



THARAERA LOST

A criminal band known as “Suldran’s Dark” who is active all over the Moonsea region and especially on the waters of the Moonsea itself, recently seized a caravel out of Phlan carrying trade-bars of smelted copper and “batons” of steel ready to be hammered into swords. Along with all of the cargo, the Dark seized six passengers for ransom. Little did they know that one of the passengers was a Harper agent. A rescue taking the party deep into the Cormanthor forest is now needed. Part One of the Gamehole Con 2016 adventure arc.

A 2-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters

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Introduction

Welcome to “*Tharaera Lost*,” a D&D Expeditions adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League organized play system and the Gamehole Con 2016 adventure arc. This adventure is designed for three to seven 5th-10th level characters, and is optimized for six 7th-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms.

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 continues their story.

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.

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.

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 at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

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 running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- 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:

- 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 with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she 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. Alternatively, 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, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used exclusively 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 seven 5th to 10th 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.

Running the Adventure

As the Dungeon Master 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. Doing so 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 one. 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. Doing so 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™* 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.

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 (1st level)</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	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 are killed. 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 is killed 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 experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after 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

Travel and trade on the Moonsea have always been hazardous. One of the many criminal bands operating on these waters is known as Suldran's Dark. Ten nights ago on the Moonsea, Suldran's Dark intercepted and boarded a metals ship (*Elviir's Kraeken* [pronounced "Ell-VEER's KRAY-ken"], a caravel out of Phlan carrying trade-bars of smelted copper and "batons" of steel ready to be hammered into swords).

The Dark is a gang of pirates, brigands, and weapons-runners headed by the crooked financier Suldran (a Sembian whose current whereabouts is unknown to the general public, and who defends himself by means of hulking bodyguards and a *driider ring* that can summon 2 of 4 *driders* at any one time; if any are near death, he "swaps them out" for a healthy one).

Suldran wasn't along on the raid, which was carried out by a dozen Dark thugs aboard their tiny but fast cutter *Waveraker*. The thugs were armed with darts

tipped with a "swiftsleep" spider-venoms-blend poison they'd just covertly purchased, and were trying out. The swiftsleep worked like a charm, and in short order the Dark had not just the crew snoring, but all six paying passengers as well, with little fighting and no alarm raised.

The *Kraeken* was making a fast night voyage to Hillsfar, in part because it was secretly carrying another cargo: two chests of raw gemstones (one containing 2,400 rubies and the other 2,200 emeralds). The Dark removed these chests to their cutter, then sailed the *Kraeken* on a new course, east past Elventree. They intended to scuttle it on the rocky, harborless coast between Elventree and Elmwood, drowning the crew, demasting the ship, and leaving it just underwater, about a hundred yards offshore, for later shallows-diving salvage of the metals. They would treat the six passengers as the Dark always does: hooded, bound, and taken into hiding in one of the ancient elven "hideholds" the Dark has discovered (and now makes frequent use of) to see if these captives could be ransomed or tortured to reveal what properties they own and what wealth they have hidden, that the Dark can extort and seize.

It all went off without a hitch, except for one tiny detail. Brelvar Hamdrel, one of the *Kraeken's* junior crew members, a "rigger" (young boy who climbs the masts and spars to adjust sails) was wearing a family "good luck charm" that unbeknownst to everyone, including himself, was an *amulet of water breathing*. He "woke up" underwater aboard the scuttled ship, the sole survivor of the crew, and remembered the pirate attack (up until the moment he succumbed to the swiftsleep). As he'd been acting as a servant to the six passengers, he was able to recount everything that happened (along with the names and likenesses of the passengers) two days later, when he reached Elventree. Hamdrel did so in several taverns, in return for drinks and meals, until he could hire on as crew on another ship (the coaster *Halavaun's Dream*, which has since sailed for Melvaunt with a cargo of fruits and vegetables).

Hamdrel's tale was overheard on three occasions by old salts drinking in the taverns who happen to be "ears" for the Harpers. They recognized Hamdrel's description of the most beautiful of the *Kraeken's* passengers—a distinctive woman of small build who has one emerald green eye and one sky-blue eye, and was going by the name "Tharaera Vrelhand"—as a Harper agent. Among Those Who Harp, Tharaera is better known as "Latrace." She was on her way south to a Harper rendezvous in upcountry Sembia from the city of Telos, where she had been working as a spices and preserves provender merchant while covertly trying to identify spies and agents of the Red Wizards and the Cult of the Dragon (both active in the area).

