

Hoard of the Dragon Queen

Background

Eons ago, dragon queen cultists ritualized the creation of draco-liches in the name of Her Dark Majesty, Tiamat. Splinter cells in the Cult of Tiamat understandable developed as impatience swelled over Her lack of acknowledgement. Four aeons into Mearls the Incalculable (illustrious initiator of the cults 666 aeon project plan) another splinter cell emerged, this one led by Severin Silajin. He stumbled upon a might incentive for recruitment, both from within the main cult and in the general populace: a dental plan. Membership of his splinter group swelled. Members throughout the realm solicit 'donations' to support Severin's great work: amassing a vast treasure hoard to summon TIAMAT, Queen of Dragons, from her confinement in Hell. "Sulking Severin" scours his megalomaniacal monologue (in the second module that hasn't been published yet) for his epic "I Told You So" diatribe to the main cult. HAIL TIAMAT!

Overview

This adventure is in 8 episodes. The first 3 are meant to be shorter, 2-hour games while the rest are longer. The first three are written for the D&D Encounters Wednesday night in-store program while the rest are for the longer D&D Expeditions in-store program. The story is continued in THE RISE OF TIAMAT, the next product in the Tyranny of Dragons storyline. HAIL TIAMAT!

Synopsis:

- Episode 1: The town of Greenest is overrun by the cult and its hirelings, presenting opportunities for heroes.
- Episode 2: Reconnaissance to the teaming cultist camp reveals a dragon hatchery cave.
- Episode 3: Revisit the now deserted camp, explore the hatchery cave, search for the towns looted plunder.
- Episode 4: Join a communal wagon caravan that includes the cults plunder to discover its destination.
- Episode 5: Investigate a roadhouse doubling as a cult safe house and discover lizard men smuggling plunder to a swamp.
- Episode 6: Track the stolen goods to a cult way-station with disgruntled lizard men among the inhabitants.
- Episode 7: Teleport to a remote cult lodge where a cult leader asks you to do his dirty work.
- Episode 8: Chase the fortune to a cloud castle and it's final destination.

Episode 1 - Greenest in Flames

There are 3 locations that can be used as a base of operations for receiving missions: the keep, the church, and the Hurling Heffer. "Seek the Keep" is an excellent first encounter and leads directly to the keep; liberally apply the 'Moving through the town' wandering encounters chart to keep them busy and immersed. Only introduce The Heffer if the party won't get on the railroad to the keep; it's a band-aid to aid a harried DM with a confused/lost group.

Screams, smoke, fires, rubble and partially eaten bodies litter town. The cult is evil and war is not pretty; keep that in mind when running this episode. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

As a hill is topped Greenest lies below, overrun. Flickering torches in the streets below flow towards the distant towns keep. A massive blue dragon dives at a barracks and slaughters a hoard of emerging guardsmen with its terrifying lightning breath. A crackling emerald ray jabs at it from atop a lofty obsidian tower as it banks. An ancient man in violet robes and pointy hat with stars and moons stands alone and exposed and in a mighty exertion hurls bolt after bolt of cracking emerald energy channeling from the full moon through him and his staff to strike the dragon. The beast screeches in pain and breaths lightning at the tower, collapsing it to rubble, hurling the ancient sorcerer to his death and entombing him under tons of cyclopean black stones. The dragon rises up in the air surveying the area, searching for more victims. Throughout the burning town invaders hunt and slaughter. **WHAT DO YOU DO?**

Moving through the town:

The town is overrun: the cult move through the streets without fear, looting, pillaging and killing with impunity. Stealthing/Bluffing through the streets while moving from location to location is wise. When doing

What Tiamat Thinks: Everyone is a stupid loser. Most of the time she doesn't think about the cultists, or Faerun, at all. She's got bigger fish to fry, like that guy down on the ninth plane. Still ... it has been awhile since she's been on vacation ... If a big enough hoard appears in the next hundred years or so she may drop by and reward folks by collecting it and deigning to lay waste to the entire planet. HAIL TIAMAT!

