

Out of the Box



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Encounters for the Fifth Edition of the world's greatest roleplaying game **Credits**

Publisher

Nerdarchy

Lead Designer and Writer

Mike Gould

Additional Writing and Design

Ted Adams, Jacob Budz, David Friant, James Introcaso, CJ Leung, Lysa Penrose, Guy Sclanders, Doug Vehovec

Editor in Chief

Doug Vehovec

Additional Editing and Proofreading

Matt Click

Art Director

David Friant

Cover Artist

Sarah Dahlinger

Interior Artist

Kim Van Deun

Cartography

Darryl T. Jones

Layout and Design

Doug Vehovec

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Out of the Box at D&D Beyond

You'll be able to run encounters through D&D Beyond's Encounter Builder but will have to use assets provided by Out of the Box encounters like the maps and descriptions. It was the only way to do it without giving away the book for free there. You'll have to be logged in to access the content, which you'll find individually by clicking on the encounter title below. You can also find Out of the Box's home at D&D Beyond through this [link](https://www.dndbeyond.com/nerdarchy/out-of-the-box) (<https://www.dndbeyond.com/nerdarchy/out-of-the-box>)

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AKA DAKKRYNN, DERRICK CLARK, DESERT RAVEN GAMER, DESIRAE V., DESPINA HARTLEY, DESTINY OF THE FATED, DEVENNOYAR, DEVIN BROWN, DEVIN RY LESTER NELSON, DEVIN TAYLOR, DEVONSON BODDIE, DEWEY WELCK, DEXTER CHU, DIANNE BUTTERWORTH, DIANNE KING, DIDAN BAY, DIEGO, DIEGO VISINTIN, DILLON VANBUKISKI, DIMIJANSEN, DIMITRI FULCONIS, DJ BLACKFORD, DJ TOMMY DLG, DM BADGER BURNS, DM DISCO DAN, DM ESS JAY, DM KELLY WILLIAMS, DM MATT RES, DM SCOTT HANKINS, DMCANCOO, DMFLUMBI, DMC400, DMDARKMYARK, DMZELLARE, DOM ATLAS, DOMENICO IOVINO, DOMINIC A. AMMANN, DOMINIC REYNA, DOMINIC SARTERRE, DOMINIK WABRA, DON COFFIN, DON WALKER, DONAL MCCLELLAN, DONALD D'AMBROSIO, DONALD GERASIMCHIK, DONALD W CASTLEBERRY, DONALD W LESHER, DONKEYOPERA, DONNY BIGGESTART, DORJAN WRIGHT, DOUG, DOUG ATKINSON, DOUG BARHOLOMEW, DOUG HULSETH, DOUG MARVEL OF THE RUBSTEL CLAN, DOUGLAS BLUME, DOUGLAS CHUCK, DOUGLAS REILLY, DOUGLAS VINE, DR SHTEG (DUNGEON RABBI), DR. DM, R.E.L., DR. ERIC FAY, DR. JERRON HERBROD, DR. PAOLO (SCHINDOCTOR) SPINETTI, DR. PETER VERNER, DR. TORNADO GAMES, DRAGON CHEMIST CHRISTOPHER, DRAGONGEM, DRAGONICUS, DRAGONSNEEZE, DRAKE OLIVER, DRAZLI, DREAD PIRATE ROBERTS, DREW BRANSON, DREW FORCHIC, DREW GIVIN, DRUELTHEGAMER, DRUMMERK20, DUANE WILKEY, DUNBAIR, DUNCAN T., DUNCAN YOUNG, DUSTIN "DARTH WELCK" FIEDLER, DUSTIN BROWN, DUSTIN FOSTER, DUSTIN NAYLOR, DUSTIN STINE, DUSTIN TALL, DUSTIN WELDER, DW RATHUS, DWAYNE BENNETT, DYLAN ARNOLD, DYLAN CUNNINGHAM, DYLAN DORTON, DYLAN HILDEBRAND, DYLAN MOORE, DYLAN VERHELST, DYW WYRM, EAGLE033 (MICHAEL), EAMON NEBONNE, ELAN V. NUNN, ED BAILEY, ED PUENTE, ED RYDER, EDDIE "DSX" KALISTA, EDDIE CATICH, EDDIE PECINA, EDDIE THE LOVABLE TRAMP, EDUARDO VIEIRA DM 'S PARTY, EDWARD B., EDWARD ENTWISLE, EDWARD LEONARD, EDWARD PIZZELLA, EDWIN MORRAN, EDWIN STALINECKER, EG CRITICAL, EVENHOW, ELEMENTAL76, ELI LEVINGER, ELIZABETH DUBOIS, ELIZABETH MUNSON, ELIZABETH NORTON, ELIZABETH ROMERO, ELRIC SOMMERS, ELRIC THE DROW, EMILY EMERY, EMILY VALES, EMMETT & OTTO'S DADDY, ENRIQUE NIEVES, ERENE THEODORAKIS, ERIC ANDERSON, ERIC BETTIS, ERIC BLOAT, ERIC BOWYER, ERIC DIETSCH, ERIC FINNETT, ERIC G. SCHUMANN, ERIC HALVORSON, ERIC HANSELAR, ERIC HARTMAN, ERIC HELICKSON, ERIC J. KOOSTRA, ERIC JORDAN, ERIC KITCHEN, ERIC M. FRIEDMAN, ERIC MILLS, ERIC MINOR, ERIC MOORE, ERIC R. DITTELT, ERIC ROBERTS, ERIC ROMANCE RAMIREZ, ERIC SCHAEFGES, ERIC SCHAFPER, ERIC WEIDUS, ERIC WELSH, ERIC WHITE, ERICK LAVELLE, ERICK SMITH, ERIC T. SMITH, ERIC VALE, ERIC VARIJAY, ERIC MARTIN, ERIN RATTLEE, ERINN DALL, ERNESTO DOS SANTOS SOARES, ESP. ESFER OF THE DARKLANDS, ETHAN BRASHFARS, ETHAN TURCO, EVAN CURRIE, EUGENE "XERACROSS" HOFT, EVAN LINDQUEST, EVAN MCROOM, EVELYN LEE, EYZRA ELLIS, F. OSWALD, FABIAN VAN LEIJDEN, FAR'AEI, FARRBOR LENNART, FEARCHAR BATTLECHASER, FEDERICO NERONI, FELIPE DEJESUS HERNANDEZ, FENG, FERNANDO A. LOBO, FERNANDO RAMIREZ, FINLY JOHNSON, FINLY DUNN, FINN SHETLER, FIREBRAD, FITZY, FLORENCE BLAKE ANDREWS, FLORIAN MULLARD, FLORIAN OGRZE-WALLA, FLORIAN 'BARATHUR' KASTELL, FLORIS SMIT, FLOWERS, FLYNN JOHN ALFRED SPEAKMAN, FOREST KISTNER, FORREST MCDONALD, FRAGINATOR, FRANCIS GAGNON, FRANCISCO J. CARRERO, FRANCOIS 'THE' MALHERBE, FRANK AND HANNAH KRIGER, FRANK AND KRIS HALDERSON, FRANK D. SCALISE IV, FRANK GRIFFITH, FRANK KANALAS, FRANK KLEHN, FRANK MOLNAR, FRANK MOORE, FRANK STEVEN GIMENEZ, FRANKENSTEIN, FRANZ, FRANDOG, FRAZER GALT, FRED KINNEY, FRÉDÉRIC ROUX, FRÉDÉRIK RATIG, FRÉDÉRIK ENGMAN, FRIDGE, FRITS KIJLJMAN, FRITZ RANDALL, FRYLOK, GABRIEL GAMERS, GABRIEL AND VICTOR C., GABRIEL. BELL, GABRIEL. DRANSFIELD, GABRIELLE GUERRE, GABRIELLE SEABORN, GAGE RICHENBERG, GALASSO, GARAK RUSTBERAD, GARETH HUGHES, GARETT SOHL, GARNER STRONG, GARNET R. JAMIE (SHEPHERD) GARRETT J. MOYNIHAN II, GABRIEL WERTZ, GARY BRANDON, GARY BRYANT, GARY D. MCBRIDE, GARY TEETERS, GAVIN MEREDITH, GAVIN OF ALLAN, GAVIN QUINLAN, GAVIN RUELNEADE, GEAORVOLFDRAG, GEEK TANK GAMES, GEIR P. GRONINGS-ETER, GENE ARMSTRONG, GENIEVEY MARTIN-PICOTIN, GEOFF "SLOTH" PENNYES, GEOFFREY A. DEAN, GEORGE GRAYBILL, GEORGE HERDE, GEORGE KENDRICK, GEORGE WEBSTER, GEORGE GERRY, GEORGE & RONALINE WHITE, GEXTROLLO, GEZA LETSO, GIGI RESTARTADEMON MARRELL, GILROY SON OF CRAG, GK, GLADHIVEN, GLENN "THE CHEZ" LAURSEN, GLENN HARTNAPF, GLENN ROLLINS, GLENN RUYNAN, GLENN STEYNEN, GLENN STECKLER, GMSMURF, GNOMEBOY M PORTENT, GOATSHANKS, GOKUDOSAMAT, GORDEROKOS, GORDON PARTON, GRADY A. LINSFORD III, GRAHAM BROWN, GRAHAM DAVEY, GRANT "REALMS" WHITFIELD, GRANT "WARPEDMAGE" BERGESON, GRANT & MAYLIN KIDWELL, GRANT IGNOTUS BRES, GRANT LINDSAY, GRANT POTTIS, GRANT "GREGOLOT" SMITH, GREG HUMBLE, GREG KINSELA, GREG LOHMAN, GREG LUCAS, GREG MILLER, GREG ROWE, GREG S. MILES, GREG