She succeeded, but things got too hot for her. It's vital the Harpers learn what she uncovered. Quickly.

Accordingly, the adventurers will be contacted by a jovial merchant calling himself "Furjur the Flippant." He is, of course, a Harper agent who will seek to hire the adventurers to find and recover their lost agent, Latrace.

Adventure Hook

Before the adventure begins, any character who is a member of the Harper faction has received a personal invitation/summons to meet a Harper operative known as "Furjur the Flippant" at the Cloverwall Roadhouse near Hillsfar.

If there are no Harper faction members in the party, any faction member will have received the invitation, passed to them by their faction contacts as a favor to the Harpers (with the understanding that the Harpers now owe them one).

Part 1:

A Tempting Offer

The Cloverwall Roadhouse is a ramshackle two-story inn a day's ride northwest of Hillsfar. It offers reasonably-priced meals and lodging, and the innkeeper operates an amateur smithy that can shoe horses and repair armor as needed.

Beside the road, across a muddy and well-trampled inn yard, sprawls a rambling wooden mansion with an uneven tiled roof, a sagging across-the-entire-front porch with similarly out-of-true balcony above, and a yard surrounded by a palisade that is visibly leaning in places. The open arched gate of the palisade sports a large and grand gilded carved wooden road sign proclaiming the place to be *THE Cloverwall Roadhouse*.

The sign is the most impressive thing about the establishment, but there's the reassuring din of a smith's forge hammer coming from around back, an agreeable smell of roast boar drifting out of the place, and several horses and mules tied to hitching-bars in front of the main doors of the roadhouse, watched over attentively by several bright-eyed, eager children who seem to belong to the place.

The main doors stand ajar, and you can hear laughter from inside; mens' mirth, but easygoing rather than drunken or uproarious.

It's coming, you can see through the gap, from a few locals facing the main source of laughter: a well-to-do looking merchant in a long cloth coat and expensive above-the-knee leather riding boots, who's sitting facing the door with a large tankard in one hand, and an unlit clay pipe in the other that he's waving for emphasis as he tells some tale or other. He's pot-bellied, and his broad and easy smile rides a jutting-chinned face framed by large and bushy black "daggerboard" sideburns. He chortles out his words, chuckling almost constantly except when he gives vent (swiftly and often) to louder laughter.

"Furjur the Flippant am I," he calls cheerfully, "and I'm looking for adventurers!"

"Furjur the Flippant" is obviously an assumed name—being as that moniker belongs to a legendary jovial but sly and pranksome merchant who flourished very colorfully in the 1340s and 1350s DR. However, this Furjur seems amiable and friendly enough that the half-dozen older local rustics sitting listening to him have obviously either swallowed whatever explanation he gave for bearing such a notorious name, or have decided not to call him on it. Probably because he's paid for their ale.

Furjur is welcoming, and calls for a fresh round of ale—or wine, or "whatever's your pleasure!"—for everyone in the inn's dining room, including the arriving adventurers. Two middle-aged and rather worn-looking but smiling women will bustle to fill those orders, though the Roadhouse hasn't a deep cellar.

If characters deny being adventurers, Furjur will cheerfully respond, "Nonsense! I can spot adventurers half a day's ride off! You're adventurers!"

He will loudly and cheerfully tell the adventurers he wants to hire them, because "Time's a-wasting, and you look like *just* what I need!"

Then he will beckon the adventurers to accompany him to a table in a corner of the room, away from the old local rustics he's been drinking with, and tell the adventurers what he wants to hire them for.

Note: All of the six rustics are undercover Harpers not half as old, drunk, or relaxed as they seem (treat them all as Veterans).

If the adventurers rough up or threaten Furjur, they'll pull loaded and ready handbows (hand crossbows) loaded with darts coated with the same "swiftsleep" the Dark just experimented with out from their laps, under the table, and fire at the adventurers, then charge with similarly-coated longswords (each has a non-poison-coated shortsword as backup).

