



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

BOUNTY IN THE BOG

The Soldiery has grown weary of dealing with a particularly nettlesome band of miscreants who have holed up in the Flooded Forest to the south. And so, you have been called upon to quell their activities so that trade along the North Road can resume unmolested. However, in so doing, the truth behind their activities reveal that much more than simple banditry is at hand. Will you be able to stop it? An adventure for 5th-10th level characters.

Adventure Code: DDEX2-7

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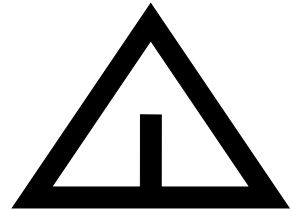
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Bounty in the Bog*, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Elemental Evil*™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 3rd-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. A player with an ineligible character can create a new 1st-level character or use a [pregenerated character](#).

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in and around the city of Mulmaster and the Flooded Forest to the south of the city.

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 3rd-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.

Faiths that can call upon spellcasting services in Mulmaster include the following: Bane, Leira, Loviatar, Mystra, Savras, Tempus, Tymora, Velsharoon, and Waukeen.

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

Adera Moonfist is a thief and a descendent of a member of the Turning Key—an adventuring party that called Mulmaster home some one hundred-forty years ago. She has also become obsessed with finding the location of the Turning Key's fabled treasure. Eventually, Adera's quest for increasingly obscure clues and arcane lore, would unfortunately introduce her to a mind flayer named Vanquo. The illithid had long coveted an artifact that had been lost in that same forest, but had been fearful of venturing through the forest's bright, exposed terrain. Seeing an opportunity in her, Vanquo captured Adera and interrogated her—absorbing every bit of information, before replacing her mind with that of an intellect devourer.

As ordered by Vanquo, the intellect devourer—now posing as Adera—began recruiting people for help for the search for the Turning Key's treasure. It also secretly approached the Cult of the Black Earth, pledging allegiance and providing information that gives the cult a great advantage.

Once Adera and her mercenaries arrived in the area, she told them she wouldn't be able to find the Turning Key's treasure or share its wealth—without more funds for excavation. The duped mercenaries, now hungry for gold, took to waylaying travelers along the North Road and helping Adera gather the resources she needs. With these funds and the cultists' zealous assistance, the intellect devourer is getting closer to achieving its master's goal.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- **Three Months Ago.** In Ravens Bluff, Adera Moonfist finds information that may lead to the Turning Key's treasure in the Flooded Forest. She begins gathering the people and equipment she'll need.
- **Two Months Ago.** The illithid Vanquo captures Adera. Her brain is consumed and her identity replaced by an intellect devourer.
- **Five Weeks Ago.** Adera's mercenaries begin attacking caravans and travelers on the North Road. The Cult of the Black Earth begins its dark work deep within the Flooded Forest.
- **Two Days Ago.** In taverns and public spaces, the Soldiery begins to spread word that adventurers are requested to assist with an investigation outside the city limits. Those who volunteer and succeed will be well paid.

OVERVIEW

Bounty in the Bog is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Hazards on the Road. The adventurers respond to a request from the Soldiery in Southroad Keep. A captain recruits them to deal with bandits who have been robbing travelers on the North Road, near the edge of the Flooded Forest. The adventurers investigate the situation and encounter the highwaymen. After defeating some of the bandits, the adventurers learn a few details about Adera Moonfist and realize they must travel into the Flooded Forest to catch the rest of the thieves and put an end to the attacks.

Part 2: Foreboding Forest. The adventurers inadvertently draw the ire of a tribe of lizardfolk, who are in a bad mood because of the unpleasant activities of other humans recently (the mercenaries and cultists). The adventurers must deal with the apprehensive lizardfolk, one way or the other, in order to find Adera and her thieves. A diplomatic approach helps reveal that something beyond banditry is at work. With the information they've gathered, the adventurers head for Adera's base of operations, although they'll need to find a way across or around the forest's hazardous, water-filled center to get there.

Part 3: Subterranean Surprise. The adventurers arrive at the entrance to a bizarre grotto, where they encounter the few remaining bandits. Within, they must deal with other hazards and guards put in place by the Cult of the Black Earth. Afterward, they come up against Adera and her cultists, hard at work on excavating a large stone object. Only by foiling the plans of Adera (and the intellect devourer within) can the adventurers succeed and claim their bounty. Failure could bring devastation.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Soldiery doesn't want to use its own resources to deal with this matter, especially since the attacks are occurring outside the city limits. The following adventure hooks can be used to draw the characters into the story.

Will Work for Food. After exploring the interesting sights and sounds of Mulmaster, the adventurers find themselves in need of gold to either move on or pay off gambling debts and bar tabs. Either through gossip in a tavern, a posted message in a marketplace, or a contact in the Soldiery, the adventurers hear of the bounty.

Emerald Alert. Elder druids within the Emerald Enclave have sensed the growth of something unnatural deep within the Flooded Forest. Now, with reports of attacks on the North Road close to that forest, the Emerald Enclave is concerned that the two events are not coincidental. They would like the adventurers to venture into the Flooded Forest and find out the truth.

A Threat to Mulmaster Itself? Any characters belonging to the Lords Alliance are approached and appraised of a number of caravan attacks. If the attacks on caravans continue, then merchants may start looking for safer routes by which to ship goods—and that could have devastating financial effects on Mulmaster, which relies on commerce along the North Road.

PART 1: HAZARDS ON THE ROAD

The adventure begins in or near Southroad Keep in Mulmaster. A severe rainstorm passed through the region the day before, finally ending just before dawn.

HEARING THE OFFER

Read the text below when you're ready to start. Adventurers with a faction assignment may have heard about the Soldiery's offer and see it as good cover for their true goal.

Recent, unseasonal rains have cast a depressing pall over Mulmaster, but as you approach Southroad Keep, the sun finally emerges, bringing with it crisp, fresh air and a sense of invigoration.

That feeling dissipates quickly as you grudgingly endure a series of checkpoints at the Keep. Gruff and probably underpaid guards repeatedly ask about your identities and the nature of your business. Once you explain that you're offering your service to help with the investigation, the soldiers direct you to see Captain Holke.

