes to have sexism heaped on her character. This distinction is sometimes referred to as lines and veils – "lines" are topics which are never to be discussed or included in the game world, and "veils" are allowed to be part of the story but not part of the spotlight.

One simple safety tool a DM can offer is an "x" card: place a piece of paper marked with an "x" at the center of the table. If a player reaches out and taps the card at any time, then either the game pauses to discuss the

situation out of character, or the DM immediately skips to the next scene (whoever tapped the x card chooses which). If you include an X card, you may also want to include an O card, demonstrating that the player is ok even if they are showing signs of distress, and an N card, showing that while things have not quite gotten to the point of an X card, they are proceeding down that path.

CHARACTER CREATION

This adventure is designed for a group of 3-5 1st level characters. Decide beforehand who is responsible for creating characters. If you are doing it on the day, allow an extra hour or so and consider printing out spell lists to help save time. Be clear upfront if there are any restrictions on particular races or classes – for example, do dragonborns exist in the chosen setting? Which deities exist for clerics? And what materials can players use to create their characters, e.g. the *Basic Rules*, *Player's Handbook*, non-core rulebooks, test material (Unearthed Arcana) or third-party content?

Finally, make sure that you understand your players' vision for their characters and how you can help fulfil this vision. Are there particular events that a player wishes to occur? Or particular ways they want their character to develop? This is your chance to allow them to shine.

FINAL TIPS BEFORE YOU START...

Remember that people change over time, and that what is discussed in the first session may not reflect you or your players' desires and comfort levels at later stages in the campaign. Make sure to frequently go back and make any necessary adjustments to the expectations you set up front.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Before commencing the narration, establish the party's background as follows:

- You are a group of new adventurers who recently set out in search of fame and fortune in the wild. Have each player introduce themselves, explain why they chose to become an adventurer, and explain how they met the others. If desired, agree a name for the group.
- You were headed to a place called Mount Neboria. Rumors tell of gemstone encrusted halls hidden deep within the caves of the mountain. Many adventurers have already headed this way, though none have returned to the village to tell the tale.

When everyone is ready, narrate as follows:

It was only yesterday that you set out from your home town, seeking the type of adventure that a small and sleepy village simply cannot offer. Only yesterday, and yet already you find yourself hopelessly lost. You are well-stocked with food and water, but this is little comfort against the pervasive chill of the northern lands.

Night has fallen, and the three-quarter moon shines dimly through the clouds as you make your way across the icy landscape. You are far from your course, and snow is beginning to drift down softly from the heavens. It is with no small sense of relief that you pass a grove of trees and spot a small cave set into a hill. It is with somewhat less relief that you hurry inside the cave only to realize that it is already inhabited. Directly opposite from you, a black-furred bear glares at you with bleary eyes. It does not seem pleased at the disturbance.

Encounter: roll initiative for an encounter with a **black bear** (BR pg. 12, MM pg. 318).

Increase its HP to 30. The party are close to the exit if they wish to run, and the bear does not chase them outside. At the conclusion of the combat, there is an ominous rumbling sound. The party have just enough time to escape before a cave-in occurs.

Development: once outside the cave, a character that succeeds on a DC10 a Wisdom (Perception) check spots the lights of a village up ahead (below the hill where the party are standing). If everyone fails their checks, they eventually stumble across the village after a miserable hour trampling through the snow and walking in circles.

SILVERWELL

The village lies at the foot of a pair of mountains, with a larger mountain faintly visible in between.

The village has no wall or other fortification save for a thin speckling of trees broken by a path half hidden in the snow. A roughly constructed wooden sign bears the name of the town: "Silverwell".

Silverwell has the following characteristics:

- It sits at the foot of a mountain range. Three mountains can be seen clearly from the town: Cinderfall to the north-west, Shadescliff to the north-east, and the immense Mount Neboria in the far north. Between Cinderfall and Shadescliff is a gorge known as Rother's Pass.
- In the town center is a small lake which is frozen over in the winter. This lake is Silverwell, the village's namesake. A narrow stream (also frozen) feeds into the lake and continues on beneath a pair of small wooden bridges.
- The total population is 253 people, consisting of 211 adults and 42 children, all of which are **commoners** (BR pg. 54, MM pg. 344). At night, most people stay indoors to escape the chill, but a few can be spotted

walking by with simple lanterns. The vast majority of the residents are human, with the exception of a small number of halflings, a pair of elves and a single dwarf. Visitors are not uncommon however, such that even unusual races can expect a degree of acceptance.

- The village has a bakery, a butchery, a grocery and a few other small shops, along with a few small shrines. Other than the inn, all businesses are closed for the night.
- The largest and most noticeable building is the Dancing Cow (outlined below). At night, the rest of the town is dark and silent except for lights and the wind and the loud music of the tavern.

