



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

RAIDERS OF THE TWILIGHT MARSH

A black dragon's treasure horde has been located in the Twilight Marsh, and within it are secrets that hold interest to the factions. With the dragon marauding over the countryside, the horde is left unguarded. Now is the time to plunder its lair! An adventure for 5th-10th level characters.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Raiders of the Twilight Marsh*, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Tyranny of Dragons*™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for three to seven 5th-10th level characters, and is optimized for five 6th level characters. Players with 4th level characters may spend 20 downtime days to level up to the start of 5th level. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in and around the Twilight Marsh, a swamp east of the town of Phlan.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a [DCI number](#). This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the [D&D Adventurers League home](#).

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the [D&D basic rules](#) or the *Player's Handbook*™.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an [official adventure logsheet](#) for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide

documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 6th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

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

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

DUNGEON MASTERING THE ADVENTURE

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.
- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since

play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*TM has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the [D&D basic rules](#) or the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules). If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ever since the lizardfolk of the Twilight Marsh raided farms for prisoners and waylaid travelers in the area (DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh*), folk have been on edge. Although a band of adventurers thwarted the black dragon Throstulgrael (more commonly known as "Velvet"), and rescued those it had taken prisoner, things seem to have gotten worse in the area. The young black dragon has been destroying caravans, farms, and ships on the Moonsea in retribution for the adventurer's meddling

ever since.

Velvet has recently left the marsh for a clandestine meeting in Phlan and is not expected to return for at least a couple of days. Bogclaw the Lizard King (DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh*) has survived and now commands the conjoined remnants of the three lizardfolk tribes. The Lizard King has learned of Velvet's absence, and sees it as the perfect opportunity to exact his revenge on the dragon for the decimation of the lizardfolk tribes.

Bogclaw is cunning, however, and knows that his clan is not strong enough to take on Velvet's minions alone, and so decides to enlist the help of the adventurers.

He sends an envoy to a local named Rolk (DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh*), and charges him with seeking out the adventurers and informing them that the dragon's lair lies unguarded and ripe for the plucking.

What none of them know is that Velvet has already prepared for his death. Using dark rituals in the dark, Velvet has completed most of the steps to complete his transformation into a dracolich. All that remains is to die.

OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken down into seven parts:

Part 1. The characters learn that Throstulgrael is away from his lair and is not expected back for some time. Some of the factions are interested in various possessions of the dragon and the allure of treasure is likely to pique the characters interest as well. Time is of the essence as the characters must race to the lair before Velvet returns.

Part 2. The characters must then traverse the marsh, where they encounter Bogclaw and a lizardfolk shaman who soon find themselves in the clutches of a shambling mound. The characters may try and save them so the lizardfolk can guide them to the dragon's lair or they may continue on without them.

Part 3. Further in the swamp, the characters find a lone goblin foraging in the boggy waters; a servant of the Bloodroot Coven. One of the hags from the coven has been kidnapped by Velvet and is being held hostage so the coven obeys the black dragon. The hags are none too pleased with the arrangement and can be bargained with.

Part 4 & 5. The characters arrive at Velvet's lair and must enter the complex and deal with the small tribe. This tribe of devious kobolds has outfitted Velvets lair with a number of traps of various intent; to maim and kill those unfortunate enough to fall victim to them. Along with the kobolds a pair of trolls patrols the cult grounds.

Part 6. Lastly, guarding his father's treasure is a half-dragon troll who dwells beneath the sunken cult complex in Velvet's lair, a large dank cistern filled with fetid water.

FAMILIAR FACES

It will come in handy to know knowing whether or not the characters have participated in DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh* and/or DDEX1-2 *Secrets of Sokol Keep* before you start the adventure.

Characters that have participated in DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh* may see familiar faces during this adventure; specifically, the ex-adventurer Rhomsan Kal and the dwarf merchant Rolk. Additionally, Bogclaw the Lizard King is still active in the area. Some characters may have battled and killed the lizardfolk king, but unbeknownst to them, his shamans managed to save him from his wounds, further proof that Bogclaw is a true lizard king, blessed by Semuanya, the lizardfolk god!

In DDEX1-2 *Secrets of Sokol Keep*, the characters may have discovered a book entitled *Moonsea Cults* written by Thalioss of Tyr. If the characters have this book in their possession, any Intelligence (Arcana or History) check made regarding cults or their practices in the Moonsea region are made with advantage.

This book also has a small entry on a cult known as the Cult of the Black Bull that once occupied a complex in what is now the Twilight Marsh. The cult entry has a map showing the complex as it was during the time that the cult was active.

TIME

The adventurers are under a time crunch. They have only a limited amount of time before Velvet returns from his excursion to Phlan. Use the Until Black Wings time tracker (Appendix 2, below) to keep track of the passage of time in the adventure. If the characters perform actions not accounted for, use your best judgment as to how long it takes.

The characters are free to rest as they see fit, but the clock is working against them. If they dally too long, their fight with Velvet will be much more difficult.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks can be used to draw the adventurers into the story. As the town is learning to cope with life under the rule of the Maimed Virulence, they may encounter one or more of the preceding adventure hooks.

Death's Shadow. As the characters are wandering about Phlan, they see a winged, black shape fly over the town towards Valjevo Keep. The next morning rumors have spread about a black dragon landing near the keep

the night before. The adventurers are instructed to meet Rolk, a contact of their faction representatives at the Velvet Doublet the following morning to learn more.

An Old Friend. If any of the adventurers participated in the events of DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh*, they have heard rumor that Rolk is in town. They receive a written invitation to join him for breakfast at the Velvet Doublet, a festhall frequented by the well-to-do along with the promises of "unimaginable fortune!"

As You Bid, M'Lord. Adventurers who are members of the Lords Alliance are approached by Gilfron Milon and asked to meet a representative of the Merchant's Guild; a dwarf named Rolk. He has information that has piqued the faction's interest. He can be found at the Velvet Doublet the following morning.

PART 1: A HOARD UNGUARDED

The adventure begins in Phlan.

THE VELVET DOUBLET

Regardless of why, the characters find themselves in the Velvet Doublet. During their meal, they encounter Rolk, a dwarven merchant whom adventurers that participated in DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh* may recognize.

The Velvet Doublet--even in the trying times that Phlan is enduring--is still a fine place. A place full of soft chairs where the only thing darker and richer than the wood that the tables are made of is the wine being served.

Unfortunately, your meal is interrupted as the door bursts open, and a dwarf in nice, albeit dusty, clothes enters the room. He sees your group, grabs a nearby chair, and joins you at your table.

Outside, nine bells toll; their tones muted by the dense fog that seems to perpetually hang over Phlan these days.

Rolk appreciates that the characters have shown up to in answer of his request. He is particularly interested in repaying those who have helped him before. Over the course of breakfast, Rolk relates the following:

- The Merchant's Guild has fallen prey to a number of thefts along the Phlan Path. One theft in particular, the Merchant's Guild is quite desperate to resolve. A lockbox was stolen recently. It is stamped with the seal of the Merchant's Guild and possesses mundane and magical protections against intrusion. Rolk is insistent that the box not be opened. He dismisses any questions as to its contents; merely explaining that it marked with the symbol of the Merchant's Guild--a gold coin embossed with an axe, a hammer, and a pair of forge tongs.
- He has reason to believe that the lockbox is currently in the lair of the dragon Throstulgrael, more commonly known as Velvet who, as luck would have it, happens to be "away from home". The dragon was seen arriving in Phlan the night before--likely visiting Vorgansharax. Rumor says he's expected to be in town for a couple days.
- The Merchant's Guild is willing to compensate the adventurers to the tune of 700 gp payable upon the safe return of the stolen lockbox and its contents.
- To ensure that they are able to get to the Twilight

Marsh quickly, the Guild provides the characters with a riding horse or 75gp each to purchase some other method of travel to the Marsh.

- Roleplaying Rolk
- Rolk is a gregarious dwarf whose fortunes have turned up lately. He takes his position as an agent of the Merchant's Guild seriously. The dragon has been costing the guild large sums of money in missing goods and employees.

When the party agrees to the quest they are given the following information.

- The merchants have negotiated with a lizardfolk tribe led by a lizardfolk named Bogclaw, a lizardfolk who fancies himself a something of a king. They are to meet with this lizardfolk at the Ringcurrent Islands, where he will provide directions to Velvet's lair.
- Rolk provides the adventurers with a map with directions to Bogclaw's camp on Ringcurrent Island from the Crossing Inn.
- Once at the inn, the proprietor, Rhomsan Kal, has boats to take into the marsh. The ride to the island should also take no more than 4 hours.
- Rolk does not know precisely where the dragon's lair is, however, or how far away it is from the inn.
- The dragon is lairing in the ruins of an old cult complex called the Hall of the Black Bull.
- Time is of utmost importance! It is rumored that Throstulgrael will be leaving Phlan before dawn tomorrow morning (likely no later than 5 bells) and it should take him no more than an hour to make the trip back to his lair. The characters should be out of the dragon's lair no more than 20 hours from now. As he says this, 10 bells toll in the distance.