Once inside the Keep proper, you're escorted up an enclosed spiral staircase to the second floor and are shown into Captain Holke's office. Inside is a young-looking man with close-cropped black hair and neatly trimmed moustache and beard. He wears a tabard with the official Mulmaster crest, with a leather vest partially visible underneath. A suit of immaculately polished chain mail and a shield are displayed in a corner behind him. A gleaming longsword with a ruby-studded pommel hangs on the adjacent wall. Before you are four attractive black cherry chairs and a large, matching desk. Spread over the desk is a map of the area, stretching from Mulmaster down south to Ravens Bluff in Vesperin. Several sheets of paper with scribbled notes are strewn over the map.

Captain Holke is genuinely pleased to see the characters. His recent promotion was granted on the condition that he keep the peace in the area and ensure that the roads remain safe and passable. The powers that be in Mulmaster wish to wipe away some of the stains on the city's reputation and increase trade. Holke initially enjoyed great success in this role, personally greeting wealthy visitors and ordering his soldiers to make sure their needs were met—sometimes at the expense of Mulmaster's citizens. In exchange, a few of the travelers have given Holke "tokens of appreciation" in the form of money, gems, and the fine longsword on the wall.

ROLEPLAYING CAPTAIN GIDEON HOLKE

Captain Holke is a skilled fighter, yet his charm and intellect are his best weapons. He revels in his growing influence, especially with some of Mulmaster's wealthiest and most beautiful women, and he's deeply concerned that the attacks could bring all that to an end. His condescending attitude toward other soldiers and his rapid promotion has created a few enemies in the Soldiery, and Holke knows they wouldn't hesitate to get revenge if his position slipped.

He treats the adventurers very well, knowing that they may be his only hope of maintaining the status quo. He may offer compliments on their appearance or choice of weaponry. If the adventurers seem reluctant to take on the job, then his inner desperation shines through.

Unfortunately, the attacks on the North Road threaten to put an end to his lucrative career, and he can't spare the resources for a possibly lengthy investigation outside the city. So far, he's managed to keep the news of the attacks from spreading too far outside of the Soldiery, but he knows that he must address this and quickly. If the attacks continue, accusing voices demand that he be removed from his cozy position—an outcome he would view as highly unfair.

During the course of the discussion, Captain Holke relates the following:

- Over the past month, three caravans have been attacked on the North Road. One had left from Mulmaster, while two were heading toward the city. The attacks occurred at roughly the same location: about 60 miles south of Mulmaster, a day north of the village of Masker's Eye.
- At least five people have been killed so far. If questioned, Holke admits that the number of attacks may be higher; if everyone on a caravan were slain, he might not hear about it for weeks until the merchants were reported missing.
- Reports from the survivors describe five or six attackers. In each case, a strange fog rose up as the merchants traveled. The caravan guards weren't able to muster a defense until it was too late.
- In each instance, the attacks were over quickly. The thieves grabbed coins, gems, and food, leaving other items—furs, perfumes, fabrics—untouched.
- The attackers were reportedly on foot. However, Holke acknowledges that horses may have been hidden nearby.

- Holke's contacts say that a wealthy gnomish merchant named Anghara Hettix leaves Mulmaster tomorrow, bound for Tantras. If the adventurers wish, Holke can persuade the merchant to take them as additional guards for part of the trip, as a sign of Mulmaster's hospitality. Under no circumstances, however, are the adventurers to tell Hettix about the recent attacks and their true reason for accompanying her. Mulmaster's image must be preserved.
- The adventurers can choose to follow the caravan from a distance, rather than be a part of it, but in any event, Holke says that they're on their own for transportation. If they don't have horses or don't want to ride in Hettix's wagons, then they'll have to walk along the North Road for 70 miles.
- Holke asks that the adventurers stop the attacks and put an end to the thieves—by any means possible. He can't spare members of the Soldiery for the trip south. He offers the party 150 gp, and adds that if they bring back any of the thieves, he'll award the characters an additional 50 gp—upping the reward to a total of 200 gp.

RUMOR MILL

In their preparations for their excursion south, the players may hear some of the following rumors:

Grumbling Among the Guards. Some characters might make some inquiries of guards about events along the North Road or may overhear their conversation. Most of the guards that the adventurers encountered on the way into Southroad Keep don't have a high opinion of the region's commanding officer. Word is that his rapid promotion are due more in part to his close connections to nobles than actual competence.

Anybody Sell a Used Gem Lately? Characters seeking out the seedier parts of town may discover rumors about a halfling mercenary who recently came into town not more than a week ago to sell some gems. Word is that he left two days later, headed south along the North Road with an unusually large amount of supplies in tow.

Ancient History. If the characters reveal their intent to venture towards the stretch of the North Road near the Flooded Forest, most folks spin a tale about an old adventuring company called "The Turning Key."

The Turning Key was a group of female adventurers, most of which were bards and thieves. The jovial group lived in Talivar—a village in the Vast. Eventually the group would disband as its members relocated to different parts of the Sword Coast.

Legend of their treasures would far outlive them, though. Adventurers would come from near and far to search the area around Talivar for the group's buried treasure, but to no avail.

Satcheera Moonfist, the last surviving member of the group, upon hearing of the treasure hunters, famously remarked "Still haven't found our jewels? They must be looking in far too dry a place!" This led many to believe that the Flooded Forest was a more likely place to search, but the size and risk deterred most from attempting. Satcheera passed away before 1370 DR.

ANGHARA'S CARAVAN

If the adventurers decide to join Anghara Hettix's caravan, the characters find that Captain Holke has made appropriate arrangements. The adventurers are responsible for their own food, water, and bedding; and are expected to provide assistance in the event that the caravan is attacked or otherwise needs help.

Shortly after dawn the next day, they meet up with the caravan just inside the gate leading to the North Road.

Passing through the gates of Mulmaster, the North Road stretches into the foothills to the south. Two wagons have been pulled off to the side laden with goods and festooned with a number of lamps, banners, and collapsed awnings. A pair of dwarven women and a trio of gnomes eye you cautiously as you approach.

