

MARAUDER'S SPEAR

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING* *FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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In the pre-dawn gloom, gnolls savage a dusty halfling trading encampment on the edge of the Eastern Shaar. Hapless *hin* and *hurbryn* merchants cry out for protection from these marauding dogs. Why are the gnolls attacking here in such numbers? Who is the real leader of the pack? A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in the East Rift for characters levels 4-7.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2011.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your Senior GM directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster*

Manual. Attacks have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. 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 encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **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, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact**

with their environment. Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following every word on the page; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. A great deal of good information on being a DM for a D&D game can be found in Chapters 1-2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 4 - 7. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the first two levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the last two levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play riskier and play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group is in agreement to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group is in agreement to do so; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter will have a level and other values (such as XP or sometimes skill checks) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only

awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later on and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return back to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly amongst the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there's still more of the adventure remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return back to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Eastern Shaar is home to numerous nomadic tribes of humans, halflings, wemics, centaurs, thri-kreen, and loxo. Recently, several individuals have been working to manipulate the balance of power between these tribes. These individuals have inflamed ancient rivalries, encouraged the formation of alliances, and awakened dormant menaces. The motivation for this activity is still unclear.

Just over a week ago, one of these individuals, an enigmatic duergar known as “the Broker,” arrived at the site where the halfling nomads of the Eastern Shaar planned to gather for trade and to celebrate the vernal equinox.

As he is wont to do, the Broker arranged a number of transactions between individuals. Among those, he told Lur Gershon, a human traveling the Eastern Shaar alone, that a group of mercenaries was available to work as bodyguards, but would need equipment.

Thus, a week ago, Lur Gershon spoke to Wimberly, a halfling arms merchant associated with the Crafty Kobold Salvage Company, and purchased hide armor and a magic bow for the mercenaries. Lur Gershon and his bodyguards headed out with their new gear.

About a day east of the encampment, Lur Gershon was set upon by gnolls. Their leader, an acolyte, had learned of the group from the whispers that he recently began hearing. The voice purports to be that of Yeenoghu, the Demon God of Gnolls. After killing Lur Gershon, the gnolls returned to their relatively new lair laden with gear, including the hide armor and magic longbow.

Yesterday, the wemic Xomoo’e (pronounced “ZOH-moo-ay”) another power broker who was traveling with a band of halfling nomads, came upon the remains of Lur Gershon’s group and returned them to the encampment. This was just before the PCs arrived and started celebrating the equinox early.

At about the same time, Yeenoghu whispered to the gnolls that they should attack the halflings to take some slaves. The adventure commences with the gnolls’ attack.

PLAYER’S INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Each year, the halflings, or “hin,” of the Eastern Shaar gather near the foot of the Uthangol Mountains to celebrate the vernal equinox. They set up their sprawling encampment not far from the top of a fantastic, upward-flowing waterfall, where they trade,

gossip, and confer. The jamboree draws a significant number of human, or “hurbryn” merchants as well.

This year, some industrious halflings have commandeered a rough cabin at the edge of the camp for use as a taproom. Its human-sized benches and trestle tables have already proven quite popular with the merchants. In addition, a number of adventurers have found their way here.

This is a great opportunity to encourage the players to introduce and describe their characters. It does not matter if the PCs have met previously. They have all come to this makeshift tavern to get a head start on the celebration (or for whatever reason each player desires). Allow for a few minutes of roleplaying among the PCs before the action begins with **Encounter 1**.

DM’S INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place on the day before the vernal equinox at a halfling encampment near the Uthangol Mountains.

Encounter 1 Fire! A horde consisting of gnolls, hyenas, and a demon attacks the encampment and sets it on fire just before dawn. The PCs must fight the marauders and help put out the fire. In the process, they may notice that the gnolls are unusually well armed and armored.

Encounter 2 Sava: The PCs meet one of two unusual individuals, a duergar merchant known as “the Broker” or the wemic medicine woman Xomoo’e. In a skill challenge involving the game of sava (similar to chess), the PCs learn a bit about the Eastern Shaar. The Broker potentially offers the PCs a magic shield in exchange for a future favor. Xomoo’e possibly challenges the PCs to a rematch at a later date.

The Broker and Xomoo’e also encourage the PCs to seek out the gnolls’ lair.

Encounter 3 Merchant: If the PCs check on the gnolls’ equipment, they learn that the Broker was somehow involved.

Encounter 4 Maze of Sseth: The PCs travel to the gnolls’ lair and discover a maze beneath it. They traverse the maze in the form of a skill challenge. If they succeed, they find a minor shrine and a number of apparently worthless bead necklaces.

Encounter 5 Snakes! Exiting the maze, the PCs find a shrine to Sseth guarded by thousands of living vipers and a zombie yuan-ti abomination that rises again when struck down.

Encounter 6 Conclusion: The PCs return to the halfling encampment. Xomoo’e and/or the Broker offer to buy the necklaces they found in Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 1: FIRE!

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 5 / 7 (1,154 / 1,680 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 gnoll acolyte (Level 4) (A)
- 8 gnoll packrunners (P)
- 4 hyena whelps (W)
- 1 crocotta (Level 7) (D)
- 6 halfling campers (H)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 gnoll acolyte (Level 7) (A)
- 8 gnoll packrunners (Level 6) (P)
- 4 hyena whelps (Level 4) (W)
- 1 crocotta (D)
- 6 halfling campers (H)

The PCs are inside a taproom, winding down a long night of carousing, when they hear the sound of gnolls and hyenas attacking the halfling encampment outside.

The first night of wheeling, dealing, and revelry is winding down, and the sun will soon rise. Although nearly everyone else has already turned in, you and a few other hardy souls remain in the taproom. As you contemplate heading to bed yourselves, you hear a high-pitched, barking sound reminiscent of hideous laughter, then an unmistakable halfling cry: "Fire!"

When the PCs look outside, they see the gnoll packrunners attacking halflings and setting tents on fire. Emphasize the brutality and inhumanity of the gnolls when describing this combat. Read the following text out loud:

A horde of hyena-like humanoids has descended upon the camp. They are dressed in fine hide armor adorned with shrunken humanoid heads and severed body parts.

The curs wield flaming brands and have already ignited one tent. They are attacking the halflings that are emerging from it, setting them on fire and hurling their flaming bodies toward the other tents. The wind fans the flames chaotically, igniting the dry prairie grass.

A DC 17 Nature check reveals that the marauders are unusually well armored for gnolls, which usually wear leather armor, rather than hide.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: A small fire between the halflings' tents provides bright light within 10 squares, as does one of tents, which is on fire. The gnoll packrunners carry torches that also shed bright light within 5 squares. In addition, any squares that catch fire shed bright light within 10 squares. All other areas are in dim light unless a light source is present. Dim light does not affect characters with low-light vision, but characters with normal vision have a hard time seeing - it grants concealment (-2 to melee and ranged attack rolls).

Fire and Smoke: Initially, only the tent adjacent to the gnolls is on fire. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in one of these squares takes 5 fire damage. Each square adjacent to a fire square is filled with smoke. Creatures in smoke squares suffer a -5 penalty to Perception checks to see or spot things. Creatures in smoke squares have concealment.

At the start of each round, each square of fire sets 2 adjacent squares on fire (starting with squares closer to the streams, as a slight wind is coming from the upper right corner of the map). Each of these new fire squares spreads on the next turn. It also generates smoke in adjacent squares. The fire will not jump the stream of its own accord.

Any square in which a gnoll packrunner drops a torch catches fire at the start of the following round.

Cabin: The log cabin is 10 feet (2 squares) high. A DC 12 / 13 Athletics check allows a character to climb up onto the roof. All doors are initially closed.

Fallen Statue: The fallen statute between the cabin and the tents counts as difficult terrain. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter these squares.

Stream and Log Bridges: The streams are relatively shallow. All stream squares count as difficult terrain, costing 2 squares of movement. The log bridge is somewhat unstable, requiring a DC 12 / 13 Acrobatics check to cross at full speed (a failed check means the character falls into the stream). A character balancing on the bridge grants combat advantage to its enemies.

Tents: The halflings' tents block line of sight, but do not cost additional movement to pass through and do not provide cover.

Trees: Any square that contains mostly foliage in it grants cover. The center square of the big trees (where the trunk is located) counts as blocking terrain.

Wagon: The wagon counts as blocking terrain. A DC 12 / 13 Athletics check allows a character to climb or jump on top.

TACTICS

The gnoll packrunners and hyena whelps begin combat alert. In the first round, those that have not yet crossed the stream do so, either by using the log bridges or by wading through. They set the second tent on fire and take opportunity attacks against any halflings that emerge. They kill the halflings, assuming that others can be taken captive later. All halflings in burning tents emerge on their initiative and flee combat by any route possible.

Once the PCs emerge from the cabin, the gnoll packrunners shift their focus from slaughtering halflings and setting the camp on fire to dealing with the PCs, whom they perceive to be a real threat. The gnoll packrunners drop their torches, grab their spears, and move toward the PCs. The hyena whelps follow the gnoll packrunners' lead. Have at least one packrunner drop its torch by the gnoll acolyte to start a blaze that the acolyte can use for protection from melee combat later.

