

ENCOUNTERS IN THE SAVAGE WILDERNESS



Jeff C. Stevens

LP

ENCOUNTERS IN THE SAVAGE WILDERNESS

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ABOUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

Thank you for purchasing *Encounters in the Wilderness* – the fourth installment of my *Savage Encounters* supplements.

Due to the success of *Encounters in the Savage Frontier*, I thought a similar product was in order. Thanks to my friend Al Spader, I was made aware of a cool adult summer camp called **Epic Nerd Camp**. The camp is a week-long adventure filled with gaming, LARPing, arts & crafts, archery, and so much more. I reached out to the organizers to see if they'd be interested in some material for their camp. They said yes and so began the production of *Encounters in the Savage Wilderness*. Be sure to check out Epic Nerd Camp's website at www.epicnerdcamp.com and follow them on Facebook: *EpicNerdCamp* and Twitter: *@EpicNerdCamp*. Who knows? Maybe they'll see you at camp next year!

As with the other *Savage Encounters* supplements, I reached out to writers for encounter submissions. With these supplements, I want to give you a valuable resource for your gaming sessions, and I want to share the imagination, creativity, and the writing styles of various authors with you.

I want to say **Thank You** to all the writers, artists, cartographers, and everyone else who had a hand in making this product what it is.

Thanks for purchasing *Encounters in the Savage Wilderness!* We hope you enjoy the encounters!

Now – go play D&D!

- Jeff C. Stevens



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USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

Although some encounters mention specific locations, with a little adjustment, each could be used in nearly every campaign and setting.

Text in these yellow boxes is to be read to players.

Text in grey boxes is for the DM only and should not be read to players.

Most of the creatures in these adventures are found in the 5th Edition *Monster Manual*. Page numbers have been included for easy reference but depending on the printing edition of your *Monster Manual*, they may not match.

This supplement uses creatures from:

Monster Manual (MM)
Volo's Guide to Monsters (VGtM)
Tomb of Annihilation (ToA)
Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes (MToF)

In addition, several new creatures have been created for this supplement. You can find these creature stat blocks at the end of the adventure in which they are mentioned.

Unless otherwise noted, all NPCs have the stats of a **commoner**.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Each one of the encounters/scenarios in this supplement includes a placement suggestion for DMs running a game in the Eberron Campaign Setting. The suggestions may include different creatures more suited to Eberron, different locations within the setting, and different allegiances or factions for the NPCs portrayed in the encounter.

Eberron creatures referenced in the suggestions can be found in *The Korranberg Chronicle: Threat Dispatch*. This community

created resource is a PWYW title available on the Dungeon Masters Guild website.

AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL

The **Average Party Level** (APL) can be used to calculate the appropriate challenge level for your party. To calculate the APL, add the total levels of all characters and divide the sum by the number of characters (rounding up for .5 or greater).

SKILL CHECKS AND SAVING THROWS

Specific DCs are written for each of the encounters. You may wish to change these DCs based on the APL of the adventuring party. We suggest the below range:

APL	Check / Save DC
1 st thru 3 rd	11
4 th thru 6 th	13
7 th thru 9 th	16
10 th thru 12 th	19
13 th thru 15 th	22

In addition, if you feel a skill check or save is too low or too high, feel free to adjust the DC as you wish.

MAPS

Unless otherwise noted, for all maps:
1 square = 5 feet.

YOU ARE EMPOWERED

As mentioned above, you do not have to run these encounters as written. You (as the DM) are empowered to make changes as you wish – adjusting the encounters as the game is played, if you like. You are part of the collaborative storytelling that is Dungeons & Dragons and you know best how to adjust the encounters so that your adventurers get the most out of the session and story.

THE CAST OF WRITERS

Thank you to each of the below for contributing to this project. Please take a moment to follow them on Twitter and check out their other products!

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Yeryl's Super Happy Fun
Murder Dungeon*

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The Midnight Revelry*

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THE FRISKY LUMBERJACK

By **Jeff C. Stevens**

@jcorvinstevens

Cartography: Erin Harvey

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

The Frisky Lumberjack is a small tavern nestled in a remote part of the wilderness. Owned and operated by the half-orc known simply as Ootha, the tavern acts as a waypoint for travelers and soldiers, and as a gathering spot for those who live nearby.

BACKGROUND

Ootha, a half-orc entrepreneur who spent a bit of time as a lumberjack, built *The Frisky Lumberjack* with her own two hands. She is especially proud of it and rather enjoys the company of the locals who visit her establishment.

She often receives overnight guests, either travelers or locals, who have had one-too-many to make it home safely through the savage wilderness. She has several rooms located on the second floor, with Ootha's room situated on the third floor.

The tavern's patrons often share tales of the goings-on in the wilderness. Their stories may lead to adventure.

PLOT HOOK

The Frisky Lumberjack can be added to any campaign and doesn't necessarily need to be located in a wilderness setting.

The tavern could be used as a starting point for many adventures, or as a base of operations for low-level characters.

Many of the locals and travelers have a few stories to share if the adventurers are interested. They include:

- Mangus Feels – an old human farmer who lives about a mile from the tavern keeps hearing strange noises coming from the forest near his groundnut farm. He took a short jaunt into the forest to see if he could find the source and he came upon an old, stone ruin. He quickly left, as the sight gave him the willies.
- Katrina Svents and her husband Babe - both middle-aged gnome tailors, complain about a recent late shipment of thread and cloth. They ask the adventurers to investigate by trekking along the road their supplier should have used (see *The Forest is Alive!*).



THE TAVERN

When the party nears *The Frisky Lumberjack*, read or summarize:

A quaint, three-story building, a tavern by the looks of it, sits nestled at the fork in the road. A sign above the door reads 'The Frisky Lumberjack.' From the open windows you hear the clank of glass, catch the scent of grilled venison, and hear jovial laughter.

Entering the Tavern

Ootha is behind the bar, doing whatever barkeeps and inn owners do – wiping down the bar, drying glasses, folding napkins, or sharpening her halberd. Several patrons sit along the long tables or at the corner tables sharing drinks, rumors, and tales.

As written, Ootha and the patrons are friendly. However, you could adjust this as you like, adding secret villains to the mix.

Ootha

Ootha is an attractive half-orc with a well-muscled body due to her time as a lumberjack. She still swings the axe; the tavern is always in need of firewood. She’s also an expert with her halberd, which she is often seen removing from its perch on the wall behind the bar, taking a whetstone to it.

Ootha is cordial and happy to see new faces in her tavern yet she keeps an eye on newcomers until she’s satisfied they aren’t brigands or troublemakers.

Ootha also lives up to the name of the bar. She’s not shy and flirts with anyone. She doesn’t prefer men over women, nor does she have a preference in race. She’s a free spirit and feels life was meant to be lived.

The Frisky Lumberjack’s Services

- The tavern’s single rooms are comfortable and priced at 5 sp per night, with the larger rooms costing 8 sp per night.
- A modest meal costs 5 sp.
- A pitcher of wine, crafted by a local dwarven brewer and made of cinnamon spiced strawberries, costs 2 sp and is well worth the price.
- A mug of ale, much better than anything found in the city, costs 4 cp and a gallon costs 2 sp.

- A hot bath costs 1 sp.
- Basic rations are also kept on hand and are sold for 5 sp.
- Salted groundnuts (peanuts in the shell) from Mangus Feels’s farm are also available, resting in bowls on the bar as free snacks for visitors.
- A small sack of groundnuts can be purchased for 1 cp with several flavor options available: salted, spicy, cinnamon, and ‘Smack-Your-Momma Hot!’

Smack-Your-Momma Hot!

A creature consuming one of these flavored groundnuts must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 5 minutes as its eyes water, tongue and throat burn, it coughs uncontrollably, and its nose runs with thick mucus.

FIRST FLOOR

Two long tables surrounded by stools allow patrons an easy view of the stage where amateur poets and musicians, along with the occasional professional bard, provide entertainment. For those seeking a little more privacy, several round tables and chairs allow for a more intimate gathering.

Tapped, wooden kegs rest on a table next to the bar. These kegs are filled with mead and ale brewed by several of the local farmers; much tastier than what one would find in the city.

Behind the bar, a small room acts as an office where Ootha occasionally meets with vendors. Attached to the office is a larder.

SECOND FLOOR

Several guest rooms, along with a private meeting room, are located on the second floor, as well as the stairwell used to access the third floor, which serves as Ootha’s room.

The Guest Rooms

Each guest is given a key to their room, with Ootha having the only spare keys. There is a 1 gp service charge if a guest loses their key. The door locks can be picked with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**.

Each of the single rooms has a small nightstand and a candle. It's possible a prior guest left something in the nightstand. If an adventurer searches a nightstand, roll a d8 and consult the below table:

1	Nightstand is empty
2	A pair of manacles
3	A pair of reading spectacles
4	A rusty dagger
5	A complete component pouch
6	A vial of lavender scented perfume
7	A bar of soap
8	An empty vial

The larger rooms contain writing desks, which, if searched, contain one of the below:

1	Writing desk is empty
2	A steel mirror
3	10 sheets of fine parchment
4	A sprig of mistletoe
5	A small jeweler's hammer
6	Three candles
7	A bag of 1,000 ball bearings
8	A vial of acid

Stairwell to Ootha's Room

The door to the stairwell used to access Ootha's room is locked and only she holds the key. Picking the lock requires a successful **DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**.

THIRD FLOOR

Ootha's room is located on the third floor, accessed by a stairwell with a locked door.

Contents of Ootha's room

If searched, Ootha has placed the following items in plain view:

- A bag of 20 gp resting on the nightstand
- A silvered shortsword resting on top of her writing desk.

Any creature who searches the room and succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check finds a bag of 100 gp stashed under the bed, a small wooden chest containing three small emeralds (worth 25 gp each) hidden in the bookshelf, and a *dagger +1* hidden under her pillow.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

This tavern can be in many places in Eberron. It is suitable to place this location in a small town. It could be in Hatheril, Breland, Tellyn, Thrane, Ghalt, Aundair, Cree, or Eldeen Reaches, among other locations.

The DM may also choose to replace the half-orc Ootha with Scythe (warforged soldier), a warforged who is getting used to being free, after the Treaty of Thronehold granted rights to their kind. Scythe's business is secretly funded by Merrix d'Cannith in Sharn, who helps warforged find their place in the world.



OOTHA

Medium humanoid (half-orc), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4, Intimidation +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Gnomish, Orcish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Relentless Endurance. When Ootha is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, she can drop to 1 hit point instead. She can't use this feature again until she finishes a long rest.

Savage Attacks. When Ootha scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, she can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Actions

Multiattack. Ootha makes two melee weapon attacks.

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. Ootha adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Ootha must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

THE FOREST IS ALIVE!

By Jeff C. Stevens

@jcorvinstevens

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

The Forest is Alive! is a short investigation/combat encounter written for a party of four to five characters of 2nd level. Scaling suggestions are included for parties up to 8th level.

BACKGROUND

A bizarre new creature is terrorizing the locals, hidden by its natural ability to blend in with its surroundings. Giant forest scorpions have learned that, if they hide along the roadway, dinner is soon to walk by.

PLOT HOOK

Merchants and innkeepers speak of shipments and guests who have never arrived. Family members fear traveling relatives have been taken by bandits or eaten by savage wilderness creatures, while others speak of seeing shapes moving in the underbrush and along the forest floor.

If the party is visiting *The Frisky Lumberjack*, they meet Katrina Svents and her husband Babe, both middle-aged gnome tailors who complain about a late shipment of thread and cloth. They ask the adventurers to investigate by trekking along the road their supplier should have used.

ROADSIDE TRAGEDY

As the party searches the roadway, they come upon an area where the scorpions ambushed someone manning a pull-cart. Read or summarize:

A pull-cart, broken and shattered, rests along the side of the road. It had been carrying grain toward the intersection you came from, but now the crushed grain barrels lie in the road.

The **giant forest scorpions** that have invaded this section of the wilderness attacked the owner of the cart. Using their giant pincers, they crushed the barrels and pull-cart and grabbed the poor soul who manned the cart.



The Barrels

Inspecting grain barrels reveals that they were crushed. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals scrape marks along the wood of the barrel and obvious signs that the barrel was crushed with a vice or similar object.

The Pull-Cart

Inspecting the pull-cart reveals that it was crushed. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals large hammer-like marks on the side of the cart, as if something had smashed down on it.

Tracks

Searching the area for tracks and succeeding on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals 5-inch diameter holes in the dirt road, spaced roughly 2 feet apart. The holes are 1-inch deep, suggesting a heavy object. If the result of the ability check above was **15 or higher**, the adventurer finds drops of blood that lead 30 feet further up the road, ending where they find a bloody leather glove with the severed hand still in it.

The Gloved Hand

The glove contains the hand of one of the passers-by who was captured and consumed by one of the giant forest scorpions.

Treasure

The index finger inside the glove wears a gold ring worth 15 gp.

SCORPION SCAT

As the party continues along the roadway, they come upon several Medium-sized, oval-shaped pellets (scorpion feces) lying along the edge of the road. Read or summarize:

Five medium-sized, oval-shaped brown objects lie near the edge of the road. One of which has a leather boot dangling from it.

The Scat

The scat is smelly, but not so smelly as to provoke Constitution saving throws. A creature who spends 10 minutes digging through a pellet and succeeds on a **DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception)** check finds humanoid and animal bones, and one of

the objects below. You may roll a d6 to randomize the find.

1	A glove which matches the one found earlier
2	An empty leather boot
3	A chain shirt
4	A leather pouch containing 30 sp and 40 cp
5	A <i>potion of healing</i>
6	A stoppered mead horn filled with mead

Each of the objects above are covered in scorpion scat. The DM has discretion to require a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw while a character searches the scorpion scat. It is a rather messy and disgusting task. On a failed save, the character is poisoned for 1 minute as it wretches from the scent.

Tracks

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals more of the 5-inch diameter holes in the dirt road. The tracks lead from the forest, continue further up the road, and end at the next site (Roadside Ambush).

ROADSIDE AMBUSH

As the party continues to search the roadway, they come upon the forest scorpions' ambush area. The scorpions hide in the forest, waiting for their prey to get closer. Read or summarize:

A mess of debris is scattered in the road ahead – an overturned wagon, a dead mule swarmed by black flies, rolls of fabric, broken barrels, and a metal chest.

The Wagon

Inspecting the wagon reveals large hammer-like marks along its side. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the mark does not appear to be from a metal weapon.

The wagon may be righted, though one of its wheels is busted, requiring a **DC 14 Intelligence**

(Insight) check and carpenter's tools, tinker's tools, or smith's tools to repair, or by casting *mending* on the wheel.

Tracks

More of the scorpion tracks are found in the road and along the ditches, continuing into the forest. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals many tracks lead to the rotting mule.

The Mule

The mule is rotting and smells horrible. Any creature within 10 feet of the rotting mule must succeed a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute as it writhes from the stench.

Inspecting the mule reveals a large puncture mark to its left side. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the mark might have been from a pick or a large sword. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Nature)** check reveals the mark appears to have been made by a stinger or something similar.

Treasure

Spilling from the wagon and strewn about the road are five rolls of fabric; dirty but salvageable. Each roll is worth 15 gp.

Note: The scorpion ambush is set up near the mule. They've learned to use it as bait. When you feel the time is right, spring the trap.

The Barrels

Inspecting the barrels reveals they have been crushed. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals pressure was applied to both sides of the barrel, as if by a massive vice.

The barrels contained dried corn and beans, all of which are now spread out on the road.

The Chests

Inspecting the metal chest reveals scrape marks and indentations along the metal, though it is

still intact and locked with a padlock. A successful **DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** opens the lock.

Treasure

The chest contains 200 sp.

THE AMBUSH

The **giant forest scorpions** (see Appendix) lie in wait near the dead mule, hiding near the ditch. They've dragged the mule to the ditch, where they can hide, using it as bait for other animals.

When a creature inspects the mule, the giant forest scorpions attack.

Scaling Suggestions

APL 2: One giant forest scorpion with 25 hit points, reduce the number of attacks to one claw and one stinger.

APL 3: One giant forest scorpion with 52 hit points

APL 4: One giant forest scorpion with 80 hit points

APL 5: Two giant forest scorpions with 45 hit points each

APL 6: One giant forest scorpion for every two adventurers

APL 7+: One giant forest scorpion for each adventurer

Treasure

An adventurer inspecting the area near the giant forest scorpion ambush easily finds:

- A leather pouch containing 20 gp.
- An invoice for thread and cloth made out to Katrina Svents.
- A note that reads:

Sister,

I'm so excited to see you and Henry. I wish you safe travels!

Love, Geneva

CONCLUSION

The giant forest scorpions are obviously the reason for the delayed shipments and travelers. The notes, rolls of cloth, and other items point to that conclusion.

If you'd like to expand on this encounter, you could create a forest scorpion lair where, perhaps, a few of the missing travelers are being held to be eaten later. You could also create a leader for the scorpions. Perhaps an evil druid who commands the scorpions, using them as his or her henchmen to ambush travelers, collecting gold and other items.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The giant scorpions are a common sight in Xen'drik, the continent to the south of Khorvaire. Drow of the Vulkoori tribes breed them and train them as guardians and mounts. This encounter is suitable along the roads nearby Stormreach, the only real settlement on the wild continent. The DM may consider adding drow warriors to the encounter.

As an alternative, the DM may place the encounter in Khorvaire. The giant scorpions were transported from Xen'drik to any region in Khorvaire by House Vadalis agents who intended to use the scorpions as mounts, like the savage drow. Their project failed when the scorpions proved to be untamable and escaped into the wild. Now, the scorpions prey on travelers near the roads.

Suggested Eberron Creature Adjustments

Horrid Giant Scorpion

Alignment: neutral evil

AC: 18

Constitution: 19 (+4)

Hit points: 58

Immunities: acid damage and charmed condition

Vicious Claws: damage increases to 10 (2d8 + 2)

Vicious Stinger: damage increases to 12 (2d10 + 2)

Challenge Rating: 5 (1,800 XP)

GIANT FOREST SCORPION

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 60ft., passive Perception 9

Languages -

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Forest Camouflage. The forest scorpion has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in a forest.

False Appearance. While the forest scorpion remains motionless it is indistinguishable from a normal forest formation, such as a mound of twigs and leaves or a mushroom patch.

Actions

Multiattack. The forest scorpion makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its sting.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). The forest scorpion has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 17 (3d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. The forest scorpion adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it, flinging its tail or pincers to block the attack. To do so, the forest scorpion must have more than half its hit points remaining.

THE HONEY BUGGY

By Jeff C. Stevens

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Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

The Honey Buggy is a short encounter designed for characters of 1st through 3rd level. This whimsical encounter allows the party a chance to collect an abandoned wagon and an interesting ally.

BACKGROUND

A gnome adventurer named Jovevus Hairtoe stumbled across an interesting magical item during his career – a jewel encrusted tiara that allowed him to control an ochre jelly. Jovevus found the ochre jelly to be a rather handy ally during his adventuring days and, after his adventuring career ended, a valuable partner in his retirement business – cleaning sewers and outhouses.

Jovevus and the jelly, which he lovingly calls Honey, travel from town to town, offering their services to innkeepers, city officials, and farmers who may need their sewers cleaned of filth or vermin. It's been a very profitable business.

Unfortunately, while traveling from one town to the next, Jovevus and Honey were attacked by a band of goblinoids. Jovevus perished during the attack, but Honey managed to escape.

PLOT HOOK

It's possible to introduce this encounter in several ways, with the most likely being the adventurers just happening upon it while traveling.

THE ENCOUNTER

When you are ready to begin the encounter, read or summarize:

Your travels continue, so far without interruption, as you look for your next adventure. That is, until you stumble upon a horse drawn wagon with the words 'Honey Buggy' written along its wooden walls. The horse that pulled the wagon is now a perfectly placed skeleton. At the front and on the ground, an old male gnome wearing a copper tiara with a softly glowing emerald lies motionless next to the wagon. A pair of leather-clad skeletons lie at the rear of the wagon.



The Wagon

Jovevus used the wagon, which he named Honey Buggy, to transport his ochre jelly, Honey. It's a sturdy wagon and, with the tiara Jovevus wears, he was able to command Honey to stay in the wagon.

Honey is a full-size, Large ooze, so she needed the large area of the wagon. Jovevus wanted her to be comfortable while they traveled.

The wagon is unharmed. The horse that pulled it is now a skeleton. Honey didn't know any better and attacked the creature after her link with Jovevus was severed.

Honey's ooze properties kept the interior of the wagon clean. Inspecting the interior of the wagon, where Honey was stored reveals the floor and 5 feet along the interior walls appear to have been recently scrubbed or sanded. The upper 3 feet of the walls look older and are not as clean.

The Gnome

The gnome is Jovevus Hairtoe, the ex-adventurer turned plumber. He's dead, overcome by the goblin ambushers who attacked Honey and him. His tiara, made of copper and fitted with a medium-sized, softly glowing emerald, allowed him to command and control Honey.

The Skeletons

The skeletons are what is left of the goblin ambushers who unknowingly released Honey from the wagon when they lifted the back door. Honey, no longer controlled by Jovevus, slipped out of the opening and onto the goblins, dissolving their flesh and leaving only their bones, shields, leather armor, and scimitars.

The Tiara

The copper tiara is magical and can be used to control and command Honey. It does not require attunement and it has no effect on other oozes. Once donned, the wearer can sense Honey's location within a 5-mile radius.

Wearing the Tiara

If an adventurer dons the tiara, they immediately feel drawn to Honey's location; though they do not have to act on that feeling. In addition, they also sense fear. This sense of fear feels like it is coming from another source in the direction the wearer is drawn toward.

Honey's Tiara

Wonderous item, uncommon

This tiara is linked to the ochre jelly named Honey.

While wearing this tiara, you have a mental connection with Honey. Though you cannot speak with her, you can sense the following emotions: fear, joy, sadness, excitement, and love.

In addition, while within 5 miles of Honey, you can feel where she is located. Though you do not know her exact location, environment, or see through her senses, you can navigate to her. The tiara leads you on the most direct path to Honey, though it may not be the safest path.

While wearing the tiara and while you can see Honey, she obeys your verbal commands.

Honey doesn't sleep. As long as you wear the tiara, you have a mental connection with Honey who can wake you, using the empathic bond. For Honey to wake you this way, you must pass a DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check to distinguish Honey's emotions from your own dreams.

The tiara does not grant immunity to Honey's abilities or acid damage if you touch her.

Honey

Honey, after dissolving the goblins and horse, has slipped off into the wilderness where she is engaged in a battle with one of the below:

- A **brown bear** (CR 1; MM, p 319) that she thinks will make a fine meal.
- Three **bandits** (CR 1/8; MM, p 343) and their two dead and dissolved companions, who noticed Honey trying to slip into their camp.
- A **farmer** and his **two sons** (**commoners**, CR 0; MM, p 345) who are battling Honey from a distance with their rakes and shovels, fending her off from trying to dissolve their dairy cow.

Approaching Honey

If an adventurer is wearing the tiara, it senses Honey's location and her current emotion: fear.

When the party reaches Honey, she's already taken damage, split into two jellies, and is reduced to 10 hp. In addition, one of her halves is destroyed, leaving only a small portion of the original, larger Honey (see **Honey** stat block). When she sees the tiara's wearer, she immediately breaks off from the encounter and begins 'running' to the wearer – loping end-over-end like a slinky toward the wearer.

A creature wearing the tiara can command the remaining Honey to cease her attack and withdraw from the area; though the other members of the battle may not be inclined to stop their attack, which could lead to roleplay or combat for the adventurers.

CONCLUSION

There are a few possible outcomes for this encounter, the two most obvious are:

- Having donned the tiara, one of the adventurers takes control of Honey, removing her from the attackers, who may possibly change their target to the adventurers.
- Honey is destroyed during combat. In which case, the tiara is no longer magical but worth 125 gp.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The Honey Buggy can be placed anywhere on Khorvaire short of the Mournlands. Xen'drik is too wild for such a wilderness encounter to be at all plausible. Other than placement, there is nothing about it which requires conversion. If you want an extra bit of Eberron flavor, make the tiara powered by a Siberys dragonshard.

HONEY (REDUCED SIZE)

Small ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 8 (1d10+6)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius)

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. Honey can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Limited Ooze. Honey isn't your average ooze, she's been created by a spellcaster and therefore isn't able to split again. In addition, in her current split state, Honey won't grow any larger

Spider Climb. Honey can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, Hit: 6 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 1 acid damage.

PITFALLS BY NIGHT

By Ken Carcas

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes

Pitfalls by Night is a search and recovery mini-adventure optimized for five characters of 4th level. The never-before-seen adversaries within this mini-adventure may prove to be very difficult to deadly for newer players, so be warned.

LOCATION

The location is purposely vague to allow DMs to fit this mini-adventure into any area they desire. So long as the area has a remote village, or small-town bordering or surrounded by a wooded area, this mini-adventure will work.

BACKGROUND

The surrounding forest trails have been plagued with missing people for some time now. The local populace has stopped sending out townsfolk to look for those missing, choosing to keep themselves to the safer confines of the town. Even the local hunters, after several of their members went missing, are refusing to venture into the woods to hunt game. Town officials are desperately hoping for a miracle.

SYNOPSIS

A creature known as a Sentient Pit Trap has moved into the local area due to the abundance of game and wildlife. Keeping to the game trails, it has managed to keep itself well fed on whatever happens to wander along. Recently, it has taken to hunting along the paths the locals use to move through the surrounding woods. Several of the locals, including a couple of the local hunters, have fallen prey to its well-disguised appearance. Since moving into the area, the pit has almost doubled in size, and this is where trouble is about to get bigger as it continues to grow. With the coming of the new lunar moon, the

one Sentient Pit Trap is about to become two, increasing the problems this small town already faces.

PLOT HOOK

There are no plot hooks for this mini-adventure. So long as the party is in a small town where the information of the missing townsfolk can be obtained, that's all that should be needed.

PART ONE: A TOWN IN TROUBLE

The party should arrive at the town in the late afternoon to early evening to set the scene for the coming night.

Upon arriving at the town by whatever path they choose, any character with a **passive Perception of 12 or more** or who succeeds a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check notices the townsfolk giving them surprised and inquiring looks. Some of the children are even seen pointing in their direction.

As one of the townsfolk approaches the party, read or summarize the following:

You are approached by a middle-aged woman, with a child in tow and bearing a roll of cloth. From the pins in her apron, she strikes you as a seamstress of sorts.

"Greetings adventurer. Please tell me that you've heard news of our plight and that you've come to find those that have mysteriously gone missing."

Others approach your group, also enquiring if you've come to help.

Each character who asks around town finds one of following information points in the order given (roleplay these out for extra fun):

- Several hunters and trappers have gone missing over the past week within the woods surrounding the town. Those hunters and trappers that remain are refusing to hunt

game or check traps, and the town's supply of fresh meat is dwindling fast.

- A hunter tells you that they have noticed game, usually plentiful within the area, becoming scarce over the weeks leading up to now. They are sure it has something to do with their missing members.
- There are fewer visitors, who normally approach via the well-traveled forest path to the town in recent weeks, dipping to none over the past week. The townsfolk believe those that travel the paths have become prey to some foul demonic beast.
- The town's apothecary is running dangerously low on healing herbs due to the problems in the woods and along the path leading out of town. Fearing to venture beyond the edge of the town, the apothecary believes she has enough to see out the week at best before depleting her supply.
- The town's officials approach you, inviting your party to drinks and a meal at a local establishment. During the pleasantries, the mayor states that the town is willing to offer free meals and lodgings at the local inn and tavern (within reason) if you can solve his town's problem. This offer also includes your choice of a new riding horse and saddle to help you on your way.

For the following scene to be set properly, it will need to be nightfall and dark once the last piece of information has been gained.

PART TWO:

AN APPRENTICE GONE MISSING

During the characters' final discussions with the town's mayor, the door to the tavern abruptly swings open, causing the already cool night air to drop the temperature in the room.

Coming through the now open door, an elderly halfling woman with a cane in hand hurriedly looks around the room before quickly shambling over to the table.

The mayor introduces the halfling woman as **Lizzy Stoutbranch** (NG, female halfling, **Commoner** (MM, p 345) with proficiency in Medicine and herbalist's tools) the town's aging apothecary, but before he can continue further, she interrupts.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"Enough of your talk. Is this them? Are these the ones that will be ridding this town of its curse? No need to tell me; I have eyes in my head."

She looks around the table and points to (pick a fighter type PC).

"You look strong, not so smart looking, but strong will do. Massy's gone missing and you're going to find her. Well? What are you waiting for? Go find my Massy!"

With that, she prods your chest and points her walking cane to the door.

The mayor quickly reveals that Massy is Lizzy's protégé apprentice apothecary who will, hopefully, one day take over from Lizzy when Lizzy passes on.

Whilst defying her elderly strength, Lizzy continues to look annoyed and her frail hand points her walking cane at the door. The characters require a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince Lizzy to part with any information. As stubborn as she is, success reveals the following:

- Massy is the most intelligent girl in town who'll one day supersede her as the town's apothecary.
- Massy has been worried for the last few days over the dwindling healing supply stocks in the store.

- Lizzy became worried when Massy failed to return to the shop in the afternoon after delivering a tonic to Mr. TwoToes (don't ask), an elderly trapper who lives in a small shack out on the edge of town. Massy never fails to return from a delivery.
- Further inquiries revealed that Massy was last seen close to the path leading out of town.
- Lizzy believes Massy went gathering elderberry flowers, which are used in tonics as a remedy for colds and fever. The shop had run out of the flowers some days ago.
- Elderberry plants are known to grow about a mile along the path leading out of town.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The mayor looks at you with a worried expression.

"We cannot afford to go losing Massy to whatever is out there. With luck, she's still alive to tell a tale. It won't take you long if you leave now. I'll even throw a pouch of gold your way if that will convince you to brave the dark."

Lizzy reconvenes her poking of your chest with her cane whilst pointing at the door.

Not leaving now will doom Massy to the monstrosity that is presently lurking along the path close to where the elderberry plants grow. If the party choose not to leave, Lizzy calls the party cowards and that she supposes an elderly woman will have to go look herself. Still choosing not to go will doom both woman and girl to the monstrosity and gain the party the animosity of the town from this day forward.

If the party agrees to leave and search the path during the night, proceed to **Section Three: A Pit So Deep**.

PART THREE: A PIT SO DEEP

General Features

Terrain. Well-traveled forest path, 10-feet wide.

Weather. A cool night with clear skies visible through the foliage above. Slight breeze with no hint of rain.

Light. The dim light from a full moon allows visibility to 30 feet.

Smells and Sounds. Heady damp dirt and woody smell. A slight breeze causes the leaves to rustle.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The night's full moon garners you just enough light through the foliage above to barely make out the path before you.

You proceed along the path at a steady but cautionary pace. It is not long before you hear, coming from the still night's darkness ahead, the faint sounds of a young woman desperately calling for help.

When the party approaches close enough to see, read or paraphrase the following:

Desperately clinging to a low-lying branch from the foliage above, a young woman dressed in a commoner's shirt, breaches, and working smock, hangs about 2 feet off the ground. Even from this distance, you can tell her strength is waning from who knows how long she may have been hanging around.

She notices your approach and feebly calls for rescue.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals Massy may have been within seconds of letting go of the branch she is presently clinging to before gaining an ounce of renewed strength from the party's arrival. She is in fact 2 rounds from letting go.

Any character who states they are scanning the area for signs of danger must succeed a **Wisdom (Perception)** check vs. an **opposed**

Stealth check from the Sentient Pit Trap (see Stat Block at the end of adventure). Failure results in the character not noticing a slight variation in the ground directly below Massy. A success allows the character to attempt a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** check to recognize the area for what it really is. Noticing the area and/or knowing what the area really 'is' may negate any surprise reaction element the Sentient Pit Trap may have within the situation.

If the party does not scan or notice the trouble, their situation has gotten worse. In this case, it is only when the party choose to help Massy that she realizes the party is unaware of the danger beneath her.

As a character reaches her, read or paraphrase the following:

As you reach Massy, you see the sudden flicker of recognition flash across her face.

"Look out! Below you! The ground is trying to eat me!"

It is with that warning that you suddenly feel the ground opening below your feet!

Lurking directly below Massy's precarious position is a Sentient Pit Trap.

In either case presented above, the DM is advised that the sentient pit trap is alert and has readied a reaction for something falling (Massy) or stepping (the characters) on its 'door' (see **Sentient Pit Trap, Enclose** at the end of this mini-adventure on how to run this area).

The combat continues with Massy, should she still be clinging to the branch 2 rounds after the party initially spot her, losing her grip and falling to the ground, landing **prone**. If the Sentient Pit Trap is not open, it uses its reaction to open, dropping Massy to a certain doom. If the 'door' is open, then Massy falls into the pit, sustaining an additional 10 feet of falling damage from her

height above the ground. Either way, Massy will most likely perish if she falls into the pit.