DM Tip:

Keep a list of names handy to help you to improvise characters that your players may unexpectedly interact with. First names are generally sufficient for side characters, especially commoners which are unlikely to hold a surname. Here are some example names for use within Silverwell: Olga, Ellic, Oswell, Katia, Danya, Terrence, Edgar, Maria, Lyn and Horace.

All of the inhabitants of Silverwell are **commoners**, which means that they have 4 hit points, an armor class of 10 and do not add any bonuses to skill checks. As DM, you can adjust this to make a particular NPC better or worse than average at a particular skill: simply add or subtract 2-4 points from the relevant check or adjust HP and AC.

THE DANCING COW

The Dancing Cow acts as both a tavern and inn and as the sole indoor communal area for the townsfolk. It has a crudely etched and partially rotten wooden sign out the front with the image of a dancing cow. Music streams out of the tavern; someone is playing the lute and singing, though not very skillfully. The shutters are mostly closed to keep out the night's chill, but light still

streams out through the slim cracks in the shutters and through the half-open door.

As the party enters, narrate as follows:

The tavern is warm, bright and cheerful, and holds at least fifty villagers packed inside, along with a short and plump bartender and a pair of busy waitresses that dart across the floor with trays of food and ale. In one corner, a bard plucks at a lute, missing every few notes and singing loudly and cheerfully off-key. He seems to be enjoying himself, and luckily the babble of the surrounding crowd covers the worst of the racket.

The front half of the tavern is made up of a combination of chattering families and loud, drunken revelers, while to the back is a larger, quieter table where some sort of meeting seems to be taking place. The adults in the latter area often pause to throw dirty looks over to the group nearby who have broken out into a raucous drinking game.

Ask players what they wish to do. If they split up and act separately, they may do so without losing sight of each other so long as they remain within the tavern.

ORDERING

Characters can either order at the bar or draw the attention of a waitress. Prices are as follows, and the fare is simple but enjoyable:

- A standard meal (bread, fish, cheese, pickled vegetables): 2 sp
- Dessert (apple pie): 1 sp
- Mug of ale: 4 cp
- Mug of mulled wine: 7 cp
- Pitcher of ale/table wine: 1 sp
- Apple juice: 4 cp
- A room at the inn: 5 sp per person per night. There are 10 rooms upstairs and 9 are available.

The barkeep is a friendly man named Alderick, who readily volunteers information and listens intently to any tales the adventurers share (true or not). The waitresses are his daughters, Elma and Lena. His wife, Rhonda, is head chef, and their two sons, Lane and Nendel, are kitchenhands. Alderick can provide the following information:

- Mount Neboria (the party's original goal) is far to the north – the group will need to stock up if they are headed that way! The mountain is visible from the village during the daytime. There are plenty of rumors about treasure in the area, but none have been proven. It is likely a fool's errand.
- The best way of getting to Mount Neboria is via Rothir's Pass, a gorge which cuts between the first two mountains of the range. Villagers often head that way to hunt, however it seems there is some trouble in the region at present.
- From what Alderick has heard, the discussion at the larger table relates to recent bandit attacks. The party looks like a strong group of adventurers – Alderick is sure that the headman can arrange a reward if they can chase off these bandits!
- The man and woman seated at the center of the larger table are Reynold and Lannis Tindall, the headman and woman of Silverwell. The bard is a fellow named Jose. (*Quietly*) he's not very good, but he's doing his best.

THE BARD

The man playing the lute is named Jose. He considers himself to be an artist – indeed, the finest musician in all of the region – and is upset about being interrupted. A DC12 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Jose to pause and listen to what a character is saying. This check is made with advantage if flattery is involved.

Jose is a diligent eavesdropper and can provide the same information as any other character within the tavern. He is also well-versed in the region and can provide directions and advice. If he particularly likes the person who is speaking with him, he tries to impress them with an additional tidbit: four days ago, he was out walking early in the morning and an enormous shape up in the sky above Rothir's Pass – the shape of a gigantic dragon! He pinched himself to see if he was dreaming, but he was wide awake. The moment he looked away, the dragon was gone, but Jose is confident in what he saw and has been waiting to see if the creature will show itself again.

If the party follows Jose's advice and join him the next morning to look for the dragon, they do not see anything. Jose however looks favorably on the party member(s) from this point, granting them advantage on Persuasion and Deception checks made against him.

DM Tip:

When a player is invited to make an ability check, the DM can choose whether to announce the difficulty class (DC) or to leave it unsaid. Announcing the DC gives players clarity about the chances of success, which can speed up gameplay and support the DM's credibility as master of rules, but can also break immersion if it gives players new knowledge about a check they are attempting.