DM Goals: As the DM you have two jobs in this episode. **First**, and both the hardest and easiest, you need to get the characters in to town and helping people. For this you need to work the hooks/backgrounds the players have chosen for their characters to give them a pretext for being in, and helping to save, Greenest. Ultimately there's an implicit understanding between DM & Player: "this is the adventure I'm running. If you want to play D&D tonight then get your ass to town and save some people." You just never want to be forced as a DM to have to say that. **Second**, you must ensure that the characters makes some contact with the towns leaders: Governor, or Elmo, or the Father. Making contact with them feeds in to episode 2, when they ask for help. HAIL TIAMAT!

Layout: THE SCENE is meant to be inspiration to the DM, to cement the encounter in their mind so all they need refer to is THE ENCOUNTER when running the adventure later. HAIL TIAMAT!

Indecision: If the group is indecisive then motivate them: "You see a little girl get slaughtered and eaten up ahead." or "Granny Gooses home for Wayward Waifs is being burned down", etc. HAIL TIAMAT!

Roleplaying: You can use Disadvantage/Advantage to encourage the players roleplay. If the players just say "I'm sneaking" then have them roll their Stealth at disadvantage. If they try to roleplay the sneak, but suck, then let them roll normally. If they do a great job roleplaying their sneaking then allow them advantage on the roll. HAIL TIAMAT!

so, all should make a DC10 check: for every two fails roll or pick one of the Wandering Encounters below. *Not sneaking/bluffing* counts as everyone failing their check. Mix & match for additional fun! HAIL TIAMAT!

Wandering Town Encounters

1. **6 Kobolds** feasting on the flesh of a man they just pulled down.
2. **3 Kobolds** and **1 ambush drake** running down a barefoot child for fun.
3. **6 Cultists** merrily pillaging a location, while singing "Rise & Shine & give Tiamat your Glory Glory!"
4. **5 Cultists** 'converting' townsfolk and accepting 'donations.'
5. **2 Cultists** and **1 acolyte** debating today's passphrase: Hail Tiamat! or Tiamat Hail!
6. **4 Mercenaries** riding down the street in an overloaded loot wagon full of furniture, singing a bawdy song and boozing from the bar they just 'liberated.' Careful of the 20' gold gilded mirror imported all the way from Waterdeep!
7. **6 kobolds** and **1 acolyte** pillaging a location. The kobolds grab loot that is not valuable and the acolyte berates them. "I don't want a used chamberpot and neither does Tiamat!"
8. **1d8 townsfolk** hiding in a location, peeking out, sobbing loudly, stifling babies, arguing best course of action to follow.

Seek the Keep

Synopsis:

A family being hunted flees by, running to the keep for protection. There are 3 encounters on the subsequent escort mission to the keep. The keep's main doors are barred as they enter, until the raid ends. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Family:

Linan Swift – mother, loves her kids, distraught over her dead husband, but resolved to save their kids.

Tom – freshly dead husband

Timmy – son, 4, cries a lot.

Lucy – 6, helps mom take care of Timmy.

HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

A woman and 2 children, barefoot and in tattered nightgowns, dart from an alley and frantically barrel through the characters while a blood-curdling cry comes from the darkened alley as **2 kobolds** pull down a man and feast on his bowels while he screams in pain & terror, struggling to free himself. **6 more kobolds** emerge to gleefully pursue the family ... inexplicably ignoring the characters.

The Encounter:

The kobolds initially confuse the characters for allied cultists, which ends once attacked. The kobolds try to pull down the women next. The man, Tom, is dead unless saved *immediately and without hesitation*. Linan can relate that the only safe place is the keep. 3 groups of **1d6 kobolds** and **1d4 cultists** are encountered on the way. They can be attacked, snuck by, bluffed, etc, to get past to the keep. Every time the characters instead retreat from an encounter then 1d6 more townsfolk join their group, coming from burning houses, fleeing through the streets, etc. For every 4 people who join another group of cultists is encountered on the way to the keep. The characters get advantage on all skill checks, because of cultists disorganization; they assume almost anyone looking confident is allied with them.

The encountered cultist groups can be corralling/marching captured townsfolk (while merrily singing!), pillaging a building (while merrily singing!), feeding on/converting townsfolk, or something else or your own devising. HAIL TIAMAT!