MOONSEA CULTS

If any of the adventurers have the book, *Moonsea Cults* (found in DDEX1-2 *Secrets of Sokol Keep*), they can find an entry on the Cult of the Black Bull; a cult of slavers that worshipped a bull-headed demon in the region now called the Twilight Marsh over a thousand years ago.

In addition, the book has a rough map of the complex as it existed a thousand years ago. The important piece of information on the map is the approximate location of a series of wells, which may allow the party to sneak past some kobolds as well as possibly the trolls should time be running short.

Only characters whose adventure logs indicate possession of the book are able to benefit from its contents.

LEGWORX

If the characters are suspicious of Rolk or his intentions, and wish to consult with their factions, they are able to do so. Offer the information below if the characters seek them out. If the characters do not think of contacting their factions, feel free to suggest that their faction contacts may have more information regarding the dragon. It takes the group **1 hour** to perform the legwork.

Lords Alliance. Members contact Braden Yil (male human), a retainer of House Cadorna. He relates that the dragon has been disrupting trade by raiding along the roads near the Twilight Marsh. In one such raid a travelling noble from Mulmaster named Tevish Malacont, a male human, was taken by the dragon and has not been seen since. If asked for a specific description or additional details, Braden will shuffle his feet uncomfortably and describe Tevish as simply "unusual".

Zhentarim. Members contact shadowy Lureene Dundragon (female Chondathan human). The dragon has despoiled many caravans and his kobold minions have dragged away much valuable cargo. More important than mere goods are a set of trade maps for the Moonsea region that were lost in a raid, if the dragon has them, the Zhentarim wants them back.

Harpers. Members contact the wise Olisara Lightsong (female moon elf). A harper agent named Uliset Faelgren was killed by the dragon in an attack by Throstulgrael along the road to Melvaunt. The agent's body was recovered, but her personal belongings, including her spellbook and Harper pin, as well as a book with encrypted Harper messages is thought to be in the beasts hoard.

SECRET MISSIONS

When characters have reached Rank 2 in their faction they are trusted to go on secret missions for the faction. In this adventurer there are two such missions:

Emerald Enclave. Seranolla the Whisperer mentions that the character has proven themselves ready to truly work for the Enclave. Scouts belonging to the Emerald Enclave have reported a growing number of will-o'-wisp in the Twilight Marsh; far more than would normally be present. To that end, Seranolla presents the characters with a device and wishes for them to use it to capture one or more will-o'-wisps.

THE DEVICE

The device provided to the characters looks very similar to a large iron lantern, engraved with runes. When activated, one will-o'-wisp within 5 feet of the device must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or be drawn into the device. While so contained, the imprisoned creature may use an action to attempt another Dexterity saving throw, freeing itself from the device if successful.

At the beginning of each round that the device contains a will-o'-wisp, arcs of lightning lash out at all creatures within 60 feet of it. The device has a +9 bonus to attack rolls, and deals 9 (2d8) lightning damage on a hit. As an action, a creature may "tune" the occupied device. If so, the device does not emit any arcs of lightning for 1 round. Additionally, while a character is actively tuning the device, any Dexterity saving throw made by a creature trapped within it is made at disadvantage. Once the creature within has failed three consecutive saving throws, it may not attempt to escape again until 24 hours has passed.

Order of the Gauntlet. Zern Xerkstil mentions that the character has proven themselves ready to truly work for the Gauntlet. In the chaos of Vorgansharax's rise to power, several dangerous prisoners escaped from the prison within Stojanow Gate. While some prisoners have been captured or killed, others remain free. It is rumored that a particularly vile prisoner named Yusten Karas, a drow assassin, has fled into the Twilight Marsh. Capture the prisoner and return them to the town of Phlan to face justice. The drow has information important to the Order and must be kept alive and returned to Phlan at all costs.

BY LAND OR BY SEA

The adventurers have a few options on how to get to Velvet's lair.

By Land. Travel to the Crossing Inn on the edge of the Twilight Marsh is relatively quick with the horses provided by the Merchant Guild. The inn is 16 miles from Phlan. At a normal pace, they arrive in 4 hours.

The characters may spur their horses to greater speed and arrive at the Inn sooner using a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) group check. If successful, the group is able to shave one hour of travel time off of their journey to the inn.

Once the characters arrive at the Crossing Inn, Rhomsan Kal—the inn's proprietor—has two small pole boats waiting for them for their journey to the Ringcurrent Islands. The journey to the islands is uneventful and takes the party 4 hours to travel the 15 miles.

If they choose, the group may attempt to maneuver their boats faster as well, but this comes at a risk. If they choose to throw caution to the wind and attempt to pole the boat faster through the marsh, the group may attempt a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) group check. If successful, the group manages to shave one hour of travel time off of their journey to the islands. However, any character that fails the group check by 5 or more suffers 1 level of exhaustion.

By Sea. Conversely, it is possible for adventurers who already know where the Ringcurrent Islands are to hire a ship to take them directly there. Asking about town, the adventurers learn that many ships are reluctant to go near the Twilight Marsh due to the recent bandit activity. An adventurer succeeding at a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, however, is able to convince a captain of a ship to brave the voyage, albeit for a steep fee of 25 gp per character. Any character with the sailor background makes this check with advantage.

Once aboard, they must find the Ringcurrent Islands. The captain of the ship does not know where they are, but has maps of the area that he and adventurers can use to locate them. Plotting the course and preparing for departure takes 1 hour and the journey itself an additional 4 hours.

Once at the Islands, the characters still need boats to get ashore. Lucky, the ship is happy to sell them two pole boats for 75 gp each. It takes 1 hour to maneuver the boats ashore.

PART 2: THE LIZARD KING

Bogclaw the **lizard king** is at the islands with his **lizardfolk shaman** named Scalesneer. Only the scattered remnants of the three tribes remained after the events of DDEX1-7 *Drums in the Marsh* transpired.

VOICES OF THE DEAD

The black dragon was enraged by the lizardfolks's failure most of the lizardfolk that survived fell prey to the dragon's vengeance mere days ago. Since then, Bogclaw, Scalesneer and the remaining lizardfolk have been hiding in the marsh.

Arriving on the island, you bear witness to devastation on an immense scale. All of the huts on the islands have been destroyed by acid. Dead lizardfolk--ravaged by acid, claws, and teeth--lay scattered all about. It's clear that these lizardfolk have been dead only a handful days.

As the characters approach, Bogclaw turns to them and speaks in broken common.

"Never thought I welcome warmlings to our island, but here you are. Do not fear our claws."

Bogclaw and Scalesneer relate the following information.

- Bogclaw's tribes have been nearly decimated by Velvet and he wishes revenge on the black dragon and wants those of his people who were captured, freed.
- If asked, Bogclaw confirms the rumor surrounding Velvet's absence, though he doesn't know when the dragon will be return.
- The shaman said that after Velvet destroyed the lizardfolk village he returned with two green hags, though he doesn't know why.
- The shaman doesn't know much about the hags, but know that the dragon has forced their aid by taking a member of their "tribe" into his lair and not giving her back.
- The hags's home is to the east.
- The dragon itself lives in a series of ruins further to the east.

ROLEPLAYING BOGCLAW

The lizardfolk king is not happy to be working with warmlings, but he doesn't have much choice. His tribe has been decimated and if the dragon isn't killed or driven away, it is not likely that his tribe survives for very much longer.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Twilight Marsh is a natural area, open to the sky, but often obscured by heavy foliage.

Light. During the day the Twilight Marsh is considered to be dim light causing creatures to have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Terrain. The marsh is mostly covered in water. The vast majority of terrain is difficult terrain and may require characters to swim in some areas.

Sounds. With the heavy foliage and dense fog about, sound is often muted in the marshes. The droning buzz of biting insects is almost always present.

Smells. With everything being constantly wet, the smell of natural decay is heavy in the air.

PROMISES, PROMISES...

As the adventurers converse with Bogclaw, his companion—who has introduced himself as Scalesneer—seems to be tending to the dead, but with one, wary eye on marsh. The shaman is placing small religious fetishes in the mouths of the dead lizardfolk. A successful DC10 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the fetishes are likely some sort of talisman to prevent the bodies from rising as undead.

Unbeknownst to Bogclaw, a **shambling mound** has slowly been creeping close to the island. Once the discussion with the lizardfolk has concluded, it attacks. Unfortunately, two **will-o'-wisps** have also meandered into the area and take advantage of the distraction to cause some trouble. Ever the opportunist, however, they flee if the shambling mound is slain.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove shambling mound, add awakened tree
- **Weak party:** Remove will-o'-wisps (they flee once combat begins)
- **Strong party:** Add 1 will-o'-wisp
- **Very strong party:** Add 3 will-o'-wisps

SPECIAL MISSION: EMERALD ENCLAVE

This would be an opportune time for any Emerald Enclave members to attempt to capture a will-o'-wisp. Note that the device emits arcs of lightning that strike everything within a 60-foot-radius, including the shambling mound which regains hit points when subjected to lightning damage.

TREASURE

Hidden amongst the brush near the shambling mound, the characters find an amulet worth 200 gp.