THE GOLEM, GREGOR VOT, GREGORY "GREGORY" THOMAS, GREGORY KIVOT, GREGORY LEWIS, GREGORY LYNN, GREGORY P. RICHARDS, GREGORY WATSON, GREG CHAVEZ, GREYSON CLARK, GREYWOLF, GRONLZ, GROVER WHITE, GUCCOMOLÉ, GUY ELLJOFT, GŮS SISKI, HAL SANDS AND MARK KNEASL, HALLI HAMILTON "VERDESTROMT" SPIVEY, HAMISH BROWN, HANS MASTEN, HANS PETER RAK, HAPE GÖTZ, HARKNESS, HARRIS MILLER, HARRISON, HALOLI MAKALEA, HAWK DESIRE, HAYDEN ROBERTSON, HAYDN ROBSON, HEATHER SMYTH, HECTOR LEE HEAVISIDE, HECTOR MAYAGOTTA, HEIDI JU GOVIC, HEIKKI D TÄHTINEN, HEIKO MUELLER, HELGRAF DRAGON, HELG JANK, HENDRIK-KUS PRETORIUS, HENRI D'AMBRENOIR (CURT LEHMAN), HENRIQUE CL JUCÁ, HENRY BELZLAIRE, HERSEY, HERR IJGENDEMMAND, HERSHEL. SEGAL, HORO PRIME, HOMERO HERNANDEZ BARRERA, HOPE CLOTHING KC, HORIB, HUGO PEREZ, HUGO SCHROEDER IV, HUGO THE HUGE, HUNTER "HBOY" FERNANDEZ, HUNTER ORRINOIRNY MAYER, HUNTER KOERNER, HUNTER NEWELL, HYBRIDGEAR, I FORGOT WHAT S IS FOR, IAIN WRIGHT, IAN, IAN "PPANNE BOY" PANTALE, IAN BECKER, IAN DAVIDSON, IAN DORAN, IAN GOLD, IAN MARTINEZ, IAN PARKS, IAN STAULTZ, IANIELL MARTIN, ICEASSASSIN77, ICECWMY, ICKONING, IGANCIO CORDOBA, IGNATIUS RALTENBACH, IKEN OWENS, ILVA SHAPOVALOV, IMANI BELZEL, IAN TRPG, INGEKMEKRON, INGJALD, INKA "KAN" SALLINEN, INSIDIOUS HEAL, IRAMIS VALLANDE, ISAC COOKE-KHAN, ISAAC MCCANNAN, ISAAC JOHNS, ISMAIL AKTAS, IVAN F. E. BELVIS NAVARRO, IVAN PALKOVIC, IVAN RACHVEY, IVAN MACKAY, IVAN OPTEKMAR, JZ BARLEY, IZBAJA SLYSMILE, J. E. MUNROE, J. MILLER, J. PAUL KELLER, EVANS PAYNE, J. LARKIN, J. PHILIP SWEET II, J. WASHINGTON, J. BANNER, J. P. BRYANT, JR., SULLIVAN, JWINSTON, JAKOB MANULUA, JAMBIEST, JACANISE FEDZ, JACK AND GRIFFIN EVAN, JACK CAUNAUGH, JACK CHURCHER, JACK HUTCHINSON, JACK KESSLER, JACK M. ELPHINSTONE, JACK NELLER, JACK PLUMBER, JACK REAPER, JACK SHANDLEY, JACK THOMPSON, JACK VIDULICH, JACKIE MILLER, JACKSON SKINNER, JACOB B. HUNTSBERGER, JACOB FORSTER, JACOB HONIGFORST, JACOB I. HATHFIELD, JACOB KOSMAN, JACOB LESINSKI, JACOB PATERSON, JACOB SCOTT FITE, JACOB SLINGSBY, JACOB STAPLES, JACOB T. MONTANA, JAMIE "GRIN" MARTINEZ, JAIMY ROOZANT, JAKE CLARKE, JAKE LOVELESS, JAKE MANNION, JAKE MARION, JAKE MCHUGH, JAKE SCHULZ, JAKE SMITH, JAKE "THINK LATER" DOMINIC, JAMES AKA. UBER, JAMES ALEXANDER DELSLE LEFEVRE, JAMES BIEHL, JAMES BLOUNT, JAMES BRADHAM SIMPSON, JAMES BROWN, JAMES BLYS A SOT GREY, JAMES C. FLEMING, JAMES CANDALINO, JAMES CAREY, JAMES CLEMENT, JAMES D. WOOD, JAMES F. DAVIS, JAMES F. 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RUSHIN, JARED NORRLE, JARED ONDRICEK, JARED TAYLOR, JAROD TAPT, JARRAD JARRAD MAIERS, JARRET WARREN, JARRETT HEALE, JARRETT HAMILTON-MACLAREN, JASA PAAVOLAINEN, JASMINE WALKER, JASON "STEBOPR" STEPHENS, JASON 'JAYNAV' HEWITT, JASON "THE ARGONAUT" GREENLEAF, JASON AND KYLIE, JASON B. SMITH, JASON BORELLEAU, JASON C. FLITSCH, JASON CHINN, JASON CONLON, JASON CRISCUOLO, JASON CROCI, JASON CROPPER, JASON DAVID, JASON DIXON, JASON E. SAUNDERS, JASON FEHR, JASON FRANSELLA, JASON FRASER, JASON GIFFORD, JASON HEREDIA, JASON J. BROWN, JASON L. WRIGHT, JASON LEE EARL, JASON LEE MILLER, JASON P. JORDAN, JASON PALFREY, JASON PETTIT, JASON POTTRATZ, JASON REICH, JASON REYNOLDS, JASON ROBERTS, JASON RYDER, JASON STUBBLEFIELD, JASON THORNE, JASON W., JASON WALSH, JASPER S. (FINNADAN), JAVIER ANDRES VERDIN, JAVIER PEREZ, JAY DABBS, JAY RANKI, JAY ROSS, JAY SCHAMMKEIT, JUDISTICE, JEAN-SEBASTIAN SAMSON, JEFF "PUFF" IRVIN, JEFF "HALEDDIT HALE, JEFF ARMISTEAD, JEFF BLACK, JEFF BLOCK, JEFF IVerson, JEFF JANISSE, JEFF KELLAM, JEFF NEELY, JEFF SCIFERT, JEFF VERACHTERK, JEFFREY GARZA, JEFFREY DRAUGHON, JEFFREY MOORE, JEFFREY S. HEMPHILL, JEFFREY SUZUKI, JEFFREY W. KRAMER, JEFFREY WEAVER, JEN "PIXELSCAPES" GAGNE, JEN "LEOTA" SCOTT, JENNIFER & BARTON PYLE, JENNIFER CARPENTER, JENNIFER KRETCHMER, JENNIFER M. BOWERSOCK, JENNIFER PAWLK, JENNIFER SUMMERS, JENNIFER WHITE, JENNINE CERRA, JENNY BRISSON, JENNY THOMPSON, JEREMIAH CHARLAND, JEREMIAH DINKINS, JEREMIAH JOHNSON, JEREMIAH T. BRUCE, JEREMIAH T. PONTIER, JEREMIAH WOODS, JEREMY BRIDGES, JEREMY BULL, JEREMY CHARLES, JEREMY EDWARDS, JEREMY FISHER, JEREMY FISHER, JEREMY GRIFFIN, JEREMY HAMAKER, JEREMY HAULT, JEREMY HOCHHALTER, JEREMY JACOB REYNA, JEREMY POULIN, JEREMY RABE, JEREMY WALKER, JEREMY WEVAND, JEROME GORBER, JERROD L. SHARP, JERRY J. BOLDUC, JERRY R. BAKER, JESPER NOHR, JESPER PETERSEN, JESSE BLANKENBURGH, JESSE C. JESSE, MACALGHEY, JESSE R. BENNETT, JESSE TILMMERMAN, JESSE VAN WIDEMAN, JESSE THE ASBENTMINDGED, JESSICA ENGMAN, JESSICA GILMAN, JESSIE RINE, JESSY SPARKS, JESTER AND THE TRAVELER, JVS, JESUS BENJAMIN ACETSA, JESUS RIS, JETPACKE, JIM DORTCH, JIM LOCASCIO, JIM O'SULLIVAN, JIM WEAVER, JIM ZINK, JIMMY THE PENGUIN, JIRI OBEJS, JITSU PAGING, JIM JASON HOBBERG, JOAN QUERALTÓ, JOANNE BR. JOAO CARREIRA, JOAQUIN IGNACIO OMILIOS, JOEY CONNER, JOE "BIG DOG" BIANCO, JOE ABBRENO, JOE CAPANO, JOE CONWAY, JOE CYGAN, JOE DESANTIS, JOE FERREIRA, JOE GREGSON, JOE KNIGHT, JOE KIPSKY, JOE NELSON, JOE PARIS, JOE POTTER, JOE RABBIT, JOE S. M. GONZALES, JOE SHINE, JOE WEBSTER, JOE COBBS, JOE ESTERLINE, JOEL L. ATWOOD, JOEL MAC RITCHIE, JOEL W. M. MCCULLOUGH, JOHANNES G. GISK, JOHN "CURSEDTECHNOCRAT" BEJARANA, JOHN "HATAMAMA" PATO, JOHN "MAXALAO" SCHLOE, JOHN & ARBY CARTER, JOHN & KIMBERLY POOLE, JOHN A. DOWER, JOHN BAER III, JOHN BEVAN (TJ), JOHN BOWLIN (VIRTUALETT), JOHN BYRON PARKER, JOHN CLEARY, JOHN CONSTANTINE, JOHN DINGMAN, JOHN DOLAN, JOHN DREW, JOHN G. HARTNESS, JOHN H. BOOKWALTER JR., JOHN HEALY, JOHN HEY, JOHN HSEIH, JOHN HY ZHANG, JOHN KELLY, JOHN LEWIS, JOHN LIEB-BALMAN, JOHN LUTTREFF, JOHN LUZZA, JOHN M. ATKINSON, JOHN MARK SMOTHERMAN, JOHN MCCLOY, JOHN NIPPER, JOHN O'CONNOR, JOHN P. HARDICK, JOHN PALMER, JOHN PAUL, JOHN PLOWMAN, JOHN REED, JOHN SCOTT, JOHN WATTS, JOHN WOODWARD, JOHN-MICHAEL CASKEY, JOHNATHAN KOKOSKI, JOHNATHEN LENNAX, JOHNNY VARGAS, JOHNT-THE-HUNTER, JON BESSLEN, JON CHRISTOPHER BACH HENNINGSEN, JON GRIM, JON GRVTHE STODLE,