2 rounds after the Sentient Pit Trap initially opens its maw, it amorphously reproduces itself due to the moon phase.

If the Sentient Pit Trap reproduces, read or paraphrase the following:

Those of you close to the situation notice the ground around the creature shimmer and begin to move out of phase. Vegetation entwines and shifts as if moving in and out of your reality. As quickly as it had begun, the area becomes solid once again, though maybe just as dangerous as it was. Or maybe more so?

Characters who have succeeded on a Nature check to recognize the creature knows that the Sentient Pit Trap has chosen this moment to reproduce. Knowing this will also reveal where the second Sentient Pit Trap appears. It is the DM's discretion on where the second creature appears based on how difficult the DM wants to make the combat is quite reasonable to have the second Sentient Pit Trap appear under a PC in an adjoining square.

If the characters in the area have succeeded a **Nature** check, have those characters attempt a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** check with advantage to see if they know what they are facing.

Combat now continues until either of the following occurs:

- The Sentient Pit Trap and its 'baby' are beaten in combat. If this is the case, proceed to **Conclusion: A Homecoming**.
- The party retreat from the area back to town, with or without Massy in tow. Should this occur, proceed to **Conclusion: A Homecoming**, remembering to take notice of relevant sections and paraphrasing that the

Sentient Pit Trap still exists, though its whereabouts are now unknown.

- The party all die from being eaten by the Sentient Pit Trap and its 'baby.' Harsh, but heck, it happens. Proceed to **Continuing the Mini-Adventure**, particularly the area pertaining to the Sentient Pit Trap living for another day (see **Avenging the Rescuers**).

If the Sentient Pit Trap dies, the characters can search the bottom of the pit for what it collected but failed to digest.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the first item on the list below; each additional 2 points above the check reveals the next level of items on the list in the order they are given:

- A leather wristband studded with semi-precious gems worth 20gp
- A *potion of growth*
- Three scrolls, each containing a spell of 1st through 6th level, sealed within a lacquered bone scroll case (DM's choice)
- One the following magic items:
 - A matching pair of *sending stones* in the shape of elf ears.
 - A *weapon + 1* that a party member can use.
 - A *circlet of blasting* imbedded with a flawless ruby that shines when used.

CONCLUSION: A HOMECOMING

Note:

If at any stage the party chooses to cause trouble within the town, the town has neither the militia nor strength to take on an adventuring group. The party is given whatever it will take to get them to leave, short of anything that will cause the loss of life to a town member. If loss of life is imminent, then the town will band together in a fruitless attempt to oust the party.

Not long after they leave (a matter of days to just over a week), news has spread with descriptions of the party members and what they did. A noticeable reward has been posted for their capture and arrest, which many bounty hunters will choose to collect upon. The party's reputation precedes them until either they move far enough for the rumors to not be reliable or they are killed or captured and returned to the nearest justice to face trial. Either way, they are never welcome within the area from that day forward.

The following sections deal with the possible outcomes of the party's encounter with the Sentient Pit Trap and its offspring:

PART 4.A:

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAD TO RUN

In this situation, party has chosen to return to town, leaving the Sentient Pit Trap alive and still a danger for those in the area.

No matter the outcome, the mayor states a deal is a deal and implores the party to return to the path and finish the job. If the party refuses, the mayor states there is no reward and no further need for the party to remain in town, ordering them to leave immediately.

Should the party also return without Massy (as she will more than likely be dead), Lizzy is beside herself in grief, using whatever influence she has in town to insist the party leave with no reward, no matter if they choose to return to the path and finish the job.

In any case the DM should use their best judgment on how they choose to proceed from here.

PART 4B: IT'S A GLORIOUS DAY, BUT...

In this situation, the party succeeds in killing the Sentient Pit Trap but, unfortunately, Massy was not able to be saved, having died during the encounter. The town is remorseful for the loss of the bright, young apothecary apprentice, but a deal is a deal. After describing what transpired, they honor the original reward and 2 days of grieving occur, starting the following day.

Lizzy is, understandably, beside herself with grief. The following sections occur:

- **Massy's Body Is Missing:** Although she doesn't prevent the town rewarding the party for ending its problem, she does hold the party accountable for Massy's death. From this day forward, Lizzy refuses to acknowledge that the members of the party exist, refusing all pleas for help coming from the party. To her, the party members are effectively dead.
- **Massy's Body Is Returned:** Lizzy doesn't prevent the town rewarding the party for ending its problem. Although beside herself with grief, having Massy's remains returned to her in whatever state goes a long way to preventing Lizzy from blaming Massy's death on the party. Lizzy will assist the party in her professional capacity, should the party require her services in the future. Returning Massy's body entitles the party to a one-time discount of 50% under what Lizzy would normally charge for her services.

PART 4C: PRAISE BE TO THE GODS

Not only does the party manage to defeat the Sentient Pit Trap but, by whatever miracle

surrounds them, they manage to return Massy to the town alive.

In this situation, the whole town rejoices that the problem is solved. Rewards, as agreed upon, are bestowed on the party by the grateful mayor. The locals rally together, pooling their resources and throw a feast in the party's honor. With food and drink aplenty, the party are hailed as heroes from that day forward.

None are more grateful than Lizzy. Requesting a private audience with the mayor and party, she lavishes her praise and thanks upon the party. Having her beloved Massy returned is all she could ask for.

In an additional show of gratitude, Lizzy gives each party member a potion of healing, stating these come from her secret personal stock. In addition, should the fighter she initially provoked have taken her rudeness without incident, she bestows a ring of protection +1 as an apology, without actually saying sorry. Should any character refuse to take the potion of healing, award the PC 500 story XP as a show towards their generosity. Should the fighter type refuse to take the *ring of protection + 1*, award the fighter type 2000 story XP (in addition to the potion XP if applicable) as an additional sign of generosity.

Regardless of whether the potions or ring are taken, Lizzy also offers her services, once only, for free if the characters are in the area. Should the party return at some later date and find Lizzy has passed on, Massy will gladly choose to honor the debt.

CONTINUING THE MINI-ADVENTURE

The DM may wish to continue the mini-adventure once *Pitfalls by Night* is concluded. The following are suggestions as to how this may occur:

- **Sagely Wisdom:** News precedes the characters of their heroic deeds. A high-level sage, an expert in phasing

creatures, employs the party to investigate a further (and deadlier) occurrence of a Sentient Pit Trap.

- **Mumma's Cumma Lookin':** Rumors reach the party that the town has become mysteriously quiet. The party return to the area to find it deserted. Lurking within the town is an elder and more powerful version of the Sentient Pit Trap. 'Mother' has come seeking revenge and the party is on the menu. Designing the stats for 'Mother' is left to the DM's discretion.
- **Planar Trappings:** A high-level mage managed to procure a section of a recently killed Sentient Pit Trap, something unheard of, until now. Knowing the reputation of the party, the mage hires them as bodyguards whilst the mage attempts dimensional travels to uncover the secret behind the Sentient Pit Trap's origins.
- **Avenging the Rescuers:** With Massy and the previous rescuing party missing, the town manages to get a message out asking for further assistance. Offering a substantial reward to solve the problem, a new party takes up the call.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The location of this encounter is vague by design, but there are two places where it makes sense in Khorvaire. The first one is in Eldeen Reaches. There are several small towns next to the great woods that cover most of the country. Small settlements like Alvirad, Mossmantle, Greenblade, Erlaskar, and Sylbaran are other good locations for this encounter.

Alternatively, the encounter can take place in a town next to the jungles in Q'barra. The DM must then adjust the descriptions to fit the jungle area, instead of forests. Pitchwall, Wyrmswatch, and Whitecliff are good candidates for this encounter.

SENTIENT PIT TRAP

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8+21)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Skills Stealth +9

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, prone

Senses blindsight 30 ft., tremorsense 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

Languages none

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Amorphous Reproduction. The sentient pit trap may choose to reproduce if a full moon is in the sky. If the sentient pit trap chooses to use Amorphous Reproduction, it takes an action to create an exact duplicate of itself at the end of the round. The sentient pit trap may only use Amorphous Reproduction once a full moon. A newly created sentient pit trap cannot use Amorphous Reproduction until the following full moon.

Camouflage. The sentient pit trap can copy its surrounding terrain to near perfection. When the sentient pit trap moves into a new terrain area, it can take an action to change its appearance to match that of its surroundings. The sentient pit trap makes all Stealth checks to hide with advantage.

False Appearance. While the sentient pit trap remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from the terrain around it.

Phasing Death. The sentient pit trap disappears once it dies. 3 rounds after the sentient pit trap is reduced to zero hit points, the remains of the sentient pit trap will begin to phase from the Material Plane and start to disappear. 6 rounds after the sentient pit trap is reduced to zero hit points, the remains of the sentient pit trap will phase from the Material Plane and disappear. Any swallowed creature with 1 or more hit points on the 6th round will reappear on the ground where the sentient pit trap died and phased from the Material Plane. Any deceased creatures (zero hit points or less) or inanimate objects still within the sentient pit trap when it phases from the Material Plane, disappears with the remains of the deceased sentient pit trap.

Actions

Multiattack. The sentient pit trap makes 4 attacks. It can target up to four separate creatures.

Spike. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., Hit: 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 1 acid damage.

Reactions

Enclose. The sentient pit trap can attempt to trap a creature once the creature approaches the center of its door. As a reaction, the sentient pit trap opens its door. A creature must make a Dexterity saving throw contested by the sentient pit trap's Stealth check. On a successful save, the creature can choose to jump to a square adjacent to the sentient pit trap. A creature that chooses not to jump suffers the consequences of a failed save. On a failed save, the creature drops to the bottom of the 20-foot pit taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage, 9 (2d8) piercing damage from the spikes, and 10 acid damage, landing prone and ending their turn. When the sentient pit trap moves, the enclosed creature moves with it. At the end of the round, the door into the pit closes, enclosing the creature. At the start of each of the sentient pit trap's turns, if the enclosed creature is at the bottom of the pit, the enclosed creature must succeed a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) acid damage or half as much on a success. The enclosed creature, providing it can find a way to reach the door above, can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 17 Strength check. On a success, the creature forces open the door enough to escape and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the sentient pit trap.

It is currently unknown from where the Sentient Pit Traps originate. Some sages believe they are not a creature at all, but simply a failed experiment involving a mimic and a displacer beast. Research continues in some circles believing that capture and study will open doors of discovery towards phasing displacement, allowing movement from the Material Plane to other unknown planes of existence.

The Sentient Pit Trap is both natural and metaphasic at the same time. By use of its phasing nature, it causes the ground to displace around it, allowing it to move from one place to another. Luckily, the sentient pit trap dislikes stone or surfaces harder than dirt, much to the delight of creatures everywhere.

IN SILVER CLUTCHES

By Alex Clippinger

@AClippinger

Estimated run-time: 45 to 90 minutes

In Silver Clutches is a short adventure written for five characters of 5th – 10th level. The adventure is set in a mountainous region or an area with rocky terrain.

BACKGROUND

The adventurers stumble across an exhausted-looking cleric, who asks their help with 'babysitting.' It turns out that watching some children is the least of the challenges the party will face.

PLOT HOOKS

The most likely way this encounter begins is with the adventurers stumbling upon Marian while they travel the wilderness. Though, you could set this up with a tavern rumor or notice board post – stating a priest in the wilderness has been looking for some help.

HAIL MARIAN

As the adventurers travel through foothills or a mountainous region, they are flagged down by a woman named Marian (human, **priest**, CR 2; MM, p 348). She has the appearance of a kind, but exhausted, robed cleric.

"I don't have very long," she says. "The children are down for a nap, but they'll be awake soon. They're not mine; I agreed to look after them to repay a debt but, oh! They're just too much!"

Marian explains that the 'children' she's looking after are silver dragon hatchlings, only a decade or so old. Their mother, an **adult silver dragon** named Auravalia, once saved Marian's life. Marian volunteered whatever service she could provide as repayment, and the dragon asked Marian to watch over her children for a

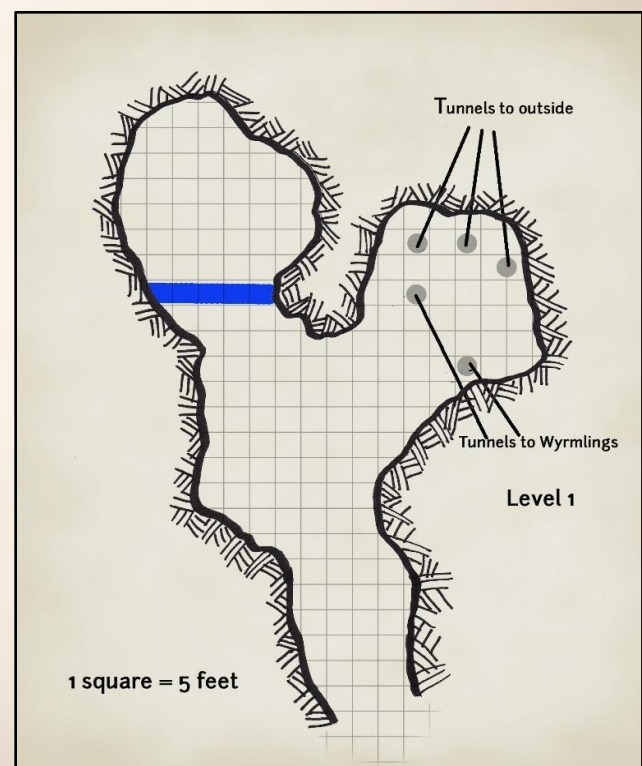
few days while she attends to business far from her lair. It's the third day and Marian is at the end of her rope with the energetic wyrmlings' demands. She begs the adventurers to help her; she has little coin to spare but remarks that their service could earn the dragon's favor.

If the adventurers volunteer to help, Marian leads them a few miles to Auravalia's lair.

AURAVALIA'S LAIR

The **adult silver dragon** resides in a cavern lair that she has spent many decades shaping and enchanting. The cavern's ceiling is covered in a thick, smooth layer of magical ice that never melts, and keeps the chambers at a cold, but not freezing, temperature throughout the year.

The rear of the main chamber leads into Auravalia's hoard, but the entrance is covered with a massive wall of ice that only retracts or returns with the silver dragon's commands. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check realizes the wall is controlled by a command word.

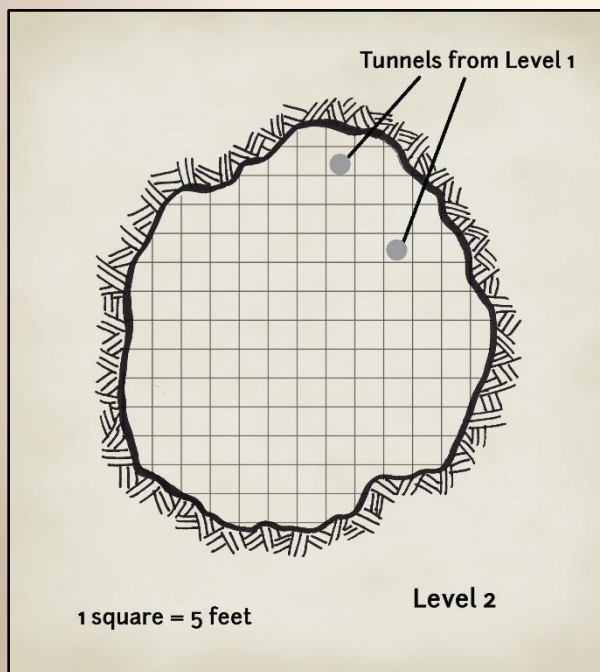


HONEYCOMB TUNNELS

Small holes in the floor and walls aren't animal burrows. Auravalia has several such passages as escape routes. If she ever needed to make a quick escape, she plans to use her change shape ability to become a creature small enough to wiggle through the tunnels, which extend 200 feet and exit outside the lair.

THE WYRMLING CLUTCH

The honeycomb tunnels beneath the main chamber have been combined into a large sub-level chamber for Auravalia's young. The chamber floor is covered with close to a foot of snow, in which the wyrmlings sleep and frolic. There are three holes in the floor of the main chamber that lead down into the snow-filled clutch. These holes are big enough for the wyrmlings to wiggle through and more than big enough for a Medium-sized creature to climb down. A creature that falls into one of these holes doesn't take falling damage as they land prone on the soft layer of snow.



THE WORRISOME WYRMLINGS

Marian's charges are a set of four **silver dragon wyrmlings** (CR 2; MM, p 118). There are three males named Gyrontyr, Port'molian, and Varshul, and a female named Indyrial. All the wyrmlings are fourteen years old but have the equivalent maturity of a nine-year-old human child. They are energetic, inquisitive, and often demanding. The wyrmlings all speak fluent Draconic and enough Common to communicate (though they don't know big words or vague concepts in the language).

The wyrmlings are constantly pestering Marian and the adventurers with questions or demands for food. For as long as you see fit, you can roleplay ways for the adventurers to interact with the wyrmlings. This might include making a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check to capture small animals outside the lair to feed the wyrmlings or making a **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** check to sing a song or tell a story that entertains the young dragons.

However, eventually, an intruder arrives at the lair; a **young white dragon** (CR 6; MM, p 101) named **Frostmaim**.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S YOUR MOTHER...

There is a rush of air and a rumble as something large hits the ground outside the cavern's mouth. A dragon's visage appears at the entrance to Auravalia's lair—but this is no silver dragon. Its scales are bone-white, becoming a mottled gray in the skull-like hollows of its eyes. It sneers at you. "Some vermin to clear out of the silver's nest," it snarls, "but soon this cavern will be hers no longer!"

Frostmaim is a **young white dragon** (CR 6; MM, p 101) who envies Auravalia's enchanted lair. Though not terribly strong or smart, he has several faithful **lizardfolk** (CR ½; MM, p 204) servants who support the young white dragon's

ambitions. Frostmaim has watched the lair and knows Auravalia is away. He has scrounged together whatever servants he can (if any; see APL below). He hopes to kill Auravalia's young and take the lair for himself, seeking to fortify it with his followers before the silver dragon returns.

Scaling the Battle

APL 5 - Frostmaim (young white dragon)

APL 6 - Frostmaim (young white dragon) and one lizardfolk servant

APL 7 - Frostmaim (young white dragon) and one lizardfolk servant

APL 8 - Frostmaim (young white dragon) and two lizardfolk servants

APL 9 - Frostmaim (young white dragon) and two lizardfolk servants

APL 10 - Frostmaim (young white dragon) two lizardfolk servants and a lizardfolk shaman (CR ½; MM, p 205).

On initiative count 20, Marian and the wyrmlings will retreat into the sub-level chamber and out of harm's way. Frostmaim will attempt to control the entrance to the lair in the first round and use his breath weapon to fill as much of the chamber as he can with deadly cold. If Frostmaim is accompanied by any lizardfolk servants, they try to get past any adventurers and attack Marian and the wyrmlings but will stop to fight if they are engaged or if Frostmaim is threatened.

Frostmaim is likely to overextend himself into the lair and lose a safe escape route; he will attempt to flee if defeat looks imminent.

AURAVALIA'S RETURN

After Frostmaim's defeat, Auravalia returns to the lair, having been alerted to combat by the cavern's magical alarms. Seeing evidence of the battle, Auravalia thanks Marian and the adventurers for their aid and rewards the party with treasure from her hoard. The adventurers are given a 400 gp and a special set of armor. The silver scale mail was crafted by a dwarven

craftsman using Auravalia's cast-off scales; it functions as a set of scale mail armor of resistance (cold damage).

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

This encounter can occur anywhere in Khorvaire. Dragons are rare but not absent in the continent. Marian should mention that Auravalia was summoned to Argonnessen, the old dragon continent.

The DM may also change the allegiance of Frostmaim and his lackeys. It makes sense for the white dragon to represent the interests of the Cult of the Dragon Below. This cult is illegal in all of the five nations. It seeks to sow chaos and turn the world to madness. Killing a silver dragon's offspring is a natural choice for this faction.

MEENA FROM THE SKY

By Florian Emmerich

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Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

Meena in the Sky is a short adventure designed for four to five characters of 1st level. Scaling suggestions are provided for higher-level parties.

BACKGROUND

Meena Gimlen, a rock gnome commoner (CR 0; MM, p 345) set out to be the first gnome to fly over a nearby forest with the help of her invention, the GL1-D35.

Not everything worked out as intended and, on her maiden voyage, Meena was attacked by a group of ravens which resulted in the GL1-D35 breaking in half.

While Meena could still hold onto one half of the GL1-D35 and glide for some hundred yards before crashing into the depths of the forest, the other part of her invention was lost at the breaking point.

Though luckily surviving the crash, her situation is far from ideal.

Her dive was stopped by **giant spider's** (CR 1; MM, p 328) web, which usually catches birds.

Not So Merry Men

Unbeknownst to Meena, the ravens had been sent out by a group of bandits, which took an interest in the flying gnome. With such a hobby presumably requiring wealth to pursue, they unleashed the unkindness onto the gnome.

The Clarke Gang

The pack of outlaws operating in the region is known as the Clarke gang. While they had been content with raiding caravans taking shortcuts through the wilderness, a recent robbery gone wrong resulted in the deaths of two of their members. As a result, the Leader of The Clarkes has begun to rethink their operation. The current crew consists of Margery & Gilbert Clarke, who are siblings, and Miles Jones, the most recent addition.

The senior members Lance Smith and Elizabeth Lewis were killed, after wary Caravan leaders started to hire more guards.

A Worried Father

Meena's father, **Umpen Gimlen**, who accompanied her and helped with preparations, was aghast seeing her dive into the forest. He wasted no time in going after her, throwing all caution to the wind.

THE ENCOUNTER

When the adventurers near Meena's crash site, read or summarize:

As you wander around the woods you hear a sudden shriek of terror coming through the trees. However, it is not immediately clear to you where it is coming from. Shortly after the first one, it is followed by more cries.

The party can locate the direction of the screams within the woods with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check.

SCREAMING FOR LIFE

Home Crashing

The shriek and the subsequent cries are originating from Meena, as she notices that she is not the sole occupant of the giant spider's web in the treetops.

Due to her mostly landing on the remains of her broken GL1-D35, she is not restrained by the webbing and, with the help of a nearby

twig, she is giving a token resistance. While for now she is able to fend the giant spider off, she can't defeat the spider on her own.

Fighting the Spider

The giant spider's web is 50 feet above the ground, though the densely growing trees give ample help to reach it easily by climbing them.

Once in the treetops, the party can opt to enter the web, but it is considered difficult terrain.

The web is susceptible to fire and easily burns, although a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals that all of the occupants in the web could suffer from fire damage. Succeeding on the check by 5 or more reveals that the wood is dry and if the fire is not stopped quickly, it will soon engulf the whole forest.

Scaling the Battle

APL 1 - 1 giant spider

APL 2 - 1 giant spider with 35 hit points

APL 3 - 2 giant spiders

APL 4 - 1 giant spider for each party member

APL 5 - 1 giant spider for each party member, each with 35 hit points.

It's a Pleasure Meeting You

Once rescued, Meena thanks the party for their timely intervention and introduces herself.

Meena is a tomboyish gnome, sporting short black hair with silver streaks. She is unusually small, even for a gnome, though she highlights that this and her low weight is a feature she calls "air-o-dynamic".

Meena's Belongings

If she did not already part with it, Meena is carrying 10 gp and a sketchbook with erratic and unidentifiable schematics, some scratched out or abandoned mid-drawing.

Meeting Meena...

At your discretion, the party could already have met Meena in a nearby town while being laughed at by the townspeople for her so-called invention. They predict that she won't fly even an inch with this "piece of junk." Though, she is comforted by her father.

SAVING UMPEN GIMLEN

Meena worries about her father, as she rightly assumes that he is probably now looking for her.

She begs the party to accompany her back to the starting cliff, as Umpen is probably looking for her from that direction. She offers a reward, once she and her father are home safely. Meena points out that she and her father are not equipped for the dangers in this forest – it's full of strange creatures and outlaws.

While she has no significant valuables with her, she promises a reward of 50 gp in total, once she and her father and she are back safely at their residence. To help persuade the adventurers, Meena offers the 10 gp in her possession as an advance payment.

Umpen's Fate

After sprinting into the woods, while on his way to the crash site, Meena's father bumped into the Clarke Gang.

Under all his pleas and cries for help, it did not take them long to figure out that Umpen is the father of their intended target. They quickly changed plans and, instead of taking Meena for ransom, they snatched Umpen and bound him, taking him back to their hideout to scheme their next moves.

Save My Daughter

You can easily switch Umpen's and Meena's place. This will, however, forgo the fight with the giant spider.

Umpen's Fate Revealed

After some time has passed going towards the cliff, the party finds a scarf partially hidden in a bush.

Meena instantly recognizes that it belongs to her father. She begins to worry as she explains that Umpen would never willingly part with it, as it was a present from her to him.

She immediately starts a frantic search of the area, sometimes stopping while calling out for her father.

Succeeding on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check while actively searching the area reveals tracks on the ground, read or summarize the following:

In the mud, partially covered by ferns and leaves, you can make out several pairs of fresh tracks. After analyzing them for a moment, you can make out four different tracks in total. The tracks of one person are seemingly much smaller than the others. The tracks all lead East from the cliff.

While the tracks are easy to follow for a while, they soon become less visible until they eventually disappear, though the characters might notice other signs.

A **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals partially and freshly bent flowers, leading further east.

On a failed check, they find other signs of passers-by, though those lead to the north. Resolve the **Hungry!** encounter.

Hungry!

After a short amount of time trekking north, read or summarize the following:

The scent of grilled meat and the corresponding sizzling sound is coming toward you. You can easily follow the enticing trail, promising some well-roasted delicacy. From behind a shrubbery, you hear two people talking in a hushed tone. Their voices are too soft to make out the heated conversation they are having

The voices belong to **Pyra** and **Leucis**, two slightly malnourished-looking tiefling poachers (use **thug**, CR ½; MM, p 350) preparing their latest catch - two rabbits.

Pyra worries that if they keep this up, there will soon be a bounty on their heads. Though Leucis argues, that the residing Count does not worry about two hungry souls, especially with bandits all over the woods.

If the party advances, both will be taken aback and retreat deeper into their campsite.

Pyra does most of the talking with Leucis only begging for mercy for their wrongdoing. They cower in fear if the party brandishes their weapons or are intimidating.

If the party does not state their agenda, Pyra asks the nature of their visit while she offers some of their game. She boldly claims that they found these two rabbits dead and then roasted them, as they did not want the rabbit meat to go to waste. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that she might be lying, as her left eye twitches nervously while giving this statement.

If asked about the bandits, Pyra only knows that they operate in the area, though she and Leucis are doing their best to avoid them. If Umpen is described to them, they recall seeing him with a group of scruffy-looking people South of their location, heading further West, sending the party back to the place they lost track. Leucis accuses Pyra of telling him that these parts of the wilderness ought to be safe. The two poachers bicker back-and-forth while quickly packing their things, insisting on taking at least one roasted rabbit with them.

HIDING OUT

The bandits have a small camp nearby, setup in a small grotto. At the DMs discretion, they may have secured the area with some traps to fend off any intruders, though they are placed too far out to warn them.

... and get to know the bandits

If the party met Meena in a nearby town, the party might have also seen the postings for bandits that hide out in woods and a potential reward for capturing them. The bounty should be higher if the criminals are caught alive.

Refer to *Chapter 5 of the Dungeon Masters Guide* for examples of traps the bandits may have set around their camp.

After a short amount of time has passed, read or summarize:

While you can't make out the details, you can hear two voices arguing in a heated discussion.

Being Sneaky

A successful opposed **Dexterity (Stealth)** check versus the bandits' **Wisdom (Perception)** check allows the party to sneak in close enough and listen to part of the conversation. Read or summarize:

Through the bushes you see a small, makeshift camp and two humans, a male and female, who are engaged in a heated discussion. They stand near an opening of a small grotto which is lined with barrels and makeshift birdcages filled with ravens.

If the party listens to the conversation, they learn that **Miles Jones (bandit CR 1/8; MM, p 343)** is not happy that they are taking hostages. He wants to get back to raiding caravans. However, **Margery Clarke (bandit CR 1/8; MM, p 343)** reminds him that they lost two of their own, once more guards were added to the caravans. She believes this old gnome is a

better prize, but if they find the girl, ransoming the two together could set them up for life.

Not so Stealthy

Failed Stealth checks alert the arguing bandits, who immediately stop their heated discussion, retreat to the grotto, and warn their third companion. While retreating, they release a **swarm of ravens (CR 1/4; MM, p 339)** that head directly for the players, attack for one round, and then fly away.

Springing into the Open

If the party storms the camp, the arguing bandits bolt for the entrance of the grotto, shouting a warning to their companion inside the cave, but not without smashing one of the cages containing ravens that attacks the party for one round and then fly away.

The Nervous Bandit

Miles Jones can be convinced to turn against his companions, especially if the characters promise him freedom.

However, the PCs also have to overcome his companions, if they are nearby and alive.

A successful **Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion)** check versus an opposed **Charisma (Persuasion)** check by Gilbert or Margery Clarke causes Miles Jones to side with the party, though he flees at the first possible occasion.

Inside the Grotto

The Grotto is filled with boxes and sacks. In the middle, an unlit fireplace with **Gilbert Clarke (bandit CR 1/8; MM, p 343)** watching over a bound and gagged Umpen in the corner.

Fighting Head On

Aside from Miles Jones, the Clarke siblings stand their ground and would rather die than be captured.

Miles Jones, doubting the undertaking completely, tries to escape at the first opportunity.

Divide and Conquer

The best bet for the party would be to wait for nightfall, as the bandits take turns standing watch outside the cave, while the others sleep in the grotto.

Scaling the Battle

APL 1 – 3 bandits (CR 1/8, MM, p 343)

APL 2 – 3 thugs (CR 1/2, MM, p 350)

APL 3 – 1 bandit captain (CR 2, MM, p 344), and **2 bandits**

APL 4 – 1 bandit captain, 1 spy (CR 1, MM, p 349), and **1 thug**

APL 5 – 1 veteran (CR 3, MM, p 350) and **2 bandit captains**

The Grotto's Treasure

The bandits stored most of their treasure within the grotto. It mainly consists of an assortment of grain, flour and dried and pickled produce, all branded with the signet of the famed merchant William Taldon, who rewards anyone returning the goods, with 40 gp.

CONCLUSION

Once Meena and Umpen are home safely, Meena invites the party for some tea and biscuits while insisting they rest in her home.

Even if the party doesn't want to stay for pleasantries, she begins preparing some hot water and offers, if not forces, the promised pastries onto the party.

In all her preparations she does not forget the promised reward.

Mourning the Dead

If one of the Gimlens die during the encounter, the other will be in mourning, though still will follow through on the promised reward.

GL1-D35 PROTOTYPE

Meena has a special reward for those that stay with the Gimlens, recounting the adventure. The DM may decide how many prototypes to award the characters.

During her research, she created, out of extremely lightweight wood and materials, several prototype models of the GL1-D35. These models have the shape of a bat, but with a thinner body. When thrown, they fly 30 feet before looping around and returning to the space from which they were thrown.

Clever PCs may find a use for these models, although they do not cause any damage. They are a rare toy and could fetch upward of 10 gp to a toy collector. Or they could bring happiness to a child with nothing to do.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The gnome-ruled continent of Zilargo is a suitable location for this encounter. The events can take place in settlements such as Tzanthus, Oskilor, or Tariston (small town). It is recommended to mention that, for it to fly, the flying device makes use of Sibera's dragonshards.

The DM may also consider the outlaws' allegiance. Since the gnome is working on a new dragonshard apparatus, it makes sense for the brigands to work for the Order of the Emerald Claw, House Cannith, House Orien, or House Lyrandar. The Order of the Emerald Claw wishes to control the production of this new device. The two dragonmarked houses have good reasons to prevent other parties from having flying devices because it disrupts their own activities.

If the DM chooses the Order of the Emerald Claw, the DM may choose to make them members of the faction and use the stats for **Emerald Claw Soldier** and **Emerald Claw Sergeant**.

AND THE GROVE STILL SCREAMS

By Remley Farr
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Estimated run-time: 30-45 minutes

And the Grove Still Screams presents an encounter scenario for the DM to build up. It's designed for players of any level, perfect for introducing players to the wilderness of the Feywild or just freaking them the hell out with a giant screaming mouth in the ground.

BACKGROUND

The fey... some call them witches. Some call them hags. Some call them cackle-mouthed spinsters drooped over heated pots, churning their boiling broth into coagulated reagents. Taste the brew, and taste their wrath. Or are they winged fairies spritzing about the meadows? Plucky little bastards as mischievous as foxes and as annoying as mosquitoes? These tales are but fantasies—a human-oriented understanding to better comprehend how a fey monster interacts with the material world.

