



# ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

## LEGACY AND VIRTUE

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A 2-hour to 4-hour Border Kingdoms adventure  
for characters of 1st - 4th level



# LEGACY & VIRTUE

The lands of Hawkgarth have long been known as "the Wood of Many Monsters". It is rumored that an archmage of some ancient kingdom busied himself with the creation of new and terrible beasts in this place, and champions from all over Faerun would come to test their mettle. A blood-red beast terrorizes the villages at night, and the normally stoic residents are quick to recruit able-bodied heroes. Too bad you're not their first choice!

*A Two-Hour to Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 1 Characters*



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**Forest image** *The Forest Clearing*, by Ivan Shiskin (1896), public domain from Wikimedia Commons

## A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT ENCOUNTER SCALING

*Legacy & Virtue* is optimized for a party of five characters. When running an adventure at a large convention such as Gamehole, it is common to have seven players at a table, which has the potential to affect encounter balance. The “Adjusting the Encounter” sidebars within the adventure are developed for an average party, but just like real life, one size doesn’t necessarily fit all.

Players have a tendency to bring their best and brightest to shows like Gamehole, and a group of seven optimized characters can easily overpower the recommended party strength you determine at the adventure’s start. As a DM, you can—and should—adjust each encounter’s difficulty to present a challenge for your players.

If the characters are overcoming combats too easily, increase the recommended strength level of the encounters by a step (from **average** to **strong**, for example). If needed, you can also increase the number of monsters or maximize their hit points to make things a little harder. In some cases, you may even need to increase the difficulty by two steps, just be careful not to make things unwinnable.

Remember, adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure’s spirit!

# the border kingdoms



# ADVENTURE PRIMER

This section provides the adventure's background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your players' characters to the action.

## BACKGROUND

The village of **AMBREES** in the kingdom of **HAWKGARTH** is the closest point of civilization to the land known as "The Wood of Many Monsters". The forests of Hawkgarth are rumored to contain monstrous creations that aren't found elsewhere in the Forgotten Realms; whether this is fact, fiction, or myth is up for debate. However, it's known that this place – the **BORDER KINGDOMS**, as Hawkgarth and its neighbors are known – has been a place of open conflict and strong-willed citizens for hundreds of years.

Adventurers sometimes come here to make a name for themselves in the woodlands but more often than not leave empty-handed and disappointed. Unfortunately, it appears that times have changed and a **BLOOD RED BEAST** has recently attacked a group of people on the road, leaving only one survivor.

Arriving in the Laughing Unicorn Tavern, tales of monsters attacks from history and current times come to the characters. They are regaled with both the fantastic and the somber, but a retired ranger named **ERIN WHICKSEY** may have more insight than even she realizes.

## EPISODES

The adventure typically takes place over one to three episodes that take approximately two to four hours to play. These episodes are initially introduced by a Call to Action encounter.

If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the Call to Action each time you play.

- **Core Episode: Owlbear Lair.** Erin helps the characters find the owlbear lair, and contained inside are more surprises than just a very angry beast.

## BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure contains bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so – earning additional advancement and treasure checkpoints in the process.

- **Bonus Objective A: Rescue or Recover the Talduth Vale Adventurers.** The adventurers from the Talduth Vale entered the owlbear lair some time ago. Rescuing or recovering them would certainly build the heroic legend that the characters are seeking to build!
- **Bonus Objective B: Deal with the Undead.** An ancient keep lies deep within the owlbear lair. Undisturbed for centuries, the restless dead are locked inside those chambers.

The meat of the adventure is essentially a dungeon crawl with one primary objective and two secondary objectives: deal with the owlbear (primary), rescue or recover the group from the Talduth Vale (bonus), and deal with the undead (bonus).

## EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, and play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

### HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately two hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

**Main Story Objective Only.** To complete the adventure's main objective, the characters participate in Episodes 1 (Call to Arms) through 3 (Wrap Up) in order, however, you may include the opportunity to pursue bonus objectives.

**Bonus Objectives.** You can extend this adventure by as much as two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives. These objectives branch off the core episode, but their order is fluid.

## CALL TO ACTION

**Estimated Duration:** 15 minutes

This adventure begins at midday with the characters present in the village of Ambrees, near Hawkgarth's eastern border. They are in the Laughing Unicorn Tavern; it is the only business in the village that caters to adventuring folk. The Border Kingdoms are populated by reserved, willful, and strong peoples of many races and some may be superficially friendly, though there's always a good chance that a charlatan or brigand is not far off – and perhaps even within arm's reach!

Allow the characters a few moments to introduce themselves and determine why they're staying at the Laughing Unicorn Tavern, and then read or paraphrase the following points about recent events:

- The region of Hawkgarth is sometimes known as "The Wood of Many Monsters", and there are always rumors of some huge mythical or fantastic creature wandering the forests and roads, ready to prey on the residents of the area.
- Enterprising youths in the area and adventurers from foreign lands sometimes come here to make a name for themselves by hunting prey in the forests.
- A tenday ago, a dozen or so travelers on the trade road were torn asunder by something huge and mean. Nobody can clearly recall the last time that something like this happened, though some tell tales along the lines of "this one time, my great-uncle and his dog saw..." The carnage of the attacks was so great that nobody's certain exactly how many people have been killed so far. Only Erin Whicksey survived this event.
- A group of champions from the Talduth Vale – the next region to the east – were hired to lure out the beast, destroy it, and bring back proof of the deed. However, they haven't been heard from for three days; they are now assumed to be dead.