Sanctuary

Synopsis:

Dozens of folk have barricaded themselves in the temple of Chauntea, blessed be her name. Cultists burn it down and batter the doors open. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

"The temple bells are ringing! They are being burned out!" By the full moon and through thick smoke you see cultists piling up hay and wood against the temple walls as another group have a large timber battering the massive wooden doors. The bell-tower houses a chaotic mob of women and children wailing frantically as the black smoke grows thicker! A woman leaps out with her baby, terrified, and crashes to the ground below. The kobolds mob her and the baby, feeding while they yet live!

The Wizards Tower:

The tower is not a real encounter location; it's just flavor text for the opening scene. The 'Seek The Keep' encounter is a good one to have if the group is on their way to the tower; Linan can discourage them from coming here. Everyone in town relates the wizard was *quite* frail and old and evil to the core. IE: they discourage them from coming here.

The rubble where the tower used to be is 30' high and crackles with green energy, with several emerald dead cultist and kobold and townspeople bodies arrayed in a 30' circle around it, as if electrocuted. The emerald death field does 1d4 damage every round. There's nothing here. HAIL TIAMAT!

Sanctuary HQ:

If used as a base then the raid can be watched from the bell tower and ropes use to get below. The Sally Door works well for the back door, and an old 'priest hole' can lead to the stream. Twist the encounters so the Father is interested in getting his flock to the keep. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Encounter:

3 groups assault the temple: Group A is **2 cultists** on the ram, **6 kobolds** ostensibly guarding, and **1 dragonclaw** overseer. Group B is **3 cultists**, **10 kobolds**, and **2 ambush drakes** mobbing around the temple in a circle, throwing up debris for the fire, making a complete circuit every 8 minutes. Group C has **2 cultists** and **6 kobolds** setting fire to the back door, gathering hay, etc. This is what is producing most of the smoke and terrifying the people inside. Father Falconmoon is frantic to keep order inside. The folk inside listen to him automatically, or to a character who makes a DC15 Persuade. Both doors have 30hp, taking 1d6 when hit by the ram. Roll every three or four rounds for a ram, with the doors showing large cracks at 20HP and giant holes at 10hp. The cult efforts to burn the doors and walls are ineffectual. If the cultists get inside it's a bloody massacre. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Hurling Heffer

Synopsis:

The Heffer is the worst bar in town and a perfect spot to introduce as an alternate base if the players are having a rough time, haven't made it to the keep or church, are lost, or are just looking for a quick drink in the middle of the chaos. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

A dragonclaw up ahead peers in a darkened doorway. Suddenly a hairy arm reaches out and yanks him in, followed by a gurgling reptilian cry of agony. The sign swinging over the doorway is a grossly obese man in a loincloth puking, and a couple of broken steps leading down to a dirt floor. Standing in a blood pool and pulling a longknife from the dragonclaw's bowels is a runty halfling. Behind him is a rancid bar with townspeople huddled in darkened corners and a few rough folk at tables with mugs in front of them. The halfling looks up, a murderous gleam in his eyes as he licks the knife clean. He bows sardonically ... "Welcome to The Hurling Heffer m'lord."

The Encounter:

The Heffer regulars skew towards Morally Dubious, with some having good tendencies and some being *quite* nasty. Thieves, ruffians, murder hobos, hookers and other low-lives congregate here. About 20 scared middle-class and lower-class folk have sought shelter here as well as a couple of respectable folk. Elmo is giving the little-ones brown bread soaked in liquor to keep them quiet, taking pity on refugees as he sees fit with free booze & food, and charging everyone else normal rates, especially the regulars.

Elmo is in charge. A couple of the more trustworthy regulars have elected themselves to a couple of areas. Myra is trying to keep the townsfolk quiet with slap and threats with Elmo intervening sometimes when a softer touch is required. Several of the male & female hookers, partial to children, try to help with the kids with varying degrees of success because MIDDLE CLASS MORALITY. Redlegs has elected himself bouncer, tending to the "ruthlessly pragmatic" side of the moral spectrum, although everyone defers to Elmo.