And these fantasies are foolish.

The fey play their own games, and when they run out of pieces, they reach into our world to restock their lineup. They are like gods in this sense: pushing mortals at their own whim. But gods don't play games in the heavens where they live. They play in our world. Fey play games with us, but they drag our confused minds back to their realm. The gods rent to own. The fey steal.

But unlike the gods, the fey can bleed, which brings us to this toothless wonder:

Yanley "Ironjaw" Smithy lost his teeth years ago. His teeth decided to start a fight with an orc's fist, and the orc's fist had natural

advantage. Being a skilled smith, Yanley fashioned himself a new set of ivory teeth capped in iron—earning him his namesake. Aside from his brawl with an orc and his skills at the forge, Ironjaw led a rarely uneventful life, almost as uneventful as a wanton NPC. But when he crossed paths with a grove of blood orange trees, Yanley tore a hole into the land of the fey with consequences best described as odd.

This hole full of odd consequences began with Skix, a meddlesome fey spirit who got his kicks by living with orange trees. Orange trees drew Skix towards their groves with a pheromantic allure, teasing the spirit of nature with ripening fruit and open stomata. There was an intimacy between the spirit and the trees, and fey—instinct in its purest form—never act with caution once something piques their desires. Fey sensuality isn't a brooding temptation, like how succubi and incubi seduce their prey. Fey sensuality is pure, pubescent adrenaline.

So Skix lived with the blood oranges, eventually taking the shape of one. Like a mortal marriage, the fey spirit "planted roots" and settled with the grove. Unmoving, yet interlocked, Skix weaved his roots and life force within the neighboring trees, trembling in ecstasy every spring as the bees and butterflies swarmed within their beckoning blooms. His consciousness rolled back as the dopamantic tide of life spilled into every crevice of the blossoming grove, spilling seed and pollen and nectar and new birth out into the world. Skix swam in paradise, and the oranges swelled in heat year after year.

After year...

But then the BURN seeped in! A hot, raking, ear-splitting scrape that ripped Skix from his botanical harem. The iron BURNed his soul! A human had invaded his grove! Each orange tree was linked with Skix's existence, and a deadly slice of iron bit into Skix's carnal fortress each second. It was a man with iron teeth causing

the mayhem—the iron, an ever-poisoning metal that spelled grisly death to any fey—what worse punishment than to be gifted luxury only to have it BURN away?

To Yanley “Ironjaw” Smithy, this was just another grove of fruit trees. The blood oranges here tasted especially sweet, so Yanley kept eating his fill, the citrus juices spilling down his chin, sprinkling the ground with pulp and sweetwater. He caused the trees to bleed with every bite, and the grass beneath his feet curdled in horror. Skix fought to escape the hell that Ironjaw had unknowingly wrought with his afternoon snacking, but Skix had coiled himself too deeply—too earnestly. For better or worse, his marriage to the grove could not be broken.

Ironjaw, his stomach now filled, left the mangled grove. Skix could only scream in poisoned terror, forever bleeding, yet never enough to die.

He’s still screaming and bleeding.

Right now.

PLOT HOOK

A whispered rumor, a hidden map, a few picked up words from the table conversing next to you in the tavern—all of these methods can give your players the desire to seek Skix’s grove.

- A beggar offers a magical orange in exchange for some “real food.” This orange is from the grove, and eating it fills the consumer’s head with visions of disembodied iron teeth gnashing through a grove of bleeding trees. The consumer then becomes color blind except for the color orange, and every night the consumer hears screaming coming from the direction of the grove, regardless of how far away the consumer is.
- The party finds an orange tree covered in rust. The ground is piled high in iron

oranges, heaped upon each other after years of not being eaten and not rotting away. Instead of branches, the tree has skeletal, iron arms. Instead of a trunk, the tree has a torso. There is a human skull with iron teeth growing from the top. This is Yanley “Ironjaw” Smithy, who died one day after eating the oranges. The magic transformed his corpse. The corpse *may* speak. A nearby village stopped looking for him ten years ago.

- A nearby brothel/tavern, “The Citrinery Spark,” is infamous for mead that is “so strong you will only see orange for a day.” The tavern’s apiaries are close to Skix’s orange grove, and honey made from the grove will cause eaters to be colorblind for 24 hours, seeing only the color orange. The mead made from this honey carries the same effect. A patron wants the party to find the source of the mead’s “extra kick” and will pay.
- Ironjaw and Skix’s tale has become legend. The players hear of this tale around a campfire, at a dingy inn, or even from a book of ghost stories. Read them or give them the text as it appears in the Background session of this adventure.

APPROACHING SKIX’S GROVE

All trees within one mile of the grove are blighted. Read or summarize:

The trees aren’t dead. Death means life once coursed through them. These lawless husks wither as though life never blessed them. They are an unborn mistake—a forest of corpseless ghosts—their branches dancing a gallows’ waltz as the wind trickles through them.

Fey magic is tied to the natural world, and Skix’s terror has driven all “soul” from these trees. Any player with an affinity for the wild can make an **Intelligence (Nature)** check to

reveal the following information plus any extra based on the appropriate score:

Result	Henrick offers:
10-14	The air around you reeks of unlife, as though the trees themselves are afraid to be alive. Life is pain for them.
15-19	The source of their pain is still nearby. Visions of it dance around you, and a scent of zesty orange refuses to leave your nose.
20-24	They speak to you, these effigies of despair, 'He had iron in his teeth, and he made the fairy bleed,' they say. 'He still bleeds. He still screams. He has driven the smiles from the wind and staunched it with fear. O, stranger, how does the lifeless die when the pain won't?
25+	"'Kill it, if you must,' the trees speak. 'Kill it, if you must!' their cries grow stronger, 'Kill it, if you must!' Your mind retches in coiled agony 'KILL IT! YOU MUST!' and all that remains is silence, and visions of a soulless mouth.

THE ORANGE GROVE

The orange trees, unlike the surrounding ones, are in full bloom, regardless of what season:

As an inverse to the previous trees, this grove of orange trees couldn't be healthier. Unlike traditional fruit-bearing trees, their blossoms and fruit are growing at the same time, the white blooms as bright as silk cloth, and the fruits swell like bubbles about to burst.

Eating the fruit from the tree causes the effect seen in scenario 1 of the Plot Hook section. The screaming comes from the center of the trees.

SKIX'S MAW

There's no need to roll an ability check to find Skix's personification of hate and pain. The

players see it immediately upon entering the center of the grove. And you will tell them:

A mouth, oddly human, rests in the ground. Fifteen feet in diameter, this open monstrosity trembles as though its jaw is ready to snap out of place. A silent, endless scream contorts across the mouth as though it has been shrieking for ages. The teeth are sooty with dirt, and though no breath escapes its maw, the scent of citrus orange rot bellows from this gaping hole in the dirt.

Over time, Skix's pain combined with the iron-tainted juices that dripped on the ground from the eaten oranges caused Skix to manifest outside of the trees, taking the form of a wailing, silent mouth in the ground. If PC's have eaten any of the oranges, they hear the screaming. To anyone else, the mouth is just a silent sin against all that is natural.

Pulling away the dirt near the edge of the mouth reveals bloodied roots that smell like sweet oranges, and any attempts to "dig up" the mouth reveal more bloody roots. The mouth doesn't increase in pain if it's harmed this way—it is already under enough spiritual trauma.

The mouth leads to nothing and is roughly fifteen feet deep. Should anyone fall into it, they won't be swallowed, but years of being open to the elements have left the mouth full of mud, rotten oranges, and water. Swimming around inside is not recommended.

SOLUTIONS

An immediate solution would be to use iron weapons on the mouth, which causes the mouth to recoil in pain. Damaging the mouth with iron causes it to bleed profusely, yet anyone under the effects of an eaten orange feels a sense of relief in the screaming akin to bursting a swollen cyst. Once slain, the mouth sinks into the ground, which now fills with a frothy orange substance—Skix is dead, and his spirit returns to the Feywild. The orange trees nearby immediately begin to rot. The deed is

done. Maybe his spirit will return to thank them in the future? Maybe it will haunt them?

Skix can also be saved, should the party discover a way. Iron has tainted his spirit, causing it to rust. Effectively, he has spiritual lockjaw (tetanus). If the PC's discover that iron has tainted his spirit, then it's possible to "clean" it by using a reagent of vinegar. One may perceive that since vinegar is used to clean rust from pots and pans, and since vinegar can be made from citrus fruits (like oranges), distilling some of Skix's oranges into vinegar may prove a viable method. A cleric or other spiritually aligned member can "deliver" the vinegar element in a variety of ways: leaving it out and blessing it, pouring it into the mouth, or even contacting Skix's spirit and offering it to him. Whatever method the party chooses, try to go along as the DM. Skix, being a fey, has never known kindness from those on the Material plane. The concept is scary for him, and a touching moment between a tormented fey and caring players can build a beautiful scene for your PC's.

There is also the chance that Skix may never be saved. The maw is left unmolested, good or bad, and his spirit continues to writhe in pain. Such can be the way of the world, where not all matters come to a conclusion. Should this be the case, let the maw haunt your players. They have witnessed it. They have seen the pain. Maybe Skix has left a mark on them: should they see an orange of any kind, they are brought back to that terrible sight of the shrieking ground and the operatic tempo of a silent, rusted contortion.

He's still screaming and bleeding.

Right now.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

This unsettling encounter should occur in the Eldeen Reaches great forest, but it should happen as far away as possible from Greenheart. Otherwise, the druids would have helped Skix already. The northern half of the forest, near the mountain range that borders the Demon Wastes, is a good location.

Alternatively, this encounter may happen in the Shadow Marches, but the description should be changed to that of a swamp. Or in Xen'drik, but the description should be changed to that of a jungle.

THE LEOPARD'S COAT

By Jean A. Headley

@JeanNadira

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

The Leopard's Coat is a short exploration/investigation adventure designed for four to five characters of 1st - 4th level. Scaling suggestions are provided for higher level parties.

BACKGROUND

Hendrik Oskarson, a wealthy merchant, has procured a rare, magical leopard from Chult at the request of a powerful patron. The leopard has escaped into the nearby forest and Hendrik wants it returned, uninjured. The leopard, in truth, wants to go home. One of Hendrik's apprentices, Kai, saw the leopard change his shape and has stolen the leopard's magical coat. Without it, the leopard can't return to his true form.

PLOT HOOK

The party is in the market when a merchant approaches and offers them a job.

Alternatively, the party could overhear talk at a tavern about a missing leopard. If they question the patrons or the barkeep, they'll learn Hendrik is looking for someone to bring the leopard back alive.

The party could also run into the leopard himself, in his human form, while moving through the forest. If you choose to introduce the encounter this way, the party is likely to meet other adventurers who have been hired by Hendrik.

TAKING ON THE QUEST

As the party moves through the marketplace, Hendrik Oskarson approaches them. Read or summarize the following:

The sights and sounds of the market envelop you: merchants peddling their wares, people haggling over prices, children laughing, musicians and dancers entertaining the crowd, bright silks and plain clothes mingling between wooden stalls and colorful shopfronts. Out of this chaos a voice calls out, "You! Hey you! You lot look like you can handle yourselves. I've got a job for you!"

When the party turns they see a stocky, well-dressed man coming toward them. He's wearing fine linen, with satin trim and silver embroidery. The man has dark hair and a full beard, both liberally streaked with white. Two carved jade beads are braided into his beard, one on either side.

NOTE: A party member who is proficient in **Arcana** recognizes runes of protection stitched into the decorative embroidery. Any dwarf in the party recognizes the two jade beads as belonging to the Edelstein clan, who are gem cutters, jewel smiths, and merchants.

He introduces himself as Hendrik Oskarson (Purveyor of Fine Magical Trinkets and Sundries) and asks them to join him for tea. If they agree, he leads them to an upscale teashop. He tells them to order whatever they would like, and he makes small talk until their tea and pastries arrive. Then he gets down to business:

"I deal in fine magical sundries and exotic items. A little over a week ago I took delivery of a young leopard as part of a consignment for a favored client. That very night someone broke into my home and tried to steal the leopard! My apprentice, Kai, came upon them in the act and scared them off, but the leopard got away. I've had people out looking for the beast, but I'm afraid they're not very good trackers. I am reluctant to hire real hunters for fear they'll simply kill the beast. I need it alive, do you understand? I'm certain the creature is in the forest but I doubt it's gone far. It is, after all, unfamiliar territory. I will reward you handsomely for its safe return. What say you?"

Haggling with Hendrick

The party may make a Charisma (Persuasion) check to haggle Hendrik's offer higher. They may continue to try until they've rolled a 20 or better, or until they've rolled less than 12 twice. Then Hendrik refuses to offer any more.

Result	Hendrick offers:
12-14	75 gp each
15-19	125 gp each and a <i>potion of healing</i>
20+	150 gp each and a 10% discount on his inventory for one week

Hendrik's Inventory

Hendrik always has a supply of potions of healing and greater healing. He also has a variety of common and uncommon magic items, as presented in the DMG. For determining random items, you can use Magic Item Table A, or Magic Item Table B in the DMG (p 144), as well as the Trinkets table in the PHB (p 160-161) In addition, Hendrik often has odd trinkets such as:

A silver spoon that prevents halitosis.

A small amber cup that turns black when poison enters the cup.

A loaf-sized wicker basket that keeps bread fresh and warm for three days. It only works on bread.

An ivory comb that eases tangles from hair. It feels slightly oily.

A wooden tinder box that renews its supply of tinder overnight.

A tiny rosewood box that creates a handful of red and pink rose petals once a day.

Offer Not Accepted

If the party refuses the contract, Hendrik thanks them for their time and leaves.

Offer Accepted

If they accept, Hendrik first agrees on a payment, and then offers his carriage for the half-hour ride to his home.

Read or summarize the following:

As you exit the carriage, Hendrick says, "Welcome, friends, to my humble estate!" as he gestures toward his two-story home built of stone and timber. To the right is a large garden neatly enclosed by a low rock wall. To the left is a carriage house with an attached stable. Hendrik waves you forward. "Come. I kept the beast in the stable. The horses are elsewhere for the time being," he says as he leads you to the back of the house.

The party is welcome to examine the stable and surrounding property. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals signs that the barn was opened from the inside.

There are two sets of footprints, one smaller than the other. It appears the larger one was hiding in the barn, and the smaller one waited outside to aide in the escape. Curiously, there are no leopard prints.

Questioning Kai

The party members can question Kai, who tells them that he came out to check on the leopard and saw two men at the barn door, one with a net. Kai says he chased them off, but the leopard must have pushed open the unlatched door.

A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that Kai is not being truthful, but he will continue to insist his story is accurate.

A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals that Kai has scratches on his forearms. He insists he got them while running through brush trying to catch the leopard.

If the party asks him why he didn't immediately call for his master, Kai shrugs and says that, in the heat of the moment, he didn't think of it.

The edge of the forest is a few hundred yards from Hendrik's house, which explains why Hendrik is sure the leopard is there.

INTO THE FOREST

General Features

Terrain. Soft earth with a thick layer of old leaves. There are bushes and plenty of other undergrowth, but the forest floor is clear and easy to traverse.

Weather. The deep shade keeps the forest relatively cool, even on the hottest days.

Light. The dense forest canopy means the forest floor is dim, even on the brightest days. There are pockets of sunshine (or moonlight) where there are small, open meadows and glades.

Smells and Sounds. The forest smells of green growing things and water, of good rich earth and leaf mold. There is plenty of birdsong, the whirs and chitters of insects, and the chirping and croaking of frogs. There is also the occasional snap of a twig or rustle of leaves as something larger moves through.

AREA 1. THE POOL

As the party enters this area, read or summarize:

Hendrik's directions were clear and accurate, and you have no trouble finding the stream and the pool. You can hear the running water before you see it, and you can smell the rich, damp earth. You clear the trees and find yourselves standing on the banks of a pool that is twenty to thirty feet across. To your right, the stream flows over an uplift of rock and splashes into the pool. To your left, the water has broken through a dam of rock and fallen branches and rushes away. Upstream, the water is ten to fifteen feet wide. Downstream it narrows to only six feet, running deeper and faster. You can see fish in the clear water of the pool, and a myriad of animal tracks in the mud. As you stand a moment taking this in, the birds you disturbed with your passing begin singing again.

The party must succeed a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check to distinguish the leopard's tracks from all the rest. A party member proficient with either Nature or Investigation may use the Help action to give the tracker advantage on his or her Survival check.

Results of the Help action:

Nature: the character realizes that the large cat-like prints are not consistent with local wildlife. The prints lead to a scattering of bloody feathers. Apparently, it caught and ate a duck.

Investigation: the character finds a scattering of bloody feathers and an indentation in the mud where a large creature could have been lying down. The blood and feathers trail off into the underbrush.

After identifying the correct tracks, the party must succeed on three **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** checks to track the leopard away from the pool. Each success leads them farther into the forest. Each failure leads them off the correct path, and the party will have to backtrack.

If the party fails to correctly identify the leopard's tracks at the pool, or fails three **Survival** checks while tracking, Ingwe approaches and offers to help them if they agree to help him.

If the party succeeds three **Survival** checks while tracking the leopard, they find the large fallen tree where Ingwe lost his coat. Ingwe approaches them there, before they've had the chance to fully investigate the area.

MEETING INGWE

When Ingwe decides to reveal himself, read or summarize the following:

A smooth, deep voice speaks from the surrounding trees, "Excuse me. You seem to be looking for something. As it happens, I am looking for something as well. Perhaps we can help each other?" You turn toward the voice, and a lithe dark man steps out from the trees. He is wearing plain but serviceable clothing – the kind any seasoned traveler would wear. He has black hair and brown eyes that sparkle.

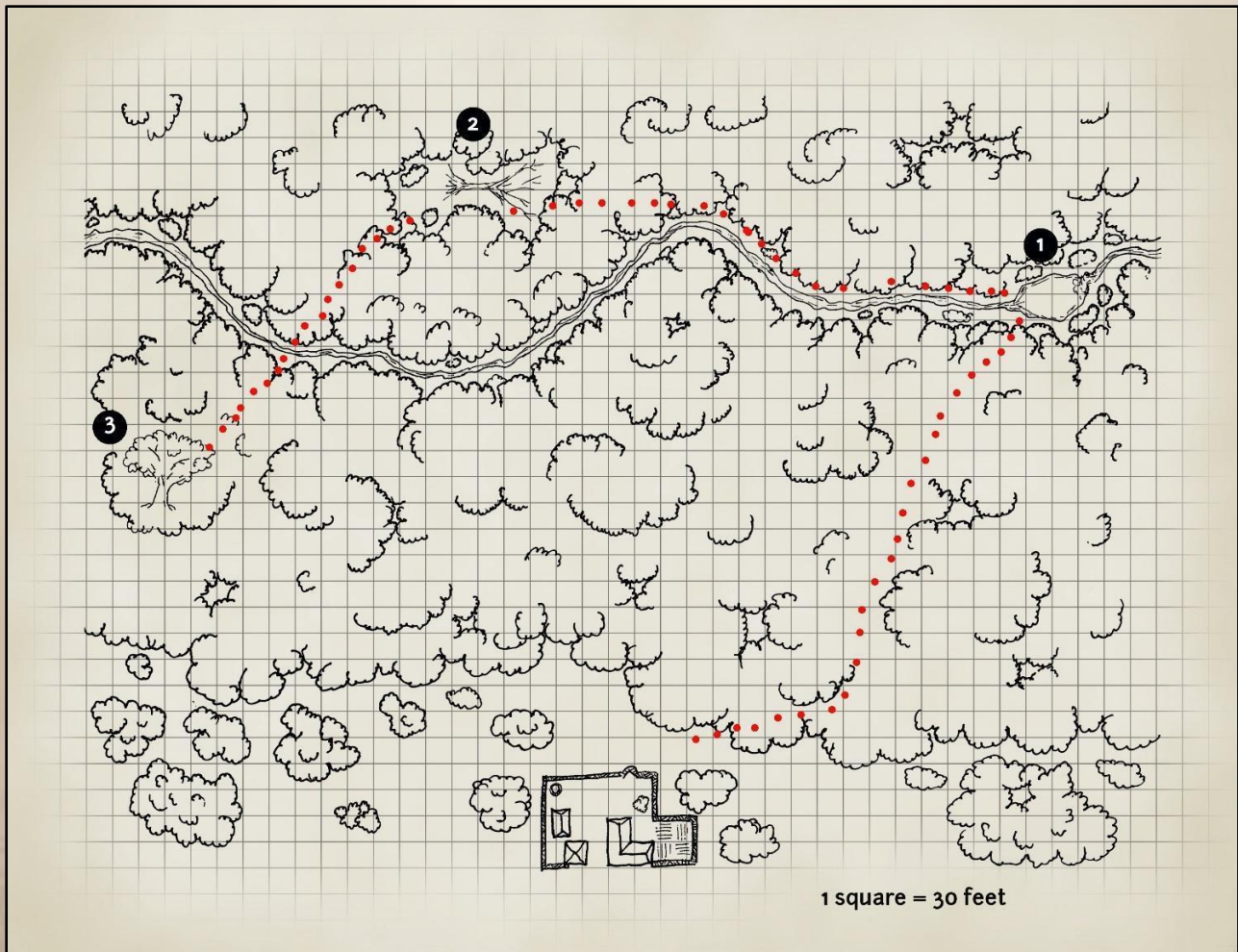
Paladins, Clerics, and Ingwe

- Paladins and Clerics who cast the spell *detect evil and good* immediately realize that Ingwe is a fey creature.
- If confronted with this knowledge, Ingwe doesn't deny it, but neither does he reveal what kind of fey creature he is, unless the party can convince him it is safe for him to do so. If the party succeeds a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, Ingwe tells the party the whole truth, including that the coat Kai stole is in fact Ingwe's leopard skin, that he is trapped in human form until he gets it back, and he's afraid some local wizard or sorcerer paid for his capture in order to get his coat.

Read or summarize the following:

"I am Ingwe, a traveler and visitor to your... home, yes? I was exploring this lovely forest," he gestures to the surrounding area, "studying the local plants, yes? And animals? I set my coat down so it would not get damaged, you see? By thorns and such. And while I had my back turned, some dirty thief stole it! It is special to me, you see? Given to me by my mother. I never go anywhere without it. There. Now you know what I am seeking. Perhaps if you tell me what you are seeking we can find both, yes? Together?"

Ingwe makes a calming motion, gesturing for the party to lower their weapons if that's necessary. The party may ask who he is, where he's from, and what he's doing, but even if they simply tell him to go away, Ingwe introduces himself.



Roleplaying Ingwe

A lithe, dark-skinned Chultan man with black hair, sparkling brown eyes, and a smooth, deep voice. He wears plain but serviceable clothing.

Ingwe is a shapeshifter who wants to return to Chult. The source of Ingwe's power is a magical leopard's coat, which he has lost.

In conversation, Ingwe happily talks about his mother, whom he adores, and his brothers, with whom he fought and played daily as children. He never knew his father, who was his mother's, how do you say... seasonal romance, yes? He talks about carefree days running through the jungle and hunting. He admits that he hated the ocean voyage that brought him here, and he is dreading that part of returning home. Though he has enjoyed exploring the forest and learning about local wildlife, he thinks his traveling days are over. He just wants to go home.

Everything he says is strictly true, but someone with a high Intelligence and proficiency in Nature might realize it is also true for a leopard.

Everything Ingwe said is true, if not the whole truth. The only lie Ingwe offers is to describe the coat as black and gold brocade. He tells the party that there are hunters in the forest, but they're not very good. He is concerned that he will be mistaken for whatever animal they are hunting. If the party asks why he thinks the hunters aren't good, Ingwe describes them as clumsy and noisy. If they ask why he thinks the hunters might mistake him for an animal, he shrugs and repeats that they are clumsy and noisy.

AREA 2. THE FALLEN TREE

As the party enters this area, read or summarize:

An ancient, mighty oak has fallen here, taking lesser trees with it and creating a small clearing. The roots of the tree have been pulled from the ground, extending into the air at least eight feet and forming a large hollow filled with leaves.

If the party chooses to help Ingwe, he moves around the clearing pointing out Kai's footsteps,

and the leopard's prints. The party may find it highly suspicious that Ingwe, Kai, and the leopard all came to the same clearing.

If they choose to send Ingwe on his way, he follows them quietly, appearing out of the forest to help them subdue Kai when they finally track him to the great oak called the King of the Forest.

TRACKING KAI

Kai is no forester and has left ample spoor for the party to follow. Anyone with proficiency in Survival can easily follow Kai – until he puts on the coat and changes into a leopard.

Ingwe will try to persuade them to track Kai first but won't argue if they choose to track the leopard. If they choose to track the leopard (which is Kai in the stolen coat), have them make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check. If the party succeeds, they successfully track Kai.

Whichever course they choose, read or summarize the following:

After half an hour tracking your quarry, you come to a small clearing where you suddenly lose the trail. You look around, even backtrack a little, but it's as if your quarry disappeared. However, as you search the clearing you realize you've found something strange: one type of print leads into the clearing, but a different set of prints leads out.

If they've been tracking Kai the thief, they discover human footprints lead into the clearing, but leopard prints lead out.

If they have been tracking Kai the leopard, then they discover leopard prints lead in and human footprints lead out.

If the party questions Ingwe about this, he will do his best to shrug it off and urge them to simply start tracking the prints that lead out. "After all, we must find both eventually, yes?"

It doesn't matter which set of prints they track from here; either set leads them to the King of the Forest.

AREA 3. THE KING OF THE FOREST

As the party enters this area, read or summarize:

Before you is a massive oak tree, easily one hundred feet tall, and four feet in diameter. Its canopy stretches out forty feet from the trunk. The ground beneath is covered in old leaves, twigs, fallen branches, and acorns. You see a partially-eaten deer hanging in the limbs about fifty feet from the ground.

Kai has been living here, becoming attuned to his new coat and abilities. There are numerous tracks, both leopard and human, and other signs of habitation including a poorly-dug latrine.

While the party is searching the area, Kai returns in human form, carrying the coat. Anyone with a **passive Perception** of 12 or higher notices the rustling in the undergrowth. If anyone is actively watching for Kai, they notice the rustling. If the party fails to notice, Ingwe points and shouts, "There he is! Get him!" Ingwe immediately gives chase.

Kai does not have time to put on the leopard coat, and simply crashes through the forest trying to get away. If the party is close to catching him, he throws the coat to try to distract them. Ingwe immediately goes for the coat and stops chasing Kai.

NOTE: You may wish to use the Chase rules found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 252.

ENCOUNTERING THE HUNTERS

At any time while searching the forest, the party may encounter the "hunters" that Hendrik first hired to find the leopard. If Ingwe is with the party, he is visibly nervous, going so far as to try to hide behind the party.

There are six men, and they have little to no experience in natural settings. They use short blades, and are carrying a net and several large cloth bags. Use the stat block for **bandit** (CR ½; MM, p 343).

The first time the party encounters the hunters they may be able to talk their way out of a confrontation. If they do, the hunters may show up again later, this time spoiling for a fight; they're tired, hungry, frustrated, and happy to take it out on the party.

NOTE: Use the hunters at any time you wish to change the pace and tone of gameplay.

CONCLUSION

By the end of the encounter the adventurers should realize that Ingwe and the leopard are one, and that the coat is actually Ingwe's leopard skin – and his true form. Ingwe rewards the party for helping him escape, giving them 17 gp, a *potion of healing*, and a spell scroll with one 1st level spell (DM's choice).

If the adventurers choose to help Ingwe return to his native jungle, Hendrik is very upset, but pays them half for trying. If he knows the party actually helped Ingwe escape, he becomes angry and refuses to deal with them in any way, calling on the local guards if the party continues trying to interact. If Hendrik learns that Kai was the one who let the leopard loose to begin with, he scolds the boy then turns him out.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The Leopard's Coat can be dropped right into Stormreach. You could change Ingwe to a Razorclaw Shifter, who cannot fully change. Rather than a problem, it gives you the opportunity to further flavor the encounter with Eberron characteristics. As it is crucial to the encounter for another NPC to possess an item which allows Ingwe to fully change form, swap Ingwe's leopard skin for a Siberys

dragonshard. Dragonshards are magical amplifiers which reasonably allow Ingwe to fully change into animal form. Dragonshards are also valuable, so if the heroes decide to simply keep the dragonshard they can sell it in Stormreach.

Ingwe's Leopard Coat

Wonderous item, very rare (requires attunement)

While wearing this coat, you gain the Druid's Wild Shape ability. You can use your action to magically assume the shape of a leopard.

You can stay in this beast form for three hours. You then revert to your normal form. You can revert to your normal form earlier by using a bonus action on your turn. You automatically revert if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die.

While you are transformed, the normal rules of Wild Shape apply (see *Wild Shape*, PHB, p 66).

After using the coat, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

INGWE

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 35 (5d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +7, Persuasion +5, Stealth +10
Survival +7

Condition Immunities charmed, magical sleep

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Ingwe is immune to magic that induces sleep.

Shapechanger. Ingwe's natural form is a fey leopard. As an action he may slip out of his leopard's coat, becoming human in appearance. To return to his natural state he must take an action to don his coat.

Keen Senses (Leopard form). Ingwe has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce (Leopard form). If Ingwe moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Ingwe can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. Ingwe makes two unarmed attacks in human form, or three attacks (two claw and one bite) in leopard form.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+5) slashing damage.

LEOPARD

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 45 ft, climb 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception, Stealth +6

Senses passive perception 14

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The leopard has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell

Pounce. If the leopard moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone. If the target is prone, the leopard can make one bite against it as a bonus action.

Actions

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

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

A LOST LEGACY

By Courtney Hilbig

@ChilbigArt

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

A Lost Legacy is a short exploration adventure designed for four or five characters of level 1st - 3rd. Scaling suggestions are included for characters up to 9th level.

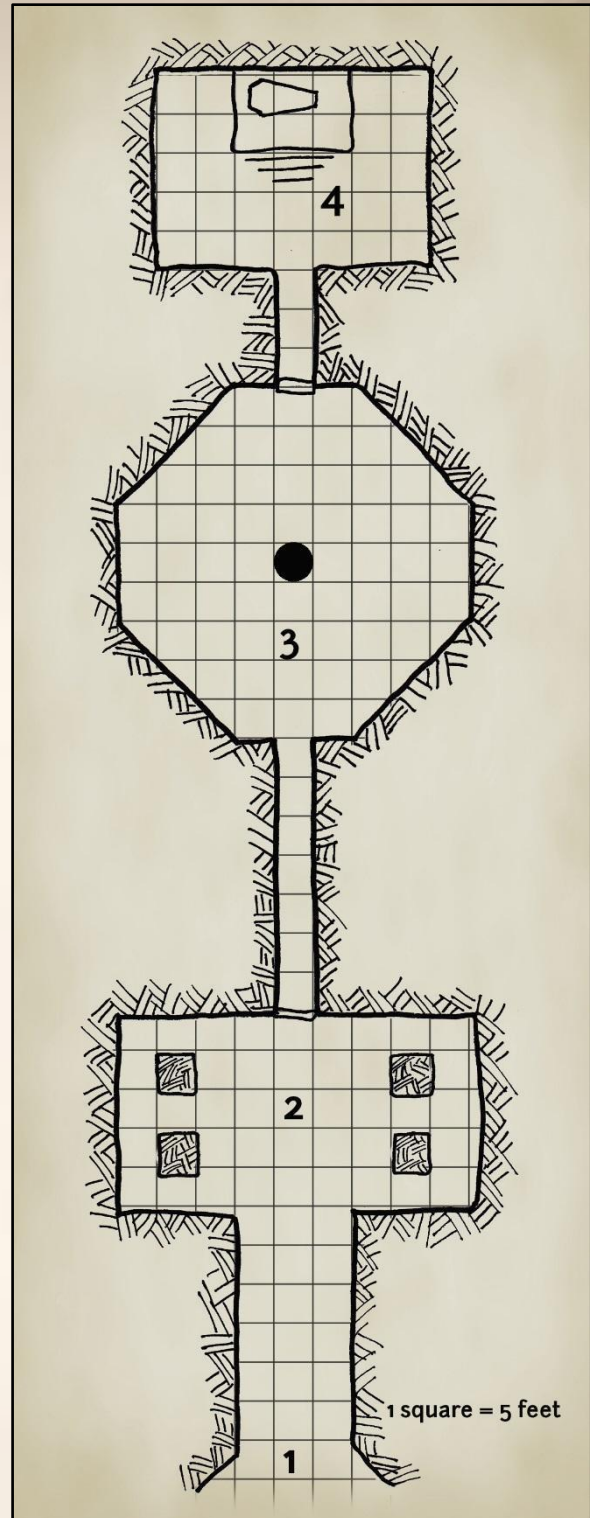
BACKGROUND

Many years ago, a wealthy, influential merchant was executed for crimes he insisted he did not commit. His body was taken far outside the city walls, to be buried and forgotten in shame.

