



NOT ANOTHER MONSTER QUEST

VOLUME
2

ORCS, GNOLLS, & MINOTAURS





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"The path before you is endless: a winding labyrinthian maze that sprawls out before you in all directions.

You take a left, then two rights before coming to a dead end. Backtracking, you try again. Left. Right. Right. Straight. Middle path at a forked intersection. Dead end. Backtrack. Right. Right. Left.

This goes on for hours before finally you see it, an exit. You sprint for the opening, relief flooding through you. You did it, you conquered the maze!

A burly minotaur congratulates you as you exit; the world suddenly fills with noise again and the carnival comes back to life around you.

An orc strongman walks by, carrying a large 200 lb. dumbbell weight in one arm. Further along, two gnoll carnival barkers are enticing crowds to enter into the next three-legged race. All around you are the sounds of enjoyment, laughter, and fun.

You sigh and venture out into the chaos, happy to be enjoying this serene day."



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FOREWORD

The world of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS has so many fascinating creatures to explore and interact with, but more often than not, those creatures labeled as “monstrous” are seen as nothing more than a bag of experience points for adventurers to carve through in their quest to further expand and explore the world around them. Very rarely are these creatures presented in a positive light, and even more rarely as individuals with their own stories to tell. This disconnect is further widened by the ability for players to create characters from these so called “monstrous” races, often labeling player characters as “outcasts” or individuals who were able to “break free” of their monstrous origins and find a more civilized way of being.

With *Not Another Monster Quest*, we seek to showcase these “monstrous” races in a wide

spectrum of colors and personality types, not just automatically quantifying them as evil because of how they look or their background. “Evil” is not something that should be prescribed to an entire race of beings with a handful of them, usually player characters, being quantified as “good.” Just as in our world, theirs is filled with people of every size, shape, color, class, and creed, and that should not be dictated by the ancestry that they were born into. In these pages you will find slap-stick gnoll comedians, masterful minotaur entertainers, and world-weary orc explorers to help enrich your world and stories. So, we invite you to turn the page, and step into a world filled with possibilities and wonder, as we break the mold, delving further into how we define these “monstrous” characters.

—Brittney Hay,
Lead Designer

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Volume 1 of *Not Another Monster Quest*. In this supplement, we will be spotlighting kobolds, goblins, and bugbears in a variety of ways. It is our goal with this anthology to give both Dungeon Masters and players fun, engaging, and imaginative stories to interact with, and to showcase the versatility of these so-called “monstrous” races.

USING THIS BOOK

This book is separated into three chapters, each dealing with fully fledged adventures that include NPCs and encounters. This supplement can be played using the *Player’s Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and *Dungeon Master’s Guide*. The *Monster Manual* contains stat blocks for some creatures found in this book. When a creature’s name appears in **bold type**, that is a visual cue pointing you to the creature’s stat block in the *MM* or elsewhere. Spells and magic items appear in *italics*, referring to listings in the *Player’s Handbook* and *Dungeon Master’s Guide*, respectively. Original creatures, NPCs, spells, and magic items are included in their own appendices at the end of the supplement.

Chapter 1 contains four adventures intended to be run either as one-shots or as part of an ongoing campaign. They are organized by tier.

Chapter 2 is a collection of 16 encounters meant to be inserted into any level play session. They are organized alphabetically by title.

Chapter 3 contains eight NPCs that Dungeon Masters can use to flesh out their worlds and have players interact with. They are organized by name.

READ-ALoud TEXT AND SIDEBARS

Text that appears indented like this should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

SIDEBARS

Additional information that gives a Dungeon Master more guidance on how to run a section looks like this. This can include game mechanics, additional content, or magic items.



CHAPTER 1: MONSTROUS ADVENTURES

Chapter 1 contains four adventures intended to be run as one-shots or inserted into existing campaigns. They are organized by tier and level, indicated by the table below.

AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL (APL)

Average party level or APL denotes the level that an adventure or encounter was written for. Some adventures/encounters have APL adjustments if your player characters do not meet the recommended level requirement for said adventure.

ADVENTURES

Title	Tier/Level
Breadcrumbs and Biscuits by Brittney Hay	Tier 1/ Level 4 (APL 4)
Minnow's Magical Maze by Bob Carnicom	Tier 2/Level 5–10 (APL 6)
Laughter is Good for the Gnoll by Grady Wang	Tier 2/Level 6–10 (APL 6)
Parks and Reclamation by Lydia Van Hoy	Tier 3/Level 12 (APL 12)



BREADCRUMBS AND BISCUITS

By Brittney Hay

Content Warnings: Missing children
This adventure is optimized for one to two 4th-level characters.m

After weathering a chaotic storm, you are called upon to help locate a missing child. Throughout your investigation, you meet several colorful characters as you push further into this ancient forest and uncover the mysteries that await.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The characters stumble upon a small cattle farm owned by Ethner Ogletree (LG minotaur **scout**, they/he) during a terrible storm. The weather has wrought havoc on the small settlement and the

party is implored to help. After sheltering the night at the ranch, another minotaur arrives, asking after his missing child. The rancher also discovers that several of his herd are missing. The characters are asked to find both the missing child and the cattle.

As the characters set out into the forest, they come upon a trail of breadcrumbs leading them further into the wilds. Through their investigations, they eventually encounter a rift in the Material Plane that leads straight into the Feywild. Despite being waylaid by several obstacles (the Feywild enjoys playing tricks on new travelers), the party continues to follow tracks.

Eventually they come upon a small hut in a glen and are invited to take tea with a hag. She has kept the child and a pet calf safe, though the latter has gone through some transformations during their journey into this strange land.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Broken Bramble Ranch has been in Ethner Ogletree's family for generations, and Ethner is a successful breeder of highland cattle, known for their sturdiness in hard weather climates. The summer storms this year have been more severe than usual, with high winds and torrential downpours making the ground muddy and unworkable. Neighboring the ranch is a small family of minotaur woodcutters, Buckeye "Big Mac" and his daughter Notty. They have recently moved to the area and sell firewood and lumber to the nearby village. Both are experienced trackers and know their way around the forest.

The forest is home to all manner of flora and fauna, though everyone has heard tales of strange creatures appearing seemingly out of nowhere when the weather becomes foul. Villagers have also been said to disappear and reappear weeks later, telling of a strange land where the trees are silver and dappled with purple and orange leaves. In truth, the forest is a place where the barrier between the Material Plane and the Feywild is particularly thin. When strong storms come, they can harness arcane energies and tear open rifts in that border, allowing creatures to pass freely between the realms.

HOOKS

This adventure can function as a self-contained one-shot. It can also be inserted into a campaign by placing Broken Bramble Ranch near a village with forest area nearby.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

The first part of this adventure takes place during a thunderstorm. As such, these weather conditions are imposed until Part 2: Into the (Fey)Wild.

Strong Wind. Characters have disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. Flying by non-magical means is nearly impossible, and flying creatures must land at the end of their turns, otherwise they risk taking fall damage.

Heavy Precipitation. Characters have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. Heavy rain also extinguishes open flames and the area is lightly obscured.

DOWNED TREE

While slogging through driving rain and high winds from a sudden storm that has overtaken them in a forest, the characters come upon a large downed tree in the middle of the road. This ancient oak looks charred, as though struck by lightning.

Upon further investigation they find a barely conscious minotaur whose leg is trapped under a large branch. The minotaur can be freed with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) skill check. When the characters move the branch, the minotaur awakens and thanks them for their help. He introduces himself as Ethner Ogletree, and tells the party that they have a farm nearby. As their leg is injured and the storm is still raging, he asks the characters for help getting home, promising them shelter for the night.

A CALL FOR HELP

Through the noise of the storm, the characters hear the sound of heavy hooves rapidly approaching. They must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d8 bludgeoning damage as a small group of **cows** come crashing out of the darkness into their midst. The cattle are pursued by a minotaur, Ethner Ogletree, who is attempting to recapture them. When Ethner sees the characters, he asks for their help, telling them that the storm has spooked his herd, and that some of them broke the fence and stampeded. In order to recapture the frightened animals, the characters must succeed on three DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks. Once the beasts are rounded up, Ethner gratefully offers the characters shelter at his ranch when they reach it.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE AND PLACES

The following notable NPCs and locations are encountered in this adventure.

All the minotaur NPCs in this adventure use their respective class stat blocks with the following additions:

- **Goring Rush.** Immediately after using the Dash action on its turn and moving at least 20 feet, the minotaur can make one melee attack with its horns as a bonus action.
- **Hammering Horns.** Immediately after hitting a creature with a melee attack as part of the Attack action on its turn, the minotaur can use a bonus action to attempt to shove that target with its horns. The target must be no more than one size larger than it and within 5 feet of the minotaur. Unless it succeeds on a DC 14 Strength saving throw, the minotaur pushes the target up to 10 feet away from them.
- **Horns.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

BROKEN BRAMBLE RANCH

The Ogletree family has operated this cattle ranch for decades, the current owner being Ethner Olgetree. They specialize in breeding highland cattle, a hardy, long-haired breed of bovine, bred to withstand the harshest weather conditions. Ethner works the ranch with the help of his wife Margot (NG, changeling **druid**, they/them), their children, Rudy (10), Bo (8), and Magnus (4), and four minotaur farmhands (**scouts**).

ETHNER OLGETREE

they/he, minotaur scout, lawful good

Ethner is the current caretaker of the Ogletree farm, along with their wife Margot. Ethner is a stickler for rules and traditions but he has a soft side, especially when it comes to their three children.

Personality Trait: Nobody stays angry at Ethner for long, since they can defuse any amount of tension.

Ideal: Fairness. We all do the work, so we all share in the rewards.

Bond: Ethner works the land, loves the land, and will protect the land until his dying day.

Flaw: Arrogance. Ethner sometimes acts like they know it all, and is prone to extended lectures and tirades.

BUCKEYE “BIG MAC”

he/him, minotaur hurricane [appendix A], neutral good

Buckeye is a lumberjack whose house neighbors the Ogletree farm. Despite his oak-like stature, he’s a softy at heart and enjoys blending teas in his spare time. Though violence is always his last resort, if a fight occurs, Buckeye prefers to use his fists. Otherwise, his trusty axe, which he carries with him everywhere, can settle the matter.

Personality Trait: We should all be free to do what we want, as long as it doesn’t harm others.

Ideal: Family. There’s nothing more important.

Bond: His honor is his life.

Flaw: Buckeye overlooks obvious solutions in favor of complicated ones.

Buckeye’s Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

GWENDOLINE “NOTTY”

she/they, minotaur commoner, lawful good

Bashful and shy, Notty is 10 years old and enjoys accompanying her father, Buckeye, out into the woods while he works. She is self-assured when it comes to navigating her way around the forest, having been taught from a young age.

Personality Trait: Learning new things is the best way to better herself.

Ideal: Redemption. There’s a spark of good in everyone.

Bond: She protects those who cannot protect themselves.

Flaw: Notty can’t keep a secret to save her life, or anyone else’s.

BISCUITS

she/her, **cow**, true neutral

A fluffy highland calf who enjoys getting into mischief, and has a sweet spot for mushrooms.

Biscuits uses the **cow** stat block until Part 3, when she becomes a **mushroom cow** and the following changes apply:

Damage Immunities poison

Rapport Spores. Biscuits can communicate simple ideas, emotions, and images to any creature within 10 feet of her that has an Intelligence of 2 or higher, except undead, constructs, or elementals.

- Her creature type is plant

NONNA THISTLE

they/she, **green hag**, true neutral

A denizen of the Feywild, Nonna Thistle spends their time gardening and knitting. She is always excited to see a friendly face and loves to help lost folk find their way back home. Though friendly and kind-hearted, they are stern with those who cross her, and a formidable enemy when wronged.

Personality Trait: All people are capable of good. It just needs to be nourished.

Ideal: Community. We have to take care of each other, because no one else is going to do it.

Bond: She owes a debt she can never repay to the person who took pity on her.

Flaw: Nona Thistle has a tendency to doubt herself and her abilities.

PART 1: RIDING OUT THE STORM

The characters arrive at Ogletree Ranch, and are immediately tasked with helping secure the farm as the storm continues to build. When the characters reach the ranch, read or paraphrase the following:

Through the torrential downpour, a small farmstead comes into view. A ranch-style house sits on the far left of a large enclosed pasture; a barn, silhouetted by flashes of lightning, stands guard in the distance. A lone figure on the porch gestures and calls out orders to others frantically attempting to secure the area against the raging storm.

AGAINST THE STORM

In this part of the adventure, characters are asked by Margot and Ethner to help batten down the hatches. Below are a series of skill challenges for the characters to help make the ranch secure.

Characters who are proficient in Arcana can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success they can tell that this storm is not normal, and that hints of magic are palpable in the air. This magical feeling continues to weigh heavily in the air, even after the storm has blown itself out in the morning.

LIGHTNING STRUCK

An ancient oak tree near the barn is struck by lightning. Despite the downpour, the core of the tree catches fire. If not put out in 1d4 + 1 rounds, the trunk destabilizes and falls on the barn, causing structural damage and catching the barn on fire in 1d4 more rounds. The barn has AC 10 and 60 HP. If the fire spreads to the barn, it does 1d8 fire damage per round, increasing by 1d8 per round it continues to burn.

FENCED IN

The high winds and rain have made several sections of fence around the pasture unstable and loose. If these sections are not repaired, a lightning strike could spook the cattle into stampeding, breaking out, and becoming lost in the storm. Characters must make three successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) skill checks to locate the broken sections of fencing. Once located, they must repair each section with a successful DC 15 skill check of their choice or a spell (i.e., Strength using carpenter's tools, casting *mending*, etc.).

Development. If the characters roll two successive failures before three successes, the cattle are spooked by the storm and stampede. Characters must then make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being trampled as the herd crashes through the weakened section of fence. On a failure they take 1d10 bludgeoning damage, half on a success. If they fail by 5 or more, they are also knocked prone and restrained by a section of broken fencing as it falls on top of them. It takes a further two successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to calm the frightened beasts and herd them back into the enclosure.

DEVELOPMENT

By the next morning, the storm has blown itself out. Thanks to the characters' actions, the ranch has sustained significantly less damage than usual. As Margot and Ethner are expressing their gratitude, their neighbor Buckeye "Big Mac" (NG minotaur **hurricane** [appendix A], he/him) appears, asking if they have seen his daughter Notty (LG minotaur **commoner**, she/they). She has been missing since early this morning, and they have been everywhere looking for her. He asks the characters' help in finding her, as she knows to stay close to the house and is not the sort to just wander off by herself. Ethner also notices that a few of the younger calves are missing from their herd—including the family's favorite, a calf named Biscuits—and asks the characters to keep an eye out for them while they search for Notty.

If the characters need some extra muscle, Buckeye "Big Mac" offers to accompany them while they search for his daughter. He can also show up in a pinch, having followed the characters' trail into the forest.

PART 2: INTO THE (FEY)WILDS

The characters search for signs of Notty and Biscuits. Eventually they come upon a tear in the Material Plane, leading them and their investigations into the Feywild.

BREADCRUMBS

In order to successfully track Notty and Biscuits, the characters must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) or Intelligence (Nature or Investigation) skill check. Notty has left a trail of breadcrumbs for the characters to follow. Choose two of the Forest Encounters below to run before transitioning to the "A Tear Between Planes" encounter, which leads the characters into the Feywild. Once in the Feywild, choose four of the Feywild Encounters before heading to Part Three: Gingerbread and Mushrooms. Some of the encounters can be run in both the Feywild and woods, as well as be used multiple times.

Because of the elemental tear, magic from the Feywild is slowly leaking onto the Material Plane. Every time a character casts a spell of 1st level or higher, here or in the Feywild, have them roll on the Wild Magic Table (*Player's Handbook*) and consult the results.

1. ARCANE RECONNAISSANCE

A scouting party composed of three **scouts** and one **mage** are attempting to find the source of the elemental disturbance that caused the storm the previous evening.

Running the Encounter. The characters come across the party while traversing the woods. They were sent out to track the elemental magic discharged by the storm and find its source. The mage (LG, she/her) in particular is worried about potential consequences of a storm that size, asking the characters if they have seen anything strange or abnormal. If the characters ask about Notty, they confess that they have not seen the child but share the characters' concern about a child being lost in the woods at such a time.

2. BEACHED

The characters encounter a pirate ship, crashed in the forest, split nearly in half by the force of impact into the canopy.

Running the Encounter. The ship is perched precariously 20 feet off the ground, supported only by the partly downed trees. The stern dangles down from the trees, swaying slightly in the breeze. Several bodies lie scattered around the base of the trees, either unconscious or dead. If anyone makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, they can see movement in the ship above. Characters can reach the ship by making a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check.

The ship's remaining crew is still reeling from the events of the storm and are not hostile. The captain (she/her) is conscious but is currently being patched up by their healer. She relays to the characters that one moment they were in the middle of a terrible storm at sea, and the next they were falling through the air, crashing into the forest canopy.

3. CURIOUS AND CURIUSER

A pair of **chwingas** (appendix A) have made their way through the elemental tear and into the Material Plane.

Running the Encounter. The chwingas have never been to the Material Plane before, and therefore are fascinated with this strange land. As they explore, they come upon the characters while the party is tracking Notty. Their curiosity gets the better of them and they continue to follow the characters at a discreet distance. If the characters stop or get distracted, one of the chwingas attempts to snatch something off one of their persons. Characters must make a Wisdom (Perception) check contested by the chwinga's Dexterity (Stealth) check in order to notice the theft.

This encounter is repeatable and if encountered again, they continue attempting to steal small trinkets and items off the characters until noticed, at which point they flee. If any take a liking to a particular humanoid, a chwinga might use its cantrips to aid it, or might bestow a magical charm (see supernatural gifts, *Dungeon Master's Guide*) before departing.

4. KOBOLDS' WALKING CASTLE

Four **kobolds** and a **kobold scale sorcerer** (appendix A) are wandering the woods in a prop wooden castle.

Running the Encounter. This small company of kobolds were a part of a performing troupe that got caught out in the storm. During the chaos they took shelter in their prop wooden castle and were blown away from the rest of their group; they are determined to find their way back. One kobold is in each corner tower of the wooden castle and the scale sorcerer attempts to direct them from the middle, while casting *fog cloud* to try to camouflage themselves. Unbeknownst to the kobolds, the wooden castle now looks like a castle floating on a cloud.

This encounter can be run again, both in the woods and Feywild. Each time they are encountered, the kobolds once again ask for directions from the characters.

A TEAR BETWEEN PLANES

The hearty twang of a string instrument greets your ears. It is a cheery tune, and as you come into this clearing you see an owlbear sitting atop a felled tree, strumming on a banjo. Five feet from them, you notice a rippling shimmer in the air that crackles with arcane energy.

This shimmer is an elemental tear in the Material Plane that leads to the Feywild. If the characters get close enough they can see a different landscape through the portal. The owlbear strumming the banjo cheerily greets the characters and introduces themselves as **Cheshire** (CG, they/them [appendix A]). Cheshire comes from the Feywild and confirms seeing Notty pass through the portal. They warn, though, that the Feywild is a strange place and that time may pass differently there than here on the Material Plane.

If the characters are having difficulties, or if you wish to interject a bit more fun, Cheshire can show up again to be their guide, give them hints, or just strike up a conversation because they are bored and the characters amuse them.

1. BOOK WORMS

The forest opens up to reveal a field full of strangely growing mushrooms.

In a small glen you see with what at first glance looks like vibrant red-capped mushrooms growing out of books, not soil. On a second glance, these "mushrooms" seemed to be folded paper origami, with the look of sugar glass, and are indeed growing out of the books on the ground around them.

Running the Encounter. Characters who make a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) check can see that the mushrooms are infested with what look to be small bookworm grubs (two **swarms of rot grubs**), seemingly attracted to the sweet scent emanating from the mushrooms. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check hears a slight rumbling under the earth where the garden is located.

Any disturbance to the ground, including the characters' attempts to harvest the mushrooms,

awakens the bookworm queen (**rot grub queen** [appendix A]) from its slumber, ready to attack any creature within range. Characters within the glen must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) piercing damage from the shards of sugar glass flying into the air when the creature emerges. The two **swarms of rot grubs** (appendix A) also rush to aid their queen.

KNOWLEDGE MUSHROOMS

Wondrous item, rare

These red-capped origami mushrooms (*Boletus cognitionis*) were grown from books using a combination of arcane and natural magics, and resemble opaque sugar glass in texture and appearance. When consumed, a character gains advantage on Intelligence (History) checks for the next 2 (1d4) hours.

Characters can attempt to grow their own mushrooms by placing a piece of one in a pot mulched with spellbook pages. Over the next month they must expend an arcane spell slot of 1st level or higher into the pot as well as succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check. Once fully grown, the mushrooms can be harvested, yielding 1d8 mushrooms per pot.

2. CLEAR CUT

The characters discover a clearing of recently felled trees. The stumps and fallen trees are weeping tears of sap.

Running the Encounter. Unbeknownst to the characters, the grove is guarded by three **faerie dragons (younger)**, all of whom are currently invisible. They are determined to find the culprit who cut down their trees and are interrogating anyone who wanders into their part of the forest. Characters must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the faerie dragons that they were not responsible. If the characters are honest with them, the faerie dragons not only confirm that they saw Notty and Biscuits, but that they gave the pair directions to a safe haven where they could rest. The faerie dragons say no more, and if threatened they use their Euphoria Breath on the characters before disappearing.

3. COUNTING SHEEP

A **satyr (variant)** is moving through the Feywild with his flock of sheep. He cheerfully asks the characters to help him count them to make sure that none were lost during his travels.

Running the Encounter. While the characters count, the satyr takes out his panpipes and plays a Gentle Lullaby. If any characters fall asleep they gain a new flaw: “I become sleepy, and it’s hard to concentrate when I hear soft soothing music.” If they make three successful group DC 12 Wisdom saving throws before two failures, they are able to successfully count the flock without falling asleep, and the satyr gifts them a *brush of remove object*.

BRUSH OF REMOVE OBJECT

Wondrous item, uncommon

This inconspicuous paintbrush looks no different from any other paintbrush. It has 3 charges. If you expend a charge you can use its magic to remove a non-magical object no bigger than a 10-foot cube. The paintbrush stores the object, and you can expend another charge to paint that object back into reality. It regains all 3 charges daily at dawn.

4. DREADFUL CAMPFIRE

The sound of soft music and laughter can be heard as you catch sight of the warm glow of firelight. Pushing forward, you see a small campsite and figures sitting around an inviting campfire. One figure plucks softly against guitar strings, while the others laugh and talk quietly amongst themselves.

The small clearing in the woods is surrounded by trees and bushes. Several tents are scattered around the outskirts. Felled logs ring the campfire; one humanoid figure sits on each, except the log closest to the party, which has two. When the characters announce themselves, the figures turn welcomingly to the newcomers and invite them to come and join them.

Running the Encounter. Creatures within 60 feet of the campfire must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they begin to forget where they were going and feel compelled to stay at the campsite. For every 4 hours spent at the campfire they must make successive Wisdom saving throws, the saving throw DC increasing by 2 each time they fail. On four failures the creatures lose the will to leave entirely unless cured by a *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell.

CLUES

While the campsite seems innocuous at first, characters can determine that something is off by making various skill checks:

- Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check can see that the figures around the campfire seem gaunt and a film of dust coats their armor, weapons, and packs.
- Characters who inquire about how long the NPCs have been here, or ask what they are doing in the Feywild and succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check, notice that upon being asked such questions, the campers' eyes glaze over and they shake their heads before answering with a shrug, "A night or two."
- Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check notice that the area around the campsite is quiet, devoid of the usual animal noises that would normally surround them.
- If characters have animal companions with them and succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, they notice that the beasts become increasingly uncomfortable the longer they stay at the campsite and that no amount of calming them helps.

5. FUNGUS AMONG US

A clearing is filled with a strange orange moss. It covers everything around it, including rocks, trees and other plants.

Running the Encounter. This strange moss is called creeper moss and it devours any living organism with which it comes into contact. Characters with a passive Perception of 13 or higher can see the remains of bodies under the thick blanket that covers this area. If anyone attempts to take a closer look, or comes within 30 feet of the clearing, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or start to be devoured by the moss. It rapidly

attempts to engulf the characters and they are considered restrained. Each round they are trapped by the moss they take 1d4 acid damage.

Though this adventure doesn't have a specified time limit, there is still a sense of urgency. If the characters decided to go around, add another encounter, as navigating around the clearing adds time to their journey.

6. RUSTED

A purple oak tree with silver and orange leaves has grown around this rusted construct (**nimblewright**, appendix A). An **owl**, which the construct has befriended, has also made its home in the tree.

Running the Encounter. To pass the time the construct enjoys telling riddles to creatures that pass by its tree. If the characters walk by, the construct tries to engage them in conversation, offering up information about which way Notty went if they answer the construct's riddle successfully.