Privately, **Elmo** is worried. The Heffer's alley door is weak and only a heavy dirty curtain serves for a front door. The building is dry kindling, it houses many scared people, and he knows they can't stay here forever but is trapped, ethically, over what to do. He can give the players missions and, just as in Sanctuary, is **interested** in getting to someplace safe ... *with* the townsfolk. After all, he runs a respectable joint. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Old Tunnel

Synopsis:

A dry tunnel leads from the keep to the outside near the stream; and old water supply during sieges. It can be used to exit the keep without being seen. The first time it's used a group of townspeople trying to sneak past a group of cultists is caught. This encounter works well when combined with another. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

"There is a batter way." says Escobart, "Follow me." Two guardsmen use crowbars to pry open the bars from a cistern while Escobart waves a smokey torch in to the darkness below the brick lip. "This leads to the

Last Call at The Hurling

Heffer: The Heffer won't last the night. The cult is too strong and the Heffer is just a dive bar, not a stone church or fortified keep. The cult eventually breaks in, kill some, and burn alive everyone still in the place, killing those running out of the flames. Two hookers, a middle-aged woman and a teen boy, escape to the keep. They report Redlegs went down last, protecting a group of children and hookers at his back, and not before he took down a half-dozen of the bastards. If anyone searches the rubble for burials, etc, then they can find: Redlegs knife, now an icon of Mogis, God of Slaughter.

+1 curved longknife, continually bloody/drips blood, unless licked clean, in which case it stays clean for a week. Does an extra 1d4 damage on a roll of 18-20, as it twists in a wound to find a liver/kidneys, heart, etc.

My PC died!

The Heffer is a good place to introduce a new PC, as are the guardsmen at the keep.

THE HURL: The Heffer offers a special drink: The Hurl, which consists of bar rag squeezing ... with bits of filth from the bar rag inevitably mixed in. Euuuuu! A pube!

The Raiders:

Mercenary scum are just bandits working for pay. They bully the kobolds unless those narc cultists are around, and are usually afraid or full of bravado when the cult leadership is around.

Kobolds filth like to eat people, hate the mercenaries, enjoy the attention of the cultists and tend to be worshipful of the cult leadership.

Kooky Kultists are true believers, baby the kobolds, try to convert mercenaries, and defer to the cult leaders.

The Leadership pander to the mercenaries, shepherd the kobolds, and ruthlessly use the cultists.

The Dragon is a lazy shit and just wants the valuables he was promised, for as little work as possible. He pulls some high profile stuff and tends to lay low, flying overhead looking busy. He condescends to everyone.

stream, providing water during a siege, but is dry two years now. You can get out that way.” She hands you a massive iron key, almost pitted completely through with rust. “This opens the grate at the stream. Good luck!”

FUN FACT: When cultists meet each other, end conversations, etc, they place the back of their hand to their forehead and wiggle their fingers while shouting HAIL TIAMAT!

Roleplay – How about giving the suckers an even break with Advantage on the roll if they notice how fragile the key is and note they are being careful?

The Encounter:

The crumbling bricks of the dry tunnel lead to an ancient rusty grate with a slightly newer lock, the moonlight streams through the end with the stream gurgling and shadowy figures sometimes pass by outside. 2 rat swarms flood by on the way, although the second flees when the first is destroyed. A dex check at DC10 opens the lock without the key breaking off in it. A miss by more than 5 jams the lock. A very noisy DC15 Strength check can force the grate. CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

The sweet sounds of singing and sobbing come through the grate. On the stream-bank nearby, cultists and kobolds ‘save’ apostate townspeople by cleansing them through drowning and sweet hymns to Tiamat. The kobolds then feast, turning the stream red by the grate. **2 cultists** and **6 kobolds** ‘save’ **6 terrified townspeople**. Well, there 6 at the start anyway ... Each time a loud noise is made in the tunnel **2 more cultists** and **6 more kobolds** have been attracted to the prayer circle. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Sally Port

Synopsis:

The sally port door in the keep is knocked down and the keep invaded. They must fought off and the door repaired or barricaded. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

“They’ve broken through the Sally door!” shouts the castellan, as cultists stream through a side door into the courtyard below. “TO ME! TO ME!” he bellows as he barrels down the narrow wall stairs to the courtyard.