PLOT HOOK

The graveyard has been lost and long forgotten on purpose; locals are not generally aware of its existence. However, there are a few ways that the party may learn of it:

- Travelers report hearing unnatural wailing coming from the area outside the city walls.
- A young tailor's apprentice, named **Eshe Ngozi**, has been having vivid dreams of being called into the jungle. She is frightened of what lies beyond the city walls. She is willing to pay what little coin she has saved to have the party investigate for her. Her detailed dreams allow her to create a map for the party to follow, leading them into the jungle on a one-day hike.
- The party may stumble across the graveyard while traveling through the jungle.



APPROACHING THE GRAVEYARD

As the party approaches the graveyard, read or summarize:

The grave marker is so overgrown that you nearly trip on it before you see it. The trees thin out only slightly here but it's enough to see the crumbling remains of a graveyard that the jungle has worked diligently to reclaim. It is eerily quiet. As you approach a pile of stones that appear to have once been a mausoleum, you begin to hear whispers...
"The living have not stepped foot here in many years... Might brave adventurers such as yourselves be willing to help a tired spirit? Or have you merely come to plunder what rightfully belongs to the Ngozi family?"

Kwaku Ngozi is a spirit trying to enlist the party's help with a task. He speaks to the party but remains invisible until he is convinced that the party is willing to talk. He then appears as a ghostly, tall, and muscular Chultan nobleman dressed in fine clothing and furs.

Kwaku tells the party that his body was buried in the mausoleum with some of his most precious belongings. However, he cannot see inside the tomb due to wards that were placed on it. The cemetery was once used to bury criminals in a place of dishonor, but Kwaku insists that he was wrongfully accused. He tells the adventurers that if they are willing to retrieve his heirloom ring from the tomb and deliver it to his great-granddaughter, Eshe, then they are welcome to keep any of the other treasures they might find inside. He expresses regret that Eshe is forced to work for others to earn a living. Most of his wealth was taken from him in the end, but Kwaku believes the ring will help lift Eshe beyond her current station.

Kwaku is most insistent that Eshe should get the ring. He says that she should not be punished further for what was done to him and that the ring will allow her to reclaim her family's lost legacy.

Playing Kwaku Ngozi

Kwaku Ngozi, in life, was a wealthy merchant who traded in furs and animal parts. Some of his former possessions were buried here with him in the mausoleum, with the intent that it should all be lost and forgotten.

Appearance: He uses his human shape when speaking to the party. He appears as a tall, muscular, Chultan nobleman dressed in fine clothing and furs. He is prideful and confident with an underlying anger at his situation.

Alignment: Lawful Evil. He is looking out for himself and his descendants first and foremost. He is a hunter and has no qualms with killing, but only does so with purpose.

Unfinished business: He wants the party to enter the mausoleum to retrieve a valuable family heirloom and give it to his great-granddaughter, Eshe, who lives in the city.

Secrets: The heirloom is a cursed ring, encrusted with jewels and bearing the mark of the god Malar. While the party seems amenable to the task, he does not tell them that he was a weretiger, and the legacy he wishes to pass on to Eshe is his lycanthropic curse. If Kwaku thinks it will help his case, he shares that he was executed for murder and buried here. Kwaku insists that he did not commit the murder. In truth, he did kill several men whom he viewed as rivals to his hunting business, but he sees it as a defense of territory rather than murder.

Behavior: If the party deduces that he was a lycanthrope, or otherwise becomes hostile to him, Kwaku attacks. First, he becomes invisible to stalk and taunt the party, then reappears, shapeshifting in spirit form. When hostile, his pupils become smoldering narrow slits, his teeth grow impossibly long and sharp, and his hands sprout wicked-looking claws.

MAUSOLEUM ENTRANCE

The mausoleum that holds Kwaku's remains and the heirloom ring is terribly overgrown, but Kwaku helps the party find the entrance. He tells the party to follow, then simply walks through a tangle of vines and disappears. It is

not difficult for the party to pull or chop away the vines and leaves to reveal the hidden stone door.

General Features

Terrain. Packed earth. The walls and ceiling are reinforced with stone.

Weather. Relatively dry and warm as they enter. The deeper into the mausoleum the party goes, the cooler it gets.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, the tomb is dark and void of light.

Smells and Sounds. Dust and dirt. Aside from crumbling earth and dust disturbed by the party's passage, the mausoleum is dead quiet.

While in the mausoleum, a character can make a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)** check to determine that the tomb must have been sealed for at least a century.

AREA 1

As the party enters Area 1, read or summarize:

The mausoleum entrance almost immediately gives way to a set of worn stone stairs. The scant light from the doorway struggles to reach the bottom of the steps.

Characters without darkvision require a source of light to see beyond the bottom of the stairs.

AREA 2

As the party enters Area 2, read or summarize:

Roots have begun to work their way through cracks in the stone slabs that make up the ceiling of this room. It appears to still be supported by four solid stone pillars. Time has worn away much of the detail of the carvings on the pillars, but the animal bones that line the walls still appear to be intact. There is a bar across the door on the far side of the room.

Succeeding on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that the stone surrounding the

door appears to be in much better shape than the rest of the room. A character who makes a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check notices the arcane runes carved into the door frame.

The door is warded with a *hold person* spell. If a character attempts to lift the bar without dispelling it, they must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or be held in place. Even if the ward is dispelled, attempting to lift the bar also awakens two **skeletal panthers** (CR ½; see end of encounter). These creatures assemble themselves from the bones on the walls and attack the characters closest to the door.

Scaling the Combat

APL 1-3: two skeletal panthers

APL 4-6: two skeletal panthers and one **minotaur skeleton** (CR 2; MM, p 273)

APL 7-9: two minotaur skeletons and a **flameskull** (CR 4; MM, p 134)

AREA 3

As the party enters Area 3, read or summarize:

The hall beyond the sealed door angles further down into the earth. Though still dusty, the deeper structure appears to be less ravaged by time. The end of the hall opens into a large ossuary. Patterns of humanoid skulls and femurs arc above a tall statue that sits in the center of the room. The man carved into the stone holds a lined circular disk. He appears to stare past you as you enter the room.

A plaque sits at the base of the statue with an inscription written in Chultan:

Let this cursed soul be forgotten. If one has no choice but to enter, then may Ubtao watch over their path; for to tread in the tomb of a weretiger without the blessing of the gods is folly.

An adventurer who is proficient in Religion (or is native to Chult) and succeeds on a **DC 12**

Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes the figure in the statue as Utao, holding his holy symbol. There is a fist-sized hole on the side of the statue just above a seam on the base. A character investigating the statue who succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check or **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check believes there is a mechanism inside that allows the statue to turn in place.

The statue must be turned to face the sealed door on the other side of the room for the party to proceed. Anyone who touches this door without having turned the statue takes 1 point of necrotic damage as a spectral claw appears in the air and slashes at them.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Strength** check may use the hole as a handhold to turn the statue on its base. Alternatively, if an object such as a weapon handle or femur bone is inserted into the hole to use as a lever, the statue may be turned with a successful **DC 12 Strength** check.

As the statue turns, the adventurers hear and feel rumbling as the door in front of them opens, and the one behind them seals shut.

AREA 4

As the party enters Area 4, read or summarize:

Carvings of feline figures line the walls of Kwaku's final resting place. A heavy stone sarcophagus rests on a plinth against the far wall.

The room is otherwise sparsely decorated. An old silvered longsword rests on top of the sarcophagus. The lid can be lifted with a successful **DC 10 Strength** check, revealing Kwaku's desiccated remains. Two silver coins are placed over his eyes.

If an adventurer chooses to do so, they may make a **DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine)** check to see how he died. A successful check reveals evidence of multiple stab wounds, some

charred on the edges. Kwaku put up a fight before he died.

A successful **DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation)** check allows an adventurer to find Kwaku's heirloom ring. A higher roll uncovers additional items as follows:

10-14	A gold locket with a painted portrait of a woman inside. An inscription in Chultan reads: "For my husband."
15-17	All previous items and a small gold bracelet worth 25 gp.
18-20	All previous items and a carved ivory statuette worth 250 gp
20+	All previous items and a Luckstone (DMG, p 205) tucked away in a pocket.

Kwaku's ring is relatively easy to find on the corpse's hand. The ring is made of gold, shaped like two clawed paws grasping a tiger's eye gemstone. At a glance, it would seem unremarkable if not for Kwaku's insistence on its retrieval. Any adventurers who are proficient in Religion and are inspecting the ring should make a **DC 14 Intelligence (Religion)** check. On a successful check, the adventurer will recognize the clawed paw symbol as the mark of Malar, an evil god worshipped by lycanthropes.

NOTE: Malar is also known as The Beastlord, and this ring carries the lycanthropic curse.

If an adventurer puts on the ring, they must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy. The ring and the curse can only be removed with a *remove curse* spell.

RETURNING TO KWAKU

In order to leave the tomb, the party must turn the statue in the ossuary back around to face the entrance. Once again, the door within the statue's gaze opens and the other closes. Kwaku

is waiting for the party outside the entrance of the mausoleum, where he met them originally.

Kwaku eagerly asks the party what they were able to find. If the silver coins were removed from the corpse's eyes, Kwaku is able to enter the room with the sarcophagus after the statue is turned away from it. In this case, he may be able to tell if anything was left inside. He will ask to see what treasures they found in the tomb. Attempting to deceive Kwaku about what was in the tomb requires a **DC 12 Charisma (Deception)** check. On a failed check, Kwaku believes the adventurers are lying to him.

Once Kwaku has confirmed that the adventurers have the ring, he asks them to promise that they will deliver it to Eshe. Kwaku is skeptical of the adventurers; convincing him of their intentions requires a **DC 10 group Charisma (Persuasion)** check or **DC 10 group Charisma (Deception)** check. Modify the DC according to the following:

- If the party shows him that they retrieved the ring, **reduce the DC by 1.**
- If the party offers to give additional items or aid to Eshe, **reduce the DC by 2.**
- If he sees that they have taken the silvered sword, **increase the DC by 2.** Kwaku also recoils at the sight of the weapon.
- If Kwaku caught them in a lie, **increase the DC by 3.**

Kwaku's reaction to the party differs depending on how they have handled the adventure thus far. If:

- the party was unable to retrieve the ring, or
- if they confront Kwaku about his lycanthropy, or
- if one of the adventurers is wearing the ring, or

- if they lie well enough to convince Kwaku that the ring was not in the tomb, or
- if they otherwise refuse to deliver the ring to Eshe,

Kwaku becomes furious and attacks the party. Use one of the following stat blocks as appropriate for the party's level.

Scaling the Combat

APL 1-3: Poltergeist (CR 2; MM, p 279)

APL 4-6: Ghost (CR 4; MM, p 147)

APL 7-9: Wraith (CR 5; MM, p 302), commanding two **Spectral Tigers** (see end of encounter)

However, if the party is able to:

- Safely retrieve the ring, and
- Agree to bring the ring to Eshe, or
- Lie well enough to convince Kwaku that they intend to give the ring to Eshe,

then Kwaku is content. He considers his business finished, and the anger that bound him to the cemetery dissipates, allowing his soul to move on to the next plane of existence.

BRINGING THE RING TO ESHE

Providing the party are not using the 2nd **Plot Hook** above, if the party asks around Port Nyanzaru, **Eshe Ngozi** is not difficult to find. She is working as an apprentice seamstress at a shop called The Tailor Maid in the Market Ward. Eshe is friendly and well-liked by the community within the area.

Again, providing the party are not using the 2nd Plot Hook above, Eshe is surprised by the adventurers arriving in the shop. She knows nothing of Kwaku and is happy to listen to the party's tale. If they give her some of the mundane treasures from the tomb, she is grateful and regrets that she does not have much to offer in return. She will offer to put in a good word with some of the local shops, granting the party a discount on basic supplies.

If the adventurers offer her the ring and warn her of its power, Eshe wants nothing to do with it. She may chastise them for taking it from the cemetery or suggest that they give it to the priests at the Temple of Savras to dispose of it properly. The priests are repulsed by such an item but will agree to safeguard it until they can find a way to destroy it.

If they present Eshe with the ring and do not warn her of its potential effects, she will put it on immediately. Eshe will stagger briefly as the party notice a subtle pulse of power. Raising a hand to her brow, she will explain that she just feels light headed and should go sit down. Eshe will look up at the party with slitted pupils, then thank them for working to restore her family's legacy before retiring to a back room. What happens from here is left to the DM's discretion.

CONCLUSION

What happens to the cursed ring is ultimately up to the party. It may have been left in the mausoleum for the jungle to reclaim. There may be a new weretiger roaming Chult. Or the ring may have been given to the Temple for safe keeping. In any case, the adventurers can be satisfied that Kwaku Ngozi has been put to rest, one way or another.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Kwaku was a lycanthrope (weretiger) and he was killed for it. In Eberron, the Church of the Silver Flame enacted a Lycanthropic Inquisition in 832 YK. It was also known as the Purge. During this period, they slaughtered most of the lycanthropes on the continent, and their descendants, the shifters. These atrocities remain a dark page in the church's history. It makes sense for Kwaku to be from that time. That would set his death around 160 years ago.

The Silver Flame only acted in Khorvaire so Kwaku's tomb should be somewhere in the five kingdoms. Since Kwaku was a wealthy merchant, his resting place may be close to

Aruldusk, Flamekeep, or Daskaran, in Thrane. The DM may also relocate Eshe to any of those three port-cities.

Ring of Kwaku

Wonderous Item, very rare

A creature donning this ring must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy. The cursed wearer is unaware of its affliction, and the changes take 96 hours before they begin to slowly appear. Casting *remove curse* on the wearer allows it to remove the ring, though the ring is still cursed and the next creature to don it must also succeed on a Constitution saving throw.

On a successful save, the creature is not cursed, and the ring appears to be a normal ring.

Refer to page 206 of the *5th edition Monster Manual* for more information on lycanthropy and player characters.

SKELETAL PANTHER

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 22 (3d10+6)

Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages none

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The skeletal panther makes two claw attacks.

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage.

SPECTRAL TIGER

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 25 (6d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The spectral tiger can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in the sunlight, the spectral tiger has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

HOTEL CALLISTA

By *Lilah Isaacs*

@Lunar_Bunni

Estimated run-time: 120 to 180 minutes

Hotel Callista is a short horror adventure suffused with some of the most twisted inhabitants from the Feywild. The adventure is designed for 4 to 6 characters of levels 4-6.

BACKGROUND

An estate once belonging to Emrys and Crystin Driscoll has been refurbished into a hotel called Hotel Driscoll. The hotel was designed for dignitaries and adventurers traveling exceptionally long journeys.

Crystin discovered that she was with child before the hotel's renovations. However, the moment Crystin laid eyes upon her malformed infant, any elation she felt deserted her. Despite herself, she named the infant Callista.

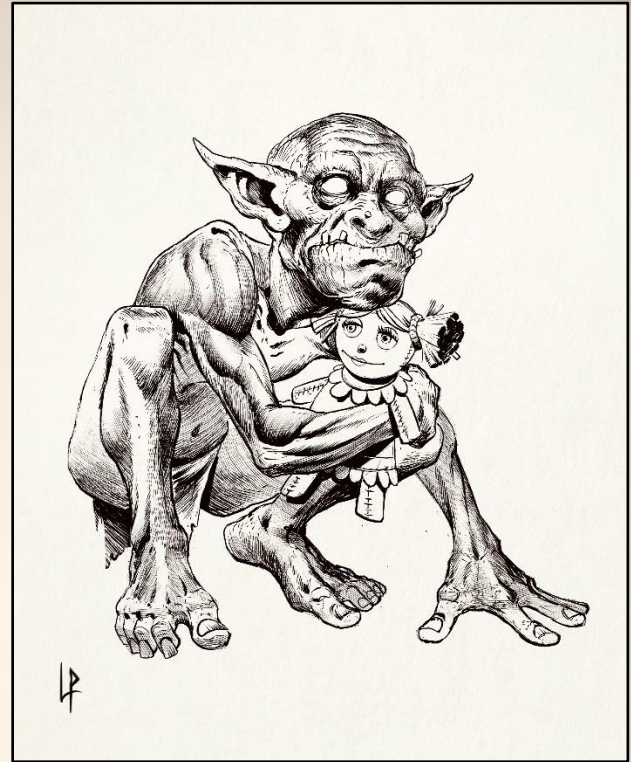
The Driscolls were disgusted by Callista, and they made every effort to keep their grotesque-looking daughter from their visitors. Living with no playmates and no approval from her parents, Callista's loneliness attracted the attention of an unlikely "imaginary friend". This friend was a Boggle that she fondly named "Slick".

Callista ruminated on one simple wish, *'I don't want to be a monster my parents hide away anymore. All I want is to be pretty and have friends.'*

Slick was privy to these thoughts and acted as her first contact into the world of the fey. This was the catalyst that resulted in a pact with an Archfey, The Queen of Air and Darkness.

To inaugurate Callista's pact, the Queen of Air and Darkness issued a macabre doll-making

ritual that involved the grisly offering of Callista's parents.



True to her end of the deal, the Archfey extricated Callista's misery upon the doll's completion. Then she sealed the malformed child's torment within the pact doll and called it "Dolores".

Since the ritual, the hotel has become a playground for the Archfey's unseelie creatures. In return for luring unwary travelers to the unseelie playground, Callista's Archfey patron grants her beauty, power, and "friends" in return.

Travellers check in, but they never check out.

If the characters wish to escape Hotel Callista alive, they must survive the unseelie fey and destroy Dolores. The threads of magic that keep the demiplane intact are interwoven through Callista's pact doll.

PLOT HOOK

Any event that leads the characters through uncharted wilderness is suitable for this short adventure. The setting could be Ravenloft, Chult, the Sword Coast, Eberron, or any homebrew setting.

The characters could be meeting for the first time upon arrival at the hotel, or traveling together for some time.

The only limit is your imagination.

APPROACHING HOTEL CALLISTA

As the party approaches the hotel, read or summarize the following:

The path curves further into the wilderness and the scent of local flora permeates the air. The path soon appears to be little more than a sparsely pebbled clearing. Curiously, the night cascades like a blanket tossed suddenly across the horizon.

Finally, the trees part and give quarter to a looming and forlorn looking estate. Yet despite its seclusion, a young woman skips around the doorstep gaily. She is burnishing an intricately carved sign that reads “Hotel Callista.”

Contrary to the dwelling, the young woman seems to possess a whimsical and childlike countenance.

An adventurer native to the area can attempt a **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** check to see if they recall any knowledge of the hotel. Consult the below table for what they recall:

15-17	Several individuals suggest that a reputable hotel resides somewhere out in this part of the wilderness. It has been known to shelter many travelers on long journeys.
18+	A first-hand account recalls a “Hotel Driscoll” that resides in this area of the wilderness. However, they cannot be certain if Hotel Callista is somehow related.

Roleplaying Callista

Callista made a pact with the Queen of Air and Darkness at the expense of her parents. She believes that her parents deserve the hand they’ve been dealt as recompense for their cruelty.

Although Callista was malformed at birth, she now possesses a haunting fey-like beauty. Framed beneath her raven locks are pale, angular features and unusually blood colored irises. With a **DC 13 Intelligence (History)** check, a character versed in Archfey may recognize that such features bear a striking resemblance to the Queen of Air and Darkness.

Callista is self-conscious and pauses at her reflection to “gussy-up.” She hides her insecurity behind jovial humor and pleasantries.

Through the Unseelie Queen’s pact, Callista has warped her parent’s hotel into a demi-dimensional fairground.

The hotel is now an amusement park to an assortment of unseelie fey whom Callista calls “friends”. The unseelie frolic through halls, rooms, and hedge maze alike, eager to terrorize any unsuspecting visitor they find.

Staying at Hotel Callista

Callista is always pleased to receive guests and she tells them so. When she notices the characters approaching, she greets them winsomely and invites them to stay.

If the characters are disagreeable about staying, Callista appeals to them with discounts they can earn by reaching the end of the hotel hedge maze.

If characters question Callista’s eagerness for them to stay, she reasons that it’s lonely this far out. She also suggests that camping in the wilderness is perilous, and she would feel culpable if any harm befell them.

Unbeknownst to the party, Callista has several **yeth hounds** (CR 4; VGM, p 201) at her employ who encompass the outskirts of the hotel property. From there, they stalk and let loose their baleful bay. The yeth hounds remain obscured and drive adventurers into the hotel through baying at Callista's telepathic command. Upon hearing her yeth hounds, Callista feigns concern and insists that the characters should come inside.

After the characters have checked in, Callista accompanies them until dinner. When she's certain they've signed the ledger and settled in, she leaves and bides her time in a hermitage cloaked by *hallucinatory terrain* across the road. From the hermitage, she scries on her guests through Dolores, a doll that Slick carries. Callista's statistics are found at the end of the adventure.



FIRST FLOOR

ATMOSPHERE OF HOTEL CALLISTA

General Features

Architecture. The hotel's wooden structure is finely lacquered and kempt inside. Drapes throughout the rooms are finely-tailored and quite exquisite.

Atmosphere. Hearth fires are maintained, and the initial atmosphere is warm and inviting. This is subject to change following the first night.

Light. Unless otherwise stated, the hotel is generally well lit with lanterns, candles, and chandeliers.

Smells and Sounds. Despite its reclusive location, Hotel Callista has all the amenities, luxuries and atmosphere of an aristocratic hotel.

1. MAIN HALL

As the party enter the Main Hall, read or summarize the following:

The chandelier's warm light gleams like a spotlight upon a ledger at the check-in desk. Behind the desk, explosions of vibrant floral greens announce curved stairs that ascend to a corridor overlooking the main hall.

Special Events

Once characters have checked into the hotel, they can trigger the following events:

- The Guestbook
- Check-In
- Slick the Boggle

THE GUEST BOOK

As the party enters the Main Hall, they are prompted by Callista to check in by signing their respective names to the guest book ledger.

Writing their name in the guest book completes their transport into the demiplane that now grips Hotel Callista. The guest book

does not care if it is their real name or a false one.

The Guest Book

If a character refuses to sign the guest book, refer to the below:

- Callista states that *‘Due to the recreational housing law #342.b12, all guests are required to sign the guest book if one is established in a recreational house.’*
- Callista says, *“Poor Agatha’s memory isn’t what it used to be. If your name isn’t on the ledger, then I’m afraid you’ll be skipped for breakfast.”*
- Those who do not sign the guest book aren’t allowed to stay in the hotel. Any character, who attempts to access another area of the hotel without having first checked in, is teleported back to the check-in desk.
- Adventurers are invited to stay in the hotel, as long as they sign the guest book. Any character, who doesn’t sign the ledger, is asked to leave. Characters are permitted to sleep outside, but any found sleeping outside are swarmed and attacked by 1d4+1 yeth hounds during the night.

If the characters read the guest book following the first night, they read “checked in, but may never leave.” scribbled beside their name.

Reading earlier pages reveals that each page is filled with tiny, barely legible writing. Careful study of the writing further reveals it to be a written transcript of every conversation the characters have had prior to arriving at the hotel.

The Demiplane Hotel

For the purposes of this adventure, the demiplane hotel functions similarly to a hedged prison variant: *imprisonment spell* (PHB, p 252).

While in the demiplane:

- *Glyphs of warding* prevent characters from exiting the hotel by conventional means.

Attempts to exit from the windows or front door results in teleportation to area 6A of the hedge maze.

- **Unseelie security** (Mimic, CR 2, statblock is found at the end of the adventure) disguises itself as the hotel’s front door. Characters who try to leave through the front door are answered by the **unseelie security**.
- If characters attempt to contact a deity magically or through prayer the DM can have the Unseelie Queen, or someone she has appointed, answer instead. The DM decides whether the entity pretends to be the deity the characters are contacting or not.

CHECK-IN

As the DM, you can assign characters to rooms individually or feel free to roll from the check-in table below. Although each room is similar in design, not every room yields the same experience for its resident.

Hotel Room Check-in (1d4)

1	Room 310 (8A) – Room 320 (10C)
2	Room 330 (9A) – Room 340 (9B)
3	Room 350 (8B) – Room 360 (10B)
4	Room 370 (9C) – Room 380 (9D)

In Hotel Callista, the first night is like any other night at an inn or hotel. However, sometime into the night, the characters’ rest is interrupted by the baleful baying of Callista’s yeth hounds as an omen of the Unseelie fey games to come. The midnight baying is a proclamation of the unseelie games to come.

Upon waking from the howling of yeth hounds, two or more characters are transported to area 6A of the hedge maze. From there, they need to navigate their way back to the hotel. (See section 6. Hedge Maze.)

SLICK THE BOGGLE

Slick was Callista's first companion and has been since she was a child. He was her first contact with fey and still inhabits the hotel. Slick often steers clear of the more malevolent fey and tries to avoid confrontation altogether. He is custodian of Callista's pact doll, and carries Dolores everywhere he goes.

Dolores

Wonderous item, cursed

Dolores is a small, ritualistically stitched doll crafted from the hair, skin, and preserved eyes of Callista's parents. The Unseelie Queen sealed Callista's childhood memories, misery, and innocence within the doll, as part of the pact.

Dolores is Callista's scrying doll, it allows her to scry on any room Dolores is in. Slick is often seen carrying Dolores from one room to the next for this purpose.

If characters linger in any one room long enough, Callista is guaranteed to send Slick with Dolores to scry on them.

In addition to scrying, Dolores possesses the following traits:

Nonmagical flames are extinguished within 30 feet of the doll.

All holy water within 10 feet of the doll is destroyed.

- Dolores dilutes magic potions within 10 feet, rendering them nonmagical.
- Dolores erases magic scrolls within 10 feet, rendering them blank and nonmagical.
- Any attempt to attune to or use Dolores as an item results in 22 (4d10) psychic damage from the horrifying visions and memories used to construct this doll.

Any time Callista wishes to scry on the party through Dolores, she sends Slick to spy on them. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check spots Slick scurrying away with Dolores. He makes liberal use of *dimension rift* to secure his escape from pursuit.

Read or summarize the following:

The sound of quick, light footsteps can be heard as a small creature hugging a doll to its chest scurries away.

Slick uses the **boggle** stat block (CR 1/8; VGM, p 128)

2. DINING HALL

Callista encourages the characters to have dinner in the Dining Hall before resting for the night.

2A. Dining Hall

When characters enter the Dining Hall, read or summarize the following:

The candlelight refraction upon shelved bottles casts a kaleidoscope of colors across the bar as the smell of fresh baked bread wafts through the kitchen door.

On arrival, characters may convene here for dinner.

2B. Kitchen

From the oven, a red-yellow glow dimly lights the kitchen. The savory scent of baked bread and roasted meat mingles with a pungent death-like stench that stings your nose.

An unassuming elderly woman hunches over the north table. The heavy sound of chopping resonates throughout the kitchen with each strike of her cleaver against a wooden board.

Among a cocktail of various ingredients littering the kitchen tables, characters might notice a mix of meats, breads, vegetables, a jar containing a preserved grape, and a black box of spices. With a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check, the characters discover:

- The preserved grape is actually a preserved human eye. This eye belongs to a cleric that died in the hotel. If the **shadows** in the Ballroom have not been

confronted, the eye darts about as if it is looking around in a panic. Afterward, it remains motionless.

- Investigating the spice box reveals three wooden, articulated figures modeled after any three members of the party. If the figures are placed on the ground, they act out insulting parodies of their duplicates' recent actions.

Agatha

Agatha is the hotel's cook. She's been employed at the hotel since the deaths of the Driscolls. She is an elderly woman who claims to care for Callista like a niece.

If characters engage Agatha long enough, she'll express how she's given Callista more love and attention than her parents ever have. She's unable to resist the temptation to brag about "useful" skills she's taught Callista. These skills include ingredient preservation, stitching, and weaving. Though, she refrains from giving any details.

Despite Agatha's seemingly "aunt-like" nature, she is actually a **green hag** (CR 3; MM, p 177) disguised by an illusory appearance.

Event: Stab it with Steely Knives

After the first night in the hotel, the characters' next visit to the dining hall is greeted with an unusual encounter.

Plated at the center of the longest dining table is a boar, primed and prepped for dinner. The dining room doors close behind any character that enters, and the plated boar stands to confront them. For the purpose of this encounter, the boar is Medium size and uses the **giant boar** stat block (CR 2; MM, p 323).

Characters who make use of the silver knives (use the stats for a dagger) on the dining table discover that the boar is vulnerable to them.

3. BALLROOM

For inexplicable reasons, the ballroom serves as an anchor for the restless spirits of the hotel's unfortunate victims. The spirits engage one another in an endless waltz. When new guests visit the ballroom, the spirits break from their cursed dance to beg for help.

Ethereal music fills the room as the chandelier's candlelight flickers and gives form to dancing shadows across the wall.

The shadows soon develop a life of their own as they drift from flickering forms into humanoid silhouettes sweeping in cadence to the melody.

The note concludes abruptly on a shrill pitch as each shadow stops and turns their attention to the ballroom's newest additions... you.

Shadows of the Past

The dancing shadows are spirits of the travelers who visited and died in Hotel Callista previously. When the shadows cease dancing, they emerge from the walls as humanoid silhouettes (use **shadow**, CR ½; MM, p 269) to pursue the characters. The number of shadows varies according to the number of characters present. The shadows communicate in Common with the characters for the purposes of this encounter.

Scaling the Combat

APL 4: one shadow for every adventurer

APL 5-6: two **shadows** for every adventurer

APL 7-8: three **shadows** for every adventurer

Although the shadows don't intend to harm the party, their desperation renders them incapable of reason. It is through their grasps in heedless pleas for help that they harm the characters by draining their strength.

Attempts to communicate with the shadows do not prevent their distressed behavior. They can be spoken to, but not reasoned with.

Turn Undead and other similar abilities can prevent the shadows from harming the party. Otherwise the characters may need to defeat

the shadows or flee from the ballroom to escape the encounter.

During the encounter the shadows will warn:

“The doll can see.”
“She won’t let us leave.”
“Dolores is the key.”

Treasure

Characters who inspect or *identify* the harp at the northeast corner of the Ballroom will discover that it is an *Anstruth harp* (DMG, p 176).

4A. STAFF AREA

Behind the check-in desk is a door that opens into a hall providing access to the back door, Mr. and Mrs. Driscoll’s room, and Callista’s room.

4B. Mr. and Mrs. Driscoll’s Room

This room is the largest in the hotel, complete with its own lavatory. Several defaced paintings of a man and woman hang against the walls. One painting is adorned with a brass label that reads *‘The Driscolls.’*

The condition of Mr. and Mrs. Driscoll’s room is the same as it was the day they died, except for a thick layer of dust that coats the furniture. Callista and Slick seem to avoid this room.

Treasure

Characters who inspect the room can find a dusty box containing *dimensional shackles* (DMG, p 165) under Mr. and Mrs. Driscoll’s bed.

4C. Callista Driscoll’s Room

Callista spent her childhood years in this room. She no longer stays in the room, but she left many keepsakes behind that could offer insight into the hotel.

Slick’s Bed

If characters inspect the room, they find a small pillow, a blanket, and droplets of oil beneath

Callista’s old bed. Callista made this bed for Slick, when she was a child.

Box of Oddities

A small box is tucked beneath the sitting chair in this room. Inside the box is an assortment of items:

- A spool of thread and sewing needle.
- Scraps of leather.
- Three marbles.
- A smooth stone.
- A quill.
- A dried inkwell.
- A small diary.

A **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the leather scraps to be human skin, the needle to be crafted from bone, and the thread to be human hair.

Callista’s Diary

If characters read through Callista’s diary, they find a detailed account concerning the fey, beginning with Slick.

Dear Diary,

They screamed at me for disturbing guests again today. I just wanted to say hello, but they said little girls that look like monsters should stay in their room.

I’m glad they did because I made a new friend today. At first, I thought someone spilled oil from their lamp, but when I followed the trail I found a little creature covered in it. He didn’t shudder or gape at me like everyone else does. He played a game with me instead and we became friends. I named him Slick.

Dear Diary,

I spoke to a Queen today! She said I can have lots of friends and I can be beautiful just like her! But only if I listen and stitch a doll the way she tells me to.

I promised her I would. I want to be pretty. I want to have friend! It’s no fun sitting in my room alone all day long.

Callista's diary includes a variety of details, including instructions used to create Dolores, and maintain the hotel's demiplane, an entry concerning a *mirror of life trapping* (DMG, p 181) in one of the guest rooms, and a page detailing Reed Redcap's patrol of the hedge maze is also included.

5. STORAGE HOUSE

The storage room holds many of the hotel goods and supplies.

5A. Laundry Room

The laundry room leads directly to the hotel storage room and contains linens that any characters may have sent for washing.