If the characters wish to speak with the residents about the inn or the village, they find that most people are tight-lipped with outsiders. Anyone that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check can determine that they simply need to earn the trust of the people, which can be done by acting upon the above points.

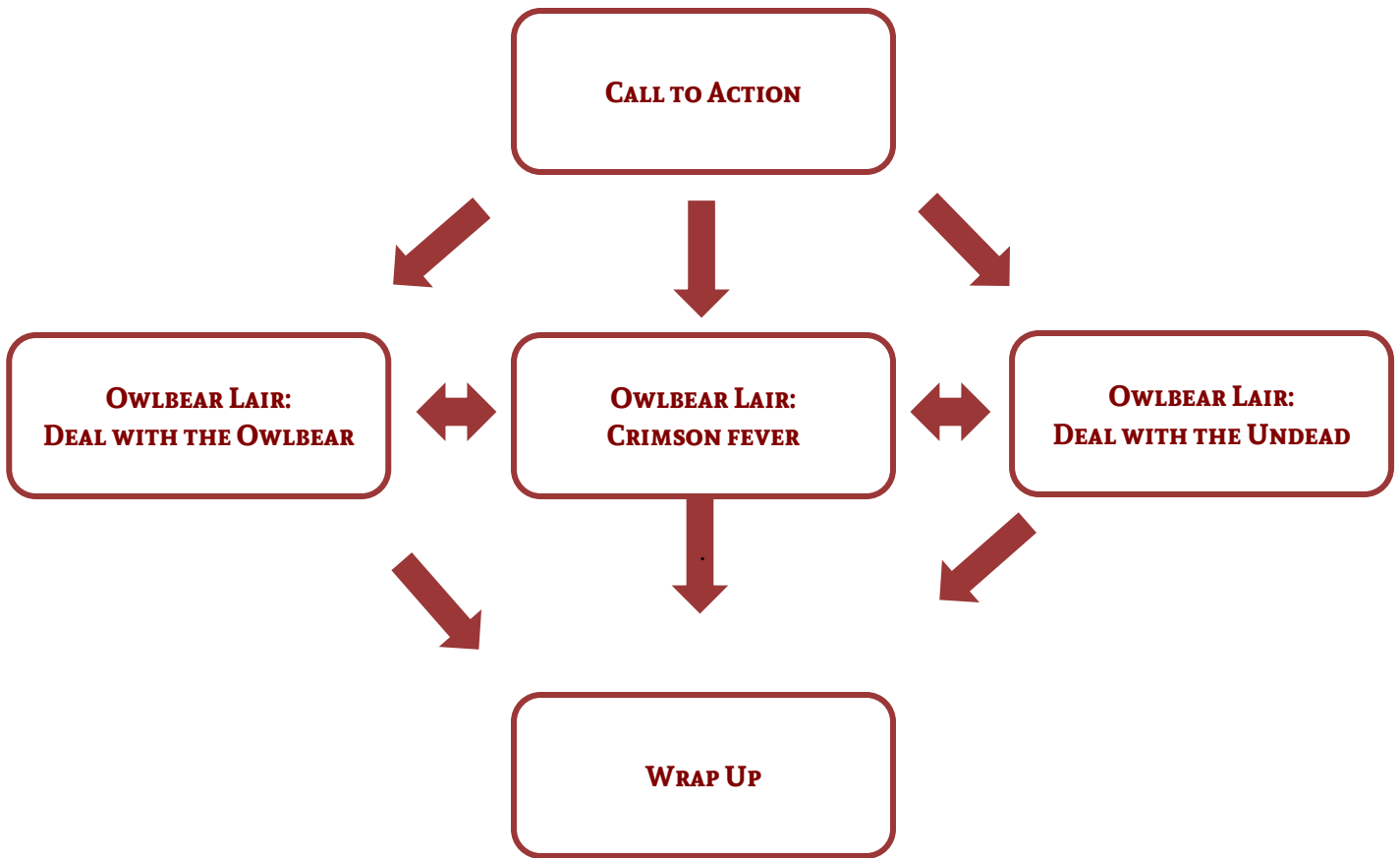
After the characters have had some time to interact with the other patrons of the Laughing Unicorn Tavern, they find that Erin Whicksey is here in the tavern. She approaches them with an armload of mugs filled with wheatwine, a sweet alcohol local to Ambrees. Read or paraphrase the following:

- She survived the attack simply because the owlbear ignored her. She does not know why, but believes that it might be related to her excessive drunkenness when the attack happened. "Alcohol's a poison, you know; even the basest of beasts knows it. I think it assumed that I was the weakest of the bunch and not a threat."
- She explains that she was a ranger when she was younger and says that she believes that the creature was either provoked or is suffering from an ailment – attacks against humans aren't common. "Something about that beast just ain't right. I know it. Shame."
- She describes the creature as "blood red and with a hoot that would crack your ears open" and "possessing knife-like claws on its paws, and a pair of horrible yellow teeth". A character that succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check can deduce that although she was drunk when it happened, she probably saw a large owlbear – and that the 'teeth' were just the top and bottom parts of the creature's beak.
- "Those kids from Talduth Vale deserve better. They're just trying to make a name. I heard that one of them – Anders Tharion – is actually something of a noble."
- She describes the party from Talduth Vale as "Anders, the lithe idiot of the bunch. His diminutive friend Thimple, the gnome bard. He's a sour fellow. And the twins Arrathys and Nayima, those girls; so angry. But they were well-muscled, that's for sure. I bet they gave a good fight before being devoured."
- The young adventurers from Talduth Vale were not properly equipped. They boasted of their prowess but had no obvious experience to back it up.