These Harpers won't try to kill, but will attempt to overcome the adventurers, who will awaken facing a Furjur regretful at what happened, and still wanting to negotiate, with the Harpers waiting right behind the adventurers, ready to stab with swiftsleep darts and quell any violence.

Swiftsleep (Injury)

Creatures subjected to this blend of three spider venoms must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or fall asleep instantly, their unconsciousness lasting 1 hour unless wounded awake (mere shaking won't rouse).

Furjur can lower his voice and act serious for moments at a time. He'll do so long enough to tell the adventurers he's willing to pay very handsomely, and on top of coin, provide all of them with any sworn alibis they need, any (forged) papers and credentials they desire to adopt Sembian or Cormyrean identities not their own, and memberships in several trading coasters, too—if they'll undertake a "straightforward adventuring task" for him.

Furjur wants the adventurers to find and recover Tharaera, alive and unharmed if possible, and all parts of her body ("every hair from her head") if not.

He doesn't say anything about her being a Harper or give her Harper name, but recounts everything about the fate of the *Kraeken*, and what Suldran's Dark is. Instead, Furjur claims Tharaera is heir to substantial holdings in Sembia and Cormyr that he himself is

tasked with watching over, by Vrelhand kin who urgently want Tharaera restored to them. He dare not act openly, because he's made such enemies of the Dark that they'll kill her just to spite him, the moment they discover his involvement. Hence the adventurers. (This is all true, except that the real Tharaera is an invalid who lives in seclusion in her own mansion, and the Harper agent using her name isn't her.)

Furjur tells the adventurers the Dark has "but one armor chink, but it's a good one," who can help the adventurers find where Tharaera has been taken and is being held: Garorn, an ex-pirate living in Elventree, who was once a member of the Dark but now hates them, and for the right price will probably help the adventurers. If Garorn just wants coin, Furjur can provide it, but Furjur suspects he'll want the adventurers to go and get something "the procuring of which is now sadly beyond him."

If adventurers ask about why this is now beyond Garorn, Furjur will say grimly, "You'll see, you'll see."

Furjur will volunteer little about Garorn beyond the fact that "anyone can find him, he's well-known. Red hair, scar down right side of his face, likes his ale. Ask at the Red Tankard, or Drassauva's Den of Delights." (He will add, if asked, that the Tankard is a dockside "dive" of a tavern, and Drassauva's is a festhall. He will also say to the adventurers if the deal is agreed-upon: "chalk this symbol on the back alley wall of the Tankard or the Den of Delights, or both, if you need to contact me." He'll dip a finger in his ale and draw the symbol on the table in front of him, then wipe it away again; the symbol is two circles of the same size transfixied by a vertical line, and bracketing two equal-sized diamonds of the same size also transfixied by the same vertical line.)

Furjur is generous with his coin, and will pay the adventurers up to 50 gp each to seal the deal, and up to 50 gp more, each, if they bring back Tharaera alive (to him, at the Roadhouse).

Part 2: The Useful Retired Pirate

The adventurers travel uneventfully to Elventree, where they readily find Garorn at the Tankard.

The Red Tankard has a wooden sign out front carved and painted to look like a red metal tankard. It is the only painted part of the ground-floor-only, silver-weathered (except where rot has made it black, or crude repairs have been made with mismatched, slightly-newer salvaged wood from shutters, wagons, and wrecked ships) sagging old building.

Inside, the place is dimly lit (by candlewheel lanterns, chained to the exposed roof-beams of the low overhead) and stinks of mildew, stale spilled ale, and worse. Only one man is sitting drinking in the place. He's being served by a dirty, skinny young girl wearing an over-the-head lizardfolk festival mask to conceal her face. She doesn't speak—and is, in fact, as Garorn will explain, a mute.

The man sitting drinking has to be your quarry, Garorn, being as he has bright red hair and a scar down the side of his face (and is the only man to be seen). He has rough, calloused hands and shoulders and arms that bulge with corded muscle, but he looks old, his hairy arms and sideburns all pepper-and-salt. He has bright, shrewd emerald-green eyes, thinning hair on top but ample sideburns, and bears no visible weapons. There are four empty tankards on the table in front of him, but he shows no signs of drunkenness.