XP AWARD

If Bogclaw survives the encounter with the shambling mound, award each character 100 XP.

WHERE TO NOW?

If Bogclaw has survived, he knows the location of both Velvet's lair and the hags's coven. However, due to his desire for vengeance against the hags, he intentionally sends the characters in their direction (see Part 3, below). Otherwise, the characters wander around the marsh for an hour before happening across the hags's goblin servitor, Rurry. The journey there takes one hour.

PART 3: THE COVEN AT BLOODROOT HOLLOW

When Velvet arrived in the Twilight Marsh, he attempted to win over the hags of the Bloodroot Coven. The Sisters, however, were not receptive. The dragon did not stomach their refusal lightly and captured one of the hags—breaking their coven.

If the adventurers seek out the coven, they find it without incident.

BLOODROOT HOLLOW

The hags reside an hour's boat ride from the ruins of the Hall of the Black Bull.

GENERAL FEATURES

The hollow is a natural area, but has been warped by the foul magic practiced here.

Light. The hollow is dimly lit, no matter the time of day. The sky above Bloodroot Hollow always appears to be in the waning light of twilight, and a thick, clammy fog covers the clearing. Stars twinkle overhead, and fireflies dance just at the edge of whatever light the adventurers brought with them. The hollow is treated as dimly lit.

Terrain. The hollow is dry land, but here and there thick roots of trees snake along the ground.

Sounds. With the heavy foliage and dense fog, about sound is often muted in the marshes. However, unusual sounds are abound; sounds that have no place being here, such as laughing children, crying women, whispering, and other unsettling sounds. No matter how extensively one might search, the sources of the noises are never found.

Smells. With everything being constantly wet, the smell of natural decay is heavy in the air. The smell, however, is masked by the smells of delicious cooking, and the pungent, sickly-sweet smell of spell and ritual components.

RURRY

When the adventurers draw near the hollow, they first encounter Rurry, a **goblin** indentured to the hags.

Stepping from your boat, you find yourself walking down a narrow path, only barely distinguishable from the surrounding flora. Thorny briars grab at your clothing as if warning you against further trespass.

Rounding a corner, you happen across a curious figure—a goblin. It carries a small basket half-full of berries, flowers, and an occasional dead lizard. He is kneeling next to a body, rifling through its pockets with one hand while the other holds a tiny dagger—its blade still wet with blood.

He starts at the sound of your arrival and faces you, "Go from this place. You no belong here!"

This is Rurry. The hags have put out his right eye, which is now sewn shut with crude twine. He wears filthy rages and no shoes. He does, however, wear a rather nice-looking pendant that appears to be a stylized eye.

He's not the sharpest tool in the drawer, but if the adventurers decide to talk to the goblin, he relates the following:

- "I'm Rurry!"
- "The ladies made my eye sick..."
- "This my food. I no share with you."
- "The ladies's house very near, very near!"
- "No! This was given to me by the ladies!" (Clutches at pendant if the adventurers try to take it or get a closer look at it.)

The corpse is that of a cultist, sent to treat with Velvet. He was on his way back to Phlan when he was slain by Rurry. The cultist is carrying what appears to be a diary filled entries detailing the daily life of someone with an overinflated ego, but folded into its pages is an official-looking document. Any adventurer examining the document easily identifies it as some sort of contract. It is plain that the document details an agreement between Velvet and the Cult of the Dragon, wherein the dragon agrees to be subjected to a ritual that would turn him into a dracolich. A character inspecting the diary with a passive Investigation score of 13 or higher finds a carefully folded piece of paper that reads:

"Beware the entrance to Throstulgrael's lair. Speak aloud "Velvet Summons Me" before you pass over it lest you die before basking in the great dragon's splendor!"

Eventually, Rurry gets antsy if the characters keep pressing for answers or if they ask who the "nice ladies" actually are. "We're gonna be late for dinner! Come, come!" He then grabs the hand of a non-threatening character and pulls them towards the coven.

TREASURE

If the characters slay Rurry, the pendant is really the only thing of value he carries (unless the group is truly hungry and able to stomach the taste of dead lizard). It is surprisingly nice-looking and radiates faint divination magic. This pendant is a scrying device used by the hags to keep an eye on Rurry and his dealings. When the hags are seeing through it, the pendants stylized eye seems to look around and blink from time to time. However, it isn't worth anything if sold.

THE SISTERS

When the adventurers and the goblin arrive at Bloodroot Hollow, Sister Pusriver and Sister Rotface are in the middle of a heated argument.

The bramble-ridden trail opens up into a large clearing in which stands a short, stout tree with thick, gnarled boughs. A rickety staircase winds around the tree's trunk to a wooden landing. Nestled among the tree's branches is a small wooden cabin. The warm glow of a fire dances behind the drawn shades. A large, rusted cage swings beneath the landing.

The sounds of a heated conversation can be heard from within the cabin, though it is impossible to hear precisely what is being said. Before you are able to get closer to discern, however, the door to the cabin is thrown open and an elderly elvish woman walks briskly out, shouting "I don't care what you think! We must cast lots! Where is Sister Deathwillow?"

The elvish-looking hag is **Sister Pusriver**. Her colleague, **Sister Rotface**, is inside the cabin. They have lived in Bloodroot Hollow for hundreds of years. Recently, however, Velvet has abducted the Sister Deathwillow, the third member of their coven.

Sister Pusriver notices the adventurers and gives a wide, friendly smile. Sister Rotface emerges from the cabin moments later.

ROLEPLAYING SISTER PUSRIVER

Sister Pusriver is the "kinder" of the two, and is adept at playing the part of a doddering old woman. She happily offers food and water to the adventurers. She is also quite forgetful, and often repeats questions or requests that she presented mere moments ago.

ROLEPLAYING SISTER ROTFACE

With Sister Deathwillow gone, Sister Rotface is the voice of reason among the remnants of the coven. However, she is not particularly well-suited for the job. She is potty and has a bit of a mean-streak--a particularly nasty combination. She is rude and offensive, and cares very little for social graces.

Sister Pusriver is hospitable and offers the adventurers a brief respite from the damp inside their cabin. Should the adventurers enter, they find a cramped, one-room cabin with three beds, a small larder and a few cabinets. There are two tables, one covered in herbs and crockery, the other covered in melted candles, coins, and shoes. Investigating the cabin reveals the following information.

- Scattered around the room are various pieces of clothing from all types of people and equipment in various conditions.
- A polished, rune-engraved lizardfolk skull rests on a chair.
- Randomly covering various shelves and hanging from string are a dozen trinkets (roll on the Trinkets table, page 160 of the *Player's Handbook*).
- An adventurer succeeding at a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check finds two sets of clothes similar to those issued to "tenants" of the prison within Stojanow Gate as well as a handful of humanoid bones underneath one of the beds.

Despite their demeanors, the hags know quite a bit about the goings on in the swamp, and can answer most general information questions. Specific details about events that have occurred within the last month or so might be unknown to them, however.

If confronted about any of the items in their cabin, the hags profess their innocence of any wrong-doing. "We have many travelers stop by, child! Most happily give us a trinket or two for a warm bite to eat."

The hags are clueless as to the process of turning a dragon into a dracolich and are also unaware if whether or not Velvet has actually been subjected to it.

If asked, they profess to have gotten the prison garments from a trio of escaped prisoners that happened across the hollow. They also freely admit to killing two of them and eating them, but only because they "looked like they tasted rather lovely."

DEVELOPMENTS

The coven is in need of the characters's assistance, specifically, the safe return of Sister Deathwillow. The hags believe that the adventurers are strong enough to do it, but in order to ensure that the dragon is slain, they warn Velvet of the adventurers's plans once the group has departed. They do this to ensure that adventurers's hands are forced.

RESCUE MISSION

Throughout the conversation, Sister Rotface steers the conversation back to the rescue of Sister Deathwillow. The two are lost without her and offer the adventurers riches if they promise to bring her back.

The hags offer the adventurers a tidy sum of 300 gp to rescue Sister Deathwillow from the Velvet's lair. They refuse to offer any of the reward up front, but do offer either a *scroll of protection from energy* or a *scroll of water walking* to assist them in their quest.

Lastly, if the adventurers mention slaying Velvet, they offer an additional 700 gp if they are successful. If the adventurers agree to one or more of the tasks, the hags also offer the following information:

- The kobolds of the Pitted Scale clan, love to capture and torture anyone they come upon, just like Velvet does. They are especially fond of using poison and acid to torture their victims.
- After he kidnapped Sister Deathwillow, the dragon demanded the hags create a ritual for him to summon the souls of the dead. Which they did. They later performed the ritual at the site of the lizardfolk village, creating the will-o-wisps.
- The hags met Larga Bloodhand and pointed her and her party toward the lair of the dragon. The hags kept one member of Larga's party as ransom, but when Reema did not come back, they ate him.