The gnoll packrunners stick close to one another to maximize their pack attack ability, to remain protected from fire by the gnoll acolyte's *abyssal shield*, and to enable the acolyte to use its *demonlord's boon* ability.

Whenever practical, the gnoll packrunners and the acolyte delay their attacks until the hyena whelps' *harrier* ability grants combat advantage against a character.

The gnoll acolyte follows closely behind the gnoll packrunners and hyena whelps to protect them with the *abyssal shield* and to be able to use its *demonlord's boon* ability whenever the minions die. It avoids melee combat, preferring to use its ranged attack. The acolyte waits to use the *burst of flame* ability of its longbow until it can target three or more PCs with it and attempts to wait until the hyena whelps also grant combat advantage against one or more of those targets. If engaged in melee, the acolyte attempts to move into the closest fire square for protection.

The crocotta remains close to the gnoll acolyte, between the acolyte and the PCs. It uses *haunting laughter* to slide characters into fires. The PCs might recognize the crocotta (which is a type of demon) with a successful Arcana check (see the sidebar for details).

So long as the gnoll acolyte is unbloodied, the gnoll packrunners, hyena whelps, and crocotta will fight until defeated. If the gnoll acolyte is bloodied, the crocotta protects it and the gnoll packrunners begin to withdraw toward it to secure their retreat through the fire. The hyena whelps follow. If the gnoll acolyte dies, all of its

remaining allies flee. If all of an individual gnoll packrunner's avenues of retreat are blocked by PCs and/or fire, the packrunner drops its spear, whimpers in submission, and surrenders.

If any gnolls or the crocotta manage to flee, feel free to insert them into Encounter 4.

The gnolls and their allies will not kill any downed PCs, as they are intent on taking prisoners.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove 4 gnoll packrunners.

Six PCs: Add 4 gnoll packrunners.

This encounter is supposed to be challenging, but not impossible. If it is too easy, have 4 additional packrunners join the foray. If it is too difficult, have the cowardly crocotta and/or some of the packrunners flee.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the gnolls are defeated, the problem of the fire remains. Ask the players what they intend to do about it. Any reasonable method that they employ to extinguish the flames (such as organizing the camp into a bucket brigade) automatically succeeds. If you are not under any time constraints, you may wish to run this as an impromptu skill challenge instead.

If the PCs take any gnoll packrunners or the gnoll acolyte prisoner and question them, a DC 12 / 13 Intimidate check or a DC 17 / 18 Diplomacy check reveals the following information. Any gnoll packrunners who were subjected to the acolyte's *demonlord's boon* power when they dropped to 0 hp are dead whether the PCs intended to capture them or not, and therefore cannot be questioned.

- The gnolls have been living in limestone caves about two hours away. The gnolls can provide directions. If the acolyte is questioned, he relays that Yeenoghu whispered to him that the caves were a place of power.
- The caves lead to two mazes, neither of which the gnolls have been able to traverse.
- The gnolls got their hide armor and the acolyte's magic bow from a group of humans they attacked recently.
- The gnolls worship Yeenoghu, the Demon Prince of Gnolls. A DC 15 Religion check recalls some basic information about Yeenoghu (see sidebar for details).
- The gnolls attacked because Yeenoghu told the gnoll acolyte to do so and to take some captives for slaves. If the gnoll acolyte is questioned, he

relays that Yeenoghu whispered to him that the pack should strike at the halflings' underbelly and take some slaves.

Once the PCs have extinguished the fire and questioned any prisoners, proceed to the next encounter.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 231 / 336 experience points each for defeating the gnollish horde.

TREASURE

The gnoll acolyte has a +2 *flameburst longbow*. None of the other monsters have any treasure.

SIDEBAR: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Here is some additional information that the PCs might know about the crocotta demon and Yeenoghu, the gnolls' patron. (For even more details, see the article "Demonomicon of Iggwilv: Yeenoghu" in issue #364 of *Dragon Magazine*.)

Crocotta: A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

- DC 15: Crocottas are demons of the Abyss found throughout Yeenoghu's Realm. There, they hunt escaped slaves and explorers alike, killing whatever they encounter.
- DC 20: The crocotta is a perverse reflection of the natural hyena and employs many of the same tactics. These demons possess a curious bark that sounds like disturbed laughter. Those who hear it move against their will. In addition, crocottas can also twist their features in grotesque forms to shock and frighten their foes.
- DC 25: Crocottas are natural cowards and flee any kind of stiff resistance. However, driving off a pack of crocottas doesn't mean that they've given up. Their hunger and hatred wins out over their fear, and they are sure to return until their victim is dead.

Yeenoghu: A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana or Religion check.

- DC 15: Yeenoghu has many names, and each one reflects another facet of his cruel and savage nature. Most know him as the Demon Prince of Gnolls, but among the gnolls, he is called the Destroyer, and in certain circles and writings, he has been called the Beast of Butchery and the Ruler of Ruin. Yeenoghu is the undisputed master of the gnolls, and through them, he works his evil in the natural world.
- DC 20: As a demon lord, Yeenoghu is a vehicle of destruction. As with other demons, Yeenoghu hungers for carnage, but also craves power over his rivals and the gods themselves. To this end, he goads his mortal servants into performing appalling acts of evil in his name throughout the lands. He admonishes his servants to show no mercy in their perpetual war—they must kill all creatures they encounter and take prisoners when the beings can serve as useful thralls.

ENCOUNTER 1: “FIRE!” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Gnoll Packrunner		Level 4 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 44
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +7; low-light vision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 13		
Speed 7		
m Torch (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1 fire damage; see also <i>quick bite</i> and <i>pack attack</i> .		
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 4 damage; see also <i>quick bite</i> and <i>pack attack</i> .		
M Quick Bite (free, when the gnoll packrunner hits a bloodied enemy with a melee attack; at will)		
The gnoll packrunner makes a bite attack against the same target; +5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Pack Attack		
The gnoll packrunner deals an extra 4 damage on melee attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the packrunner's allies adjacent to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Intimidate +8, Stealth +10		
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 9 (+1)	Cha 7 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, light shield, spear, torch		

Hyena Whelp		Level 2 Minion
Medium natural beast		XP 38
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +7; low-light vision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 12		
Speed 8		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 4 damage; see also <i>pack attack</i> .		
Pack Attack		
The hyena whelp deals an extra 4 damage on melee attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the whelp's allies adjacent to it.		
Harrier		
If a hyena whelp is adjacent to an enemy, all other creatures have combat advantage against that enemy when making melee attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 5 (-2)

Gnoll Acolyte (Level 4)		Level 4 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid		XP 350
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +9; low-light vision		
Abyssal Shield aura 5; allies within the aura gain resist 5 fire.		
HP 108; Bloodied 54		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 15		
Resist 5 fire		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 7		
Action Points 1		
m Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage; see also <i>pack attack</i> .		
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon		
Requires +2 <i>flameburst longbow</i> ; Ranged 20/40; +11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage; +2d6 fire damage on a critical hit; see also <i>pack attack</i> and <i>burst of flame</i> .		
R Burst of Flame (minor; daily) ♦ Fire		
Requires +2 <i>flameburst longbow</i> ; the next ranged basic attack the gnoll acolyte makes with its longbow before the end of its turn becomes a burst 1 centered on the target. Use the listed attack bonus for the longbow, but against Reflex. Instead of normal damage, each target hit takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
C Filthy Curse (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic, Necrotic		
Close blast 5; +8 vs. Will; 1d8 + 4 psychic damage and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
Demonlord's Boon (immediate reaction, when an ally within 5 squares of the acolyte is reduced to 0 hit points)		
The gnoll acolyte heals 5 hit points.		
Pack Attack		
The gnoll acolyte deals an extra 5 damage on melee and ranged attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the acolyte's allies adjacent to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Intimidate +7, Stealth +11		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 19 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 7 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, handaxe, +2 <i>flameburst longbow</i> , quiver of 30 arrows		

Crocotta (Level 7)		Level 7 Skirmisher
Medium elemental beast (demon)		XP 300
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
HP 78; Bloodied 39		
AC 21; Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 18		
Resist 5 variable (1/encounter; see MM glossary)		
Speed 8		
m Gore (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.		
C Haunting Laughter (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Close burst 3; +10 vs. Will; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target slides 1 square. Miss: The target slides 1 square.		
C Morphic Visage (minor; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Illusion		
Close blast 3; +10 vs. Will; the crocotta gains combat advantage against the target until the end of its next turn.		
Craven (immediate reaction, when targeted by a power with the fear keyword; at-will)		
Whenever a crocotta is the target of an attack with the fear keyword, it shifts 4 squares away from the source of the attack.		
Feint		
If a crocotta shifts at least 1 square during its turn, its melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages -
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 17 (+6)	Wis 15 (+5)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 5 (+0)	Cha 11 (+3)
Description This predator blends the features of a wild boar and a hyena. Black-spotted brown fur covers its head. Large brown, pitted tusks emerge from its canine jaw. The rest of its body is hairless and covered with hideous, crusty sores. It has a long ratlike tail. (Source: <i>Dragon Magazine</i> , Issue 364)		