Garorn is warily friendly as the adventurers approach, and will freely give his name.

Garorn proves to be wry and amiable, but is no chuckler, and has a sharper tongue than Furjur.

He fears nothing and no one, and the adventurers will rapidly discover that the ex-pirate has retired to a life of daily drinking because he has no legs; Garorn is a tattooed old drunkard in constant pain because of these amputations—which (as Garorn will readily admit) were a “pirate punishment” administered by Suldran (for Garorn's hiding some loot for himself, for later—“And why not? All the others were doing it!”).

Garorn now gets around by lying on his belly on a cart and “padding” along the cobbles with his hands, hence his hardened hands and prodigiously strong shoulders and arms. He's used to drinking heavily to quell his constant pain.

Garorn knows who Tharaera really is, and will tell readily the adventurers she's a Harper—and so is Furjur—and all about Latrace's mission in Telos. Garorn sometimes works with the Harpers (for pay), but is no “keep all secrets” loyal Harper, and doesn't believe in deceit and secrecy (“Open piracy, now, that's

mere luck of the blade, but spare me all this trickery and lies, lies, lies!”).

He confirms all the details of the Dark and the fate of the *Kraeken* that Furjur gave the adventurers, and says that for the right pay, he'll reveal who the adventurers should go after, to trace the missing Tharaera to where she's being held.

Just as the rustics drinking in the Roadhouse were undercover Harpers keeping watch over Furjur, 8 of the toppers in the Tankard are undercover Harpers (again, treat as “Veterans,” with handbows firing swiftsleep darts, then charging with longswords) who will rush to protect Garorn if the adventurers mistreat him, their attacks intended to start negotiations with a fresh start, not kill adventurers or derailing the process of hiring them]. Those Who Harp find Garorn a very useful go-between with pirates, smugglers, and forgers, and want him kept alive and functioning just as he is.

Garorn can't be magically coerced into revealing anything. He has a natural spell immunity brought about by incidents in his past that cause him ongoing physical and mental trauma.

Garorn wants the adventurers to go south into the forest (Cormanthor, still known as “the Elven Court” in Elventree—which back in the 1350s and 1360s DR was the only place where the elves traded with humans) and harvest for him some “bluemoss—wild bluestar moss.” He shows them a handful of dry, crumbled moss, and tells them that the live stuff, which they *must* keep moist, is a deep, rich blue, and glows silver-blue in darkness and dim light. He needs at least “a fistful, and two fistfuls would be better!” Garorn needs the bluemoss to make a paste he chews to dull his pain (he constantly feels a burning, throbbing agony in his missing legs); if they bring this to him, he'll tell them who to tail out of Elventree, or where to head to intercept them, and what to watch for, to find the “secret place” they'll head for, that should lead them to Tharaera and the rest of the *Kraeken* captives.

Bluemoss is rare, and found only where springs come to the surface in the vast Cormanthan forest. Garorn can tell them what trails to take to enter the Elven Court, but warns them that thieves use the forest to hide things in, and both trap and guard those hiding-places, and that the adventurers will have to go in “much deeper” and leave the trails to find any bluestar.

Part 3: A Forest Welcome

Characters venturing into the woods will be sniped at by bandits with crossbows, who wait behind pit traps and a variety of snares (adventurers charging them directly will fall afoul of these hazards). They are the aforementioned independent villainous users of the forest as hiding-places, and have nothing at all to do with the Dark or Tharaera (and know little about the gang, and nothing about her).

They also have no bluemoor, there's no bluemoor anywhere near the areas they're guarding, and none of them even know what bluemoor is; if the characters ignore their initial crossbow attacks and continue on, all 3 encounters will be avoided. If the adventurers fight briefly and then move on, only the last of the three (Thrudran) will pursue.

These three ner'do'wells are all loners, guarding their own separate little hiding places in the forest, so the adventurers will face a sequence of three separate encounters, as follows (see Appendix for NPC Stats):

One-Eyed Drukk

Drukk will fire once with his light crossbow and then drop it and use his scimitar from then on (also has 3 daggers: 2 at belt, one strapped openly to right bicep).