SPECIAL MISSION: ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

If any of the characters belong to the Order of the Gauntlet, they have been charged with reclaiming the drow, Yusten Karas. As fate would have it, the adventurers find the unconscious drow in the cage hanging in the tree beneath the hags's cabin. If he regains any hit points he wakes up. The hags, however, are not keen to let him go and only permit the adventurers to take him if they partake in a trade. Examples of forms of "payment" that the hags accept is detailed in "Interested in a Trade, Child?" below.

ROLEPLAYING YUSTEN KARAS

Yusten does not appreciate the predicament that he is in, but prefers it better to rotting in a cage. Yusten is cold-hearted and apathetic through and through. He is melancholy and offers nihilistic, brooding comments whether solicited or not. Needless to say, he is difficult to like.

While in the custody of the characters, he does not actively attempt to escape from or harm them. That is not to say however, that he help them either. If faced with combat, he hunkers down behind the nearest source of cover and waits. If attacked, he uses the disengage action if possible and the dodge action if not. Yusten has a total of 27 hit points and an AC of 13. He is unarmed and unequipped. He constantly badgers the characters to give him any number of things—a weapon, armor, food, water, a bit of alcohol, etc.

INTERESTED IN A TRADE, CHILD?

The sisters have a number of items of adventuring gear that they are willing to trade to the adventurers in exchange for any number of unusual or unsettling things. Some examples of things that the hags take in payment are:

- A kiss
- A lock of freshly cut hair
- The adventurer must swallow a stone carved with the symbol of the coven—a tree weeping blood
- A handshake
- Forsaking a loved one
- A single drop of blood
- A single copper piece
- A finger (specifically, the character's)

None of the "prices" are dangerous or harmful, though any adventurer paying it earns the "Traded with a Hag" story reward (See Rewards, below). Any adventure agreeing on a price, may choose one item. If any of the characters participated in the events of DDEP1 *Corruption in Kryptgarden* and swore an oath to King Witchthorn, the hags recoil in fear and refuse to trade with them. Similarly, any non-evil fey in the party (such as familiars) caution their masters or companions about entering into such a deal.

The sisters have the following items available for trade. All of the items are from the *Player's Handbook*:

- 4 potions of healing
- 2 flasks of alchemists fire
- 2 flasks of lamp oil
- 4 vials of antitoxin
- 2 vials of poison

IF THINGS GO SOUTH

Should the characters try and intimidate the hags they fall to the floor in fear and beseech the characters not to hurt them, for they are "just old ladies." However, if they are pushed too far or physically attacked, they defend themselves without hesitation or mercy. The hags turn invisible and summon two **will-o'-wisps**. The hags fight until they are at 20hp or less. They then turn invisible and flee. Provided at least one hag survives, Velvet is still warned, albeit with the additional hope that the dragon kills the adventurers—either way, the hags benefit.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove 1 hag and 1 will-o'-wisp
- **Weak party:** Remove 1 will-o'-wisp
- **Strong party:** Add 1 will-o'-wisp
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 green hag and 1 will-o'-wisp

If the hags warn Velvet, he leaves Phlan within the hour and arrives at his lair within an hour. The adventurers's trip to the Hall of the Black Bull, however, takes just over an hour. If warned by the Coven, Velvet arrives at the ruins (see Part 5, below) before the adventurers. Otherwise, he arrives after they do.

TREASURE

If the adventurers agree to rescue Sister Deathwillow and ask for an advance on their reward, they are offered either a *scroll of protection from energy* or a *scroll of water walking*.

Additionally, any adventurer who "trades" with the hags receives one of the following items. All of the items are from the *Player's Handbook*.

- *Potion of healing*
- Flasks of alchemists fire
- Flasks of oil
- Vial of antitoxin
- Vial of poison

If the adventurers slay the hags or cause them to flee, they find all of the above items offered for trade, plus an additional 1,000 gp in curiously-minted electrum coins. The coins are eye-shaped complete with a hole in the middle that can be seen through.

XP AWARD

If the characters treat with the hags of Bloodroot Coven, award each character 100 XP.

TO THE RUINS!

Assuming that the characters dealt with the hags amicably, they provide directions to Velvet's lair, a mere 30 minutes away. Otherwise, the ruins are not difficult to find— the trip there, however, takes one hour.

PART 5: THE RUINS OF THE BLACK BULL

Throstulgrael's lair is beneath the ruins of an ancient complex that once belonged to a long-forgotten cult of the Moonsea. In addition to the protection that its remoteness provides, the dragon has a small tribe of kobolds that excitedly follow his commands and keep his prisoners. Two acid-scarred trolls patrol the cult grounds.

It is important to note that the map of the ruins is not intended to be used in its complete form during play. It is provided as a reference for the DM in the event that the characters encounter a patrol. If a map is used during combat, simply use the map provided as a reference and reproduce the general area surrounding the characters when combat begins.

THE RUINS

Like everything else in the nearby marsh, the cult complex is nearly submerged beneath marshy water that is anywhere between a few inches to several feet deep with an occasional spot of land.

GENERAL FEATURES

Light. While it is still day, the entire area is covered by a blanket of fog and dimly lit. If it is after sundown, however, it is dark. No lights are present, save for those that the characters brought with them.

Terrain. Most of the ground within the ruins is covered with 1 to 2 feet of slow-moving water. However, the hidden wells are quite deep and difficult to see. All of this make traversing the ruins dangerous as a number of traps have been laid by the kobolds within. Here and there willow trees and reeds lightly obscure creatures standing within or behind them. Adventurers choosing to navigate the ruins while still on the pole boats, are available to avoid most, if not all, of the hazards.

Sound. The kobolds in the large willow tree can be heard going about their normal lives. The trolls can be heard rummaging through a building. The ever-present droning of flies and other insects is quite loud here.

Smells. The smell of rot and putrescence is thick here. The acidic tang noticed earlier but much stronger.

Wells. There are five old wells throughout the temple complex that are covered by deeper water. These wells are not obvious and likely are only found by those who know they're there or are lucky enough to happen across one. If an adventurer possesses the *Moonsea Cults* book from DDEX1-2 *Secrets of Sokol Keep*, they find that it

has includes a map of the ruins that shows the wells.

The characters can otherwise still happen across them, though it is very difficult. Any character succeeding at a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the well below the surface of the murky water. As characters without the book from DDEX1-2 *Secrets of Sokol Keep* do not know of their existence, finding them is likely only possible as a result of a passive check.

The wells afford the adventurers an opportunity to bypass the patrols of trolls and kobolds and the plethora of traps laid by the latter. In order to enter the complex via a well, the adventurers must hold their breath and swim down the well and through the pipes into the cisterns. Characters who swim down the wells come out in "Cistern B", in the Bowels of the Black Bull (See Part 6, below). As they swim there is no light in the pipes. They notice there are some pipes that have been destroyed and sealed (these lead to the dragon's lair). Play up the tension here. The distance the characters will need to swim isn't short enough to risk drowning, but they don't know that.

THE RUINS

As the adventurers enter the ruins, read:

The ruins of the complex are all in horrible shape--many having long ago collapsed in on themselves. Sometimes, only a short, moss-covered wall is the only sign of the ruins.

While there may have once been a wall surrounding the complex, only a few sections peek out of the murky waters.

Nature has reclaimed many of the buildings within the ruins; reeds, lily pads, and pondweeds sprout everywhere. Gaunt willow and sycamore trees rise like moldering skeletons from the muck-covered ground.

THROSTULGRAEL

If Velvet was warned of the adventurer's arrival, he confronts the adventurers before they enter the Hall of the Black Bull. As the adventurers arrive, read:

The wind picks up and the sun is blotted from the sky as an immense black form circles above you.

"You are bold to be intruding upon my domain!" the dragon bellows, "Bold indeed!"

Velvet is none too pleased—having sped all the way here from Phlan only to find the adventurers on his doorstep. Two **trolls** await just inside the hall and emerge as the adventurers draw near. Eight **kobolds** ride on Velvet's back and hurl rocks, nets, and acid and firepots onto the characters as they battle the trolls. For the most part, Velvet stays well out of melee combat, instead staying low enough for the kobolds to attack and shout a few insults—approximately 80 feet off of the ground. If the characters seem to be making short work of his trolls and kobolds, however, he uses his breath weapon to even the odds.

The kobolds astride the dragon have a number of items at their disposal; products of their labors in the dark chambers beneath the ruins. Additionally, they enjoy the benefit of cover (+2 AC). On their turn, the kobolds may use any one of the following attacks. The kobolds can't use the same attack two rounds in a row.

- **Rock:** +4 to hit, 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.
- **Acidpot:** +4 to hit, 7 (2d6) acid damage.
- **Firepot:** +4 to hit, 7 (2d6) fire damage.
- **Stinkpot:** +4 to hit, target must succeed at a DC 11 Constitution save or be poisoned for 1 minute. As an action, a poisoned character repeat the saving throw, ending the condition early if successful.
- **Net:** +4 to hit, target restrained, but can use action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature on a success. The net can also be destroyed by dealing 5 slashing damage (AC 10).