If characters inspect the laundry, they discover that many of the clothes don't belong to anyone at the hotel currently.

5B. Storage Room

The hotel's food, wine, spices, and other necessary supplies are kept here. If characters investigate the storage, they find hidden crates and chests containing equipment and coin.

Treasure

The chest of adventuring gear contains the following:

- *Amulet of proof against detection and location* (DMG, p 150).
- A pouch containing 12 gp and 30 sp.
- A lamp (missing the wick and no oil).
- A wizard's spellbook containing the spells *detect magic*, *color spray*, and *magic missile*.
- A gem encrusted longsword with the initials 'JCS' on the blade (worth 65 gp).

6. THE HEDGE MAZE

The hedge maze is a garden structure that was commissioned by Emrys and Crystin Driscoll when they remodeled their estate. They thought it an ideal hotel attraction, which was

not only a form of entertainment, but those who reached the end would earn a discount for their stay.

The hedge maze is a *razorvine* (DMG, p 110) that grows into tangled hedges. The hedges are approximately 15-feet high, and each 5-foot square has an AC of 11, 25 hit points, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage. The razorvine has been enchanted with *plant growth* and mends itself if it is burnt or slashed open. Anyone attempting to pass through a brief opening in the hedge is tangled inside.

Callista has carried on the Driscoll's discount tradition. However, she neglects to mention that part of the bargain also involves surviving the Unseelie friends that lurk within.

When characters enter the hedge maze for the first time, read or summarize:

Oppressive thickets of tangled vines close around you in towering hedgerows.

Navigating the Maze

If a character stays in guest room 310 or 350 (areas 8A and 8B) and studies the lay of the maze, they can navigate at an advantage with a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check inside the maze. Otherwise, there are no discerning features that offer clues regarding which direction they should turn.

An Unseelie Wonderland

Many Unseelie fey make the hedge maze their home. They entertain themselves with the unsuspecting hotel guests Callista provides.

You can roll from the hedge maze encounter table below to decide which creature lurks at each marker.

Hedge Maze Encounter (1d6)

1	1d4 ettercaps (CR 2; MM, p.131)
2	1d4 quicklings (CR 1; VGtM, p.187)
3	1d4 meenlocks (CR 2; VGtM, p.170)
4	Displacer beast (CR 3; MM, p.81)
5	Redcap (CR 3; VGtM, p.188)
6	Reed Redcap riding a displacer beast

Reed Redcap

Reed Redcap functions as Callista's eyes in the Hedge Maze. Reed rides a **displacer beast** (CR 3; MM, p.81) to patrol the hedge maze more efficiently.

Characters who damage the razorvine hedge invite the attention of Reed and his **displacer beast**, who attack within three rounds of the razorvine being damaged.

Reed Redcap uses the **redcap** stat block (CR 3; VGtM, p.188) and wears a *cloak of displacement* (DMG, p.158). Reed does not leave the Hedge Maze unless he is provoked or instructed by Callista.

Anyone who crosses Reed and his **displacer beast** is certainly in for a rough time.

6A. The Driscolls

Two weather-worn gravestones protrude from the earth. One is etched 'Emrys Driscoll' and the other, 'Cristin Driscoll'.

This plot is the final resting place of the Driscolls, and the end of the hedge maze. Characters teleported to the maze begin here upon waking. If characters inspect the inscriptions, it reads:

*Here lies father – to whom I was a bother
Here lies mother – we hated each other*

SECOND FLOOR



7. UPPER HALL

The upper hall leads to the hotel's guest rooms. Oil spots can be seen dotting the floors sporadically. This is from Slick scurrying through the halls.

Rich red carpet lines the length of the corridor, soft candlelight welcomes guests at the stairway peak, and invites a restful night of sleep.

8. MAZE VIEW GUEST ROOMS

These guest rooms overlook the hedge maze.

When the characters first settle into their rooms, read or summarize the following:

Candlelight spills across the chamber and illuminates clean linen sheets and lavish draperies with a soft orange glow.

The ambient warmth is dashed suddenly by ghostly baying. Then silence falls on the hotel once more.

8A. – 8B. Guest Room 310 and 350

Characters who study the lay of the maze from here can be given advantage on **DC 13 Wisdom**

(Survival) checks to navigating the maze. (see 6. The Hedge Maze - Navigating the Maze).

9. HOTEL FRONT GUEST ROOMS

These guest rooms overlook the sparse dirt road that ferry visitors to Hotel Callista.

9A. – 9D. Guest Room 330-340 and 370-380

If characters succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check**, they have a chance to witness Callista leaving the hotel. She vanishes through an invisible barrier and into her hermitage, where she bides her time until **Dolores** is destroyed.

9C. Guest Room 370

This guest room is the only room furnished with a personal fireplace.

A **meenlock** (CR 2; VGM, p 170) has nested itself deep within the smoke shaft. When a character sleeps here, the meenlock surreptitiously scurries under the bed and telepathically torments them with dreadful imagery.

10. CENTRAL GUEST ROOMS

These guest rooms are at the center of the hotel's top floor.

10A. – 10B. Guest Room 320 and 360

Although the central rooms have no windows, they are no less lavish than the rest. If a character stays in either of these rooms, a *mirror of life trapping* (DMG, p 181) awaits them.

There is only one *mirror of life trapping* in the hotel. If Rooms 320 and 360 are both occupied, the DM decides which room the mirror should be in.

If a character is trapped within the mirror, it frees a **doppelganger** (CR 3; MM, p 82) who

polymorphs into and charades as the imprisoned party member.

If characters learn of the mirror and imprison Slick with it, Slick drops Dolores in the last place he was standing when he was trapped.

11. LAVATORIES

The guest lavatories have everything characters need for personal care. The facilities are routinely cleaned after use, though no one is ever seen entering or exiting.

CONCLUSION

Callista's ultimate goal is to fulfill her end of the bargain with the Queen of Air and Darkness.

The Unseelie Queen supplies Callista with beauty, power, freedom from the memories of her childhood torment, and a consistent supply of "friends."

These friends are the unseelie fey who wander the halls and hedge maze of Hotel Callista. The hotel is their fairground and they seek entertainment through harrowing each traveler that stays. When the fun for the unseelie fey ends, so too, does their "friendship."

If the party wishes to escape Hotel Callista, they must catch Slick and obtain Dolores. It matters not whether they restrain, imprison, or eliminate him to retrieve the doll.

Dolores cannot be destroyed by nonmagical flames; the characters need to find other ways to destroy the doll. When Dolores is destroyed the enchantment on the hotel lifts and allows the characters to leave.

Should a character choose to use the doll to contact the Unseelie Queen, they are expected to make a bargain equal to or greater than Callista's.

Whatever the characters choose, Callista confronts the party directly and fights to protect her pact with the Unseelie Queen.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

This hotel's location is left vague by design because it can be located anywhere outside of a large population. As such, it can be anywhere in Khorvaire. As written, Callista makes a pact with a fey entity in exchange of unearthly beauty, but only if she keeps on gifting sacrifices to the fey and lets them visit the hotel from time to time. Eberron too has a Feywild sibling plane, so this background lore works as written.

Alternatively, the DM can shift the whole scope of this encounter by replacing the fey entities with Quori spirits (**Kalaraq**), or a **Daelkyr**. The Quori are evil spirit-like creatures from the realms of dreams. They often meddle in human affairs by controlling their dreams and planting seeds of thought in their minds. If it furthers the Quori's goals to control Hotel Callista, they can control Callista through her dreams and plant the idea to kill her parents. After that, the Quori may use the hotel to enslave more minds.

The Daelkyr are the lords of madness. They come from Xoriat, the Realm of Madness. They dwell deep underground and use their strong psychic powers to manipulate the lesser races. A Daelkyr lord may be behind Callista's actions if having the hotel furthers his goals of freedom or a future invasion from Xoriat.

UNSEELIE SECURITY

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8+18)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage not made with nonmagical attacks.

Damage Immunities acid

Conditions Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages -

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The unseelie security can use its action to polymorph into a door or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Adhesive (Door Form Only). The shapechanger adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the shapechanger is also grappled by it (escape DC 13). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

False Appearance (Door Form Only). While the unseelie security remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary door.

Grapppler. The unseelie security has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Magic Resistance. The unseelie security has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sprightly Spunk. If damage reduces the unseelie security to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is necrotic or from a critical hit. On a success, the shapechanger drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage. If the unseelie security is in door form, the target is subjected to its Adhesive trait.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

CALLISTA DRISCOLL

Medium human, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +2, Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Persuasion +6

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Sylvan

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Callista's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. She can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *disguise self, mage armor (self only) silent image, speak with animals*
1/day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. Callista is an 11th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, eldritch blast, chill touch, poison spray, minor illusion, prestidigitation, vicious mockery*

1st – 5th level (3 5th – level slots): *blink, charm person, dimension door, greater invisibility, faerie fire, fear, counterspell, misty step, phantasmal force, scrying, sleep*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Misty Escape (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest). In response to taking damage, Callista turns invisible and teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space she can see. She remains invisible until the start of her next turn or until she attacks, makes a damage roll, or casts a spell.

BIGFOOT FROM BEYOND

By Jean Lorber

@JLorber4

Estimated run-time: 120 to 180 minutes

'Bigfoot from Beyond' is a mystery and exploration adventure designed for five characters of 2nd - 4th level

Editorial Note

The plural of "bigfoot" is "bigfeet" and not "bigfoots" (see chapter 1 of a style guide entitled 'Fellowship of the Ring' by J. Tolkien).

BACKGROUND

Recent warm winters have thawed a frozen mountain pass, allowing new migrations of creatures across the mountains.

A northern female bigfoot has made the journey south, followed soon thereafter by two rival males. One male has unwittingly brought an exotic plant with him that is poisonous to the fey creatures of the south.

Soon after arriving, the female bigfoot has been injured and is now hiding in a nearby village. The males are seeking her out. Villagers haven't seen the bigfeet, but escalating disturbances in the village have everyone on edge.

SYNOPSIS

This adventure centers around a small group of bigfeet, and their impact on the forest to which they recently migrated.

The PCs first see the impact of a newly-introduced poisonous plant, inadvertently spread by the bigfeet. For the good of the forest, the PCs must stop the plant's spread by discovering the bigfeet's role, then returning the creatures from whence they came.



Investigating a nearby village reveals an injured female bigfoot. Tracking down her suitors reveals the source of the poison and allows the PCs to stop its spread. With the help of some divination magic, the PCs can learn of the female's desire to go home.

A local lord arrives and tries to recruit the PCs to join him on his mission to occupy the mountain pass, the very place where the female must be taken. But she must be smuggled out of the village, lest the villagers seek vengeance on her.

After a dangerous run up to the mountain pass, the PCs discover that it is occupied by a troop of hobgoblins. With the hobgoblins defeated, the remaining bigfeet can go home.

PLOT HOOK

The simplest hook is to have the PC's patron or faction ask them to investigate rumors of new creatures and evil humanoid activity around the village of Mountview. In the Forgotten Realms, Mountview could be located near the Lurkwood, with the Spine of the World representing the northern mountain range.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure could start along the forest road to Mountview, with your PCs getting a glimpse of a poisoned dryad (Area 1).

AREA 1: THE ROAD TO MOUNTVIEW

This encounter introduces the poisonous plant to the forest ecosystem. It should take place as the party travels through or near wilderness. Read or summarize the following:

The dense forest of the past few miles is finally giving way up ahead; the village of Mountview is near. Suddenly, at the edge of the road, a female figure appears out of nowhere and collapses. Another figure, clad in dappled green and brown, emerges from the woods, breathing heavily.

The human **scout, Welbish** (CR ½; MM, p 349), has been following a **dryad** who succumbed to the poisonous flower. The dryad, normally a healthy lime green, is gray-skinned and dies during the encounter no matter what the PCs attempt. The following information can be found:

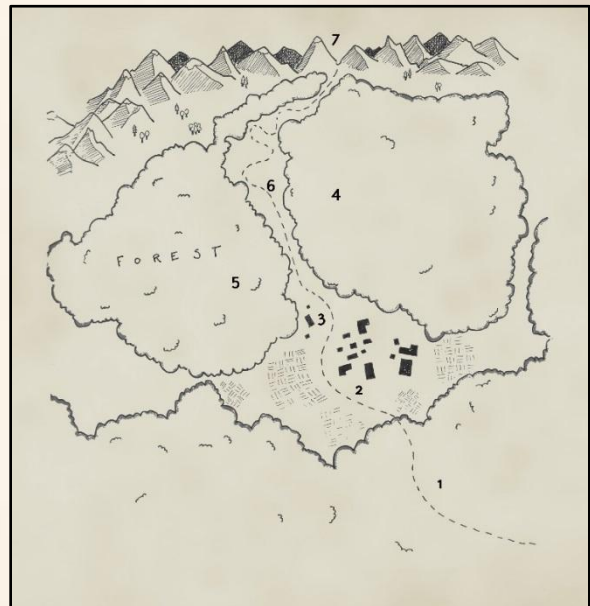
- Inspecting the dryad reveals the presence of pink “powder” around her nose and mouth. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals that the powder is pollen.
- A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check confirms that the dryad was poisoned and that the pollen is responsible.

Welbish reveals the following useful information:

- “While hunting, I saw this dryad racing through the forest.”
- Mountview villagers fear some new creature.
- “If poison killed the dryad, I don’t recognize it.”

If the PCs attempt to heal the dryad, it fails but Welbish is appreciative and gives them a spell scroll of *Speak with Animals* that will be useful when dealing with bigfeet (see inset ‘Bigfoot Basics’). He then returns to the forest to continue his exploration.

Note: Welbish could re-appear from time to time to keep the PCs on track, heal them, or deliver the necessary communication spells if the PCs lack them.



AREA 2: VILLAGE

As the party enters Area 2, read or summarize:

Most of the inhabitants of this village are gathered in the small square, seemingly waiting for something or someone.

The villagers are milling about, waiting for the arrival of their lord, Underbaron Rungshtaad. It becomes clear he is not well-liked, but the villagers hope that he's coming to deal with the recent disturbance (see Area 3).

A group of children approaches the PCs, asking for extra food, preferably vegetables. These are the female bigfoot's "nurses" (see Area 3). The children run away if the PCs show too much interest. Delay any full-blown investigation by interrupting the PCs questions with the Underbaron's arrival.

Village Talk

Use the NPCs listed below or your own to populate the village:

- Mildred (**commoner**, CR 0; MM, p 345). A mother of 10, she's short-tempered but hands out cookies as an apology.
- Brindee (**guard**, CR 1/8; MM, p 347). A woodcutter, she shows she's tough with a crushing handshake.
- Mork (**commoner**, CR 0; MM, p 345). A tavern owner, he tries to sell day-old bread at double the price.
- Zumad (**apprentice wizard**, CR ¼; VGTm, p 209). A retired scribe and fledgling wizard, he's blind and friendly. He has an old spell book with *comprehend languages* and *guidance*.

Design Note

Zumad can provide assistance for communicating with bigfeet. If your PCs don't have the needed spells, Zumad and/or his spellbook can accompany them on their journey.

Interacting with the villagers reveals that they are all on edge due to the recent disturbances. Reveal the following information to your PCs, most of which foreshadows later events:

- There's a new pass through the mountains, opened and now accessible due to a few warm winters.

- Hobgoblins were spotted a few days ago (no specific location is given).
- Strange beasts have been heard lately, screaming in the forest to the north.
- Just last night there were disturbances in town (Area 3): random items were stolen and a "big, two-legged creature" snatched a red cape from Brindee.
- No one knows anything about poisoned creatures or exotic flowers.

If asked, the villagers lead the PCs to the site of the disturbance (Area 3).

Underbaron's Arrival and Mission

The local **noble**, Underbaron Rungshtaad (CR 1/8; MM, p 348), arrives with 4 **guards** (CR 1/8; MM, p 347) in a fancy, horse-drawn wagon. He dismisses villagers' concerns about strange creatures as "nonsense" and quickly announces his own plans: he will occupy the mountain pass, so that he may legally begin charging taxes and tolls.

The Underbaron is short on proper soldiers, so he's forced to ask the village militia. He spies the rugged-looking PCs in the crowd and attempts to recruit them, offering 20 gold pieces each. He bluffs about possible trouble if the PCs don't join him. A successful opposed **Wisdom (Insight)** check (party) versus a **Charisma (Deception)** check (Underbaron) detects the bluff.

Two villagers join him, whether the PCs join or not. Rungshtaad begins the journey up to the pass (Area 7), not knowing the danger he's walking into.

AREA 3: FEMALE BIGFOOT LAIR

As the party enters Area 3, read or summarize the following:

A barn and several small huts mark the northern edge of the village. Children are walking around while a group of adults stands in the road, surrounding something.

The female bigfoot was injured last week by a pack of hunting dogs. Some village children happened upon her, coaxed her into the hay barn, and have been secretly nursing her back to health. Any inquiry about the kids seen here reveals that they are the “beggars” from Area 2.

Bigfoot Basics

Appearance and behavior

Bigfeet are around 7 feet tall and quite muscular. They have ape-like features and unnervingly human eyes. Their shaggy, brown pelt is so dense and matted that it is often home to algae, lichen, and other plants.

They are well-suited for jumping and climbing trees, enabled by remarkably strong feet and legs. Bigfeet are vegetarian but can be aggressive. They attack with a devastating kick if antagonized.

Communication

Bigfeet sentience lies somewhere between humanoid and beast. Normally, a bigfoot can't be reasoned or negotiated with, but it can recognize whether a humanoid is aggressive or peaceful. PCs would be well-advised to use magic to assist communications.

Due to a bigfoot's unique development, spells that target beasts (e.g. *animal friendship*) or humanoids (e.g. *hold person*) can both be used. However, the caster must adapt the spell as it's cast. The spellcaster must succeed on a **DC 11 ability check** (using the caster's spellcasting ability) to make the spell function on a bigfoot.

Note that analogous spells exist regarding communication with beasts (e.g. *speak with animals*) and with humanoids (e.g. *comprehend languages*). If a party attempts such a combination of spells, reward them with **Inspiration** and automatic success on the task at hand.

A successful **DC 8 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that they are watching the PCs nervously, looking frequently at the barn.

The villagers are standing around the bigfeet males' display sites. Very large humanoid footprints are clearly visible.

Bigfoot Display Sites

Both bigfoot males have constructed a ritualized display designed to impress the female (they know she's in the barn and respect her decision to lair there). The displays are within 50 feet of the barn, on opposite sides. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check confirms that both displays are oriented towards the barn.

The displays show the personality of each male: one violent and aggressive, the other gentle. For the violent male's site (east of the barn), read or summarize the following:

A large pile of household debris sits in the road, topped with a barn door which is cunningly balanced to remain upright. Most of the door is smeared red with blood. A strong, musky smell pervades the area.

The source of the blood is obvious: several chickens and a goat lie dead nearby. The color red is featured prominently here, a visual clue linking this display to the violent male's lair (Area 4).

For the gentler male's site (west of the barn), read or summarize the following:

A 5-foot-wide circle in the dirt has been strewn with yellow dandelion flowers. In the middle is a loosely-stacked tower of stones, about 6 feet tall. A strong, musky smell pervades the area.

The color yellow is featured prominently here, a visual clue linking this display to the male's lair (Area 5).

NOTE: If the PCs need a further clue about the meaning of the displays, mention that they are in the open and clearly meant to be seen. A male mockingbird lands on one, and begins singing his heart out to attract a mate.

After building their displays last night, the bigfeet leaped away back to their lairs. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival)** check is needed to ascertain that the “red display” maker went to Area 4 and that the “yellow display” maker went to Area 5. If this check is failed, it can be repeated once the PCs commit to entering either Area 4 or 5.

Parley with Female Bigfoot

The female **bigfoot** is convalescing in the second-story hayloft of this 50-foot-long by 30-foot-wide barn. She hides in the hay, but evidence of her stay is obvious if the PCs climb to the second floor —scraps of vegetables are everywhere and the hayloft smells strongly of unwashed bodies and old fur, similar to the smells at the display sites. She is visible with a successful **DC 8 Wisdom (Perception)** check. She has 40 hit points.

If approached, the female is scared but relatively docile. Without magic, only limited communication is possible with her; she'll accept a gift of food and pat the PC on the head. But if the right spell is adapted (e.g. speak with animals), the following information can be obtained (related in as few words as possible):

- She was attacked by dogs.
- She feels lost and wants to go home (back over the mountain pass).
- There are two male bigfeet in the area, and she is scared of one of them.
- She doesn't know anything about a poisonous plant.

She agrees to go with the PCs if they state they will take her home. The children cry but agree that it's for the best.

If the villagers see the female, they shout “*kill the beast, it's been attacking us!*” The PCs can defuse the situation with calming role-playing, or a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. A failed check results in 2 villagers attacking the female, who does not fight back, requiring the PCs to intervene if they want to avoid bloodshed.

ENVIRONS OF THE FOREST

General Features

Terrain. Rolling hills giving way to steeper slopes near the mountains.

Weather. Cool, misty mornings becoming clear in the afternoon.

Light. The dense trees make for shady conditions, but light levels are still considered normal.

Smells and Sounds. Musty, decaying leaf litter, the fresh smell of spruce resin and a cacophony of early morning birdsong.

AREA 4: EASTERN WOODS

These woods hold little out of the ordinary besides a male bigfoot. Once in the woods, finding the bigfoot's lair requires a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** check, with advantage if the PC describes how they track (looking for hair and footprints). Failed checks delay their investigation, triggering random forest encounters. The first encounter involves 2 **giant centipedes** (CR ¼; MM, p 323) which both fall on a PC in a surprise round. Though, PCs with a passive Perception of 12 or higher are not surprised. If more encounters are needed, use the DMG's list of forest monsters, CR1/2 to 1 (DMG p 302-303).

Mean Bigfoot's lair

This encounter serves as a combat encounter, confirms this male is not the poisoner (if the party think to look for evidence of pollen) and introduces him as a potential resource later in the adventure (see Area 8).

As the party approaches the lair, read or summarize the following:

A throaty howl rises up from the forest ahead of you, followed a few seconds later by a loud splash.

The PCs hear this bigfoot's display ritual, designed to attract a mate. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception or Survival)** check reveals that the howl moved downhill while it sounded.

If the PCs don't request and/or succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** check before moving further, the bigfoot notices them and expertly hides. Either way, read or paraphrase the following if the PCs move forward:

The forest parts to reveal a clearing, formed by a deep pool around 30 feet wide. On the left, uphill from the pool, is a 50-foot-tall cliff with a small waterfall cascading over it. Foliage crowds around most of the pool's perimeter. A muddy path runs from the pool to the cliff top.

Unless the PCs succeeded on the Stealth check above, a male **bigfoot** is hidden, watching them from under the waterfall, visible only with a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** check, made with disadvantage. If the PCs linger, he will stalk them and leap out at an inopportune moment.

If the PCs succeeded on the Stealth check above, they can watch the creature's display: he howls, takes a running jump off the cliff and belly-flops into the pool far below to make the most impressive splash possible.

Once he lands in the pool, the bigfoot must recover for 10 rounds, giving the PCs a chance to explore his cliff top lair. The area consists of matted-down vegetation and a scattering of red items (bloody chicken feathers, Brindee's red cape, and sticks of sealing wax). Searching the area reveals a *dagger +1* with a ruby in the hilt (100 gp value, stolen from Zumad).

NOTE: If your PCs are looking for poisonous pink pollen, inform them that there are no such flowers in this area.

Interacting with Bigfoot

Whenever this bigfoot is first revealed, give your PCs a chance to interact. Magical communication or a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check is needed to prevent an immediate attack; the check is made with advantage if the PCs also engage in submissive or deferential behavior (e.g. avoid eye contact, bow).

Without magic, communication from the bigfoot is limited to aggressive thumping and gestures. With magic, a bit more is revealed:

- he's an angry male that wants to find a mate.
- he's ready to fight, especially anyone who hurts him.

After a round of interactions, the check above must be repeated. On a failure, the bigfoot attacks. If he loses more than 50% of his hit points, he jumps away and vanishes.

The PCs should also discover a path made by the male, leading straight to the pass trail (Area 6). Knowing that he patrols the road will be useful later in the adventure.

AREA 5: WESTERN WOODS

These woods hold little out of the ordinary besides a male bigfoot. Once in the woods, finding the bigfoot's lair requires a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** check, with advantage if the PC describes how they track (looking for hair and footprints). Failed checks delay their investigation, triggering random forest encounters. The first encounter involves 2 **giant badgers** (CR ¼; MM, p 323) fighting over a deer carcass. They attack the PCs unless someone succeeds on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check, made with advantage if food is also offered. If more encounters are needed,

use the DMG's list of forest monsters, CR1/2 to 1 (DMG p302-303).

Gentle Bigfoot's Lair

This encounter holds the answer to the mystery of the poison pollen. If the party navigates here, read or summarize the following:

A low, melodic humming drifts through the air, along with a rather pungent smell.

Following the humming leads the PCs right to a male **bigfoot**, the gentle creator of the yellow-themed display in Area 3. Read or summarize the following:

The humming leads to a gallery of sorts on the forest floor, where yellow flowers and objects are displayed prominently. Twenty feet above, a male bigfoot sits in a tangled knot of bent over saplings; a nest of sorts. He holds a flower which he's extending towards a small, winged humanoid hovering in front of him.

His gallery includes a myriad of yellow objects including a yellow flower with pink pollen that is responsible for poisoning the dryad.

The bigfoot doesn't notice the PCs at first; he is fascinated by a **pixie** named **Myzhi** (CR 1/8; MM, p 253) who is flitting around his head. When the PCs arrive, she is about to smell the proffered poisonous flower. These flowers can be seen growing on the male's pelt.

If the PCs do nothing, the pixie inhales the pollen, momentarily convulses, drops to the ground, and dies. The male is confused but soon loses interest and carries on humming from his elevated nest.

A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Nature)** check reveals that a number of the pink-pollen plants have taken root at this location. Ripping the plants up requires 8 rounds. Due to the poison pollen, a gnome or elf that participates could face dire consequences. After the first plants are killed, inform any gnome or elf PC within 10 feet that they suddenly feel extremely itchy. If

they don't move away, the poison begins to take hold: the PC takes 5 (1d6 + 2) poison damage every round they remain near the plants.

Without magic, communication from the bigfoot is limited to curious glances and offerings of fruit. A **DC 8 Intelligence (Nature)** check confirms that this male is peaceful. With magic, much more information sharing is possible:

- he wants to find a mate.
- he will cooperate with the PCs plans as long as the female bigfoot is involved, otherwise he won't leave his lair.
- he likes the yellow flowers growing on his pelt.
- he doesn't know they are poisonous.
- if an explanation is given, he can understand the concept that the yellow flowers are poisonous (e.g. "flower bad") but will only agree to destroy them if he is given another yellow item (10 shiny gold pieces will do).

AREA 6: TRAIL TO THE MOUNTAIN PASS

As the party enters Area 6, read or summarize:

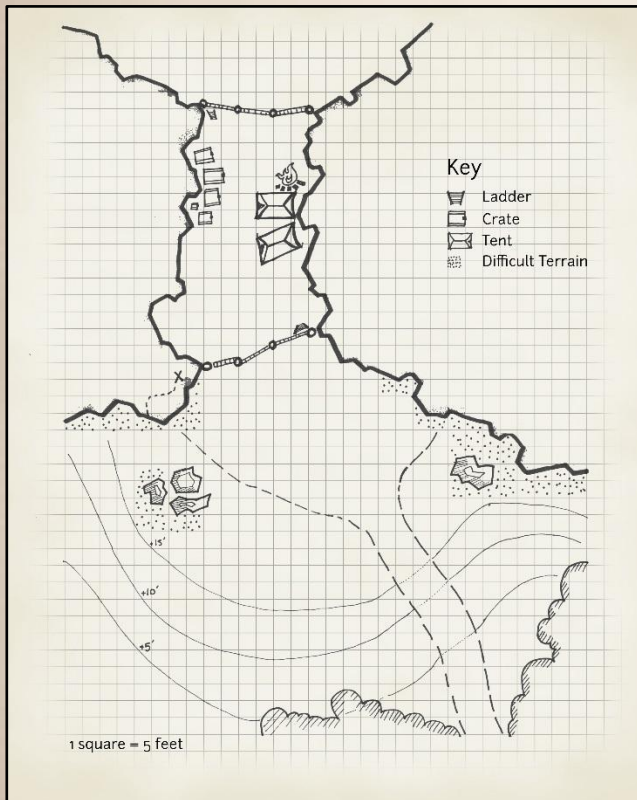
This narrow trail quickly starts to climb towards the mountain pass high above.

At walking or slow wagon speed, reaching the pass from the village takes 3 hours. Normally just a thin path, it shows signs of recent and heavy use (see Area 7). Wagon tracks and footprints are readily visible. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals that the footprints were made by several sets of well-constructed, Medium-sized boots.

Underbaron's Mission

If the PCs accompany the Underbaron early in the adventure, their journey through this area is uneventful, with the exception of seeing bigfoot footprints in the mud.

If the PCs didn't accompany the Underbaron, they encounter the bodies of his party, felled by hobgoblins' crossbows and deposited here as a warning to others who may travel this path (see Area 7). This occurs before the complications below.



COMPLICATIONS

If the female bigfoot is transported on this road, the following encounters occur in the order given:

The Dryad

After a few minutes of travelling, a robin lands on the female bigfoot, viciously pulls her hair, then flies off. It is an enchanted spy of a dryad, a sister of the poisoned dryad in Area 1. The robin reports back to the dryad, setting up the next encounter.

After an hour of traveling, inform your PCs that a small tree blocks the path ahead. A **dryad**

(CR 1; MM, p 121), 2 enchanted **dire wolves** (CR 1; MM, p 321) and an enchanted **giant toad** (CR1; MM, p 329) lie in wait in the shadows (**DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice). The dryad waits to attack the PCs – she hopes to catch them off guard while they are moving the tree, or while they are separated while crossing over the tree or moving around it. As she leaps from the forest she screams: “*Revenge for my poisoned sister!*” The dryad attacks the female bigfoot while the animals attack the PCs.

During the encounter, she also causes a dead tree branch to fall into the melee; two PCs must make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failure, the PC takes (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. A successful save results in no damage and not being knocked prone.

Mean Make Bigfoot

After two hours of traveling, the PCs travel through the edge of the mean bigfoot's territory (Area 4). He doesn't approach but inform your PCs they hear howling in the distance.

This male could be used as a weapon against the fortified hobgoblins in Area 7. He can be lured to the road with yelling, then he chases the trespassers by jumping after them, kangaroo-style. Bigfeet aren't used to long-distance running, so outrunning a bigfoot requires only a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw; PCs that fail the save can choose to succeed by accepting **one level of exhaustion**.

AREA 7: MOUNTAIN PASS

As the party enters Area 7, read or summarize:

Ahead of you, the forest gives way to rocky debris. The steep trail, wet with melting snow, ends at a narrow mountain pass. Sheer 100-foot-tall faces rise up on either side. A rough, wooden palisade has been built across the 15-foot-wide gap, with no visible doors.

A squad of 8 **hobgoblins** (CR ½; MM, p 186) and their **hobgoblin captain** (CR 3; MM, p 186) currently occupy the mountain pass. The captain, **Jaka-Jhash**, has been instructed to hold it as a strategic location until it can be further fortified; the pass allows them access to a land they've long considered invading.

They have hastily constructed a 10-foot-tall palisade on both sides of the pass. It was built using a wagon-full of timber (and the wagon itself) and stretches across the entire 15-foot gap.

If the PCs observe this area from the forest, they remain unnoticed. If they continue forward, a hobgoblin guard sounds the alarm. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals one hobgoblin armed with a crossbow sitting atop the wall, on guard duty.

A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check about the structure reveals a weak, 5-foot-wide section of wall; it can be pushed over with a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** check. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check of the surroundings reveals the presence of a natural shelf on the western rock wall, 30 feet up (marked with an 'X' on the encounter map). It provides half cover and offers an unobstructed view of the hobgoblins camp. Climbing to it requires a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** check during the ascent.

Underbaron's Success

With or without the PCs, the Underbaron and his men reach the pass. Upon seeing his future income source already occupied, the baron has a tantrum and attacks. Unless the PCs can intervene in some fashion, the Underbaron and his men easily lose the fight and are killed, their bodies dumped on the trail below as a warning to others.

Bring a Bigfoot

The fortified hobgoblin camp is designed to be a very difficult challenge for low-level PCs. The Underbaron's failure should be a warning.

NOTE: To make this encounter easier, the bigfoot kills the hobgoblin captain. To make it harder, only the regular hobgoblins are killed.