Drukk is a battered-looking, burly man of middling years and average height. He is indeed missing one eye—his left—and wears an eyepatch that has three rotting worms pinned to it, an adornment he made and renews because he's found that people (notably including foes he's crossing blades with) find it very distracting.

Drukk is an unlovely man sporting several large warts on his chin and jaw, and is close-mouthed, wary, and always alert to anyone nearby, especially anyone who might be getting around behind him...

Drukk announces his presence to the adventurers by loosing a bolt from his crossbow at the most formidable-looking character he can get a good shot at, without warning. Then he scurries to his "refuge" between two massive old dead trees, a small closet-like space defined by the two huge (thick-as-a-cottage, each) old tree trunks, and a wall, behind him, of an impenetrable 20-foot-thick tangle of interwoven thorny branches, so adventurers can only get at him one at a time—through a three-foot-wide opening. Drukk takes a stand there with his scimitar, bringing his crossbow with him but not reloading or readying it, and if the characters use ranged weapons at him, he can retreat behind a sheltering root of one of the gigantic trees and hunker down for shelter. Atop his

cache of food and his treasure, which are two coffers in a two-foot-deep hole, under an old piece of bark: a coffer of old cheese and two skins of wine, and a coffer of 150gp and three small 50-gp-each-value moonstones.

Right in front of Drukk's hidey-hole is a **pit trap**, concealed with an old brown woven carpet artfully strewn with forest loam, dead leaves, and a scattering of dead twigs so it looks like the rest of the forest floor. Perception DC:15 to spot; the pit is 10 feet deep and its bottom is lined with a vicious array of fire-hardened wooden spikes (1d6 bludgeoning [falling] damage plus 2d10 piercing damage). Drukk is adept at skipping past the edges of the pit without falling in, but anyone who clearly sees him doing this will be aware that he's avoiding a patch of ground. If he has as much as a ten-foot lead on the nearest PC, however, he'll be able to whip around one of the trees that brackets his hidey-hole and be in his preferred spot "beyond" it before they can see how he gets past the pit trap.

If the adventurers don't come after him, or retreat from where he makes his stand, Drukk will remain in his hidey-hole for days if need be; he won't come creeping after the adventurers to snipe at them, because guarding his hiding-place is all he cares about; if he thinks a group of strangers all knows where it is, he'll lie low and then relocate later to a new hiding-place.

Ralaera Blacktalons

Ralaera will fire down at adventurers from a perch up in the trees with her light crossbow and then run along branches and a rope "handrail" line to another perch farther along the trail and then fire again, then leave the crossbow aloft there and swing on a descending line that she'll let go of to drop into the heart of a dense stand of pine trees.

Where, out of sight of the adventurers, she'll land on a pad made of piled-up pine boughs, slither down off of it, and into a dirt tunnel, dragging some of the boughs after her to plug her entrance. Ralaera hides her treasure (two large, heavy canvas sacks of 300 gp each) in the loose dirt walls of this winding tunnel, which is an old bear lair. She'll remain down in the lair, still and silent, attacking only if someone "drops in" on her.

Which the characters may well do, because the tunnel runs from the hole with the pine boughs out to the surface, but along the way, no less than three pit traps fall down into it. Ralaera is in the habit of running down and stabbing any "drop ins" with her scimitar. She also sports 4 daggers: 1 at her belt, one down either boot, and one sheathed at the back of her neck, hidden by her long unbound hair, its belt

forming a neckband that supports a gorget-plate over her throat.

All three of the traps are located inside the stand of pine trees—in all three of the places where there’s enough of a gap between pine boughs for someone to stand without getting pricked. They are all **pit traps** concealed with loose-woven mats carefully covered with forest loam, dead leaves, and a lot of pine needles so as to look like the rest of the forest floor (Ralaera keeps three stout saplings and two belts to lash them together with, stood upright amid the boughs of some of the pines, to serve her as a pit-spanning platform she can lie on as she rakes and rearranges the forest litter to conceal a mats.

Pit Traps

Perception DC 15 to spot; each pit is 20 feet deep, plus Ralaera will pounce as fast as she can.

Ralaera is a stocky, hard-faced middle-aged woman in dirty, supple-soft leather armor. Her name comes from the elbow-length black soft leather gloves she wears at all times. She had long, tangled, unbound black hair, going white at the temples, and moves very quietly, catlike and graceful. She looks . . . dangerous.