As a general guide, it is ok to reveal the DC of most Strength, Dexterity and Constitution checks, such as checks to climb a wall or pick a lock. Avoid revealing the DC for most Wisdom and Intelligence checks, especially Insight, Perception and Investigation, and for unexpected saving throws. Otherwise, use discretion to decide whether players could have reasonably determined the difficulty on their own, or how important it is to keep them in the dark.

THE COUNCIL MEETING

The back half of the tavern is taken up by a meeting of twenty villagers. Those at the table are unlikely to notice anyone's approach unless that person makes an effort to announce their presence. Introduce the scene as follows:

The larger table in the second half of the tavern seems quieter at first, but as you approach you catch the sounds of a heated argument.

In the center of the group, a well-dressed but haggard looking man meekly attempts to direct the situation as voice after voice cuts over him. Many of those assembled are already on their feet, seeming to struggle to keep their voices down.

"This is a test, don't you see?" one man shouts. "If we don't fight back now, those bandits'll know that Silverwell is fresh for the taking!"

"Just *who* is going to fight back, Kastor?" a tall woman asks. She stands near the center, looming over the facilitator with her arms crossed over her chest. "Against bandits, and who knows what else? We're a farming village, not a militia!"

"If they're not interested in us, leave 'em be!" another voice cries out, and is followed by a chorus of assent. Kastor scowls furiously, and as though this is a signal, several more voices begin to argue, calling out over one another.

Depending on how long they eavesdrop, players can learn the following:

- Several villagers have been killed by bandits in a place called Rothir's Pass.
- Kastor wants to lead a party to go and fight the bandits. Most of the townsfolk are not keen on this idea.
- The well-dressed man is Reynold Tindall, the headman of Silverwell. The tall woman

who spoke before is the headwoman, Lannis Tindall.

- A pair of the villagers that were killed left behind orphaned children.

If players do not interrupt, the meeting concludes with Lannis's announcement that the discussion has run its course, and that they will simply wait things out for now. A furious Kastor storms off, while the rest of the group slowly disperses. Reynold and Lannis remain at the table.

If players approach and ask questions, they can learn the following:

- The residents of Silverwell often go to Rothir's Pass to hunt and fish. This is an important supplement to their farming.
- Two days ago, four villagers went to Rothir's Pass and did not return. A search party was called, and discovered the corpses of each of these villagers, strung up outside the entrance to Rothir's Pass with a sign that read: "Stay out of the mountains!" The slain hunters were brought back from Rothir's Pass and were buried earlier today.
- The villagers know that this must be the work of bandits. They know that bandits are common further north, in the villages surrounding Mount Neboria, though Silverwell has been lucky in that it has not suffered this way in the past. None of the villagers are trained or equipped to fight, except to hunt.
- The bandits have not yet attacked the town, but many fear it is only a matter of time.

Either Reynold or Lannis can offer a reward of 25 gp per person if the party manages to drive off the bandits. Silverwell is a small town and this is all that they can spare. They explain that Rothir's Pass is north of the village, and is easily accessed by following the stream away from the lake.

FIGHTS AND DRINKING GAMES

Within the Dancing Cow there is a group of loud and obnoxious villagers ready to challenge any newcomers to either a fight or a drinking game. These are the local woodcutters (humans named Kia, Telm and Liam), two travelers (an elf named Elaniel and a dwarf named Silkas), and the village troublemaker, Mick (human).

Mick is already quite drunk and is quick to challenge strong-looking newcomers to a fight. He expects them to reject the offer and is somewhat disturbed if they accept. If he can back down without looking foolish he does, otherwise treat this as a combat encounter with the following characteristics:

- Mick suggests a wager of 5 sp, which each combatant must place on the table beforehand. Mick has a total of 20 sp in his purse for players that wish to negotiate.
- Mick has 10 hit points, a Strength of 14 (+2) and +4 Athletics. He has a +2 bonus to hit with either unarmed strikes or improvised weapons. Unarmed strikes deal 3 (1+2) bludgeoning damage and improvised weapons deal 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage. All of this damage is non-lethal.
- Victory is decided if either combatant is knocked out, pinned or withdraws.
- There are many witnesses, who team up to pin down any character that deals lethal damage or otherwise takes the fight too far. Elaniel loudly cheers through any fights while Silkas watches in disgust and mutters to himself. Kia, Telm and Liam are all open to bets on the outcome.

If any party member(s) instead stays for a drinking game, run this as follows:

- All players place a wager of 10 sp on the table to enter. Whoever is in the game for the longest wins all of this silver (after paying for the drinks). A player loses if they either withdraw or are unable to continue.