The Encounter:

1 acolyte, **4 kobolds**, and **1 ambush drake** rush through the sally door. The sally door is off its hinges and badly cracked. **1 mercenary**, **3 cultists**, and **4 kobolds** arrive every 6 minutes, running up in the distance to launch more attacks. 5 castings of mending or piling up a BUNCH of HEAVY stuff prevents the second attack if the repair is quick. Many timbers, heavy water barrels, etc lay about if anyone thinks to ask. Inspiring the guards and townsfolk to assist dramatically shortens the barricade time ... as the second enemy group tries to force their way. The castellan and guards fight an identical group deeper in the courtyard. “Go secure the door!” he bellows. HAIL TIAMAT!

Dragon Attack

Synopsis:

The dragon takes a break from townspeople snacking to do what he was hired for: assist the attack. He hovers at the walls, slaughtering guards with his breath, flying away for a recharge, then flying up again to repeat. He kills *many* guardsmen or be driven away. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

The Governor, battered and bloody, steely surveys by the full moon the carnage taking place below in town, directing his troops fire, and barking orders. “Jamis, get the kitchen maids and put water on the north tower till the fire is out. Fronkin! Direct your archers at ...!” ... a shadow passes over the full moon as lightning and ozone crackles, burning Fronkin and his archers to a crisp. The sickening smell of burnt flesh and hair hangs heavy over their blackened bodies as a enormous blue metallic dragon with razor sharp fangs and claws banks up and readies itself to make another pass at the walls ...”

The Encounter:

The dragon only hovers 25’ from the parapet and only fries people with its breath. The wall has 20 guardsmen, armed with militia bows & short swords; the dragon kills 1d4 and injures 1d6 every time it breathes. It retreats 300’ until the breath recharges, then returns and repeats. If 24 damage is inflicted on the

So ...my PC is a dragonborn ... People are not fools. They know that if you look different you are not necessarily evil. They generally try and give everyone the benefit of the doubt. There could be some tense moments as they react in raw fear at seeing another dragon-man, but kind actions and the presence of the characters allay their fears. They judge on actions, not looks. HAIL TIAMAT!

Design Note: This encounter is deadly; the dragon can kill characters outright. This *must* be demonstrated early in this encounter so the players can make an *informed* decision for their characters actions. From a design standpoint, it ham-handedly shows the results of the 5e’s “bounded accuracy.”

A Dragon! Don’t forget the dragons Frightful Presence. It effects everyone on the parapet: guardsmen, characters, and Governor alike. All the NPC’s fail their saves and fitfully or half-heartedly attempt to attack by doing thing like waving their swords at it ... from 25 feet away, or fumbling a knocked arrow ... if they don’t outright cower in a fetal position.

dragon, or a critical, then in draconic it roars “Screw this bullshit!” and flees. It grabs a loot wagon eats the teamsters, and abandons the cult. HAIL TIAMAT!

Design Note: This encounter teaches 2 lessons. First, you can subdue enemies instead of just killing them. Second, asking the enemy what is going on is a great way to gain an edge. IE: It allows the DM to legitimately feed the players information.

Prisoners

Synopsis:

The Governor wants a prisoner to interrogate. Someone needs to sneak out and grab one. This is a good mission to tack on to another. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

“... and bring one of the filth back alive; I need to know what’s going on out there!”

The Encounter:

The Governor stresses *he* needs to interrogate the prisoner. The Governor directs them to interrogate in the courtyard while he watches and guards/townfolk murmur. The prisoner is then placed under guard, roughed up overnight by guards, given a 5 minute trial in the morning, and hung, its head put on the parapet.