In Elventree, Ralaera makes a living “skimming” cargoes: stealing a little of this and a little of that, for resale, from passing shipments in the warehouses. She is patient and shrewd, and the adventurers just happened to catch her out in the forest checking on her life savings...about which she is paranoid (they took her a long, careful time to build up, and she greatly fears losing them).

The 4-foot-wide open end of Ralaera’s tunnel is guarded by dozens of poison darts. To get in and out unharmed, traversers should brace themselves so as to walk on the lower sections of the walls, and the floor where it meets the walls, and nowhere else on the floor. Stepping on the floor more than a boot’s thickness away from the walls will depress a hidden pressure plate; there are a row of three such plates, one filling a five-foot-square area in front of the tunnel mouth, one filling the adjacent five feet of floor at the tunnel mouth and just within, and one filling the next five feet of tunnel floor. The plates and the dart-tube holes are both concealed by dirt-cloaked fine netting hung along the walls and laid on the floor. Each pressure plate unleashes 8 darts: the plate outside the tunnel attracts darts firing out of the edges of the tunnel-mouth in crisscross fashion, spaced high and low, and the others fire straight across the tunnel, high and low.

Poison Darts x8

DC 15 Investigation to spot, DC 15 Dexterity Check with Thieves Tools to disable, each dart is a +8 bonus ranged attack for 2

(1d4) piercing damage and DC 15 Constitution save: successful means 5 (1d10) poison damage, failure means 10 (2d10) damage.

Shields will intercept these darts; Ralaera uses 2 shields, hidden elsewhere in the forest, to trigger them all when she wants to renew the poison and reload them all.

Thruldran

Thruldran will fire once with his heavy crossbow and then drop it and use his mace from then on (also has 2 daggers: 1 at belt, 1 sheathed down left boot), and a hand axe elsewhere in the forest he can fetch to chop things after the fight.

Thruldran will try to wound or take down any character that looks like a spell-caster (robes, wizard hat, wand) with his crossbow, then attack, retreating to where he hopes to lure the adventurers in under his net (he’ll rush to bash anyone caught in it with his mace).

The net is stretched between two trees overhead, hidden by thick foliage, and is brought down by triggering a trip wire three inches off the ground that’s hidden by heaped-up leaves (Thruldran easily clears it because he knows exactly where it is); DC 10 Wisdom Check to spot, DC 15 Dexterity Check using thieves’ tools to break trip wire harmlessly; if lacking thieves’ tools, an edged weapon or tool can serve, but a check with disadvantage must be made; if failed, net is triggered.

Thruldran will turn to confront the adventurers, snarling and brandishing his mace, as if he’s fled into a dead end and is now turning at bay, with the 10-foot-square net-drop area right in front of him. Adventurers who close with him are likely to be trapped under the net as it falls (restrained if failing a DC 15 Dexterity save, and knocked prone). Trapped adventurers can use action to make a DC 10 Strength check to free themselves or another within-reach creature. The net is AC 10 and has 20hp (dealing the net 5hp of slashing damage destroys a 5-foot-square section, freeing anyone in that section).

Thruldran will enthusiastically bash anyone netted, but will flee if spells are hurled his way and he survives them—and he *isn’t* trapped in a dead-end at all, he has his own little escape trail behind him. If the battle goes against Thruldran, he’ll flee along it—and it runs back into many trees and hooks around a large duskwood. Thruldran knows to grab a broken-off stub of bough and swing himself hard around to the left, against the trunk of the duskwood; any character who doesn’t do the same will blunder straight into Thruldran’s waiting pit trap.

Pit Trap

The pit trap is concealed by a woven twig and bough wattle laid flat and strewn with forest loam, dead leaves, and a scattering of dead twigs so it looks like the rest of the forest floor.

Perception DC 15 spot; the pit is 10 feet deep and its bottom is lined with a vicious array of fire-hardened wooden spikes (1d10 bludgeoning [falling] damage plus 2d10 piercing damage).