JON H, JON KELL, JON L HARDING, JON NEPSHA, JON WANDREY, JONAS EWING AND HIS LOVELY PLAYERS, JONAS KARLSSON, JONAS TESCH KLEIST ELMULD KOHL, JONAS-CRALUND, JONATHAN "NASH" SULC, JONATHAN ALVEAR, JONATHAN BEAN, JONATHAN BELL, JONATHAN BRADLEY, JONATHAN BROWN, JONATHAN FRANKLIN, JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, JONATHAN KROMREY, JONATHAN LYE, JONATHAN M DIBENEDETTO, JONATHAN PETTIT, JONATHAN POWELL, JONATHAN SIDWELL, JONATHAN STOCKWELL, JONATHAN TOT, JONATHAN WRIGHT, JONATHAN COLAND VALDIVIA, JONNE K KUOKKANEN, JORDAN BASINSKI, JORDAN CHAN, JORDAN HARRIS, JORDAN KEMP, JORDAN P. SNOW, JORDEN OSBORN-SELBY, JORDI PÉREZ JORDÁN, JORDY VLASKAMP, JORGE ESPINOSA, JORGE SALAZAR, JOSE CAMACHO, JOSE GOMEZ JR, JOSE LUIS MESSEGUER, JOSE PEREZ, JOSEPH C, JOSEPH CHIRELLI, JOSEPH KULLMANN, JOSEPH L, KROGMIEBER, JOSEPH L, RUTLEDGE, JOSEPH M ADAMS, JOSEPH MAREK, JOSEPH MATTHEW JAMES, JOSEPH MILES, JOSEPH OLWENICKI, JOSEPH PATRICK FRANCIS MCGUIRE III, JOSEPH TUCCLIO, JOSEPH WARNER, JOSEPH WEEKWRIGHT, JOSEPH WINNERS, JOSH B, JOSH BAKER, JOSH BECKA, JOSH BECKA, JOSH BROWN, JOSH GRAY, JOSH JOKOR BELT, JOSH MARSH, JOSH MCKAMIE, JOSE NEESSE, JOSH R, JOSH RENSCH, JOSH RICHARDSON, JOSH ROOKS, JOSH SKINNER, JOSH WILLIAMS, JOSH WINANS, JOSH WINDSOR, JOSH WINDSOR, JOSHUA CHIL, JOSHUA CLARK, JOSHUA D GARCIA, JOSHUA DOBLING, JOSHUA E. MILLER, JOSHUA FR, JOSHUA GOPAL-BOYD, JOSHUA HARVEY, JOSHUA JAMES WIGANT, JOSHUA K REARDON, JOSHUA KENSLER, JOSHUA KENSIS, JOSHUA LAPPLE, JOSHUA LESRIE, JOSHUA MANIRJAN, JOSHUA MEEHAN, JOSHUA PORTER, JOSHUA RICHARDSON, JOSHUA SECKEL, JOSHUA STAUFFER, JOSHUA THORNTON, JOSHUA TYLER JONES, JOSHUA WILBERT, JOSHUA "SCRIVEN" IBARRA, JOSHUA BROWN, JOYD OLDHAM, JOURDAN LEES, JP PATTERSON, JT TEAGUE, JUAN FRANCISCO "ZEROMEGAS" GONZALEZ, JUAN PABLO GONZALEZ, JUDAH HOPKINS, JUERGEN BARTIS, JULIAN A. ANDERSON, JULIAN BEHRENS, JULIAN C MAKIN, JULIAN HORNE, JULIE BLAKE, JULIAN "HELLA" PIERLOVISI, JURAJ KREMNICAN, JUSTIN & RACHAEL LITZENBERG, JUSTIN ALLIS LONG, JUSTIN C, JUSTIN D SIMON, JUSTIN D. NICKERSON, JUSTIN DAVEY, JUSTIN DUARTE, JUSTIN E. MILLER, JUSTIN FERRELL, JUSTIN FORLENZA, JUSTIN HORNUNG, JUSTIN LINDBECK, JUSTIN MILES, JUSTIN POAGE, JUSTIN ROSS, JUSTIN RYAN CRISLER, JUSTIN SINKS, JUSTIN STORIE, JUSTIN THOMAS, JUSTIN USINGER, JUSTIN VAN DUINE, JUSTIN WOLD, JYM COKE, JORN BISSEK, KJ BOESER, K. BELLE, K. DOMINIQUE HALLETT, K. LANDGRAF, KENNETH BERSFORD-JAMES, KAELEGH POST, KAILASH JAGDEO, KAIYO, KALACIA, KALAFUT FAMILY, KALLE D SMITH, KANE SKIMMING, KANNAN ALGESAN, KARI BOWER, KARI DECHENE, KARI KREUTZER, KARI L. WEAVER, KARI SCHMIDT, KARNER-OSTHEIMER FAMILY, KARY REALM MASTER K WILLIAMS, KASSIE M, KASTIR, KATE HAWKINS, KATE WEBSTER, KATHARINA KRETSCHMAR, KATHERINE A. WINTER, KATHLEEN GORDON, KATHRINE DIMMOCK, KATHRYN FLUCHT, KATIE VOBGERL, KAVEN FORTIN CLAVEAU, KAY, KAYLIN MCCONNELL, KAYTEE PALLAGE, KEAN MAIZELS, KEITH AMMANN, KEITH DWYER, KEITH E HARTMAN, KEITH ENLOE, KEITH HALL, KEITH MACKAY, KEITH SANDERSON, KEITH SPLAWN, KEITH VANBOSKIRK, KEITH VANDENBERG, KEITH WILLIAM MCIFE, KELLY FINN, KELLY GRIFFIN, KELLY MISSEY, KELLY MURPHY, KELVIN WOOD, KEN "KILROY" REINERTSON, KEN FARNSWORTH, KENDALL PATTERSON, KENNETH A CARROLL, KENNETH BARRAS, KENNETH BROWN, KENNETH DAVIS, KENNETH JANZ, KENNETH JENSEN, KENNETH MCCLAIN, KENNETH MCKINLEY THOMAS, KENNETH NATALI, KENNETH WAYNE GENTRY SMITH, KENNEY DE RYCK, KENNY BEECHER, KENT LANGHAM, KENT RICE, KENT TAYLOR, KESE, KESZANNÉ, KEV WALSH & THE LOVELY MATES, KEVIN "KEEPEERGA" FOSTER, KEVIN ACORN, KEVIN BETTERTON, KEVIN D. MERRILL, KEVIN DUDLEY, KEVIN HUGHES, KEVIN J WILSON, KEVIN JACOBSEN, KEVIN JESSOP, KEVIN LACROIX, KEVIN MCAVOY, KEVIN MCINTYRE, KEVIN MCMANUS, KEVIN MICHAUD, KEVIN MOORE, KEVIN R. SMITH, KEVIN RHEAULT, KEVIN RICHMEIER, KEVIN SHILLING, KEVIN STONER, KEVIN V, KEVIN KEVIN, KHOFUZZ, KIAMI B KOSTAS, KIBA, KIM VAN DEUN, KIM WINSTRAND, KIP KORRIVEAU, KIRBY ADAMS, KIRK MOLLIS, KJELL GUNNAR TRIMBO-FORTHUN, KLI OF DRAGON'S DEN, KNIGHTSTALKER, KODY CHRISTOFFER, KODY TENCH, KOD THEKOBOLD, KOMBYAN NIKOLADZE, KONNAR BOOR- MAN, KOSTAS