Halfling Camper		Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid		XP 0
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +5	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 14; see also <i>nimble reaction</i>		
Speed 6		
Nimble Reaction		
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.		
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)		
The halfling camper forces the attacker to reroll the attack and take the new result.		
Alignment Good	Languages Common, dwarven	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Thievery +9		
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 9 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 10 (+3)	Cha 14 (+0)
Equipment none		

ENCOUNTER 1: “FIRE!” STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Gnoll Packrunner (Level 6)		Level 6 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 63
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 15, Will 15		
Speed 7		
m Torch (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1 fire damage; see also <i>quick bite</i> and <i>pack attack</i> .		
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 5 damage; see also <i>quick bite</i> and <i>pack attack</i> .		
M Quick Bite (free, when the gnoll packrunner hits a bloodied enemy with a melee attack; at will)		
The gnoll packrunner makes a bite attack against the same target; +7 vs. AC; 3 damage.		
Pack Attack		
The gnoll packrunner deals an extra 5 damage on melee attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the packrunner's allies adjacent to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Intimidate +9, Stealth +11		
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 14 (+5)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 9 (+2)	Cha 7 (+1)
Equipment hide armor, light shield, spear, torch		

Hyena Whelp (Level 4)		Level 4 Minion
Medium natural beast		XP 44
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision		
HP 1; a minion never takes damage on a miss		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 13		
Speed 8		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 5 damage; see also <i>pack attack</i> .		
Pack Attack		
The hyena whelp deals an extra 5 damage on melee attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the whelp's allies adjacent to it.		
Harrier		
If a hyena whelp is adjacent to an enemy, all other creatures have combat advantage against that enemy when making melee attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 2 (-2)	Cha 5 (-1)

Gnoll Acolyte (Level 7)		Level 7 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid		XP 600
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +10; low-light vision		
Abyssal Shield aura 5; allies within the aura gain resist 5 fire.		
HP 156; Bloodied 78		
AC 23; Fortitude 20, Reflex 21, Will 18		
Resist 5 fire		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 7		
Action Points 1		
m Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage; see also <i>pack attack</i> .		
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon		
Requires +2 <i>flameburst longbow</i> ; Ranged 20/40; +14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 8 damage; +2d6 fire damage on a critical hit; see also <i>pack attack</i> and <i>burst of flame</i> .		
R Burst of Flame (minor; daily) ♦ Fire		
Requires +2 <i>flameburst longbow</i> ; the next ranged basic attack the gnoll acolyte makes with its longbow before the end of its turn becomes a burst 1 centered on the target. Use the listed attack bonus for the longbow, but against Reflex. Instead of normal damage, each target hit takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
C Filthy Curse (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic, Necrotic		
Close blast 5; +11 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 psychic damage and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
Demonlord's Boon (immediate reaction, when an ally within 5 squares of the acolyte is reduced to 0 hit points)		
The gnoll acolyte heals 5 hit points.		
Pack Attack		
The gnoll acolyte deals an extra 5 damage on melee and ranged attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the acolyte's allies adjacent to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Intimidate +8, Stealth +12		
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 8 (+2)	Cha 7 (+1)
Equipment hide armor, handaxe, +2 <i>flameburst longbow</i> , quiver of 30 arrows		

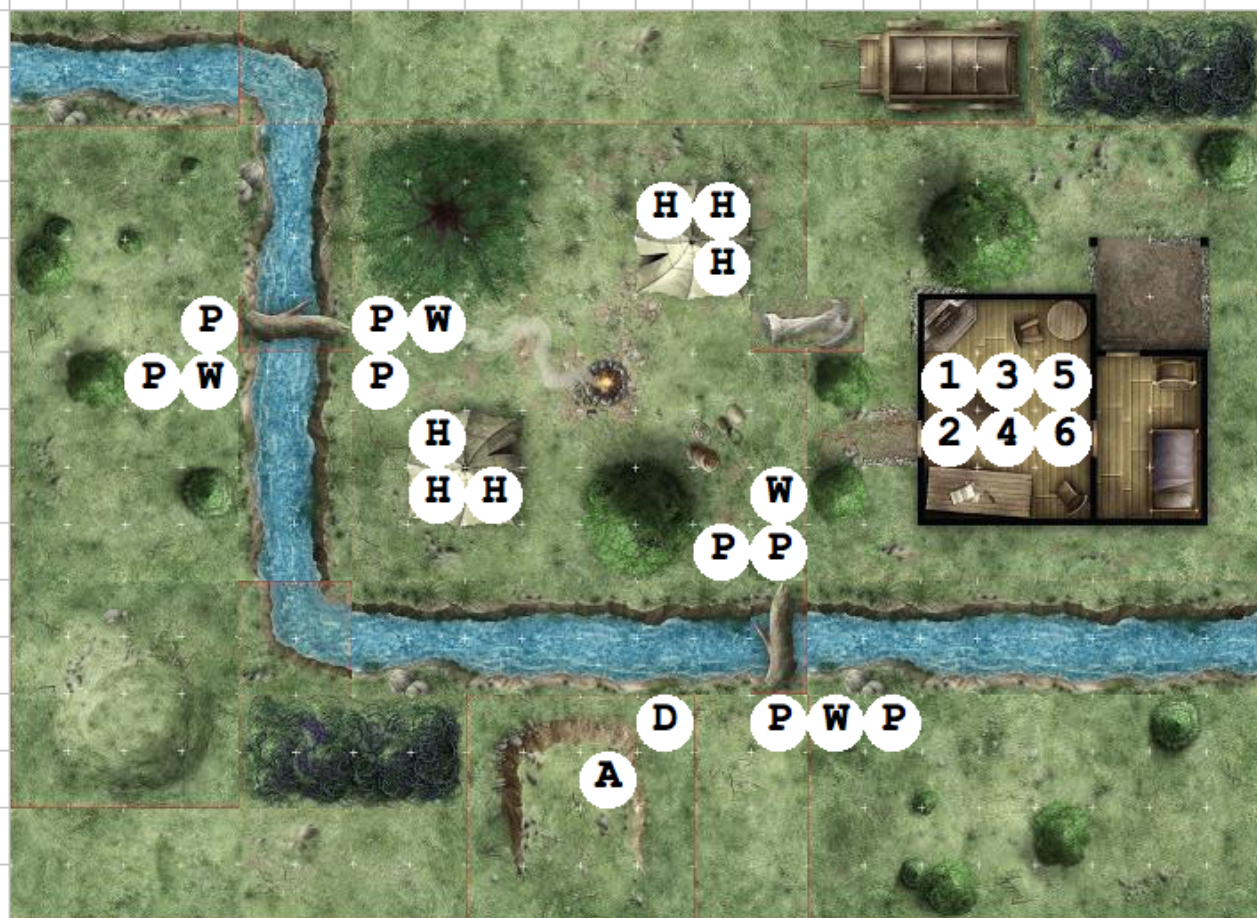
Crocotta	Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium elemental beast (demon)	XP 400
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +11; darkvision	
HP 94; Bloodied 47	
AC 23; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 20	
Resist 5 variable (1/encounter; see MM glossary)	
Speed 8	
m Gore (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.	
C Haunting Laughter (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear, Psychic	
Close burst 3; +12 vs. Will; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target slides 1 square. <i>Miss</i> : The target slides 1 square.	
C Morphic Visage (minor; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Illusion	
Close blast 3; +12 vs. Will; the crocotta gains combat advantage against the target until the end of its next turn.	
Craven (immediate reaction, when targeted by a power with the fear keyword; at-will)	
Whenever a crocotta is the target of an attack with the fear keyword, it shifts 4 squares away from the source of the attack.	
Feint	
If a crocotta shifts at least 1 square during its turn, its melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages -	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 19 (+8)	Dex 17 (+7) Wis 15 (+6)
Con 14 (+6)	Int 5 (+1) Cha 11 (+4)
Description This predator blends the features of a wild boar and a hyena. Black-spotted brown fur covers its head. Large brown, pitted tusks emerge from its canine jaw. The rest of its body is hairless and covered with hideous, crusty sores. It has a long ratlike tail. (Source: <i>Dragon Magazine</i> , Issue 364)	

Halfling Camper	Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid	XP 0
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +5	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 14; see also <i>nimble reaction</i>	
Speed 6	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling camper forces the attacker to reroll the attack and take the new result.	
Alignment Good Languages Common, Dwarven	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Thievery +9	
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 9 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 10 (+3) Cha 14 (+0)
Equipment none	

ENCOUNTER 1: "FIRE!" MAP

RUINS OF THE WILD

Stream / Crevasse	8x2	x2
Camp / Field	8x8	x1
Cabin / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1
Stream / Road	8x2	x2
Field / Skeleton	4x8	x2
Graves / Briar	4x2	x1
Mound / Hobbit Hole	4x4	x1
Hill / Stairs Down	4x4	x1
Ruined Wagon / Briar	4x2	x1
Fallen Statue / Mud Puddle	2x1	x1
Log Bridge / Treasure Chest	1x2	x2
Stream Bend / Horse	2x2	x1
Stream Bend / Road Bend	2x2	x1
Covered Wagon / Field w/Log	4x2	x1
Field / Rock Outcropping	4x2	x1
Field / Road	8x2	x2



P = Gnoll Packrunners, W = Hyena Whelps, D = Crocotta Demon, A = Gnoll Acolyte of Yeenoghu
H = Halfling Campers; 1-6 = PCs

ENCOUNTER 2: SAVA

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 1 / 4,
COMPLEXITY 3 (300 / 525 XP)

SETUP

The Broker: male duergar information broker
Xomoo'e: female wemic medicine woman

Number of Successes: 8

Number of Failures: 3

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, Perception, Thievery

Other Ability: Intelligence (required)

Following the attack on the encampment, the PCs are approached by one of two unusual individuals, depending on what actions the PCs take. Ask the PCs whether they retire to their bedrolls or return to the taproom. If you are under no time constraints, consider allowing the PCs to separate and meet both NPCs. Otherwise, use your best judgment as to which option the majority of PCs would seem to favor.