One of the gnomes, a woman with gray-streaked, dark red hair comes around to greet you. The air is filled with ringing and clinking as her extensive (and gaudy) jewelry collection bounces in time with her step.

"You must be my ordained entourage," she says with a wry smile on her face. "Good morning, I'm Anghara Hettix."

Anghara introduces her colleagues. Anghara suspects that there's a hidden motive to the adventurers' presence, but Captain Holke has done right by her in the past. She relates that Holke has instructed her that the characters are accompanying her only as far as the pass in the Earthspur Mountains, but as she isn't paying for the extra guards, Anghara doesn't mind.

ROLEPLAYING ANGHARA HETTIX

Anghara is an experienced, well-traveled merchant with a pleasant manner and a tendency to use long, multisyllabic words whenever possible. After securing a small amount of wealth from her time as a rogue in Icewind Dale, she sought a less hazardous life as a merchant near the Moonsea. While her trouble-seeking days may be done, she is quite able to defend herself in a fight.

She dearly hopes that the adventurers' presence today isn't a bad omen. It is expected that her first impression of them is that they are at least a capable group, and to her mind there's no point in turning down free help. If they demonstrate some skill during the trip, she may even hire them herself.

Before the caravan departs, Anghara establishes a few ground rules. First, under no circumstances are the adventurers to ask about the nature of her cargo or open any of the crates within the wagons. Second, when they make camp for the night, they must set themselves up away from the wagons. And finally, if the caravan encounters trouble she expects that the adventurers aid in its defense. If they can prove themselves useful in that regard, she may toss “a little something extra” their way. Assuming the characters accept these terms, the caravan sets off shortly thereafter.

ANGHARA'S COLLEAGUES

Anghara is traveling with four others, as follows:

Dayra and Magrori Emberaxe. Two dwarvish mercenaries. Sisters. Dayra is fun-loving and enjoys playing pranks on her rather dour and stubborn sister. Both pass their idle time throwing dice with one another. Depending on which of the two you ask, the other is terrible at the game.

Roderunk and Fendlik Hettix. Anghara's gnomish cousins. These two gnomes are identical twins (a rarity amongst gnomes) and often complete each other's sentences. They know that they are nearly impossible to tell apart, and use it to their advantage. They share a keen appreciation for the finer things in life and are often found hiding away drinking or smoking a frustratingly large portion of Anghara's trade goods.

THE NORTH ROAD

The attacks occurred in roughly the same area—a stretch of road about 60 miles south along the North Road.

GENERAL FEATURES

The North Road has the following general features.

The Terrain: The North Road is well maintained and wide enough to easily accommodate two wagons traveling side by side or passing in opposite directions. The terrain around you is fairly plain at the start of the journey, with more hills appearing as you head south. The Earthspur Mountains loom far in the distance to the east and south.

Weather: Sunny and mild.

Smells. The country around the North Road is, for the most part, scrub brush and foothills, but is nevertheless quite pleasant. The air is filled with the smell of wild flowers. Near Mulmaster, the air is tinged with salt, but as the adventurers near the Flooded Forest, the air takes on the odor of stagnant, fetid water.

Travel Time. If the adventurers are traveling on foot or with a caravan, it takes them three, full days of travel to arrive at the section of the North Road where the attacks occurred. If the adventurers speed ahead on mounts, the trip takes two, full days.

AMBUSH!

Whether or not the characters chose to accompany Anghara's caravan, they happen across an ambush when they reach a winding stretch of the North Road nearest the Flooded Forest.

Any character with a passive Perception score of 13 or higher notices the hiding bandits and is able to act in the surprise round. If one or more of the characters are scouting ahead or otherwise detect the bandits without being detected themselves, the group may be able turn the tables on the would-be ambushers. Let the characters get creative in their assault, and reward creativity with surprise and possibly advantage on an attack roll.

If the bandits get the drop on the adventurers, read:

The placid tranquility of the countryside is suddenly and rudely interrupted by the twang of a bowstring. All around you, shouts emanate from behind boulders, trees, and the occasional bush.

As they round a bend in the road, the caravan is ambushed by a **scout**, a **bandit mage** and four **bandits**. They are hiding behind rocks and small trees on both sides of the road. One of the bandits is the halfling mentioned in the Rumor Mill sidebar.

If the characters are with Anghara's caravan when they are ambushed, describe a separate group of bandits that the dwarvish sisters are engaged with. If the characters seem inclined to assist them, the dwarvish sisters insist that they've got things in hand, and that the characters should take care of their own group of foes. If the characters ignore the dwarves, the bandits that they are fighting are slain if hit with a successful attack.

The four bandits fight to the death—they're too frightened of the scout's reprisal to surrender. The scout and the mage, however, are more pragmatic. If either is reduced to less than 5 hit points, they flee into the wilderness. To facilitate this, the mage keeps one spell slot available to cast *invisibility* to aid in her flight. If escape is impossible, they surrender.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some recommendations for adjusting this combat encounters. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove four bandits and one mage; add one scout
- **Weak party:** Remove four bandits
- **Strong party:** Replace the scout with a spy; replace four bandits with four scouts
- **Very strong party:** Remove bandits, add two spies and one mage

DEVELOPMENTS

If the adventurers disobey Holke's orders and inform Anghara about the bandit activity in the area, Dayra is grievously wounded in the ambush, but still alive—thanks to the extra padding she wore in observance of the characters's warning. Similarly, if the characters go out of their way to engage the bandits that the dwarves are fighting, she survives the ambush. However, if the characters remain silent about the bandit activity or do not attempt to save the dwarves, she is slain.

Anghara and her team are grateful for the adventurers's assistance in defending the caravan and decide to continue to Tantras. She certainly has no interest in watching over or transporting any prisoners. If Dayra survived the ambush thanks to the characters disclosure, Anghara is thankful for their aid and provides them a pouch containing 50 gp.