A male bigfoot can wreak havoc on the hobgoblins, but your PCs might need some extra clues to conceive of this possibility. Use the following prompts to encourage alternative planning that involves a bigfoot:

- While the PCs are observing the palisade, a bigfoot howl is heard which visibly unsettles the hobgoblins.
- The female bigfoot makes a low crooning sound in the direction of the nearest male and looks expectantly (it goes unanswered for now).

The gentle male will come along if the female is involved while the aggressive male will need to be lured here. If a male bigfoot enters this area, he is shot with a crossbow, then attacks the hobgoblins in a rage.

The bigfoot launches himself over the palisade, landing with a heavy thump on the other side. A hobgoblin voice barking out commands turns into a high-pitched scream, followed by a minute of loud crashes and yelling. A section of the palisade shudders, then collapses. Through the dust, you see the bigfoot lurch, then fall, his pelt bristling with crossbow bolts.

The bigfoot kills at least 4 (1d6+1) hobgoblins and knocks down a section of the wall before being killed himself.

In his tent, the hobgoblin commander has hidden a locked chest (DC 12) that holds 8 *crossbow bolts +1*, 400 gold pieces in various coinage, and a map of recent hobgoblin troop movements. This map is worth 100 gold pieces if sold to the right military leader or faction.

CONCLUSION

If the adventurers help clear the pass, they are free to deliver the female bigfoot and any surviving males to their northern home. Award them each 1,000 XP.

The villagers are thankful, giving the PCs a pouch containing 100 gold pieces in various coinage, and a pair of prized draft horses and wagon (combined value: 135 gp). If the stolen items are returned to their respective owners, each PC returning the items gains a bonus of 200 XP. If the *dagger +1* is returned, the grateful Zumad gives a PC a set of *magic armor +1* (DM's choice of armor type), a memento of a fellow adventurer that's been collecting dust in his basement.

If the PCs manage to kill all the poisonous flowers, Welbish and a local druid finds them and thanks them for their efforts. The PCs are given appropriate magic items such as a *rope of entanglement* (woven from grapevines), a *javelin of warning* (the warning sound is a rattlesnake rattling), a *staff of the woodlands*, or 20 preserved *goodberries*.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

This encounter should be placed near a mountain range to be plausibly used as written. There is ample room on Khorvaire in northern Breland, somewhere in the feet of the Blackcaps. See *Wayfinder's Guide*, p 24 for an overview of Breland. If your heroes are currently in Sharn, they must travel to the encounter location. There is a regular service of airships from Upper Dura in Sharn to points north, as well as lightning-rail service.

BIGFOOT

Large beast/humanoid, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages none

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Natural Camouflage. The bigfoot has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in forest, swamp, and rocky terrain.

Both Beast and Man. Spells that target beasts or humanoids can target the bigfoot. However, the spell's caster must succeed on a **DC 11 ability check** (using the caster's spellcasting ability) otherwise the spell has no effect.

Actions

Multiattack. The bigfoot makes two attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage.

Kick. *Melee Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** to avoid being pushed 10 feet and knocked **prone**.

Bear-hug. *Melee Attack:* DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** to avoid being **stunned** for 2 rounds.

THE CHARNEL HOUSE

By JVC Parry

@jvcparry

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes.

The Charnel House is a short, exploration and combat focused encounter for five characters of 4th level. Characters lower than 3rd level are likely to struggle with this encounter.

BACKGROUND

This charnel house once belonged to a nearby village, whose inhabitants were struck down by a terrible curse.

At some point in the last few weeks, a necromancer was attracted to the place, thinking he could use the corpses within for his own army. Unfortunately, he raised a creature, a minotaur zombie. Too strong for her to control, it now roams and haunts the place.

PLOT HOOK

Though tailored for a Chult environment, no specific plot hooks have been created for this encounter. Most of its history has been lost to time, save what characters can piece together from the surrounding rotting village.

The party is most likely to simply stumble upon the charnel house, or perhaps hear or read a rumor of it from other passing explorers.

APPROACHING THE CHARNEL HOUSE

As the party approaches the charnel house, read or summarize:

Pressing deep into the jungle, you notice a low, hexagonal stone building surrounded by tombstones. As you near the squat structure, you hear a low, soft whimper coming from within.

An adventurer native to Chult can attempt a **DC 14 Intelligence (History)** check to see if they

recall anything about the local area or the purpose of the building:

Result	Information
14-18	the building is clearly a house for interring the dead.
19+	this region of the jungle was seized by a vile curse a decade ago and perhaps this building is the site of their dead.

Any character can attempt a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check to determine the origin of the sound:

Result	Origin
10-12	the sound is like the whimpering of a young child.
13-19	it seems as if the sound is emanating from the charnel house.
20+	although it sounds like mewling, the sound is created by the breeze whistling through the charnel house.

ENVIRONS OF THE CHARNEL HOUSE

General Features

Terrain. Cracked flagstones.

Weather. Cool, dry air within the charnel house with a slight breeze.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, the tomb is dark and void of light.

Smells and Sounds. The deeper characters get into the charnel house, the more it begins to smell like death. The breeze blowing through the tomb makes it sound as if a child is whimpering within.

AREA 1

As the party enters Area 1, read or summarize the following:

You push aside the stone slab that marks the entrance to the chanel house, revealing a dark, shrine-like room within. Writhing vines have wormed through the stonework, covering the room like green veins. A single stone door, carved to resemble a corpse, leads further into the tomb.

The stone door that leads further into the tomb is trapped with a shutter in the ceiling, which contains human remains, and a pair of rat swarms, which feast upon them.

Rat Trap

Simple trap (level 1-4, moderate threat)

Built into the ceiling above the door is a shutter that is pulled open when the door is opened. Within is a swarm of rats and an assortment of chewed bones.

Trigger. Anyone who opens the door enough to step through triggers the trap.

Effect. The triggering creature must make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage from falling bones. In addition, the character is surprised by the two swarms of rats (CR ¼; MM, p339) that accompany them.

Countermeasures. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check when the door is partially open reveals the shutter and handle that the door is sliding open in the ceiling. Characters can then slip through the thin gap or block the shutter with a 5-foot-square item.

AREA 2

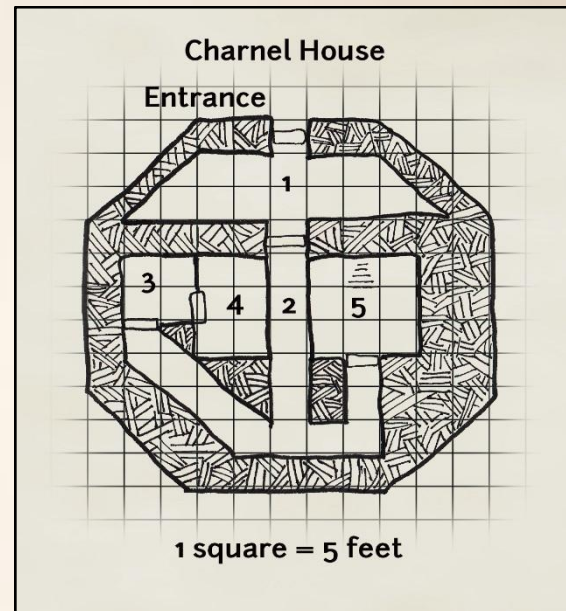
As the party enters Area 2, read or summarize:

Hundreds of skulls stare out at you from the gloom ahead. These, and thousands of other bones, have been mixed with mud and dead plant matter to create makeshift walls within the stone structure. The morbid corridor ahead leads on for about 30 feet before forking. You can still hear the whimpering of the child somewhere up ahead.

Unless the party succeeds on a **DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth)** check, they are noticed in this corridor by the **minotaur zombie** in area 4.

The minotaur zombie takes the most direct route to the adventurers and is strong enough to come crashing through the bone walls.

Characters who attempt to smash through the walls must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** check. On a failed check, the character takes 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. A check automatically fails if the bone wall is covering a stone wall.



AREA 3

As the party enters Area 3, read or summarize:

You emerge into a small, 10-foot-square shrine. On the northern wall is a wooden altar, atop of which are numerous carved idols and bowls.

The carved idols atop the shrine depict some of the Chultan Trickster Gods (or whichever best suit your campaign). The bowls clearly held organic matter, but the contents have decomposed beyond recognition.

AREA 4

As the party enters Area 4, read or summarize:

Something is clearly amiss in this room. The skeletal walls have been smashed beyond recognition, leaving shards of jagged bone protruding from daub. The wooden furniture which once graced this room lies in cleaved chunks on the floor. Sitting amidst the wreckage is the half-devoured corpse of an elderly woman.

Unless it has already charged the characters, the **minotaur zombie** (CR 4; see end of encounter) is in this room chowing down on its creator.

Characters who search the body of the necromancer find a spell scroll of animate dead tucked into her robes. They also find a scrawled note that reads:

Today I shall create my strongest minion yet. I have located the body of a bull-headed beast which I shall drag here to reanimate. This handsome creation will be my pride and joy. I fear that its power may be greater than mine, and thus I shall bind its spirit to a gemstone and hide it away.

AREA 5

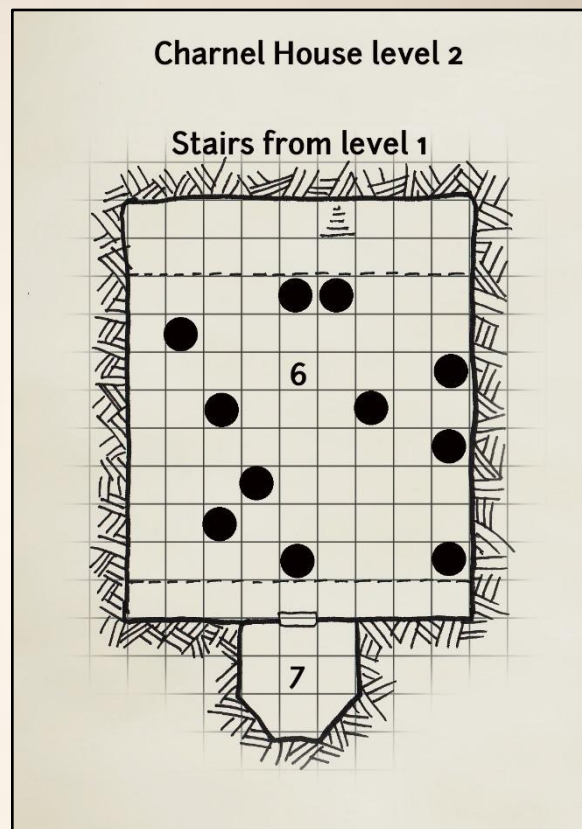
As the party enters Area 5, read or summarize:

Tall bone columns hold up the roof of this chamber. Set into the walls are the skeletons of ancient chieftains, still adorned with their ceremonial headdresses and jewelry.

Characters may wish to plunder the skeletons for their ceremonial garb. There are four skeletons, each of which is dressed with 100 gp of jewelry.

A character who attempts to take these items from the corpses must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw, or be grasped by the head by the skeletons, whose eye sockets flare with golden fury. On a failed save, the character

takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage and must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or become blinded for 2d8 + 1 hours. After this time, the character's sight returns to normal. The condition can be removed with a *lesser restoration* spell or similar magic.



AREA 6

As characters descend the stairs in Area 5 and enter Area 6, read or summarize:

You descend beneath the ground into the charnel house's underbelly. Here, the smell of death grows strong, and any natural light dies away. As you reach the bottom of the cracked stone stair, you look out over a sea of skeletal remains. Hundreds upon hundreds of bones fill up the room before you, up to a height of 1 foot. Here and there, jagged boulders poke out of the ivory sea.

At the north and south ends of the chamber are stone platforms. In between is the 1-foot-

deep pile of human remains. Jutting out from this are the boulders.

Characters who step on the bones for the first time on a turn, or start their turn there, must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or take 5 (1d10) necrotic damage as smoky, purple tendrils rise from the bones, draining the characters life force. In addition, **two skeletons** (CR ¼; MM, p 272) rise from the bones next to the character and attack them. The sea of bones counts as difficult terrain for non-undead.

To make it across the ossuary safely, characters must hop from boulder to boulder and balance on their jagged surfaces. To hop safely onto a boulder, a character must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. On a failure, they slip into the bones, fall prone and end their turn. Climbing back onto a boulder requires a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check.

AREA 7

The stone door to this chamber is heavy, and swings shut unless held open. A creature holding the door open blocks line of sight into the room.

Atop a small plinth in the center of the room is a gemstone, roughly the size of a small child's fist. The purple stone seems to glint and twinkle as if some dark light is stored within. Surrounding the stone, connected to the plinth by 5-foot-long chains, are five slaving zombies.

The chains connecting the **five zombies** (CR ¼; MM, p 316) to the plinth have **AC 19, 10 hit points**. They can be broken with a successful **DC 20 Strength** check, though the zombies are not intelligent enough to try themselves. Instead, they swipe out at nearby living creatures, never able to move more than 5 feet away from the plinth.

Characters who succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check notice the following:

Result	Information
10-13	On the floor of the chamber are humanoid bones.
14-16	Amongst these bones, you make out a leather satchel.
17-19	Several of the zombies have small feathered darts poking out of their backs and shoulders.
20+	Tiny holes line the back wall of the chamber.

In the center of the room is a stone plinth, to which the zombies are connected. Atop this, at a height of 5 feet, is a purple gemstone in a stand. The gemstone contains the spirit of the **minotaur zombie** and allows the creature to be controlled as with an animate dead spell. The gemstone requires attunement. It has AC 13, 5 hit points and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Destroying the gemstone destroys the **minotaur zombie** and prevents undead from forming within the charnel house.

A creature who tries to remove the gemstone from the stand might trigger the Poison Dart trap (see end of encounter).

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, the characters manage to destroy the **minotaur zombie**. If they do so by destroying the gemstone, they will also have prevented further undead forming in the charnel house. Alternatively, the party might have gotten themselves a new undead beast of burden!

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The Charnel House might have been written specifically for a location in the Mournlands. See the Wayfinder's Guide, pp 14-16. Otherwise it needs nothing to make it more Eberron-specific.

Poison Darts

Simple trap (level 1-4, dangerous threat)

Along the back wall of the chamber are dozens of tiny holes, each of which contains a poisoned dart. The trap discharges when the gemstone is removed.

Trigger. A character who removes the gemstone from the stand triggers the trap.

Effect. Six darts fire out of the back wall, spaced around 2 feet apart. Each dart makes a ranged attack with a +8 bonus against a random target within 20 feet of the southern wall and within line of sight. A target hit takes 3 (2d4) piercing damage and must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Hidden behind the wall are several sets of pulleys and ropes which move latches and gears to reset the trap every three rounds. As long as the gem is lifted from the pedestal, the trap continues to fire and contains enough ammunition for a total of four firings.

Countermeasures. As detailed above, characters who succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** check notice evidence of the darts. Stuffing the holes prevents the darts from firing. Swapping the gemstone for a similarly-sized item also prevents the trap from triggering, but requires a successful **DC 18 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check. Failure causes the trap to trigger.

MINOTAUR ZOMBIE

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 86 (9d10+36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands Abyssal, but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Charge. If the zombie moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

Labyrinthine Recall. The zombie can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the zombie can gain advantage on melee attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5+ the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

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

CRIB SWAP

By Jesse Peterson

Estimated run-time: 1-2 Hours

Crib Swap is a short exploration adventure designed for five characters of 7th level. Scaling suggestions are included for characters of level 4 – 10.

LORE OF CLOAK WOOD

The Cloak Wood is an overgrown ancient forest just south of Baldur's Gate. The sages of Candlekeep to the south warn citizens to keep out of the forest proper as it is said to be filled with rabid beasts, horrid monsters, and violent fey creatures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A coven of hags living in the Cloak Wood have been stealing children from Baldur's Gate. They have been consuming them to make their own children, which they have been returning as imposters. Lately they have been stealing the children of noble houses in order to gain inside influence in Baldur's Gate.

These hags have also corrupted a druidic leyline in the forest to help hide themselves, and to help defend against outsiders. They have also enlisted the help of a Warlock of the Archfey, who has a fascination with the magic they are performing, as well as a Displacer Beast, who they feed generously as a pet/guardian.

The Grand Duke Portyr was informed of these missing nobles a tenday ago, but his mages could not seem to divine the location of the hags. He believes they may have taken refuge in the Cloak Wood. He has sent guards to the wood but they never returned. He reaches out to the adventurers in a hope that they can remove the hags without costing him additional men.

PLOT HOOKS

The party can be in Baldur's Gate for many reasons. The most popular of these would be to shop in the metropolis.

Characters may be here to earn money doing side jobs or street performing. The scholarly may be here to visit Sorcerous Sundries, a renowned magical store of arcane supplies. Religious characters have their choices of the local temples. (Gond, Tymora, Umberlee, Helm, and Lathander)

The party should be approached in the tavern as night falls.

A DUKE IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

As the party winds down for the night, read:

"As you settle in for the night, a stranger in a brown cloak enters the tavern. A hood is pulled over their face to hide their features. The stranger stops a barmaid and palms her a coin. Then, they pull up a table furthest from the door. After a while, the maid approaches and tells each of you that the stranger has requested your presence."

FEATURES OF THE PURPLE WURM TAVERN

General Features

Light. The lamps in the tavern are hooded as to create a purple glow over everyone.

Smells and Sounds. The smells of food and ale mix with sweat and blood. The Purple Wurm is an Inn that caters to merchants and adventurers of all kinds.

Personnel: There are 2 barmaids and a bartender that tend the bar at all times. There are also 6 (1d8+2) patrons in the bar. DMs can feel free to flavor them as they see fit.

The barmaid cannot answer any questions as to why the stranger has made such a request. The only information she knows is that the stranger is a man by the sound of his voice.

- A **DC 10 Insight (Wisdom)** check can determine that the hooded figure does not seem to have a menacing presence.
- A **DC 10 Perception (Wisdom)** check can be used to determine that the man is not carrying any weapons.

Any attempt to read the stranger's mind or communicate telepathically is thwarted. He wears an invisible *Ring of Mind Shielding*.

THE STRANGER

As the party joins the stranger, read or summarize:

A strange man talks to you from the shadows of his cowl'd face. "I am in need of a few accomplished adventurers to do a task for me. Should you accept I would make it worth your time." he says, placing a bag of gems on the table.

The man in question is no other than **Grand Duke Portyr (noble, CR 1/8; MM, p 348)**, current ruler of Baldur's Gate. He tells the party the following information:

- There are rumors about children being abducted during the night and then reappearing the next day acting weird. He fears they have been taken by fey.
- The Cloak Wood to the south is the closest presence of fey in the area.
- He does not want word getting out about this, as it might cause a panic.
- He is willing to pay the adventurers in gemstones worth 250 gp per child returned. (Negotiable up to 500 gp per child.)
- He will offer to rent the party riding horses to help expedite the task.

A character trying to discern the identity of the man must succeed on a **DC 20 Investigation (Intelligence)** check followed by a **DC 15 History (Intelligence)** check. A person with the Noble background makes the History check at advantage.

When the party accepts, the man takes his leave. The Cloak Wood is a day's ride south of Baldur's Gate. The party should arrive easily.

ENTRANCE TO THE CLOAK WOOD

As the party nears the Cloak Wood, read or summarize:

The tangled forest of the Cloak Wood stands before you. Its branches create a thick canopy above your head. Heading inside, the daylight dims to shafts of radiance that filter through the leaves above. A few hundred feet in, you see marks of conflict in a clearing.

General Features

Light. The beams of light filtering through the leaves create dim light conditions in the entire forest.

Terrain. The undergrowth is maintained by dryads. Leaves and twigs litter the ground, but do not cause difficult terrain. The trees are 40 feet tall unless stated otherwise. Characters may short rest, but a long rest is unavailable since the leyline is drawing energy from the forest. The party should feel constant unease if they stop for an extended period of time.

Wildlife. The forest creatures are wary of anything not from the Cloak Wood and will hide from outsiders.

Spells. Attempting to locate fey using divination and scrying magic fails whilst the party are within the forest.

AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

As the party moves into the woods to investigate, a **warlock of the archfey** and his shadow hound(s) watch them from the shadows.

Any character with a **passive Perception of 20** or higher or who succeeds a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** check detects the warlock's presence. This check is made with disadvantage (-5 to passive Perception) if the character does not have darkvision. If the characters fail to

detect the warlock he surprises them during their investigation of the clearing.

Investigating the clearing shows obvious signs of struggle. The culprit would seem to be wolves (the Warlock's hounds). The previous guards who were sent here were ambushed by the Warlock. There are no bodies, as the Warlock fed them to his dogs, but pieces of gear are strewn about the clearing.

Scaling the Combat

APL 4: warlock of the archfey (CR 4; VGtM, p 219)

APL 5-6: warlock of the archfey and 4 blink dogs (CR ¼; MM, p 318)

APL 7-8: warlock of the archfey, 1 yeth hound (CR 4; VGtM, p 201), **and 4 blink dogs** (CR ¼; MM, p 318)

APL 9-10: warlock of the archfey and 2 yeth hounds.

A TRAIL OF BREADCRUMBS

Once the characters finish in the clearing, read or summarize:

Following the signs of skirmish deeper into the wood, you quickly lose sight of the signs of struggle. The path abruptly ends at a fork in the trees. Both directions look eerie as the trees give the illusion of reaching out toward you with crooked claws.

Both paths lead to the destination, but one is more perilous than the other. A character may make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check to determine which track is more dangerous. A successful check reveals a bow half buried in the dirt bearing the emblem of Baldur's Gate down the left path. One of the children left this behind, hoping someone would find them.

The left path is the safest and most direct, and the right path wraps around to a trap.

THE RIGHT? PATH

If the party takes the right path, read or summarize:

Pushing ahead cautiously, the dense wood opens into a small glade. The area is enclosed on all sides by thick woven tree limbs. The limbs are connected to seven trees spaced 40 feet equally around the grove. Each tree has a glyph on it glowing with a soft green glow. The ground has smaller, yet similar, glyphs spiraling to the center where a small dirt mound resides.

Any character with a **passive Perception of 12 or higher** realizes the forest is eerily quiet in this area. The characters are producing the only sounds around them.

If at least 3 humanoids enter, the tree branches close the dome around them. The fey used this place as a trial to test wanderers in the forest, but it has been corrupted and repurposed as a trap. The hags are using this leyline of magic as a cover, preventing detection.

The Trapped Grove

The area acts as a permanent druid grove (*druid grove* spell: XGtE, p 154), but the Grove Guardians are inactive. A detect evil and good spell reveals the area has been desecrated.

While the trap is active, the intertwined branches that create the walls of the grove have AC 13, 100 hit points, immunity to non-magical attacks, and if damaged they trigger the negative effects of the trap. In addition, teleportation or plane shifting spells have no effect inside the dome. Sound still passes through the dome as normal although it is slightly muffled.

The dirt mound contains a 10-inch tall sapling that will regrow if taken. A character who studies the glyphs and succeeds a **DC 10 Intelligence (Religion)** check

recognizes the symbols of deities from the Nature domain.

The Trees and Clues

In order, clockwise from the northernmost tree, the symbols are:

- Silvanus, god of wild nature (Oak Leaf)
- Auril, goddess of winter (Snowflake)
- Eldath, goddess of peace (Waterfall)
- Malar, god of the hunt (Clawed Paw)
- Mielikki, goddess of forests (Unicorn's Head)
- Chauntea, goddess of agriculture (Sheaf of Grain)
- Corellon Larethian, god of elves (Quarter Moon)

A riddle in common is written around the mound in the center. Should the players inspect it, read the riddle as follows:

"I give life and can take it away.
I am the reflection of all mankind.
I begin as one thing and end as another.
Nations would war over me."

The answer to the riddle is "woman"; though, to pass the test, the party must touch specific trees.

The four of these trees bearing symbols of goddesses are secretly the grove guardians (see *druid grove* spell, XGtE, p154). To pass the test, the characters must touch the four guardians without touching another tree.

If a character touches a guardian, the symbol glows brighter and the sapling in the center grows 15-feet taller with each correct selection – up to 60-feet tall if all four trees are correctly selected.

If a character touches a tree that is not a guardian, the trap resets, causing the guardians to dim, and the sapling in the mound to decrease to its original 10-inch tall size if it has grown from correct selections. All characters

inside the grove must pass a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion as a necromantic pulse of energy bores into them and saps their strength.

Once all four guardians are lit, the tree in the mound grows to 60-feet tall and the grove branches retreat back to their respective trees, revealing an exit to the west along a new path.

Treasure

Characters who know Druidic find a hidden message written in the canopy leaves. Speaking the command word in Druidic turns the tree back into a *staff of the woodlands* (DMG, p 204). In staff form, the object is carved to resemble four dancing dryads.

SHACK, SHAUNTEY, CHANTEY, AND SHANTY

When the party enters this area of the forest read or summarize:

The trees around you begin to thin again as you break into what looks like an expanded campsite. There is a hut without windows made of stone and debris that stands to one side. The scents of cooking meat and seawater float on the air. Above all of these though, you smell rot. The source of this smell seems to be a visceral scene that is sectioned off behind a waist high fence encompassing a yard area. Two goats and five chickens are seen grazing in the yard.

The Hut

Currently, the hags are not in the hut. Characters who explore the hut find a pot of stew (containing chicken feet and beaks, and a cow's tongue) on the fire, and four children chained to a post in the center of the room. There are various concoctions and ingredients in bottles and jars resting on shelves along the walls.

The Children

The four children are chained to a wooden post in the center of the room, secured by a padlock

(**DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** to unlock, or **DC 20 Strength check** to break). Their experience and the grotesque appearance of the hags has put the children in a state of shock. They do not respond when spoken to. If taken from the hut, the children regain their senses in a few hours.

The Hags

The hags, who were out gathering more herbs, mushrooms, and root vegetables for their stew, know the party is here by using their Hag Eye. The eye currently resides in a bottle of eyes on a shelf in their cabin. They can return to the clearing within a minute while invisible. If any of the party are outside, they hear rustling in the forest along the clearing on a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check as the hags return.

Each of the hags is invisible on a different side of the campsite. Shauntey, the **night hag** (CR 5; MM, p 178) to the west, Chantey the **green hag** (CR 3; MM, p 177) to the north, and Shanty the **sea hag** (CR 2; MM, p 178) to the south. The hags also have a pet **displacer beast** (CR 3; MM, p 81) who is currently in a makeshift dog house in the visceral area of the yard. Should the party interact with the doghouse, the displacer beast barks loudly, alerting the hags, and defends the hut.

If the party attempts to leave the hut with the children, the hags whistle for the displacer beast and attack. Each hag targets the member of the party they believe is weakest to their abilities, preferring to let the displacer beast protect them from melee combatants. The hags tease each other during combat by judging each other's tactics or attempting to steal another's kill.

Scaling the Combat

APL 4-5: Reduce the hags' and displacer beast's hit points by half.

APL 6-7: As written

APL 8+: Give hags coven spells (MM, p 177)

CONCLUSION

If the party is successful at bringing back the children, the hooded stranger meets them again in the tavern. Revealing himself as the Duke, he tells the party that their actions will always be remembered in Baldur's Gate. This benefit gives all characters involved advantage on all **Charisma checks** with nobles in Baldur's Gate. He pays them and lets them know that the imposter children will be dealt with accordingly.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

It makes more sense to set **Crib Swap** in Stormreach than Sharn. Exchange Duke Portyr for a notable of Stormreach. Use Tulea Wylkes, mother of the city's new Harbor Lord, Jonas Wylkes. The young man is a dissipated hedonist, but his mother is a powerful woman accustomed to working in the shadows to his benefit. If the heroes succeed, she will arrange it that Jonas gets the credit. Rather than a day's ride to the wilderness, the heroes enter the jungle almost immediately. Remember to remove references to the Cloak Wood from the read-aloud text.

THE CURSE OF LUNA

SHARPCLAW

By **Tony Petrecca**

@TonyPetrecca

Map: *Dyson Logos*

Map is available by clicking [here](#).

Estimated run-time: 120 to 180 minutes

A hag's horrible curse haunts a hideously transformed family. Can the characters save the day? The Curse of Luna Sharpclaw is a short adventure written for four to five players of level 5th - 10th.

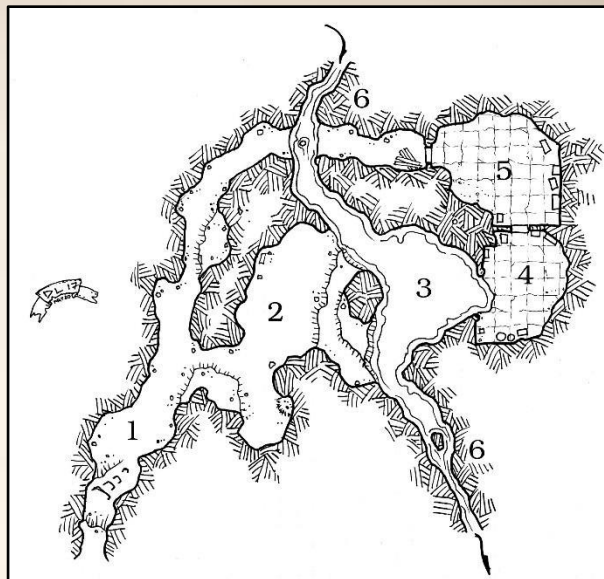
BACKGROUND

Joana Heliax and Brennan Woodheart had retired from their adventuring days, marrying and settling down to raise a family. Soon after purchasing a fine parcel of land to farm, the ranger and bard were blessed with twins, Elyanna and Orin. Taking after their parents, the children had an adventurous streak and often wandered the nearby woods, which were kept safe by their parent's frequent patrols.

One day, the children wandered too far and came upon an old crone who lived in a cave. Lady Luna Sharpclaw, she called herself, and she invited the hungry children in for a meal. Lady Sharpclaw was, of course, no lady, and soon the annis hag revealed herself, much to the children's dismay. Now captured, the hag began preparing her meal.

When Elyanna and Orin did not come home that night, Joana and Brennan grabbed their gear and set out. Picking up the twins' fresh trail wasn't a challenge for Brennan, and by midnight, under a bright full moon they found the cavern. The two stealthily scouted the cavern and spied the hag in her lair, boiling vegetables in a large stew pot while the children were in cages nearby.

The battle was hard fought and brutal, but Joana and Brennan, fueled by the rage only a parent could understand, defeated the hag. With her dying breath the hag uttered a horrible curse.



“Talent stripped, beauty ripped, I curse you all with my foul grip. By dawn this day I take away all that made you love and play. Handsome human, lovely elf, you’ll soon learn to loathe yourself. Foolish mortals – break this curse and I will return to make things worse!”

As the hag exhaled her final breath, Joana and Brennan found the key to the cages, released their children, and collapsed, exhausted from the battle. They awoke from a fitful, nightmarish sleep to a new terror: two trolls towering over them!

The hag's curse had taken hold, and the family found themselves transformed into horrible beasts. The once handsome and dexterous Brennan reached for his sword to attack the trolls but found himself unable. His arms were gone, replaced by bovine legs, as his long, awkward neck struggled to raise his now hideous, warthog shaped head. The catoblepas searched the room looking for his lovely wife, but she was nowhere to be found. Instead, in a

defensive position, pressed against a nearby wall, was another hag!

Somehow, after the initial shock wore off, the family recognized each other and wept.

At first, each knew who he or she was, but as the days passed, the instincts of their new forms slowly began taking over the personalities of Brennan and the children. Only Joana's mind remained fully intact. She went to seek help - to find someone who could remove this curse - but, unable to disguise herself, she soon found herself under attack and fled.

The family have since resigned themselves to their new forms and their cursed existence. The children, becoming more troll-like each week, "play" outside the cave, hunting meat for the family. Brennan wallows in the mud of the cavern's brook-fed pool, and Joana, matron of the family, does all she can to protect and keep them.

Details of The Curse

Lady Sharpclaw's dying curse is powerful indeed. For ages she worked to form a terrifying bond with the darkest powers of the Abyss. She drew upon every ounce of that bond when her mortal form was slain, implementing a horrible curse more powerful than a *wish* spell.

The children were permanently polymorphed into trolls, and Brennan was permanently polymorphed into a catoblepas. In both cases, they assumed all the abilities of their new forms, slowly losing their minds as well.

The curse impacted Joana differently. Joana took the form and physical characteristics of an annis hag, but her powerful personality and will allowed her to retain her wits and spellcasting abilities.

Casting *remove curse* on any member of the family will remove the curse's effects from the whole family, restoring their original forms. However, removing the curse also restores Lady Sharpclaw to her mortal form, bringing allied fiends from the Abyss with her!

TROLL PLAY

The encounter begins when the traveling party is accosted by trolls. Read or summarize the following:

A cool breeze penetrates the forest canopy, making for a cool, comfortable day. Song birds have been serenading throughout the wood and the pleasant travel is enhanced by the sweet smell of a blooming lilac bush.