- Each round, everyone makes a Constitution saving throw. The DC is equal to 10+the number of rounds to date: e.g. it is DC10 on the first round and DC15 on the sixth.
- Take note of each time a character fails their saving throw. After one failure, they have disadvantage on all ability checks and attacks. After two failures, they also have disadvantage on all saving throws except Constitution saving throws. After three failures, they fall unconscious, and have one level of exhaustion the next morning.
- Refer to the following table for each character's Constitution save bonus and the number of saves they have failed as of the time the players join:

Character	Con Save Bonus	Failed Saves
Elaniel	+5	–
Silkas	+4	–
Mick	+4	1
Kia	+2	–
Telm	+2	1
Liam	+2	2

If characters participate in either a fight or a drinking game, regardless of whether they win or lose they win a level of acceptance among the members of the table. Depending on how things have progressed, the table may share some information about recent events in Silverwell and about the discussion occurring at the nearby table (see “The Council Meeting”).

DM Tip:

The DM can control the pacing of the game by choosing the type of rules that apply to particular situations. For example, if the entire party decides to sit down and engage in drinking game, the long form rules above would be appropriate, but if only one player wishes to do this, it may be best to replace these rules with a single check. Roll an opposed Strength check to see who wins the barfight, and roll an opposed Constitution saving throw to see who wins the drinking game.

HEADING TO BED

It is late in the evening, and the party have been travelling all day. Award 25 XP to each player character, or up to 50 XP if they roleplayed particularly well.

Staying at the inn costs 5 sp per person. There are ten rooms upstairs, and only one is currently occupied. Staying at one of the houses, if players can convince a stranger to take them in, costs nothing, but requires the full party to spend the night together in a fairly small room. If players instead choose to set up camp, have them roll a DC15 Wisdom (Survival) check to see if they can create a safe camp in the cold weather; failure means that everyone commences the next day with *exhaustion*, and a result of less than 5 means that they also take 4 (2d4) cold damage.

ROTHIR'S PASS

If the party spend the night at the Dancing Cow, Alderick greets them in the morning with hot porridge and mugs of tea. These are included in the room fare. As they set out, describe the scene as follows:

A curtain of fog hangs low over the land, pierced through by morning sunlight. It is still early in the day as you set out, but already the small town is alive, preparing for the coming spring. Outside, you can see villagers hard at work mending homes and wagons, and from inside you can hear the noise of flour being ground, cloth being woven and tools being crafted.

At the center of the town, you easily spot the village's namesake: the gleaming lake Silverwell, frozen solid and dusted with snow. A small stream leads away from the village. The way is quickly swallowed by fog, but you can see the shapes of the mountains rearing up somewhere ahead.

Confirm whether there is anything the party wishes to do before setting out. Once they are ready, have everyone roll a DC10 Wisdom (Survival) check to see how well they navigate across the frozen land. There are no major consequences for failing, however the DM should describe that their character is continually falling over along the way.

If the party follows the stream as directed, the journey takes a little over an hour, much of which is spent travelling uphill. After forty minutes of travel, the way levels out. Rothir's Pass itself is a gorge that cuts between the two mountains, with Cinderfall on the left and Shadescliff on the right. The gorge is roughly twenty feet wide, which sheer cliffs on either side. The frozen stream continues through the center, surrounded by lush vegetation even in the chill winter.

The scene of the last bandit attack remains stark. The corpses have been removed, but the bloodstains and tattered ropes can still be spotted beneath a light layer of snow. A DC12 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals tracks leading further into the gorge. The tracks appear to belong to a human. There are no other clues.

If players continue into the gorge for another ten minutes, any character with a passive Perception of at least 11 spots a pair of bored looking **bandits** (BR pg. 53, MM pg. 343) standing guard outside of a cave set into the sheer wall of Shadescliff (the eastern mountain). The bandits are making no attempt to hide themselves.

Allow the players to discuss and decide on their approach, however even as they start to act, there is a shout from within the cave. The two bandits turn to look and then together draw their weapons and dash inside. If players follow and gaze into the cave, describe the scene as follows:

You see a small, roundish cavern with a narrow opening on the opposite side. Within the cave, four bandits fight desperately against a pair of mottled green creatures with long, curved horns and whip-like tails. The monsters do not look like creatures of this world; if anything, they seem demonic in nature. To one side, a fallen bandit stares at you with glassy-eyes, blood still pumping from the deep claw marks scratched across her abdomen.

In this scene, two **quasits** (MM pg. 63 or refer to Appendix 1) are in combat with four **bandits**. Two of the bandits, and one of the quasits, have been reduced to half HP.

DM Tip

At any time, the DM may choose to adjust an encounter either based on player actions or based on the pace and style of the game. An easy way to do so is to adjust the hit points of the combatants or to give them additional items or abilities. Alternatively, the DM can introduce reinforcements to rebalance the sides of the combat or can hasten the end of the encounter if foes choose to flee.