Should the characters capture either the scout or the evil mage, one of the two eventually reveals the following in the course of discussion:

- They were hired by someone called Adera Moonfist about six months ago down south in Raven's Bluff. Any character that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the name as belonging to a successful thief in the city-state. Any character with the Criminal, Urchin, or similar background, or a character that calls the Vast home may make this check with advantage. If the character also heard the rumor "*Ancient History*" (see Rumor Mill sidebar, above), they recall the name Moonfist as being a member of the Turning Key. Neither of the bandits know of the old adventuring group.
- Her demeanor has recently changed. Before she relished the search for treasure almost as much as the treasure itself. But now, every day that her searches yield nothing finders her more angry and demanding than the day before.
- More recently, Adera instructed the bandits to rob caravans and other travelers and travel to Mulmaster with the proceeds to buy new shovels, picks, and whatever other supplies are needed.
- They seldom see Adera—perhaps once or twice in a tenday when she comes out of the forest with a couple of her diggers to pick up supplies and receive news from the city.
- They under instructions not to approach the site without her express permission.

- They don't know much about the “diggers,” but feel uncomfortable around them. The diggers were hired recently, and weren't part of Adera's Ravens Bluff associates. When traveling, they usually wear dark green cloaks, with drawn cowls.

The bandits do not know the exact location of the excavation site, but point out its approximate location if given a map. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check guesses that it takes about five or six hours to get there on foot—riding in on horseback would be dangerous due to the mud and sinkholes common to the Forest.

The bandits have a large tent a few miles into the forest, but they do not divulge this unless specifically asked and a character succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check.

If there is no one left for the adventurers to interrogate when the battle is over, the characters find a map of the local area on one of the dead bandits. On the map, the characters find that the bandits marked their camp, the ambush site, and a third location within the Flooded Forest marked only with a shovel crossed with a pick. Otherwise the map is found in the camp.

THE BANDIT'S CAMP

Off of the road, the adventurers find tracks that appear to have been made by the wheels of a small wagon pulled by a single horse. These tracks lead to a large clearing five miles deep in the forest with four threadbare tents around a small fire pit. The wagon is concealed behind the largest tent. There are also four horses lashed to a couple of nearby trees. If a character investigates the interior of the tents, they find the following:

- Six bedrolls, and burlap sacks with personal effects (i.e., a few sets of filthy clothes, a caricature of a loved one, etc.)
- A map of Ravens Bluff
- Four unlabeled jars filled with a pungent, yellow paste. Any character proficient with herbalism kits automatically recognizes the substance as a form of insect repellent. Any other character succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) check to realizes the same. Each jar contains 3 doses of the goop. As an action, a creature can apply the salve which lasts for 2 hours. After that time, it must be reapplied.
- A number of crates labeled "Hothin Mercantile". The crates contain bolts of fine cloth, spices, and other trade goods worth a total of 100 gp.

Inside the largest tent, they find a large, wood chest. The chest is locked and opening it requires a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Inside the chest, the characters find the following:

- A few sets of slightly-less-filthy clothes
- The mage's spellbook bundled in an oiled leather haversack
- A *scroll of comprehend languages*, a *scroll of remove curse*, and a *scroll of silence*
- An unlocked lockbox containing 25 gp

Additionally, any character searching the chest that also succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a cleverly hidden secret compartment containing 45 gp. It would appear that the scout had been skimming a bit off of the take and had been hiding it here.

TREASURE

If Dayra survived the ambush, Anghara gives the group a payment of 50 gp.

Each of the bandits carry 5 gp in various coins on their person, for a total of 30 gp. The mage also carries a *potion of healing*.

If the characters locate the bandit camp and investigate the tents, they find 4 jars of insect repellent. Additionally, the chest contains the mage's spellbook, a *scroll of comprehend languages*, a *scroll of remove curse*, a *scroll of silence*, and a lockbox containing 25 gp.

If the characters discover the secret panel in the chest, they also find the 45 gp that the scout had been hiding from his colleagues and employer.

XP AWARD

If the adventurers saved Dayna's life, either by warning them ahead of time regarding the bandits or by assisting during combat, award each character 50 XP.

PART 2: FOREBODING FOREST

It's early in the afternoon by the time the adventurers have finished dealing with the ambush and potentially located the bandits's camp. They must then decide what to do with any prisoners they have and what their next course of action is. Presumably, they venture into the Flooded Forest, looking for Adera's camp. They could opt to take a long rest at this point as the next location is several miles away.

GENERAL FEATURES

The general features of the Flooded Forest are as follows:

Light. It's partly cloudy, and the light that does come through the clouds is broken up by the trees as the forest gets denser. Visibility is no more than 60 feet along the path and only 20 feet along the sides.

Sounds. Bird calls. Droning buzz of insects. Chirping of crickets and frogs.

Smells. Rotting vegetation. Stagnant water.

Terrain. The Flooded Forest has boggy soil and is marsh-like in places. The terrain is spongy and at times resembles quicksand (though it only threatens to take the characters footwear off their feet rather than swallowing them whole). Characters need to make a Constitution (Endurance) DC 15 check or suffer from Stage 1 Exhaustion. This check should be made before the interaction with the lizardfolk below.

UNHAPPY LIZARDFOLK

A lizardfolk tribe in the southern part of the Flooded Forest has grown agitated in recent days, disturbed by visions of outsiders. As such, they have been watching Adera and her diggers but have thus far been reluctant to attack. They are returning home from watching Adera when they spot the adventurers in the swamp ahead.

Several miles into your journey the forest becomes more swamp-like. The ground is wetter, the air thicker, and the insects much more annoying. As you slog through more and more vines seem to dangle from trees, increasingly impairing your view of the path ahead. As you pass through one such curtain of vines, you see a creature standing not 20 feet in front of you.

It's two legged and reptilian, with dark green scales across its tall, powerful body. Thick talons extend from its hands and feet, and a red frilled crest runs down from its head all the way to its sinewy tail. A feather- and bone-adorned amulet around its neck and a similarly decorated rod in its clawed hand suggest some level of intelligence. It looks at you steadily with yellow eyes, and he speaks in a hissing voice.

The patrol of four **lizardfolk** stand in the middle of the path to challenge the adventurers's presence. One of them is named Soqaxu, and steps forward asking "*Why are you here?*" in archaic Draconic.