In each scene below, the PCs engage in a game of *sava*, a Faerunian game which is a combination of go and chess, in an attempt to win a wager. The pieces (and their real-world counterparts) are pawns, rooks (castles), knights-errant (knights), priests (bishops), kings, and queens. Although only one PC can actually play *sava* against the opponent in each scene, all of the PCs may attempt to assist in a variety of ways.

In addition, the PCs may engage their opponents in conversation and learn something about the Shaar and their opponents' reasons for being there.

Continue with Scene 1 for PCs who return to the taproom. Continue with Scene 2 for PCs who try to go get some sleep. No single PC can participate in both scenes as they occur simultaneously.

SCENE 1: THE BROKER

Having decided to enjoy breakfast before attempting to get some sleep, you return to the taproom. Its only occupant, other than the bleary-eyed halfling who served you earlier, is a stout dwarf with a bald pate. His dark skin is quite unusual for a dwarf.

As you enter, he looks up from the game board he has been contemplating. A wide grin splits his roan beard. "Friends, won't you join me for a game of sava?"

A DC 15 Nature check reveals that this is a duergar, a race of dwarves from the Underdark. While generally

evil and reclusive, some duergar venture to, and even live on, the surface. There are even duergar allied to the gold dwarves of the Rift.

The Broker: The duergar tells the PCs that the locals refer to him as "the Broker" and that they may also do so. (If any PC mentions the Crafty Kobold Salvage Company, from EAST1-1 *These Hallowed Halls*, the Broker will nod and say that he has worked with them in the past.)

The Broker addresses the PCs by name whether he is introduced to them or not. He is smooth-spoken to the point of oiliness and peppers his conversation with flattering and self-deprecatory remarks (e.g., "nicely played" or "oh, I should have seen that one coming").

In the course of the game, the PCs can learn the following information from their opponent:

- He deals in the exchange of information and favors.
- He has come to the encampment because at such gatherings large amounts of interesting information exchange hands.
- He arrived approximately a week ago and humbly admits that he has helped a number of people with various problems. He declines to comment on any specific transaction, preferring his dealings to remain confidential.
- He knows the PCs' names because he picks things up here and there and occasionally overhears conversations.

The Board: The Broker's *sava* board and pieces are made of hand-carved wood, dyed red and gold. The pieces are simple and depict halflings (pawns), human (rooks), centaurs (knights-errant), wemics (priests), a thri-kreen (queen), and a loxo (king). A DC 15 Nature check identifies the individual pieces. Wemics are a centaur-like race combining the characteristics of humans and lions. Thri-kreen are mantis-like beings. Loxo are a large humanoid race with elephantine features. A DC 15 History check indicates that the pieces represent the various nomadic peoples of the Eastern Shaar.

The Wager: The Broker offers to bet on the *sava* match. He will bet as much as 10 gp per PC that he will win. He pays winners with coins minted in the Underdark. Any PC who wagers with the Broker receives a +1 bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against the Broker in this encounter.

SCENE 2: THE WEMIC

It has been a long night, and you have chosen to get some rest before the celebration starts in earnest. However, as you approach your tents you pass an unusual being. She appears to be part lion and part

humanoid, similar to a centaur. Her entire body is covered in tawny fur, except for her four paws, which are rust-colored.

As you pass by, she looks up from a game board she has set up on a large rock near her campfire. She rises partway and stretches. "I am still too wound-up from the gnoll attack. Do any of you play sava? It would really help me relax."

A DC 15 Nature check reveals that the creature is a wemic, a race of nomads from the Eastern Shaar. Wemics are aggressive and generally uneducated, but are seldom evil. They occasionally interact with the other nomadic peoples of the area.

Xomoo'e: The wemic introduces herself as Xomoo'e (pronounced "ZOH-moo-ay") of the Ma'heeta (pronounced "MAH-he-ta"), or "Red-Sleeve" pride. Her name translates into Common as "Spear Woman." She is friendly and talkative throughout the game, though her speech is occasionally punctuated with great lioness yawns and cat-like stretches. She is inquisitive and asks the PCs about their adventures.

In the course of the game, the PCs can learn the following information from Xomoo'e:

- She is a medicine woman among her pride.
- She has come to the encampment to trade medicines and learn other races' healing techniques, as well as to gather news of the wider world. She also wanted to see the famous upward-running waterfall.
- She arrived at the encampment just yesterday, traveling with a group of halfling nomads that she encountered on the way.
- On the road, she and the halflings discovered a group of humans that had been attacked by gnolls, probably the same ones that attacked here. She was told the humans were Lur Gershon and his bodyguards.
- She is an accomplished healer who venerates the nature goddess Chauntea Diamondeyes.
- She knows the ritual *raise dead* and can cast it if the PCs can pay for it. However, she lacks the resources to cast it on the halflings who died in the gnoll attack. Moreover, she doubts they would come back, as they died as part of the natural cycle of life in the Eastern Shaar.
- She has numerous *potions of healing* for sale for 50 gp each.
- She notes that the gnolls were exceptionally well armed, as they generally do not wear hide armor or have access to magic weapons. If the PCs indicate they intend to investigate, she suggests they talk to the arms merchant Wimberly.

The Board: Xomoo'e's sava board and pieces are made of hand-carved wood dyed blue and green. The pieces are simple and depict gnolls (pawns), ankhegs (rooks), manticores (knights-errant), perytons (priests), a wyvern (queen), and a dragon (king). A DC 15 Nature check identifies the individual pieces. A peryton resembles a giant eagle with the head of a demonic stag. A DC 15 Nature check indicates that these are all types of monsters commonly encountered in the Eastern Shaar.

No Bets: Xomoo'e does not approve of gambling, preferring sure things to risky bets. She will not wager on the game.

SKILL CHALLENGE

The skill challenge is identical regardless of which opponent is faced. Each round, the single PC that actually plays sava makes a mandatory Intelligence check against the opponent (each check is made against DC 12 / 13). This represents how well the PC is playing. The other PCs may suggest moves, aiding the player on his or her Intelligence check (DC 10 to grant a +2 bonus) or they may attempt to use other skills to influence the outcome of the game.

The Intelligence checks are mandatory; each success or failure counts towards the overall success or failure of the challenge. In addition, the PCs may use other skills to earn successes or failures as part of the skill challenge, as detailed below. The game continues until the PCs accrue 8 victories and win, or suffer 3 failures and lose.

Allow PCs to be creative and use skills not detailed below. Assign hard DCs (17 / 18) to actions that are unlikely to help and/or difficult to execute. Assign moderate DCs (12 / 13) to plans that are nearly certain of success and/or are simple to execute. In addition, reward plans that are exceptionally clever or well role-played with automatic success.

Cheating: If the PCs lose the skill challenge because of failed skill checks having to do with cheating, their opponent breaks off the game, returning any wager and accusing them of cheating or not playing seriously. In either event, the opponent will not offer the PCs the reward detailed below.

Conversation: During the game, the PCs' opponent makes conversation. The most important topic to include is a discussion of the gnoll attack earlier in the evening. The NPC describes a possible location of the gnolls' lair, a set of limestone caves in the foothills of the nearby Uthangol Mountains. This information makes the lair easier to find in Encounter 4. If the PCs are

caught cheating, or if they are rude or disrespectful, the opponent does not mention this information.

Bluff (DC 17 / 18): A character attempts to distract the opponent with conversation or diversions. Alternately, a character can use this skill to aid another PC in the use of another skill. For example, a character could distract the opponent with a Bluff check while another character used Thievery to switch the pieces on the board. Such a use of the Bluff skill only requires a DC 10 Bluff check and provides a +2 bonus to the other character's check. Failure not only fails to aid in the other character's check, it also increases the DC of that check by +2, as the opponent realizes that something is going on.

In addition, a character could use Bluff to suggest an illegal move, passing it off as a variant on the game or a perfectly legal move.