MAVRIDIS, KRAIG HORGAN, KRELLIC, KRIS FITZ, KRIS SAUNDERS, KRISTEN A. RISMILLER, KRISTEN DURBIN, KRISTEN MCINTOSH, KRISTOPHER STEVENS, KRISTY OVERATTIS, KRYS OTSUKA, KURT C YOST, KURT RAUER, KURT TERFLOTH, KUZMICK, KYLAR DRAGONFANG, KYLE "WEEMS" STEVEN, KYLE ALLYN, KYLE BICHICI, KYLE BURNS, KYLE CAPPS, KYLE CHAPMAN, KYLE ENNIS, KYLE GRAHAM, KYLE HARALDSEN, KYLE HAUKE, KYLE J. KNUDSEN, KYLE JAMES, KYLE JURIK, KYLE M. JOHNSON, KYLE MCCARDIE AND JACOB HOLLOMAN, KYLE MULLIGAN, KYLE PEARCE-OBRIEN, KYLE TODD LEMIEUX, KYLE WELSH, L. BERSFORD, LACHLAN & LAWRENCE HOLBROOK, LANDISTHETHEIK, LANDON MEASELIS, LARZELLOT, LARA BAKER WHELAN, LARA OHYLA, LARRY CLINE, LARRY DILLON, LARRY FELTON, LARRY THERIAULT, LARS DOOMPHLE, BELLECKE, LARSON STEFFER, LAURA PENNING, LAUREN KLAUMENZER, LAUREN KNEPPER STEPHEN, LAURENCE B WALLS, LAURENS ZAMAN, LAURI KOOBAS, LAWRENCE HELBER, LEE AJIFU, LEE ANN HARRIS, LEE CHANTAL, LEE D A LEE JONES, LEE S, LEIGH STANISLAW, LENNART HENNIGS, LEO NEGRON, LEO FLEWICK, LEONARD LEE, LERON CULBERTH, LESLIE BACKHARTH, LESTER DODGE, LESTER WARD, LEVI HIGHT, LEWIS KELLY, LIANA LILSKI KING, LILTH WOODBURN, LINCOLN RAY WILLIAMS II, LINDSAY AUSTEN, LINDSAY RAE ELLINGTON, LISA ROWALD, LITTLE E. LIZ, MADDEN, LLOYD A HASKIN IV, LLR, LODEWYK BOUTE, LOGAN M GOODEN, LOGAN MAYNARD, LOGAN MCCREA GILBERT, LORA LYNN SHANKS, LORD BOURDYMAN, LORD CPT MORIAN LONGMONT, LORD SILVER, LORENZO DE FELICE, LORETO PETER ALONZI III, LOSTPAIL ALDREY, LOUIS DA KNIGHT OF D&D, LOUIS HETRICK, LOUIS ISHIL, LOUIS ROY, LOUIS-ANDRE PELLETIER, LUCA LAVERGNE, LUCA LETTIERI, LUCA VAVALA, LUCAS JUSTINIAN, LUCAS MAY, LUCHO CASTRO, LUIS "POCHOLO" ORTIZ, LUIS TORO, LUKAS KLAPATCH, LUKAS SOGARA EDRUP, LIJKE ELIAS HADDAD, LUKE FABIS, LUKE G., LUKE KAY, LUKE MCPHAN, LUKE RENDA, LUKE SAUTER, LUKE THORNGAGE, LYNN TACKETT, LYNN, M BOCKI, M GRUBBS, M K WOOTTON, M PULLEN, M DILLON-MAYNE, M HARRIGAN, M. T. FRALEY, MAJ, MANDERS, MCGVRACHIDILLOS, MA2-DL, MACEO ZEBEDA, MACIEJ NIEGOWSKI, MADELINE ROSE, MADURGAN, MAGNUS & DANTE SHEIKH, MAGNUS PETER LARSEN, MAJA BUCER, MARCANTHONY LOFTHOUSE, MAKERHACKS, MAKOTO YUAN, MALCOLM A. 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SMITH, MURRAY AATDES, N LYONS, N/A, NARIL, NASHAN, NANCY WHEAT, NATALIE ABINANTE, NATASHA ENCE & ROBERT SMITH, NATE BROEKER, NATE BURT, NATE CARTER, NATE CHUMLEY, NATE DRAGONMYACE LAEDAM, NATE MORIN, NATE WEST, NATE "LHUY" SHAPIRO, NATHAN ORRIN, NATHAN BROWN, NATHAN COOK, NATHAN CUSICK, NATHAN EKSTROM, NATHAN HUVA, NATHAN JOHNSON, NATHAN OJEDA, NATHAN RAPHELD, NATHAN SPARKS, NATHAN VON SON, NATHAN WEBSTER, NATHANAL STUVER, NATHANIEL CHAN, NATHANIEL CHAPMAN, NATHANIEL CURTIN, NATHANIEL MUZZY, NATHAN CLERKE, NEDROK, NEIL BLUMFIELD, NEIL LAIRD, NEIL OEL, NELL, "THE BLNK DOD" SCHLAX, NENOS, NENTHEN-GAMING TEAMACTUALITY, NERD IMMERSION, NETTLEFILMS, NEVIRK, NIGELPROFESSOR, NIC REEL, NIC SCOTT, NICHOLAS AHN, NICHOLAS ANTONI, NICHOLAS COTTERILL, NICHOLAS DUX, NICHOLAS HARVEY, NICHOLAS MCGOUGH, NICHOLAS MCKEE, NICHOLAS PACZKOWSKI, NICHOLAS PHARRIS, NICHOLAS PITTSIEY, NICHOLAS R KANDAS, NICHOLAS RINTCHE, NICHOLAS SCAMMAN, NICHOLAS TORGERSON, NICHOLAS TURNER, NICHOLAS W., NICHOLAS WYNNA, NICHOLAS ZANDUIN PHILIP, NICK "DWHISPER" MARTIN, NICK ACKERMAN, NICK ANDERSON, NICK BARDESLON, NICK BEE, NICK FOSTER, NICK GUMBY EVENSON, NICK HETSCH, NICK JEFFERY, NICK JONG, NICK LANE, NICK MATHER, NICK MILLER, NICK MORAIS, NICK NAVETTA, NICK O'BRYAN, NICK STEVENSON, NICK WESSELMANN, NICK ZAGORSKY, NICK-NACK, NICKOLAS SZILAGYI, NICOLAS DESJARDINS, NICOLAS M, NICOLE D. CAMPOS, NIGEL, "NUB" SANFORD, NIK SIEFKE, NIKER DUE, NIKI AND CELINA, NIKLAS "WASTELAND" BLOM, NIKLAS T. LONSTRUP, NIKOLAUS SHEEHAN AKA THE DREAD LORD, NIKUTU-HU, NILES GREGOR, NILS K. HOLTE, NIMROD SLOR FUTTERMAN, NN, NOAH BRUEMMEYER, NOAH HOUISER, NOAH JAMES BOLLINGER, NOAH KARRER, NOBITSUKA, NOLAN SMART, NOODLEBOX, NORM SATIYO, NORMAN GROSS, NORSE FORDY, NOTKESKRAM, NULG BULL, NYMIE THE POOH, OORBOY, ODDI LEVI KAREN, ODESSERSON, ODIE BRACY, OLEKSIY KOVALYK, OLIVER CARLSON, OLIVER HAHN, OLIVER AL., OLIVIER AMYOT, OMAR