- Everyone knows where the camp is.
- **Kobolds** are terrified. They say what is needed, including lies, to please captors. They know they work for the cult of the dragon and the “nice dragon lady” Rezmair; “Dragon ladzzz givuz muchz babz fleshz. Bab fleshz zgood! You givz babz fleshz?”
- **Mercenary Scum** talk freely. They do a job for gold and are NOT dying to keep cult secrets. They know who Rezmair is, they have been raiding the area with orders to bring back valuables, and scuttlebutt at camp says dragon eggs lay in a cave. “Hey buddy, spare a cig?”
- **Cultists** are depressed, tight-lipped, and make half-hearted attempts to talk themselves free. They truly believe and truly don’t understand why people won’t convert. A DC10 **Intimidate** or DC12 **Persuade** reveals they hoard loot to summon the Queen of Dragons and there is a clutch of dragon eggs under HEAVY guard in a cave at the camp. “How could we have failed! hail tiamt? :(“

Fun fact! It’s traditional to use fire & torture when using intimidate. The DM can reward creativity by giving advantage.

Save the Mill

Synopsis:

If the characters let cultists escape, etc, then work in this encounter. The cult knows a group is helping the town and set up an ambush in the mill, luring them in through threats of arson. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

“They’re burning the mill!” comes the cry from the walls. The Governor limps on his mangled leg: “If it burns we’ll loose our wheat and without a mill this winter will be worse than the raid. There don’t look to be many. Can you cut a path through and stop them?”

The Encounter:

4 kobolds and **2 mercenaries** parade around the mill with torches, piling up hay and kindling. Inside the mill hide **1 acolyte** and **4 more mercenaries**. When approached the kobolds run off and the mercenaries back up to a door, cursing the kobolds, and flee inside. The noisy running millstone inside masks the sounds of the cultists. The fleeing force back themselves up to the wheel and when engaged the others drop down from behind.

Observing the mill allows a DC15 **Insight** or DC20 **Performance**; revealing the force outside to be faking it: “No you stupid kobold, we’re not actually trying to burn it down!” Inside a DC20 **Perception** notices the ambushers above, otherwise they gain surprise. 10 minutes later a dozen bloody but competent guardsmen show up to to relive the group. HAIL TIAMAT!

Half-Dragon Champion

Synopsis:

Design Note: You can't kill everyone you meet, some are just too powerful. This encounter also introduces how the Death mechanic works and demonstrates that the cult is EVIL. Not in a detached way, but in a real, visceral way. The best hooks motivate the PLAYERS, not the characters. You'll have to have a real hard-hearted group to not hate the cult after this one.

If someone doesn't go out then Sgt Markguth does. He ties his shield to his mangled left arm, pick up his worn shortsword, and resolutely walk through the gate to face his doom. He ignores his family as they rush past him, eyes firmly fixed on Langedrossa, who towers over him. He is not a religious man, but he knows he will soon gaze at the light of Pelor and that his wife & children are safe. Langedross toys with him a bit, then slaughter him, adding his head to his breastplate. The kobolds then feed on his body, and drag it off along with all of the possessions and all that was Markguth. Markguth old shield, crushed under the onslaught, does not break, through the arm attached to it is torn off. If anyone thinks to ask, It becomes an icon of Pelor. The players should feel like shit at this point. :)

While the most simple of worn wooden shields, it will not sunder under attack, ever. +1 shield, unbreakable. Auto-casts Bless once a week when things look bleakest, during which it shines with a blinding golden warm light.

THE CHARACTERS CHEATED!

This encounter is hard. Someone is going to die, and they know they are going to die before the combat even starts. So you wanna be a hero? Here's your chance: you're gonna die, now march out anyway. If Langedrossa is actually defeated then good for them! If done through treachery, cunning and a bizarre plan involving a bag of possums ... then all the better!

Thanks Man! This is important. These thanks should be sincere and heartfelt. This is another way we get the characters to accept the episode 2 mission.

This is a good final encounter. The champion of the raiders appears to bluster, threaten, show off and feed his ego. He brings hostages and merrily executes them to coerce someone in to single combat. Facing him's a bad idea; he's an overwhelming opponent. HAIL TIAMAT!