Diplomacy (DC 17 / 18): A character attempts to talk the opponent into spotting the PCs' side a piece, going easy on them, or teaching them how to play as the game proceeds. Once one character has successfully used Diplomacy to influence the opponent to make the game easier, further checks aimed at obtaining the same result increase in difficulty by +2 each time.

Insight (DC 17 / 18): A character attempts to read the opponent's telltale gestures and facial expressions in an attempt to figure out whether the playing character's moves are good (e.g., when the character actually playing lifts a piece, another PC watches the opponent for signs of whether the move is good and relays the information to the player).

Efforts to covertly relay information garnered through use of the Insight skill may also require a PC to make a secondary DC 12 / 13 Bluff check (for example, coughing at the right moment without alerting the opponent). Failure of this secondary check does not result in a failure. Instead, it increases the DC of subsequent Insight checks by 5 (to DC 22 / 23) as the opponent tries to hide his or her expressions.

Intimidate (DC 22 / 23 vs. the Broker, DC 12 / 13 vs. Xomoo'e): A character can attempt to throw the opponent off of his or her game by making an Intimidate check.

This check is hard against the Broker, as he commonly employs such tactics himself. If a PC succeeds in intimidating the Broker, then it counts as two successes.

This check is easy against Xomoo'e, who considers the game merely a friendly diversion, but carries the risk of causing her to quit. If a PC attempts to intimidate Xomoo'e and fails, it counts as two failures; if this ends the challenge, she breaks off the game, refusing to play with such bullies.

Thievery (DC 22 / 23): A character can attempt to cheat by removing pieces from the board or repositioning pieces. Other characters may aid such an attempt not only with the Thievery skill, but also with the Bluff skill, as explained above regarding that skill. The DC for each subsequent Thievery attempt increases by +2, as the opponent more carefully watches the board to ensure that no one is cheating.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Completing the skill challenge takes the PCs about an hour.

Success: If the PCs succeed at the skill challenge against the Broker, he offers them a *shield of defiance (heroic tier)* in exchange for a promise to do him an unnamed favor at some point in the future. He explains that even though the PCs may not need or want the shield, they will enjoy the "time value of treasure" by having the money it represents months before they earn it. He declines to accept any conditions on the favor. Award each PC that agreed to owe the Broker a favor the story object EAST03 *A Favor Owed*.

If the PCs succeed at the skill challenge against Xomoo'e, she compliments them on their skill and invites them to a rematch at the summer solstice. Award each PC that participated in the encounter the story object EAST04 *An Invitation*.

Note: No PC can earn both story objects or play against both opponents. However, it is perfectly fine for some of the PCs to earn EAST03 while other PCs earn EAST04.

Failure: If the PCs fail the skill challenge, the opponent decides the PCs are not fated to be significant players in the future events of the Eastern Shaar. Therefore, the Broker does not offer the *shield of defiance (heroic tier)* and the PCs do not incur the debt. Similarly, Xomoo'e decides not to invite them to the Council Hills for the tribal gathering at the summer solstice.

In either event, the Broker and Xomoo'e suggest that the PCs may wish to track the gnolls back to their lair to determine whether there are any more gnolls and to secure any loot that may have been left behind.

If the players appear to be considering taking an extended rest, discourage them. For example, tell them that they have observed other adventurers attempting to pull together groups to explore and loot the gnolls' lair. The adventure does not necessarily have to come to a screeching halt if the players insist on taking an extended rest, however.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 60 / 105 experience points each for beating either the Broker or Xomoo'e at sava. They receive half XP if they lose the game. (If different characters play against both NPCs, the party as a whole gets full XP as long as they win at least one of the two games. They do not earn twice the XP for winning both games.)

TREASURE

The Broker offers the PCs a *shield of defiance* (heroic tier) if they win the sava match and at least one PC agrees to owe him a favor. The PCs can also win up to a maximum of 10 gp per PC by wagering with the Broker and winning.

ENCOUNTER 3: MERCHANT

SETUP

Wimberly (Insight +6)

If the PCs choose to follow up on the unusual armor and weapons the gnolls are carrying, they eventually encounter Wimberly. If Xomoo'e does not direct them to Wimberly, a DC 15 Streetwise check indicates that Wimberly is the most knowledgeable and well-respected merchant dealing in arms and armor in the encampment and therefore the most likely to know more about the gnolls' unusual armaments.

You come upon the arms merchant's tent as a halfling woman sprints out of it and past you. She careens off a signpost that reads "Wimberly's Weapons" and "Crafty Kobold Salvage Company" before scurrying away.

As you enter the tent, you hear the halfling merchant inside mutter to himself, "Filthy demons. First, they gut my customers, then they pillage our camp." Looking up, he practically snarls at you. "What do you want?"

Wimberly is angry and vengeful, having learned that the gnolls who attacked the camp were the same ones that slaughtered his customer, Lur Gershon. If the PCs mention they drove the gnolls off, his attitude toward the PCs improves dramatically. He offers the PCs a set of *fireburst armor* +2 if they will agree to hunt down any gnolls that got away and to make sure there are no more lying in wait.

As Wimberly speaks, he curses the gnolls with every breath. He has the following information to impart:

- If shown the hide armor the gnolls were wearing or the +2 *flameburst longbow* they were carrying, Wimberly recognizes the items as ones he sold to a human, Lur Gershon, for his bodyguards. That transaction took place nearly a week ago. When he learns that arms and armor he himself sold were used in the attack, Wimberly becomes even more insistent that the PCs attack the gnolls' lair.
- Lur Gershon and his bodyguards were found dead on a track headed east, deeper into the Eastern Shaar, shortly thereafter. A group of halflings and a wemic traveling toward the encampment from the east came across the remains and brought them back just yesterday.
- Wimberly recalls that when Lur Gershon bought the armor, he mentioned he was outfitting the bodyguards, whom he hired on a recommendation from the Broker.

Wimberly has a wide assortment of arms, armor, and equipment for sale. He can sell the PCs any items from the *Player's Handbook* at standard prices. (Remember that characters in *Living Forgotten Realms* may not buy magic items of a level higher than their character level, however.)

If the PCs confront the Broker with the information that he told Lur Gershon to hire the bodyguards, the Broker freely admits this fact. He points out that Lur Gershon's death is proof of the fact that he needed the bodyguards. If the PCs try to blame the Broker for arranging for the gnolls to get the dangerous magic weapon and the improved armor, he dismisses such accusations as preposterous and excuses himself. If the PCs choose to pursue the Broker, feel free to improvise. He would seek to escape without bloodshed.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs decide to check out the gnoll lair, proceed to Encounter 4.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs do not earn XP for this encounter, and it does not count toward a milestone.

TREASURE

Wimberly gives the PCs a suit of *fireburst armor* +2 if they agree to hunt down and deal with the gnolls.

ENCOUNTER 4: MAZE OF SSETH

**SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 4 / 6,
COMPLEXITY 4 (700 / 1,000 XP)**

SETUP

Number of Successes: 10

Number of Failures: 3

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Dungeoneering, Endurance, History, Insight, Perception, Religion, Thievery

Secondary Skill: Heal

The PCs must travel through the wilderness for several hours before finding the gnolls' lair. The gnolls did not make much of an effort to conceal their own tracks, but the area to be searched is still fairly parge. A DC 17 / 18 Nature check (DC 12 / 13 if the PCs received directions from the Broker, Xomoo'e, or the captured gnolls) is required to find the lair. If time permits and any gnolls or the crocotta fled Encounter 1, feel free to stage a short fight in the gnoll lair with the survivors before revealing the stairs.

Once the PCs succeed at the Nature check, they arrive at the lair. Read the following:

The gnolls' lair turns out to be a deep cave low in the Uthangol Mountains. A thorough search has turned up little more than a few bones and some trash. It does not appear as if the gnolls were here for very long at all.

Just as you are about to give up and return to the jamboree to report that the threat is apparently over, you chance to discover a well-hidden set of stairs carved into the rock, leading deeper into the mountainside.

Far below, the stairs end in two closed stone doors. From here, you can just make out a line of Iokharic script above them.

The script above the doors states, in Draconic:

"Two Paths to Glory: Willing Sacrifice and Domination."

A DC 20 Religion check recognizes this bit of Ssethssar dogma: the two most honored achievements for a priest of Sseth, also known as a Mazewalker, are to willingly sacrifice him or herself to Sseth and to rise to dominance over others.

The doors are the two entrances to a maze dedicated to Sseth. If the characters choose to enter the maze to the left, proceed to Scene 1. If they instead

chose to enter the maze to the right, proceed to Scene 2. Discourage the party from splitting up with dire warnings of the dangers such a maze can present. If the PCs nonetheless split up, increase the DC of all checks by 2 until the PCs join back up, either by retreating, or by making it to Scene 3.

SKILL CHALLENGE

The adventurers' progress through the maze is abstracted into a skill challenge with three scenes. The PCs begin in either Scene 1 or Scene 2 as explained above. Once they attain 5 victories, they proceed to Scene 3. (If you are not limited by time, or if you want to add some variety, you can blend elements of both Scene 1 and Scene 2 to make the maze a more complicated environment.)