Here are a few ways that the encounter with the bandits and quasits can be modified:

- One additional quasit is invisible at the time the adventurers first peer into the cave. It appears 1-2 rounds later.
- One of the bandits was frightened by a quasit's Scare ability and ran down the passageway. He eventually returns with three reinforcements.

Find out what players want to do, e.g. whether they wish to attack (and who) or if they would prefer to watch and wait. Neither the quasits nor bandits are friendly to the party, but while the quasits attack indiscriminately, the bandits focus their attacks on the quasits unless given reason to do otherwise. If the players do not intervene, the fight concludes with all quasits dead and two bandits alive but injured (5 HP each). The

quasits disappear into a puff of dark smoke. The bandits pause to catch their breath.

If the party have revealed themselves, the bandits turn to them at the conclusion of the fight. They try to scare off the party rather than fight, but fight if needed so long as their numbers are at least equal to that of the party. On initial meeting, the bandits refuse to answer questions about who they are, though they freely admit that they killed the villagers: "They wouldn't keep their noses out of our business. Butt out, or you're next."

DM Tip:

Encounters become more interesting when there are multiple possible approaches. Depending on their moral compass and reasoning, players may either choose to intervene in the bandits' fight or to simply watch and wait for a good opportunity.

The bandits in this adventure are not good-hearted: in order to survive, each has robbed from and even killed innocent villagers and travelers. This does not mean that they are incapable of reason, nor that they attack indiscriminately. They are distrustful and hostile towards outsiders, but they know that their boss is acting strangely and can be persuaded to seek help from the players.

Bandit names may be either common names or nicknames that they have picked up over time. Examples: Ada, Keth, Shelly, Smoke, Badger, Ritchie, Claw, Lightning. In order to differentiate the bandits, the DM can give each a particular quirk or to equip them with different weapons, e.g. swapping their scimitar (1d6+1 slashing damage) for a dagger (1d4+1 piercing damage) or rapier (1d8+1 piercing damage).

Players can use Charisma checks (Deception, Intimidation or Persuasion) to convince the bandits to talk, or can use spells such as Charm Person. Use the following points to roleplay the interaction:

- *Who are you?* The bandits are members of the Highcliff Clan, named after a village

closer to Mount Neboria which was destroyed by an avalanche. The survivors who lost their homes and livelihoods turned to banditry in order to survive.

- *How many of you are there?* All of the bandits are present except for a pair that are out patrolling further north. They are expected to report back in about an hour.
- *Why are you here?* The bandits do not understand the reasons, but their boss insisted that they stand guard over the caves and prevent anyone or anything from entering until she returns. They have not seen her in three days.
- *Who do you work for?* The leader of the bandit gang is a woman named Hilda. She was the original founder of the band and has led them loyally since, but has been behaving oddly of late. She was always fearsome, but she had had a kind side as well. Hilda's bizarre orders to guard the cave were communicated coldly and with no explanations. She threatened death to any who disobeyed.
- *Can you tell us anything else about Hilda?* Hilda is a fearsome fighter, and is also capable of casting some spells. She is blind in her left eye, but this does not impede her in a fight.
- *What were those things you were fighting, and where did they come from?* The bandits do not know, but they are not the first monsters to appear over the past few days – one or two appear every day, though these ones have been the strongest yet. All of them have approached from the north as far as the bandits can tell. It seems the monsters have been trying to get to where Hilda is. The bandits are concerned about their leader, but have decided to trust her; she has never been wrong yet.

Hilda's orders are absolute, and any bandits that remain alive and conscious bar the path of a creature attempting to get through. If the party wish to convince the bandits to let them

pass, they must either succeed on a DC14 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check, made with advantage if they appeal to the bandits' concerns around Hilda's behavior, or a DC20 Charisma (Intimidation) check. The players may repeat either of these checks up to two more times before the bandits attack, but increase the DC by 2 points for each failure.

THE ICE CAVES

The cave closest to Rothir's Pass contains little of value beyond a few sacks of provisions (preserved meat, double-baked bread and dried herbs) and spare weapons and armor. The latter are of below average quality, but players can find any simple weapon, shield or light armor that they wish.

The passageway leading out of the cave is wide enough for up to three people to walk side by side. The next area is the main living area of the bandits. If they search, players can uncover a total of 45 gp, a healer's kit, 2 *potions of healing* and various personal trinkets belonging to the bandits – of course, any bandits with the party at this point object to a search of their belongings, though they are willing to produce the healer's kit and potions if convinced to ally with the party.

If the party follows the path onwards, it slopes gently upwards, winding its way around the inside of the mountain. Partway through is an *alarm* spell that alerts Hilda if anyone comes this way. If anyone is using *detect magic*, they spot an aura of abjuration magic. The spell covers the entirety of this section of the tunnel; there is no way for the party to get past without triggering her spell except with use of *dispel magic* (which is unavailable to 1st level players).