PART 3: GINGERBREAD AND MUSHROOMS

The characters track Notty and Biscuits to a gingerbread mushroom-capped cottage where they find the pair well looked after, even if the Feywild has had its way with Biscuits.

NONNA THISTLE

Nonna Thistle (N **green hag**, they/she) found Notty and Biscuits wandering the Feywild about two weeks ago. She graciously offered them a place to stay, all the while reassuring Notty that help was most certainly on the way. During their stay Biscuits ate some strange mushrooms growing in Nonna Thistle's garden, which transformed her into a **mushroom cow**.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE

Read or paraphrase the following as the characters arrive at Nonna Thistle's cottage:

The sweet smell of baked goods reaches your nose as a small cottage made of gingerbread comes into view. Off to one side is a well-appointed garden, filled with all manner of herbs. A strange-looking calf is tethered to a post, grazing peacefully outside. Warm colored lights shine through the windows and a curl of smoke rises from the chimney.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Cottage. Nonna Thistle's house is a 15-foot radius, one-room cottage, with a small table and chair, bed, and cooking nook with fireplace. It is made of gingerbread and has a purple-capped mushroom roof and stone chimney.

Mooshroom. The strange-looking calf grazing outside is Biscuits; she is a vibrant red speckled with white polka dots, and has red capped mushrooms growing from her back.

Garden. This garden is filled with odd-looking plants only found in the Feywild.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters approach the cottage, through the windows they glimpse Nonna Thistle and Notty in the midst of having tea. They are chatting animatedly toward one another, Notty making big gestures with her hands and Nonna Thistle listening intently to what she is saying.

Nonna Thistle gladly invites the characters in for tea if they knock on the door. She inquires if they are here for Notty and Biscuits, and is excited to hear that the pair are going home with the characters. The tea that Nonna Thistle serves functions as a long rest for the characters, restoring missing hit points, spell slots, and refreshing abilities. She also gives the characters a stone that helps guide them back towards the portal; the closer to the portal the characters come, the warmer the stone becomes. Before leaving Notty gives Nonna Thistle a big hug, thanking her for her help and hospitality.

If you wish, and the players are interested, feel free to run any encounters not used in Part Two: Into the Fey(Wilds), letting the characters encounter them now.

CONCLUSION

Once safely home, Notty is glad to be reunited with her family. If Buckeye didn't accompany the characters, he is overjoyed to see his daughter and thanks the party with 25 gp and a *potion of healing*, apologizing that he doesn't have anything more to express his gratitude.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Though the current adventure is done, the characters can further explore the area in several ways if they so choose.

CHESHIRE THE OWLBEAR BARD

Cheshire is absolutely fascinated by the characters. They have never been outside of the Feywild and everything is novel and new to them. As such, Cheshire may ask to tag along with the party, or the characters may come upon them somewhere, creating mischief and mayhem.

In truth, Cheshire is on the run from their creator, a druid who makes her home in the Feywild, where she conducts experiments on all manner of creatures to study the results of a prolonged stay in the Feywild on their constitutions.

FEYWILD RIFTS

Characters could continue to study the unique properties of this area, and check to see if the storm has opened any more rifts. Locals could share the stories that they have, as well as tell about the strange experiences that happen to those who wander too far in.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brittney Hay (they/she) is a non-binary, best-selling TTRPG creator, wife, mom, and overall geeky nerd person. They have written for several DMsGuild projects such as *Animal Sidekicks*, *Eat the Rich: Volume #1*, *Eyes Unclouded*, and most recently *Heart of the House* and *Playing Possums*. In her spare time, she enjoys reading fantasy novels and historical fiction, playing board games with their family, and going hiking in the wilds of Colorado. You can find them on Twitter @FNDungeonMom, and check out her portfolio at dungeonmomdesigns.carrd.co.

MINNOW'S MAGICAL MAZE

By Bob Carnicom

This adventure is designed for 5th to 10th level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 6.

Welcome to Minnow's Magical Maze, a traveling roadside attraction for all ages! Test your skill in the many mini games, try your luck with the boarlet races, or attempt to navigate the infamous magical maze itself. There is something for everyone, and adventurers may walk home with more than just an oversized stuffed owlbear!

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The characters travel to the maze and are warmly welcomed by Minnow the Minotaur. Minnow happily explains the history of his magical maze, and how the roadside attraction came to be. The characters can explore the grounds and participate in the different activities, most notable being the magical maze itself. Completing games earns characters tokens that can be exchanged at the Prize Vendor.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Minnow's Magical Maze is set in Eberron and can be located anywhere. However, the maze can also be setting-neutral and characters can encounter it on any trade or travel route.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following notable NPCs and locations are encountered in this adventure.

All the minotaur NPCs in this adventure use their respective class stat blocks with the following additions:

- **Goring Rush.** Immediately after using the Dash action on its turn and moving at least 20 feet, the minotaur can make one melee attack with its horns as a bonus action.
- **Hammering Horns.** Immediately after hitting a creature with a melee attack as part of the Attack action on its turn, the minotaur can use a bonus action to attempt to shove that target with its horns. The target must be no more than one size larger than it and within 5 feet of the minotaur. Unless it succeeds on a DC 14 Strength saving throw, the minotaur pushes the target up to 10 feet away from them.
- **Horns.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

MINNOW

they/he, minotaur guard, lawful neutral

Minnow is a minotaur who created Minnow's Magical Maze to spite his previous employer. Minnow was once a guardian for a mage's labyrinth but left because he wasn't being paid enough for his work. Minnow now brings joy to adventurers in a "mostly" safe attraction where they can win rewards that are certainly not stolen from the mage's labyrinth.

Minnow is tall and broadly built, like most minotaur. Their coat is a faded red with spots of white on their back and lower legs. The hair on their chin is neatly braided and entwined with colorful beads. Minnow wears an elegant red suit jacket with a white shirt and pleated gold vest with shiny black buttons. A black top hat, perfectly tailored to fit between their horns, is perched on his head. Minnow still carries their trusty greataxe, but it is usually strapped to their back and is covered in bead necklaces that they hand out to folks who successfully complete the maze.

Personality Trait: Minnow welcomes a test of strength in the form of a head butt contest.

Ideal: Minnow is prideful in their creation of the maze.

Bond: Minnow will guard treasure no more. Any adventurer should be able to find the joy of looting and have fun doing it.

Flaw: Minnow frequently forgets how large their horns are, and often breaks fragile pottery.

PRIZE VENDOR

they/them, mimic, neutral good

Tokens earned from Minnow's Magical Maze can be redeemed in the Prize Vendor, a non-aggressive mimic. The Prize Vendor resembles a standing rectangular container with a magical glass pane showing different colored orbs floating inside. Once a token is deposited, an orb drops to the bottom of the machine, where the winner can use an access flap to retrieve the prize. When the orbs are retrieved, they are covered in a slimy, light blue substance, but can be opened easily. Once opened, an item appears from an extraplanar realm and settles in the holder's hand.

The prizes can be hand-picked rewards for the characters that are tailored to their skills, or you may also roll on Magic Item Table B in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

HOOKS

COME ONE, COME ALL

The characters could see an advertisement on a town notice board for the Magical Maze located nearby. One of Minnow's heralds could also be in the town the characters are visiting and boasts of the magical attraction. The notice board or herald has maps to the maze's current location that automatically adjust if the magical maze moves to a different place.

YOU'RE INVITED

If you are running this as part of a campaign, Minnow has sent the characters a personal invitation to the maze upon hearing of the good deeds they have accomplished. The invitation comes with a map to the maze's current location, which automatically adjusts if the magical maze moves locations. However the characters arrive, the attraction is bustling with other locals and travelers. The party is greeted by the charismatic and friendly Minnow,

who introduces them to their creation. Minnow happily tells the characters about the many attractions they offer. They also explain that completing some of the games gains them prize tokens that can be spent at the Prize Vendor. If Minnow is not socializing throughout the grounds, they are found in the cart at the edge of the grounds.

PART 1: ARRIVING AT THE MAZE

When the characters approach the grounds read the following:

As you approach the cluster of colorful pitched tents, you hear the sounds of joyful laughing and excited chatter. A large sign on the side of the road reads *“Minnow’s Magical Maze: The Most Magical Attraction in All of Eberon!”* Crowds gather outside tents, carts, and floating stands while enjoying the attractions the maze has to offer.

MINI GAMES

Many attractions around the grounds have games and puzzles that characters may participate in for prizes or just for fun, including the infamous maze itself that the party can attempt to navigate. This section describes the grounds and mini games that the characters can play.

Unless otherwise specified, all carnival workers have the **warforged soldier** (appendix A) stat block. Any characters who misbehave at an attraction may be removed by an attendant.

VOID FISHING

An enclosed structure made out of obsidian surrounds a swirling dark hole in the ground. The sign on the roof of the structure reads “Void Fishing.” A warforged tends the attraction, and throws random, mundane objects into the void hole; as soon as an object passes through the portal it



seemingly disappears. Characters cannot see past the mystical dark portal that spins in a vortex of black, grey, and purple. Beside the warforged are a selection of fishing poles equipped with a special dimensional fishing line.

A character who wishes to play uses the provided fishing pole to try to reel in prizes—or potentially an unexpected creature lurking in the void. The character who is fishing must roll a d100. On a 1–10 the character has snagged a creature from the void and everyone rolls initiative; roll a d6 on the Void Fishing Encounter Table.

VOID FISHING ENCOUNTER TABLE

Dice Roll	Encounter
1	two doppelgangers
2	one spectator
3	two dolgaunt (appendix A) and two dolgrim (appendix A)
4	two grell
5	two intellect devourers
6	one death slaad

If the party is more combat-oriented, you may increase the chances on the d100 roll. On a roll of 11–90, the character snags a trinket (roll once on the trinket table located in the *Player's Handbook*). On a 91–100, the character catches a prize token! This is limited to one per character, so if a character who has already gained a prize token here makes multiple attempts, they instead receive a trinket from the trinket table. Characters are allowed three chances at void fishing per day.

THE EBERRON SCURRY

The race track is a 80-foot oval with floating disks that function as spectator stands. A warforged wearing an oversized red visor with B00K-E3-P3R inscribed on it stands near the seating area. The warforged handles wagers that the spectators place on which boarlet (**boar**) will win the round of racing. The winnings are paid 4–1, with a minimum buy-in of 20 gp. A sign hangs above the spectator area with the current schedule of boarlet races. During the day, a race takes place every hour and the winner of each finished race is posted.

Each race features four boarlets; they wear red, blue, green, and purple collars. Every morning, Minnow uses a ritual that he learned from a druid circle he gained favor with, to cast *conjure animals*

and create the boarlets. The boarlets' names are Slim (blue), Brock (red), Plopper (green), and Kevin (purple).

Once the characters have placed their bets and taken their seats, the countdown to the race begins. A **homunculus** stands on a floating disc above the starting gate with a green flag. The countdown hits 3...2...1..., the homunculus waves the green flag wildly, and the boarlets are released from the start gates! The race has four stages. For each stage, roll a d4; the result of the roll determines who is winning at that stage. 1 = Slim (blue), 2 = Brock (red), 3 = Plopper (green), and 4 = Kevin (purple). Describe the boarlet edging forward and taking the lead however you see fit. The fourth roll determines the winning boarlet. If the characters wagered on the winner, they may collect their winnings from B00K-E3-P3R at the end of the race.

GLOOMY GOURDS

A patch covered in pumpkins of various sizes, unlike the rest of the attractions, is oddly vacant. A warforged guards the entrance and explains that one of the pumpkins is an **awakened pumpkin** (appendix A). The pumpkin was placed in the patch by a mischievous trickster and has caused the attraction to be shut down. The warforged offers a prize token to any character who can find and defeat the awakened pumpkin.

The awakened pumpkin is hiding somewhere in the patch disguised as a normal pumpkin. Characters must make a Wisdom (Perception) check contested by the pumpkin's Dexterity (Stealth) check in order to spot it amidst the patch. On a failed check, the pumpkin surprises the characters in combat.

ALLOCOASTER

This ride awards no prize tokens and is meant for exploration/roleplaying fun. The characters enter a tent roughly 20 by 20 feet on the outside with a large sign that reads "Allocoaster." The inside of the tent is at least five times larger than it appears from the outside, with a railed-off track on which **allosauruses** run. The allosauruses are staged and saddled by Minnow's warforged helpers. If characters wish to ride them at more than a walk, they must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check or fall off the creature's back. If they fail by 5 or more they take 4 (1d8) piercing damage as the creature tramples them with its

sharp claws. Once an allosaurus has been exercised, it is corralled into an opening in the wall that leads to a demiplane where the allosauruses roam freely. If asked, the warforged or Minnow explains that their allosauruses were all rescued from a band of wandslingers who caged the creatures to help them scavenge the Mournland.

THE TREE TOSS

The Tree Toss competition is a show of strength against the infamous continental champion Mabub, an **orc** who was raised and trained in the city of Sharn. Mabub welcomes any challenge, and offers a prize token as a reward if the characters are able to beat him in a game.

Tree Toss is a strength-based game that is played to the best of three rounds. Contestants use their strength to throw a large **awakened tree** across a measured field. Whoever throws the tree the farthest wins the round. The awakened trees are delighted by being tossed, and squeal with joy as they fly through the air.

Each round, the character and Mabub roll a contested Strength (Athletics) check, and whoever has the higher roll throws their tree farther and wins the round. Once either the character or Mabub have won three rounds, they are declared the winner of the game. If a character wins, Mabub begrudgingly gives them a prize token. Characters can only compete in Tree Toss once per day or until they complete a short rest. Mabub does not have this restriction and can compete as many times as challenged.

Mabub uses the **orc** stat block with the following additions.

- Mabub has expertise in the Strength (Athletics) skill

GROOVY GROVE

A dance floor charged with blue energy buzzes in the middle of the attraction grounds. Qasi (CN **satyr reveler** [appendix A], she/her) practices her moves on the dance floor, waiting for her next challenger. Qasi runs a dance competition where endurance and willpower determines who is the last dancer standing. Qasi offers the *enthralling*

pan flute (see sidebar) to anyone who is able to defeat her.

The dance floor is magically powered by the same power source as the Lightning Rail. When a dance competition begins, the floor lights up with shocking blue and white lights and emits music. The music is loud, fast-paced, and upbeat, and magically entices anyone on the floor to dance. The song and beat changes each minute. The longer the characters and Qasi dance, the more difficult it becomes to continue. Dancers must continue to perform well, as well as to outlast the competition. Each dancer in the competition has three dancing points. Once a dancer runs out of these points, they are eliminated from the competition. Each minute of dancing is considered one round, and rounds continue until only one dancer is left. For each round, the dancers must make a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check. On a failure, the dancer's next Constitution saving throw is made with disadvantage. Next, the dancers must make a Constitution saving throw. Whoever has the lowest result loses one point. With each subsequent round, the DC for the Charisma (Performance) check increases by 2. The competition continues until only one dancer remains.

Qasi gives each dancer a prize token just for competing. If a character defeats Qasi in the competition, Qasi rewards the character with her magical panpipe. The *enthralling pan flute* is imbued with the magic of the Feywild and can be used to charm creatures who hear the panpipe played.

ENTHRALLING PAN FLUTE

Wondrous Item, very rare (requires attunement)

This pan flute is imbued with magic that can charm those who listen to its melodies. If a performer plays for at least one minute, up to four creatures who heard the entire performance must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is charmed for one hour, or until the creature takes damage. While charmed, the creature is friendly to the performer and is entranced to the beautiful music from the pan flute.

PART 2: MINNOW'S MAGICAL MAZE

The main attraction is the magical maze that Minnow created himself. While the maze still has typical tropes of winding corners, dead-ends, and magical tricks, unconventional encounters can happen while inside. This section is only a guideline as the maze changes for each playthrough. The number of encounters depends on how long you wish to spend on it, and the types of encounters can be tailored to your players' preferences. The encounters, puzzles, and contents are not limited to the suggestions below. You may use any encounter in any volume of this book, for example. You may have the characters find NPCs from your current adventure who are aimlessly lost in the maze. The possibilities are endless!

When the characters approach the maze read the following:

As you approach the maze entrance, you see double doors framed by an ornate stone archway. The door opens as you come near, and you feel yourself pass through a magical barrier that domes the maze. The walls tower over you, and you hear faint sounds of magical energy, a cackling laugh, and the thumping of sizable footsteps.

FEATURES OF THE MAZE

Walls: The stone walls are 60 feet tall and 10 feet thick, but a magical barrier prevents passage above or through the walls. This prevents a character from flying over the walls to get an aerial view of the maze, or from passing through them by magical or physical means.

Entrance: The large wooden doors are 20 feet tall and 40 feet wide, and open automatically when the characters approach.

Lighting: Unless otherwise specified, the maze paths are lit by magical orbs emitting bright light.

NAVIGATING THE MAZE

There is no map for the maze; it is an ever-shifting and changing labyrinth, different each time it is encountered. For characters to successfully navigate their way through, they must succeed on a number of DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) checks equal to the number of characters. For each failure, the characters have one of the encounters listed below.

The characters can take a short rest while in the maze. However, if the party attempts to take a long rest, a patrolling **water elemental** appears and interrupts them. The elemental doesn't damage characters but hoses them with water until they move along. If attacked, it slips under the wall to avoid damage. Characters may find random puddles of water as they navigate the maze, hinting at this creature's existence.

MAZE ENCOUNTERS

Encounters for the maze are modular and you may choose to run as many or as few of these encounters as you wish. While running this part of the adventure, there should be no more than four combat encounters. There is no limit on how few or how many traps are in the maze.

The number of encounters you should run depends on the amount of time you have available. Use the guideline below for the length of time it takes and recommended encounters.

Short (1 hour). Two combat, one puzzle, one social.

Medium (2 hours). Three combat, two puzzles, one social.

Long (3–4 hours). Four combat, three puzzles, two social.

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

STEAM CLEANING

Two **living burning hands** (appendix A) crawl on the path ahead. The hands are flaring fire in a 15-foot cone on a small puddle, evaporating the water.

SHOCKING SURPRISE

A **living lightning bolt** (appendix A) crackles around the corner. It attacks any creature who wanders into its path. Characters with a passive Perception 13 or more are not surprised, hearing the static energy of the bolt.

HALLWAY OF STEEL

A 20-foot-wide path ahead is lined with over a dozen seemingly identical suits of armor, their shields inscribed with the Minnow's Magical Maze crest. Six **animated armors** are hidden amongst them, and attack when the characters are halfway up the path.

RAGE ARMOR

Two **helmed horrors** patrol a vortex path. Characters with a passive Perception 13 or more hear the clanking armor of the helmed horrors before rounding a bend to encounter them.

TEA PARTY

A 25-foot square room is furnished with a dining table set with four teacups and a bouquet of flowers as a centerpiece. Four silver knives are placed next to each teacup. Six chairs are set around the table, and a dusty old rug lies under the table. If the characters investigate the setting, one **animated table** (appendix A), one **rug of smothering**, two **mimic** chairs (the two end chairs), and four **flying swords** (four of the knives) animate and attack the characters.

PUZZLE ENCOUNTERS

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

The path ahead is blocked by a **gynosphinx**, who is not hostile to the characters as they approach. The gynosphinx explains that the characters may not pass unless they answer a simple riddle. Alternatively, the characters may be able to pass if they know a piece of lore that the gynosphinx does not know.

Some riddles to use in this encounter:

- What tastes better than it smells? (Solution: Your tongue).
- What word of five letters has one left when you remove two? (Solution: Stone).
- I turn once, what is out will not get in. I turn again, what is in will not get out. What am I? (Solution: A key).

If the characters give the gynosphinx a piece of lore, a story, or a personal secret, the gynosphinx makes a DC 22 Intelligence (History) check. On a success, the gynosphinx allows the characters to pass. Upon failure, the path behind the gynosphinx crumbles, becoming a dead end, and the gynosphinx vanishes, returning to their home plane.

SHOW AND TELL

The path leads to a small, 10-foot square room; a locked stone door is on the wall opposite from the path. A stone statue of a humanoid head sits at the center of the room staring at the door. Inscribed on the door, in Common, are the words, "*Show Me Only Wealth.*" Four objects are scattered around the room: a golden flagon, a silver necklace, an emerald ring, and a leather pouch filled with 50 gp., but they are adhered to the floor and cannot be claimed unless the puzzle is solved.

The solution to the puzzle is to cover or hide the words "*Show Me Only...*" on the door, so that the statue only sees the word "*Wealth.*"

CREATURE PAINTINGS

Ahead is a 10-foot wide hallway with seven paintings hanging on the wall. The paintings, in order, depict the following: octopus, ankheg, lich, rat, bone devil, ettin, and wyvern. At the end of the hallway is a stone door. Scripted on the door, in Common, reads “*What you seek is not seen. Speak its name and your passage is clear. But beware claws and beak if your answer rings false.*”

The solution to the puzzle is the word OWL-BEAR. The first letters of each creature represented by a painting are scrambled and spell the word that the characters should speak to open the door. On the other side sits an oversized stuffed owlbear. If they fail the riddle, an **owlbear** appears in front of the door, barring their passage.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

THUMPING IN THE MAZE

The characters hear the sounds of loud thumping footsteps over the maze walls. Standing at the end of a wide path is a **cyclops**. The cyclops sees the characters and makes a thunderous charge towards them, but stops short, extends their hand, and reveals...a prize token! The cyclops only speaks Giant, but enthusiastically hands the characters the token and says they are off to find more in the maze.

TEA TIME

Rad Padder (CN, gnome **noble**, he/him) is dressed in fine party clothes; he wears a knitted cap and is holding a scepter topped with a heart-shaped ruby. He has been lost in the maze for a few hours and offers 50 gp to the characters if they escort him to his tea party (see Tea Party Encounter).

TRAP ENCOUNTERS

TINY SNARE

On the path ahead lies a tiny rope set up as a snare, only a few inches wide. The snare is actually a magical glyph that casts *levitate* on any creature that comes within 5 feet of the trap. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines this is a magical trap that can be disarmed by means such as *dispel magic*.

MAGIC GLYPH

Three magical glyphs are hidden somewhere in the next 50 feet on the path ahead. Characters with a passive Perception of 15 or higher notice a glyph glowing on the ground or the wall of the maze. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies each glowing glyph as one of the following spells: *magic missile*, *scorching ray*, *thunderwave*, *web*, or *symbol* (DM's choice). In order to navigate the path successfully and not set off any of the glyphs, each character must make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check as they reach a glyph. On a failure, the glyph is triggered (spell save DC 15). Characters who have identified the glyphs beforehand gain advantage on these checks.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The characters may leave whenever they choose. Attractions shut down at sunset except for the maze. Every few days Minnow personally navigates the maze and escorts out anyone who is lost, giving them only a pat on the back. The maze is packed up and moved every other week, and usually stays near large cities or high-traffic trade routes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Carnicom is a TTRPG writer, husband, and dog dad. He is best known for *Warforged or Warforged Unknown*, a best selling duet style adventure written for one Warforged character trying to find their lost memory cells. You can follow him on Twitter [@Bob_The_Tree](#).

LAUGHTER IS GOOD FOR THE GNOLL

By Grady Wang

This adventure is designed for four to six characters of levels 6–10, and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 6.

Gnolls have opened a comedy club, but the neighbors aren't laughing—they're worried that it's a cover for something more nefarious. Put a capper on these hecklers by joining Open Mike Night and finding out whether or not the joke's on you.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Characters are asked to infiltrate Open Mike Night at the High In A Laugh comedy club, which was

recently opened by a gnoll clan. They must gain the trust of the gnolls to enter the VIP Lounge of the club and determine whether any criminal activity is occurring.

During the first half, the party attends Open Mike Night, which can be used separately for any club night event. Characters can choose to perform, mingle with the patrons, or scout the club for clues.

The second half can go one of two ways, depending on whether the club is a cover for illegal activities. If it is, a local crime syndicate is using it as a base of operations, unbeknownst to the gnolls who run the establishment. You choose the scenario at the start of the adventure and use the clues provided to steer the narrative in that direction.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The comedy club is a legitimate business. The gnolls in question aren't related by blood but found each through a shared desire to leave behind the "gnoll"madic lifestyle and work as adventurers until they saved up enough to open their own business. Having used humor to get through difficult moments in their lives, they decided to play to their strengths and start a comedy club to endear themselves to their neighbors.

However, try as they might, rumors arose that criminal activity is occurring in the club. These rumors aren't unusual for any club that hosts nighttime activities in dark rooms with all manner of folk and entertainment. They have received several small complaints but aren't sure who's behind them; perhaps a disgruntled neighbor is unhappy with the noise, or a rival comedy club is unhappy about having competition and is looking to cause trouble. Or maybe something seedy actually is happening without the gnolls' awareness.

Eventually, the rumors reached a point where the local authorities—the mayor, a watch precinct captain, a guild leader, or other community figure—can't ignore them. However, they can't uncover any concrete evidence of wrongdoing and the club is generating substantial income and business for the town, so they don't want to offend the gnolls by investigating without cause. Thus, they recruit adventurers to go undercover.