Allow PCs to be creative and use skills not detailed below. Assign hard DCs (17 / 18) to actions that are unlikely to help and/or difficult to execute. Assign moderate DCs (12 / 13) to plans that are more certain of success and/or are simpler to execute. In addition, reward plans that are exceptionally clever or well role-played with an automatic success.

A PC may volunteer to attempt a truly hard DC (22 / 23) if he or she is supremely confident of success. If a PC succeeds at a check with such a high DC, that PC discovers a shortcut through the maze. This counts as two successes instead of one. A failure still only counts as one failure. Each PC should only be able to do this one time during the overall challenge.

SCENE 1: THE LEFT HAND

The left-hand doors lead to an enormous labyrinth. As you walk between its narrow walls, you can hear your footsteps echo in the dark vault above.

This section of the maze is a traditional labyrinth (i.e., corridors without a roof) that weaves through a set of underground vaults in a seemingly endless series of intersections, 90-degree turns, and dead ends.

To traverse this part of the maze and reach Scene 3, the PCs must achieve 5 victories. In addition, the PCs must make three mandatory group Thievery and/or Perception checks (DC 17 / 18), as the corridors are beset with hidden pits. Failure indicates that some of the PCs have tumbled into a pit. All PCs expend a healing surge for each failure to represent the damage from falling and the exertion of helping their comrades escape the pits. PCs who are not injured in falls of 20' (e.g., through operation of a *safewing amulet*) do not expend healing surges in this manner.

PCs who devise a way to mark their way through this section of the maze gain a +2 bonus to all skill checks in this scene, including mandatory skill checks, as they eliminate most backtracking and thus avoid falling into the same pits twice.

Acrobatics (DC 12 / 13): A character that succeeds on an Athletics check, as described below, may subsequently attempt an Acrobatics check to remain atop the walls of the labyrinth and direct the party's progress. Failure indicates the character has fallen and costs a healing surge, just as the falls from the mandatory Thievery checks do.

Athletics (DC 12 / 13): A character can climb the rough walls of the labyrinth and scout the surrounding area, provided he or she has darkvision or a light source. A failed Athletics check results in a fall, which costs the character a healing surge, just as the falls from the mandatory Thievery checks do.

History or Religion (DC 21 / 23): The walls of the labyrinth are laid out in religiously significant patterns. There are also many examples in history of similar types of mazes. A successful check identifies a pattern at its outset and either eliminates it as a potential route or identifies it as a likely exit.

Once the PCs have accumulated 5 victories, allow them a short rest and proceed to Scene 3.

SCENE 2: THE RIGHT HAND

The right-hand doors lead to a series of snaking caverns. As you crawl through this portion of the maze, you must frequently stop to search for secret doors. In addition, a number of passages have been obscured by clever illusions.

This section of the maze consists of deceptively twisting tunnels, drops, and chimneys. To traverse it and reach Scene 3, the PCs must achieve 5 victories. In addition, they must make a total of three mandatory group Insight and/or Perception checks (DC 17 / 18) to discover the secret doors and illusions that hide the correct route through this area. Every time they fail a group check, they go down a false trail or stumble into some sort of trap or hazard, which costs each PC one healing surge to represent the damage taken and the exertion of recovering from the hazards they encounter.

PCs can employ the ritual Detect Secret Doors (or similar divination rituals, such as Hand of Fate, as you see fit) to automatically succeed at some or all of the mandatory Perception and Insight checks.

PCs who devise a way to mark their way through this section of the maze gain a +2 bonus to all skill

checks in this scene, including mandatory skill checks, as they reduce the amount of searching and backtracking they must do.

Athletics (DC 17 / 18): A character can use the Athletics skill to scout ahead of the party, free-climbing chimneys and lowering a rope and jumping short drops.

Dungeoneering (DC 17 / 18): A character can use this skill to gauge the grade of passages, estimate where one tunnel leads in relation to another, notice subtle inaccuracies in the obscuring illusions, and find changes in stonework denoting possible secret doors.

Once the PCs have accumulated 5 victories, allow them a short rest and proceed to Scene 3.

SCENE 3: THE SUNKEN MAZE

The maze has been taking you progressively deeper into the earth. It has also grown progressively more cold and damp. As you turn the next corner, you spy open water. The passage ahead, which you have determined to be the proper route, is partially submerged.

The final section of the maze is flooded. Its snaking tunnels are all partially, and occasionally fully, underwater. For PCs to successfully navigate this section of the maze, they must each make two individual mandatory Endurance checks due to temperature (DC 17 / 18) and two individual mandatory Athletics checks for swimming (DC 12 / 13). Call for one set of checks at the beginning of the scene and one set just before the PCs reach the end of the maze.

Each time a character fails one of these checks, that character (and only that character) loses one healing surge. This represents the toll that the cold water and the effort of swimming through the narrow tunnels and sharp rocks takes on the characters. Failing these individual checks does not constitute a failure for overcoming the skill challenge. PCs who have a swim speed do not have to attempt the Athletics checks. PCs who have cold resistance (either innate or magical) or who can breathe water do not have to attempt the Endurance checks.

PCs who devise a way to mark their way through this section of the maze gain a +2 bonus to all skill checks in this scene, including mandatory skill checks, as they reduce the amount of time they are in the water and avoid taking the same route multiple times.

Athletics (DC 12 / 13): In addition to the mandatory checks above, PCs may use this skill to swim ahead and scout out parts of the maze, or to aid weaker swimmers.

Dungeoneering (DC 12 / 13): PCs may use their knowledge of caves and subterranean waters to aid them in selecting likely passages and ruling out dead ends. Failure at a Dungeoneering check means the PCs remain exposed to the cold and water for longer, requiring an additional, immediate, round of mandatory Athletics and Endurance checks from all PCs.

Heal (DC Varies): When any character fails one of the mandatory skill checks, a different character may attempt a Heal check against the same DC to prevent the first character from losing a healing surge. This represents the timely application of first aid. If the Heal check fails, it does not count as a failure against the overall challenge. A character may not benefit more than once from this effect during the skill challenge.

Perception (DC 17 / 18): PCs may observe currents or ancient signs of passage to select likely passages and rule out dead ends. Failure at a Perception check means the PCs remain exposed to the cold and water for longer, requiring an additional, immediate, round of mandatory Athletics and Endurance checks. Once the PCs accumulate 10 victories or 5 failures, proceed to the section on ending the encounter.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Completing this skill challenge takes the PCs about 3 hours of game time.

Victory: If the PCs accumulate 10 successes before 3 failures, they discover a minor shrine to Sseth before exiting the maze.

Defeat: If, instead, the PCs accumulate 3 failures before 10 successes, they still exit the maze. However, they dismiss the route to the minor shrine as a dead end and bypass it. Skip the following section and proceed to the next encounter.

If the PCs successfully navigate the maze, they find a minor shrine tucked into what otherwise appears to be a dead end. Read the following text:

Deep in the heart of the maze, when checking a submerged side tunnel, you round a corner and spy a niche set into the tunnel wall. The carvings here depict the maw of an enormous stone snake. A pedestal in the form of a forked stone tongue stands in the niche. Upon it you find several delicate necklaces of clay beads, which seem quite out of place.

A DC 15 Religion check indicates that this shrine is dedicated to Sseth, the evil god of serpents and mazes.

The pedestal holds a small number of necklaces made of clay beads (one per PC). A DC 15 History or Religion check indicates that perhaps they have some

religious or historical significance, although exactly what that significance might be is unclear. An Arcana check does not reveal any presence of a magical aura. The necklaces appear to be cheaply made and do not seem to have any obvious monetary value.

The PCs may choose to take the necklaces or may choose to leave them alone. Either way, proceed to Encounter 5.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 140 / 200 experience points each for successfully navigating the maze.

TREASURE

If the characters succeed at the skill challenge, they find a number of simple necklaces (one per PC) made of clay beads strung on decaying leather.

Pay close attention to where the characters place the necklaces, without asking them where they put them (which might tip them off). This becomes important in Encounter 6.

ENCOUNTER 5: SNAKES!

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 5 / 7 (1,000 / 1,500 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and hazards at the low tier:

1 Zombie Abomination (ZA)

1 Serpent Circle

This encounter includes the following creatures and hazards at the high tier:

1 Zombie Abomination (Level 6) (ZA)

1 Elite Serpent Circle

A set of stairs leads up out of the water-logged tunnels. As you climb them, you notice a faint glow. At the top, you see that the stairs end in a brightly lit chamber. At least one gnoll made it this far through the maze, as its corpse lies sprawled before you, a few feet away from a pair of closed stone doors.

A DC 15 Heal check reveals that the gnoll was crushed to death by a large creature within the last 24 hours. A DC 20 Perception check indicates that a large snake or other scaled creature came through the area during the same time period. On a separate DC 15 Perception check, the PCs hear something large dragging across the floor beyond the doors. The doors open easily, as they were recently unjammed by the gnolls.

Once the characters decide to open the doors, read the following:

A large snake with humanoid arms lurks in the chamber beyond the doors. The monstrosity's rotted scales and lifeless gaze indicate that although it is moving, it is no longer living.