Erin describes the location of the attack as being about a 30-minute trek from the tavern, and how the beast seemingly erupted from the ground. She shudders at the recollection, downs the rest of her drink, and excuses herself.

# EPISODE FLOWCHART

This section should provide you, the DM, with a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



## CORE EPISODE: OWLBEAR LAIR

**Estimated Duration:** 2 hours

### THE DARK HOLDS MANY SURPRISES

The owlbear lair is, at first, a direct investigation. The further that the characters progress, the more they might discover – from owlbear young to trapped undead to a forgotten, destroyed keep.

#### PREREQUISITES

The characters must have talked to Erin in the Laughing Unicorn Tavern and gotten the location of the attack from her. A basic search of the area reveals owlbear tracks as well as the tracks of the party from Talduth Vale. They all lead to a roughly-dug burrow in the earth.

#### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The characters enter the lair by way of the burrow; this is marked by the grey circle on the map in chamber 1. The lair is large and offers several side chambers. The southern portion of the lair is comprised of decrepit rooms from a long-lost keep, but unfortunately the earth has swallowed it up and it cannot be explored further at this time.

**Lighting.** Bright light extends 10 feet into the den from the entrance, and dim light extends 20 feet beyond that. After that point the complex is consumed by darkness except where specifically noted.

#### TRAPS & PUZZLES

If any loud sound effects such as the owlbear's hoot or the *thunderwave* spell are used, loose earth from the ceiling of the cavern begins to fall. This causes 3 (1d6) points of bludgeoning damage to a random creature in that chamber and increases by 3 (1d6) every successive time this occurs while the characters are still in the lair. A successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check negates half of the damage.

If three loud effects are used in a single chamber, there is a cave-in in that space. The entire chamber is treated as difficult terrain and any creature present when the cave-in is triggered must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) points of bludgeoning damage and be pinned to the floor by rubble. If a creature fails this saving throw by 5 or more, they must also succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious by the falling rubble; that character is considered buried and begins to suffocate immediately.

#### OBJECTIVES

Each space in the lair has things to interact with and investigate. The characters know of their primary objective already, and anything further would simply cement their status as heroic adventurers and provide them with an excellent start to their careers:

They must deal with the threat of the owlbear. As this is its lair, they already know that it will have some advantages.

They should attempt to discover the status and whereabouts of the group from Talduth Vale.

#### BONUS OBJECTIVE: DEAL WITH THE UNDEAD

The undead will not leave the worked stone of the ruined keep. If the characters inspect those stones, they find faint lingering evidence of abjuration and conjuration runes. This counts for one-third of this bonus objective.

## Playing the Pillars

#### COMBAT

If the owlbear sees any of the characters within 15 feet of her cubs, she enrages and fights to the death. If the characters have already fed her, she is agitated and growls a warning first but won't pursue them if they leave.

#### EXPLORATION

The characters may stealth through the lair, and in so doing discover the ruined keep, the fragile ceiling, and Anders – all without riling the owlbear.

#### SOCIAL

Resourceful characters may attempt to calm the owlbear through magic or copious amounts of food (20 pounds of fresh meat or 10 days of rations). The cubs require half of this amount.

## CREATURES/NPCs

The main part of the lair contains the **owlbear**, two **owlbear cubs**, and **Anders Tharion** (currently at 0 hit points and both legs broken).

If the characters explore the area thoroughly, they find some undead as well as the source of the crimson fever infection.

### Objectives/Goals

The **owlbear** is afflicted with crimson fever and fights to the death if alarmed or challenged. While in her lair, she gives intruders a single growl of warning before attacking. She is missing large patches of feathers and her skin is crimson and flaky, appearing almost demon-like due to being afflicted with crimson fever.

The **owlbear cubs** are only a tenday old and cannot hunt on their own. As wild creatures, they are unsuitable as animal companions and cannot be trained. They are easily agitated and very noisy. They are in the early stages of crimson fever but may recover with fresh air and untainted food and water.

### WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

According to Erin, the beast is agitated. It may be susceptible to strong smells (she was drunk when it attacked her group) or it's possible that it's hungry or sick.

The characters also know that another group of adventurers was sent after the beast, and there is a slim chance that one or more of them may be alive.

### WHERE IS THE OWLBEAR?

As the characters investigate the area, the owlbear also moves about. There are four owlbear cubs in the lair (two in each of the chambers marked '4'), and the owlbear prefers to spend time there. It cannot open any closed doors, and even if the door to chamber 9 is open it will not enter (see that chamber's description).

When the characters first arrive, the owlbear is in chamber 7, toying with one of the corpses. For every five minutes that the characters spend in the lair, the owlbear moves two chambers in a random direction. If it makes its way to the chambers with the cubs, it will stay there for one hour before moving on. Should it find its way into the same chamber that the characters occupy, it will not immediately consider a character that has drunk any amount of wheatwine in the last hour to be a threat, as the alcohol masks their scent and confuses the sick owlbear's senses.

Use this as an opportunity to build suspense by describing the faint hooting noises, the deep claw marks in the walls, the smells of wet earth and rotting vegetation, and so on.

### TIMING AND EXPLORATION

Allow the characters as much time as they need to explore the environment but advise them to stay on-task. They don't know it, but Anders Tharion (see chamber 3) will succumb to his wounds and die 30 minutes after the characters enter the lair. If he is revived, he can share any of the information in his NPC description in the appendix, but he is not a capable combatant and may actually be a detriment to the party as they explore the environment.





## 1. ENTRANCE CHAMBER

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The gray circle on the map indicates the burrow entrance some twenty feet above. The chamber's ceiling is approximately ten feet here, so ropes and climbing gear should be used unless the characters are particularly creative.