The type of town or city the gnolls are in affects how their club is viewed. A cosmopolitan city may not be concerned at all, while a small town that has been attacked by warbands may be more fearful. The distinction doesn't have to be rural versus urban, and a crime-ridden city may be more suspicious than a peaceful, isolated village.

HOOKS

OPEN MIKE NIGHT

The party sees posters advertising Open Mike Night at the club and locals are abuzz about it. Turns out it's the first of its kind, as the club previously only hosted vetted performers, and many eager amateurs are excited at the idea of having a chance to compete. At the end of the night, the

crowd votes for their favorite performers and the top three each win 10 gp and lifetime VIP status, which confers a permanent 15 percent discount on all food and drink, as well as access to the back rooms.

SHADY RUMORS

Alternatively, a concerned local business owner or town authority approaches the characters to recruit them to investigate the club, offering 50 gp each if they can clear up the rumors or find proof of wrongdoing. They also offer lifetime free room and board at a comfortable lifestyle level inn in town if the characters are able to apprehend (alive) any criminals they identify.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Wanting to fit in, the gnolls chose new names for themselves:

RANDAL BUCKMAN

he/him, gnoll flind (appendix A), *neutral good*
Randal Buckman is the clan leader and club host. Instead of a flail, he has three brightly colored canes that grant him 10-foot reach, as they can magically change length like the kind used to pull people off stage in old comedies.

Ideal. He believes that gnolls should be able to gain acceptance and be a part of society like any other humanoids.

Bond. His compatriots are his chosen family and he does whatever is necessary to make their dreams come true.

Flaw. He always tries to see his best in others and thus has a tendency to ignore warning signs about people who are hostile to him or gnolls.

AMBER BRAWNAVIL

she/her, gnoll Fang of Yeenoghu, lawful good
Amber Brawnnavil is Randal's right hand and the club's head of security.

Ideal. To Amber, Randal and the other gnolls are the most important people in her life, and she does whatever is necessary to protect them.

Bond. Because Randal believed in her when no one else did, she pursues any dream of his even if she doesn't believe they can come true.

Flaw. She is slow to trust and doesn't like to accept help.

REED TEALEAF

he/him, groll commoner, chaotic neutral

Reed Tealeaf is the club's popular headliner but is working the signup table tonight.

Ideal. Reed believes everyone should be able to laugh and be happy.

Bond. Reed loves an adoring crowd.

Flaw. Reed does whatever it takes to make people happy, which makes him susceptible to social pressure.

CREATING GNOLL NAMES

To create more gnoll NPCs, combine any random first and last names from those suggested for major races in the *Player's Handbook*.

OPEN MIKE COMPETITORS

All competitors use **commoner** stats. The following are example competitors competing with the party for winning the top three.

- **Micky McGee** (CG human, she/her) is a comedian who mines personal awkward life stories for humor.
- **Visahla Dunshire** (N half-elf, half-halfing, she/her) is all sass who relentlessly roasts the audience.
- **Durrekh Thurg** (NG half-orc, he/him) loves making fun of celebrity gossip and famous adventurers.

ANTAGONISTS

When running this adventure, choose one of the two antagonists below. Each antagonist has different story beats laced throughout the adventure that you can use to further enhance the narrative.

RONNIE BUCKMAN

he/him, human noble, true neutral

Ronnie is a local business owner who owns another nightclub named Buck Wild. Upset that High In A Laugh's business is taking off while his well-established business is floundering, Ronnie decided his only option was to drive the gnolls out of town by spreading nefarious lies about them.

ROLEPLAYING RONNIE

The 55-year-old human is known around town as being charming and charitable but also very

private—everyone knows him but no one knows him *well*. While generally kind, he has a temper and a tendency to hold a grudge, which is driven by anxiety and introversion. He's particularly sensitive about his name because he inherited his wealth from his father, Exatavius Buckman. People hear his family name and attribute his success to his father's achievements, when, in fact, Ronnie has poured his heart and soul into his nightclub, Buck Wild.

Unfortunately, hard work doesn't always result in success, and Buck Wild's reception has been middling at best. The arrival of another nightclub, this one instantly famous and run by a gnoll claiming the same family name as his own, has triggered his insecurity and worst instincts. He is obsessed with the gnolls, jealous of their popularity, and what started with a few spontaneous snide comments has escalated into a full-blown propaganda campaign. Tonight during Open Mike Night, his long campaign comes to fruition as he plans to confront the gnolls directly.

FORESTE POQUIR

she/her, elf champion (appendix A), chaotic neutral

Foreste is a charming smuggler who has gained the gnolls' trust, only to use their club as a rendezvous point for the sale of stolen archaeological treasures.

ROLEPLAYING FORESTE

Foreste is a young elf who fell in with the wrong crowd and was ostracized when she was caught committing petty crimes. Seeing no point in seeking redemption if no one was willing to forgive her, she instead turned to self-aggrandizement, finding a niche in using her natural charisma to avoid suspicion while smuggling and selling ancient artifacts. She isn't malicious and tries to avoid hurting others, but she always looks out for herself first. Foreste is taking advantage of the large crowd on Open Mike Night to make her biggest sale yet, a *cursed master's amulet* (sidebar) for a shield guardian from an ancient civilization, though she doesn't realize that it is cursed. Several agents (**bandit captains**) for prospective buyers are present, though they flee at the first sign of trouble.

CURSED MASTER'S AMULET

Wondrous item, rare

This item looks like a *master's amulet*. However, this particular amulet is actually cursed, but its magical nature is hidden; *detect magic* doesn't detect it. An *identify* spell reveals its true nature.

Curse. Upon activation the amulet raises any undead within a 30-foot radius of you, and they immediately attack the nearest creature to them. At the end of each of your turns you can make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to attempt to deactivate the amulet. On a success the undead become inert.

A *remove curse* spell or similar magic, breaks the curse, and afterwards it functions like a normal *master's amulet*.

PART 1: A GNOLL JUDGMENT ZONE

The first half of the adventure takes place in the public area of the comedy club, which is divided into four main areas:

- A1: Dining Area/Lounge
- A2: Kitchen/Bar
- A3: Main Room
- A4: Side Rooms (not open/accessible tonight)

SCHEDULE

The club is open and has been crowded all day in anticipation of Open Mike Night, which begins at sunset and lasts for three hours. Each performer has five minutes for their routine. Characters can arrive at any time.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Characters can move freely through the club, but engaging in an activity requires spending time in the area where the activity takes place. They can participate in one activity per area or three activities in total.

ARRIVING AT THE CLUB

Regardless what time the party arrives, read or paraphrase:

As you approach the club, you hear the rustic tunes of a popular local band over the rumbling chatter of the crowd inside. The smell of barbecued meats drifts through the air. The exterior is no different than other buildings in the area, but you feel a chill as you pass through

the entrance into a dimly lit lounge that resembles a rocky cave. The dining area is filled with tables and chairs shaped like boulders, and fake plants cling to rocky outcroppings overhead. A human wanders past, alcohol on his breath as he exclaims, "Isn't this so *novel*?"

Reed is at the entrance staffing a sign-up table for prospective performers. Characters who wish to perform a routine must sign up with him. They can perform alone or in groups of two.

AREA 1: DINING AREA/LOUNGE

This first area is a large lounge for patrons to mingle while enjoying food and drink between shows.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area is about 50 feet by 50 feet, though the walls are irregular, mimicking the rocky appearance of a cave. The ceiling is roughly 15 feet high. Characters enter from doors on the south wall. To the east is a doorway that leads to the counter and kitchen. A hallway to the west goes towards the comedy rooms, while a hallway to the north leads backstage and to the back rooms.

Lighting. Small globes of magical light are regularly spaced throughout the chamber and pulse rhythmically to the beat of the music.

Spectral Band. A small stage in the far corner of the room has musical instruments being played by *unseen servants*.

Graffiti. Painted or carved into the rock walls are all sorts of bad jokes and puns like "This is a gnoll judgment zone." "Gnollzur wuz here," is painted in bright colors by the hallway leading to the main room, and the words "Gnoll Laugh, Gnoll Life" are scrawled in one corner.

Food and Drink. Characters can get the house special meal, Carrion Charcuterie, for 5 sp; this consists of delicious cold cuts, cheeses, breads, fruits, and jams arranged to resemble a half-eaten carcass.

ACTIVITIES

Characters can partake in various activities while in this area, learning valuable pieces of information about the establishment, comedians, or townsfolk gossip.

Mingle. Characters must make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check and on a success they learn one piece of information.

- **If Foreste is the antagonist**, one of her buyers mistakenly assumes the characters are working for Foreste, and greets them using the passcode “These appetizers are good, but I hear the fish is even better.” If they don’t receive the correct answer phrase (“The only water in the forest is a river”), they apologize, saying that they mistook them for someone else, and attempt to handwave any further questions.
- **Durrekh Thurg**, having heard that the party is in town, comes over to talk with them. He questions them about their adventuring career to see if he can get any material for his routine tonight. The characters must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to fend him off or make their first check during their comedy performance with disadvantage.
- **Durrekh Thurg** thinks himself above all the other competitors. He is very proud but also very insecure, mostly about being a half-orc, and has really found a home here as he is more accepted by the gnolls.
- **Micky McGee** likes to mingle with the crowd beforehand, attempting to gather up juicy bits of information about guests’ awkward life moments to use in her comedy routines. Not many patrons find this kind of humor endearing.
- **Amber Brawnnavil** is Randal’s right hand gnoll and head of security. She is understanding and very fair in her dealings, but doesn’t stand for ruffraff or shenanigans at the expense of the club.
- The service is amazing, and the entertainment is always top notch. Though many townsfolk were initially hesitant about the gnolls and their intentions, the clan mostly has the support of the community.

Eavesdrop. Characters must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check, and on a success they learn one piece of information.

- **If Foreste is the antagonist**, characters overhear one of Foreste’s prospective buyers and one of her agents having the following exchange: “These appetizers are good, but I hear the fish is even better” and “The only water in the forest is a river,” before being led out of the room.

- **If Ronnie is the antagonist**, Randal and his staff have had problems with vandalism lately; an unknown assailant has repeatedly painted graffiti on the outside of the comedy club.
- **Visahla Dunshire** is said to be half a halfling, though no one can agree on what her other parentage is supposed to be, and despite her size, most are reluctant to ask.
- Characters can overhear **Micky McGee** talking up other customers in the room, attempting to find out information about their lives. If engaged directly, she tries the same on the party. They must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to ward her off, or make their first check during their comedy performance with disadvantage.

Gossip. Characters must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Charisma (Persuasion) check and on a success they learn one piece of information. Conversely, using what they have learned, they may attempt to sway patrons by making a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Each factual check (such as obtained through the Eavesdrop activity) automatically adds or removes 5 votes for a comedian, depending on whether the rumors are favorable or unfavorable, respectively. False rumors require a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception) or other appropriate check.

- **If Foreste is the antagonist**, NPCs here mention shady business dealings between Randal and a mysterious figure who is secretly a patron of the comedy club, and is the real reason it has become so successful.
- **If Ronnie is the antagonist**, characters overhear patrons discussing Ronnie’s nightclub, Buck Wild, critically comparing it to the much more popular gnoll establishment.
- One of the performers tonight, **Visahla Dunshire**, is said to use a *wand of smiles* to make patrons laugh at her jokes.
- **Durrekh Thurg** thinks he’s funny but most folks just laugh at his half-orc appearance, not at his jokes.
- Some of the best food in town is served here and apparently several establishments attempted to poach **Delicious**, the head cook, but she preferred to stay with her chosen family.

AREA 2: KITCHEN & COUNTER SEATING

The counter looks into an open kitchen and the gnolls are happy to bring small groups into the kitchen to show how hygienic and organized it is.

ACTIVITIES

The same activities from Area 1 can occur in Area 2. Additional activities include:

Staff Gossip. Characters can speak with the kitchen staff to learn about Foreste's buyers or hear about what townsfolk have been saying in regards to the comedy club, depending on the scenario. The characters must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to learn this information. Alternatively, a successful roll can get them a tour of the kitchen (see below). Staff members that the characters can interact with include:

Aramil Stumbleduck (LG gnoll **commoner**, he/him) is a waiter who keeps asking about the characters' adventures. Characters who speak with Aramil can learn the following:

- Aramil is very proud of his last name, which comes from a nickname given to him after he discovered a hidden village of awakened ducks during his adventuring days and gained their trust enough for them to teach him how to swim.
- **If Foreste is the antagonist**, Aramil mentions that a "well-to-do" elf regularly rents out a VIP room and whenever she is a customer, the elf prefers the room to be set up beforehand with as little interference from the staff as possible.
If Ronnie is the antagonist, Aramil recalls having to remove several fake "health and safety" fliers that someone had affixed to the front of the comedy club that detailed (falsely) how the club had been "shut down" by the health inspection board. These bogus notices cost them a week's worth of business before Randal could clear up the matter.

Bimpnottin Cimber (NG gnoll **commoner**, they/them), is a line cook who keeps getting distracted talking about recipes. Characters who speak with Bimpnottin can learn the following:

- There's a tree north of town that has incredible recipes drawn on its trunk that are only visible

on nights with a full moon when its light causes the text to glow. No one knows who wrote the recipes, but Bimpnottin believes that whoever perfects all the recipes unlocks a secret ultimate recipe from the tree.

- **If Foreste is the antagonist**, they mention seeing a strange shipment of crates in one of the VIP rooms while cleaning up. Thinking they were luxurious wines for various VIPs, they opened them. On further investigation Bimpnottin found several antique, strange-looking objects. They brought this to Randal's attention but before he could investigate, the crates had been removed.
- **If Ronnie is the antagonist**, Bimpnottin mentions that in the past few months food shipments have either gone missing or were found to be spoiled upon delivery. Patrons have also started to complain about food poisoning, though the kitchen staff can't explain the reasoning behind it, as all food is taste-tested before being sent out.

Whispers on the Wind (CN tabaxi **bandit**, he/him), Windy for short, is a waiter who secretly works for Ronnie, intent on spreading misinformation about the comedy club and the gnolls in order to sully the business's good name. Delicious, the head cook, is well aware of this, but keeps Windy in her employ because "better the devil you know." Characters who speak with Windy are told the following:

- Windy was hired a few months after the comedy club started to become very popular with the locals.
- Gnolls shed a lot, but one of them is a wizard who alters the memories of anyone who complains about finding hair in their food.
- Randal has a dark past that he's trying to hide from the townsfolk. If pressed, Windy makes vague insinuations but won't give any specifics.
- Windy overheard Reed talking to Amber about rigging tonight's competition so that comedians who are better than him won't steal his spotlight.
- Buck Wild is a much better club than High in a Laugh because it serves deer milk.

What do they know? Per Ronnie's instructions, Windy has been attempting to sabotage the business, which includes but is not limited to, poisoning the food as it goes out, messing up delivery orders, and generally attempting to create as much chaos as possible without getting caught. In truth, Windy quite likes the gnolls and working for Delicious, but Ronnie pays well and he doesn't want to get on the bad side of the influential Buckman family.

Whispers on the Wind only has this role in the adventure if Ronnie is the antagonist. Otherwise he is just one of the various kitchen staff hired to work for the club.

KITCHEN TOUR

Characters can request a tour of the kitchen by making a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. Seeing they are VIPs (adventurers), the tour is led by **Delicious** (N **gnoll pack lord**, she/her), the head cook, who is from a gnoll clan that turned to worship of Baphomet and thus has tiefling-like horns. Delicious worked as a mercenary to raise money for the clan and has a soft spot for adventurers. She often had to pose as a cursed tiefling to get work, so she is extra friendly with tiefling characters. Characters who speak with Delicious during the kitchen tour can learn the following:

- Delicious is very proud of her "state of the art" kitchen and how well-maintained everything is. Everything is brought in fresh daily and if not used, it is donated to local charities, at which Delicious also volunteers from time to time.
- She has been saving up to open her own restaurant, and if the comedy club continues to be a success, that dream may come true sooner rather than later.
- **If Foreste is the antagonist**, Delicious remembers helping lock up one evening only to find Foreste and some of her "guests" still occupying a VIP room, long after hours. Delicious found this suspicious because the "guests" didn't look like the high-paying clientele that Foreste usually associated with, more like ruffians from the streets.
- **If Ronnie is the antagonist**, Delicious recalls him approaching her one evening. He offered

to pay double what Randal pays if she'd come work for him.

DEVELOPMENT

As Delicious shows the characters around the kitchen, a delivery of freshly slaughtered chickens arrives at the back door. Screams erupt when the staff open the crate.

If Foreste is the antagonist, the *master's amulet* she's selling is cursed and summons worms to reanimate corpses nearby. The shipment of chickens is infested with wriggling worms that connect the corpses together into a giant undead shambling chicken (**spawn of Kyuss** [appendix A]), which attacks.

If Ronnie is the antagonist, he sabotaged the chickens to try to cause food poisoning to malign the gnolls. However, the *psychic poison* (see sidebar) he used attracts a **swarm of cranium rats** (appendix A) which leap out of the crate and attack.

PSYCHIC POISON

Poison (ingested)

This rare poison is typically created by student wizards for pranks. Magically distilled from the tears of a humanoid, it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, but it emits a psionic vibration that attracts creatures with psionic capabilities. The poison doesn't cause physical harm but causes intense mental discomfort, which can manifest into physical ailments as the mind tries to pin the discomfort on a recent cause. Typically, this presents as food poisoning symptoms, as the discomfort begins shortly after eating, but can occasionally cause other forms of paranoia depending on context and a creature's existing fears.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours. While poisoned, the creature can only comfortably move half its speed. If it moves more than half its speed, it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, it must use its action to deal with stomach upset or other overwhelming discomfort. On a success, it manages to overcome the sensation.

Ingested. A creature must swallow an entire dose of ingested poison to suffer its effects. The dose can be delivered in food or a liquid. You may decide that a partial dose has a reduced effect, such as allowing advantage on the saving throw or dealing only half damage on a failed save.

DIFFICULTY ADJUSTMENTS:

The scenario assumes the party is split, though Delicious also helps fight the monster.

Increase Difficulty. If most of the party is on the tour or the characters present are higher than level 8, increase the difficulty by using two of the monsters instead of one.

Decrease Difficulty. If the encounter is too difficult for the number of characters present, have a staff member dump a pan of boiling oil on the creature at the start of combat to halve its hit points.

REWARDS

Defeating the creature(s) gains Delicious's gratitude, and she authorizes the party to enter the VIP Rooms (see Part 2: Ignorable Intentions) as part of their reward. If no bystanders are killed or knocked unconscious, the kitchen staff offer the party their tips for the evening (50 gp) in thanks.

AREA 3: MAIN ROOM

This is the only room open tonight. It is the largest room and can seat over 200 people.

ACTIVITIES

Attend The Show. Characters not currently performing their routines can attend the show, watching various other NPCs perform. In addition, they can do one of the following activities:

Cheer. The character makes a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, they may choose one performer to gain advantage on their next roll. They can only do this once per performance.

Jeer. The character makes a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the performer gains disadvantage on their next roll. If the check fails, assign a Disruptive Token to the character. Bouncers (**guards**) immediately attempt to eject any character who accumulates three Disruptive Tokens and

prevent them from returning except to perform a routine.

- If characters attempt to use magic to disrupt a performance (i.e., *vicious mockery*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*, etc.), they must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid being detected by the bouncers. On a failure, they are immediately removed from the club until it is their turn to perform.

If you wish to add an additional challenge to the characters' routines, then NPCs may also partake in the Attend The Show activity.

SHOW TIME

Each character who signed up for Open Mike Night can perform their routine here.

For each joke they tell during their routine (maximum 5 jokes), characters must roll 1d6 and add their Charisma modifier. The sum of the rolls determines their final vote count, barring any adjustments due to other activities like Area 1 or audience support.

OPEN MIKE NIGHT VOTING

At the end of the night, the crowd votes for their favorite performer. The following NPCs get the following number of votes:

- Durrekh — 40 votes
- Visahla — 33 votes
- Micky — 21 votes

All other NPC performers get fewer than 15 votes.

GOOD ROLEPLAY

If a player really knocks a routine out of the park, you can forego scoring and skill checks altogether. Otherwise, any player who attempts a real-life routine should be granted advantage on each performance roll.

AREA 4: SIDE ROOMS

These are smaller rooms normally open to allow multiple performances to occur simultaneously. Since the focus tonight is on Open Mike Night, all these rooms are closed and locked. They connect to the VIP Lounge though, so characters can break in by making a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check or picking a lock with a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using thieves' tools.

PART 2: IGNOLLBLE INTENTIONS

This part of the adventure is broken up into two scenarios, depending on which antagonist was chosen at the beginning. If someone in the party wins Open Mike Night, Randal invites them to the VIP Lounge to celebrate. Otherwise, characters must interact with Delicious (Area 2) to access this room.

THE VIP LOUNGE

The lounge is 100 feet by 100 feet with a 15-foot diameter circular stage in the middle, tables set up around the stage, and booths along the walls. There's a private connection to the kitchen on the southeast wall and a bar on the west wall doubles as an exit to corridors leading to the main and side rooms. Doors along the north lead to smaller private lounges, which are closed tonight.

Various NPCs take turns performing comedy routines or songs on the center stage. In the spirit of Open Mike Night, the VIPs are encouraged to take the stage throughout the night if they wish. Randal is at the back entertaining various VIPs while Foreste or Ronnie are also present, holding court in another corner of the room. If you use the Shady Rumors hook, the party's contractor is also present, keeping an eye on Randal, on the lookout for any funny business.

Both antagonists immediately take an interest in the party when they arrive. **If Foreste is the antagonist** she mistakes them for prospective buyers. **If Ronnie is the antagonist**, he sees them as new faces he might be able to turn against the gnolls. Play their interactions for comedy with Foreste using code phrases or making offers that the party can misinterpret or Ronnie cautiously making ever more ridiculous claims about the gnolls to test what the party is willing to believe.

If the characters gain access to the VIP Room before attending Open Mike Night, the lounge is mostly empty save for a few NPCs who have started to gather early for drinks. If questioned, they state they are here to meet with either Foreste or Ronnie later in the evening. Characters may recognize some of them if they encountered them during activities in Area 1 and 2.

DEVELOPMENT: CONFRONTATION

Depending on which antagonist was chosen at the beginning run Scenario A: Not So Gnollble Intentions or Scenario B: Shady Dealings Gone Awry

SCENARIO A: NOT SO GNOLLBLE INTENTIONS

If characters didn't take the kitchen tour, chaos breaks out around the club as food poisoning takes hold. Ronnie loudly accuses Randal of intentional poisoning, and his circle of supporters (two **gladiators** and three **nobles**) leap to Ronnie's defense. Otherwise, a fight breaks out when drunk patrons (two **gladiators** and three **nobles**) who heard Ronnie's slander start picking fights with gnolls. Bolstered by the chaos, Ronnie confronts Randal about the rumors.

Ronnie's supporters produce falsified evidence of health code violations and forged pages from Randal's diary suggesting the gnolls plan to rob townfolk. Relevant successful skill checks of DC 12 or higher allow characters to discover discrepancies that prove they are lying.

Randal is confused by what's happening. He's an easy-going character who tries to see good in people but is very protective of his clan. He immediately orders all gnolls to stand down to avoid being seen as aggressive, but is very willing to verbally spar with Ronnie's group to defend his reputation. He tries to defuse the situation with humor and self-deprecation.

RESOLUTION

If characters don't help Randal protest the false accusations, the town authorities present shut down the club and exile the gnolls. Characters can go about clearing Randal's name in a variety of ways. Some examples are listed below.

- Characters can provoke a fight. If they defeat all of Ronnie's group, Ronnie readily admits he is lying.
- Characters can advocate for the gnolls by presenting evidence (produced from successful skill checks) that the nobles are lying, having Delicious or Amber identify patrons to testify on the gnolls' behalf.

- Characters who confront Ronnie must make three skill checks, taking the average of the three attempts. Each character can only make one skill check, and the same skill cannot be used more than once. See the Ronnie Confrontation Table for outcomes.

RONNIE CONFRONTATION TABLE

Average of 3	Outcome
1-7	Ronnie becomes infuriated and order his group to attack
8-14	Ronnie and the town officials aren't swayed by the characters. They continue to be suspicious of the gnolls but do not arrest them.
15-20	Ronnie breaks down and admits he started the rumors and begs for forgiveness. Randal is willing to forgive him, as long as he never comes here again.
20+	Ronnie gives a sobbing confession about everything which becomes an outpouring of his subconscious feelings, resulting in a declaration of profound envy and admiration for the gnolls. Randal offers to take him under his wing to help him work through his issues and they become best friends.