HILDA'S LAST STAND

At the end of the path, the players see the following:

The narrow tunnel opens up into a vast chamber, at least two hundred feet wide and easily as tall, with a wide gash far above, revealing a cloudy sky pierced through with golden sunlight. In the shadowy space below is a huge greyish rock foundation sprinkled with snow.

Hilda is already alert to the party's presence and is waiting, invisible, to the side of the tunnel. The moment anyone walks through, she attacks:

You are given no time to admire the scene before there is a sudden rush of motion to your left, and a figure rushes towards you brandishing a pair of wickedly curved scimitars.

Have players roll initiative, however Hilda has surprise in the first round. Her stats are in Appendix 1. She is beyond reason, and as long as she is conscious she attacks anyone within the chamber, including any bandits the party brought with them. She does not leave the chamber to pursue if they flee. If players or NPCs attempt to communicate with her, all she says is, "You should not have come". Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) checks (DC 10) reveal that she is either charmed or possessed.

As soon as Hilda is reduced to 5 hit points or less, describe the last attack or other action, and then the following:

All of a sudden, the bandit chief seems to stiffen. From her lips springs an inhuman screech that pierces through the air, rattling your bones and tearing at your eardrums. The sound seems to stretch on impossibly, but even as you stagger back and try to steady yourselves, the scream cuts off and the woman tumbles limply to the ground.

Silence falls for a brief moment, but before you even have time to process what has happened, there is a rumbling sound, and the mound of stone and snow behind your foe seems to come to life.

Powerful limbs stretch and shift. An enormous set of dull grey wings unfold and shake away the settled debris, as a pair of pale blue eyes blink open amid the mountain that is this colossal creature.

"Enough of this racket," a booming voice growls. "Won't you leave a dragon to die in peace?"

ILZHROTHIR'S TALE

Ilzhrothir has lived for over one-and-a-half thousand years and is close to death. In his younger years, he was vicious and spiteful, but much of his former personality has faded. Although he is not particularly friendly towards the party, he will answer most of their questions, and is slow to anger. See Appendix 1 for his stats.

For those who are looking to continue into a longer-term campaign, the conversation with Ilzhrothir is an opportunity for the Dungeon Master to introduce next steps and foreshadow a later enemy. Use the following points, or adjust as desired, to answer questions from the characters:

- *Who are you?* I am Ilzhrothir Diamondfang, of course. Were you not looking for me?
- *What did you do to Hilda?* You mean that human woman who was here before? I did nothing. It came here a few days ago and refused to leave. I assume it was sent by that wizard.
- *Which wizard?* Hmm, so you really aren't working for him? Well, I suppose there's no harm in telling you...

When prompted, Ilzhrothir tells his story. Allow player interjections and adjust accordingly.

"I was once the most powerful dragon in all the north. None could defeat me in battle: I tore down giants with my claws, and amassed treasures the like of which this world has never seen, piled high within the caverns of Mount Neboria.

"No mortal foe could have defeated me, but even mighty Ilzhrothir could not stand against the ages, and with age came wretched weakness. Only look upon me now, and see the pathetic creature I have become: a dragon that cannot fly freely is no dragon at all. I finally realized that, at least in this world, Ilzhrothir Diamondfang's strength had come to an end. But in the next world... well, his luck shall be very different. So I thought, at least, but perhaps I was wrong."

A trace of regret touches Ilzhrothir's sapphire eyes. "I was short-sighted. There was one final wish I kept with me even as my strength waned. It was unimaginable that in death I would lose the treasures I had gathered – had gathered over the course of over a millennium!" The dragon suddenly roars, and the cavern shakes with the sound. Ilzhrothir's rage fades as fast as it appeared, and he continues, "A wizard came to speak with me. He claimed that he could transport my riches into the next world, if I would but offer him a small share in my treasure. In other circumstances, I would have frozen him where he stood for his insolence, but what were a few baubles worth to me when faced with the loss of a whole mountain?"

"I did what he said. I followed his instructions and lent him my power, or at least what was left of it, and with that power, the man opened a pathway into the next world. I felt hope, for the last time in my long life.

"But soon my treasure was gone, and in its place were demons by their thousand, flooding out of Neboria and across the surrounding areas. Most of them were weaklings I could have destroyed with a single swipe of my claws, but there were so many, and my strength was not what it had been. I fled from the mountain and flew as far as I could carry myself on these feeble wings. And here I lay, waiting for death with absolutely nothing to show for my life." The dragon hisses with frustration, and falls silent.

If the characters wish to ask any more questions, he answers them to the best of their ability. He does not know the identity of the stranger, beyond a name: Kelzreth. He does know that Hilda was most likely watching over him on Kelzreth's command, though he is not sure why, considering the ritual is already over. If the party wants to know more about what happened, Ilzhrothir suggests they would have to travel to Mount Neboria, if there is anything left of the place. Ilzhrothir fled four days ago.