As the day's travel continues, the sweet smells fade, replaced by the faint stench of rot and death. The road rounds a bend, and ahead you see a cave mouth atop a hillock. A dank, stagnant stream flows from a second underground entrance.

Two massive, long nosed green beasts crest the hillock and rapidly approach.

These two **trolls** (CR 5; MM, p 291), are Elyanna and Orin, the cursed children of Joana and Brennan Woodheart. The trolls are excellent rock throwers. Add the following ranged attack to their available actions:

Rock: Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 60/240, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

Being young children at heart, their intentions as they approach are not violent, though conveying that may be a challenge. The trolls immediately flee to their cave if attacked.

APPROACHING THE CAVERN

The catoblepas' presence within the cavern has had an impact on the small knoll. An aroma of rot permeates the area and most of the grasses and clover that once covered the hill have died, replaced by crabgrass and thistle. The brook that emerges from the hill is stagnant and algae filled and the tree atop the hill barely clings to life.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check made near the stream reveals the catoblepas' large cloven tracks in its muddy bank.

General Features in the Cavern

Terrain. The passages of this limestone cavern are damp with humidity.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, there are no light sources in the cavern.

Ceiling height. Unless otherwise noted, the ceiling is 10 to 12-feet-high in narrow passageways and peaks at 15-feet-high in the larger chambers.

Smells and Sounds. The air within the cavern is stale and foul, smelling of troll, catoblepas, and stagnation. An eerie quiet permeates the cavern.

AREA 1 – THE MAIN CAVERN

ENTRANCE

As the party approaches the main entrance of Area 1, read or summarize:

Roughhewn limestone stairs descend into the darkness of this small cave entrance. The smell of rot wafts up from below. To the right, a small, stagnant brook emerges from the hillside.

The steps descend about 10 feet into the passage below. If alerted, the two trolls pick up rocks, ready their actions, and wait in ambush while on the low ledges at Areas 1a and 1b. After a single volley, they rapidly retreat to the rear of Area 2, alerting the catoblepas and their mother.

AREA 2 – TROLL DEN

This large chamber serves as the trolls' home and living area. The chamber to the south contains bedding made of straw and tree branches. The brook pools in a chamber to the east, intersecting this area and allowing the catoblepas from Area 3 access to help deal with hostile intruders.

Treasure

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals two 100 gp amethysts and 65 gp amongst the straw and branches.

AREA 3 – CATOBLEPAS CAVERN

Brennan, now a **Catoblepas** (CR 5; VGtM, p 129), spends his days wallowing in misery and muck in this chamber. The stagnant pool slopes gently at first from its shores at the edge of Areas 2 and 4. A steep drop off 5 feet from either shore descends to a depth of 10 feet.

The catoblepas will defend the trolls, his children, with his life.

Treasure

Brennan's gear from that fateful night has sunk to the bottom of the pool. Anyone searching the pool's depths who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** check finds the remains of the ranger's equipment: A suit of *studded leather armor +1*, and a beautiful *longsword +1* with gold inlaid leaf and vine patterns on the hilt and blade.

AREA 4 – THE FAMILY ROOM

This roughhewn chamber was once the hag's kitchen and laboratory. Most of her works have since been destroyed by either Brennan or the trolls in fits of rage, though they wisely left two lanterns hanging upon the wall, allowing the chamber to be dimly lit. Should trouble arise, **Joana** (stat block below) will emerge from Area 5 to assist. Though she will defend her family with her life, her first move will be to plea with any adventurer's assaulting her family.

"Please, STOP! Those are my CHILDREN!"

If cooler heads prevail and combat ceases, the trolls retreat and huddle here, behind their mother and father, and Joana shares the tale of the curse.

AREA 5 – JOANA’S CHAMBER

Another roughhewn chamber, this was originally the hag’s living quarters. The chamber is well lit by four lanterns hanging upon the walls, but Joana has disposed of the bulk of the hag’s goods, pouring potions and reagents into the stream long ago. Joana sleeps upon her adventurer’s bedroll, and spends her days writing a book detailing her adventuring days, the start of her family life, the curse, and life since the curse. If a final tragedy befell the family at the hands of the characters, they can learn the truth reading Joana’s book.

Treasure

Joana recovered the bulk of the family’s liquid assets from their farmhouse and brought them here. In addition to her gear, a locked chest sits on the floor near her bedding. The chest is not trapped. Picking the lock requires a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools**. The chest contains 2,200 gp, 100 pp, an amethyst pendant set in gold worth 500 gp, and the deed to the family’s farm.

NOTE: In her stat block below, Joana wears a ring of protection and carries an instrument of the bards mac-fuirmidh cittern.

AREA 6 – STREAM TUNNELS

The slow flowing stream enters and exits the hillock through short, narrow water-carved passages. The tunnels are 2-feet-high and 2 to 4 feet wide, providing potential ingress or egress for Small characters to navigate at a crawl. If attempted, the tunnels are considered difficult terrain.

REMOVING THE CURSE

Casting *remove curse* on any one living family member will break the curse entirely, restoring the four to their natural states immediately. However, as the hag warned, removing the

curse is not without repercussions. Regardless of where the curse is removed, Lady Luna Sharpclaw appears in a planar ripping burst, knocking her four victims unconscious from psychic damage. If *remove curse* is cast upon a family member, read or summarize:

As you recite the final incantation, a glow forms about the whole family and they rapidly transform. The trolls shrink, the catoblepas’ hooves turn to hands, and the hag’s hideous face reveals beauty. In mere seconds, the family is restored.

They rush to embrace each other when suddenly the air bursts between them. The four fall backward, unconscious, and there in their midst stands none other than Lady Luna Sharpclaw and she is not alone. Standing next to her is a horrible six limbed, fiendish bipedal insectoid.

PCs should be surprised by this sudden appearance. Lady Luna, an **annis hag** (CR 6; VGtM, p 159), who has no intention of being slain again, will attempt to escape if possible. Her escort, a **mezzoloth** (CR 5; MM, p 313) eagerly defends her.

For game purposes, once restored to their original bodies, treat the children as **commoners** (CR 0; MM, p 345), Brennan as an **archer** (CR 3; VGtM, p 210) and Joana as a **bard** (CR 2; VGtM, p 211).

Scaling the Combat

APL 5-7: As written

APL 8-10: Add an additional mezzoloth

AFTERMATH

Depending upon the characters’ actions, there may be ample opportunity for further adventure. If the characters killed the family, believing them to be monsters, and later discovered Joana’s journal, they may well wish to resurrect the unjustly slain family.

If Lady Sharpclaw got away, she may well plot against the family or the characters.

If the characters saved the day and Lady Sharpclaw was slain a second time, Joana and Brennan might appreciate an escort back to reclaim their farm. Of course, they can take care of themselves and a final resolution might just be the characters and the Woodheart's saying their goodbyes.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Annis hags exist in Eberron. In fact, the founders of the nation of Droaam are a trio of hags.

The Curse of Luna Sharpclaw is another which can be placed in the Mournlands. The Mourning might have caught the family at its fringes, and of the many unknown and unknowable things which happened that day, this is but one of them. That said, it is hard to simply remove the hag and have her appearance of the boss fight be anything other than jarring, from a story perspective.

Alternately, this encounter can be placed just outside Stormreach. The dangers of Xen'drik are manifold and manifest, and the idea of a pair of powerful adventurers unwittingly establishing a homestead near an annis hag's lair is perfectly reasonable. Stormreach being in close proximity also gives the heroes access to the magic required to restore the family if they can't cast remove curse themselves.

JOANA HELIX, HAG FORM

Large fey, chaotic good

Armor Class 18* (natural armor plus *ring of protection*)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +6*

(**Ring of Protection*. +1 to all saves)

Skills Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Joana is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *dissonant whispers, faerie fire, healing word, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Instrument of the Bards. Joana possesses a *MacFuirmidh cittern*. She can use an action to play the instrument and cast each of the following spells once per day as a 4th-level spellcaster: *barkskin, cure wounds, fog cloud*.

Song of Rest. Joana can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. Joana can confer this benefit on herself as well.

Taunt (2/day). Joana can use a bonus action on her turn to target one creature within 30 feet of her. If the target can hear her, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of Joana's next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. Joana makes three attacks: one with her bite, and two with her claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6+5) slashing damage.

Crushing Hug. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (9d6+5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends, the target takes 36 (9d6+5) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of Joana's turns. Joana can't make attacks while grappling a creature in this way.

BLOOD IN THE WATER

By Karl Resch
@ArtificerAlf

Estimated run-time: 30 to 45 minutes

Blood in the Water is a coastal encounter where a group of heroes must fend off blood crazed sahuagin as they seek to consume a wounded hippogriff. This encounter involves a swarm of sea devils, possibly leading to a group of 4th or 5th level PC's being hopelessly devoured. However, sahuagin think with their stomachs, and with a few astute observations, clever heroes may find a way to prevail.

BACKGROUND

While traversing a rocky shoreline, the heroes encounter a dying hippogriff, collapsed on a large rock and barely breathing. The blood from its wounds mingles with the seawater, drawing the attention of sahuagin hungry for prey. The conflict leads to an exciting confrontation as the tide slowly rises while the battleground shrinks!

THE HIPPOGRIFF

As the party steps across the rocky shore, read or summarize:

The waves lap the enormous rocks, ready to reclaim them back to the sea. In front of you lies a sight beholden to tragedy as you think of the magnificence this beast once possessed. The hippogriff's breathing is labored and shallow. Feathers are scattered everywhere, its bloodied wounds mixing with the seawater.

At the beginning of the encounter, the **hippogriff** (CR 1; MM, p 184) is dying, having failed 1 death saving throw. It can be stabilized with a **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine)** check. If healed, the hippogriff fights any sahuagin that approach it.

There are several ways the hippogriff could have taken its wounds, all based on the DM's

discretion and what future plans they have for the creature. A few are listed below.

- Another hippogriff – A fierce battle for the coastal territory has left this hippogriff nearly dead. Perhaps the rival that wounded it is still lurking nearby!
- Poachers – Big game hunters are always looking for prized beasts to sell to arenas or warlords. This hippogriff may have been left for dead after the poachers plundered its nest for eggs. These hunters may still be lurking nearby, adding an additional complication to characters that drive off the sahuagin!

ENVIRONS OF THE AREA

General Features

Terrain. Flat, rocky boulders. A character may choose to leap over the water to another rock with a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check or a **DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check.

Weather. Whatever the DM chooses! A light, misty rain could be falling, or a blazing sun could sit directly overhead.

Light. The encounter is assumed to take place during the day, with normal daylight. The DM may adjust the encounter and the light if they so choose.

Smells and Sounds. The crashing waves, circling gulls, and constant wind makes it difficult to hear much of anything else, especially at a distance.

THE SAHUAGIN

As the party step from the shore to the protruding rocks, read or summarize:

The crash of waves and the tang of the salt in the air assails your senses as you traverse the rocky coastline.

The **sahuagin** (CR ½; MM, p 263) attack in three waves:

- First wave: 1d4 + 2 (or 4) sahuagin

In the first wave, the sahuagin are after the hippogriff, altered to its presence by the blood

in the water. They arrive focused on the large central rock.

- Second wave: 1d6 + 2 (or 5) sahuagin
- Third wave: 1d8 + 2 (or 6) sahuagin

The second and third wave emerge from the sea wherever the DM deems necessary. If multiple characters are wounded, they will split up their own groups, looking for wounded prey.

As the sahuagin emerge from the sea, they attack the nearest wounded creature, including other sahuagin!

The text below could be modified to demonstrate the horror of this event:

Your weapon cuts across the scaly hide of the sea devil, causing blood to trickle down its abdomen. The sahuagin standing adjacent cock their heads, nostrils flaring, before opening their fanged maws and attacking their former ally, tearing off large chunks of flesh.

For some added flavor, the DM may wish for the sahuagin to focus their attacks on characters casting spells. Sahuagin hate and fear magic, unless being wielded by their priestesses.

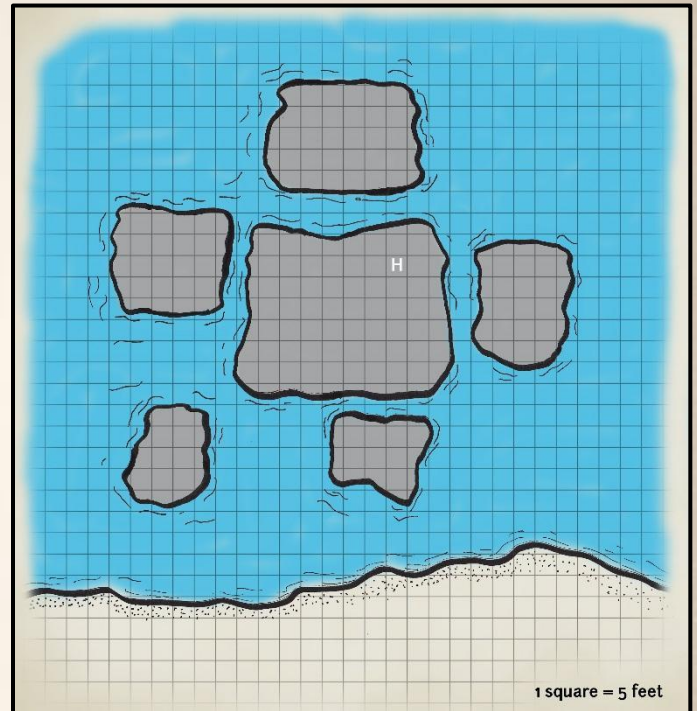
WATER DEPTH

At the beginning of the encounter, the water depth of the entire area is 5-feet deep. As the encounter progresses, the tide comes in, creating less space for the characters to fight advantageously (unless they have a swim speed!). This increases the water depth by 5 feet every two rounds and reduces the surface area on each of the boulders and shore by 5 feet, pushing characters to the center of the boulder, or forcing them to move into the water.

THE INCOMING TIDE

Approaching the hippogriff causes the tide to come in... and begins the encounter.

When you first scrambled across the rocks, the waters only lapped at their edges. Now, with each new wave, sea water splashes your footwear. The tide is coming in!



ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

The DM should feel free to adjust the encounter as they see fit, using the following recommendations as guidelines.

APL 1-3: 1 sahuagin (first wave), 2 sahuagin (second wave), 3 sahuagin (third wave)

APL 4-6: 2 sahuagin (first wave), 3 sahuagin (second wave), 4 sahuagin (third wave)

APL 7-9: Encounter remains as written

Additionally, if the waves are easily dispatched, the DM should feel free to add in a **sahuagin priestess** (CR 2; MM, p 264) or a **sahuagin baron** (CR 5; MM, p 264). Regular sahuagin will never attack an injured priestess

or baron, though the same cannot be said in reverse!

CONCLUSION

Once the characters drive off the hungry sahuagin, they can spend more time tending to the wounded hippogriff. With a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check followed by a **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check, or with the aid of healing magic, the creature will have regained enough strength, perhaps using that strength to serve the party as a mount.

However, the threat of the sahuagin is far from over. Deep below, in the ocean depths, they wait....

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

This encounter may occur in any coastal region in Eberron but it is more than appropriate for the southern regions. The Thunder Sea, which separates Khorvaire from Xen'drik, is a region of the sea densely populated by different sahuagin tribes. Some of these tribes are savage and kill anyone or anything that trespasses within their territory. If the party is traveling south of Sharn to Xen'drik, through the Straits of Shargon, they may encounter this tribe and the wounded hippogriff.

Hippogriffs are also a common mount choice for wealthy citizens in Sharn.

THE FROG PRINCE

By *Luciella Elisabeth Scarlett*

@LuciellaES

Estimated run-time: 30 to 60 minutes

The Frog Prince is a short swamp encounter designed for four to five characters of level 1st - 4th.

BACKGROUND

The adventure takes place within a large swamp where the bullywug queen Korrokanda holds sway. Deeply spiteful and greedy, Korrokanda surrounds herself with stolen treasure and fawning sycophants. Those who wander the swamp are inevitably found by her minions and dragged before her throne. Yet the vicious queen has one soft spot: her foolish son, Prince Raby, who dreams of one day finding an adventure of his own.

PLOT HOOKS

The party may enter the swamp for a number of reasons. For example:

- They are travelling to another destination and the quickest route is through the swamp.
- A group of villagers were captured by the bullywugs; a notice has been put up offering a 100 gp reward for their safe return.
- A 100 gp bounty has been offered for the head of the wicked bullywug queen.

ENTERING THE SWAMP

Read or summarize the following:

A barricade of trees and shrubbery marks the beginning of the swamp. The air is warm and slightly humid, and already small insects are beginning to buzz around as you approach.

You spot a narrow path winding through the dense trees and choose this as your starting point, yet after only a few minutes' walk, the trail falls away into the muddy water of the swamp.

SWAMP ENVIRONS

General Features

Terrain. Damp and overgrown, with patches of thick mud, pools of deep water and clusters of reeds and mangroves. Most of the area is difficult terrain.

Weather. Warm and sticky by day and cool by night.

Light. The swamp is dimly lit by sunlight streaming down through a thick canopy.

Smells and Sounds. Smell of mud, flowers and rotting wood. Sounds of insects buzzing around and splashes of creatures living in the water.

Have whichever character is in the lead make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check to navigate the terrain. On a success, they make it through the swamp without difficulty. On a failure, the group are delayed by an hour as they struggle to find a safe path through the swamp. If the roll fails by more than 5, read or summarize the following:

If the roll fails by 5 or more, read or summarize the following:

You stride confidently into the swamp, explaining to your companions that you sense the presence of a path hidden in the water. For a brief moment, your claim seems to hold true, before you trip over a submerged log and fall into a deep sinkhole.

Escaping the sinkhole requires a successful **DC 10 Strength** check (made with disadvantage if the character is wearing medium or heavy armor). On a failure, the character begins to

drown and is unable to make a second check. Other characters can fish them out with a successful **DC 15 Strength** check, made with advantage if they work together. Repeat the

GIANT SNAKES

As the party continues, the greenery thins out and the water grows deeper until any shorter races in the party are nearly up to their shoulders. As the characters proceed, have whomever is in the lead make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check. On a success, the leader spots the approaching threat one round before they are close enough to attack. Read or summarize:

You catch a glimpse of something moving to your left – a sinuous form that casts barely a ripple as it swims toward you. A pair of beady eyes peer out from the murky water.

Roll for initiative, choosing from the options below, based on Average Party Level (APL):

Level Adjustments

APL 1: 3 **giant poisonous snakes** (CR ¼, MM, p 327).

APL 2: 5 **giant poisonous snakes** (CR ¼, MM, p 327).

APL 3: 1 **giant constrictor snake** (CR 2, MM, p 324) and 2 **giant poisonous snakes** (CR ¼, MM, p 327).

APL 4: 2 **giant constrictor snakes** (CR 2, MM, p 324).

Tactics: The snakes attack mindlessly and without coordination but flee if brought to half or fewer hit points.

Terrain: This area is difficult terrain for any creature without a swim speed. If a character drops an item, they must use an action and succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check to retrieve it.

PRINCE RABY

After 2 rounds of combat, Prince Raby appears:

A gibbering battlecry has you glancing back as a humanoid figure with strange frog-like features charges forward, brandishing a rusty scimitar. “Get back, you nashty shnake!” he yells as he takes a swing.

Raby (see end of the encounter) attacks the closest snake. He is also carrying three antidotes which he can offer if any party members were poisoned.



While the combat continues, Raby keeps his words brief, but lets out a squeal of delight whenever a spell is cast or an attack lands. As soon as combat finishes, read or summarize:

As the last foe disappears into the swamp, the stranger turns to you, eyes shining with excitement: “Wow! You’sh all pretty powerful, eh? No need Raby’sh help at all!”

Use the following points to roleplay the interaction:

- *Who are you?* “Ish Raby, shon of da Queen Korrokanda – da queen who’sh landsh dish ish.”
- *The Queen?* “Mmhm. Da Queen ish a big, powerful, shcary bullywug! She collectsh gold from the vishitorsh to da shwamp. But Raby makesh you a deal: yoush let him come with you, Raby help yoush out!”
- *Why?* “Raby alwaysh wanted to go on an advensha! Maybe fight shome bigger shnakes, or dragonsh?”

Raby is irritatingly cheerful and endlessly curious, but he is a useful guide. He has advantage on all **Wisdom (Survival) checks** to navigate the swamp, can swim and retrieve any items dropped into the water, and has advantage on all **Charisma (Deception, Persuasion and Intimidation) checks** when interacting with other bullywugs, including Queen Korrokanda.

CONCLUSION

Raby is not very stealthy. If he or the party attract the attention of other bullywugs, they speak to him in Bullywug and attempt to convince him to bring the party to Korrokanda. Allow the players to roleplay this interaction with Raby as their translator. Raby assists the party so long as they remain within the swamp, but eventually determines that the adventuring life is not for him; he is happier amidst the mud and mangroves. He does however ask for an autograph or two before leaving.

If the party hurt Raby in any way, the bullywugs mercilessly hunt them down. They are best to quickly leave the swamp in this situation.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The Frog Prince is easily set in virtually any forested wilderness on Eberron, but is most plausibly set in the steaming jungles of Xen’drik, added as the adventurers are traveling overland on foot to or from Stormreach. Alternately, if the adventurers have traveled from Sharn into the wilderness of Khorvaire, you might place this encounter in the King’s Forest.

PRINCE RABY

Medium humanoid (bullywug), neutral

Armor Class 19 (half plate, shield)

Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +3, History +2, Persuasion +3

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Bullywug, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. Raby can breathe air and water.

Speak with Frogs and Toads. Raby can communicate simple concepts to frogs and toads when he speaks in Bullywug.

Standing Leap. Raby’s long jump is up to 20 feet and his high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Multiattack. Raby makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage.

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

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

IT CAME FROM ABOVE

By **Al Spader**

@BrownLantern

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

'It Came from Above' is a short adventure designed to take place as adventurers are about to settle in for a night's rest. This adventure works best in a forest or near a small copse of trees.

The adventure is designed for a party of four to five characters of level 1st - 4th. Scaling suggestions for higher-level parties are included.

BACKGROUND

Recently, a female flornar (see below for more information) named Streelock, who was being pursued through Realspace by an unknown spacecraft in the shape of a giant sea urchin, crashed on Toril. The giant sea urchin ship damaged Streelock's acorn-shaped craft using one of its many spines, causing it to crash land.

Unfortunately, Streelock's spacecraft has had a bizarre effect on the plant life near the crash site, causing it to animate and defend the craft.

FLORNARS

Focused and dedicated environmentalists, the flornars were originally one of the races that created Garden. When the "planet" was attacked by pirates, the flornars were able to escape aboard their acorn ships.

Flornars are plant-based creatures similar to dryads who look vaguely humanoid with organic weapons and armor growing from their skin. The weapons and armor are symbiotes grown from seeds, which are planted beneath their skin.



PLOT HOOK

As the party begins to bed down for the evening, a massive meteorite falls from the sky, crashing nearby. The impact causes a large explosion.

If the party isn't interested in the explosion, they are attacked 2 hours after they go to bed. In this case, run the wave encounter from the "Sealing the Leak" section of the module. The party should figure out that this has something to do with the crash. The party can then go through the woods, deal with the traps, and find Streelock.

FIRE RAINS DOWN

When you are ready, read the following:

The quiet evening is disrupted by the sounds of crackling flames and a thunderous boom. You look to the sky and see an orange meteorite screaming by overhead, much closer than you've ever seen before. The falling star crashes to the ground behind a copse of trees, spraying dirt and wood into the air.

THE FOREST

General Features

Terrain. Detritus-covered packed earth with medium sized trees every ten feet.

Weather. It is a dry evening with no clouds, save for a faint fog rolling several feet off the ground.

Light. The moon is gibbous and the stars aren't covered by clouds, creating a dim, eerie twilight.

Smells and Sounds. Damp dirt and rock, a soft breeze circulates within, originating from the lower section of the crater.

As the party enters the forest, read or summarize:

The forest stretches to the left and right for several hundred yards. The quickest route to the impact site is a well-worn game trail that seems to bisect the forest. The low fog bank becomes thick in the dark woods, rising two feet off the ground.

Allow the party to explore the area as they wish, using a DC 12 for the appropriate ability checks.

The forest is a completely normal forest at first. The party can see a plume of smoke rising above the canopy that they can use to navigate to the impact site.

The Forest Comes to Life

When the party feels comfortable and thinks there are no threats, the forest comes to life and tries to keep them from proceeding. Feel free to use as many of the traps below as you'd like. When a trap springs, tell the party that it is as if the trees and plants have a moment of consciousness and are targeting them to prevent them from proceeding.

Choking Root Trap

The ground erupts with dirt as roots reach out and try to coil around the characters' necks.

Detection and Disabling: There is no way to detect when these roots are going to attack. To disable the roots the characters must deal at least 10 slashing or fire damage in one round. If a character only partially disables the roots, more roots appear at the start of the next round and the amount of damage needed to disable the roots resets.

Triggering: This trap is triggered when a character steps within 10 feet of a plant of your choice.

Effect: Creatures within 10 feet of a tree must succeed on a **DC 12 Strength** saving throw or have a root wrap around their neck and pull them to the ground. When this happens, the creature is restrained, prone, and suffocating. (A character can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Constitution modifier).

Cordycep Spore Trap

Soft mounds of moss erupt with poisonous spores.

Detection and Disabling: A **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals that the moss is an abnormal color, a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check notices that this type of moss is usually poisonous if eaten.

Triggering: This trap is triggered when a character steps on a mound of moss.

Effect: Creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or take 5 (1d6 + 2) acid damage and suffer temporary madness. Instead of rolling on the madness table, for the next 10 minutes, the affected creature must attempt to climb a tree until it gets to the highest point and stay there until the effect ends or is removed. If the effect lasts the full 10 minutes, the character falls unconscious for 2 minutes or until woken.

Slime Spray Trap

A plant with pitcher-shaped leaves vomits green slime onto the party.

Detection and Disabling: A **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals that this type of plant isn't native to this part of the world. If a party member exceeds the check by 5 or more, they know this plant is not of this world.

Triggering: This trap is triggered when a character comes within 5 feet of the plant.

Effect: A mucus-like green substance erupts from the plants leaves, creating a 10-foot-radius green, slimy rain. Creatures within this radius must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw. If they fail, they are under the effects of a *heat metal* spell until sufficiently cleaned off using water or magic.

Thorn Spray Trap

The vegetation sprays needle-like thorns at the players.

Detection and Disabling: Characters with a **passive Perception score of 12** or higher gain advantage on the saving throw for this trap. Use DM judgement to allow advantage for other reasons too (i.e. Nature check, or Survival check).

Triggering: This trap is triggered when the DM wishes.

Effect: All creatures make a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw or take 7 (2d6), 14 (4d6), 28 (8d6), or 56 (16d6) piercing damage or half as much damage on a success.

Continuing into the Forest

The further the party gets into the forest, the more alien it should feel. Animals are missing, and the plants seem to breathe in and out. Once the party has dealt with a few of these traps, move on to The Crash Site.

THE CRASH SITE

As the party nears the crash site, read or summarize the following:

As you emerge into an opening in the wood, the sound of crackling fire and the acrid smell of smoke assault your senses. As you adjust to the stimulation, you notice a wall of dirt and trees ahead of you. The wall clearly looks like a crater.

General Features

Terrain. Upturned soil makes for annoyingly soft ground. Every few feet branches and large rocks poke out of the soil.

Weather. The air is dry and chilly but not cold. When characters exhale, they can see their breath.

Light. The stars are shining brightly and the moon is almost full providing dim light to the entire area.

Smells and Sounds. The sound of smoldering fire and the smell of smoke.

Allow the party to approach the crater how they wish. The walls of the crater are ten feet tall and can be climbed without an ability check. Party members may attempt a **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check if they feel inclined. A success on this check reveals that in order for a meteor to make a crater this big, it must have been about the size of a covered wagon.

Dwarves in the party know that most meteors are made out of stariron – a valuable metal known for its pliability and magnetic properties.

Once they reach the top of the crater wall, read or summarize the following:

The crater is about 30-feet-deep, but the depth isn't what you focus on. Where you would initially expect a chunk of rock or stariron, you instead see a massive acorn the size of a house. Smoke pours out from the acorn cap and a black ooze-like substance drips from the cap to the ground.

As the party makes their way into the crater, allow them to make **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** checks. On a success, they notice a thin seam in the side of the acorn that looks like an oblong door. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals this acorn is not from any plant on Toril.

When the party is ready, they can attempt to open the door to the acorn. Doing so requires a **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature)** check. The door can also be forced open with a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** check or attacked. The acorn is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, cold, poison, psychic, and lightning damage but is vulnerable to slashing and fire damage. The door has an AC 15 and 30 hit points.

Once the door is open, read or summarize the following:

On the other side of the door you see numerous root-like structures criss-crossing an open room. In the center of the room is a chair made out of wood. A humanoid figure with bark for skin sits upon the chair with roots attached to its body. The figure appears unconscious.

The creature in the chair is a flornar named Streelock, her craft was damaged by pirates causing her acorn craft to crash. The party does not know about the creature, regardless of ability check results.

With a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check, the party can notice several things:

- The creature in the chair is wielding a shield and a longsword, but they seem to be fused with her body.
- Some of the creature's skin is grey while other spots are brown, with the grey areas appearing dry, cracked, and withered.
- Its body is wood-like.
- A **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that the creature is unconscious, and that part of her shield arm has been impaled with a spike.
- The creature also seems to be dehydrated.

Any magical healing applied to the creature will wake it. A create water spell functions as a heal spell.

When Streelock comes to, she is terrified and swings wildly at the creature who healed her, making an attack with disadvantage. Do not roll initiative for this attack. After swinging, Streelock calms down and begins speaking in Sylvan.

If the party does not have a way to speak or understand Sylvan, Streelock taps her chair in several places and odd-looking roots with bell-like structures descend from the ceiling next to the character's heads. Another descends next to Streelock's head. The creature gestures for the party to hold the cone to their ears. If they do, the party understands what she is saying. Streelock gives the party all the information in the Background section.

If the party asks Streelock about the bizarre changes to the surrounding area, she apologizes profusely. The enchanted fuel flornars use often enhances the capabilities of plant material. She points out that there must be a fuel leak somewhere. If the party mentions what they saw dripping from the acorn, Streelock jumps up and encourages the party to come help her before it is too late. Read or paraphrase the following:

With the quickness of a young elf, Streelock moves to the other side of the craft, revealing a hidden drawer where she pulls out a small bottle filled with seeds. Streelock smashes her sword into pieces on the ground and pours the seeds on the nub of her arm. Within moments, several pod-like structures grow out of Streelock's bark. She looks at you and says, "OK, let's take care of this!" She kicks the door open and hops out of the acorn.

SEALING THE LEAK

Streelock will race to the back of the craft and begin spraying a foam-like substance from her arm in an attempt to seal the fuel leak. As she is working, the forest will come to life, attempting to keep Streelock from being able to fix the ship.

Once Streeclock starts, read or paraphrase the following:

Roots and foliage begin to jerk to life, congealing into humanoid shapes. As the vegetation takes form, Streeclock shouts, "This is going to take a while, keep those beasts off my back!"

Wave Combat

This combat uses waves of creatures. Streeclock needs 8 rounds to complete her repairs. New waves appear on rounds 0,2,4,6, and 8. Use the wave suggestions below. They do not need to be in the order written and you can use the same wave more than once if you wish, but try to vary what you send to keep players on their toes!

Streeclock During Combat

If targeted during the combat, Streeclock fails all skill checks and has disadvantage on saving throws.

APL 3 – AC 18 and 25 hit points

APL 7 – AC 18 and 55 hit points

APL 13 – AC 18 and 115 hit points

APL 18 – AC 18 and 205 hit points

WRAPPING UP

Depending on how the defense of Streeclock goes, this encounter can end in various ways. Here are a few options based on the outcomes:

Streeclock Successfully Patches the Leak

Streeclock dashes into the acorn and activates a weapon that causes the masses of vegetation to lose coherence and collapse to the ground. Streeclock then gifts the party a magical weapon depending on their tier. The weapons are grown from Streeclock's body and then cut off and given to the party. These weapons function like the normal magic weapon except they are made out of wood.

Adjusting Combat

(Additional adjustments should be made for APLs not shown here. Dryad variants use the *Volo's Guide to Monsters* or *Monster Manual* classes in the back of the book.)

These creatures all look like gnarled masses of vegetation. All creatures gain the vulnerability to fire trait and lose any resistance or immunity to fire.