In contrast, the floor beneath it teems with life. Constrained within a magic circle hewn directly into the stone floor, thousands of vipers slither and writhe.

The shards of two broken jars and their glistening contents litter the floor between you and the serpents.

To the side of the chamber stands an altar. Its face depicts a snake-headed being biting the hand off of a hooded supplicant's arm.

If you are running the low-level version of this adventure, continue by reading the following:

A large book and a shining headband rest atop the altar.

If you are running the high-level version, read the following instead:

A large book and an unlit candle rest atop the altar.

A DC 15 Religion check indicates that this shrine is dedicated to Sseth, the evil god of serpents and mazes. A DC 15 Nature check determines that the being depicted on the altar is a yuan-ti malison.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Everburning flames in sconces shed bright light throughout the area.

Serpent Circle: Until disabled, the serpent circle writhes with living snakes. All serpent circle squares count as difficult terrain, costing 2 squares of movement. See the trap's stat block for more details.

Shattered Jars: In a recent battle with the gnolls, the zombie aberration shattered two canopic jars, spilling viscera across the floor. Squares with the remains of the jars and their contents are slippery (hindering terrain). Creatures entering these squares at greater than half speed must make a DC 12 / 13 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

TACTICS

The zombie abomination is surprised unless the PCs make a great deal of noise before opening the doors.

In the first round of combat, the zombie abomination slithers forward to engage the closest PC in melee (if necessary). It attacks with its bastard sword, and then attempts to use its *grasping coils* ability on the same target. Thereafter, it employs its move action (if remaining) and an action point to repeatedly employ its *grasping coils* and *crush* abilities against the target.

The zombie abomination saves its second action point for use after it employs its *rise again* ability. Once it rises, it either moves forward and employs its *grasping coils* ability, or attacks with its bastard sword and then its *grasping coils* ability. If the *grasping coils* attack succeeds, the abomination spends its remaining action point to use its *crush* ability. If the *grasping coils* attack fails, the abomination instead uses the action point to make a second attempt.

The zombie abomination prefers to fight from the rear of the chamber, forcing characters that engage it in melee to circumvent the shattered jars and to suffer attacks from the serpent circle.

Once the zombie abomination successfully grabs a character with its *grasping coils* ability, it maintains the grab from round to round as a minor action to enable the abomination to use its *crush* ability against the character twice. Whenever the abomination is even partly within the serpent circle, any character the abomination has grabbed is also subject to the effects of the serpent circle. If the abomination grabs a character when the abomination is not in the serpent circle, it attempts to use a standard action to make a Strength vs. Fortitude attack to move half speed, dragging the character into the serpent circle. (See page 290 in the *Player's Handbook* for the rules on forcibly moving a grabbed creature.)

The zombie abomination fights to the death.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: The zombie abomination has 186 hp, is bloodied at 93 hp, and rises with 93 hp at low level; it has 237 hp, is bloodied at 118 hp, and rises with 118 hp at high level.

Six PCs: The zombie abomination has 278 hp, is bloodied at 139 hp, and rises with 139 hp at low level; it has 355 hp, is bloodied at 177 hp, and rises with 177 hp at high level.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the zombie abomination, they have finished their exploration of the gnolls' lair and the unexpected discovery of the maze of Sseth. They should return to the encampment. Proceed to Encounter 6.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 200 / 300 experience points each for defeating the zombie abomination.

TREASURE

At low level, the book on the altar contains the ritual Hand of Fate and the headband is a *circlet of authority*.

At high level, the book contains Discern Lies and the candle is a *ritual candle*.

ENCOUNTER 5: “SNAKES!” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Serpent Circle	Level 2 Warder
Hazard	XP 125
Hazard: The divine circle in the center of the room writhes with thousands of venomous snakes.	
Perception	
Characters automatically see the serpent circle.	
Trigger	
A creature who enters or starts its turn in the area circumscribed by the circle is attacked by the snakes within.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction	Melee
Target: Creature within the circle	
Attack: +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6+3 poison damage and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A character adjacent to the circle can disable it with a DC 20 Thievery check. If successful, the snakes contained within are released and disperse harmlessly. ♦ A character can attack the serpent circle with a blast or burst attack (AC 10, all other defenses 12; hp 30; resist 5 all). ♦ A character in a square not completely encompassed by the circle can avoid entering it by squeezing (half speed, -5 penalty to attack rolls, grant combat advantage). ♦ A character in a square not completely encompassed by the circle can avoid entering it by making a DC 15 Acrobatics check. 	

Zombie Abomination	Level 4 Solo Brute
Large natural animate (undead)	XP 875
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +4	
HP 232; Bloodied 116; see also <i>rise again</i>	
AC 18; Fortitude 22, Reflex 18, Will 20	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7, climb 7	
Action Points 2	
m Bastard Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +7 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage and the target is marked until the end of the abomination's next turn.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
The zombie abomination makes two bastard sword attacks.	
M Grasping Coils (minor; at-will)	
+5 vs. Reflex; the target is pulled 1 square and grabbed (until escape). The abomination can grab only one creature at time. Checks made to escape the abomination's grab take a -5 penalty.	
M Crush (minor; at-will)	
Grabbed target only; +5 vs. Fortitude; 2d8+4 damage.	
Rise Again (the first time the abomination drops to 0 hit points)	
Make a new initiative check for the abomination. On its next turn, the abomination rises (as a move action) with 116 hit points.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 6 (+0) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 18 (+6)	Int 3 (-2) Cha 3 (-2)
Equipment bastard sword	

ENCOUNTER 5: “SNAKES!” STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

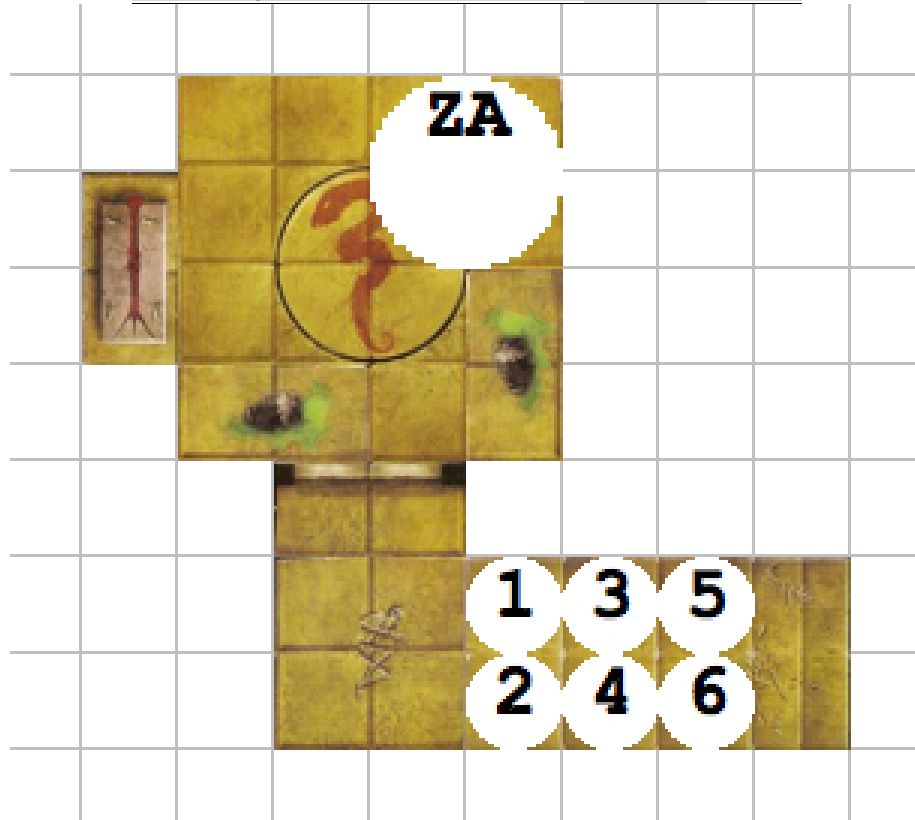
Elite Serpent Circle	Level 2 Elite Warder
Hazard	XP 250
Hazard: The divine circle in the center of the room writhes with thousands of venomous snakes.	
Perception	
Characters automatically see the serpent circle.	
Trigger	
A creature who enters or starts its turn in the area circumscribed by the circle is attacked by the snakes within.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction	Melee
Target: Creature within the circle	
Attack: +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d6+3 poison damage and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A character adjacent to the circle can disable it with a DC 22 Thievery check. If successful, the snakes contained within are released and disperse harmlessly. ♦ A character can attack the serpent circle with a blast or burst attack (AC 14, all other defenses 16; hp 70; resist 5 all). ♦ A character in a square not completely encompassed by the circle can avoid entering it by squeezing (half speed, -5 penalty to attack rolls, grant combat advantage). ♦ A character in a square not completely encompassed by the circle can avoid entering it by making a DC 17 Acrobatics check. 	