If not slain, Thruldran will flee but skulk after the adventurers, shadowing them and waiting for any chance to polish off a wounded or separated-from-the-rest character; he wants no survivors to know of his net and pit. He has no treasure, but was planning to bury a *lot* of wealth right beside the pit, very soon.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are the recommendations for adjusting these combat encounters. They are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Drukk – AC:12 HP: 32; Ralaera – AC: 12 HP: 30; Thruldran – AC:11 HP: 32
- **Weak Party:** Drukk – AC:12 HP: 40; Ralaera – AC: 13 HP: 45 ; Thruldran – AC:11 HP: 40
- **Strong Party:** Drukk – AC:15 HP: 55; Ralaera – AC: 16 HP: 60; Thruldran – AC:15 HP: 55
- **Very Strong Party:** Drukk – AC:15 HP: 62; Ralaera – AC: 16 HP: 70; Thruldran – AC:15 HP: 65

Part 4: Naga Cave

After fighting off or escaping the bandits and heading deeper into the ancient forest, the trail the party has been following fades away. A DC 13 Survival/Wisdom check is required to keep going in the right direction. If the party fails the check, they become lost, losing all sense of direction under the deep and unrelenting boughs of Cormanthor.

If the party is lost, there is a 50% chance they will stumble into a patch of brambles concealing **Xander**, a **werebear** who is currently asleep. He will not be at all happy at being awakened, and will immediately attack (the lead party member can attempt a DC 18 Perception or Survival to spot and avoid).

Xander is unfortunately more than a little insane and will fight to the death. While werebears aren't traditionally known for such ferocity or suicidal tendencies, Xander has been away from civilization for too long and his more bestial nature has long since taken over. The bear inside him fights constantly with the human, and that fight has created a morass of confusion and despair. He'll see the adventuring party as interlopers and maybe (a little) as saviors.

An hour after encountering the bear, the party may make another DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check to rediscover the trail and eventually find their destination. (If it fails, another check is allowed an hour later; any success at these checks means the party finds the trail, and doesn't have to face additional checks to lose their way again.)

The hours of taking great care to try to follow a barely perceptible path through the deep, all but impenetrable forest is starting to wear on everyone's nerves. The combination of fighting off bandits, being scratched and cut by innumerable thorns, tramping through the hot and still wildwood and the claustrophobic feeling that you are being slowly crushed by the heavy canopy of shadowtops, hemlocks, and duskwoods, have led even the most charitable among you to actively speculate what Garorn's life would be like if he were missing more than just his two legs.

Just when the pooling sweat in the small of your back, all the bruises and scratches and the incessant forest have you on the verge of quitting this fool's errand, the path before you suddenly slopes down into a natural hollow, where the mouth of a large cave can clearly be seen. Beyond being able to see a bit of sky for the first time in hours, you notice the startling silence of this place. It is as if the entire forest is suddenly holding its breath.

This shallow forest cavern is home to a **spirit naga**. From this lair, the naga plots and schemes with the

most dangerous criminal gangs operating out of Elventree, such as Dzethar's Serpent and the Mahlaxlurs. There are springs of drinking water in the caves...and some bluestar moss! A DC 13 Perception check will reveal the faint sound of running water emanating from the caves. A DC 10 Nature/Wisdom check will inform a character that a dark cave with running water would be an excellent place for moss to grow.

The adventurers can't get anywhere near the moss, which is in a cleft where the naga keeps its treasure (four *potions of greater healing*, bone-tube-encased spell scrolls of *arcane eye*, *Evvard's black tentacles*, *legend lore*, and *scrying*, and a small 50-gp-value carved ivory hand-coffer containing 6 black pearls, each worth 500 gp), without killing the naga.

The naga will back up into the cleft. There is a pit trap in the floor of its cave, far to its right, and the naga will cast a *minor illusion* of a treasure chest atop this pit trap before any adventurers enter the cavern. When any character sees the naga, it will feign "hurrying to guard the chest," but will not move onto the pit trap, instead moving in behind it and pretending to be enspelled to guard the chest "by a dragon who watchesss you even now!"

Pit Trap

Perception DC 18 to spot; 40 feet deep and its bottom is lined with a vicious array of fire-hardened wooden spikes (4d10 bludgeoning [falling] damage plus 2d10 piercing damage).