APL 3

2 vegepygmies (CR ¼; VGtM, p 196), **1 vegepygmy chief** (CR 2; VGtM, p 197)

2 thornies (CR 1; VGtM, p 197), **1 vegepygmy chief**
2 vine blights (CR ½; MM, p 32), **3 twig blights** (CR 1/8; MM, p 32)

4 needle blights (CR ¼; MM, p 32), **2 twig blights**
6 dryads (CR 1; MM, p 121)

APL 7:

3 wood woads (CR 5; VGtM, p 198)

2 shambling mounds (CR 5; MM, p 270)

2 dryad archers (CR 3; VGtM, p 210), **2 dryad knights** (CR 3; MM, p 347)

1 corpse flower (CR 8; MToF, p 127)

APL 13:

1 treant (CR 9; MM, p 289), **1 shambling mounds** (CR 5; MM, p 270)

2 dryad champions (CR 9; VGtM, p 212), **1 dryad warpriest** (CR 9; VGtM, p 218)

2 shambling mounds (CR 5; MM, p 270), **2 corpse flowers** (CR 8; MToF, p 127)

1 summer eladrin (CR 10; MToF, p 196), **2 spring eladrin** (CR 10; MToF, p 196)

APL 18:

2 dryad archdruids (CR 12; VGtM, p 210), **2 corpse flowers** (CR 8; MToF, p 127)

2 green abishai (CR 15; MToF, p 162), **1 dryad archmage** (CR 12; MM, p 342)

2 dryad archmage (CR 12; MM, p 342), **2 dryad archdruid** (CR 12; VGtM, p 210)

2 dire trolls (CR 13; MToF, p 243), **1 cadaver collector** (CR 14; MToF, p 122)

Treasure:

Tier 1: Rapier of Warning (DMG, p 213)

Tier 2: Giant Slayer Battleaxe (DMG, p 172)

Tier 3: Greatsword of Speed (DMG, p 199)

Tier 4: Defender Longsword (DMG, p 164)

Streelock Dies While Patching the Leak

Streelock looks at the characters and in her dying words says, *“Take my arm and finish what I started.”* A character can use an action to hack off her arm. The character must use an action and succeed on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival)** check to complete 1 round of patching. Once the seal is patched, the plants collapse to the ground as the source of their animation has dried up.

Streelock Dies and the Players Don’t Patch the Leak

If the characters fail to protect Streelock or patch the leak, they should feel the need to run for their lives. The plants keep coming and in larger waves. You should make it apparent that this grove is lost and the players should retreat.

If using this as part of an ongoing campaign, feel free to create your own vision of what happens to the acorn and the animated plants.

The Party Didn’t Explore the Crash Site and Went to Bed.

If the party isn’t interested in the explosion, they are attacked 2 hours after they go to bed. In this case, run the wave encounter from the “Sealing the Leak” section of the module. The party should figure out that this has something to do with the crash. The party can then go through the woods, deal with the traps, and find Streelock.

WHAT NEXT?

If you wish to follow up on this encounter but aren’t sure what direction to take, here are some possible ideas:

- The Urchin Battleship, piloted by a faction of neogi, descends to the crash

site and creates a base there, taking wild races as slaves.

- More acorn ships descend to the world asking for refuge from a great war on another planet.
- The animated plants begin to cover the region, creating a living section of land.
- A goblin tinkerer finds scraps of the acorn ship and begins making his own flying rigs.
- Animals in the area eat the detritus and begin going mad, attacking anything that moves.
- The party is teleported onto a flornar podship and are asked to be arbiters between the flornar and the neogi.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Being an encounter featuring an alien race, **It Came from Above** could be set in any forest setting with no additional adjustments.

THE GREAT DEVOURER

By Christopher Walz

@DMChristopherW

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes

The Great Devourer is a short combat and exploration adventure designed for five characters of 7th level. Scaling options are provided for lower and higher-level parties.

BACKGROUND

An ancient troll deity called Vaprak, who devours the souls of burnt trolls, is being worshiped at an abandoned and burned husk of a guard tower. **Magda Bonebelcher** has deemed the site The Great Devourer and believes it to be holy to Vaprak, as many trolls were killed in the fire that destroyed the tower long ago. Magda has gathered her fanatic trolls, along with a captured family of gnomes, to perform profane rituals to Vaprak within The Great Devourer.

PLOT HOOK

No specific plot hooks have been created for this encounter. The party may learn about the tower from a local hunter or logger, hear reports of the missing Tizzle family, or stumble upon the tower while exploring the savage wilderness.

Loathsome Limbs Variant

It is recommended you use the loathsome limbs variant found in the troll's *Monster Manual* entry. This is a fantastic rule that provides for a unique and instantly memorable encounter. What could be funnier than a troll chasing after their severed limbs?

APPROACHING THE TOWER

As the party approaches the tower, read or summarize:

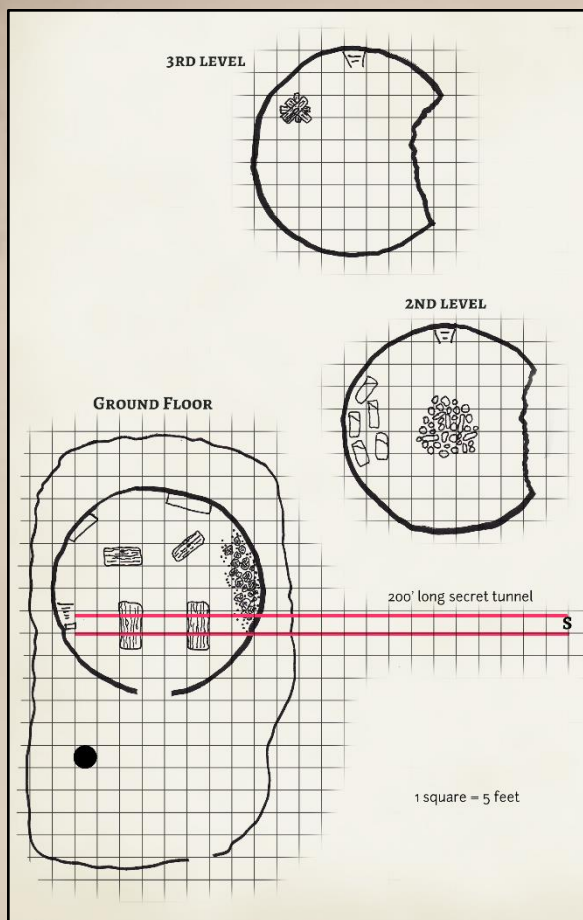
An old stone watchtower looms just over the forest's canopy. Much of the stone is blackened from an ancient fire. Pervasive kudzu vines climb the exterior walls and into a large crumbled hole on the eastern side of the third floor. The rank smell of rotten meat wafts through the air as you approach.

The three-story tower is 60-feet tall and was built nearly a century ago. It is well-constructed and remains mostly intact after the fire. The eastern portion of the top floor has caved in, exposing it to the elements. A 5-foot tall stone wall surrounds the tower, creating a small courtyard.

After observing the tower, characters who succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence (History)** check recall that towers constructed in this style were often built with an underground escape tunnel. Characters who are proficient in mason's tools or have a background connected to architecture or construction have advantage on this ability check.

If the characters watch the tower for at least twenty minutes, they see a total of three **trolls** (CR 5; MM, p 291) moving about the courtyard as well as two more trolls on the third floor.

Characters with a **passive Perception of 16** or higher or who pass a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check hear the gnomish family cry out from the third floor. After twenty minutes, one of the trolls in the courtyard leaves to search for food in the nearby wilderness. She returns after thirty minutes with a large buck.



GENERAL FEATURES

Use these notes to help you bring this encounter to life.

Sights, Smells, and Sounds. The trolls have painted crude images of Vaprak devouring humanoids and trolls alike throughout the tower. The courtyard and tower smell of rotten meat and waste. Periodically, a captured Tizzle cries out in fear.

Walls. The tower walls are made from smooth masonry. They have AC 18 and 60 hit points per 5-foot cube. They have immunity to necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant damage and resistance to cold, fire, lightning, piercing, and slashing damage. They require a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check to climb.

Light. Lighting conditions depend on the time of day you use this encounter. The trolls do not use light sources at night.

THE ESCAPE TUNNEL

The escape tunnel exits 200 feet east of the tower. The cellar door into the tunnel is covered in underbrush, making it difficult to spot.

Characters who search for the tunnel entrance must succeed a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice the door. It is unlocked.

As the party enters, read or summarize:

This long tunnel is barely tall enough to stand in and thinner than a goliath. Root systems from trees and undergrowth hang from the loose dirt ceiling, previously held in place by ancient wooden rafters. An acrid smell burns your nostrils and stings your eyes.

The guards and loggers used this tunnel to escape the tower after setting it on fire. The 5-foot wide, 6-foot tall tunnel winds 200 feet to the east where it ends at a barred door. The bar can be easily lifted from this side.

Black Pudding

As the trolls burned alive, their magical, regenerative blood mingled with the flames and spawned a **black pudding** (CR 4; MM, p 241). The pudding has lived in the tunnel feeding on small animals and one ill-fated adventurer. The pudding has spread out across the ceiling of the tunnel 60 feet from the wilderness exit. Characters with a **passive Perception of 12 or lower** are surprised by the pudding.

The pudding attacks the largest living creature available, hoping to dissolve a sizable meal. If the ooze splits, the smaller oozes spread out to find new targets. It fights to the death and pursues the characters if they flee.

Treasure

An adventurer's partially dissolved remains lie in the tunnel. The pudding has eaten the skeleton's nonmagical gear, but a *short sword*

+1 (DMG, p 213) and a *potion of growth* (DMG, p 187) remain.

Scaling the Combat

APL 5-6: reduce the black pudding's hit points to 65

APL 8-9: two black puddings

THE COURTYARD

As the party enters the courtyard, read or summarize:

A group of trolls is gathered around a discarded hunk of masonry. One has opened up its own stomach, spilling innards across the stone. The brutes seem to be peering into their comrade's entrails, in search of elusive wisdom. In the center of the courtyard is a standing stone painted to resemble a giant troll. The painting is crude and disproportionate, as if a child painted it.

Shrine to Vaprak

The trolls have painted an 8-foot tall stone to look like a hulking troll devouring tiny humanoids. This is a depiction of Vaprak the Destroyer, the giantkin deity trolls believe to be their progenitor. The trolls placed the stone in the center of the courtyard and left offerings at the base.

The characters can recover a large ruby covered in bile worth 250 gp. Magda consumed the ruby after killing a traveling noble and presented it to her god in a uniquely trollish manner. The other offerings are sacks of rotten but rare meats, such as rothe, pixie, and blue-haired gnome.

Grisly Portents

Three **trolls** (CR 5; MM, p 291), or 2 if the party waited for one to leave on a hunting trip, stand around a large boulder in the courtyard. One troll has convinced the others he is a prophet of Vaprak and can read the future in his own entrails. He has clawed open his stomach and spilled his intestines out on the rock. The trolls

all have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and -5 to their passive Perceptions to notice the characters. The false prophet begins combat with 10 fewer hit points but can regenerate them as normal.

The trolls engage heavily armed characters first. If the party shows they have acid or fire magic, the trolls Disengage and retreat inside to warn their comrades. After 3 rounds, Magda and any remaining trolls from the courtyard begin throwing rocks at characters in the courtyard. The trolls have +7 to hit with their rocks and deal 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The trolls have disadvantage on rock attacks made further than 60 feet away.

Deceptive characters can trick the trolls into leaving their post. These trolls fanatically follow Vaprak and can be misled by false signs or portents. They have disadvantage on any ability checks or saving throws to resist following such signs. Characters might use illusion magic or mundane means, such as calling in Giant from the forest, to trick the trolls. If tricked, the trolls leave for 10 minutes before realizing it is a ruse.

Scaling the Combat

APL 5-6: reduce all troll hit points to 55

APL 8-9: increase all troll hit points to 90

GROUND FLOOR

As the party enters the ground floor of the tower, read or summarize:

The singular room on this floor houses burnt tables, chairs, and shelving. At one time, a sturdy stone staircase climbed to the second floor, but it has been lost under a pile of rubble. To the west, a small staircase descends to a squat cellar door.

The door to this area has been ripped off its hinges and thrown aside; an act of rage after Magda was unable to open it.

This floor was used as a common room and dining area for the tower's watchmen. The door

at the bottom of the stairs to the west leads to the escape tunnel but has been barred from the other side. It requires a **DC 20 Strength** check to force open. If the characters force this door open, it alerts any trolls in the courtyard and wakes the troll on the second floor.

Scaling the Walls

The staircase that led to the second floor collapsed during the fire. The trolls use their Large size and immense strength to easily hoist themselves up. If the characters attempt to climb the walls, they must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check. If a character fails, they fall 10 feet and take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

SECOND FLOOR

As the party ascends to the second floor, read or summarize:

Burnt bunks have been shoved against the wall in this room, their footlockers broken and turned upside down in a futile attempt to find something of use. The center of the room is piled high with the half-eaten remains of beasts and humanoids, on top of which rests an obese female troll covered in oozing growths.

This floor was used as living quarters for the watchmen. The floor is unstable from the fire and years of disrepair. As long as there isn't a flurry of action, such as that caused during combat, the floor will hold. Characters who have a **passive Perception of 14** or higher or succeed a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check spot the tell-tale signs of the decrepit floor. Characters who are proficient in carpenter or mason's tools or who have a background related to architecture or construction have advantage (+5 to passive Perception) on this ability check.

Treasure

If the characters search through the humanoid remains in this room, they find a gold wedding band set with a diamond worth 300 gp.

Sleeping Troll

The sleeping troll is a **venom troll** (CR 7; MTof, p 245). If you do not have access to *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*, use a **troll** (CR 5; MM, p 291) with the following changes:

- **Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 98
- **Poisonous.** The troll's bite and claw attacks deal an additional 4 (1d8) poison damage.

This horribly obese troll is the oldest member of the tribe and is known to eat anything in her path. She recently wandered into a cave infested with giant spiders that nearly got the best of her. Her regeneration saved her, but her body still courses with spider venom.

The troll is sleeping soundly after gorging herself. She can, however, still smell the characters with her keen scent. If the troll succeeds on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** check, made with advantage due to her Keen Scent trait, she smells the characters and wakes up. If she fails, she remains unconscious and unaware of the characters. Any loud noise, such as combat, falling down, or other overt actions immediately wakes the troll.

If the troll was woken up either by the trolls in the courtyard or the characters, she Readies an action to Attack the first character she sees. The troll prefers soft targets in light or no armor, hoping for an easy meal. She fights to the death and pursues the characters if they flee.

If combat breaks out, Magda and the fire-scarred troll begin to prepare for the characters. Magda casts aid as a 3rd-level spell on herself and the fire-scarred troll and sets her club on fire. She then releases the fire-scarred troll, who jumps down the ladder to the second floor. He attacks using his Reckless trait, targeting the closest available target at all times. Magda climbs down the exterior wall of the tower to flank the characters from below.

She arrives in 3 rounds and harasses the characters with sacred flame and her spiritual weapon.

Scaling the Combat

APL 5-6: the troll attacks with disadvantage on all attacks due to having gorged itself

APL 8-9: the floor collapses on a roll of 1-2. Increase the saving throw to DC 16.

Unstable Floor

If combat occurs on this floor, roll a d6 at the start of every round. On a result of 1, the floor collapses. Any creature standing on the floor must succeed a **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw or fall to the ground floor, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from collapsing debris and be knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half damage and is not knocked prone.

THIRD FLOOR

As the party ascends to the third floor, read or summarize:

Ancient weapons rusted well beyond usefulness still hang from pegs along the walls. A huge female troll, well-muscled under protective layers of fat, is stoking the flames of a bonfire. A third arm grows from her chest, holding a length of chain keeping a crazed troll at bay. Along the eastern wall you see a bound and gagged family of six helpless gnomes.

This floor housed the watchmen's arms and armor and served as the primary lookout post. The collapsed wall on the eastern side has left a large 15-foot hole in the building. Magda has prepared a small bonfire on this floor, meant to roast the Tizzles.

The Tizzles

A family of six gnomes (NG **commoners**; MM, p 345) were captured from a small village a day's journey from the tower. Trolls love gnomish flesh and plan to have a contest to see which troll can eat their gnome the quickest. They

have been hogtied and placed near the collapsed wall.

The Tizzles are all conscious but restrained and frightened of the trolls. Their bindings can be easily cut or untied using an action. If saved, they thank the characters profusely and promise to reward them if brought back to their home.

Treasure

The family's mother, Winny, is an accomplished alchemist and rewards the characters with an *alchemy jug*, 5 *potions of healing*, and a *potion of diminution* if led safely home.

Vaparak's Chosen

Magda Bonebelcher (CR 7; see below) leads her greatest warrior, a troll called Neckbiter, around on a short length of chain. He is a **fire-scarred troll** (CR 6; see below). The crazed troll survived being set on fire by a young adventuring party. Horrible burn scars cover the troll's body, which will never fully regenerate. He has gone completely insane and lashes out at any non-troll. Magda believes he has been blessed by Vaparak, who devours a troll's soul when they are killed by acid or fire.

If the characters possess acid or fire magic, Magda casts protection from energy on herself and engages in melee combat with her crazed ally, targeting the most physically imposing character first. If the party does not use acid or fire magic, she casts spirit guardians. She attacks using her bite, claw, and club, which she ignites using the bonfire.

The fire-scarred troll always attacks the nearest non-troll creature using his Reckless trait, including the bound gnomes. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, he rushes the character who dealt the damage and attacks them, even if the movement would draw opportunity attacks.

The trolls fight to the death defending their holy site and pursue the characters if they flee.

Treasure

Magda wears a necklace laced with charms she has taken from adventurers. One such charm is a rotting finger that still wears a *ring of protection*, an item she never knew had magic properties.

Scaling the Combat

APL 5-6: reduce Magda's hit points to 90 and the fire-scarred troll's to 65.

APL 8-9: add one troll.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

The Great Devourer has a compelling title for Eberron, as The Devourer is a god which represents the raw destructive power of nature. However, while evocative, The Devourer in context makes little sense in this encounter. It makes sense for Eberron trolls to worship The Fury, another of the Dark Six (and incidentally sired by The Devourer). Trolls exist everywhere in Eberron, one of the few races which are native to each continent. On Khorvaire, trolls have mostly retreated to Droaam, though it's perfectly reasonable for some to have failed to heed that call, instead continuing to wander wilderness areas. This encounter could happen anywhere civilization begins to encroach on forested wilderness. This encounter is best kept in Breland, relatively near Sharn. Look for Sharn in the far southeast. Droaam is just to the north and west, and there is a nice spot to drop this encounter in the eaves of the Skyraker Forest on the border with Droaam. That's an easy day trip via skyship from Sharn, if the heroes aren't already on the way to the Droaam border on some other errand.



MAGDA BONEBELCHER

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Wis +6

Skills Religion +1, Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Third Arm. Magda's regeneration has gifted her a fully functional third arm. This allows her to wield her club and shield while still casting spells that require a somatic component.

Spellcasting. Magda is a 6th-level spellcaster (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Magda has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

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

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

3rd level (3 slots): *protection from energy, spirit guardians*

Actions

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its claw, and one with its flaming club.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack. +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack. +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Flaming Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

FIRE-SCARRED TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +8

Skills Perception +1

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Giant

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the troll can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws or one with its bite and four with its claws if it has fewer than half of its hit points remaining.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack. +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack. +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

FEY ON THE WAY

By Christopher Walz

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Estimated run-time: 30 to 60 minutes

Fey on the Way is a roleplaying encounter for characters of any level. If you are looking to introduce a fey ally or present a planar portal to the Feywild, consider using this encounter. Lady Adyra makes for a great recurrent NPC who can offer adventure hooks, advice, or magical aid.

The encounter does not rely on ability checks or other game mechanics to reach a conclusion. However, Lady Adyra is presented in enough detail for you to accurately portray her. Ultimately, it is your choice how she reacts - not the roll of the dice!

BACKGROUND

Lady Adyra is a powerful fey spirit known as The Breath of the Wood. She exists freely on both the Prime Material Plane and Feywild and has been called the queen of the forest for millenia. Stories about Lady Adyra are common, but few depict her in the same way, as she is always changing, like an itinerant breeze.

She is mystically tied to whatever wilderness you decide to set her. If the forest were to die, so would she. Likewise, as the wilderness grows stronger and more vibrant, so does her power. She cannot leave the forest, but she has many allies that do her bidding away from the forest's protective canopy.

PLOT HOOKS

Lady Adyra is aware of everything happening within her forest and can simply appear before the characters whenever she wishes. She is most likely to do this if the characters have worked on behalf of a nature-loving faction, such as a group of druids, rangers, or a local baron who wants to preserve the area. She is not likely to ally with a group that has willfully destroyed sections of the forest or supported

factions that openly oppose the natural order. She might even offer aid if the characters are in a particularly tough combat encounter, speaking with them after the fight is resolved.

Alternatively, Old Remy (NG human **scout**, CR ½; MM, p 349), a drunk, out-of-work game warden, tells tall-tales of a beautiful nymph that has appeared to him while napping in a favorite meadow. No one believes the drunkard, but he swears the lady has led him home many times. If the characters listen to his tales, he will gladly take them to the meadow. If the characters are of good heart, Lady Adyra approaches them. Old Remy can be found in *The Frisky Lumberjack* or any other nearby tavern.

THE LADY APPEARS

When you are ready to introduce Lady Adyra, read or summarize:

A beautiful woman with sharp elven features stands before you, wearing a simple roughspun robe and carrying an oaken staff. Her face is unmarred like a young lady's, but her eyes hold wisdom far beyond her apparent age. Her voice seems to be carried by the breeze, soft like birdsong but unquestionably commanding.

If the characters are not openly hostile to Adyra, she happily speaks with them. If they draw weapons or ready offensive magic to use against her, she attempts to diffuse the situation with diplomacy. See *A Fickle Spirit*, below, for more information on how to roleplay Lady Adyra. If the characters persist, she retreats using either *plane shift* or *tree stride*. See *Angering the Lady*, below, for more information.

A FICKLE SPIRIT

The fey are well known for their capricious natures; Lady Adyra exhibits this perfectly. Similar to the elven Eladrin, Lady Adyra is closely tied to seasonal changes and the effects they have on emotional states. She cannot, however, willfully change the season she

embodies and must stay within a seasonal state until its natural end. See the table below for information on how to roleplay Lady Adyra depending on the season in which she is encountered.

For information on Personality Traits, Ideals, Bonds, and Flaws see Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook*. Goals represent Lady Adyra's driving motivations (beyond protecting her forest, which is always her primary goal). Troubles represent things that plague the Lady's mind. These should be used as tension points when interacting with the characters.

SERVING THE LADY

After conversing with the characters, Lady Adyra will offer to ally with the characters if they have not angered her. They must swear to protect this forest and the natural order as a whole. While she does not have access to lie detecting magic, Lady Adyra is very wise and will be able to sense a lie from all but the most skilled conperson. If the characters attempt to use the Lady's good faith for their own purposes, she will become angered and retreat from the conversation. See *Angering the Lady*, below, for more information.

Circles, Domains, Oaths, and Pacts

If a character is considering multiclassing into a nature-themed class or subclass, or they have not yet chosen a subclass for such a class, Lady Adyra presents a fantastic opportunity for you to roleplay this aspect of character customization. Lady Adyra is a powerful druid and can teach the old ways of natural magic to her allies. Likewise, she follows deities who fall under the Nature cleric domain and will oversee a valiant paladin's Oath of the Ancients. Finally, she can lead the character down the path to contact an Archfey in hopes of establishing a warlock's pact.

If a character already follows such a path, consider this in Adyra's interactions with the party. If you choose to use ability checks for this encounter, these characters might have **advantage** on Charisma checks against Lady Adyra.

Some tasks Lady Adyra may have for the characters include: convince a logging camp to relocate, help injured beasts, cleanse the forest of evil fey, or protect the forest from evil creatures, such as goblinoids, orcs, or evil giants.

FEYWISE GIFTS

Lady Adyra has access to many items, abilities, and information that will prove useful to adventurers. Here is a list of some rewards you may offer for this or future interactions with Lady Adyra. If you use her as a source of adventure hooks, these could represent rewards for quests.

1. The location and operation of a planar portal to the Feywild
2. A secret concerning a local lord that happened in the forest
3. A loyal beast companion of CR 1/2 or lower
4. 1d6 Tiny awakened beasts to serve as messengers, spies, or personal assistants for 1 week.
5. A safe place to rest and recover within the forest
6. Druidic spellcasting up to 6th level
7. A charm that allows the wearer to speak with animals (as per the spell *speak with animals*) for 1 week
8. 2d6 *potions of healing*
9. *Bracers of archery*
10. *Boots of elvenkind*
11. *Cloak of elvenkind*
12. *Keoghtom's ointment*
13. *Philter of love*
14. *Potion of animal friendship*
15. *Potion of growth*
16. *Quiver of Ehlonna*
17. 2d12 *arrows +1*
18. *Weapon +1* (club, longbow, quarterstaff, scimitar, shortbow, sling, and spear only)
19. *Ring of animal influence*
20. *Staff of the woodlands*

ANGERING THE LADY

If the characters attack or otherwise anger Lady Adyra, she will become hostile toward them. She may give the characters a second chance, depending on her seasonal alignment (see A Fickle Spirit, above). If this happens, her wilderness realm should become immediately hostile for the characters. If they have been given any gifts, their magic may cease to work or even become cursed.

The Lady has a number of close allies at her disposal. If angered, she will send these creatures and NPCs against the characters.

Reynald the Stagheart

Reynald is a ranger fiercely dedicated to Lady Adyra. As an infant, he was left to die from exposure by his parents during the Spring before the Lady found him. She raised him as her own, teaching him the old ways of the forest. Reynald acts as the Lady's eyes, ears, and hands outside of the forest. His loyal companion, Summerbreeze (female **dire wolf**, CR 1; MM, p 321), is rarely far from his side. Reynald's stat block is presented below.

Fey Servants

Lesser fey act as the Lady's servants and companions. While within the forest, she is able to call upon:

12 **pixies** (CR ¼; MM, p 253),
12 **sprites** (CR ¼; MM, p 283),
5 **blink dogs** (CR ¼; MM, p 318),
2 **dryads** (CR 1; MM, p 121), and
1 **satyr** (CR ½; MM, p 267)

Rallying these forces takes at least 2 hours. These fey are fiercely loyal to the Lady and follow her commands.

Wilderness Beasts

Lady Adyra has some degree of control over the forest's natural beast population. Refer to Appendix A: Miscellaneous Creatures in the *Monster Manual* for a list of appropriate beasts. A pack of Lady Adyra's beasts may be led by an

awakened (as per the druid spell *awaken*) leader.

EBERRON PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Fey on the Way requires no mechanical transition to Eberron, except that instead of referring to "the Feywild" you should refer to "Thelanis," which has distinctly Eberron characteristics. In game terms, the two are interchangeable, but if your party is adventuring in Eberron, it's crucial to keep flavor consistent.

Alternately, the encounter can be placed in the deeps of any wild forest on Eberron. As the encounter assumes a wild, ancient forest untrodden by the feet of mortals, it makes more sense to put it on Xen'drik before a forest in one of the Five Nations, because most of those forests are arguably too civilized to suit Lady Adyra. Xen'drik is untamed, uncharted, wild, and chock-a-block with powerful and ancient magic, perfect fuel for that arch-fey.

Lady Adyra's Changing Personality

	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER	WINTER
PERSONALITY TRAITS	I give more than I take. I am prone to reminiscing about the past.	I am full of energy. My interests are as fickle as a child's.	I display my strength whenever possible. When annoyed, I lash out in anger.	I carefully consider the long-term effects of a decision. I am prone to melancholy.
IDEAL	Change. Life is constantly changing. We must embrace that, even if it means death.	Aspiration. I will be even better this year.	Power. In order to protect the land, I must become stronger.	Tradition. The old ways have been forgotten, but I will fight for them.
BOND	I must prepare the land for dark days.	I must teach and nurture the land.	Every life under these trees are my children. I will protect them as a queen to her people.	I must complete my duty, no matter how grim it becomes.
FLAW	I believe my past accomplishments were too few.	I sometimes fail to see the bigger picture.	I am easily annoyed and often make rash decisions.	I care little for individual lives.
GOALS	To ensure the forest survives the winter.	To learn as much as I can.	To destroy those who would harm the forest.	To create a new, stronger forest.
TROUBLES	The land is already diminished. How much must we lose this year?	Life is precious and fragile. Can it ever truly be safe? Is the outside world dangerous?	Our enemies are numerous and growing. How can we win the next battle?	My children have become weak from a life of leisure. Should I still champion them?

LADY ADYRA

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 97 (15d8+30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saves Cha +8, Wis +9

Skills Arcana +7, Insight +9, Nature +11,

Perception +11, Persuasion +8, Survival +9

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 21

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Primordial, Sylvan, can speak with all animals

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting: Lady Adyra's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). Lady Adyra can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect good and evil*, *detect magic*, *druidcraft*, *tree stride* (within forest only)

1/day: *plane shift* (self only to Feywild), *scrying* (within the forest only)

Spellcasting. Lady Adyra is an 11th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Lady Adyra has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *produce flame*, *resistance*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *beast bond*, *charm person*, *cure wounds*, *goodberry*, *entangle*

2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *moonbeam*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals*, *dispel magic*

4th level (3 slots): *conjure woodland beings*, *polymorph*

5th level (2 slots): *awaken*, *insect plague*

6th level (1 slot): *conjure fey*

Magic Resistance. Lady Adyra has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Otherworldly Beauty. Lady Adyra's supernatural beauty makes attacking her difficult. Creatures attacking her must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on their attack.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (+9 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage or 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage if using two hands or 9 (1d8+5) magical bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

REYNALD THE STAGHEART

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, dual wielding)

Hit Points 76 (9d10+27)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saves Str +4, Dex +7

Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +4, Nature +3, Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Senses passive perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish, Goblin, Orcish, Sylvan

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Reynald is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Reynald has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *ensnaring strike*, *hunter's mark*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision*, *pass without trace*

3rd level (2 slots): *conjure animals*

Dual Wielder. When Reynald uses his multiattack action to make melee attacks, he may use a bonus action to make one additional attack. Additionally, when wielding two melee weapons Reynald adds 1 to his Armor Class (shown above).

Favored Enemies. Reynald has special training against goblinoids, orcs, and the undead. He has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track his favored enemies as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Magical Scimitars. Reynald's melee weapon attacks are magical.

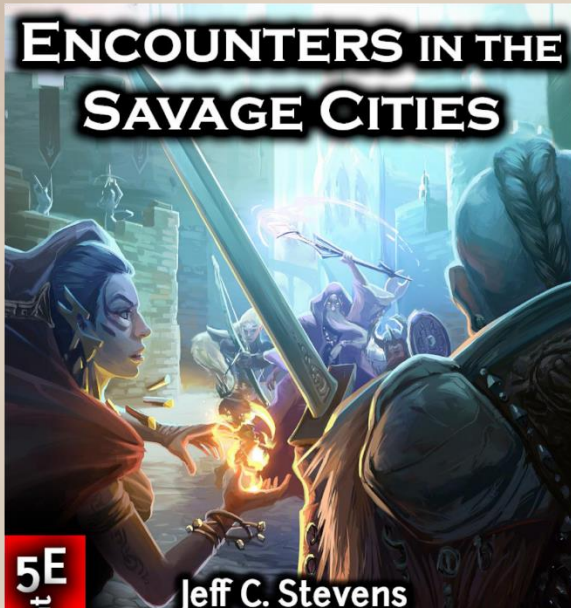
Actions

Multiattack. Reynald makes two melee or ranged attacks.

Scimitar +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

LOOKING FOR MORE ADVENTURE?

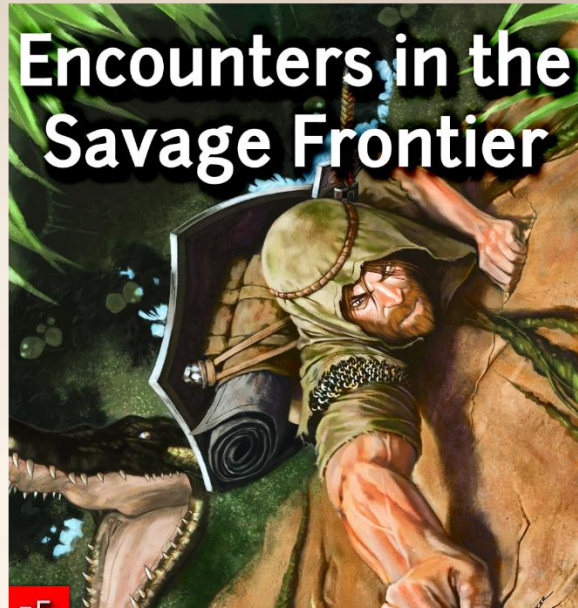



ENCOUNTERS IN THE SAVAGE CITIES

5E
Supplement

Jeff C. Stevens


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SAVAGE ENCOUNTERS THE MINES OF CHULT

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