A character succeeding at a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) identifies these creatures as lizardfolk. A character that succeeds on this check by more than 5, also knows that while lizardfolk are xenophobic, they are not necessarily hostile unless their territory has been violated. They also know that lizardfolk is not common in this part of the Flooded Forest.

ROLEPLAYING SOQAXU

The lizardfolk is smart, experienced, and right now very conflicted. He is greatly concerned about the activity in the grotto, but he is reluctant to challenge Adera, especially this far from home. His mission is supposed to be a fact-finding one, after all. The king would not want him to start a major fight without knowing for certain that the tribe would be at risk otherwise. Therefore, Soqaxu has decided to offer himself as bait. If these other outsiders are allied with those in the grotto, then they will likely attack him—and be quickly outmatched when Soqaxu's warriors reveal themselves. On the other hand, if these newcomers are *not* allied with those in the grotto, then he may have found a way to stop the mysterious activities without risking reprisals against his tribe.

DEVELOPMENTS

This encounter could become a difficult or even deadly fight for the party. The outcome hinges on whether any of the adventurers threaten or attack the lizardfolk without provocation.

The Adventurers Attack. The four lizardfolk warriors defend themselves. Determine surprise as usual.

Should a character be reduced to 0 hit points, the lizardfolk batter them into unconsciousness. The lizardfolk bind them and take them to their camp nearby to learn more about them. Eventually, they release the characters under threat of death if they should attack again.

The Adventurer's Parlay. Unless one of the characters speak Draconic or have magical means to translate, discussion with the lizardfolk is difficult, to say the least. Adventurers may need to resort to dramatic gestures, pantomime, or crudely drawn pictures in the mud in order to get their point across. While rolling is not necessary for simple things, the lizardfolk and characters may need to make Wisdom (Insight) checks in order to decipher more complicated ones. Particularly entertaining and clever attempts at communicating should be rewarded.

If anyone in the party *can* converse in Draconic, things become much more straightforward. The lizardfolk know nothing of the North Road attacks, but do express their concern about the activities within the grotto. They reveal that four people are inside the grotto right now. Many humanoids look the same to most lizardfolk, so the lizardfolk can't be more specific than that, although they reveal that one of them—most likely the leader—seems "unusual."

Even if the adventurers make peace with the lizardfolk, they adamantly refuse to join them in investigating the grotto. They are beyond the tribe's border and do not risk a greater conflict. He does, however, warn the adventurers of the giant wasp nest on the approach to the grotto. He and the warriors will wait here for the adventurers' return so that he can report to their tribe.

GIANT WASPS

After the adventurers have spent about two more hours trudging through increasingly swampy terrain, the characters come upon an elemental node.

You continue to follow the path—and the muddy trail left by the wagon—into a wider area, letting in more natural light than you've seen in a while. The trees here are taller and even more misshapen than those at the fringe of the forest. If the gnarled aerial roots slightly resembled gnarled, groping fingers before, that feeling is unshakeable now. The bark is cracked and oddly twisted in spots, exposing sap to hungry insects. It reminds you of an open sore. The ground from this point on takes on a distinctly darker tinge.

DEVELOPMENTS

The grotto itself is an elemental node, and its energies have affected sections of the surrounding terrain for several miles. Anyone who succeeds at a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check knows that the trees's appearance is unnatural. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Intelligence (Arcana) check suggests that wild magic, necromancy, or extraplanar energy could be causing this. Anyone in the Emerald Enclave faction who succeeds on this check knows that extraplanar energy is the cause.

The bark isn't the only strange thing on one of the trees. Fifty feet above you, nestled in the crook of a limb, is a large, gray, adobe-like structure, almost like a crude hut, with large holes riddling one side. A strange droning noise emerges from it, increasing in intensity—and three giant winged insects zip out of the holes and fly straight down toward you!

The three **giant wasps** ignore anyone who has applied the pungent yellow paste from the bandits' tent within the past two hours, or shortly before the encounter with the lizardfolk, assuming the adventurers haven't recently taken a long rest. Once combat starts, the wasps continue to ignore such targets unless that adventurer decides to attack a wasp.

As an action, a character can apply one dose of the unguent to himself or another character.

If an adventurer is paralyzed by a giant wasp's poison, a wasp picks up that adventurer and flies back to the wasps' nest. The wasps fight to the death.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some recommendations for adjusting this combat encounters. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove one giant wasp
- **Strong party:** Add two giant wasps.
- **Very strong party:** Add four giant wasps

XP AWARD

If the adventurers were able to reach an understanding with the lizardfolk and avoid conflict, award each character 75 XP. If the characters avoid the encounter with the wasp due to the application of the insect repellent, award each character 50 XP.

PART 3: SUBTERRANEAN SURPRISE

The adventurers follow the path to its terminus, the entrance to a large grotto deep within the Flooded Forest.

ENTERING THE GROTTO

GENERAL FEATURES

Once the adventurers enter the cave mouth, the following features apply.

The Terrain. The floor, walls, and ceiling are a mix of stone and mud, descending down. Rocks and small piles of mud line the sides of the tunnel, and lumber supports have been placed every 30 feet or so. The tunnel is about 15 feet wide and its average height is 10 feet.

Light. Dim for the first 30 feet, then dark for the next 120 feet. It gets dim again for the final 30 feet as the tunnel opens into the chamber where Adera and the cultists are working.

Sound. No sounds until the adventurers get about 50 feet from the tunnel's end, at which point a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals sounds of digging and shouted commands echoing from up ahead.

The tracks in the dark earth lead you around a large, muddy bog. The air, while no longer humid, now feels strangely thick regardless, and your lungs are beginning to strain after your long walk. A gentle breeze blows toward you from the west. Near you, at the edges of the peat-covered bog, many purple reeds with mushroom-shaped bulbs are poking through the moss.

Finally, your trail ends at a rocky outcropping at the base of a hill. There's a wide cave-like opening in the rocks, flanked by wheelbarrows, piles of stones, and broken pieces of shovels, picks, and other tools.

The purple reeds are an aquatic version of two **violet fungi**. The adventurers are safe as long as they don't step into the bog—otherwise the fungi attack.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some recommendations for adjusting this combat encounters. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove one violet fungi
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add three violet fungi

SITUATION MUDDY

Once the party has moved about 50 feet into the tunnel, read the following text.