EL, TABARI, OAKSEY/PANOKEY THE GREATEST WIZARD, ORLIN HRISTOV, OTHER, SIDE, STEVE, OUT OF THE BOX, OWEN DRISCOLL, OWEN GOMYER, OWEN SLEVIN, OZAMAR P. W. ARNOLD, P.B. PAHEY, POISON, PAGE E. PAOXIERE, PAPERCASTLES, PARADIGMBLUE, PARKER SEYMOUR, PARKER SMITH, PASCAL "HOCUS" HERRMANN, PASCAL "NEGRAI" DANIEL, PASTOR PALLAGE, PATCAT127, PATRICK DOWEN, PATRICK "LEVITE" SCHENK, PATRICK A. COOPER, PATRICK ASCHWANDEN, PATRICK BRUCE, PATRICK CIRACO AK ANCIENT GAMER, PATRICK COLEMAN, PATRICK COTTELL, PATRICK DISHOP, PATRICK FARMER, PATRICK FARRELL, PATRICK GREEN, PATRICK HORSMAN, PATRICK KLOES, PATRICK LACKEY, PATRICK LAWSON, PATRICK MAHLER, PATRICK MCHUGH, PATRICK MURRAY - RED SHIRT GEEKS, PATRICK NEILL, PATRICK OSBORNE, PATRICK P., PATRICK ROSENTHAL, PATRICK SCHATZ, PATRICK SHEPARD, PATRICK TRAEY, PATRICK WOOD-BURN, PATRICK UELAND, PAUL BLUYSTONE, PAUL EDISON, PAUL HAMNETT, PAUL KENSLER, PAUL LANDIS, PAUL LOUCH, PAUL MASKELNYE, PAUL, MICHAEL NEWMAN, PAUL MILLER & CAPTAIN SCRIBS, PAUL NYTRAL, PAUL PARDEE, PAUL PHILBIN, PAUL R. WEST, PAUL REDMAN, PAUL RICHARD BANG, PAUL SCOTT, PAUL SEAGRAVE, PAUL SHEPPARD, PAUL SIMON, PAUL SPARKLES, PAUL STALLINGS, PAUL STEFFENS, PAUL TING, PAUL XENDRENN MESMER, PAWHAENDED, PAZOOSE, PEDRO EUGÉNIO GUIMARÃES CARVALHO, PEDRO PANZARDI, PEDRO ROCHA, PEP PEP, PER-PHILIP SOLLIN, PERRIN OF GNOTH, PETER ANDERSON, PETER EARLE, PETER FARSANG, PETER FASTENAU, PETER FOX, PETER GRAY, PETER HALDENBY, PETER J. SMITH, PETER KJEVALL, PETER KRYNSINSKI, PETER LEIGH, PETER MAGUIRE, PETER REEVES, PETER THE BEARD, PETER-ALBERT HAUZELDEN, PETER-PAL KOCH, PHIL ONG, PHIL "HAIRY" DAVIDSON, PHIL MILLAR, PHILIP EHRIG, PHILIP "DOC" FRACICA, PHILIP MICHAEL, PHILIP SHININE, PHILIP STUTLER, PHILIP V ROGERS JR, PHILIP LEIGH, PHILIPPE PERSAUD, PHILIP JONES - ELVINKNEEAPER, PHILIP STRASSMANN BAKER, PHILIP WARD, PHILIP ZELLER, PHOENIXWAKI, PHOTETH, PHIREQAZD, PIERRE TO, PLATINUMBLEAD, PONTUS KARSTEN, PORTER HENSON, POSTALNEDER, PRAESUL, ELYSIA, PRAGUEPIDE, PRAKASH UPADHYAYULA, PRIETY AND PAUL ROBINETTE, QOHEIET, QUADRE ARCHAICQUE, QUINN MONFRAYS, QUEST VANKIRK, QUINN CRANDALL, QUINT R & B, J SCOTT MCKENZIE, R. REN HACH, R. WILLIAMS II, RACHEL "SHEEPY" DONAHUE, RACHEL GEL, RACHEL PHIMPHOVNG, RACHEL WHEEL, RACHIT MODI, RAFA FELIZ, RAFAEL DIAZ RUIZ, RAFFLES, RAJUN, RALPH & KENDRA JIMENEZ, RALPH KARTER, RAMON SCHWAMMBERGER, RAMOS ROB, RAMSAY FEATER, RANDALL A. 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EVANS, ROBERT SMITH, ROBERT THOMPSON, ROBERT WINCHESTER, ROBERTO DEVOTO, ROGB, ROBN "WAR MAKE" BOHRA, ROBO GORLIN G, ROBYN AND TONY DEROCCHIS, ROB HOLDSWORTH, RODERICK EDWARDS, RODNEY C GOTTSCHALK, ROGER BARBASS, ROGER FARLEY, ROGUEUTALYR, ROYLTIC, ROMAN DIJON, ROMAN BENDT, RON PARK, RON ROBERTSON, RON SARGENT, RON COOMER DIJHUIS, RONALD DUNBAR, RONAN PLESSIS, RONDA D BEERS, RONDIVEN ARCHAIME KING OF AMUP, RONNIE KIEKEL, ROY DONOVAN, ROSS AITKEN, ROSS BEL-SOME, ROSS BROCKUNIER, ROSS GIMBLETT, ROSS HUGH KILPATRICK, ROSS PATTERSON, ROSS RICHARDS, ROSS RICHARDS, ROSS SNYDER JR., ROXANNE READY, ROY ANATI, ROY BREES, ROZIEE PEARSON, RFG CRUNCH, ROK ANROLLE, RU, HARTSELL, RUBEN, RUBEN BODHAN, RUFUS DE RHAM, RUIKYUS HOGGOZAKI, RUDE ANDREAS GRIMSTAD, RUSS LIZETSKI, RUSSEL HALL, RUSSELL "REDJACK" PETREE, RUSSELL AVERY LONG, RUSSELL HOWES, RUSSELL HOYLE, RUSSELL PATTI-WILLIAMS, RUSSELL VENTMIGLIA, RUSSELL WHITE, RUSTAN MELVILLE, RUSTY MILLER, RY SCALLES, RYAN "VIKTORY" GLASS, RYAN BRADFORD, RYAN ELLIOTT, RYAN HELMS, RYAN HOVINGH, RYAN J. LEONARD, RYAN KELLY, RYAN KRAUKIJS, RYAN LAMPYER, RYAN LEARY, RYAN LEWIS, RYAN MONAHAN (GM DPS), RYAN NAWROTZKY, RYAN NICOLAI, RYAN OLSON, RYAN PRICE, RYAN RAMPERSAUD, RYAN SAKAI, RYAN SAWYERS, RYAN SCHNABEL, RYAN SCHULTZ, RYAN STUMVOLL, RYAN TAT, RYAN TREANGEN, RYAN WATKINS, RYAN WEAST, SABRINA WALKER, SAGIA ADULALAH, SAGOMAR, SAIL GUMDIZ, SALTNEPPER, SAM ALI, SAM BAUER, SAM BURTON, SAM CIMINI, SAM CONWAY, SAM DAVIS, SAM ES, SAM JOHNSON, SAM PRATT, SAM RICHARDS, SAM ROSENTHAL, SAMANTHA BLANCHARD, SAMANTHA DALPHINIAS, SAMANTHA PLATE, SAM PALGIREN, SAMMY JAY, SAMUEL PANSHIRE, SAMUEL