The chamber itself is littered with stones, broken roots, and discarded half-eaten limbs of several different woodland creatures. The smell throughout the entire cavern system is earthy, wet, and has hints of rotting meat.

Owlbear tracks and droppings are easy to follow. Quiet hoots and snuffles can be heard to the east and louder grunts and hoots can be heard to the south.

## 2. SANDY PIT

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The floor here is very loose due to copious amounts of sand being present in the roughly bowl-shaped chamber. The entire floor is considered difficult terrain. Small stalactites hang down from the ceiling, built of mineral deposits being filtered through the groundwater pockets above the ceiling.

Any amount of investigation here shows that the owlbear uses this chamber as a place to dispose of most of its droppings by burying them beneath the sand.

## 3. PLAY SPACE

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** These chambers are only about seven feet tall and the floor is littered with bones from all manner of creatures, broken owlbear eggshells, and droppings and other bits of viscera.

### CREATURES/NPCs

**Anders Tharion** is near the center of the room. He is unconscious and has 0 hit points. The owlbear has brought him here to get her young to learn to hunt, but they have no interest in leaving their respective chambers (see the description of chamber 4).

Without healing, he dies 30 minutes after the characters enter the owlbear lair.

If he is brought back to consciousness, he can share any of the information in the NPC appendix about himself or his erstwhile companions. Even after healing, he is unable to move on his own due to his injuries – he's not an adventurer. He has no combat training and makes all attacks with disadvantage (his Strength and Dexterity modifiers are -2 due to his injuries).

### BONUS OBJECTIVE: RESCUE OR RECOVER THE TALDUTH VALE ADVENTURERS

The group from the Talduth Vale originally had four members. **Anders** is one, but the gnome and the human sisters remain.

## 4. WARRENS

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** These chambers are only about seven feet tall, and the floor is littered with bones from all manner of creatures, broken owlbear eggshells, and droppings and other bits of viscera.

### CREATURES/NPCs

One **owlbear cub** is in each of these chambers and they are about a tenday old. They are savage and untamable due to the early stages of crimson fever coursing through their systems. Although they do not leave their specific warren chamber, they break into excited hoots and howls if they see another living creature. Nearly everything becomes either food or a chew toy to them. The cubs are not a threat in combat and can be easily defeated if engaged.

## 5. BOTTLENECK

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** This narrow passageway is highly unstable. If two loud effects are used here the passageway will crumble as the sandy walls will release the stones and earth behind them. On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check, the characters can determine that any cave in here would seal off the chambers beyond.

## 6. MUDDY CHAMBER

### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The floor is covered in sucking mud. Any creature that stops or ends their turn more than ten feet away from the walls in this chamber must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check or be restrained as their feet become sucked into the muck. Huge owlbear tracks can be seen crisscrossing the area, though they don't appear to cross into chamber 8 for some reason. A series of thin crimson roots can be seen coming out of the stone from chamber 8 and reaching into this place.

## 7. DISPOSAL

### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The remains of unwanted meals lie scattered all over the ground here. Some are humanoid but most are woodland creatures of various types, including deer and giant spiders. Curiously, the mostly decayed corpse of a much larger owlbear can be spied laying along the western wall.

### CREATURES/NPC'S

The corpse is an **owlbear zombie** because of the crimson fever's after-dead effect. It shuffles to its feet with a loud hoot if the characters spend more than two rounds in this chamber.

### TREASURE & REWARDS

The characters find the following:

- A handful of coins can be recovered. This takes one round.
- With a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the characters can find a small but mostly intact lockbox half buried in the ground. It takes two rounds to unearth the box. The letters contained inside are very provocative; they were exchanged between Anders Tharion and someone named Mikato.

## 8. GRAND HALL

### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Crimson roots can be seen poking through the earth where the mud and rock meet the worked stone. The eastern door is locked, and the key is held by the **zombies** in chamber 15.

The bodies of **Arrathys** and **Nayima** are here. They have been dead several days and show grievous wounds. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) check confirms that they died to bite and claw wounds from the owlbear.

Any character that succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check once they've seen this room recalls that many conquerors have laid claim to the Border Kingdoms, and there are numerous lost ruins in the wilderness. Succeeding on this check by 5 or more also grants that the stonework here is similar to that of ancient Netheril, an old human kingdom.

### TREASURE & REWARDS

The characters find the following:

- Arrathys is carrying a *potion of healing*.
- Nayima is carrying a vial of antitoxin.

### BONUS OBJECTIVE: RESCUE OR RECOVER THE TALDUTH VALE ADVENTURERS

The group from the Talduth Vale originally had four members. **Arrathys** and **Nayima** are two of them, but the gnome and the human noble remain.



## 9. BROKEN CHAMBER

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** This chamber has fallen into disarray and is partially collapsed. The entire floor is considered difficult terrain, and the eastern wall has given way to what appears to be a series of crimson roots growing out from chamber 10.

## 10. ROOT HUB

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Crimson veins – roots, actually – criss cross the room and emerge from the walls. The air smells of salted meat, and it almost feels as if the roots are pulsing. This place is uncomfortably warm and quite humid. The roots have what appear to be naturally-occurred arcane sigils on them. A shallow pool of water is in the center of the room.

- A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that these are indeed the roots of some larger organism, but it is one that is not known across Faerun.
- A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check confirms that these roots are magically enhanced, but with spells and power that have been long absent from the world.
- A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine) check confirms that these roots cause intense illness in any creature that consumes them.
- If the root is removed from the structure, it loses its potency in a matter of hours. It is not suitable as a poison or distilled element for potions.