Velvet flees if he is reduced to half hit points or fewer, or if both of the trolls are slain. He demonstrates zero concern for any kobolds on his back; most of those that are plummet to their deaths as the dragon wheels and flies away. Velvet flies away a short distance to a submerged tunnel that leads to his lair beneath the ruins. Once there, a Cult of the Dragon cultist heals Velvet, who regains enough hit points to leave him at no less than half his maximum hit points.

ADJUSTING THE TROLL PATROL ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Reduce each troll's hit points to 42
- **Weak party:** Reduce each troll's hit points to 63
- **Strong party:** Increase each troll's hit points to 105
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 troll

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters enter the Hall of the Black Bull via the hidden wells, Velvet heads to his lair, disappointed at the

characters's absence. However, he will be there waiting for them—just as angry and deadly as ever.

One of the trolls is the mother of Graxxygak (see Part 7, below). With her dying breath, she shouts out a dire threat in broken Common to the characters:

"My child will flay skin from your bones and melt all that remain!"

XP AWARD

If the party enters the Hall of the Black Bull via the hidden wells and bypasses the encounter with Velvet and the trolls, award each character 300 XP.

PART 6. THE HALL OF THE BLACK BULL

Though very old, the Hall of the Black Bull still retains the same sense of grandeur that it conveyed in its heyday—albeit slightly more wet and moldy.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following general features apply on this level of the Hall of the Black Bull

Light. The hall has windows, but they are covered in muck and grime—all but preventing light from entering the structure. Though streams of yellow light trickle through in a few places, all of the areas within are treated as being completely dark. The only light in this dismal place is that which the adventurers have brought with them.

Smell. The smell of mildew and rot is strong here, but not as strong as the troll dung.

Sounds. Dripping water, cracking and falling stone. As the adventurers progress, the chattering of kobolds can be heard around corners, though they fall silent when the characters draw near.

Terrain. The trolls care very little for cleanliness and patches of troll dung make the floor slick in some places, while in others, crumbled and fallen stone hinders movement. Both of these conditions are treated as difficult terrain.

Kobold Clan. The Pitted Scale clan of approximately 20 kobolds lives and worships the dragon here. They follow their master's teachings and revel in gaining information from captives through torture, specifically the use of acid and poisons. They often subject themselves to the same poisons and acid that they use on their prisoners, using the poisons to commune with the kobold gods and acid to mark their scales with religious symbols.

The kobolds that serve Throstulgrael live in the ruins, fighting over every bit of dry ground they can find, primarily in the hall itself.

Trolls. Though the trolls are resentful of the dragon, Velvet's acid breath keeps them in line. Each of the trolls has deep runnels of acidic scarring down the length of their bodies from "lessons" that Velvet has taught them

The trolls patrol the marsh in and around the hall complex, searching for food—including any kobolds that might be foolish to wander around the ruins alone.

1. THE MAIN HALL

This was once the main gathering area of the cult that built the Hall of the Black Bull, as well as their place of

worship. It has since been occupied by a pair of trolls.

The prominent feature of this vast T-shaped room is a large statue of a rearing bull carved from what appears to be a single piece of black basalt standing on a plinth of rough-hewn alabaster.

Mossy vines crawl up the walls and hang from the ceiling. Doorways are set into the north and south walls of this room—though their doors fell from their hinges long ago and have since surrendered to the damp.

If the characters did not encounter the **trolls** in Part 5, above, they are here. They attack the adventurers immediately should they enter this area.

One of the trolls is the mother of Graxxygak (see Part 7, below). With her dying breath, she shouts out a dire threat in broken Common to the characters:

"My child will flay skin from your bones and melt all that remain!"

TREASURE

The trolls have stashed their collective hoard of eight gems worth a total of 200 gp as well as a sack containing 200 gp and 500 sp in a large burlap sack next to the statue. Unbeknownst to them, a chest of 5,000 cp is hidden away in a cunningly concealed compartment in the statue that they never managed to find. Finding the chest requires a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check.

2. THE KOBOLD LAIR

The kobold clan lives in these rooms. Though, when the characters arrive, only very old and very young are present. Upon the adventurers arriving, those kobolds that remain squeal in terror and flee out into the ruins.

TREASURE

The kobold leaders have three bags containing a total of 200 gp worth of various coins along with 30 gp worth of jewelry not-cleverly hidden in the larger of the rooms. There is nothing of value in the small rooms inhabited by the other kobolds.

3. VACANT ROOMS

With the exception of plant growth and an occasional pile of troll or kobold excrement, these rooms are empty.

4. REFUSE CHAMBER

This room is full of rotting and moldering piles of wood,

metal, paper and cloth—all of which has succumbed to the damp. The door in is barred from the inside and can only be opened from the outside using brute force. Any adventurer succeeding at a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check bashes the door in and makes a tremendous amount of noise doing so (though not enough to alert those creatures in the bowels, below).

5. THE WAY DOWN

The kobolds have suspended **flasks of acid** above the staircases leading down into the Bowels of the Black Bull (see Part 6, below). The flasks are connected to a tripwire at the top of each of the two the staircases. Noticing the tripwire requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

When triggered, each creature within a 10-foot-radius sphere must succeed at a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (4d6) acid damage. Those that succeed suffer half damage. A similar trap has been erected at each of the rear exits to the building as well.

XP AWARD

If the adventurers avoid or disable the acid traps, award each character 100 XP.

PART 6. THE BOWELS OF THE BULL

Throstulgrael has only recently taken over the cult complex, having relocated and escaped the onslaught of a rather devious cult in the Flooded Forest near Mulmaster only within the last year. Once the dragon found a suitable lair, he began abducting local humanoids to find out about treasure in the area and other opportunities to expand his power in the region. One of the main reasons that the dragon took the temple for his lair, however, was the mostly intact prison that he found beneath it.

1. THE PRISON

Under Velvet's watchful eye, the kobolds of the Pitted Scale clan tend to the prisoners kept here. This is not as pleasant as it sounds. For the most part, this involves torturing them with various poisons and acids.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following general features apply on this level of the Hall of the Black Bull

Light. There is no light here save for a few braziers used for brewing. The 10-foot-radius around a brazier is dimly lit, while the rest is dark.

Smell. The overpowering smell of blood and excrement is strong here, but is all but overwhelmed with a sharp, acidic tang—it almost hurts to breathe.

Sounds. Dripping water, cracking and falling stone. Whimpering. Rattling chains. Screams of agony.

Cages. There are eight, 10-foot-by-10-foot cages in this room with bars set into the bare stone floor. Each of the cages are occupied by 2 or 3 emaciated humanoids (mostly human with a couple representatives of the other common races). Only one of them has a single occupant. That cage contains a single, old woman (see Prisoners, below). Additionally, a plethora of cages fill the shelves that line the walls—all full of poisonous animals. Velvet takes pride in his collection of snakes, centipedes, scorpions and other venomous pets.

Shackles. Six sets of shackles are set into the far wall of the room. They are occupied by various humanoid creatures.

Terrain. Mud has oozed up through cracks in the floor in some spots, creating patches of difficult terrain.

This dark room is lit by three dimly-glowing braziers distributed among a half dozen tables in the room. Cage bars are set into the floors and are occupied by emaciated people in various stages of neglect. A half-dozen shackles hang from the far wall, their occupants moaning in pain and delirium.

A trio of kobolds are here and, upon noticing you, one of them grabs a cauldron from a nearby table and hurls its steaming contents onto the shackled prisoners who howl in pain.

The howls of pain quickly to turn to those of rage and fury as they stand and—with what seems to be the slightest effort—yank the chains from the wall before charging in your direction.

All of the prisoners are held in one large room, lined with cages and littered with tables and racks full of torture devices and alchemical equipment. A few prisoners are manacled to the walls, while the rest are locked securely in the cages.

Velvet has entrusted two **kobold cult fanatics** to lead the kobold clan in managing his "guests" in the prison with the assistance of a **kobolds berserker**. The cult fanatics torture the prisoners while the kobold berserker performs other various duties (such as moving prisoners from place to place, feeding and watering them, dismembering and disposing of those that are lucky enough to die).

When the characters enter the room, the kobold cult fanatics abruptly stop their work and the kobold berserker runs to a nearby table that holds a cauldron full of *elixir of hate* (see sidebar, below). He douses the shackled prisoners with the liquid who, in turn, begin to froth at the mouth and fly into an uncontrollable rage, turning into three **berserkers**. They immediately break free from the chains and attack the adventurers. The kobold cult fanatics stay in the rear and use spells to attack from range.

The *elixir of hate* is considered a poison for the intent of detecting what is affecting the prisoners and subsequently curing it (such as *lesser restoration*, *lay on hands*, *protection from poison*, etc.). Once cured, the berserkers attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of their turns. If successful, the berserker's body has purged itself of the *elixir of hate* and the prisoner returns to his normal self, albeit slightly tired.

KOBOLD...BERSERKERS?

Another benefit of Velvet's abduction of Sister Deathwillow is the creation of *elixirs of hate*--potent drafts that turn Velvet's kobold minions into raging monstrosities. Kobolds hand-picked by Velvet are each given 1 elixir that dramatically improve its combat capabilities.