BRADBURNIE, SAMUEL F. LETT, SAMUEL FARIAN RABER, SAMUEL HILL, SAMUEL JOHNSON, SAMUEL VIMES, SANDER BO-GAARDS, SANDRA DEBIANO, SANDRIDER, SANDY MURRAY, SARA GAVILLUCCI, SARAH FRASER, SAVADGE DRAGON GAMES, SAVAGE DM, SAWYER B. REDDEN, SC LINDEN, SCALL SCHWUNDI, SCOTT "OPERATOR" BERGER, SCOTT "TALON" M., SCOTT B. SCOTT BRAGATO, SCOTT C PINNOW, SCOTT DELBUI, SCOTT E SANDERS, SCOTT EMOND, SCOTT GEISLER, SCOTT GORSKI, SCOTT HANDREN, SCOTT JORDAN, SCOTT KIEH, SCOTT KONG, SCOTT M. KHELI, SCOTT P. SCOTT P. MCELHINNEY, SCOTT RADZIEWICZ, SCOTT REICHEL, SEAMUS MCNIFF, SEAN "MACE" KING, SEAN BINKLEY, SEAN BYRNE, SEAN CHAMBERS, SEAN DRISCOLL, SEAN G. DONAHUE, SEAN GARRIGAN-GALL, SEAN GOLDSPIR, SEAN HOPKINS, SEAN KELLEY, SEAN LESLIE, SEAN PURCELLA, SEAN V. OWEN, SEAN W MCNNES, SEAN WIGGINS, SEBASTIAN GREGS, SEBASTIAN MULLER, SEBASTIAN PADILLA, SEBASTIAN WILL, SEBORKNING, SELENA PAPPAS, SENOL LEONG, SENOR CHEEZY POOPS, SETH KELLEY, SETH PINGREE, SH, TAN, SHADRAW, SHAELYNN BINGHAM, SHANE DOWEN, SHANE HALLGREN, SHANE MC GLAUN, SHANE NAPIER, SHANE WOOD, SHANNAN MC CARI, SHANNON BOKSTHAUVER, SHARANJIT PADHANA, SHARKFING, SHAUN KHEHRMEYER, SHAUN M PEER, SHAUN FENNESSEY, SHAWN GARETT, SHAWN HUDSON, SHAWN P. SHAWN POLKA, SHAWN R. JOHNSON, SHAWN RASSEN, SHAWN TOOLE, SHAWN "THE SCURRY" MURRAY, SHIA WILLIAMS, SHEPHE, SHELBY ECKHOLT, SHELBY ROSEDALE, SHELDON YONEDA, SHELLEY A MILLER, SHENI PASCHEN, SHIVER/ELECTRIC, SI NOSSER, SIDDHARTHA GEORGE, SIEGRIED OF APIN, SIGVALD BACKTHORNE, SIJTJE VAN DER MEER, SILAS HALL, SILVERPUCK, SILVIO HERRERA GEA, SILVIUS ALTUS, SIMON FRASER, SIMON GRAAFSSA, SIMON LAMARCHE, SIMON TANNER, SIMON WARD, SIMONE, SINDRE GLOSTI, SINJUN STRYDOM, SIR ANDREW MILLETT, SIR DAN CLARK, SIR WALTER DESCHAIN, SITI A. STAGG, SJ DICKEY, SKYLAR GUIMOND, SKYLAR SIMMONS, SKYLER ELSEY, SKYRSHOUSOL, SLAINTE MATHAI, DRUP OF HIBERNIA, SMITY YORUBENJAEGER, SOCKYDM, SOL SUKUT, SOLMAN, SOLRACEPTIM, SONOFOSOFAMAN, SOUTHKATHONE VILAYSAĆ, SOVEST555, SPECULI, SPENCER POCOCC, SPIEWOK KAMIL, SPORKULA VON SPORK, ST JACOBSON, STAG MCDYRE, STARK MAXIMUM, STARLING RIDGEWAY, STEVE NADON, STEF MAC - DANCES WITH KOBOLDS, STEFAN HEILTJES, STEFAN SCHLICHTING, STEFANIE MENIK, STEFANO BALDANTONI, STEFFEN SØRENSEN, STEINES J., STEPH BALAGOT, STEPHANIE, STEPHANIE GLOCK, STEPHEN CARRATT, STEPHEN COX, STEPHEN DHOOGE, STEPHEN F WORKMAN, STEPHEN GETTY, STEPHEN HADDOCK-WELER, STEPHEN J. LUCAS, STEPHEN KNIGHT, STEPHEN KNIZEK, STEPHEN KRAK, STEPHEN RAMIREZ, STEVE "TROLLISH" BULLA, STEVE CONNELL, STEVE JENKINSON, STEVE MUSA, STEVE PARR, STEVE ROGERS, STEVE THOMSON, STEVE O MITCHELL, STEVEN A CROUCH, STEVEN A. HOLOMSHEK, STEVEN BARNES, STEVEN BLEDSOE, STEVEN CRAIG EPPERSON, STEVEN D. CLARK, STEVEN GREY, STEVEN HOLMES, STEVEN KLEINHEINZ, STEVEN MELARA, STEVEN MINTON, STEVEN NESS, STEVEN OLMSTED, STEVEN SMITH, STEVEN T. NORRIS, STEVEN THANS, STEVEN WARD, STEVEN WELLS, STIG ARNE LÆRKERO, STOVERS, STONE HALL, STONLEYMANCER, STORNIJA TODOROVIC, STORIEN AGOSTINELLI, STURGAN MCGHEE, STUART MCWEN, STUART JOHNNY Q, T.C. CoMMANDER, SULLY (MATTHEW) SULLIVAN, SUPA-KITSUNE, SURAGAL, SUSAN WEBB, SVEN SCHUTTER, SWEET TITO, SWIFTY, SYLVIAN COUSINEAU, SZARICOT, STRAHEM "MOESITTA" STRENDEN, T. ALDERSON, T. REILLEY, TABLETOP TEAMBUILDING LLC, TAFERLING, TAI NGUYEN, TAKÁTS ATÁLYA, TALYNA KELLUM, TAMIKO FUJIO, TAN, TANNER DONALD, TANNER338, TANTRILL, TAPPO KURKUNEN, TARA GEMMELL, TARN CARLSON, TARRAL MURPHY, TARYN & RYAN BROWNFIELD, TAYLOR COX, TAYLOR INESTA, TAYLOR KENT, TAYLOR KLINE, TAYLOR VIK, TEAL GALE, TEAM RAD INTENTIONS, TEAO ANIMAR, TECH WILKINSON, TED BURFIELD, TED CHILDERS, TED CORY, TED KERAMIDAS, TED MELWEE, TEHRKZZ, TELEMACHOS ROSE, TERJE NILSEN MADSEN, TERMIUS, TERRELL FARMER, TERRELL SHAW, TERENCE GRACE, TERRY V HOBBS, TESS WINLOCK, TESTOSTENOLUS BROHAM, THADDEUS RYKER, THAJI, THARNAAU, THAT NOEL GUY, THE ALBERT CLAN, THE BARNETTS, THE BUDGET DM, THE D'AMATO FAMILY, THE D4 MAFIA, THE DEVOURER OF WORLDS, THE IRON BREWSKEY, THE KILTHROAT KING, THE MIGHTY TRUMP BRYES, THE RAVEN ROUS, THE SPACE RANGER KNOWN AS ROSSI, THE WANDERING FIRE, THERBAVO, THE