Any creature that consumes a fresh portion of the root or drinks the water must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become afflicted with crimson fever.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Two batches of **violet fungus** hide here, attached to the eastern and western walls and hidden among the roots. The fungus has taken on a crimson hue and blends in with the roots; until they attack, they can only be spotted by characters that have a passive Perception of 14 or higher.

## 11. ABANDONED KITCHEN

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The broken furnishings in this chamber clearly mark it as an old kitchen. Though the pots and tables have long since become useless, it is obvious from the size of the room and the worn grooves in the floor that it once saw plenty of activity.

## 12. STORAGE

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** Once upon a time this chamber held dry goods. Old wooden racks have collapsed with age and whatever goods they once held have long since vanished. The wood for the western door has swollen shut and requires successful a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to open.

## 13. GATHERING CHAMBER

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### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** This large space was once intended to serve as an entertainment hall. Faded frescoes can still be spied and show finely dressed nobles cavorting with strange beasts, the likes of which are unidentifiable. The corpse of a gnome is in the center of the room.

The southern door has been nailed shut, and the western and eastern doors are swollen shut in their frames as the wood has expanded with the moisture in the air. A successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check will open them. There is a gap that is just large enough for a medium creature to squeeze under the western door.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Two **shadows** lurk in a corner. The gnome was evil and so did not rise as a shadow himself.

### TREASURE & REWARDS

The characters find the following:

- Thimple's signet ring. It is made of brass and has no gp value.

### BONUS OBJECTIVE: RESCUE OR RECOVER THE TALDUTH VALE ADVENTURERS

The group from the Talduth Vale originally had four members. **Thimple** is one of them, but the human noble and the human sisters remain.

## 14. EMPTY CHAMBER

### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** No evidence remains of this room's original purpose. Crimson roots can be seen snaking out from the stonework and into the raw earth, though (see the description of chamber 10).

The wood for the eastern door has swollen shut and requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to open. A medium creature could squeeze under it, though, and upon inspection it looks like someone recently did just that.

## 15. GRAND HALL

### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** At some point in history this was clearly a grand dining hall. The shattered remains of five long tables and dozens of chairs lie scattered about the chamber now.

The eastern door has been sealed shut, with stone wedges holding the door in place, as if something on the other side was intended to be contained.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Three **zombies** lurk here now. Their tattered rags contain no identifiable markings that would establish who they were or how long they've been down here – though it's a safe bet that it's been years at a minimum.



### TREASURE & REWARDS

The characters find the following items of interest amidst the wreckage:

- One silver goblet
- One tarnished silver serving platter inscribed with text in Ancient Netherese that reads “Property of Histokle”. The name is unfamiliar unless someone succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check, which allows that character to recall the name as one of the “lost magi of Netheril”.
- A small key that unlocks the door to chamber 9.

### BONUS OBJECTIVE: DEAL WITH THE UNDEAD

Discovering the name “Histokle” may not mean much right now, but it accounts for one-third of this bonus objective.

## 16. SERVICE CORRIDOR & STAIRS DOWN

### AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** This long hallway is damp, and the temperature is uncomfortably warm. At the top of the spiral stairs the air becomes hot, and the humidity makes it hard to breathe. For every hour spent here, the characters must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion due to the oppressive environment.

The western doorway shows a great many scratches in a pattern like that of a humanoid hand, but the grooves are far too deep in the stone for them to be from a natural creature.

The stairs descend some twenty feet but end abruptly as the lower levels of this lost keep have long since collapsed and have been filled in with rubble. Further exploration is outside the purview of this adventure.

### CREATURES/NPCs

A strangely-shaped **minotaur skeleton** stands sentinel at the far end of the hall. It charges as soon as it sees a living creature.

### BONUS OBJECTIVE: DEAL WITH THE UNDEAD

This is not a normal minotaur skeleton, as it is a magically-created hybrid of a dwarf and a cow. If any of the characters examine the bones they can easily determine the unnatural origin, and it accounts for one-third of this bonus objective.

## WRAP UP

Once the characters have dealt with the threat of the sick owlbear they can either return to the Laughing Unicorn Tavern or move on to other adventures.

**Main Story Objective: Deal with the Owlbear.**

The characters can relay to Erin the details of how they resolved the owlbear issue. She is happy if they incapacitated the beast, and ecstatic if the cubs are still alive. If the characters determined that the crimson fever is the cause of the issue, she grunts and says that she will “work something out shortly”. If the characters removed any of the owlbears from the lair she flies into a curse-filled tirade, as “that is outside the natural order of things – don’t you know anything?!”

**Bonus Objective: Rescue or Recover the Talduth Vale Adventurers.** It is possible that they have Anders Tharion with them; if he is alive and the characters also recovered his letters from chamber 7, he is thankful and asks the characters to contact Mikato for him while he recovers at the Laughing Unicorn Tavern. He goes on to share any information

from his NPC appendix entry that he has not already shared, as well as anything he knows of his kidnappers. He has no interest in returning to the Vale.

**Bonus Objective: Deal with the Undead.** What the characters do with the knowledge of the buried Netherese keep is entirely up to them. If they talk to the people of Ambrees about it, they aren’t particularly impressed, saying “ruins litter these lands. They’re empty so let’s just keep the past buried, eh?” The fact that the ruins were infused with arcane runes and that the hybrid minotaur was still a threat is something that may later be explored, but “Histokle” is certainly worth remembering...

### TREASURE & REWARDS

Regardless of Erin’s disposition towards the characters, she is a firm believer in doing the right thing. She hands over a delicate silver circlet that is decorated with arcane runes, saying that it served her well over the years.