SCENARIO B: SHADY DEALINGS GONE AWRY

Unbeknownst to Foreste, the amulet she is attempting to sell is cursed. Within 30 feet, it animates any undead creatures who then attempt to harm anyone save for the wearer. As part of her sales pitch, Foreste activates the amulet, triggering the cursed magic; floorboards break as a **ghostly superstar** (appendix A) and six **zombies** rise up from the burial ground underneath the club, summoned by the *master's amulet*. While around Foreste's neck, it glows brightly, and green necrotic energy visibly flows between the amulet and the undead when within 50 feet of each other.

Randal is enraged that Foreste is conducting illegal activities in his club. He positions himself between the undead and the town authorities (use **noble** stat blocks) to protect them, asking anyone with combat experience to help.

TACTICS

The amulet prevents Foreste from leaving the area unless the undead are defeated. She therefore prioritizes killing the undead but becomes hostile to any character who attacks her or tries to keep her from escaping. As soon as she is able, Foreste attempts to flee. She surrenders if she falls below 40 hit points, or if characters recognize her desire for love and acceptance based on her duets with the ghostly superstar and convince her to reform.

The ghostly superstar is driven by base instincts and is attracted to strong emotions. Its primary interest is in triggering juicy duets—it and its zombies attack only if it feels threatened. If the party has any emotionally-resonant secrets or unresolved tensions between them, this is a way to unearth or at least hint at them. Otherwise, the ghostly superstar is interested in Foreste's insecurities, Randal's sense of betrayal, and the town authority's fears. (see Example Duets sidebar)

EXAMPLE DUETS

Ghostly Superstar and Foreste (set to Lady Gaga's "Poker Face")

Zombies: Muh muh muh maaah

Ghostly Superstar: You wanted toys that your poor mama couldn't buy stealing, hiding, cheating, lying, all things that you tried

Foreste: and loved it

Ghostly Superstar: Uh oh but they caught you as your life was 'bout to start and joy all turned to ashes when they struck you from their hearts
Oh oh oh oh

Foreste: Won't hear me sob, they can all go rot,

Ghostly Superstar: Oh oh oh oh

Foreste: Screw what they thought, I'll make my own lot

Can't read my,

Can't read my,

No they can't read my Poquiiir face

Zombies: She's got no one who loves her

Foreste: Can't read my,

Can't read my,

No they can't read my Poquiiir face

Ghostly Superstar: She's got no one who loves her

Foreste (sadly): P-p-p-poquiiir face, p-p-poquiiir face

Zombies: Muh muh muh maaah

Foreste (tear drips down her face): P-p-p-poquiiir face, p-p-poquiiir face

Zombies: Muh muh muh maaah



Randal Buckman and Town Authority (set to Elton John and Kiki Dee's "Don't Go Breaking My Heart"):

Authority: Don't go breaking my heart

Randal: I wouldn't ever try

Authority: Oh, honey, if I get suspicious

Randal: You can raid me that night

Authority: Don't go breaking my heart

Randal: Why can't you believe in me?

Authority: Oh, honey, when you came to my town

Randal: Oooh, you gave me your keys

Randal & Authority: Woo-oooh,
Nobody knows it

Authority: When
taxes were down

Randal: We came around

Randal & Authority: Oooh oooh
Nobody knows it

Zombies: Nobody knoooooows

Authority: Right from the start

Randal: I gave you my heart

Oh, oh, I gave you my heart

Authority: So don't go breaking my heart

Randal: I won't go breaking your heart

Randal & Authority: Don't go break-
ing my heart

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Characters collect the rewards offered in the hook based on how Part 2 resolved. If the authorities who promised the reward were somehow killed but the characters helped the gnolls, the gnolls give them an equivalent reward.

Furthermore, if the characters successfully helped the gnolls, Randal offers the characters their choice of one of the following from the treasures the gnolls accumulated while adventuring:

- 1 *potion of heroism*
- 4 *potions of greater healing*
- 1 *driftglobe*
- 1 *yellow diamond elemental gem*
- 1 *robe of useful items*

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

If the gnolls were driven out of town, they move the comedy club, starting over in another town. Characters who realize the gnolls were falsely accused may help the gnolls rebuild.

If the gnolls were exonerated, they continue building on their popularity, expanding into other businesses. Delicious wants to open a fancy restaurant, Amber wants to open a self-defense academy, and Randal wants to open a shelter for the down-trodden. Characters can help them choose and set up their next venture.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Grady Wang is ½ of The Gallant Goblin, a publisher and YouTube review channel of TTRPG supplements and accessories. He is the bestselling author of DMs Guild products such as *The Gray Merchant of Asphodel: 100+ Theros Magic Items* and *Kill Bhaal Vol. 1*, as well as producer of the *Fight Your Minis* series which gives you everything you need to know to use the minis you unbox from D&D's Icons of the Realms product line. You can find him on Twitter via the official Gallant Goblin account [@gallantgoblin](https://twitter.com/gallantgoblin).

PARKS AND RECLAMATION

By Lydia Van Hoy

This adventure is optimized for four 12th-level characters.

“You have rigged the drawing of lots, hoping to cheat me and my followers. But One-Eye never sleeps; One-Eye sees all. There is a place for orcs to dwell...here! And here! And here again!”

— GRUUMSH ONE-EYE

The Kingdom of Many-Arrows has sent a team of researchers to uncover a holy site of the orcish pantheon, hoping that their discoveries will encourage the rest of the orc nations to ally with them. But are they ready for the shocking truth?

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The Kingdom of Many-Arrows has sent a team of researchers to uncover a site of religious significance to the orcs, hoping to find evidence of a gentler side to the orcish pantheon that has been lost to the ages. It’s their hope that a discovery of this magnitude could serve to unite the orcs under one banner, providing safety in numbers from those who see them only as monsters. There’s only one problem: the entire site is scarred by magic, preventing them from accessing the knowledge stored in the inner chambers.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Many-Arrows is a peaceful orcish kingdom, which occupies Dark Arrow Keep and much of the Spine of the World mountains. They've recently taken an interest in uncovering sites of cultural significance to the orcs, in order to reclaim their history from those who've villainized them. After beginning to restore several of these sites, an unexplainable increase in prophetic dreams has steered them to their largest one yet, and they weren't quite prepared for what they would find. A forgotten holy site of the orc pantheon has been sealed for ages, with both ancient history and foes locked inside.

HOOKS

Random Encounter. The adventurers come across the archaeological dig during their travels, and are approached by the orcs for their assistance. How hard could digging for treasure be?

Prophecy, Fulfilled. A character who has a religious connection to the orcish pantheon, or is of orcish heritage, receives a prophetic dream guiding them to a radiant basilica full of all manner of orcish people. When they arrive, they find only the dig in progress.

Pride and Prejudice. Officials of a nearby town have noticed the orcs congregating at the dig site and are growing increasingly anxious. Adventurers are asked to find out what the orcs want and convince them to move on.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following notable NPCs are encountered in this adventure.

PAKGU THE BUSY

they/them, orc **champion**, *neutral good*

Pakgu is an orc who is slowly sneaking up on middle age, though they would never admit that to you. Their name comes from their inability to relax and delegate tasks, resulting in a fine layer of dirt that covers them at all times. They seem to be genuinely excited for the possibilities of what they might uncover, and can almost always be

found attempting to insert themselves into the action while the other researchers beg them to take a break.

Pakgu uses the **champion** stat block (appendix A) with the following modifications:

- They speak Common, Elvish, and Orc.

MOR THE SEER

they/she/he, orc **diviner**, *chaotic neutral*

Mor is a younger, genderfluid orc with cerulean cataracts and a vibrant blue spellscar that races across their face like a blindfold. Despite his age, he has attended every excavation since the prophetic dreams began and is one of the most experienced diviners of the Many-Arrows Kingdom. Unlike Pakgu, Mor has no qualms about staying out of the action and is perfectly happy to watch the dig until her particular skill set is required.

Mor uses the **diviner** stat block (appendix A) with the following modifications:

- She is blind, and has blindsight with a range of 120 feet.
- Fire damage dealt by her spells ignores resistances.
- They speak Common, Celestial, Elvish, and Orc.

PART 1: ANCIENT HISTORY

The adventure begins with adventurers spotting a large grouping of orcs and what seems to be an archaeological dig amongst long forgotten ruins.

HELPING HANDS

The orcs have been hard at work uncovering an entrance that would let them explore deeper into the ruins, but there's one problem: this site is sealed by a kind of magic that they cannot pierce or bypass. As the adventurers approach the ruins, Pakgu rushes to greet them.

An excited orc bounds towards you, arms outstretched. "Finally, some real adventurers!" they exclaim, causing others to turn their attention to the party. "I've got a real noble job for you, if you people think you can handle it."

If the characters show interest in the job, Pakgu leads them into the ruins, where Mor waits near the entrance. Together, the two can provide the party with the following information about the job:

- The research group hails from the Kingdom of Many-Arrows, which has spent the last decade rebuilding in peace after being ruled by a usurper.
- Prophetic dreams have led their people to this religious site, and they believe it contains lost knowledge about the nature of the orc pantheon.
- Through his divination, Mor knows that the magical scar on the ruins comes from a clash between greater deities that took place thousands of years ago.
- Mor's divination has yet to uncover the purpose of the magical wall preventing the orcs from entering the ruins, but he believes it may be to protect the knowledge inside.
- In exchange for scouting out the ruins and bringing any relics found to the surface, Pakgu can offer the party 100 gp for each relic and a parcel of land on the outer edges of Dark Arrow Keep.
- Mor suspects that if they can find enough relics above ground, they may be able to draw enough power from them to bypass the magical wall.

If they accept the job, adventurers are asked to help gather relics from the various dig spots around the ruins in order to help open the door. Characters may use spells or abilities to assist in this, such as the *locate object* spell. The following checks may also be made in this section:

- DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) checks to spot relics close to the surface which have not yet been uncovered.
- DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks to unearth buried relics.
- DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) checks to spot partially buried relics.
- DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) checks to find relics by sifting through a larger area.

If the characters fail three or more of the above checks before they gather the required relics, the **sword wraith commander** (appendix A) in area **A3** is alerted by the digging and uses its Call to Honor action immediately upon characters

entering the room. Once the party has found at least three relics, they can join the orcs in presenting them to Pakgu and Mor. As Mor attunes herself to the relics, Pakgu will invite the party to join them and the rest of the orcs for their evening meal.

During this time, the characters are free to introduce themselves to the other dozen orc researchers and have their fill of the orcish food and drink provided.

PART 2: THE DESCENT

As meal time draws to a close and researchers retire to their tents for the night, Mor can be heard calling out to Pakgu as a magical charge fills the air surrounding the ruins.

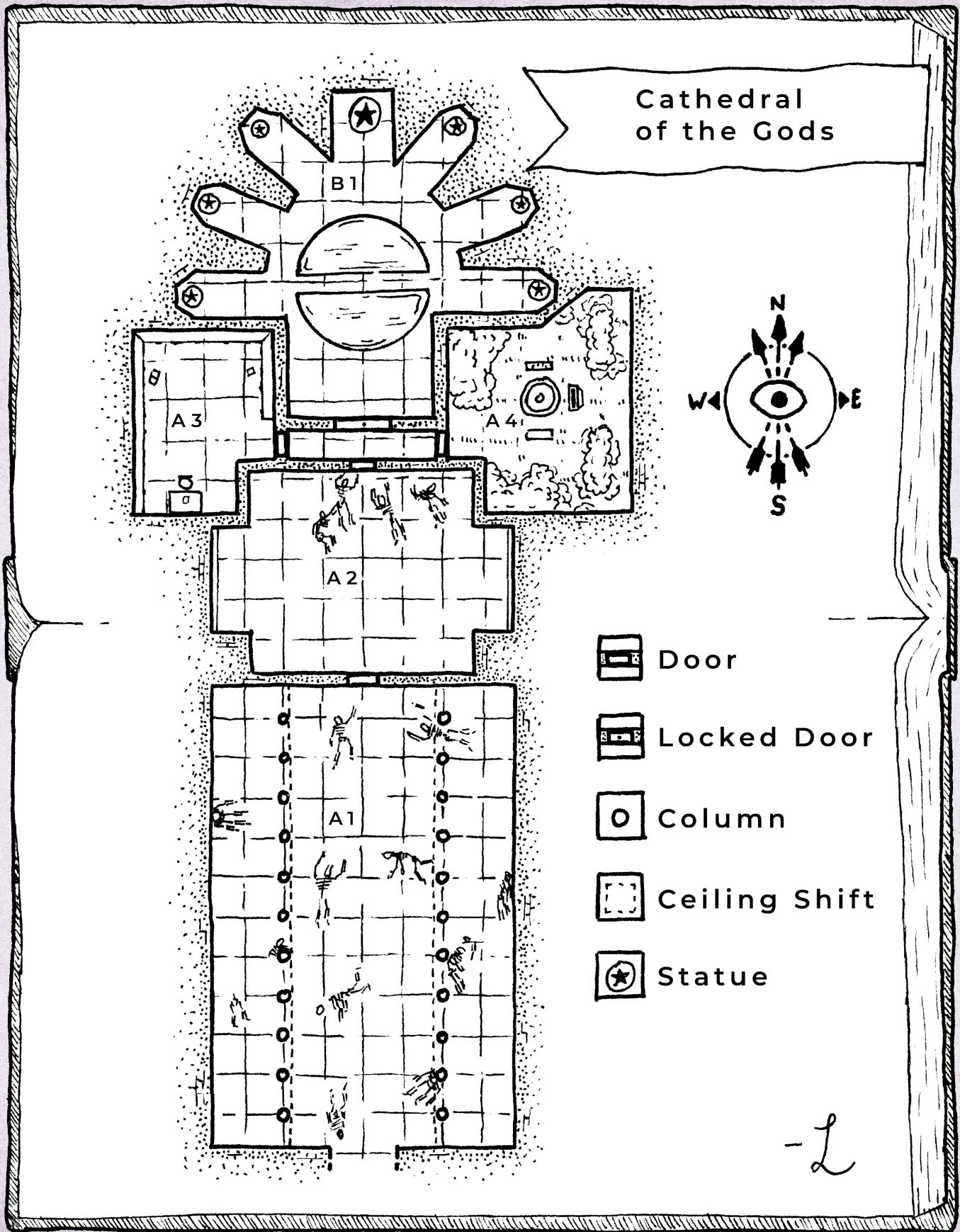
BREAK ON THROUGH

Mor's calls stop the researchers in their tracks, as her voice rings with an authority none of them have heard before. Pakgu gathers the adventurers and rushes them towards the entrance to the ruins.

"It has opened, but not for long!" Mor's warning rings through the camp, causing everyone to freeze. It's obvious that the words do little to instill confidence in the researchers, and none want to be the one who ends up trapped within the ruins. Suddenly, a firm hand is at your back and pushing you towards the entrance. "We must go now," Pakgu shouts excitedly, "before it's too late!"

As the characters approach the entrance to the ruins they notice that the magical wall has fallen, giving way to a bright light that emanates from beyond the doorway. Once the entire party has entered, Mor collapses, unable to hold the magical barrier open any longer. Pakgu assures the characters that they will be able to reopen it by morning, before carrying an exhausted Mor back towards the camp.

Inside this area, as well as the rest of the ruins, attempts to use magic to escape fail and may backfire (roll 1d100 on the sorcerer's Wild Magic Surge table in the *PHB*). Attempting to use magic to communicate, such as through use of the *message* or *sending* spells, results in both sides receiving only a loud static noise.



A1. NAVE

Upon entering the ruins, the adventurers see a long hallway with 20-foot high ceilings stretching before them. On either side of the hallway is a narrow aisle, separated from the main corridor only by columns; the ceilings above the aisles are only 10 feet high. Ornate orcish folk art, worn by time, decorates the columns that line this hall, while an assortment of elven and orcish skeletons litters the floor.

A **spirit troll** (appendix A) and three **specters** wander the far end of the hall, attacking when the characters venture too close. When the troll drops to 0 hit points, a character can banish it by making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check.

A2. GALLERY

This room has a large alcove on either side, containing detailed paintings of the deities Gruumsh and Luthic, respectively. Those with a passive Perception of 15 or higher, or who make a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, notice that the tiled floor is actually a mosaic in the image of an eye. More skeletons are in this area, though these look as if they had been fleeing toward the northern door. Going through this door leads the characters to a short hallway; a door is at either end and in the center of the north wall is an ornate, locked door.

This room contains the following items:

Relic/Treasure. A magical spear, a *blood spear of Gruumsh* (see sidebar), stuck in the back of a skeleton.

Relic. An oversized golden chalice, inlaid with orcish runes made from bloodstones; this requires a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find among the debris.

Treasure. A total of 1,500 sp and 50 gp, with unrecognizable inscriptions

Treasure. A suit of *millennial chainmail* (see sidebar).

BLOOD SPEAR OF GRUUMSH

Weapon (spear), uncommon (requires attunement)

When you hit with a melee attack using this magic spear and reduce the target to 0 hit points, you gain 2d6 temporary hit points. Any creature can wield the spear, but only the character chosen by Gruumsh to wield it gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Proficiency with a spear allows you to add your proficiency bonus to the attack roll for any attack you make with it.

MILLENNIAL CHAINMAIL

Medium armor (chain mail), legendary (requires attunement by a creature of good alignment)

This armor feels and looks like a set of mithral chain mail, but has a pale green color that grows brighter with sunlight. This armor has no Strength requirement, and does not impose disadvantage on Stealth checks. When worn, your Armor Class is 16 + your Dexterity modifier (maximum of 2). If your alignment changes to neutral or evil, your attunement to this item is broken immediately.

Additional Powers. If the wearer of this armor is a worshiper of Corellon Larethian, the armor painlessly extends small green roots into the wearer's skin. It has 1d4 + 2 charges, which can be expended as a bonus action to restore 1d6 hit points to the wearer. This armor regains 1d4 charges at dawn, and can hold a maximum of 6 charges.

A3. REPOSITORY

The hallway's western door leads to a room that seems to be a combination of a library and an office. In the southern alcove, a **sword wraith commander** (appendix A) paces in front of a desk, waiting for its final combatant.

The walls are lined with bookshelves from floor to ceiling that contain large leather-bound tomes and logs, all covered in a thick layer of dust. The researchers who wait outside would be ecstatic to receive any of these books, as each one contains lost orcish records, but characters can also find the following items in this room:

Relic. A book, written in Orc, detailing the betrayal of the orcs by the gods. Requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find.

Relic. A record of ancient orc traditions, from before their introduction to Toril. Requires a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find.

Relic. A book containing several incomplete family trees, detailing the lineage of some of the earliest and most prominent orcs.

Relic/Treasure. The *Tome of Ilneval* (see sidebar), a magical book of ancient orc battle strategies.

TOME OF ILNEVAL

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a wizard)

This hefty, leather-bound tome appears at first glance to be a record of the battle strategies of the ancient orcs. When studied closer, however, it is revealed to be a spellbook penned by a student of the orc deity Ilneval. When found, it contains the following spells, which are wizard spells for you as long as you are attuned to the book: *aura of purity*, *divine word*, *dominate person*, *dominate monster*, *holy aura*, *stoneskin*, and *spiritual weapon*. It functions as a spellbook for you.

While you are holding this book it functions as an arcane focus for you, and you gain a +2 bonus to your spell attack modifier and spell save DC for wizard spells you cast.

A4. THE HOLY GARDEN

Beyond the eastern door lies a once-beautiful garden, now decrepit and overgrown, with a domed stone ceiling. Everything within this room is covered in a thin layer of cracked, dried blood. Characters with a passive Perception of 18 or higher, or who make a successful DC 16 Perception check,

can discern that this fine coating most likely comes from it having quite literally rained blood within this chamber. A character with a religious connection to the orc pantheon, or with orc heritage, can recall stories of the orc deity Luthic defeating her foes with great claws and storms of blood. Characters with a passive Perception of 17 or higher, or who make a successful DC 15 Perception check, can also notice gouges—as if made by claws—in the stone throughout the room.

In the center of the overgrown garden sits an empty fountain surrounded by three stone benches. The top of one of these benches has been removed, revealing an empty hidden compartment. Examining the remaining benches reveals that they also have hidden compartments. The top of the north bench has begun to crumble and can easily be smashed open, while a successful DC 17 Strength check (or a spell such as *telekinesis*) is required to remove the top of the south bench. The benches contain the following:

North Bench. A large, gold key topped by an eye with a ruby center. This key is required to advance to the next section of the adventure.

South Bench. The *Diary of Luthic*, a book in Orc that was penned by the deity herself. The passages in this book illustrate her importance to the orc pantheon, and denounce the domain of “servitude” credited to her by the other pantheons. This diary paints her as a more maternal equal of Grummsh, rather than as a servant.

A character who has a passive Perception of 20, or who makes a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check can find the *cloak of Shargaas* (see sidebar) in this area. If the party does not find this item here, Mor gifts it to them at the end of the adventure as part of their reward.

CLOAK OF SHARGAAS

Wondrous Item, legendary (requires attunement)

While you wear this black velvet cloak, you can pull its hood over your head to become invisible. While invisible, anything you are carrying or wearing becomes invisible with you. You become visible again when you cease wearing the hood. Pulling the hood up or down requires an action. Deduct the time you spend invisible, in 1 minute increments, from the cloak's maximum duration of 1 hour. After 1 hour of use, the cloak ceases to function until at least 12 hours have passed, at which point it regains 1 hour of duration.

Additionally, while wearing this cloak, you are proficient in Dexterity saving throws if you are not already. Additionally, you gain proficiency in Stealth and Sleight of Hand. You add double your proficiency bonus to checks using these skills, unless another ability or feature grants this benefit.

PART 3: CATHEDRAL OF THE GODS

Having explored the ruins and located the required key, it is time for the characters to advance through the hallway's central door. A choir of indistinguishable baritone voices can be heard as the key turns in the lock, and the air, which had been stale, begins to feel electrically charged. The party must finish the once-epic battle that was started here if they wish to reveal the ruins' secrets.

THE OTHER SIDE

Stepping through the doorway is like stepping through a portal to another world. The bathhouse within appears to be unchanged by time, and glistens as if awaiting the arrival of the gods themselves. Suddenly, several large orcs advance from a series of alcoves that line this room.

As the characters enter this room, labeled on the map as B1. Bathhouse, they are confronted by six orcs with unusual appearances. Each stands over eight feet tall, dwarfing most average orcs, and what skin is visible beneath their leather armor is covered in radiant blue cracks not unlike Mor's spellscar. While these ancient orcs speak only a forgotten dialect of Orc, the divine magic now permeating these ruins grants the party the ability to not only understand them but be understood in return. As they approach the party, the largest of these orcs moves to the front to ask the characters one question: "What is it that you seek?"

Telling the ancient orcs about the research team above brings them great joy, but they also look pained. The origin of the bathhouse, they reveal, was to bring the orcish nations together in worship of their gods; the room they currently occupy was intended to be used only by the deities and their most trusted advisors. It marked the beginning of orcs emerging from the caves they had been forced into and forging new homes, in direct defiance of the other gods. It stood for only a decade before followers of Corellon Larethian attempted to destroy it. As the attackers approached the inner chambers, they were laid waste to by the orc deities themselves. As the only survivors of the carnage, the orcs within this chamber were granted immortality so that they might protect the secrets within these ruins, in the hope that they one day would be exposed. Gruumsh and Luthic then sealed the ruins themselves, leaving the ancient orcs trapped within.

The alcoves they emerge from each contain detailed marble statues of the orc pantheon, with Gruumsh in the center. If adventurers examine the statues they will find one inscribed with a title they've never heard: "Goddess of Art and Celebration." However they cannot make out the name of this figure, who was lost to the annals of history.

While the characters are within this room, the electrical pulse in the air continues to grow, before sending a shockwave of magic throughout the entirety of the ruins. The ancient orcs feel it too and inform the characters that, with magic being restored to the ruins, several unhappy souls need to be put to rest before it can be permanently unsealed. As long as the ruins are sealed, however, the ancestral orcs must also remain sealed in this room.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Awaiting the players in A2. Gallery are two **revenants** (lacking the Rejuvenation trait) and 2d4 + 2 **skeletons**. Having been contained within the ruins for so long, the revenants have lost their original purpose and have sworn vengeance on any and everyone. The magical wall sealing the ruins falls when the last of these undead is slain, and the ancestral orcs can leave B1. Bathhouse at long last. They thank the party for their assistance, and are eager to meet those who wish to restore the ruins to their former glory.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the characters have defeated the last of the undead, all that is left is to return the relics they've collected to the researchers who await them, as well as make a few introductions. Pakgu is beside himself with excitement when the ancient orcs emerge from the ruins behind the party, and a crowd begins to form around them. The party is invited to spend the rest of the day with the orcs in celebration, as there's no way they can continue work after such a great discovery has been made. In addition to the promised rewards, Pakgu says that the characters can keep any magical items found within the ruins, and they find that the bag of gold Pakgu gives them is roughly 200 gp heavier than what was promised.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

In the coming months after the conclusion of this adventure, the Kingdom of Many-Arrows will have begun to send caravans of artisans and workers to restore the ruins to the great cultural site it once was. Assuming the characters are on good terms with the researchers when they leave them, Pakgu may call on them in the future to assist with various aspects of the restoration. If the characters are ever in a difficult situation, they could be rescued by a band of orcs from the Kingdom of Many-Arrows, courtesy of one of Mor's many visions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lydia Van Hoy (@lydiavanho1 on twitter) is a best-selling TTRPG creative who strives to inspire appreciation for the strange and unusual, and to expand the ways we interact with fifth edition by approaching design from a "roleplay first, combat last" standpoint.