Any kobold berserkers that the adventurers come across begin the encounter using statistics of normal **kobolds**. However, they may quaff an *elixir of hate* on their turn as a free action. When quaffed, their statistics are replaced with that of a **kobold berserker**.

Curious or fool-hardy adventurers may want to quaff an elixir discovered on the body of a kobold that was unlucky enough to die before consuming it. If this happens, the adventurer who drinks the potion attacks recklessly, gaining advantage on Strength-based melee weapon attack rolls based on Strength for 1 minute. However, attack rolls against the character have advantage. When the effect wears off, the adventurer suffers two levels of exhaustion (see Players Handbook, Appendix A). The elixirs lose their potency after 24 hours after which time they provide no benefit if drank.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove 1 kobold cult fanatic and 2 berserkers;
- **Weak party:** Remove 1 berserker;
- **Strong party:** Add 1 berserker
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 kobold berserker, 1 berserker

PRISONERS

There are also 10 additional prisoners--most of which are human, but a few non-humans are also present. These are all captured bandits, travelers, traders, and other folk that Velvet absconded from the Phlan Path since his arrival. They don't have much in the realm of useful information for the party, other than that before any of Velvet's minions enter the Cistern to the left of the prison, they say something in an odd language. If any of the berserkers were cured or otherwise survived the encounter, they are here as well.

All of the prisoners are severely malnourished and heavily injured. They are of no help in battle and refuse to proceed further into the complex. If forced to go towards Cistern A, they scream and flail in abject terror, and dig their nails and feet into the floor.

Amongst the prisoners are:

Larga Bloodhand. An orog warlord of Thar who came to treat with the Velvet in the hopes that the dragon would secure her rise to power in the Grey Lands. One of Larga's bodyguards inadvertently insulted the dragon, and Larga and her party have been trapped here ever since. The dragon only recently consumed the last of Larga's retinue;

Sister Deathwillow. Where the other cages have 2 to 3

captives inside, only one cage has a single occupant--an old human woman you'd guess were it not for her impossibly black eyes. This is Sister Deathwillow.

TREASURE

The kobolds have a total of 200 gp worth of saleable equipment, coins, and gems looted from the prisoners. Each of the kobold cult fanatics has a key that unlocks the cages and shackles.

XP AWARD

If the characters free the prisoners, award each 100 XP.

2. CISTERN B

This small cistern is the terminus of the wells that dot the complex. It is filled with water.

If the characters entered the Hall of the Black Bull via the concealed wells in the ruins above, they enter this level of the ruins in this area. It is similarly available as an exit should the characters choose to use it as such.

3. CISTERN A

This is the lair of Throstulgrael--the black dragon otherwise known as Velvet.

The broad door before you is covered in the same slimy mud that rises up to your ankles as you walk through this short hallway.

The floor in the hallway to the dragon's lair is trapped with a **glyph of warding**. The glyph is detected by any character succeeding at a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

If the glyph goes unnoticed, it is triggered when a creature passes over it without saying the phrase "Velvet Summons Me." Any creature within a 20-foot-radius sphere must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) acid damage. A successful saving throw reduces this damage by half. The trap cannot be disabled. The only way to bypass it is by using magic, such as *dispel magic*, or by using the pass-phrase, above.

GENERAL FEATURES

Velvet's lair has the following general features.

Light. The glow of embers from the braziers is the only light in the cistern; they cast dim light throughout the room.

Terrain. Most of the cistern room is taken up with water. The cave is rocky ground, pock marked by acid.

Sound. The sound of dripping water.

Smells. Everything has an acidic smell, causing your nose to burn.

Corrosive Air. Four cauldrons set about the room are filled with acid, and warmed by coals set in the braziers beneath them. As the acid boils, caustic fumes coils from the braziers and fills the room. As a result, the room each square in the room is lightly obscured.

If the adventurers knock over or otherwise disable the braziers, the damage that the acidic fog deals is reduced by 1 point. If all four cauldrons are upset, the fog lingers for an additional 2 rounds before dissipating.

Water. Most of the water in the cistern is a foot or so deep—nothing necessarily impeding. However, there is a 15-foot-wide cylinder in the center of the room that descends to a depth of 40 feet before veering off to another location elsewhere in the marsh. This is the primary means of access for Velvet and the half-dragon troll.

The door opens into a cavernous cistern that likely held a vast quantity of water at one time, but most has drained away through a large hole that appears to have been melted into the far wall. Around the room, pale green steam wafts from four pitted, iron cauldrons suspended over lit braziers.

Steps lead down into dark murky water—likely to the bottom, though it is difficult to tell precisely how deep the water is.

Velvet's lair is the large cave on the room's far wall—having melted through the cistern wall with his acid breath. Any creature, on his or her turn, must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) acid damage from breathing the **acidic fog** that permeates the room. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw suffers no damage. A character who spends an action to tie a rag around her face may make this saving throw with advantage.

Because the water here is so murky, it is difficult to notice precisely where the **submerged tunnel** is. Noticing the hole requires a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone who doesn't notice the hole and enters a square containing it must succeed at a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall in and be submerged 5 feet. Falling in does no damage, but getting out does require a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

FOES AND TACTICS

Velvet is here if he was warned of the adventurer's arrival by the hags or if the characters arrived here after 6am the following day. In the event of the former, Velvet was encountered in the ruins above and is likely quite

wounded; at **half hit points**. If the adventurers otherwise avoided the encounter or if it is after sunrise when the adventurers arrive, then he is here at full hit points and not pleased to see the adventurers.

Unbeknownst to the adventurer's, most of the ritual required to transform Velvet into a dracolich has already been completed. The only thing which remains is to quaff the draft that stops his heart and seals his soul in his phylactery—which he has already taken to wearing around his neck.

Once combat has begun, Velvet never strays further than 20 feet from the entrance to the side room in the cave portion of this lair. If Velvet is reduced to 30 or fewer hit points, or if he is otherwise certain that he will die before his next turn, he roars a command in Draconic and a cultist emerges from the small room in the back of the cave holding the vial containing the draft over his head. As a reaction, Velvet bites the cultist (AC 12, 9 hit points). This cultist willingly allows Velvet to attack, granting advantage to the dragon. If the cultist is slain (either by Velvet or the characters), Velvet grabs the cultist in his jaws and swallows him whole—vial and all. When this occurs, proceed to "The Death of Throstulgrael", below.

ROLEPLAYING VELVET

While he was hesitant to leave his lair in the Flooded Forest near Mulmaster, Velvet has found his new one to be quite the improvement. However, he is running on borrowed time. The ritual to turn him into a dracolich is nearing completion, and a small piece of him is rather terrified.

Throstulgrael is cruel and fights with reckless abandon, hurling insults that are nearly as sharp as his claws.

Graxxygak, a half-dragon troll, sleeps in the smaller chamber in the cave portion of this area. Where he is when combat begins depends on the result of the *glyph of warding* on the door into the cistern.

- **Glyph Triggered.** The troll wakes up from a particularly nice nap and slips into the submerged tunnel in the center of the room in order to ambush the party. Compare the result of Graxxygak's Dexterity (Stealth) check with the party's passive Perception. However, due to the murkiness of the water, the adventurers have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to see him. This reduces their passive Perception by 5.
- **Glyph Not Triggered.** Compare Graxxygak's passive Perception to the lowest passive (Stealth) score of any adventurer who enters the cistern. When awoken, he rushes to the cave entrance and uses his breath weapon before engaging in melee.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Reduce Graxxygak's hit points to 63
- **Weak party:** Reduce Graxxygak's hit points to 74
- **Strong party:** Increase Graxxygak's hit points to 94
- **Very strong party:** Increase Graxxygak's hit points to 105

THE DEATH OF THROSTULGRAEL

Once Velvet reaches 30 hit points, he consumes the draft containing the brew that slay him and bring about his rise as a dracolich. Velvet fears this, but has come too far to turn back now.

"Enough!" Throstulgrael bellows, "I am done with this existence."

The curtain at the back of the room flies open, and a cultist emerges. He shouts a single word in a strange, complex tongue and rushes towards the dragon, a large vial clenched in his outstretched arms. Velvet lashes out at the man and, taking the man into his jaws, swallows him in two jerking gulps, vial and all.

The dragon cries out in agony and collapses to the ground, his breath labored, ragged, and finally still. And almost immediately, his flesh decomposes before your eyes; scales crumble to dust while the muscle beneath turns gray and desiccated until Velvet is little more than a skeleton littered with ragged strips of rotted flesh.

A heartbeat later, pin-points of green light flares to life in the now-empty sockets of the dragon's skull. The skeleton jerks unsteadily to its feet and leaps overhead; diving into the water in the middle of the cistern and out of sight.

THE PRISONER

At the rear of the main cave is a smaller cave, its entrance concealed by a curtain comprised of black dragon scales that protects the contents of the cave from the cisterns acidic air. Within this smaller cave is the Velvet's hoard and his prisoner; Tevish Malacont.

There is a single cage in the dragon's lair that holds a rather bedraggled and acid scarred human.