The naga, Yarlryx, hopes to increase its treasure by gaining weapons and wealth from the adventurers, and will use its *lightning bolt* and other spells to give them a real battle. It can't quite believe they can defeat it, and knows it can come back from death anyway, and will neither surrender nor retreat. It's not above using its charm, hold, and dominate spells to try to force adventurers into the pit trap.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are the recommendations for adjusting these combat encounters. They are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove the spirit naga; replace with bone naga
- **Weak Party:** Reduce spirit naga's total hp to 60
- **Strong Party:** Remove the spirit naga; replace with guardian naga
- **Very Strong Party:** Remove the spirit naga; replace with guardian naga and add a pet carrion crawler

Conclusion: Return to the Tankard

If the adventurers return to Garorn and give him the moss, he tells them to seek Drassauva (proprietress of the Den of Delights), find the “secret passage from her bedchamber,” and follow her on one of the “every tenday or so” occasions when she uses it, to vanish overnight.

That, the ex-pirate tells the adventurers, is when she goes to report to Suldran, and take him his fifth-share of all the Den’s takings, and receive her latest “spy on so-and-so, watch out for this thing, and do this to such-and-such” orders. Beware her, Garorn warns; she carries poison. She’ll be heading for Skulljaw Hill, deep in the Elven Court, where there’s “some sort of lair, whose entrance I could never find.”

So ends Adventure One.

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
Drukk	700
Ralaera	700
Thrudran	700
Xander/Werebear	1800
Spirit Naga	3900
Garorn	3000

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **2,250 experience** points.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **3,000 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
Drukk's Treasure	200
Ralaera's Treasure	600
Yarlryx's Treasure	3500

4 x POTIONS OF GREATER HEALING

Potion, uncommon

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

SPELL SCROLLS

Arcane Eye, Evard's Black Tentacles, Legend Lore, and Scrying

Renown

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

Downtime

Each character receives 5 downtime days at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM Rewards

You receive 450 XP, 225 gp and 5 downtime days for running this session.

Appendix: Monster/NPC Statistics

One-Eyed Drukk (Veteran)

Medium Humanoid, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class: 17 (splint)

Hit Points: 45

Speed: 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10	11	10

Skills: Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses: Passive perception 12

Languages: Common

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Drukk makes two Scimitar attacks in melee.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

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

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

Ralaera Blacktalons (Veteran)

Medium Humanoid, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class: 17 (splint)

Hit Points: 50

Speed: 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10	11	10

Skills: Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses: Passive perception 12

Languages: Common

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Ralaera makes two Scimitar attacks in melee.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 80/320ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

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

Thruldran (Veteran)

Medium Humanoid, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class: 17 (splint)

Hit Points: 45

Speed: 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10	11	10

Skills: Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses: Passive perception 12

Languages: Common

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Thruldran makes two Mace attacks in melee.

Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 100/400ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

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

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

Xander, Werebear

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger) neutral good

Armor Class: 10 in humanoid form, 11 (natural armor) in bear and hybrid form

Hit Points: 135 (18d8+54)

Speed: 30ft. (40ft., climb 30ft. in bear or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10	17 (+3)	11	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills: Perception +7

Damage Immunities: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered.

Senses: passive Perception 17

Languages: Common (can't speak in bear form)

Challenge: 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. The werebear can use its action to polymorph into a Large bear-humanoid hybrid or into a Large bear, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size and AC, 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.

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

Actions

Multiattack. In bear form, the werebear makes two claw attacks. In humanoid form, it makes two greataxe attacks. In hybrid form, it can attack like a bear or a humanoid.

Bite (Bear or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werebear lycanthropy.

Claw (Bear or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage.

Greataxe (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Spirit Naga

Large Monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 75 (10d10+20)

Speed: 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

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

Damage Immunities: poison

Condition Immunities: charmed, poisoned

Senses: darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

Languages: Abyssal, Common

Challenge: 8 (3,900 XP)

Rejuvenation. If it dies, the naga returns to life in 1d6 days and regains all its hit points. Only a *wish* spell can prevent this trait from functioning.

Spellcasting. The naga is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks), and it needs only verbal components to cast its spells. It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, minor illusion, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, detect magic, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *lightning bolt, water breathing*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, dimension door*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 31 (7d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.