**Magic Items.** An old *circlet of blasting* is granted to the characters.



# ADVENTURE REWARDS

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

## ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

---

The characters receive 2 advancement checkpoints and 2 treasure checkpoints for completing the **main story objective** below.

- **Main Story Objective:** Deal with the Owlbear

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each **bonus objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A:** Rescue or Recover the Talduth Vale Adventurers
- **Bonus Objective B:** Deal with the Undead

## PLAYER REWARDS

---

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

### MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing adventure's **main story objective** unlock this magic item.

**Circlet of Blasting.** This circlet looks like a simple piece of silver jewelry. On close inspection though it is decorated with all manner of arcane runes from the schools of evocation and conjuration.

This item can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handouts**.

### STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

**Anders Tharion Rescued.** You rescued Anders Tharion, a young noble that had been kidnapped from Talduth Vale. More information can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handouts**.

## DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

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In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

## APPENDIX 1: NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

### ANDERS THARION

Human male, mid-20s. The son of a nobleman from Talduth Vale, Anders has never wanted for anything in his life. Was kidnapped by Thimple during a bard's performance and later pressed into mercenary service by the twins Arrathys and Nayima. He desperately seeks a peaceful life, and has a lover named Mikato (not present in adventure).

**Personality.** Anxious and self-deprecating. Attempts to help everyone if possible, even if it means over-extending himself.

**Ideal.** Peace isn't a goal, but the natural order for life.

**Bond.** I see the best in everyone and form close bonds with people, even though they aren't always comfortable with it.

**Flaw.** I shy away from all forms of conflict.

### ARRATHYS & NAYIMA (DECEASED)

These twin human sisters were mean and depraved in life.

They were exceptionally strong and delighted in ridiculing everyone around them but held a special – if begrudging – respect for Thimple. They had dark skin and claimed to be from Mulhorand. The owlbear hunt was entirely their idea, and they pressed Anders and Thimple in action.

### ERIN WHICKSEY

Human female, 45. Normally drunk on wheatwine, Erin is a retired ranger that lives in Ambrees. She was a skilled tracker before she left her life of adventure behind. She has broad shoulders and a square jaw, and her skin is leathery and tanned from spending many years in the sun.

**Personality.** She is often quite bristly and quick to share an acidic opinion. Honest to a fault but prone to gossip, it's clear that her command of "social etiquette" is severely lacking.

**Ideal.** I seek to bring the love of the wilderness into everyone's lives. Respect the beast and live a better life.

**Bond.** I value the lives of animals over most people.

**Flaw.** I'm a gossip and share everything I've heard.

### THIMPLE (DECEASED)

This diminutive gnome delighted in trickery and deception. He was the mastermind behind the kidnapping of Anders, and often spoke about how they planned to ransom him back to his family in Talduth Vale. He would make frequent reference to using poisons on unsuspecting people just to see how they'd react ("it's just a little poison, not enough to kill 'em!") and confided in Anders that he planned to betray the twins Arrathys and Nayima.

## APPENDIX 2: CREATURE STATISTICS

### MINOTAUR SKELETON

*Large undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 67 (9d10 + 18)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 6 (-2) | 8 (-1) | 5 (-3) |

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands Abyssal but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Charge.** If the skeleton 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.

#### ACTIONS

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

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

### A STRANGELY-SHAPED MINOTAUR?

The minotaur here was a magical creation, crafted by an ancient wizard as a hybrid of a dwarf and cow. As such, the following adjustments are needed:

- Reduce size to medium.
- Reduce gore damage to 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing.
- Reduce charge damage to 7 (2d6) piercing.

### OWLBEAR

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 20 (+5) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 3 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 7 (-2) |

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

### OWLBEAR CUBS

The owlbear cubs in this adventure are very young and about the size of a dog. Due to their savage instincts, they are unsuitable as animal companions and are not able to participate in combat.

### CRIMSON FEVER

The owlbear is afflicted with crimson fever for most, if not all, of the adventure. This changes the owlbear's stat block in the following ways:

- **Aggression.** The owlbear has advantage on the first attack roll that it makes on its turn.
- **Bare nerves.** If the owlbear takes 10 or more damage from a single source, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Failing this saving throw causes the owlbear to hoot loudly in pain and to have disadvantage on its next attack.
- **Consumption.** If an owlbear's opponent is reduced to 0 hit points, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw in order to attack a different target. If it fails, it will continue to attack this foe until it is dead. The owlbear has advantage on this saving throw if it can see its cubs.



## SHADOW

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 6 (-2) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 6 (-2) | 10 (+0) | 8 (-1) |

**Skills** Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

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

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Amorphous.** The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

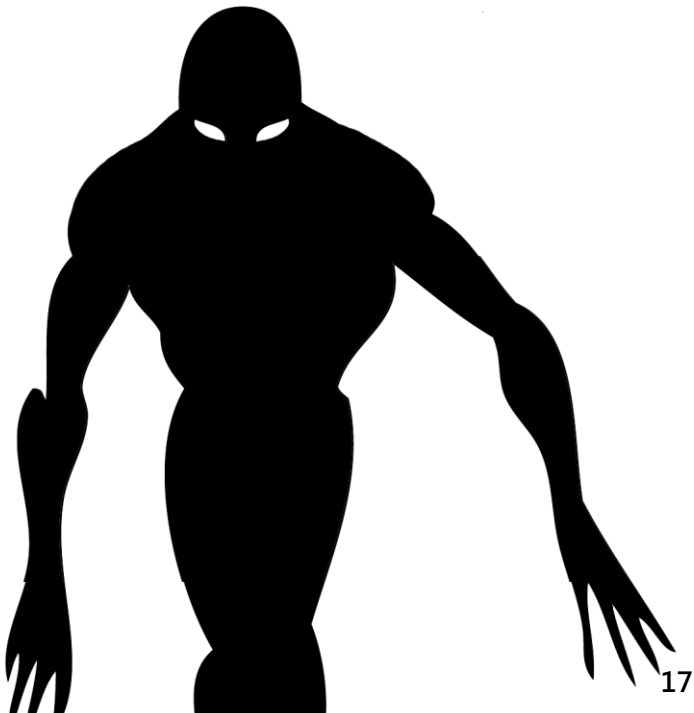
**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Sunlight Weakness.** While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