Tevish Malacont. Tevish has been captured for some time and has been extensively tortured by Throstulgrael. He currently believes that he is dead and this is his punishment for a life of evil. Though the characters have no ways of knowing it, Tevish was a member of the strange cult that drove the dragon from the area surrounding Mulmaster, to the south.

Tevish is unable to speak about his past except in cryptic outbursts such as:

- "In their conjunction, all will behold the power of the Eye!"
- "The Eye is every-watching and ever-knowing!"
- "We obeyed the Prophet!"
- "Four bound by a fifth!"

There is little else of use that the characters will be able to get out of Tevish. If the characters bring him back with them to Phlan, he offers them a warning before departing the Hall of the Black Bull. He then resumes his rambling:

"Sea and city, capes and swords. Burning, crushing, howling, drowning Lords.

ROLEPLAYING TEVISH MALACONT

Tevish is wholly unstable and his mannerisms show it. He has not the faintest inkling of where he is or if he is even still alive. At times, he rants about his current predicament being his punishment for the wrongs he committed in life.

TREASURE

Velvet has accumulated an impressive hoard of 4,000 gp worth of various coins, art objects, and gems in the relatively short time he has laired in the Twilight Marsh. The characters also find a suit of *+1 splint mail*.

If any of the characters are members of the **Zhentarim**, the characters also find an oiled leather satchel containing a number of trade maps of the Moonsea region.

If any of the characters are members of the **Harpers**, they find a gaudily embroidered haversack with a few sets of equally gaudy clothes and a silver pin that resembles the Harper logo. Wrapped carefully in the clothes is Uliset Faelgren's *dragonhide spellbook*. They also find a Harper codebook tucked into a cleverly-hidden pocket inside the haversack (no check necessary to find).

If any of the characters belong to the **Lords' Alliance**, they find a magnificently beautiful lockbox of a strange, purple wood inlaid with platinum. The top of the box is decorated with a six-inch wide gold coin stamped with a crossed axe, hammer, and forge tongs.

The lockbox has no visible lock, hinges, or other hardware. It cannot be opened using mundane or magical means. Without the appropriate key, the only means of accessing the contents of the lockbox is by destroying it. Though it is made of wood, it is as strong as steel and extremely durable (AC 19, 36 hp). If destroyed, the only item within it is a single, yellow rose. If so opened, Rolk is visibly upset and does not pay the adventurers their promised reward of 700 gp.

XP AWARD

If the characters avoid the Glyph of Warding trap award each character 100 XP. If the characters release Tevish award each character 50 XP.

CONCLUSION

After Throstulgrael is defeated the remaining kobold minions scatter into the marsh. The captured prisoners are thankful for being rescued from the clutches of the torturous kobolds and their dark master. Several prisoners are willing to help the characters return to Phlan with the dragon hoard.

If the characters killed Throstulgrael and return to the hags and return their coven mate, the coven pays what is owed, though they are dismayed to hear about his transformation into a dracolich.

Returning the mysterious magically marked box to the Merchant's Guild earns their reward and a mischievous smile from their guild contact.

The return to trip to Phlan is uneventful. Damp, cold, and long, but otherwise uneventful.

REWARDS

Make sure note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Lizard king	1,100
Lizardfolk shaman	450
Will-o-wisp	450
Awakened tree	450
Shambling mound	1,800
Green hag	700
Goblin	50
Troll	1,800
Kobold cult fanatic	450
Kobold berserker	450
Berserker	450
Half-dragon troll	2,300
Throstulgrael, young black dragon	2,900

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Rescue Bogclaw	100
Parlay with the hags	100
Sneak in using the wells	300
Avoid or disable the acid traps	100
Each berserker saved	100
Avoid or disable the glyph of warding	100
Free Tevish	50

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **3,000 experience** points.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **5,000 experience** points.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Merchant's Guild advance	75
Shambling mound's amulet	200
Gems in troll lair	200
Sack of coins in troll lair	250
Hidden chest in troll lair	50
Sack of coins in kobold lair	200
Jewelry in kobold lair	25
Stolen equipment, gold, & gems	200
Dragon's Hoard	4,000
Reward from the Merchants Guild	700
Hag reward for rescuing Deathwillow	300
Hag reward for killing Velvet	700
Hag treasure (alternate to hag reward)	1,000

ULISET FAELGREN'S DRAGONHIDE SPELLBOOK

This spellbook is bound in black dragon scales and clasped shut with an ivory toggle. It contains the following spells that may be scribed into a character's spellbook using the rules in the *Player's Handbook*.

1st Level: *comprehend languages, detect magic, identify*

2nd Level: *detect thoughts, locate object, see invisibility*

3rd Level: *clairvoyance, tongues*

4th Level: *arcane eye*

5th Level: *legend lore*

SPELL SCROLL: PROTECTION FROM ENERGY

Scroll, uncommon

This spell contains a single *protection from energy* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

OR

SPELL SCROLL: WATER WALK

Scroll, uncommon

This spell contains a single *water walk* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

+1 SPLINT ARMOR

Armor, rare

This fine suit of armor has dwarven runes etched upon it. The runes describe the glories of great battles in the North against orcs. The armor glows faintly when within 100 feet of orcs. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SPELL SCROLL: HASTE

Scroll, uncommon

This spell contains a single *haste* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

POTION OF INVULNERABILITY

Potion, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RENOWN

All faction members earn one renown point for participating in this adventure.

Zhentarim characters earn **one additional renown point** for returning the trade maps found in Velvet's lair.

Lords Alliance characters earn **one additional renown point** for discovering the fate of Tevish Malacont and bringing him to Phlan.

Harper characters earn **one additional renown point** for recovering the Harper codebook and pin from Velvet's hoard.

Emerald Enclave characters of rank 2 (Summerstrider) or higher who complete their special mission earn **one additional renown point** and should note the **completion of a special mission** on their adventure logsheet.

Order of the Gauntlet characters of rank 2 (Marchon) or higher who complete their special mission earn **one additional renown point** and should note the **completion of a special mission** on their adventure logsheet.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

FAVORS AND ENMITY

The characters have the opportunity to earn the following story reward during the course of play.

Traded with a Hag. Either out of greed, naivety, or sheer ignorance, you traded with a hag and now bear a mark visible only to other fey. Any Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to positively influence non-evil fey are made with disadvantage. In order to remove this mark, the hag that you traded with must willingly return the "payment" you rendered in the trade.

DM REWARDS

You receive **400 XP** and **ten downtime days** for running this session.

APPENDIX 1: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

AWAKENED TREE

Huge plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d12 + 14)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages one language known by its creator

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

False Appearance. While the tree remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

Hit: 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

BERSERKER

Medium humanoid (any race), any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the berserker 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

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

GOBLIN

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

GREEN HAG

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The hag can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

Mimicry. The hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

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

Illusory Appearance. The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies.

The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.

Invisible Passage. The hag magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.

HALF-DRAGON TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +1

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Draconic, Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Keen Smell. The half-dragon troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The half-dragon 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.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The half-dragon troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

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.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The half-dragon troll exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

KOBOLD

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 5 (2d6 - 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

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

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

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

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

KOBOLD BERSERKER

Medium humanoid (kobold), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the berserker 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

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+ 3) slashing damage.

KOBOLD CULT FANATIC

Medium humanoid (kobold), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

LIZARDFOLK SHAMAN

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +6

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hold Breath. The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Spellcasting (Lizardfolk Form Only). The lizardfolk is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The lizardfolk has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, produce flame, thorn whip*

1st Level (4 slots): *entangle, fog cloud*

2nd Level (3 slots): *heat metal, spike growth*

3rd Level (2 slots): *conjure animals* (reptiles only), *plant growth*

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Lizardfolk Form Only). The lizardfolk makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage in crocodile form. If the lizardfolk is in crocodile form and the target is a Large or smaller creature, the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the lizardfolk can't bite another target. If the lizardfolk reverts to its true form, the grapple ends.

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

Change Shape (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The lizardfolk magically polymorphs into a crocodile, remaining in that form for up to 1 hour. It can revert to its true form as a bonus action. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

LIZARD KING

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5, Survival +4

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Hold Breath. The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Skewer. Once per turn, when the lizardfolk makes a melee attack with its trident and hits, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage, and the lizardfolk gains temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lizardfolk makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws or trident or two melee attacks with its trident.

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

SHAMBLING MOUND

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)

Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Immunities lightning

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Lightning Absorption. Whenever the shambling mound is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shambling mound makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 14), and the shambling mound uses its Engulf on it.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Engulf. The shambling mound engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the mound's turns or take 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the mound moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The mound can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 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.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

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.

WILL-O'-WISP

Tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 22 (9d4)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	28 (+9)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Consume Life. As a bonus action, the will-o'-wisp can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that has 0 hit points and is still alive. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against this magic or die. If the target dies, the will-o'-wisp regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Ephemeral. The will-o'-wisp can't wear or carry anything.

Incorporeal Movement. The will-o'-wisp 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.