Eventually, Ilzhrothir grows tired of the questioning:

The ancient dragon shifts and twitches where he lies – a hint that you may have overstayed your welcome. "Leave me now," the dragon growls. "Before I lose my patience. I may be old, but I am not so old that I cannot destroy a band of tiny little creatures such as you."

The party will hopefully catch this as their cue to leave. If not, Ilzhrothir readies his breath weapon.

If the party check on Hilda, they find her alive but unconscious. She is carrying a total of 25 gp along with a ring of cold resistance and a spellbook containing all of the spells on her statblock. Otherwise, there is nothing of value to be found in this chamber.

CONCLUSION

Award 75 XP to each player for completing this quest, along with XP for each foe defeated including any who fled or were tackled through social interaction.

If Hilda is left alive, she awakens an hour later with no memory of the past week. The last thing she remembers is going for a walk after dinner one day while the band were close to Heavenshadow, one of the towns further north. Both she and any bandits that survived want nothing more to do with the adventurers. They have saved up enough gold by now (if it hasn't been plundered) that they should be able to find a place to settle down and live more honest lives.

If the party takes their story back to the village, Reynold makes good on his promise to pay 20 gp to each of them. He is however disturbed at what they have told him about the demons, and urges them to head north.

Ilzhrothir slips away into death that very night. By the next morning, a strange sight is visible on the horizon: around the summit of the Mount Neboria, dark shadows shift and play as though beckoning the way to the north.

-THE END-

APPENDIX 1: MONSTER STATS

Refer to the *Monster Manual* or *Basic Rules* for monsters marked in **bold** within the adventure text which are not listed here.

QUASIT

Tiny fiend (demon, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (3d4)

Speed 40 ft., (10 ft., fly 40 ft. in bat form; 40 ft., climb 40 ft. in centipede form; 40 ft., swim 40 ft. in toad form.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shapechanger. The quasit can use its action to polymorph into the beast form of a bat, centipede, or toad, or into its demon form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is not transformed. It reverts to its demon form if it dies.

Magic Resistance. The quasit has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects,

ACTIONS

Claws (Bite in Beast Form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC10 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Scare (1/Day). One creature of the quasit's choice within 20 feet of it must succeed on a DC10 Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the quasit is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Invisibility. The quasit magically turns itself invisible until it attacks or uses Scare, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the quasit wears or carries is invisible with it.

HILDA OF THE HIGHCLIFF CLAN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +4, Perception +2

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blindfighting. Hilda is blind in her left eye, but is able to rely on both her right eye and her ears in combat. Even if she is blinded, attacks on her do not have advantage unless she is also deafened.

Spellcasting. Hilda is a 3rd level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Hilda has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, light, prestidigitation*

1st Level (4 slots): *alarm, burning hands, false life, shield*

2nd Level (2 slots): *enlarge/reduce, invisibility*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hilda makes two attacks with her scimitars.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

REACTION

Parry. Hilda adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must be able to either see or hear her attacker and must be wielding a melee weapon.

ILZHROTHIR DIAMONDFANG

Gargantuan dragon, neutral evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 429 (26d20 + 156)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	3 (-4)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +13, Wis +10, Cha +11

Skills History +9, Perception +17

Damage Immunities cold

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (5/Day). If Ilzhrothir fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Slow Destruction. Ilzhrothir must take an action to inhale prior to each use of his breath weapon.