### ACTIONS

**Strength Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.



## VIOLET FUNGUS

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 5 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 3 (-4) | 1 (-5) | 10 (+0) | 1 (-5) | 3 (-4) | 1 (-5) |

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, frightened

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the violet fungus remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary fungus.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The fungus makes 1d4 Rotting Touch attacks.

**Rotting Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

## ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 13 (+1) | 6 (-2) | 16 (+3) | 3 (-4) | 6 (-2) | 5 (-3) |

**Saving Throws** Wis +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**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.

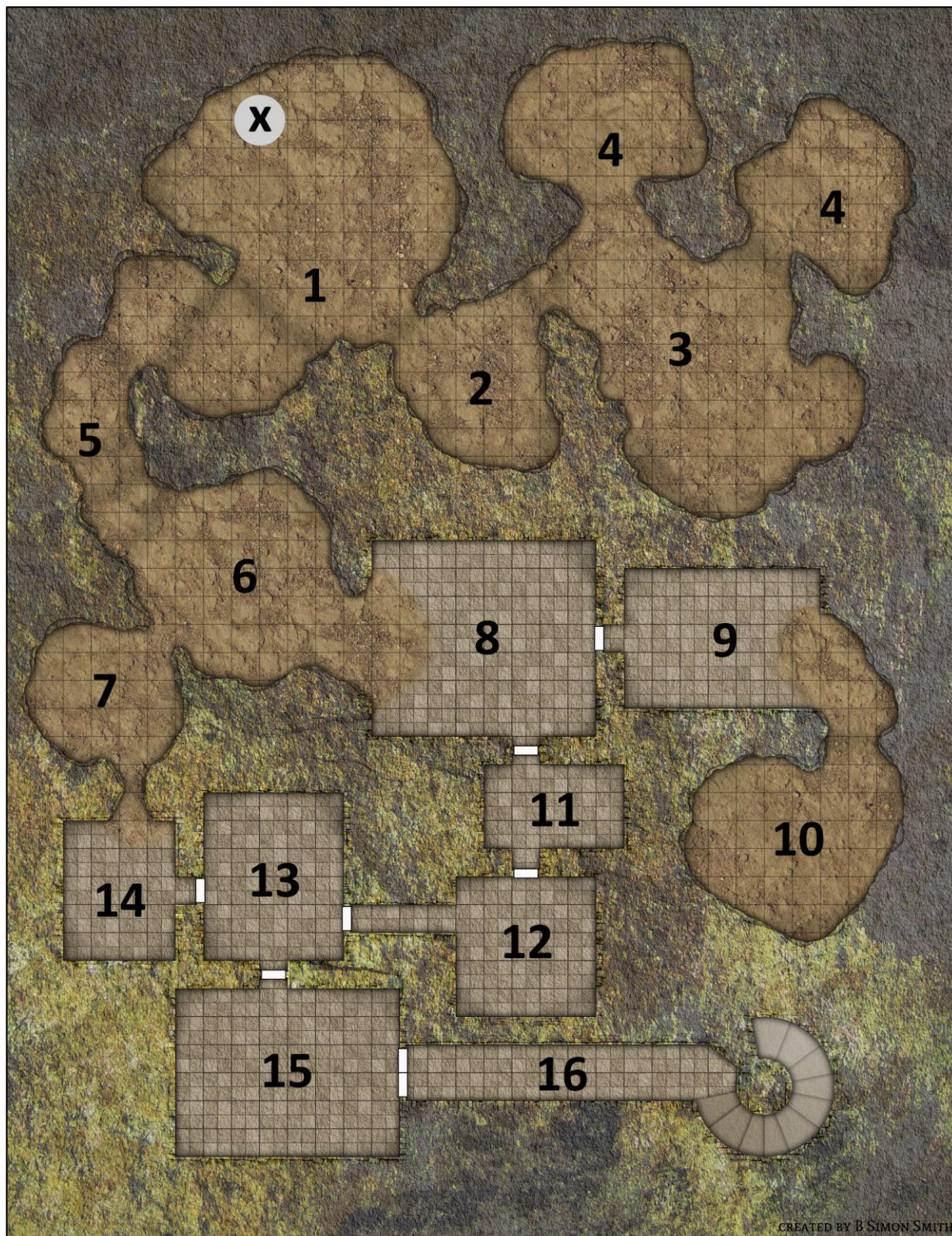
### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

### OWLBEAR ZOMBIE

Increase the zombie's size to large, grant it maximum hit points (33), and its slam attack becomes 'claw'. A claw attack deals slashing damage.

# APPENDIX 3: MAPS



## APPENDIX 4: PLAYER HANDOUTS

### CRIMSON FEVER

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Crimson fever is an affliction that is localized to the Border Kingdoms. It is a virulent disease that causes the afflicted creature to become almost mindlessly violent as they succumb to its ravages, and if they die while so afflicted, they rise as zombies a tenday later.