Variable Illumination. The will-o'-wisp sheds bright light in a 5- to 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The will-o'-wisp can alter the radius as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Shock. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

Invisibility. The will-o'-wisp and its light magically become invisible until it attacks or uses its Life Drain, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

THROSTULGRAEL, YOUNG BLACK DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

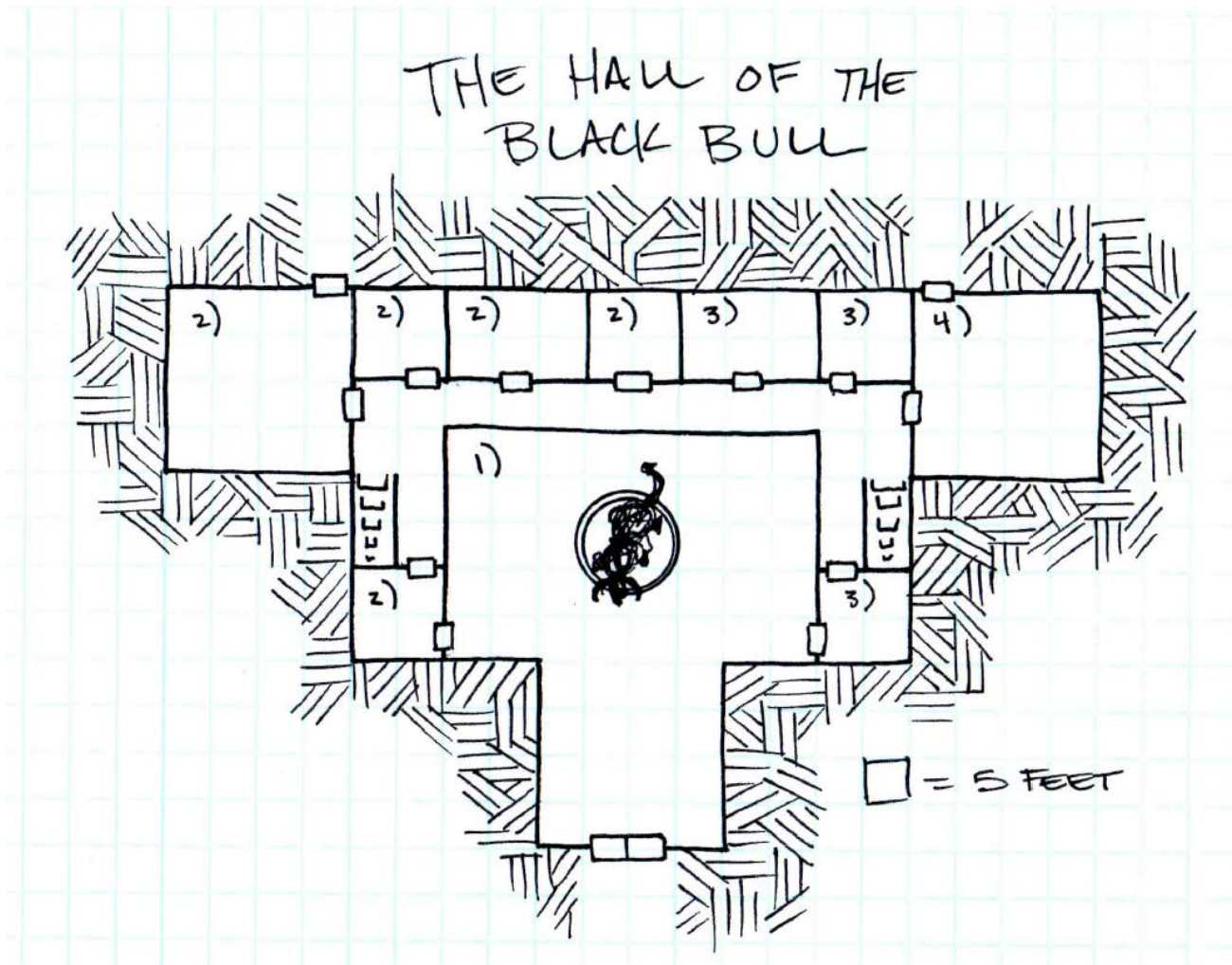
Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

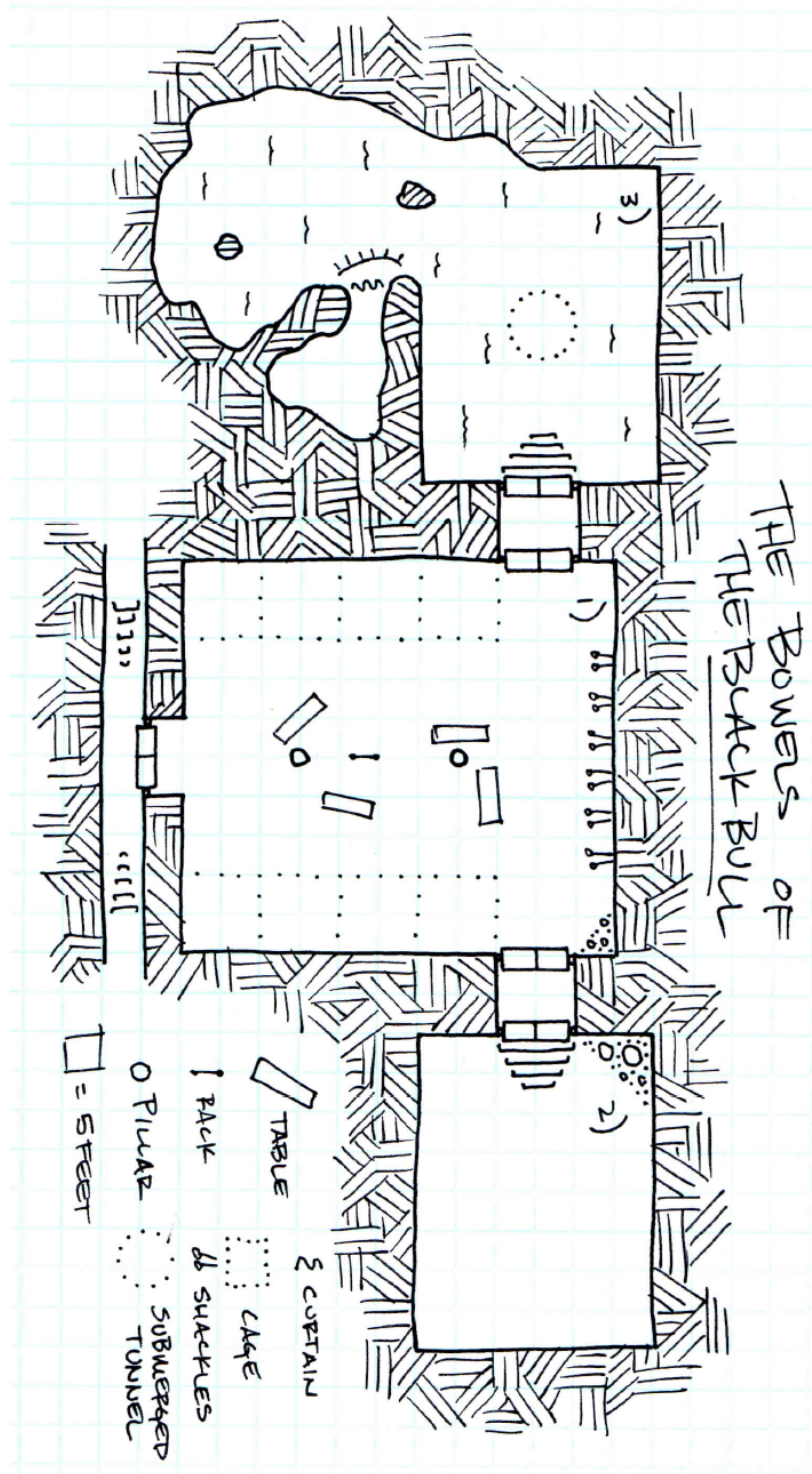
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

MAP 1: HALL OF THE BLACK BULL



MAP 2. THE BOWELS OF THE BLACK BULL



APPENDIX 2: UNTIL BLACK WINGS (TIME TRACKER)

Use this matrix to track the progress of the characters throughout the adventure. Put an "X" in the Passed column when that hour has passed. The Event field is just to see a suggested flow of events.

Time	Passed	Event	Time	Passed	Event
9am		1 hour to meet faction contacts	10pm		Arrive at complex, scout complex
10am		Travel to crossing inn	11pm		The Ruins of the Black Bull
11am		Travel to crossing inn	12am		The Hall of the Black Bull
12pm		Travel to crossing inn	1am		The Bowels of the Black Bull
1pm		Travel to crossing inn	2am		
2pm		Travel to Ringcurrent islands	3am		
3pm		Travel to Ringcurrent islands	4am		
4pm		Travel to Ringcurrent islands	5am		
5pm		Travel to Ringcurrent islands	6am		Velvet returns to his lair
6pm		Meet Bogclaw	7am		
7pm		Travel to cult complex	8am		
8pm		Meet Bloodroot Coven	9am		
9pm		Travel to cult complex	10am		

DEBUT RESULTS CODE: FEBRUARY-MARCH 2015

If you are DMing this adventure at during the months of February or March 2015, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.