Zombie Abomination (Level 6)	Level 6 Solo Brute
Large natural animate (undead)	XP 1,250
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +5	
HP 296; Bloodied 148; see also <i>rise again</i>	
AC 20; Fortitude 24, Reflex 20, Will 22	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7, climb 7	
Action Points 2	
m Bastard Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage and the target is marked until the end of the abomination's next turn.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
The zombie abomination makes two bastard sword attacks.	
M Grasping Coils (minor; at-will)	
+8 vs. Reflex; the target is pulled 1 square and grabbed (until escape). The abomination can grab only one creature at time. Checks made to escape the abomination's grab take a -5 penalty.	
M Crush (minor; at-will)	
Grabbed target only; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
Rise Again (the first time the abomination drops to 0 hit points)	
Make a new initiative check for the abomination. On its next turn, the abomination rises (as a move action) with 148 hit points.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 18 (+7)	Dex 6 (+1) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 3 (-1) Cha 3 (-1)
Equipment bastard sword	

ENCOUNTER 5: "SNAKES!" MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Altar / Portcullis	2x1	x1
Stone Doors / Broken Urn	2x1	x1
Broken Tablet / Broken Vase	2x1	x2
Skeleton on Floor / Floor	2x2	x1
Stairs / Hall	4x2	x1
Snake Sigil / Intersection	4x4	x1



ZA = Zombie Abomination; 1-6 = PCs

The Serpent Circle is the 2x2 area indicated in the top center of the map

ENCOUNTER 6: CONCLUSION

SETUP

The Broker (Bluff +9; Passive Perception 19)

Xomoo'e (Bluff +4; Passive Perception 24)

When the PCs return to the halfling encampment, they are met by the Broker, Xomoo'e, or both, depending on whom they met earlier. If the PCs only played sava against the Broker, he is here alone. If they only played against Xomoo'e, she is here alone. If they separated and played against both opponents, then both the Broker and Xomoo'e approach the PCs at the same time.

As you cross the stream to reenter the encampment, you are greeted by a familiar face.

The Broker and/or Xomoo'e greet the PCs and ask them what they found in the gnolls' lair. If the PCs found but do not mention the necklaces, consult the NPCs' passive Perception checks. They automatically notice the necklaces if the PCs failed to state they put them in a backpack or hid them. If the PCs try to hide the necklaces in the NPCs' presence, have them make Thievery checks. If the NPCs' passive Perception checks exceed the PCs' Thievery checks, the NPCs notice and ask about the necklaces.

The Broker and Xomoo'e attempt to hide their interest in the necklaces. Roll Bluff checks for them, opposed by the PCs' passive Insight checks. If the PCs beat the NPCs, tell the PCs that the NPCs are attempting to restrain their interest in the items.

The Broker offers to buy the necklaces from the PCs for 100 / 150 gp each, less any gold he lost in wagers in Encounter 2 (up to 10 gp per PC). If any PC took his debt in Encounter 2 and refuses to deal, he calls in the debt to secure that PC's necklace. Do not award such a PC the story object EAST03 *A Favor Owed*, as his or her debt is paid.

Xomoo'e also offers to buy the necklaces from the PCs for 100 / 150 gp each. If they refuse, she sweetens the offer by also offering a *bronzewood weapon* +2. If the PCs accept her offer of gold or simply give her the necklaces, she gives them the *bronzewood weapon* +2 as a token of esteem.

Any PC who keeps his or her necklace receives the story object EAST05 *A Mysterious Trinket*.

If the PCs inquire, the Broker and Xomoo'e reveal that they are willing to purchase the apparently worthless jewelry because know someone who would pay well for objects found in a Ssethssar shrine. They

steadfastly refuse to tell the PCs who that person would be.

TREASURE

Xomoo'e gives the PCs a *bronzewood weapon* +2 if they give or sell her at least one necklace.

Any PC that sells a necklace to the Broker or Xomoo'e gets 100 / 150 gp (less any money wagered to the Broker).

CONCLUSION

Once the PCs have dealt with the Broker and/or Xomoo'e, read the following:

What started out as a long night of revelry has become an extremely long day of adventuring. With the gnoll threat neutralized, you see hin nomads and hurbryn merchants cleaning up from this morning's attack.

Despite its violent start, the celebration of the vernal equinox is a great success. For your role in averting disaster, you find that halflings continuously buy you drinks and bring you food. The story of your exploits in the limestone caves soon spreads, and you enjoy a degree of fame for the rest of the festival.

If time permits, consider running an impromptu skill challenge in which the PCs aid in rebuilding the encampment, burying the dead, treating the wounded, gathering firewood for a bonfire, and preparing a feast of celebration. Regardless, the PCs get a Minor Quest award of 9 / 19 XP each for uncovering some of the secrets of the Shaar, although in some ways, they have discovered at least as many questions as they have answered.

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

It is critical that you enter the PC rewards accurately on the tracking form, and ensure that the information is reported and entered online in a timely manner. While players will be able to track their character's information on paper, the online information serves as an important backup and verification of play.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 1: Fire!

231 / 336 XP

Encounter 2: The Broker

60 / 105 XP

Encounter 4: Maze of Sseth

140 / 200 XP

Encounter 5: Snakes!

200 / 300 XP

Minor Quest: Secrets of the Shaar

9 / 19 XP

Total Possible Experience

640 / 960 XP

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or some other item of value. Each player makes one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that to the gold all characters receive, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. You can have a negative number and enter that negative

online. PCs receive 20% of a magic item's purchase price for any item they sell.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

Gold per PC

100 / 150 gp

(Encounter 2: 10 / 10 gp; Encounter 5: 100 / 150 gp, less any gold gained in Encounter 2)

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

Bundle A: *+2 flameburst longbow* (PH, 8th level)

Found in Encounter 1

Bundle B: *shield of defiance (heroic tier)* (PH, 8th level)

Found in Encounter 2 if PCs beat the Broker at sava

Bundle C: *fireburst armor +2* (PH, 8th level)

Found in Encounter 3

Bundle D: *circlet of authority* (low-level version only) (PH, 7th level)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle E: *ritual candle* (high-level version only) (PH, 11th level)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle F: *bronzewood weapon +2** (AV, 8th level)

Found in Encounter 6 if PCs meet Xomoo'e

Bundle G: *hand of fate* (ritual book) (low-level version only)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle H: *discern lies* (ritual book) (high-level version only)

Found in Encounter 5

Potion plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of healing* plus 75 / 200 gp to their

total gold. The player should write the potion gained on their adventure log.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 125 / 250 gp to their total gold.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. A single PC may not earn both EAST03 and EAST04. However, all PCs can earn EAST05 in addition to one of the other two awards.

EAST03 *A Favor Owed*

You promised the enigmatic duergar called “The Broker” that you would do him a favor at some point in the future, with no questions asked.

EAST04 *An Invitation*

Xomoo’e, a medicine woman from the Ma’heeta, or “Red-sleeve,” pride of wemics has offered you a rematch at the game of *sava* if you choose to attend the gathering of tribes that will take place near the Council Hills in the Eastern Shaar at the summer solstice.

EAST05 *A Mysterious Trinket*

Maybe you just wanted a souvenir, you liked how it looked, or you thought you could get more for it later. Whatever the reason, you decided to keep one of the odd clay bead necklaces that you found in the Sseth shrine, rather than sell it.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

1. How much of the halfling encampment burned?

- a. A bit. The characters defeated the gnolls and/or put out any fires before there was much damage.
- b. A significant amount. The gnolls managed to burn down the tents, but the characters got the fire under control before it spread to the taproom.
- c. Everything. The gnolls burned the encampment to the ground.

2. Did any of the characters agree to owe the Broker a favor?

- a. Yes. They took the proffered payment and agreed to owe the Broker an unconditional favor later.
- b. No. The characters decided to forgo the shield and thus did not incur the debt.
- c. Not applicable. All of the characters met with Xomoo’e instead.

3. Did the characters discover how the gnolls got their hide armor and the +2 *flameburst* longbow?

- a. The characters did not notice anything was amiss or did not choose to investigate it.
- b. The characters spoke to Wimberly, who indirectly linked the items to the Broker. However, the PCs kept this information to themselves.
- c. The characters connected the goods to the Broker through Wimberly and mentioned that connection to Xomoo’e or someone else.
- e. The characters made the connection and confronted the Broker about it.

4. Did the characters give or sell the necklaces to the Broker or Xomoo’e?

- a. Yes. They sold or gave them all to the Broker.
- b. Yes. They sold or gave them all to Xomoo’e.
- c. Yes. They sold or gave some to the Broker and some to Xomoo’e.
- d. Yes. They sold or gave some to the Broker and/or some to Xomoo’e. However, they kept some, too.
- e. No. They kept them all or they did not find them.

NEW RULES

Bronzewood Weapon +2

Level 8

Creatures of the Shadowfell react poorly to this hard, red-brown wood.

Lvl 8 +2 3,400 gp

Weapon: Any melee

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, or +1d10 damage per plus against shadow creatures.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with the weapon. The target is outlined by a golden nimbus and does not gain the benefit of concealment or cover (save ends). The target benefits from total concealment or superior cover as normal. If the target is a creature that has the shadow origin, then it also takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (ends on same save as above).

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 65.