CHAPTER 2: MONSTROUS ENCOUNTERS

This chapter contains sixteen individual encounters to add into your play session. Some encounters have specific level ranges, while others have adjustments (APL) depending on the level of party you are running.

ENCOUNTERS

Title	Tier (Level)
"A Dangerous Crossing" by Brittney Hay	Tier 1 (level 3)
"Atop the Mountain" by Alex Niederberger	Tier 1 (level 3)
"Barbershop Orc-tet" by Ginger a.k.a Laura Armstrong	Any Tier (any level)
"Caravan Under Attack" by Tineke Bolleman	Tier 1 (level 1–2)
"Friendship Pie" by Cindy Butor	Tier 1 (level 1–3)
"Give That Back!" by Tineke Bolleman	Tier 1 (level 1–4)
"Gnoll In A Hole" by Alex Niederberger	Any Tier (any level)
"Love Notes" by Cindy Butor	Tier 1 (level 1–3)
"Mines of Tar" by Brittney Hay	Tier 2 (level 5)
"Minnie's Maize Maze" by Katie Van Munster	Any Tier (any level)
"Minotaur Masterpiece Theater" by Emmerich Hauf	Tier 1 (level 2+)
"Nomadic Animal Rescue" by Tully R. Gibney	Tier 2 (level 5)
"Orc World Wrestling" by Alex Niederberger	Any Tier (any level)
"Ranger Rryrg's Nature Camp" by Erin Tierney	Tier 1 (level 3)
"Strike It Rich" by Erin Tierney	Tier 1/Tier 2 (level 1–10)

All **minotaur** NPCs in this chapter use their respective class stat blocks with the following additions:

Goring Rush. Immediately after using the Dash action on its turn and moving at least 20 feet, the minotaur can make one melee attack with its horns as a bonus action.

Hammering Horns. Immediately after hitting a creature with a melee attack as part of the Attack action on its turn, the minotaur can use a bonus action to attempt to shove that target with its horns. The target must be no more than one size larger than it and within 5 feet of the minotaur. Unless it succeeds on a DC 14 Strength saving throw, the minotaur pushes the target up to 10 feet away from them.

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

All **gnoll** NPCs in this chapter use their respective class stat blocks with the following additions:

Darkvision. 60 feet.

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

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

All **orc** NPCs in this chapter use their respective class stat blocks with the following additions:

Darkvision. 60 feet.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Powerful Build. Orcs count as one size larger when determining their carrying capacity and the weight they can push, drag, or lift.

A DANGEROUS CROSSING

By Brittney Hay

An encounter optimized for three to five 3rd-level characters

The Blue Window Caravan is a traveling merchant caravan that sells their wares in several major cities. The caravan consists of three wagons each pulled by a pair of **giant lizards**. They are currently halfway through a five-day journey in between towns and are in the middle of fording a river.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

River: The river is 50 feet wide and 10 feet deep at its deepest point.

Lighting: It is currently dusk, and the natural lighting is rapidly disappearing.

Water Current. While not strong, if a creature lost its footing, the current would sweep them away at 15 feet per round. To avoid being swept away, creatures must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to keep moving against the current and slippery rocks.

CREATURES

The caravan consists of seven **commoners** (three of them children), three **guards**, and one **druid**—all minotaurs. They are led by Illsofar the Wanderer (TN minotaur **bard**, he/him), a charismatic rogue who could charm the pants off a dragon. Lying in wait for the unsuspecting caravan is a group of four **specters**, eagerly anticipating nightfall so they can attack as soon as the sun has set.

EVENT: A SPECTRAL FEAST

As the second wagon is halfway through the river, a wheel breaks off in the riverbed, and the specters seize their moment to pounce. When the characters arrive, two commoners and one guard have been killed by the specters. Illsofar and another guard barricaded themselves in one of the wagons and are protecting the children. The first wagon had already forded the river, but its giant lizards were spooked by the attack and fled. The second wagon crashed into the river and one of the giant lizards broke free from its harness, but was caught in the river's current.

TREASURE

Once the specters have been driven back or defeated, if Illsofar survived, he offers the characters a pick of his wares as a reward for saving the caravan (roll twice on Magic Item Table B in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

ATOP THE MOUNTAIN

By Alex Niederberger

An encounter designed for three to five 3rd-level characters

The characters are travelling through a mountainous region, through a valley or around some low foothills.

A stooped minotaur wearing a ragged gingham dress sits on a large rock, facing a treacherous-looking mountain. Her ear twitches, and she turns your way, revealing cataract-filled eyes, and she waves.

Meredith (NG minotaur **commoner**, she/her) introduces herself to the characters and asks for their assistance. She used to visit the shrine atop the mountain with her father and always thought it was one of the most beautiful places in existence. She wants to visit but doesn't think she'll be able to make the arduous journey by herself. It's not a matter of her blindness—she's excellent at getting around—but an issue of physical ability.

If they accept, Meredith says she'll guide them, the shrine being a worthwhile place to visit. Meredith uses her Labyrinthine Recall ability to remember the route, describing their surroundings while traveling with beautiful accuracy.

RAVINE

A ravine cuts across the path. A makeshift wooden bridge is pulled up to the opposite side. The characters can jump across with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check and extend the bridge for Meredith. If a character fails, they fall into the ravine and take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. Climbing out requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, with failed checks leading to another fall and an additional 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for each.

ROCK WALL

The path turns into a rough rock wall. Meredith says she could climb up if the characters set a rope. Climbing up is made in three stretches. The first requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check; a failed check causes the character to fall to the bottom, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. The second stretch requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to swing around a lip; a failed check causes the character to take 3 (1d6) slashing damage from the sharp rocks. The final stretch requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check; a failed check causes the character to fall to the bottom for 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Once the character reaches the top, they can easily set a rope to bring Meredith up.

THE MOUNTAINTOP

Read or summarize the following:

You step out onto a cold clearing, green grass peeking out of a thin layer of snow. At the center is a pile of stones, carefully arranged into a small shrine. Meredith rhapsodizes about every little detail, except the many humanoid statues, all of which have a horrified expression on their face.

A **basilisk** slithers out from a copse of trees and attacks the characters. Being blind, Meredith is immune to the basilisk's Petrifying Gaze.

Once the basilisk is defeated, Meredith hobbles up to the shrine and places a simple stone on it, explaining that it's for her father. As she walks back to the characters' side, the snow briefly swirls into the silhouette of a minotaur before falling to the ground. The characters all receive the *mountain's charm* (see sidebar).

Mountain's Charm. The characters gain resistance to cold damage and for the next three days, can recall any path they've traveled.

BARBERSHOP ORC-TET

By Ginger aka Laura Armstrong

An encounter optimized for any number and any level of characters

Wandering down the small crooked street, you hear the sounds of snipping, scrubbing, and singing. You stand outside a large building with a hanging sign with the words "The Barnet's Bane." Four orc barbers in matching dark green waistcoats are attending to a variety of customers while singing a capella. A poster in the window bears amazing drawings of the same orcs posing with hats and canes, as well as a small sign saying "Adventurers sought. Inquire within."

The shop is busy with people waiting, chatting, and catching up on gossip; laughter spills out of the waiting area. It is obvious that people come here not just for a style and song but for a sense of community.

A large orc pedicurist buffs the feet of an orc patron using a stone the size of an average humanoid head. A goliath is getting a manicure from an orc, who sings in bass tones as she shapes their nails, occasionally pausing to chatter to their customer. The two others are focused on cutting hair and shaving beards in stylish patterns.

The four orcs who own and work at The Barnet's Bane are:

Lash, bass (she/her). Lash is the main owner of the Barnet's Bane; she has immaculate nails and long, luscious, permed bright pink hair. She speaks in a high pitch but sings in bass tones. She knows everything that is going on and has her finger on the pulse. If the party wants to know what's happening in town, they just need to get a manicure and pop a few coins in a tip jar.

Cog, baritone (he/him). Lash's husband is an older orc with a beaming, toothy grin and a curled mustache and shaved head. Cog is a master razor artist; he shaves the straightest edges and creates the most interesting styles.

Nash, tenor (she/her). Nash is much smaller than the other orcs, standing at only 6 feet tall. She has short, spiky hair, dyed black, and facial

piercings, and her rolled-up sleeves reveal many tattoos. She artfully snips patrons' hair into a variety of styles and does creative dye jobs.

Bumbub, lead (they/them) is a large gentle orc. Their specialty is "A bit of this, a bit of that."

They are a magician with intricate braids, extensions, and general stylings such as eyebrow plucking and knuckle waxing.

EVENT: A CLOSE SHAVE

The barbers need help procuring a substance that makes the best shaving foam: **bullywugs** secrete a gel-like substance that clings to rocks and aquatic plants. They direct the characters to a swamp on the outskirts of town, where a small knot of bullywugs live. The barbers would prefer that the party not kill the creatures if possible.

Characters must make a successful group DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check in order not to be noticed by the bullywugs. If the check fails, they are spotted by $1d4 + 1$ bullywugs. The DC for this check increases by 3 depending on the Tier of the party. The bullywugs are not initially hostile, but will become so if they are threatened with any violence. Characters can successfully harvest a jar of this treasured substance by making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check or a DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check using a herbalism kit. If they succeed by 5 or more, they can harvest more than one jar ($1d4 + 1$).

For higher-level parties, use the following combinations:

Level 5–10: three **bullywugs** and one **bullywug croaker** (appendix A)

Level 11–16: three **bullywug croakers** and three **bullywug royals** (appendix A)

The party is rewarded with the Bane's Bane VIP Treatment, which offers some temporary benefits: characters gain temporary hit points equal to their level + their Charisma modifier, and have advantage on Charisma checks for the next 24 hours.

CARAVAN UNDER ATTACK

By Tineke Bolleman

An encounter for four to six characters of levels 1–2, optimized for four 1st-level characters

A caravan of **gnoll** traders (**commoners**) regularly travels this route. They are experienced travelers and capable of defending themselves from danger, but this time they have run into grave danger.

The caravan consists of a family of five: A father (Roirc), mother (Kho), and their three children, ranging from young adult to teenagers (Sibei, Kuat, and Knoun). They transport their equipment and goods on the back of donkeys. The donkeys make travel slower and they can carry less, but at the same time they can reach villages and outposts not accessible by cart or wagon.

You travel a road winding through the hills covered with sparse vegetation. As the road makes a sharp turn around a rocky outcrop, screams and cries for help erupt from ahead.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Difficult terrain: The road is 10 feet wide. While the road itself and 5 feet on either side is easily passable, anything farther out is considered difficult terrain.

Recent bad weather has flushed a group of three **giant centipedes** out of their den. Hungry and irritable, they wandered close to the trade road, where they spotted the caravan. The slow-moving pack animals of the caravan looked like excellent prey to the centipedes.

The centipedes attacked from one side of the road in full force, driving the gnolls back. The parents are currently defending themselves, while the children are trying to keep the donkeys from bolting. Without some aid, casualties are almost a certainty. The gnolls call out for help, hoping someone will hear.

Three **giant centipedes** are attacking the gnolls (if the party has more than four characters, add one centipede for each additional character; if the APL is 2, the number of centipedes is $1.5 \times$ the

number of party members). Roric and Kho fight to defend their family and pack animals; the children are non-combatants.

When the centipedes are defeated, the gnolls thank the characters profusely, apologizing that they have no reward to offer until they reach their next market. They invite the party to travel with them for a few days to the next town, where they expect to make a nice profit on their wares and will be able to suitably recompense their rescuers for their aid.

If the characters agree, the trip can be an opportunity for social role playing as they get to know the gnolls, exchanging tales with the adults and entertaining the children with stories of their adventures. Once they reach their destination and set up shop, the gnolls do a brisk business in the market square; when they are ready to move on, they give the characters 50 gp in thanks.

FRIENDSHIP PIE

Cindy Butor

An encounter optimized for a party of three to five characters of levels 1–3

The day is brisk and sunny, and you are enjoying the sights and scents of the famed Flutternut Fall Festival when you hear a crash. When you go to investigate, you see a short, barrel-chested orc covered in flour and on the verge of tears. “Goodness me, goodness me,” he mumbles as he starts picking up fallen pots and pans, “I’ll never be able to get ready at this rate!”

The **orc** is Parsnups Tartin, and he is in quite a pickle. He had intended to compete in the Pie-a-Palooza contest, but all of his helpers have unexpectedly fallen ill. He knows that if he doesn’t submit anything, he’ll be teased unmercifully by his family. He hopes that the party might be willing to assist him. It would mean the world to him.

EVENT: PIE-A-PALOOZA

If the party agrees to help Parsnups, they must move quickly as the Pie-a-Palooza contest has already begun. They must attempt to complete five activities. If they succeed in each activity, they create a fantastic pie that wins Parsnups first prize.

If they succeed in some or none of the activities, well, aren’t the friends they made along the way good enough?

Every party member must complete one of the activities, and a party member cannot complete a second activity until everyone else has completed one. If the party has fewer than five characters, Parsnups completes one of them; give him a +3 to whatever the skill is.

Additionally, one person may Help the person completing an activity, giving them advantage on the roll. However, neither the person who completed the activity nor the person who gave them Help can complete or Help on the next activity.

ACTIVITIES

Find Ingredients. The group must scour the festival and surrounding woods to find suitable ingredients by rolling a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Nature) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, they find exactly what they want. On a failure, the DM chooses.

Create a New Recipe. The group must create a new pie recipe by rolling a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) or Charisma (Deception) check. On a success, they come up with something delicious and innovative. On a failure, the DM chooses.

Prep Ingredients. The group must take their ingredients and prepare them by rolling a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Intelligence (History) check. A character who has proficiency with cook’s utensils makes the roll with advantage. On a success, everything is correctly chopped and measured. On a failure, they are not.

Assemble Pie. The group must put together and bake the pie by rolling a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Charisma (Persuasion) check. A character who has proficiency with cook’s utensils makes the roll with advantage. On a success, they bake a beautiful pie. On a failure, they do not.

Present Pie. The group must entice both onlookers and judges with their pie by rolling a successful DC 12 Charisma (Performance) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a success, everyone is excited to eat the pie. On a failure, only the judges hesitantly attempt it.

PRIZES

- Five successes: first prize, 100 gp, and Parsnup's friendship
- Four successes: second prize, 80 gp, and Parsnup's friendship
- Three successes: third prize, 50 gp, and Parsnup's friendship
- Two successes: honorable mention and Parsnup's friendship
- One success: a participation ribbon and Parsnup's friendship
- No successes: Parsnup's friendship

GIVE THAT BACK!

By Tineke Bolleman

An encounter optimized for three to five characters of levels 1-4

Nokiras (LG, he/him) is a **minotaur** alchemist who enjoys the puzzle of mixing ingredients together in a way that makes the whole better than the sum of its parts. In order to have plenty of ingredients on hand, and to be able to study in peace, he has moved to the countryside where he maintains a lavish garden. When the weather is good, he enjoys working with the windows open. Today however, he has had an unexpected sneaky visitor...

"You sneaky little thief! Give that back!" A thundering voice rings out from between the trees, and agitated footsteps, followed by a string of expletives, follow. In the middle of a large clearing stands a magnificent old oak tree. A minotaur paces agitatedly back and forth beneath the tree's branches.

When approached, Nikoras takes a few calming breaths. He explains that he was at work in his lab when a magpie flew in. The little "thief" made off with an amulet that was hanging on the wall. The amulet isn't particularly valuable, but it has a lot of sentimental value to Nikoras.

The real problem, however, is much more serious. The magpie has taken the amulet high up into its nest in the branches of a 30-foot-tall oak

tree that is sacred to the local druids. The tree is too ancient and sturdy to simply shake the nest free. And Nikoras is too heavy to climb up into the higher branches without causing damage.

Nikoras gladly accepts any help in retrieving the amulet, but insists that the tree must remain unharmed. Let the characters be creative in how to solve this. If they somehow have the perfect solution for this already handy, let them have an easy victory: being prepared pays off. The amulet can be retrieved in several ways; if the characters require suggestions:

Climbing up. The lower branches are easily reached, but the higher up one goes, the harder it gets. Characters who wish to attempt the climb must make three successful Strength (Athletics) checks, starting at DC 10 and increasing by 2 for each check thereafter. If a character fails, they fall back to the ground, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each 10 feet fallen, and make their next round of checks at disadvantage.

Coax the magpie down. The magpie can initially be coaxed down, without the amulet, with some tasty morsels. Anyone with (rudimentary) abilities to talk to animals can set up a trade. Magpies are smart animals and this one knows it has something good, judging by the ruckus it's making. The bird is willing to trade the amulet for a handful of shiny objects, or a large amount of food (like a loaf of bread). Successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks help in the negotiations.

When the amulet is retrieved, Nikoras invites everyone back to his house for dinner. As a reward, everyone can pick a common potion (*potion of climbing*, *potion of comprehension*, *potion of healing*, or *potion of watchful rest*). What he does not have on hand he can create.

POTION OF COMPREHENSION

Potion, common

When you drink this potion, you gain the effect of a *comprehend languages* spell for 1 hour. This liquid is a clear concoction with bits of salt and soot swirling in it.

POTION OF WATCHFUL REST

Potion, common

When you drink this potion, you gain the following benefits for the next 8 hours: magic can't put you to sleep, and you can remain awake during a long rest and still gain its benefits. This sweet, amber-colored brew has no effect on creatures that don't require sleep, such as elves.

GNOLL IN A HOLE

By Alex Niederberger

Content Warnings: genre-specific violence/death, animal death, and hunting

An encounter optimized for four 1st-level characters

A soft wind blows across the plains, rustling the dry grasses. It's otherwise oppressively silent. Suddenly, a shushing sound comes from your left. A hyena-like head pokes out of a foxhole dug into the ground. They put their finger over their lips and gesture you over.

Cameron (CN **gnoll**, they/them) explains that they're hunting a rare oversized, three-antlered deer as part of a rite of passage to become a **gnoll hunter** (appendix A) for their community. They point out a patch of scrub a few dozen feet in front of a copse of trees and explain that the deer has been hiding in the scrub for several hours.

Cameron doesn't want to move because they think they have the perfect vantage point. They offer the characters a *potion of climbing* if they sneak around behind the deer and scare it out of the shrubs.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Trees: The treeline allows the characters to get behind the deer easily without scaring it. A character making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots a flock of birds in the tree. If they detect the birds, have them roll a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check; on a success, they identify the birds as **blood hawks**.

Scrubland: Thick brush covers the ground. If a creature attempts to move more than its movement speed in a single turn (via a Dash action or similar ability), they must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

EVENT: OH, DEER

When the characters approach the three-antlered deer (**elk**), it attempts to escape. A flock of eight **blood hawks**—which the deer was hiding from—explode from the trees and attack. Six blood hawks swarm the characters and the other two dart for the deer, reaching it in the first round of combat. The deer starts combat prone, and uses half of its movement to stand up, attempting to use its antlers to swat away the blood hawks that are menacing it.

Cameron is surprised for the first round of combat, but they begin shooting during the second round. They have a +3 to hit and deal 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage with their longbow. If any of the blood hawks attacking the deer are killed, another hawk peels off from the pack attacking the characters and goes for the deer. This continues until Cameron or the blood hawks succeed in killing the deer.

A STAG-GERING PAYOUT

If Cameron survives and kills the deer, they happily give the characters the promised *potion of climbing* as a reward, along with 5 gp per character as extra thanks.

If the blood hawks or the characters kill the deer, Cameron argues that they failed in their task and keeps the potion. If the characters insist, Cameron grudgingly pays the characters 5 gp each for their troubles.

GNOLL SPORTSBALL!

By Katie Van Munster

An encounter for any number of characters of any level

The **gnoll** tribe invites the characters to a game of Sportsball. The game is a team sport played in rounds where players move a ball up and down the field to try to score points by kicking the ball into the opposing team's net.

A group of athletic gnolls are laughing and kicking a leather ball to each other. One of them sees your party, and waves you over with a smile. "Want to play Sportsball with us?"

THE SPORTSBALL FIELD

Field: A flat patch of land that is 75 feet wide by 120 feet long

Net: A net that is 15 feet wide, 10 feet tall, and 5 feet deep sits at each end of the field, in the middle of the 75-foot width.

RULES OF THE GAME

Objective. Best of three. Play three rounds and score a point in at least two of them to win the game.

Teams. The number of gnolls equals the number of characters participating.

Initiative. Each Sportsball player, whether gnoll or character, rolls for initiative. The team whose player rolled the highest initiative goes first. If the two teams tie on initiative, the highest-scoring players on each side roll again until there is a winner.

Pre-Round Setup. The highest-initiative players from each team face off in the middle of the field. The rest of the players can position themselves wherever they like on their half of the field.

Starting the Round. In the first round, the player with the highest initiative gets the ball and takes the first turn. In subsequent rounds, the team that lost the previous round gets to start with the ball. Players then take turns in order of initiative, regardless of which team they are on.

Scoring/Ending the Round. Score a point by kicking the ball into the opposing team's net. This ends the round.

After the Round. Players set up on their side of the field, and the highest-initiative players from each team meet in the middle to start the next round, with the team that lost getting the ball first.

PLAYER'S TURN

A player's turn consists of a movement and an action.

Movement. Players can move up to their speed with or without the ball.

PLAYER ACTIONS

Players can perform the following actions: Dash, Kick the Ball, Steal the Ball.

Dash. A player can move up to twice their speed with or without the ball.

Kick the Ball. A player can kick the ball up to 30 feet in any direction. They can attempt to kick the ball farther by rolling an Athletics (Strength) check where every point above 15 equals an extra 5 feet of distance. The player can kick the ball up to this new distance. Note: a player can hold this as their action. For example, Player A holds their Kick the Ball action, Player B comes within 30 feet, triggering the action, Player A kicks the ball to them, and now Player B can kick the ball on their turn as well.

Steal the Ball. If a player is within 5 feet of the ball, whether it has been kicked or is in another player's possession, they can attempt to take the ball by rolling a contested Acrobatics (Dexterity) or Athletics (Strength) check against the player who last touched the ball. The player who rolls the highest Acrobatics (Dexterity) score gets the ball. When a player successfully steals the ball they now possess it and can choose to kick it in the same turn.

Note on Possessing the Ball. When a player possesses the ball, they can bring it with them as they move, and kick it when they are ready to do so. Only players who possess the ball are able to kick it.

THE GNOLL TEAM

Number of Players. Equal to the number of characters who are playing Sportsball.

Speed: 30 ft.

SKILL MODIFIERS

Tier	Acrobatics (DEX)	Athletics (STR)
1 (level 1-4)	+2	+1
2 (level 5-10)	+3	+2
3 (level 11-16)	+4	+3
4 (level 17-20)	+5	+4

LOVE NOTES

Cindy Butor

An encounter optimized for a party of three to five characters of levels 1–3

As you are walking along the road, you see a gnoll sitting on a tree stump, puzzling over some pieces of paper. She's wearing spectacles, and seems anxious. Hearing your arrival she looks up. "Ah, friends," she says, "I don't suppose any of you are good with riddles?"

The **gnoll** is a local shop worker named Lurla Beans (LG, she/they), and she has three notes from her girlfriend Shandrel Vin (NG **gnoll**, she/her). They're supposed to contain clues about where to meet for their picnic in a few hours, but Lurla is having trouble deciphering them. She's already failed to meet her girlfriend several times now, and doesn't want to disappoint her again. She'd be grateful for your help.

EVENT: LOVE NOTES

NOTE ONE

Honey pie,

Each hour we are apart is a sorrow. And I long to be in your arms. Don't tarry. Not when we can be together. Only you do I love. Read between the lines to start your journey. That will tell you where to go.

Hearts and kisses!

Solution. The first letter of the salutation and every sentence spells out "HEAD NORTH."

NOTE TWO

I am neither song nor am I speech, but something in between. Let me loose into the air and there your guide shall be.

Solution. After heading north, Lurla should start humming. When she does, a **faerie dragon (younger)** holding a bouquet of wildflowers appears to lead her closer to her goal.

NOTE THREE

High above the canopy proudly stands a promontory. There lies a symbol of our love you cannot fail to see.

Solution. A bare cliff juts above the trees. Once Lurla starts heading towards it, the faerie dragon leaves her. At the cliff's base, the path splits in two. The one on the right has a stone with the letters SV + LB carved into it in front of it. Lurla should take that path.