Any creature that consumes food or water that has been tainted by the arcane roots in the owlbear lair must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become afflicted with crimson fever. Each day that they are afflicted, their Intelligence and Wisdom scores are reduced by 1; when these scores reach 0, the creature dies. A creature may attempt the saving throw every 24 hours, and any creature that dies while suffering from crimson fever rises as a zombie a tenday later. Every day that a creature is afflicted causes their flesh to become discolored and eventually turns crimson.

This disease is strangely immune to magical healing, but the recuperation downtime activity (*Player's Handbook*) is automatically successful so long as the character has access to fresh food and water.

### MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

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#### CIRCLET OF BLASTING

*Wondrous item, uncommon, Table F*

This circlet looks like a simple piece of silver jewelry. On close inspection though it is decorated with all manner of arcane runes from the schools of evocation and conjuration.

While wearing this circlet, you can use an action to cast the *scorching ray* spell with it. When you make the spell's attacks, you do so with an attack bonus of +5. The circlet can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

### STORY AWARDS

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#### ANDERS THARION RESCUED

You rescued Anders Tharion, a young noble that had been kidnapped from Talduth Vale. Whether or not he shows up in your later adventures remains to be seen, but he will surely remember your impact regardless.

# APPENDIX 5: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 2**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

## NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Welcome to the D&D Adventurers League! [You can learn more about this global organized play campaign on our website.](#)

## NEW TO THE BORDER KINGDOMS STORYLINE?

Gamehole Con has been granted the ability to develop CCC (Convention Created Content) adventures for the Border Kingdoms. No other convention or organization outside of Wizards of the Coast has been granted this ability. Their region guide was written by Ed Greenwood and [you can get your copy on dmsguild.com](#). Border Kingdoms adventures can be run just the same as any other Adventurers League-approved content.

## NEW TO BEING THE DUNGEON MASTER?

A plethora of great Dungeon Master advice can be found all across the internet. New DMs are urged to purchase a copy of the Dungeon Master's Guide and join our Facebook ([player group](#) and [DM group](#)) and [Twitter discussions](#).

## ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience and consideration.

If this adventure proves too easy for your players, consider increasing the owlbear's hit points to maximum, use smarter tactics when it attacks, or some similar method. You may also wish to add a second owlbear to the lair for very strong tables.

If this adventure proves too difficult for your players, consider lower the DC of the crimson fever saving throws by 1 or 2 and remove the owlbear's advantage on her first melee attack each round. For very weak groups you could go so far as to apply disadvantage to all of the owlbear's melee attacks and call it an effect of her advanced illness.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

## Determining Party Strength

| Party Composition                | Party Strength |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 3-4 characters, APL less than    | Very weak      |
| 3-4 characters, APL equivalent   | Weak           |
| 3-4 characters, APL greater than | Average        |
| 5 characters, APL less than      | Weak           |
| 5 characters, APL equivalent     | Average        |
| 5 characters, APL greater than   | Strong         |
| 6-7 characters, APL less than    | Average        |
| 6-7 characters, APL equivalent   | Strong         |
| 6-7 characters, APL greater than | Very strong    |

## A NOTE ON PREREQUISITES AND OBJECTIVES

D&D Players love to do things that their DM's can't possibly anticipate, and at the same time, Dungeon Masters are encouraged to customize the content of our adventures, mixing and matching bits here and there to make the final story as-played, their own.

This adventure takes place almost entirely in an underground area, which essentially makes it a dungeon crawl. The characters have their primary objective (deal with the owlbear) and will learn the secondary objectives (discover the cause of the crimson fever and deal with the undead) during their explorations. While you shouldn't have to rearrange too many details of the various chambers, take a moment to ensure that the players are aware of these secondary objectives so that they receive the most complete gaming experience possible while they participate in this adventure.

## A WORD TO THE WISE

Due to the loose nature of the owlbear's lair, the characters may (and probably will!) make decisions that you didn't initially anticipate. Let it happen! There's plenty of exploration to go around, and they should have the freedom and encouragement to explore the entire area.

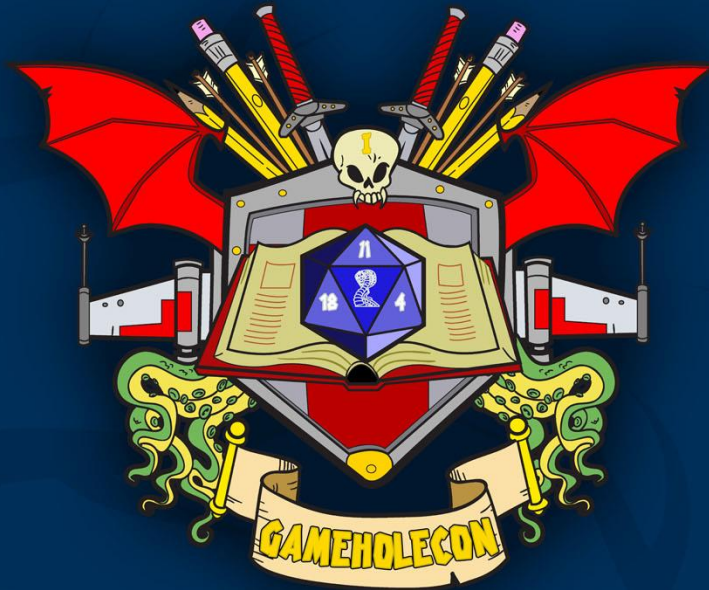


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