DEDMIGNO, THINGC007, THEODORE SIMONSON, THEOBOROBY, THIEN NGA, THIS HOOGSTASTER, THOMAS BROOKS, THOMAS BYRBER BROCK, THOMAS DELWAIDE, THOMAS ISON, THOMAS J. TALAMINI, THOMAS LUTZKE, THOMAS MILAZZO, THOMAS MULVIHILL, THOMAS SOWELL, THOMAS SUETENS, THAGO MO, TIWAZ, TIDBIT, TIDETURNER, TIL, LAMMER, TIM, TIM BOSLEY, TIM CORTIS, TIM CROWE, TIM CZARNECKI, TIM GRAHAM, TIM HENGELGER, TIM HIBBERTS, TIM JOHNSON, TIM JORDAN, TIM RATTI, TIM S., TIM S.M., TIM SAIFERS, TIM SCOFF, TIM STOOP, TIM VOVES, TIM WINTON, TIM "KLEEFH" SHIRK, TIMO, TIMO KUTSCHER, TIMO S., TIMOTHEUS OBERDER, TIMOTHY, TIMOTHY "MIDMIDAL" ARTHUR, TIMOTHY (TIMLORD) MILLETT, TIMOTHY BAKER, TIMOTHY COUILLARD, TIMOTHY DAVIE GRAMSHAW, TIMOTHY G. SMITH, TIMOTHY KENNEDY II, TIMOTHY N TURBA, TIMOTHY RICHTER, TIMOTHY TREGALTY, TIMOTHY THOMAS, TIMSHREYES, TINA PRICE, TINA SHEARER, TINDALEN, TIREY MORRIS, TITUS F. J. KORDIAK, TJ NEECE, TONIAS ANGEHRN, TONIAS HALL, TONIAS PETER, TOBIN F. STRIDER, TOBY, TOBOLD, TOBYR, TOP JEFFCOAT, TOP MILLER, TODD WALSH, TOM ANDREA, TOM BURDAK, TOM CRANE, TOM FRICKANICE JR., TOM MECHLER, TOM ROBERTSON, TOM TRIEBE, TOM VELTHUZEN, TOMARE UTSLU ZO, TOMMI HEIKKINEN, TONY BALLARD-SMOOT, TONY BLAKE, TONY FREY, TORYR STEED, TRAISS, TRAVERS, THE LOST, TRAVIS ATKINSON, TRAVIS CALLAN, TRAVIS HORNER, TRAVIS LOVELLETTE, TRAVIS SCHUMACHER, TRAVJANUS, TRENT GAREWAL, TRENT NGUYEN, TRENT PRIETO, TRENT SCHULTZ, TREVOR 'RAEL' GUSTOVIC, TREVOR ADAMS, TREVOR BURGER, TREVOR CLENDANIEL, TREVOR HOBBS, TREVOR HOBBS, TREVOR JOHNSTON, TREVOR NATALIE, TREVOR THOMPSON, TREVOR WAYNE MAYES, TREY MATTHEWS, TREY MILLER, TREY MORTON, TREY ROBBINS, TRISTAN ALEX D, TRISTAN LAMBDIN, TRISTAN LOUDET, TRISTAN MARES, TROLLIDM, TROY ELLIS, TROY EVERETT, TROY HIER, TULERAN, TUREVANCY, TY ELTON, TY PEPIN, TYE PARKER, TYLER CAMPBELL, TYLER CHEATHAM, TYLER DANH, TYLER GASTEGIER, TYLER GUTHRIE, TYLER J. ROMAN, TYLER MATTHEWS, TYLER SUTHERLAND, ULAA, UBERGROG, ULFBJORN FRANKSON, UNCLE CHRISSEY SHAW, UNCLE UNCLE KYLE, UNMADDEGAMING, UROTHJRAZAIL, UZAI QURAISHI, VAM, STEKIAK, VANANAN, VANJA MATTIAS, VALHROGUMERO, VEDRIN, VELTYR DRAKE, VERRI, VICINGAMING, VICTOR LING, VICTORIA HAIRSTON, VIDIR, VIGGOSLIGO, VIKTOR BOVALDUS, VINCE COOPER, VINCENT BALEDRÉ, VINCENT DICELLO, VINCENT PELLETIER, VINCENT TENIA, VINCIUS ROYKAT PINTON, VLAD 'NOA' GUIL-VEZAN, VOLNSKIY, VOLODYMYR I. REVENKO, VORPAL3, VSEVOLOD BENKUNSKY, W SLUGH, WD TRACY, WMORGAN, WOLFPACKNATION, WADE "THATWADEGUJ" COTTLE, WADE NUDSON, WAGGZ, WALDY DM, WALTER CHIE, WALTER HOSING, WALTER SREBALUS, WARREN C. WARREN CANON, WARREN JAMES ZORZOPIAN, WARREN SCHADER, WARREN TOCHOR, WAWOOZIE, WAYNE CUNNINGHAM, WAYNE WELGUSH, WENDY FADERSEN, WES, WHITEFENCH, WIL TAYLOR, WILDTIM, WIL, WILL CHAPPELL, WILL ESSIG, WILL HOPKIN, WILL MUNOZ, WILL SPARLING, WILL TEMMEN, WILLIAM, WILLIAM (RPGMCMA) OSWIN, WILLIAM ALTZER, WILLIAM C COLBURN, WILLIAM C FLETCHER, WILLIAM EATHER, WILLIAM EISENMENGER, WILLIAM FELLARS, WILLIAM HOWARD, WILLIAM HUMAN, WILLIAM J. MOORE, WILLIAM J. SCOTT II, WILLIAM JACKSON, WILLIAM JAMESON, WILLIAM LABRAKE, WILLIAM LARSON, WILLIAM LIGGETT, WILLIAM NIELSEN, WILLIAM NYL, WILLIAM PARNISH, WILLIAM ROSE, WILLIAM STAUFFER, WILLIAM T WOLFS, WILLIAM TAYLOR SALSBURY II, WILLIAM TEAPLE, WILLIAM LUTTEN VANDER, WISE KING, WIZARDS OF THE HOUSE OF BROADWELL, WOLF BRIGADE STUDIO, WOLFE G. DRAKE, WOLFF BOUVY, WYNN ALEXANDER, WYN VERNIEL, YAHUN WISPRIDER, YANIBUS FUZZYFOOT, XATHRUS, XAVI, XELAX, XEON THE KOLBOIT (CC), YAMIL CAMACHO, YANS LUO, YARDEN YACOV, YARLOWBEARD, YORICK "WEPKAT" WEENEN, YUTIM "REVERSED" NOWDAS, YURY DYSENKO, YVETTE BROWN-LOSSON, ZACH WOOD, ZACH LEWISON, ZACH MARTIN, ZACH MILLER, ZACH MILLER, ZACH STROMSODT, ZACH WILD, ZACHARY BERGHAMMER, ZACHARY HUEBSCHER, ZACHARY KOON GRANGER, ZACHARY MARTINEZ, ZACHARY MAYER, ZACHARY MORRIS, ZACHARY NORTON, ZACHARY PAXNE, ZACH NEWMAN, ZAHARIEL, ZAK KOTLOW, ZANDRA HOFFMAN, ZARAH, ZARATHUD, ZAYAN AND SAGAR PATEL, ZELLER HOLMES JR, ZEMESAN, ZEMI, ZEYAD BOUARIK, ZIGGY RAMONE, ZOF, ZOLTAN DEATHSPAWN, ZOMBIE ROOMIE, ZR GAN, ZUMBATHRIST, ZYRAXI, "THE WORLD CHAMP" BENJAMIN MELTZER