The Scene:

The gates EXPLODE as a huge hulking horror strides through the smoke & dust of the rubble. Eight foot tall and muscles rippling through his cobalt blue dragon-scale skin, dripping bloody heads of women and children hang from his belt and are sewn together on his back as crude armor. 16 of the smaller reptilian creatures skulk through behind him, prodding five bloodied and terror-stricken people: an old man in a blood-soaked ragged tunic, a shrieking and sobbing woman with bloodied and barefoot feet and two dirty children, naked, crying, with bloody streaks running down their dirt-encrusted bodies. The dragon-man casually tosses aside a 1-ton chunk of the gates. He shouts at the walls: "People of Greenest! I feel generous! See you these prisoners? I give them to you if you but send a single champion to fight me!" He picks up the man and rips him in half, his organs spilling below as the man screams in terror and pain. He then rips his head off, adding it his belt. "I kill one prisoner every five minutes until you FACE ME!" Sgt Markguth turns to you and hoarsely whispers, his face white with terror ... "Pelor grant me mercy ... that's my family!"

The Encounter:

Langdrossa is arrogant, condescending, blood-thirsty ego-maniac and totally evil. He is completely sure of victory. His minions, enthralled, watch him in action. Both are therefore more susceptible to some kooky deception/plan: give them advantage on any bizarre stunts they pull to cheat. Landrossa taunts his opponent, toy with them, and then mercilessly kill them. He then bends down and rips out a large hunk of flesh with his maw, howls at the moon, noisily chews it and gulps it down, prior to stalking off. A PC can then be stabilized, having failed 1 death save through the flesh-gulping. If defeated, the kobolds stand speechless. If intimidated even SLIGHTLY they drop their weapons and flee noisily in abject terror and horror, totally demoralized. Otherwise they attempt to retrieve the corpse, where it is displayed as a hero of the cult at camp in episode 2. HAIL TIAMAT!

Rewards:

- In Encounters, everyone advances to second level automatically. Otherwise award XP as normal.
- Coins can be 'liberated' freely, raising no questions.
- "Valuable items" can be sold, but the fence/buyer recognizes it as stolen during the raid and nasty rumors spread about the town. Heroes no more!
- **Between** encounters townsfolk, guards, etc thank the characters: shaking hands, warmly thanking them, trying to offer their meager food or what few coins they have, a woman giving birth in the keep names her child after a dragonborn PC, etc. Nighthill/Elmo/Falconmoon respects the characters more and more as they go on additional missions and save more people. They are quite sincere and solemn in their gratitude.
- Random Guard: "Thanks for the assist man, I would have been a goner, like Rudy, without you up on the walls with us! Have a swig!"

Town Personalities:

The Keep

Governor Nighthill: salty and competent old warhorse in charge, but currently in over his head. Trusts Escobert completely.

Castellan Escobert the Red: Blustery but competent dwarf second-in-command. Is everywhere doing everything. Once abandoned 20 guards in a bandit raid.

Sgt Markguth: Friendly and kind-hearted family man, clearly the most competent of the guards. **Once** in this episode he can save a PC by knocking them out the way of dragon breath, a sword-thrust, etc, at the cost of severely mangling his left arm.

Scum at The Heffer

Elmo: gruff but kind-hearted barman/owner. Large and in charge. Tries to get along with everyone. Has a soft spot for Sam, who he suspects is his son. Grudge against Escobert 'the bloody.'

Redlegs: murderous halving doorman, nicknames comes from his feet having a tendency to be stained with blood. Defers to Elmo. Hates Myra, loves the hookers, male and female.

Myra: older hard-hearted madam of the brothel behind the Heffer. Hates everyone but herself.

Sam: teenage hooker. He likes kids. Doesn't care for Lenore.

Lenore: is secretly Sams mother, also likes kids.

Father Falconmoon: 1/2 elf priest of temple. Radiates quiet confidence; you know everything is going to be ok when he says it will be.

Archmage Dieton: aka Sir Not-Appearing-in-this-adventure. Returns in chapter 4 to teleport the characters ahead of the cult.

[Relationship Matrix]

Random Buildings in Town:

[do this]

Random Townsfolk/Guard

[do this]

Random Cultists

[do this]

Adventure location maps

[do this]

Treasure hoard generator

[do this]

Monster descriptions

[do this]

Character hooks

[do this]

TODO:

layout

foreshadow major villains

The Guard: Work these two in the encounters where guards are present, especially Markguth.