ACTIONS

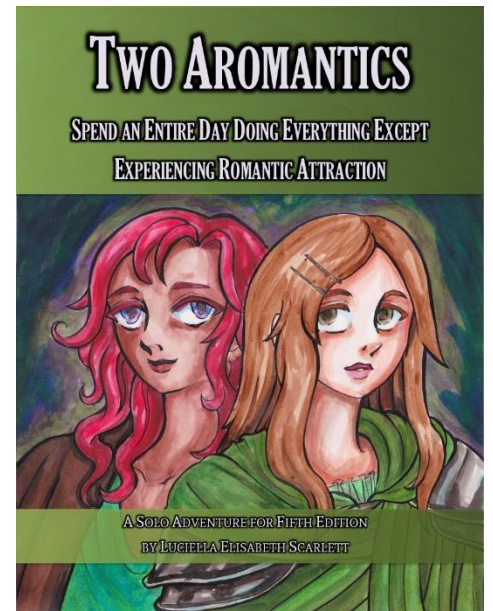
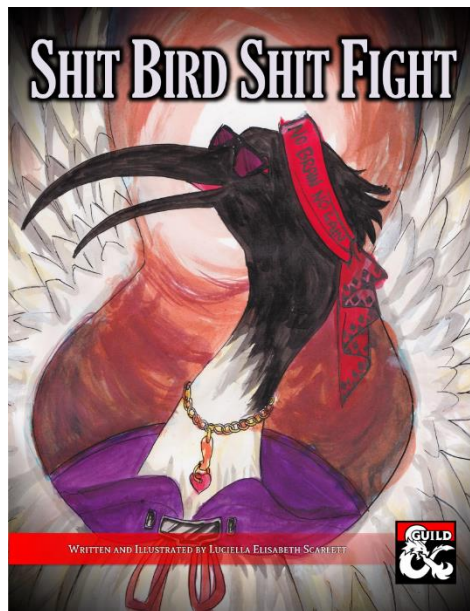
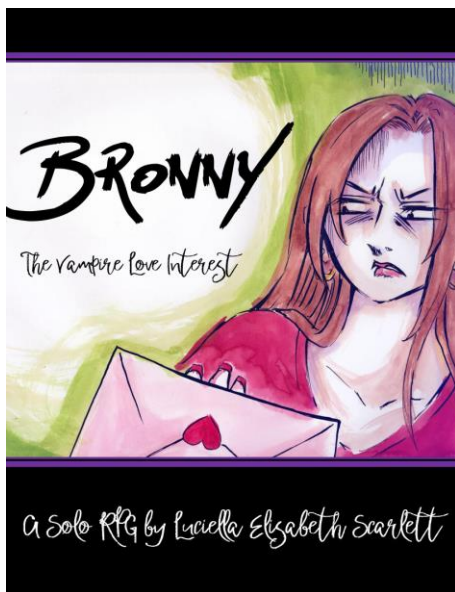
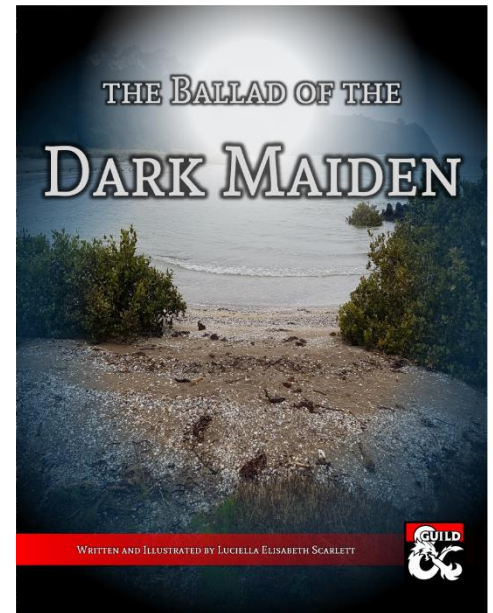
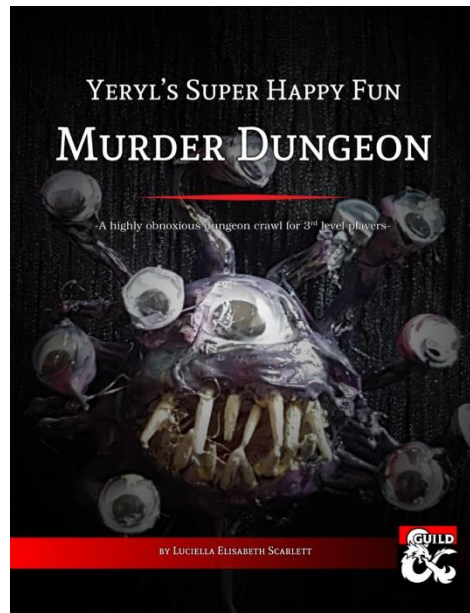
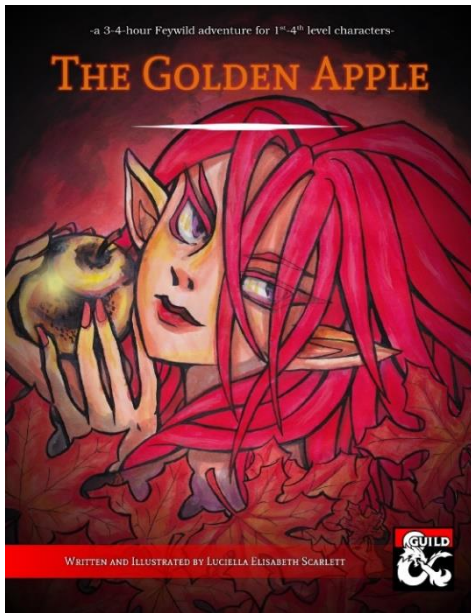
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) cold damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5-6). Ilzhrothir exhales an icy blast in a 120 ft., cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 24 Constitution saving throw, taking 81 (18d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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