As you continue your gently sloping descent, you hear a tiny, nasal voice echoing just ahead. The words are strange, but the voice is a grumbling whine.

The tunnel eventually opens into an irregularly-shaped 40-foot by 100-foot room. Piles of excavated dirt and pools of fetid bog water are littered about the floor.

There are three **mud mephits** in this room. Only one of them, however, can be seen thanks to the mephits's *false appearance* ability. The mephits have been set to guard the entrance to the grotto along with the **gray ooze** that is 10 feet in front of the group and is also unseen due to its *false appearance* ability.

If the adventurers have darkvision or a light source, they reveal more details of the mud mephit.

You see a strange little creature flapping a few feet in front of you. It has a long, pointed ears and a nose to match, with misshapen porous wings that don't look capable of keeping it aloft. The whole thing seems covered in mud.

The mud mephits have come through from the Plane of Elemental Earth, and Adera (or, rather, the intellect devourer) has persuaded them to guard the tunnel. The mephit that the adventurers can see has been set tis complaining that he's the one who has to set the trap. The language is Terran, and the mud mephit is complaining, "*Why does it have to be ME again? It's not fair! I'll kill them if they keep it up!*"

The mephits enjoy the idea of feeding trespassers to either the giant badger below or the gray ooze. The mud mephits attempt to keep the adventurers' attention focused on them (which they love), giving the unseen mephits and ooze an opportunity to strike with advantage.

Once the hovering mephit is sure he's been seen, he spreads his arms wide and says in Terran, "*I'm so glad you've come here to die today. Can I have any treasure you found today? You won't need it.*" As soon as any adventurer takes another step toward him, piles of mud on either side of the party reveal themselves to be mud mephits.

On the first round of combat, the mephits attempt to use *mud breath* to make the adventurers easier prey for the ooze, which barely even notices the mephits. The mephits and ooze fight until they're slain.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some recommendations for adjusting this combat encounters. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove gray ooze
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add 1 gray ooze and 1 mud mephit

THE CAVERN

Once the adventurers descend farther and are about to see light up ahead (about 30 feet from the end of the tunnel), they'll be able to hear raised voices and digging sounds from the chamber ahead. Of course, unless they're moving stealthily, Adera Moonfist (uses **spy** statistics), three gargoyle-masked **Sacred Stone monks**, and a **giant badger** are likewise able to hear *them!*

If anyone in the party suggests they need to move quietly, ask for a DC 16 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. If at least half the group succeeds, Adera doesn't hear them.

Otherwise, if they fail the group check, Adera has the benefit of surprise and attempt a *sneak attack* with her hand crossbow before the main combat begins.

When the adventurers look into the cavern, read:

The tunnel opens into a large cavern, illuminated by several dozen sunrods. Boulders, tall mounds of recently excavated earth, and a small wagon dot the cracked, uneven floor. In the center is a pit, about twenty feet wide. You're too far away to see what's at the bottom, but you do see a man in a gargoyle mask nimbly climb up a ladder to join several similarly masked men at the pit's edge. Standing to one side is an auburn-haired woman wearing leather armor and long blue gloves. Her beauty is matched only by the hate in her eyes as she glares at you. She pulls out a short sword, tugs on the collar of the gigantic badger crouching next to her, and yells, "Kill them!"

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. Difficult. The rocks and cracked earth slightly impedes movement. The piles of dug-up earth provide half cover. The piles of rocks provide three-quarters cover.

Light. Brightly lit. The accumulated sunrods provide plenty of illumination.

Smells. Dampness, human sweat, and animal waste.

ROLEPLAYING ADERA (THE INTELLECT DEVOURER)

For reasons known only to him, the mind flayer Vanquo is desperate to acquire artifacts linked to the Elemental Plane of Earth. His creation, the intellect devourer, shares that desire. The aberration has successfully used Adera Moonfist's body and connections to assemble a team of bandits, as well as rally Black Earth cultists to her side. Now that the goal is in sight, the intellect devourer has no tolerance for additional delays. It wants the adventurers dead. It only attempts diplomacy if it sees that its side is losing, and even then only to attempt to switch bodies in order to facilitate its own escape.

Adera attacks from range, letting the Sacred Stone monks engage the adventurers in melee to use *sneak attack* as often as possible. The Sacred Stone monks attack without uttering any words or making any sounds. The giant badger savagely attacks the closest target. The monks and the giant badger fight to the death. If captured, the monks say nothing, as their vow of silence dictates.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some recommendations for adjusting this combat encounters. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one Sacred Stone monk and the giant badger
- **Weak party:** Replace the spy with a scout, remove the giant badger
- **Strong party:** Add one Black Earth guard
- **Very strong party:** Add one Black Earth guard and one bandit mage

DEVELOPMENTS

If Adera is reduced to 0 hit points during combat, read the following:

Adera Moonfist drops to the hard ground, dead. No sooner do you breathe a sigh of relief something impossible happen. Her brain slides right out of her body, as if her skull weren't there! Then the violet, wrinkled, pulsating mass extends four clawed legs, tenses, and jumps!

A successful DC 15 Intellect (Arcana) check identifies the creature as an intellect devourer, a vile creation of mind flayers. If any of the monks are in a position to witness this, they're just as shocked by the appearance of an intellect devourer as the party.

If three or fewer adventurers are conscious at this point, the intellect devourer attacks one at random, as described above, believing there's still a chance to salvage this operation. If more than three adventurers are still active, it spends its turn fleeing through one of the many cracks in the cavern walls. Unless the adventurers are able to stop the creature, it escapes.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some recommendations for adjusting this combat encounters. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** Reduce the intellect devourers hit points to 14
- **Strong party:** Increase the intellect devourer's hit points to 28
- **Very strong party:** Increase the intellect devourer's hit points to 35

EXAMINING THE STONE

If the adventurers examine the stone, they can find out the following information.