CONCLUSION

Shandrel, another gnoll, is waiting at the top of the cliff with a lovely picnic. Once she arrives, Lurla profusely thanks the party for their help, giving them 10 gp in gratitude, as the gnolls begin their romantic date.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- If your party doesn't get the clues, try drawing a rough map of the area. Items to include are a large forest, a compass with a large "N," a faerie dragon with musical notes next to it, a cliff, and a two-pronged path at the base of the cliff.
- If the party can't figure out the first note, write it out for them and bold the first letters.
- If the party can't figure out the second note, have them roll a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check. Offer them a clue for every success.
- If the party can't figure out the third note, have them roll a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Offer them a clue for every success.



MINES OF TAR

By Brittney Hay

An encounter optimized for three to five 5th-level characters

An acrid, sickly sweet smell reaches your nose. As you round the bend in the road, the smell intensifies, and you hear voices arguing. Two groups of large individuals are in a heated conversation beside a sizable black lake. Occasionally, a bubble slowly rises to the surface, popping with a sticky sound and releasing a cloud of sulfurous gas into the air.

Shuffle Spice (LG minotaur **veteran**, they/he) and Velvet Moonlight (LN minotaur **berserker**, she/her) are the owners of two mining companies that exclusively mine tar in the region. Both companies have contracts staking their claim to this tar lake, and both owners are threatening violence if the other doesn't leave.

CREATURES

The two mining companies and their members are:

Terra Formations, owned by Shuffle Spice; one minotaur **priest**, two minotaur **spies**, one minotaur **bard** (appendix A)

Obsidian Depths, owned by Velvet Moonlight; two minotaur **druids**, one minotaur **mage**, one **brown bear**

EVENT: A TAR-RIBLE SITUATION

The two groups are moments away from trading blows when the characters arrive. If the characters haven't been quiet in their approach, Velvet Moonlight notices them, beckoning them over. She tries to enlist the characters as mediators to sway them to her side, figuring that more muscle might be the edge she needs in this argument if this dispute escalates into a fight. Shuffle Spice, seeing this tactic, also attempts to sway the characters, bribing them with 50 gp, and, if necessary, sweetening the pot with two *potions of greater healing*.

Characters can attempt to calm the situation by making three successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) checks before two successive failures. If they fail at calming the two groups, the companies start fighting (to incapacitate, not kill; see Knocking a Creature out, chapter 9, *Player's Handbook*), only disengaging when half of their numbers are knocked unconscious.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters defuse the situation, Velvet Moonlight and Shuffle Spice see the error of their ways and agree to a truce. They thank the party and give them an *orb of direction* and the two *potions of greater healing* for acting as mediators.



MINOTAUR MASTERPIECE THEATRE

By Emmerich Hauf

An encounter designed for three to four players of 2nd level or higher.

The party arrives in a town on a popular trade route. Bright, colorful posters, featuring comedy/tragedy masks with minotaur horns, are everywhere and advertise a performing troupe called the “Minotaur Masterpiece Theater.” A young **minotaur** named Oliver (NG, he/him) spots the characters and explains that he and his group are having a bit of trouble getting ready for that night’s performance, and asks for their assistance.

THE THEATER

If they agree to help Oliver, he conducts the party to a beautiful old theater. It smells of old wood, and even though it’s a little musty, it’s charming. The theater’s arches are larger than average, and even the desk in the lobby seems to be a bit higher.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Front of House. In the lobby of the theater, the characters notice a large painting hanging over the front desk. The painting features an attractive female minotaur wearing a gorgeous purple gown. Any creature who looks at it must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by Clara Caster Menken (CG **ghost**, she/they) for one hour.

Onstage. The stage is set for a performance of the opera *The Merry Minotaur*; various set pieces including a bookcase, a fainting couch, and some papier-mâché mountains are arranged around the stage.

Backstage. At stage right are various ropes for curtains and fly rails; a door in the back that leads to a downstairs dressing room and a prop table is filled with various glasses, weapons, and food, all fake.

Clara Caster Menkin uses the **ghost** stat block with the following additions:

Swan Song (Recharge 6). Clara unleashes an operatic solo that haunts those who hear it. This

song has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 60 feet of Clara must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 10 (3d6) thunder damage and is deafened.

EVENT: THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Oliver explains that the actors are being menaced by the ghost that haunts the theater; last night, the ghost would not leave the performers alone during the performance, and they all fled. Desperate to fulfill the troupe’s contract, Oliver offers the adventurers 50 gp each to fill in for the missing performers, but warns them that Clara’s ghost is likely to interrupt their performance.

In life, Clara Caster Menken was a popular singer who performed at the theater; audiences lauded them and their talent. In death Clara fears for the future of the theater but struggles with allowing new acts to upstage her legendary presence.

PERFORMANCE

Should the party accept, the characters must perform for the audience. If asked, a few actors agree to assist them: an old **minotaur** actress named Gladys (LG, she/her) who practically lives in the theatre, a diva **minotaur** actor named Byrnard (CG, they/he), and Oliver.

Clara is determined that no one upstage her, and the adventurers must win her over with a successful performance. Only then will Clara cease haunting the theater.

A complete success—resulting in a standing ovation from the audience and ghostly roses raining on stage—requires three successful DC 15 group Charisma (Performance) checks. Successful use of props or exemplary roleplaying may grant advantage or lower the DC of these checks to 12. With one failure, the party is still successful, and Clara fades away with a wave.

On two failures, the party must succeed on an additional DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince Clara that the theater is in good hands. After three failures, Clara attacks the adventurers, defending her theater’s reputation.

NOMADIC ANIMAL RESCUE

By Tully R. Gibney

An encounter optimized for four to five 5th-level characters

Smoke has filled the sky long before you reach what was once a thriving village. All that remains now are charred remains and the pained moans of the few survivors.

Leftovers of Lyrin. The town, formerly known as Lyrin, has been burning for almost a day. On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check, a character can locate the source of the moans: a mostly intact barn towards the edge of town, where a gnoll tends to a large burn on a horse. Nearby is a cart with two **giant weasels** hitched to it; both weasels have a collection of scars that show a caring hand has tended them. If the characters fail this check, they can still find the barn but will have less time later in the encounter to deal with an escalation.

For Whom the Bell Gnolls. The **gnoll**, named Lestor (CG, he/him), is dressed in green overalls with a dangling strap. When approached by the characters he winces and quickly blurts out that he must have arrived only an hour before them. He explains he is a nomad who helps animals in need, such as his two giant weasel companions. "I found 'em when they were wee. Thought they would stay that way, but now they're the ones carrying me." Lestor is a kind and gentle soul, despite the unkindness he has faced from other travelers on the road.

EVENT: ROUND-UP

A horn bellows, followed by a cacophony of galloping hooves and the shrieks of men. Lestor's face goes pale even before turning to see the bandits charging down a nearby hill into the town. "I seen 'em terrorizing this area lately. Help me load the last of the animals! We must flee before those bandits get their hands on them or us."

Lestor requests the party's help rounding up the remaining animals, as well as to help them all escape. If the characters passed the check to find the barn earlier, they have five rounds to help Lestor round up the animals and load them onto his cart; otherwise, they only have three rounds.

At the end of the last round, if the characters have successfully rounded up at least three animals, Lestor motions the characters to ride out of town with him, otherwise, the bandits (one **archer**, one **scout**, one **berserker**, and one **soldier**) attack the characters and Lestor before they can escape. Characters may choose to engage the bandits directly, but Lestor cautions against that, saying that the animals are the priority for the moment.

The following animals are close to the barn and can be brought to safety by a character who successfully passes the check below:

- A standoffish dog (**mastiff**) that is hiding underneath the remains of a nearby porch and can be coaxed out with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- The **riding horse** Lestor was tending to cannot walk; it requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to load it onto the cart.
- A mother duck guards her ducklings against anyone who approaches, but can be calmed with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.
- A young bull is running around town, panicked by the flames, but can be caught and pinned down with a successful DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.
- A frightened **cat** runs away when approached but can be surprised and picked up with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

A Rainy Day Fund. If the characters successfully escort Lestor and at least three animals out of town safely, Lestor thanks the characters for their help and chuckles, reaching into a large sack on his cart. He tells the characters, "I have just the thing for a day like this," and tosses them a small bag. It contains a number of jewels equal to the number of characters, each worth 50 gp.

ORC WORLD WRESTLING

By Alex Niederberger

An encounter designed for characters of any level

This encounter takes place in a ramshackle wrestling ring surrounded by stands. The arena could be found in a number of environments: among the ruins of a town, in the dock ward of a bustling city, or cut out of the stone of a quarry.

To get the characters involved, read or summarize:

A handsome orc wearing a strange outfit—a sparkly red unitard with intricately embroidered barrel designs and a deep v-neck that shows off his muscular chest—trots up. He smiles and asks, “Do you want to make some money?”

Kranark (orc **gladiator**, he/him), also known as “The Barrel,” explains that he’s part of a wrestling organization, and a few of their wrestlers couldn’t make it, so they have some spots open. He explains it’s mostly a performance, no one should get hurt, and they can make 10 gp for every round they win.

THE CREW

Characters can fight each other, or they can take on an experienced wrestler:

LEVEL 1-4

- Kenny, “The Kobold,” (they/them, **kobold**)
- Theodore, “Borr,” (none, trained **bear**)
- Stiblan, “Shadow,” (she/her, orc **assassin**)

LEVEL 5-10

- Turblok, “The Tax Man,” (he/him, **orc**)
- Guis’tannoth, “Gusto,” (none, **air elemental**)
- Stennis, “Cold One,” (she/her, **frost giant**)

LEVEL 11-16

- Kranark, “The Barrel,” (he/him, orc **gladiator**)
- Sylvia, “Major Pain,” (she/her, **erinyes**)

LEVEL 17-20

- Tim, “Tim,” (he/him, **balor**)
- Arakan, “My Liege,” (they/them, **storm giant**)

ORC WORLD WRESTLING RULES

Orc World Wrestling is a form of theater featuring over-the-top displays of athletic and acting prowess in non-lethal combat. The rules are simple and modular.

Determine Opponents. Traditional matches are one-on-one, but the rules can easily accommodate free-for-all (keep track of scores independently), or team (aggregate the scores of each team) matches. Character-versus-character matches are viable too.

Determine Duration. Choose the number of rounds the match will last, minimum three.

Rounds. For each round, every participant chooses a skill check: Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), Charisma (Intimidation or Performance), or something else if they’re creative. Checks for subsequent rounds cannot use the same ability (Strength, Dexterity, etc.) chosen in the preceding round. Encourage the players to describe their characters’ moves in dramatic or comedic fashion; the DM can do the same for the NPC participants.

Scoring. Record the result of each ability check at the end of each round and add them together at the end of the match; the individual or team with the higher total wins.



RANGER RRYRG'S NATURE CAMP

By Erin Tierney

An encounter for characters of any level

As you walk through the forest, you hear the sound of laughter through the trees. As you get nearer, you find a clearing where a group of gnoll children read nature handbooks and do arts and crafts under the supervision of an adult gnoll carrying a walking stick.

The characters are approached by the adult gnoll, **Ranger Rryrg** (NG, he/him [appendix A]), who greets them warmly. He explains that he runs Ranger Rryrg's Nature Camp for young gnolls. The camp focuses on conservation, especially of creatures that serve important roles in their ecosystems. He teaches the gnolls to treat so-called monsters with respect and care. Ranger Rryrg has a few jobs available for adventurers who want to help out:

NATURE TALES

Ranger Rryrg would like for the characters to share their real-life nature experiences with the camp. He asks them to tell a kid-appropriate story about their adventures in the natural world, especially one that emphasizes the conservation of wild monsters.

Ranger Rryrg gathers the gnoll children around a campfire and introduces the characters. The characters must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma (Performance) check to entertain the children as they tell their story. If the story fits the theme of animal and monstrosity conservation, reduce the DC to 12. On a success, the character receives a reward. If the story is not appropriate for children or is not in line with the camp's values, Rryrg interrupts and hurriedly ushers the characters elsewhere.

DISARMING TRAPS

Ranger Rryrg wants help removing owlbear traps from the surrounding woods. A nearby furrier has been setting out inhumane traps and harming the already-sparse owlbear population. It's a job that is too dangerous for the campers, and Rryrg does not want to lead any nature hikes until the traps are gone.

If the characters search for traps, they must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to find one. When they do, a character must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to disarm the trap or take 2d4 piercing damage and be restrained until another character uses an action to remove the trap.

They can repeat this process 1d4 + 1 times. After they do, they can return to Rryrg to receive a reward.

ARCHERY CLASS

Characters can give the students an archery demonstration. They make an attack with a bow of any type against the straw target, which has an AC of 10. If they beat the AC by 2 or more, they hit the middle ring, and if they beat it by 4 or more, they hit the bullseye.

Characters can demonstrate proper form to the students by making a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This gives them advantage on any attacks against the target.

REWARDS

Ranger Rryrg rewards each character who successfully completes at least one job with a Ranger Rryrg's Nature Camp *walking stick medallion*. When affixed to a quarterstaff, the medallion grants the staff's wielder +1 to Intelligence (Nature) checks.

Rryrg also shares a little-known nature tip about a creature with a CR of 10 or lower. Characters who listen to the tip gain advantage on their next Intelligence- or Wisdom-based check related to that creature.

STRIKE IT RICH

By Erin Tierney

An encounter designed for characters of levels 1–10

As you hike through the dusty chaparral, you can hear the sound of deep voices...angry voices. As you continue, you see two orcs wearing sturdy prospector's gear engaged in a shouting match that seems about to come to blows. "I staked this claim!" bellows one, pointing at the nearby brook that cuts through the scrubland.

The area is a dry land filled with hardy woody brush and low-hanging trees. A small stream with a constant flow, but small enough to jump over, cuts through the land. Around the stream is a small, flat floodplain. A scraggly tree in the floodplain is split down the middle and charred. The two **orcs**, Mud (TN, he/him) and Dinnek (CN, she/her), are on the near side of the waterway, both carrying packs of supplies with metal pans hanging from them. They are in a heated argument.

EVENT: CLAIM JUMPING

Mud is accusing Dinnek of jumping his claim, pulling up the stakes that he had put down to mark this part of the stream as his. He claims that he can tell that this is a good stretch for panning, and he's sure he'll find gold there. Dinnek claims that when she came to stake her claim this morning,

there were no stakes, and that the stream doesn't belong to anyone.

If the characters choose to intervene, they can side with either of them. With a successful DC 22 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, they can convince one of them to leave or scare one of them off. Alternatively, a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince them to both pan in the stream, but neither is happy with this outcome.

A character who makes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the brushy shrubs on the sides of the floodplain have relatively fresh plant matter tangled in their lower branches, deposited there when the stream overflowed its banks. Likewise, by making a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check, the characters can determine that the charring on the tree was caused by a recent lightning blast. If asked, Mud confirms that the tree was fine when he staked his claim a few days ago.

If the characters figure out that a thunderstorm likely flooded the river and washed the stakes downstream, the Charisma (Persuasion) DC for any outcome becomes 12, since the orcs each recognize the validity of the other's claim. Mud realizes that Dinnek didn't intentionally jump his claim and Dinnek acknowledges that Mud did stake the claim first. If the characters convince them both to work the river together, they'll be satisfied and cooperate.

In thanks, each satisfied orc gives the characters gold dust that they've found worth 10 gp.

CHAPTER 3: MONSTROUS NPCs

In this chapter you will be introduced to eight different NPCs to use in your settings and stories. Each NPC comes with a background, stat block, and rich history, with guidance on how characters could meet them, either by befriending them or by earning their ire. They are organized alphabetically, with a key below for easy identification.

NPC Name	Race (CR)
Ash Blake by Fabby Garza	Gnoll (CR 3)
Augustus Shellhammer by Emmerich Hauf	Orc (CR 3)
Brunna by Tineke Bolleman	Gnoll (CR 2)
Granny Knucklebones by Katie Van Munster	Gnoll (CR 1)
Minerva Irons by Fabby Garza	Minotaur (CR 3)
Mister Codgers by Jason Miscia	Minotaur (CR 3)
Sona by Thai Williams	Minotaur (CR 3)
Will Tall by Tineke Bolleman	Minotaur (CR 5)

ASH BLAKE

“Oh, sweet flower, if only I could stay with you. But alas, I have places to go, people to kiss, wares to sell.”

— ASH BLAKE

Ash is a light brown gnoll with a tuft of purple hair atop her head. She is rarely seen in public without her trademark black leather, and her face sports a semi-permanent wry smile. Her smile, in combination with her piercing green eyes, has broken many hearts. A collection of piercings on her ears, eyebrows, and upper lip complete her look.



TRAITS

Ash Blake (true neutral, she/her) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Non-committal. She will show you a wonderful time, but it will not last forever.

Ideal: Freedom. Being free means choosing her own path, love, and destiny.

Bond: Family. Relationships are restricting and better left alone, but she will always have time for those who raised her.

Flaw: Heartbreaker. Ash does what she wants; it's not her fault if people get attached.

BACKGROUND

Ash had a typical upbringing and childhood, although she wasn't going by that name or pronouns then. She did what her parents told her, and she had a stable job at the family store. She met a nice gnoll lady, fell in love, and married. She always kept her head down and did what would make the most people happy. But something was always digging into her, scratching at her soul every time she was called "mister" or "sir." Despite always being the perfect son and husband, she knew she was living a lie. She was a woman. She always had this feeling, but she tried to push it away, scared to disappoint or hurt those close to her.

Then, one day, she realized she had to transition or she wouldn't last much longer. So she told her wife, who left her the next month. Ash's parents, however, were much more welcoming, embracing her as the woman she had always been, as their daughter.

Eventually, Ash realized she would never be able to be herself in her hometown, however much she loved her parents. She wanted to start fresh. So, with her parents' blessing, she took the family's magical wagon and became a traveling saleswoman for her family's store. At first, she only focused on business. But after some time, she grew into herself, both physically and mentally, becoming the traveling heartbreaker she is today.

Ash's one hobby is upgrading and racing her magic wagon, always trying to make it faster and, according to her, "cooler." If there's a faster wagon anywhere, she hasn't raced it yet. The wagon has been a family heirloom for generations and it's Ash's most treasured possession. She has not only given it several coats of paint but has found magical ways to supercharge the wagon with runes, spells, and magic gems. Ash is always on the hunt for ways to make the wagon faster. She occasionally races it, both for fun and money. If someone manages to beat her, she accepts the loss but constantly asks for a rematch.

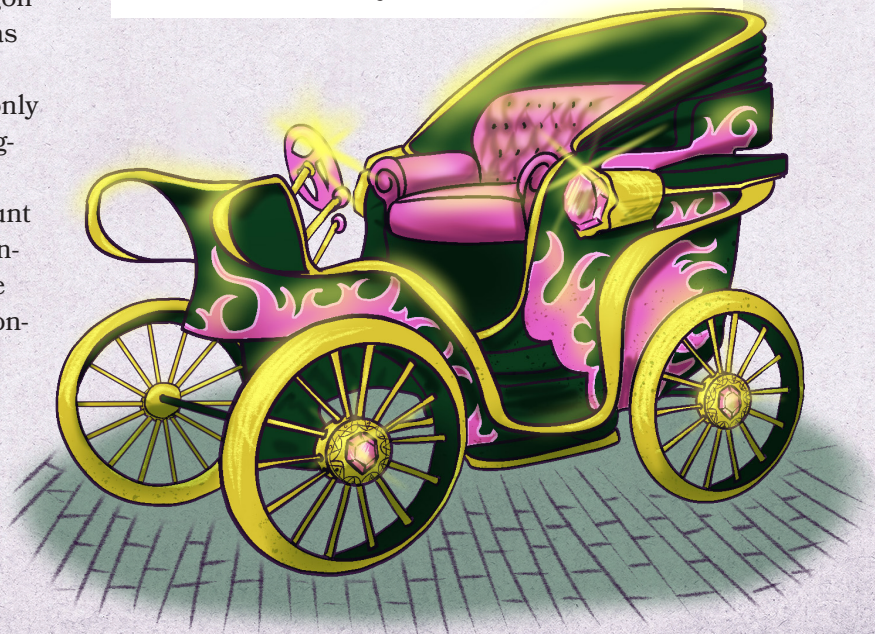
ASH'S MAGIC WAGON

Wondrous item, unique (requires attunement)

A flashy wagon with pink flames painted on the sides, it grants its driver advantage on all land vehicle skill checks, requiring no horses or other beasts to move it. It has a speed of 40 feet.

The wagon has a brightly colored magical gem on each of its wheels, each of which has one charge. The wagon regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn. You can use the charges in the following ways:

- The wagon's reflexes and agility allow it to move with a burst of speed. When it moves on your turn in combat, you can expend a charge to double its speed until the end of the turn. Once you use this gem, you can't use it again until the wagon moves 0 feet on one of your turns.
- The wagon expends a charge, launching a flask of alchemist's fire. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 5/20 ft., one target. *Hit*: 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of the target's turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 14 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.
- You can expend a charge to cast the *grease* spell (DC 14). It covers a 10-foot square and lasts for 1 hour.
- You can expend a charge to cast *invisibility* on the wagon and its contents. The effect lasts for 1 hour or until you dismiss the effect.



AS AN ALLY

Ash may provide characters access to her many and diverse wares, ranging from magical artifacts and exotic imports to common necessities. She can also provide a night of companionship to a character if they get along well with her, but for only one night. She may also help the party by offering them a ride for a fee if they are going the same way.

The best way to convince Ash to join the characters in a more long-term way is to promise her the magical means to improve her wagon's speed and power. Another way to have her join the PCs is if she is challenged to a race. As long as she can use her wagon, she will race against anyone and anything. She will not back down from a racing challenge. What potential opponents offer does not matter much because she will race out of pride, even promising to join or help the characters if they manage to beat her and her wagon in a race.

AS AN ADVERSARY

Ash is not a fighter; she tries to avoid confrontation and will leave town to escape unless her wagon is threatened.

She confidently accepts any racing challenge against her and her wagon, regardless of how ridiculous or unfair it may look. However, if anyone tries to damage or steal her wagon, Ash turns angry and violent. She attacks the culprits and uses funds to hire mercenaries or adventurers to get her wagon back by any means necessary.

As a race adversary, Ash will not use dirty tricks or cheat. She wants to win fair and square, otherwise it means nothing. But she will not go easy on anyone or herself. If Ash's opponent may be hurt unless Ash lets them win or overtake her, she does not. She rationalizes this, saying they knew the risks and that they shouldn't have been aggressive if they weren't ready to deal with the fallout.

ASH BLAKE

Medium humanoid (gnoll), true neutral

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 5d8 (22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +4

Skills Persuasion +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Gnoll

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Rampage. When Ash reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on her turn, she can take a bonus action to move up to half her speed and make a wrench attack.

Spellcasting. Ash is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting modifier is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips: *mending, mage hand, thaumaturgy*

1st level: *earth tremor, shield, Tasha's hideous laughter*

2nd level: *enlarge/reduce*

Wagon Master. Because of her mechanical background, Ash has expertise with land vehicles.

ACTIONS

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

Flash-bang. Ash targets a space up to 10 feet away, and throws a small explosive shell that flares up in a blinding light. All creatures within 10 feet of the target space must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the start of Ash's next turn.

REACTIONS

Flash of Genius (3/Day). When Ash or another creature she can see within 30 feet of her makes an ability check or a saving throw, she can use her reaction to add +3 to the roll.

AUGUSTUS SHELLHAMMER

“If you can’t look good while fighting your enemies, then what is the point of it all?”

— AUGUSTUS SHELLHAMMER

Augustus is a tall orc with light green skin and large tusks on his lower jaw. He wears his long black hair tied back in a loose braid and has excellent facial hair. A refined gentleman and talented seamster, he wears a tailored suit or a beautifully made coat when he isn’t working, Augustus is constantly trying new looks and styles. No one can ever guess what he will wear next, but it is always incredible.

TRAITS

Augustus Shellhammer (neutral good, he/him) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Augustus loves taking care of people. He also loves designing clothes and armor, but most of all, he wants to please his customers.

Ideal: He believes if you help someone, they’ll help someone else, like a ripple effect.

Bond: Augustus’s loyalty has a lifetime guarantee; if you need help, he will be there.

Flaw: He doesn’t like people who waste his time and patience.

BACKGROUND

Augustus has been making clothes for as long as he can remember. His mother, Calliope, was a talented tailor and designer who taught him everything she knew, seeing his natural talent for the vocation. Many happy hours were spent as a child with his mother, sewing and learning everything he could from her. Though Calliope knew much about needle and cloth, she understood that to nurture her son’s natural gift, she would have to make sure that he had a wide variety of experiences and was apprenticed to only the best Masters.

As a teenager, Augustus left on a ship to apprentice as a seamster in a faraway city. He was originally nervous about being away from home, but soon his sense of adventure got the better of him and he found that he very much enjoyed sailing, taking to it almost as naturally as he did



tailoring. However his apprenticeship with a renowned Master was never to be.