- The pit is about 20 feet deep. A *detect magic* spell reveals a powerful abjuration aura. If anyone climbs down the ladder to explore the bottom, they'll end up standing on a large, green stone rectangle, about 15 feet long by 10 feet wide.
- A closer examination shows that all of the stone's corners have been ground down to smooth edges.
- Carved onto the stone are elaborate, angled runes, which are partially blocked by a blackened handprint. The smell of burned flesh lingers. (Earlier, an eager and unfortunate cultist had triggered a protective rune and been killed on the spot.) Any adventurer who places his hand on top of the blackened handprint that fails on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw takes 11 (2d10) acid damage from the rune's residual energy.
- The stone bears an inscription in Terran:

"This stone is the prison of Taavor, the Mad One. Treacherous yet resolute, here the Mad One stays to seek penance from the Prophet Urnrayle and to await his release when the great Elemental Battle comes, for even the insane have a place in war."

The adventurers may not know what to make of this, even if they can translate the inscription, but they should get the feeling that undoing the abjuration aura could have unfortunate consequences.

HARPERS

The efforts of a mind flayer's servant to uncover an artifact so close to Mulmaster should greatly concern the Harpers.

Members of the Harpers who copy the inscription on the stone and give a complete report earn **one renown point**.

TREASURE

Adera was wearing two moonstone bracelets (worth 50 gp each), studded leather armor, and a *ring of water walking*. She also carried 50 gp. The cultists had only their scimitars and dark green clothing and cloaks.

CONCLUSION

If the adventurers established friendly contact with Soqaxu, the lizardfolk are waiting for them on their way out of the Flooded Forest. Soqaxu is pleased to hear that the threat has been taken care of and presents each of the characters a fetish, saying that they will be welcome by their tribe and by other Moonsea lizardfolk so long as they display it.

Depending on what the adventurers did with any prisoners or if they were able to take the bandits' horses and wagon, they either walk back to Mulmaster or go on horseback. Captain Holke is satisfied by their report—and he'll be even more pleased if the adventurers were able to bring back any prisoners. It's up to the players how much their characters should reveal to Holke. If the Soldiery were to know about the elemental node and the stone, would any soldiers see it as an opportunity to gain money or influence? On the flip side, information about the Cult of the Black Earth's activities does sound like something that Holke would want to know.

If any of the bandits escaped the ambush, they lick their wounds and head back to Ravens Bluff. The intellect devourer makes its way back to Vanquo, likely using up a couple of host bodies in the process. The mind flayer is intrigued by his servant's description. While the item wasn't a *devastation orb*, it harbors something potentially quite powerful nonetheless. If the adventurers decided to block the entrance to the cavern, though, Vanquo vows vengeance.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. 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
Cult fanatic	450
Intellect devourer	450
Bandit mage	200
Black Earth guard	200
Spy	200
Sacred Stone monk	100
Scout	100
Lizardfolk	100
Giant wasp	100
Gray ooze	100
Giant badger	50
Mud mephit	50
Violet fungus	50
Bandit	25

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Tell Anghara about the attacks	50
Avoid conflict with the lizardfolk	75
Avoid conflict with the giant wasps	50
Complete your mission for Holke	50

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **450 experience points**. The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **600 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
Bandit personal gold	30
Lockbox within the bandit tent	25
Bag of amethysts	100
The spy's stash	45
Adera's amethyst bracelets	100
Adera's gold pouch	50
Bounty from Holke	150
Bonus for returning with a captive	50

RING OF WATER WALKING

Ring, uncommon, requires attunement

This band of flaking, rusted iron band seems to be constantly damp and quickly soaks through any gloves worn over it. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

A description of this item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

SPELL SCROLL: COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

Scroll, uncommon

The spell scroll contains a single *comprehend languages* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SPELL SCROLL: SILENCE

Scroll, uncommon

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

SPELL SCROLL: REMOVE CURSE

Scroll, uncommon

The spell scroll contains a single *remove curse* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SPELLBOOK

The mage's spell book has the following spells in it that may be scribed into a character's spellbook using the rules in the *Player's Handbook*.

1st level: *charm person, earth tremor**, *magic missile, shocking grasp*
2nd level: *earthbind**, *hold person, invisibility, Snillloc's snowball swarm**

*Denotes spells found in the free download for *Elemental Evil Player's Companion*. They can also be found in *Princes of the Apocalypse*.

PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

RENOWN

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

Harper characters earn **one additional renown point** for copying the inscription on the stone and returning to their faction.

Emerald Enclave characters earn **one additional renown point** for stopping the excavation in the grotto and informing their faction of what is there.

Lords Alliance characters earn **one additional renown point** for stopping the bandits and the group returns the trade goods to Hothin Mercantile.

DOWNTIME

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

DM REWARDS

You receive **200 XP, 100 gp** and **ten downtime days** for running this session.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

BANDIT MAGE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +5, History +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The red wizard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, invisibility*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d8 - 1) bludgeoning damage.

SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

LIZARDFOLK

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Draconic
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

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

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

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

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

GIANT WASP

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

VIOLET FUNGUS

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 5 ft.

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

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened

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

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fungus makes 1d4 Rotting Touch attacks.

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

MUD MEPHIT

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Terran

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of sticky mud. Each Medium or smaller creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the end of the creature's next turn.

False Appearance. While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mound of mud.

ACTIONS

Fists. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Mud Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit belches viscid mud onto one creature within 5 feet of it. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

BLACK EARTH GUARD

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Intimidation +1, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

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

REACTIONS

Unyielding. When the guard is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

SACRED STONE MONK

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +3, Perception +4

Senses tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the monk is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While the monk is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 10 feet (included in its speed).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The monk makes two melee attacks.

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

REACTIONS

Parry. The monk adds 2 to its AC against one melee or ranged weapon attack that would hit it. To do so, the monk must see the attacker.

GIANT BADGER

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.

GRAY OOZE

Medium ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

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

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Corrode Metal. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the ooze corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the ooze is destroyed after dealing damage.

The ooze can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.