During the voyage, the ship was attacked by pirates and Augustus was taken prisoner. The crew was rough and tumble, arguing what to do with such a scrawny orcling, as they normally did not take prisoners but since the ship had very few monetary goods that they could sell, they were forced to make do. Augustus, though scared, was charming and soon even had the most grizzled old pirates chatting to him about their adventures on the high seas. He got into his captors’ good graces by repairing the ship’s sail after a particularly nasty storm nearly capsized the ship and they were forced to weigh anchor to make repairs. That act of kindness, when he could have very well run off the minute they touched land, endeared him even further and he was made a full member of the crew.

The pirates taught him how to sail and to use a sword. They became a second family to Augustus, but that made him miss his mother even more. He had often stayed up late into the evenings, staring at the stars, wondering if she had ever known what had become of him. Eventually, after several years of piracy, he amicably left the crew to open his own shop, “Needles and Pauldrons,” that specializes in clothing for the fashionable and practical adventurer, reconnecting with his mother and bringing her into his shop to help run the business.

AS AN ALLY

Augustus is a lover of good tales, good company, and challenges. He can repair battered armor and can assist in a fight. It has been some time since he has seen regular combat, but Augustus can still hold his own. He does not like seeing his customers treated poorly and will immediately jump in to defend them.

AS AN ADVERSARY

Augustus is known for his extravagant clothing designs, but also for his short temper and eagerness to jump into battle. He can be temperamental if rushed to finish a job. If something happens to his shop, workspace, or any projects he is currently working on, you may need to take your orders elsewhere.

AUGUSTUS SHELLHAMMER

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral good

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws DEX +5, CHA +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +4, Perception +4, Performance +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Orc

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Augustus can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

Light-Footed. Augustus can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Needle and Thread. Augustus can add double his proficiency bonus to any ability checks he makes while using Leatherworker's or Weaver's Tools.

Powerful Build. Augustus counts as one size larger when determining his carrying capacity and the weight he can push, drag, or lift.

Suave Defense. While Augustus is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, his AC includes his Charisma modifier.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Augustus can make three attacks: one with his dagger and two with his rapier.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

BRUNNA

“Please, take a seat, and let the mists of the future be parted before you.”

— BRUNNA

An older gnoll woman wearing a colorful tunic and wide pants happily shakes your hand in greeting. She is graying a bit around her muzzle, but her eyes are clear and sharp and take in every detail about you.

TRAITS

Brunna (chaotic good, she/her) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Curious. Brunna is curious, mostly about the world, including its myriad creatures and how they live. She easily strikes up conversation with just about anyone.

Ideal: Everyone Deserves Happiness. In big and small ways, everyone should be happy and loved.

Bond: Family. Brunna has three families, and she loves them all equally and uniquely.

Flaw: Indecisiveness. While Brunna does get glimpses into the future, it has made her cautious to act. The future is far from set in stone, and a wrong word might negatively impact someone.

BACKGROUND

Brunna was born with one other littermate, a brother, into a small gnoll family. Her parents raised her in a traditional family group, where several adults raised their children together, with the help of various grandparents and aunts and uncles whose children were grown or who did not have children themselves. Her childhood was filled with love and play.

From a young age, Brunna had an uncanny knack for doing things just in time. She would step aside just as a bird would have pooped on her head, withdraw from a path just before a wild animal passed, and pick the right piece of produce at the market when the rest were spoiled. At first, her parents figured that Brunna was unusually blessed by the gods. After all, the omens at her birth were good. But then, why was her brother not equally lucky? They put it down to the gods being helpful



and fickle at the same time. And who were they to question them?

As Brunna became a teenager, it was clear that her ability to avoid danger was more than just luck. Where at first her “luck” had been in the moment avoiding, or choosing, something as it was happening right now, she began to have strange “feelings.” Instead of stepping aside at the right time, she would feel that a path was unsafe and warn others not to take it. She knew that some traders’ goods were intentionally adulterated before even seeing them. Incidents like these became too common to be mere coincidence, and Brunna’s parents decided that it would be best for her to live and study with a small group of traveling mystics.

Brunna was sad to have to leave her family, but excited at the prospect of learning magic, secrets, and arcane rituals. Everyone had heard strange stories about the mystics, who were semi-nomadic and wandered between communities in the area.

The mystics welcomed Brunna, and began a slow process of testing the reach and limits of Brunna's talents, determining whether those talents could be directed or cultivated. Brunna spent a few years with the mystics, learning how to direct her powers of foresight. She learned how to employ cards, bones, the leaves of plants scattered in the winds, and crystals to direct her clairvoyance. She also picked up some non-magical methods of determining the paths a creature could take, such as interpreting dreams.

While Brunna had come to love the eccentric community as a second family, she yearned for more: to see the world. She traveled the region for a while, making frequent stops at both her family home and the mystics' caravan, if her path crossed theirs. Eventually, when visiting one of the larger cities, she encountered a traveling circus. Brunna was fascinated by so many different races working together, traveling the land and providing entertainment in exchange for coin. She followed the circus for a few stops. Her fortune telling did not go unnoticed by the circus people, who, after having several long talks with her, asked her to join them.

Brunna has traveled with the circus for many years now, telling fortunes during the day, and enjoying the crowds and their energies during the

evenings. She keeps up connections with an extensive network of friends, relatives, family, acquaintances, co-workers, and associates throughout her travels, sometimes leaving the circus for a few days to visit someone she hasn't seen in a while.

AS AN ALLY

Brunna is open to give anyone a hand. She believes everyone deserves help and kindness. While she would not readily risk life and limb in combat, she would defend the circus and its people if they came under attack. Anyone who befriends her can count on a lot of motherly advice (sometimes about the future) and a solid network of connections in cities the circus frequents.

AS AN ADVERSARY

Not one to seek direct confrontation, Brunna acts more from the sidelines. She uses her network of contacts to gather information about an adversary and then find a way to best utilize that information. She is not afraid to dig deep to get at the dirt and then dish that dirt around. People who cross her generally regret it, as their reputations may be ruined, they may be denied lodging, refused service, or even be barred from entering a town.

BRUNNA

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic good

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Gnoll

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Rampage. When Brunna reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on her turn, she can take a bonus action to move up to half her speed and make a bite attack.

Future Glimpse. Brunna studies a creature for one uninterrupted minute. She must be able to see the creature up close and observe its

movements and mannerisms. Sitting across a table from someone will work, as will studying someone through a scrying mirror. After the minute of study, she makes a Wisdom (Insight) check. The higher the check, the more specific details she can divine about that creature's future. A low roll could reveal nothing more important than divining that the creature's next meal will disagree with it. A high roll might not only reveal that the creature will be murdered, but also the name of its murderer, and when and how the act will take place.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Brunna makes two melee attacks.

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

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

GRANNY KNUCKLEBONES

“You look sad, dear. Come, let Granny Knucklebones cheer you up with a cookie and a story by the fire.”

— GRANNY KNUCKLEBONES

An old gnoll woman leans on her staff and smiles at you. She wears a woolen shawl, colorful beaded necklaces, and bronze bracelets and earrings.



TRAITS

Granny Knucklebones (neutral good, she/her) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Kind. She is kind and is always looking out for others. If someone is down she tries to cheer them up with cookies, a story, or a game of knucklebones.

Ideal: Peacekeeper. There is no need to fight; let's all just get along and play a game of knucklebones instead.

Bond: Family. Her gnoll community means everything to her and she will protect them with her life.

Flaw: Slow to Trust. She is slow to trust outsiders and keeps a watchful eye on them.

BACKGROUND

Granny Knucklebones has lived as a nomad with her community all her life. As a young gnoll, Granny Knucklebones helped herd the community's cattle and sheep. She saw many fights between her community and others and lost many loved ones. As an elder, she pushes for peace and diplomatic resolutions.

Granny Knucklebones leads a quiet life now and spends much of her time with the children. She enjoys beading necklaces and making jewelry, telling stories, and sharing fresh baked cookies. She is also a ruthless knucklebones player, which earned her the nickname Granny Knucklebones.

AS AN ALLY

Granny Knucklebones can offer the characters food and shelter, information about local nature and history, and help with Insight (Wisdom) checks. If their cause is good, she may even be able to get her community to help them—if it doesn't put her people in unnecessary danger.

AS AN ADVERSARY

Granny Knucklebones is insightful and knows if the characters are trying to deceive her and bring harm to her community. If she detects any ill intent, she acts friendly and oblivious but notifies the leaders of her tribe. She also does her best to find peaceful resolutions. She fights only if she has no other choice.

GRANNY KNUCKLEBONES

Medium humanoid (gnoll), neutral good

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +3

Skills History +1, Nature +1, Insight +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Gnoll

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Rampage. When Granny Knucklebones reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on her

turn, she can take a bonus action to move up to half her speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

True Strike. Granny Knucklebones gains brief insight into her target's defenses. On her next turn, she gains advantage on her first attack roll against the target.

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

Spears. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Bond: Friends are useful until they become a nuisance.

Flaw: Minerva is stubborn and slow to trust. If you lose her trust, it is almost certainly lost forever.

BACKGROUND

Minerva does not talk about her past; she says that it's no one's business but hers. As far as she is concerned her life started when she chose the name Minerva Irons, left her old life behind, and started a new life as the female minotaur she knew she was.

That was several years ago. Now Minerva runs Minerva's Inn and Tavern in a little sleepy town. She is also the town's unofficial enforcer. Everyone knows that if a problem arises or if someone is making trouble in town, you call Minerva. She runs trouble-makers out of town, and helps those in need.

When she first arrived in town, it was being terrorized by a small mercenary gang who had claimed it as their private base of operations, despite the protests of the townsfolk. She helped the residents get rid of the mercenaries and in return, they gave her the building the gang had been using. Thus Minerva's Inn and Tavern was born.

MINERVA IRONS

"Minerva will feed you if you are hungry, she will give you a place to spend the night if you don't have any. She will also beat you within an inch of your life if you come into her inn looking for trouble."

— CECILY AGUSTINE,
ADVENTURER & FRIEND OF IRONS

Minerva is big, loud, and beautiful: seven feet tall, built like a brick house, and with incredible makeup skills. Her curly mess of hair is almost always up in a bun in between her two sharp horns. She usually dresses in incredibly low-cut, sleeveless blouses that show off both her bosom and her arms. Flowing skirts and comfortable shoes finish her everyday look.

TRAITS

Minerva (lawful neutral, she/her) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Loud and energetic, she is always there to lend a hand to people who need it.

Ideal: Duality. The world comes in two flavors—friends and jerks—and those who are jerks had best stay well away from her.



The tavern always has several tables set up with games of chess, and whenever Minerva has a free moment she plays one of her regulars in a match. She is just as efficient at chess as she is in a fight.

AS AN ALLY

If the PCs haven't gotten on Minerva's bad side and they ask her for something that wouldn't cause trouble for the town or its residents, she enthusiastically helps out. Not only is she a proficient fighter, but she is a respected figure in the town and could help the characters by vouching for them.

AS AN ADVERSARY

If the characters are actively causing problems for Minerva, her tavern, or the town, then she will confront them, first verbally, then if they persist, physically. If the characters appeared to cause problems but stopped when Minerva confronted them, she won't attack them, but they won't be allowed entrance into her establishment.

MINERVA IRONS

Large monstrosity, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +7, Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Charge. If Minerva moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

Labyrinthine Recall. Minerva can perfectly recall any path she has traveled.

No Half Measures. At the start of her turn, Minerva can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls she makes during that turn, but attack rolls against her have advantage until the start of her next turn.

ACTIONS

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

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

MISTER CODGERS

"I've always wanted to have a neighbor just like you."

— MISTER PHRED CODGERS

A black minotaur dressed in comfortable travel clothes, including a red cardigan sweater, places a large backpack on the ground. Poking out from the backpack are what look like dolls.

TRAITS

Mister Codgers (neutral good, he/him) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Creative. He makes up songs about little moments in his life.

Ideal: Kindness. Just one kind word can make all the difference in the world.

Bond: Helping. If he helped even a few children in his life, he counts it as well spent.

Flaw: Stubborn. He tends to stick by his decisions, even if they're wrong.

BACKGROUND

Little Phred Codgers grew up in the village of McFurley, an only child whose parents had succumbed to illness when he was four years old. Phred was raised by his grandparents, who owned a garment shop. He was a shy child who spent much of his time reading books and playing with puppets, even making his own. His grandparents encouraged their grandson's interests while also seeing to his education and teaching him their trade skills.

As Phred grew older, he found that he was most fulfilled when putting on puppet shows for children. But rather than slapstick, he used his puppets to teach children the importance of kindness, empathy, and helping others. The joy of connecting with these youngsters filled Phred with such joy that he wondered if other children might not also benefit from a gentle voice and kind hand like his.

These days, Mister Codgers travels to different villages and performs for children. His sweet nature and his belief that everyone should feel loved drive him to treat everyone as a friend and neighbor.



CARDIGAN OF THE NEIGHBOR

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

The last sweater knitted by Grandma Codgers. Her love left special magic on this garment. While attuned to this item, Mister Codgers has the following benefits:

- Resistance to cold damage
- Advantage on all Charisma-based saves and skill checks.

AS AN ALLY

If the characters encounter Mister Codgers in their travels, he may request that they join him. He could be traveling through a dangerous area and asks the party to help protect him. Perhaps they meet Mister Codgers in a town where performers aren't well thought of. The characters can help the minotaur change the minds of the townsfolk.

AS AN ADVERSARY

While it's unlikely to meet Mister Codgers in this capacity, it's not impossible. A surefire way to gain Mister Codgers as an adversary is to be unkind and cruel to children. He simply won't stand for it. There is also the chance that Mister Codgers has been tricked into believing that the characters are trying to harm him.



MISTER CODGERS

Medium monstrosity, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Cha +4, Wis +5

Skills Insight +7, Perception +7

Damage Resistances cold (while wearing *cardigan of the neighbor*)

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Expert in Make-Believe. Mister Codgers can use a bonus action to see through magical disguises.

Special Equipment. While wearing the *cardigan of the neighbor*, Mister Codgers has resistance to cold damage and advantage on all Charisma-based saves and skill checks.

ACTIONS

Reluctant Unarmed Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

SONA

“Even when lost, a step in any direction moves us forward. Especially when lost.”

— SONA

Curious eyes gazing back at you, a minotaur with light brown fur and dressed in well-worn traveler’s garb waits patiently ahead. A black fur arrowhead on her forehead points down her nose. Small horns crest out and upwards, grading from ivory at the base into the same near-black color as the arrow-shape on her head. One hand loosely holds the strap of a woven satchel slung over her shoulder while the other grips a sleek wooden staff with a bronze ring looped through the top.

TRAITS

Sona (lawful good, she/her) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Soft-spoken and patient, she carefully considers both an individual’s words and the way they present themselves.

Ideal: All creatures serve a function, and nothing is insignificant.

Bond: We are all connected to the world and the designs of the universe: its balance, its form, and its goal.

Flaw: Sona spends more time trying to understand the complexities of a person and their words than answering them.

BACKGROUND

For generations, Sona’s family has guarded The Sulphur Pass, one of the gates to the Plane of Fire. But, for her, fate decreed otherwise. Her first word was “Why?” and at every stage of her life she has questioned the world surrounding her, looking for its purpose or for some grand machination. Early on she discovered the circle of life without having been taught; she understood cause-and-effect simply from careful observation. She knew her role within the Pass when the time came to take up the mantle of guardian. After a group of adventurers unwittingly collapsed the gates and the portal between the Planes, however, Sona found herself without purpose. Simultaneously unburdened

of all responsibility and grounded by the weight of what to do next, her mind drifted beyond the Pass, beyond the clouds and sky, to look upon the world as a whole. She was now free to explore it all, to venture out into the world and understand its harmony.

In the years that followed, she sought out others on the path, masters or those wiser who might be able to teach her. Although she found more questions than answers, she discovered that the destination for the path she was on now had a name: enlightenment. Unfortunately, others who seemed to walk the same path all had different definitions for it. Navigating her own way proved to be a challenge if she listened to everyone else, and indeed, there were a few times that she found herself lost.

These days, she walks the line between forging her own trail and following in the footsteps of others. Sona spends much of her free time meditating as she travels in search of others on the same path.

In order to help with her attempts at meditation, a fellow walker of the path gifted Sona with a staff that exudes calm and serenity. However, she has found just as much use for it in diffusing tensions when her travels take her to places where locals are less than welcoming.

SERENITY

Staff, rare (requires attunement)

The staff has a peaceful aura to it and once per day it can calm creatures within a 20-foot radius. As an action, the wielder may cast *calm emotions* centered on themselves, without the need to concentrate on the spell. The staff regains spent uses each day at dawn.

AS AN ALLY

Sona is a useful friend to have. The combination of her extensive travels and inquisitive personality have given her a wealth of knowledge. She is more than happy to share her knowledge with anyone who asks, so long as she believes the information won’t be used for harm. This information can include locations and how to reach or navigate them, NPCs and Sona’s insights on them, or even philosophical advice.

On occasion, Sona needs a group of characters to help on her journey and either requests or hires their services. This could be as simple as accompanying her through a dangerous region or helping to reclaim a temple of the path. Alternatively, when Sona perceives an imbalance within an ecosystem, be it a forest, a city, or an entire kingdom, she may hire the party to aid in restoring balance.

AS AN ADVERSARY

If Sona views members of the party, or indeed the party as a whole, as disruptive to the communities they interact with (doing more harm than good) she approaches them calmly and at a time she feels they will be most receptive to her words, politely informing them of the damages they have caused.

Should the party be indifferent or not act on this information, or if their perceived offenses lead Sona to believe that they can't be reasoned with, she will not interact with them further. Instead, she simply informs the authorities in the places she visits of a group of dangerous travelers and what she has so far learned of them.



SONA

Large monstrosity, lawful good

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +8

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Charge. If Sona moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must

succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 ft. away and knocked prone.

Labyrinthine Recall. Sona can perfectly recall any path she has traveled.

Stunning Strike (4/day). When Sona hits another creature with a melee attack, she can attempt to interfere with their flow of ki. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of her next turn.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

WILL TALL

“Labyrinths are dead ends. Metaphorically, of course, not literally. Otherwise, they would just be mazes.”

— WILL TALL

Will Tall is a minotaur whose imposing stature is contrasted by his non-threatening vest and breeches. He has a bristly mustache under his snout and has several books of various sizes strapped to his belt.

TRAITS

Will Tall (lawful good, he/him) has the following traits:

Personality Trait: Curious. He likes to figure out how things work, never feeling satisfied with ignorance.

Ideal: Self-Improvement. He doesn't see the point of doing anything if there's no possibility of getting better at it.

Bond: Impression. He wants to prove to his father that there is more to life than labyrinths.

Flaw: Condescending. He sees those who don't share his ideals as complacent.

BACKGROUND

Will Tall grew up on the road. He apprenticed under his father, Nanren Tall, a traveling labyrinth architect. Will learned the trade of constructing labyrinths, working among those who could afford their services. He saw how the upper class treated his father and became determined to carve out a place for himself that did not involve catering to the rich.

As Will progressed through his apprenticeship, he grew bored with the labyrinth trade. No matter how many twists and turns he added to his designs, he never felt that he could improve the existing models. Nanren's tutelage exacerbated his frustration; he insisted that Will use only traditional methods in his designs. Will attempted to add false walls, hidden doorways, and optical illusions, but his father shut down his ideas in favor of “proper methodology.”

After finishing his apprenticeship, Will refused to become an official member of the family



business. He had a falling out with Nanren, calling his father's designs tired and unoriginal, and set off to find his fortune. Will sought out wizards and artificers he thought could offer a new perspective to his craft. He found that magic users were of no help; they didn't understand the purpose of a labyrinth or the challenge it represented. The idea that a labyrinth had to be solvable was alien to the learned mages. It wasn't until Will stopped in a kobold village that he found a breakthrough. The mechanics of kobold traps and security systems made for the perfect puzzles to put in his labyrinths.

Will founded his new business, a new sort of traveling entertainment. From town to town, he set up rooms filled with mechanical puzzles and challenged locals to escape them. His puzzles required clever thinking and teamwork to solve, and locals hoping to prove their mental acuity paid for the experience. Will continued to improve his rooms and began to branch out, creating puzzles that customers could buy and solve at home. He hopes that his enterprise becomes popular enough that he can return to his father with proof that breaking from tradition is not only possible but profitable.

AS AN ALLY

Will Tall sells puzzle boxes that use a series of moveable parts to prevent anyone from gaining access. Each box is about the size of a fist and is made of sturdy iron. They have an AC of 19 and 8 hit points. If someone doesn't know the trick to open the puzzle box, they must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence check to solve it. Will sells the boxes for 2 gp.

Will Tall is also relentlessly curious and invested in figuring out how things work. If characters are looking for a solution to any riddle or mechanical puzzle, locals might direct them to seek him out if Will is in the area. Likewise, characters might be able to convince Will to join them in delving into a dungeon if they promise him significantly challenging traps and puzzles. If the characters have foreknowledge that traps and puzzles are inside, he is willing to join them. If not, they must succeed at a DC 16 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to convince him to come along.

AS AN ADVERSARY

The role of a puzzlemaster is often adversarial. Will Tall travels from town to town, setting up escape rooms that characters can solve. He is always trying to improve his designs, so he may approach capable-looking adventurers to test out a new room with experimental puzzles. These puzzles are always mechanical rather than magical and often involve opening locks, breaking codes, and other types of problem-solving. The rooms have a time limit in which characters must solve all the puzzles in the room to succeed.

While never malevolent, Will's curiosity may put him in conflict with the characters, and some boxes are best left unopened. The characters may find that Will is working to uncover dangerous magic or unleash a fearsome creature locked behind a tempting puzzle. Will works towards a solution, whether he's oblivious to the danger or merely driven to learn. Characters must figure out a way to stop him or face the consequences of his solving the mystery.

WILL TALL

Large Monstrosity, lawful good

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills Investigation +7, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Charge. If Will Tall moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

Labyrinthine Recall. Will Tall can perfectly recall any path he has traveled.

Fast Hands. Will Tall can use a bonus action to disarm a trap or pick a lock with a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check on each of his turns.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. Will Tall makes two melee attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Gore: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Improvise Trap (Recharge 5–6). Will Tall can create a trap from the supplies he has on hand. He designates an unoccupied 5-foot square that is adjacent to him and lays a trap there. Creatures that do not see him place the trap must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice it. If a creature enters the space where the trap is, the trap triggers, producing one of the following effects:

- The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- A cloud of opaque smoke fills the square, heavily obscuring it. The creature, as well as any creatures that enter or start their turn in the square, must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be unable to take reactions until the beginning of their next turn.

APPENDIX A: CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

This appendix contains all the stat blocks not found in the *Monster Manual* or *Player's Handbook*, for your reference.

The Creature Stat Blocks table indicates which adventure(s) or encounter(s) each creature appears in. The source for each creature is included as well.

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

Creature	Appears in...	Source
Animated Table	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	TFtYP
Awakened Pumpkin	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	NAMQ2
Bard	Mines of Tar (ch 2, "Monstrous Encounters")	VGtM
Bullywug Croaker	Barbershop Orc-tet (ch 2, "Monstrous Encounters")	GoS
Bullywug Royal	Barbershop Orc-tet (ch 2, "Monstrous Encounters")	GoS
Cheshire	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	NAMQ2
Champion	Laughter is Good for the Gnoll (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures") and Parks and Reclamation (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM
Chwingas	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	ToA
Diviner	Parks and Reclamation (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM
Dolgaunt	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	E:RFtLW
Dolgrim	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	E:RFtLW
Flind	Laughter Is Good For the Gnoll (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM
Ghostly Superstar	Laughter Is Good For the Gnoll (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	NAMQ2
Gnoll Hunter	Gnoll in a Hole (ch 2, "Monstrous Encounters")	VGtM
Hurricane	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	PotA
Kobold Scale Sorcerer	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM
Living Burning Hands	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	E:RFtLW
Living Lightning Bolt	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	E:RFtLW
Nimblewright	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	WD:DH
Ranger Rryrg	Ranger Rryrg's Nature Hike (ch 2, "Monstrous Encounters")	NAMQ2
Rot Grub Queen	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	NAMQ2
Satyr Reveler	Minnow's Magical Maze (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	MOoT
Spawn of Kyuss	Laughter Is Good For the Gnoll (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM
Spirit Troll	Parks and Reclamation (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	MToF
Swarm of Cranium Rats	Laughter Is Good For the Gnoll (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM
Swarm of Rot Grubs	Breadcrumbs and Biscuits (ch 1, "Monstrous Adventures")	VGtM

SOURCES: E:RFtLW (*Eberron: Rising From the Last War*), GoS (*Ghosts of Saltmarsh*) MToF (*Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*), MOoT (*Mythic Odysseys of Theros*), NAMQ2 (*Not Another Monster Quest: Vol.2*), PotA (*Prince of the Apocalypse*), ToA (*Tomb of Annihilation*), TFtYP (*Tales From The Yawning Portal*), VGtM (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*), WD:DH (*Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*)

ANIMATED TABLE

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Antimagic Susceptibility. The table is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the table must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

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

Charge. If the table moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

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

AWAKENED PUMPKIN

Medium awakened plant, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +7

Damage Resistances fire, non-magical bludgeoning and slashing damage

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

False Appearance. While the awakened pumpkin remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary pumpkin and has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Inspired Toss. When the awakened pumpkin uses Humanoid Toss, it may use a bonus action to make a Vine Whip attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The awakened pumpkin makes two slam or two vine whip attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Vine Whip. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Humanoid Toss (Recharge 5–6). A creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the awakened pumpkin throws a target 30 ft., dealing 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If a creature fails by 5 or more, it is also knocked prone.

BARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Spellcasting. The bard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Song of Rest. The bard can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The bard can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Taunt (2/Day). The bard can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the bard, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the bard's next turn.

ACTIONS

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

BULLYWUG CROAKER

Medium humanoid (bullywug), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Bullywug

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Amphibious. The croaker can breathe air and water.

Speak with Frogs and Toads. The croaker can communicate simple concepts to frogs and toads when it speaks in Bullywug.

Standing Leap. The croaker's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The croaker has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

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

Glaaar-pat (3/Day). The croaker sings a song of marshy doom. Each chosen creature within 30 feet of the croaker that can hear the song must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw also has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws until the end of its next turn.

Rooooo-glog (1/Day). The croaker sings an ode to an elder froghemoth. Each bullywug within 30 feet of the croaker that can hear the song gains 10 temporary hit points.

BULLYWUG ROYAL

Medium humanoid (bullywug), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10(+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +3

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +4, Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Bullywug

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Amphibious. The royal can breathe air and water.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the royal hits with it (included in the attack).

Frog Rider. The royal has advantage on melee attacks made while riding a frog mount.

Speak with Frogs and Toads. The royal can communicate simple concepts to frogs and toads when it speaks in Bullywug.

Standing Leap. The royal's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The royal has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The royal makes two attacks: one with its royal spear and one with its bite.

Royal Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

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

Croaked Decree (1/Day). The royal makes a loud pronouncement. Each bullywug within 60 feet of the royal that can hear the pronouncement has advantage on its next attack roll.



CHESHIRE

Large awakened monstrosity (owlbear), chaotic good

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +2, Performance +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Innate Spellcasting. Cheshire's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). They can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *druidcraft*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

3/day each: *catnap*, *enhance ability*, *levitate* (self only), *pass without trace*

1/day each: *invisibility*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

Inspiration (2/day). Cheshire inspires their allies at just the right moment. As a bonus action, Cheshire can choose an ally within 60 feet of them that can hear them and grant that ally a Bardic Inspiration die. Once within the next 10 minutes, the ally can roll an extra d8 on one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw.

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

Song of Rest. Cheshire can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if they spend any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. Cheshire can confer this benefit on themselves as well.

Taunt (2/Day). As a bonus action, Cheshire can target one creature within 30 feet of them. If the target can hear Cheshire, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the Cheshire's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cheshire makes two attacks: one with their beak and one with their claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Teleport (Recharge 4–6). Cheshire can magically teleport up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space they can see. Before or after teleporting, Cheshire can make one beak attack.

CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Str +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

CHWINGA

Tiny elemental, any alignment

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Evasion. When the chwinga is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Innate Spellcasting. The chwinga's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or verbal components:

At will: *druidcraft, guidance, pass without trace, resistance*

Unusual Nature. The chwinga doesn't require air, food, or drink. When it dies, it turns into a handful of flower petals, a cloud of pollen, a stone statuette resembling its former self, a tiny sphere of smooth stone, or a puddle of fresh water (your choice).

ACTIONS

Magical Gifts (1/Day). The chwinga targets a humanoid it can see within 5 feet of it. The target gains a supernatural charm of the DM's choice. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for information on supernatural charms.

Natural Shelter. The chwinga magically takes shelter inside a rock, a living plant, or a natural source of fresh water in its space. The chwinga can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect while inside this shelter, and the shelter doesn't impair the chwinga's blindsight. The chwinga can use its action to emerge from a shelter. If its shelter is destroyed, the chwinga is forced out and appears in the shelter's space, but is otherwise unharmed.

DIVINER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 67 (15d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Spellcasting. The diviner is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The diviner has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, message, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic,* feather fall, mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts,* locate object,* scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance,* fly, fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye,* ice storm, stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Rary's telepathic bond,* scrying**

6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion, true seeing**

7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball, teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *maze*

**Divination spell of 1st level or higher*

Portent (Recharges after the Diviner Casts a Divination Spell of 1st Level or Higher). When the diviner or a creature it can see makes an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check, the diviner can roll a d20 and choose to use this roll in place of the attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 - 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

DOLGAUNT

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (unarmored defense)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +4, Stealth +6

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 14

Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Evasion. If the dolgaunt is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the dolgaunt instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails. It can't use this trait if it's incapacitated.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dolgaunt makes two tentacle attacks and two unarmed strikes. Up to two tentacle attacks can be replaced by Vitality Drain.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 12) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the dolgaunt can't use the same tentacle on another target. The dolgaunt has two tentacles.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Vitality Drain. One creature grappled by a tentacle of the dolgaunt must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, and the dolgaunt regains a number of hit points equal to half the necrotic damage taken.

DOLGRIM

Small aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Dual Consciousness. The dolgrim has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dolgrim makes three attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

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

GHOSTLY SUPERSTAR

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 90 (20d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skills Performance +10

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Incorporeal Movement. The ghostly superstar can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Smooth Moves. The ghostly superstar can move without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Sing With Me. At the start of its turn, the ghostly superstar designates two creatures it can see as duet partners. It can designate itself as one of the duet partners. The creatures can choose to take 11 (2d10) psychic damage to avoid becoming duet partners. Otherwise, the creatures must sing a duet to each other and move closer to each other each round during the duet. The creatures must sing truthfully about how they currently feel, otherwise the duet ends. The duet lasts until either the ghostly superstar or a duet partner decides to end it, or if the duet partners attack each other or the ghostly superstar. If the duet ends before the partners have sung for at least two rounds, the duet partners take 11 (2d10) necrotic damage. If the duet lasts at least two rounds, each duet partner can make a DC 18 Charisma (Performance) check when it ends, regaining 5 (1d10) hit points up to its hit point maximum on a success.

Backup. Whenever the ghostly superstar is singing, all undead within 60 feet of it sing and dance in sync with it. Affected undead can take actions but must all move the same distance in the same direction as determined by the ghostly superstar.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) necrotic damage.

Catchy Song. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghostly superstar that can hear it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become restrained for one round because they are so busy tapping their toes to its song.

REACTIONS

Confront Heckler. If a creature that is not a duet partner hits the ghostly superstar with an attack during an ongoing duet, the ghostly superstar can immediately teleport to the creature and attack it with Withering Touch.

GNOLL HUNTER

Medium humanoid (gnoll), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gnoll makes two melee attacks with its spear or two ranged attacks with its longbow.

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

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage when used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.

FLIND

Medium humanoid (gnoll), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +5

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Gnoll

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Aura of Blood Thirst. If the flind isn't incapacitated, any creature with the Rampage trait can make a bite attack as a bonus action while within 10 feet of the flind.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The flind makes three attacks: one with each of its different flail attacks or three with its longbow.

Flail of Madness. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target must make a melee attack against a random target within its reach on its next turn. If it has no targets within its reach even after moving, it loses its action on that turn.

Flail of Pain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 22 (4d10) psychic damage.

Flail of Paralysis. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

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

HURRICANE

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Auran, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Spellcasting. The hurricane is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *gust*,* *light*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *jump*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (2 slots): *gust of wind*

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

Unarmored Movement. While the hurricane is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 15 feet (included in its speed).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hurricane makes two melee attacks.

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

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. When the hurricane is hit by a ranged weapon attack, it reduces the damage from the attack by 1d10 + 9. If the damage is reduced to 0, the hurricane can catch the missile if it is small enough to hold in one hand and the hurricane has at least one hand free.

KOBOLD SCALE SORCERER

Small humanoid (kobold), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d6 +10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +2, Medicine +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Spellcasting. The kobold is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *chromatic orb*, *expeditious retreat*

2nd level (2 slots): *scorching ray*

Sorcery Points. The kobold has 3 sorcery points. It can spend 1 or more sorcery points as a bonus action to gain one of the following benefits:

- **Heightened Spell:** When it casts a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist the spell's effects, the kobold can spend 3 sorcery points to give one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw against the spell.
- **Subtle Spell:** When the kobold casts a spell, it can spend 1 sorcery point to cast the spell without any somatic or verbal components.

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

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

ACTIONS

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

LIVING BURNING HANDS

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

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

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5–6). The living spell unleashes a thin sheet of flames in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LIVING LIGHTNING BOLT

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 57 (6d10 + 24)

Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

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

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The living spell makes two Magical Strike attacks.

Attack Name. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (5d6 + 4) lightning damage.

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5–6). The living spell unleashes a stroke of lightning in a line 100 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

NIMBLEWRIGHT

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Skills Acrobatics +8, Perception +2

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands one language known to its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Magic Resistance. The nimblewright has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The nimblewright's weapon attacks are magical.

Repairable. As long as it has at least 1 hit point remaining, the nimblewright regains 1 hit point when a *mending* spell is cast on it.

Sure-Footed. The nimblewright has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nimblewright makes three attacks: two with its rapier and one with its dagger.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The nimblewright adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the nimblewright must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

RANGER RRYRG

Medium humanoid (gnoll), neutral good

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +4

Skills Nature +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Gnoll

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Rampage. When Ranger Rryrg reduces a creature to 0 Hit Points with a melee attack on his turn, he can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a quarterstaff attack.

Special Equipment. Ranger Rryrg has a *walking stick medallion* equipped to his quarterstaff. While carrying his walking stick, he gains +1 to Intelligence (Nature) checks.

Spellcasting. Ranger Rryrg is a 1st level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Ranger Rryrg has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (3 slots): *hunter's mark*, *goodberry*, *cure wounds*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.

ROT GRUB QUEEN

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Str +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from non-magical weapons

Damage Immunities acid

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

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Tunneler. The rot grub queen can burrow through solid rock at half its burrowing speed and leaves a 5-foot diameter tunnel in its wake.

Earth Armor. The rot grub queen doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it burrows.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rot grub queen makes one bite attack and one stab attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Stab. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 13).

Acid Spray (Recharge 6). The rot grub queen spits acid in a line that is 30 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Rot grubs live in hives that serve one rot grub queen. This queen grows larger than other grubs, preferring to remain underground, relying on the colony to feed and sustain it. If a queen is killed, the rot grubs retreat far underground and one of the larvae starts to undergo the transformation into becoming a full-fledged queen. This process takes several years, and therefore the colony protects their queen with their lives if necessary.

SATYR REVELER

Medium fey, any alignment

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Performance +7, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Enthralling Performance. If the satyr performs for at least 1 minute, it chooses up to four humanoid within 60 feet of it who watched or listened to the entire performance. Each target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. While charmed in this way, the target idolizes the satyr and will take part in the satyr's revels. The charmed condition ends for the creature after 1 hour, if it takes any damage, if the satyr attacks the target, or if the target witnesses the satyr attacking or damaging any of the target's allies.

Magic Resistance. The satyr has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sleepless Reveler. Magic can't put the satyr to sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The satyr makes two ram attacks or two shortbow attacks.

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

SPAWN OF KYUSS

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 76 (9d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Saving Throws Wis +1

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

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

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Regeneration. The spawn of Kyuss regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or a body of running water. If the spawn takes acid, fire, or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the spawn's next turn. The spawn is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Worms. If the spawn of Kyuss is targeted by an effect that cures disease or removes a curse, all the worms infesting it wither away, and it loses its Burrowing Worm action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spawn of Kyuss makes two attacks with its claws and uses Burrowing Worm.

Burrowing Worm. A worm launches from the spawn of Kyuss at one humanoid that the spawn can see within 10 feet of it. The worm latches onto the target's skin unless the target succeeds on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. The worm is a Tiny undead with AC 6, 1 hit point, a 2 (-4) in every ability score, and a speed of 1 foot. While on the target's skin, the worm can be killed by normal means or scraped off using an action (the spawn can use this action to launch a scraped-off worm at a humanoid it can see within 10 feet of the worm). Otherwise, the worm burrows under the target's skin at the end of the target's next turn, dealing 1 piercing damage to it. At the end of each of its turns thereafter, the target takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage per worm infesting it (maximum of 10d6). A worm-infested target dies if it drops to 0 hit points, then rises 10 minutes later as a spawn of Kyuss. If a worm-infested creature is targeted by an effect that cures disease or removes a curse, all the worms infesting it wither away.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.



SPIRIT TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (15d10 + 15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Giant

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Incorporeal Movement. The troll can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns. If the troll takes psychic or force damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 3) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. The stunned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) psychic damage.

SWARM OF CRANIUM RATS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages telepathy 30 ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Illumination. As a bonus action, the swarm can shed dim light from its brains in a 5-foot radius, increase the illumination to bright light in a 5- to 20-foot radius (and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius), or extinguish the light.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The swarm's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). As long as it has more than half of its hit points remaining, the swarm can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *command*, *comprehend languages*, *detect thoughts*

1/day each: *confusion*, *dominate monster*

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Telepathic Shroud. The swarm is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as to all divination spells.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

SWORD WRAITH COMMANDER

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, shield)

Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Martial Fury. As a bonus action, the sword wraith can make one weapon attack, which deals an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a hit. If it does so, attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Turning Defiance. The sword wraith and any other sword wraiths within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sword wraith makes two weapon attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Call to Honor (1/Day). To use this action, the sword wraith must have taken damage during the current combat. If the sword wraith can use this action, it gives itself advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn, and 1d4 + 1 sword wraith warriors appear in unoccupied spaces within 30 feet of it. The warriors last until they drop to 0 hit points, and they take their turns immediately after the commander's turn on the same initiative count.

WARFORGED SOLDIER

Medium humanoid (warforged), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +4, Survival +4

Damage Resistances poison

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Warforged Resilience. The warforged has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned and is immune to disease. Magic can't put it to sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warforged makes two ardblade attacks.

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

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Protection. When an attacker the warforged can see makes an attack roll against a creature within 5 feet of the warforged, the warforged can impose disadvantage on the attack roll.



APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE CREATORS

Not *Another Monster Quest, Volume 2*, was the collaborative effort of a talented group of creators. They are the heart and soul of this project, and without them none of this would have been possible.

Alex Niederberger (@soundsofbones on Twitter and Bandcamp) is a composer and TTRPG designer who strives to create experiences that experiment with story and form. Dungeon design and non-violent conflict resolution have been of recent interest, but—in the end—getting to work with cool folks has been the most rewarding part of joining the TTRPG community.

Ashton Duncan is a freelance editor and writer. You can find her posting pictures of her dog and cooking her way through the *Heroes' Feast* cookbook on Twitter @ashtonnduncan. Her recent works include *The Glitter Grimoire* and *Van Richten Dies in Ravenloft*.

Bob Carnicom is a TTRPG writer, husband, and dog dad. He is best known for *Warforged or Warforged Unknown*, a best selling duet style adventure written for one Warforged character trying to find their lost memory cells. You can follow him on Twitter @Bob_The_Tree.

Brent Jans has worked as a freelance fiction and TTRPG editor for the last fifteen years. He is currently an editor for *On Spec Magazine*, a Canadian quarterly publication of speculative fiction, and has edited for all four volumes of the *Uncaged Anthology*, as well as the *Unbreakable: Revolution Anthology*. He is currently the lead editor for *Heroic Chord* from Peach Garden Games and *Court of Blades* from A Couple of Drakes. You can read more from him at renaissancegamer.ca.

Brittney Hay (they/she) is a non-binary, best-selling TTRPG creator, wife, mom, and overall geeky nerd person. They have written for several DMsGuild projects such as *Animal Sidekicks*, *Eat the Rich: Volume #1*, *Eyes Unclouded*, and most recently *Heart of the House* and *Playing Possums*. In her spare time, she enjoys reading fantasy novels and historical fiction, playing board games with their family, and going hiking in the

wilds of Colorado. You can find them on Twitter @FNDungeonMom and check out her portfolio at dungeonmomdesigns.carrd.co.

Cameron Day is the copper dragon behind Daylight Publications, an RPG company that brings you books and supplements filled with pop culture homages and massive story-shaking ideas, such as his two hits *Supers & Sorcery* and *Comets & Cockpits*. When he is not behind the desk writing for RPGs, he is a full time history teacher in southern New Hampshire. You can find him on Twitter @daylightpub1066 or go to his website <http://www.daylightpublications.com/> to stay in the loop!

Cindy Butor (she/her) lives in Kentucky with her partner Sam and their three beautiful monsters (i.e., cats) Dinah, Cicada, and Lottie. By day, she is a reference librarian stressed out about providing adequate services to the public, but by night she is a writer and crafter stressed out about meeting her deadlines. You can find her other works on the DMs Guild under her name, listen to her TTRPG shenanigans in the actual play podcast *4Ever GM*, and follow along with her crafting at twitch.tv/cindy_bee.

David Markiwsky is a writer, artist and editor in Canada, with an obsession for all things fey. David's work includes titles such as *Gimble's Guide to the Feywild*, *Uncaged*, *Unbridled* and the stand alone game *Utopia*. You can find David rambling about art and game design on Twitter @DavidMarkiwsky.

Emmerich Hauf is a non-binary writer and game designer from central New York. This is their first game and they have been thrilled to be a part of this project. For more queer shenanigans and creative projects you can find them on Twitter @wizardsandbeans.

Erin Tierney (@triggy42 on Twitter) is a writer and creator of immersive arts. From murder mysteries to video games, she loves art that makes the viewer a participant. By day she is a bookseller, escape room host/builder, and games journalist.

Fabby Garza is a Mexican American trans woman, tabletop writer, and podcaster currently living in Austin, Texas, with her gf and their three cats. She has written for *Pathfinder*, *Starfinder*, *Hard Wired Island* and other games. You can find her in the actual play podcast *Eidolon Playtest* or on her twitter [@Fabby_Garza](#). She likes Bears.

Grady Wang is the co-founder of The Gallant Goblin, which produces all manner of TTRPG content from reviews on YouTube to supplements on DMs Guild to minis and other merch at [gallantgoblin.com/shop](#). He is best known as the writer of *The Gray Merchant of Asphodel: 100+ Theros Magic Items* and a contributing writer for *Sirens: Battle of the Bards*. He is on Twitter at [@gallantgoblin](#).

Gordon McAlpin is a freelance book designer, illustrator, and animator based in Somerville, MA, where he lives with his wife Karyn and their two cats, Dipper and Mabel. He has an MFA in Design from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. As a TTRPG book designer, he has worked on *Elminster's Candlekeep Companion* and *Darkhold: Secrets of the Zhentarim* (for designers Anthony Joyce and Justice Arman), *Monsters of the City* and *Monsters of the Wilderness* (for Cawood Publishing), and *Kingdoms & Warfare* (for MCDM Productions). You can find more of his work at [gordonmcaldin.com](#).

Jacky Leung is a Chinese American award-winning best-selling TTRPG writer, designer, and editor. He has worked for *Wizards of the Coast*, *Paizo*, *Evil Hat Productions*, and others under various roles. He is also the Creative Manager of *Unbreakable Publishers*, a platform for Asian creators telling OwnVoices stories through TTRPGs. You can find him on Twitter ([@deathbyimage](#)).

Jason Miscia is a freelance writer and TTRPG creator. Previous writing credits include *The Bedtime Man*, *Ravenloft Gazetteer: Verbrek*, *Kermikk the Slaad*, *Marvelous Archetypes: Ultimate Addition*, and *Ezmerelda's Dossier of Dread*. You can find Jason at [Jason Miscia Writes](#) or on Twitter as [@MuppetofaMiscia](#).

Kathleen Harrington is a retired university instructor (zoonotic diseases and public health) who is now happily immersed in editing for her long-time passion, D&D. She's also a cat mom, druid, and general geek/nerd. You can find her portfolio at [kathleen-harrington.carrd.co](#).

Kael McDonald (he/they) is a writer and artist from Oklahoma, and the creator of comic series *Vigilante 2890*. He shares his work at [kaelmcdonald.com](#) and on Twitter as [@KaelMcDonaldArt](#). Kael believes the power of story changes the world and wants to tell stories that better reflect the range and diversity of our human experience.

Katie Van Munster makes maps for wildlife conservation and is a freelance artist, game designer and writer of fantasy. She has a Master's degree in Environmental Science and is thrilled to be able to pursue both of her lifelong passions: creating imaginary creatures and saving real ones. You can find her on her website, [katievanmunster.com](#), and on most social media at [@katievanmunster](#).

Ginger aka **Laura Armstrong** (they/them) is a queer TTRPG writer and cartographer. They live in rainy Edinburgh with their partner and cat. They mainly write games about ghosts. You can find all their games and maps through their Twitter [@inkyginge](#).

Lessie Nieves-Paugh is a Puerto Rican Illustrator that uses various art styles that evoke the use of colors, textures in her theme of fantasy realism in order to create a vision for the unwritten stories. She has worked on several indie projects in the TTRPG which can be found on [@linktr.ee/ribbonotes](#).

Lydia Van Hoy, the Mother of Goblins, is a best-selling TTRPG creative. They're best known for their work on DMs Guild titles such as *The Half-Race Handbook* and *The Adventures Domestic Handbook*. You can find them being chaotically queer on Twitter [@lydiavanhoy1](#), or follow their projects at [motherofgoblins.gay](#).

Matthew Stirling (He/They) is a non-binary creator, illustrator, maker, and dungeon master. They spend most of their time creating "The Beyonders," a fantasy comic series. You can find his work [@hannahmaycreate](#) on Instagram, TikTok and Etsy.

Niki Pell is an artist and craftsperson who loves finding where magic and the mundane intersect. Right now they are trying to learn how to roller skate and keep their garden alive in the South Carolina heat. Find them on Twitter as [@niki0pell](#).

Noah Grand (They/He) is best known as the ENnie nominated writer of *Jaunt to the Center of Faerûn*. They also worked on best-sellers *Darkhold*:

Secrets of the Zhentarim, *The Princess Project*, and *Master of None*. As an editor, they are best known for fostering inclusion and mentoring new writers on projects like the *Eat the Rich* zines and *Friends, Foes and Other Fine Folks*. All rumors of Noah looking for excuses to sneak beholders and owlbears into adventures are completely true.

Paola Harris is a designer and illustrator originally from Bolivia. She spends her time designing geeky D&D inspired merch for her store Paola's Pixels and drawing fanart. You can find her on Twitter as [@irrel](#).

Saga Mackenzie is relatively new on the TTRPG creator scene and is a queer trans freelance illustrator primarily focused on fantasy cartography who also dabbles in adventure writing and world building. She now has several stand-alone or collaborative adventures on the DMs Guild including the (at time of writing) Electrum bestseller *Song of the Mountain* — part of the *Player's Primer* series, and several more in various stages of development! When not creating D&D content she is juggling multiple ongoing RPG campaigns both as player and DM. You can follow her for the latest on what's happening at [@pyxistyxgwj](#) on Twitter.

When **Sam Hope** ([@SamPHope](#)) needs to relax after a high octane day of being an accountant, he settles down to review, blog about, and occasionally create TTRPGs and their supplements.

Sariel Snowings is a non-binary 2D artist and illustrator working primarily on video game and TTRPG content. You can find their work on most social media under the handle [@SarielSnowings](#).

Thai Williams (He/Him) is a half-Filipino, half-English adventurer with a penchant for daydreaming and sharing the excitement of exploring. As it turns out, creating fantasy worlds, stories, and lore is one of the best ways to do both at the same time! You can find the majority of his work on his website, [OfMetalAndMagic.com](#), or posting weekly fantasy noticeboard posters on Twitter under [@Metal_And_Magic](#).

Tineke Bolleman is a freelance RPG writer who lives in the Netherlands and holds a day job in IT. She loves writing adventures. When not writing, she relaxes by gaming, reading, and cuddling with an assortment of pets. She can be reached on Twitter through [@DireOtterGames](#).

Tully R. Gibney is a non-binary TTRPG designer, editor, mini painter, and Twitch streamer. Follow them on Twitter [@tullavin](#) to keep up with their upcoming TTRPG and mini painting YouTube channel, Twitch stream announcements, and daily mini painting hobby streak posts.

Ymia is a Belgian based illustrator, cat mom and D&D nerd. Her drawings range from detailed animal centered illustrations to TTRPG-related drawings. You can find more on her social media here: [linktr.ee/ymia](#).



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