False Appearance. While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage, and if the target is wearing nonmagical metal armor, its armor is partly corroded and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

INTELLECT DEVOURER

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12
Languages understands Deep Speech but can't speak, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Detect Sentience. The intellect devourer can sense the presence and location of any creature within 300 feet of it that has an Intelligence of 3 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a *mind blank* spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The intellect devourer makes one attack with its claws and uses Devour Intellect.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Devour Intellect. The intellect devourer targets one creature it can see within 10 feet of it that has a brain. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw against this magic or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage. Also on a failure, roll 3d6: If the total equals or exceeds the target's Intelligence score, that score is reduced to 0. The target is stunned until it regains at least one point of Intelligence.

Body Thief. The intellect devourer initiates an Intelligence contest with an incapacitated humanoid within 5 feet of it. If it wins the contest, the intellect devourer magically consumes the target's brain, teleports into the target's skull, and takes control of the target's body. While inside a creature, the intellect devourer has total cover against attacks and other effects originating outside its host. The intellect devourer retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as its understanding of Deep Speech, its telepathy, and its traits. It otherwise adopts the target's statistics. It knows everything the creature knew, including spells and languages.

If the host body drops to 0 hit points, the intellect devourer must leave it. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the body drives the intellect devourer out. The intellect devourer is also forced out if the target regains its devoured brain by means of a *wish*. By spending 5 feet of its movement, the intellect devourer can voluntarily leave the body, teleporting to the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The body then dies, unless its brain is restored within 1 round.

SPY

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

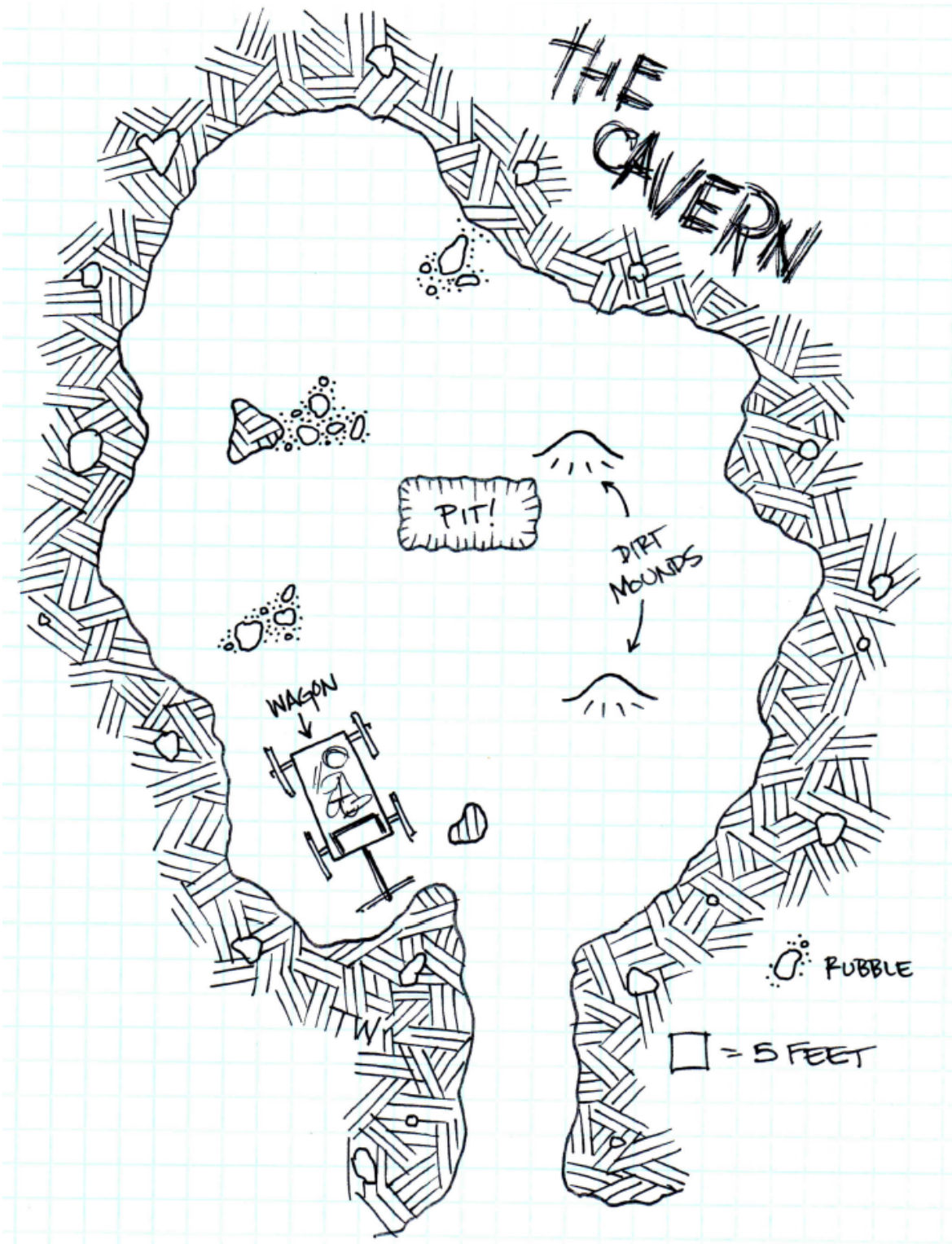
Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

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

MAP 1: NORTH ROAD SKIRMISH



MAP 2: CAVERN



DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Adera Moonfist (uh-DARE-uh). Human female, now inhabited by an intellect devour commanded by the mind flayer Vanqua. She/it is working with the Cult of Black Earth because their interests currently align with Vanquo.

Anghara Hettix (ANG-harr-uh HETT-ix). Female gnome caravan master and merchant. The characters are assigned to accompany her on her journey south.

Captain Cideon Holke (SID-ee-uhn HOLE-k). Charismatic, attractive young male human who hires the characters to stop the bandits that are attacking caravans on the North Road.

Dayra and Magroi Emberaxe (DAY-ruh & MAY-gree). Dwarven sisters. Caravan guards who like to dice.

Roderunk and Fendlik Hettix (ROW-dur-uhnk & FEND-lick HETT-ix). Twin male gnomes, cousins of Anghara who share a keen appreciation for the finer things in life, but not necessarily working to attain them

RESULTS CODE: APRIL-MAY 2015

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of April or May 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.