Foreword

I can't begin to tell you how often I've stressed myself out over developing a unique or interesting combat encounter for my adventuring party, let alone having to quickly develop one when a campaign takes a turn I wasn't expecting! Countless times I've found myself attempting to write in a vacuum, tearing my hair out in my attempts to surprise and challenge my players in new and extraordinary ways. Sometimes I'd pull it off! Other times, not so much. This was the difficulty of the "dark days," when supplementary content for DMs was not only difficult to find, but difficult to vet for balance. Forum boards and wikis could only help so much when you have no real means of trusting the source. However, we live in a wonderful time when the community has grown and developed support for stressed Dungeon Masters on a scale I had only dreamed of.

Nerdarchy in particular have been a bastion of creativity and encouragement for DMs of all ages and experience levels, bringing both quality commentary and accessible content to the space through their online videos, their thoughtful blogging on all things Tabletop Roleplaying Games, and eagerness to help those seeking guidance on social media with their own difficulties running their home game. Their crew of talented writers, designers, and genuine enthusiasts of the hobby are a fantastic example of what makes this play-space so welcoming and wonderful. They've put their hearts into sharing the experience they've gained in their years playing and running their own games, as well as study on game design and preparation philosophies, and this product is no exception.

Each encounter outlined within is presented with reasoning for their development and sources of inspiration, making it rather simple to see where the ideas within are coming from, and how best to implement them into your existing narrative. The descriptions that follow are given a succinct and easy-to-digest framework for presentation, showing you all the moving parts you can utilize to maintain and advance the challenge for your players without pre-defining the surrounding story too tightly (which I find a trap some supplements fall into,

making it difficult for some to tailor it into their own creative story). Many of these encounters concisely outline a handful of variables, helping you prepare for some of the expected, and giving you an idea of the unexpected that may fall in-between. Beyond that, the breakdowns present suggested combatants (should battle break out), as well as the level of treasure and rewards to be acquired by surmounting the dangers within... and then a series of complications that can arise based on the actions taken by the adventurers who have stepped up to the task of your challenge. The thorough-yet-compact presentation of the conflicts within this collection make for a rapidly comprehensive resource for Dungeon Masters to pull from, take inspiration from, and even offer a format for developing their own encounters should they enjoy the contents within.

I cannot recommend this collection enough. I've been inspired by a number of the hooks in these pages, and hope you will be as well.

— Matt Mercer

How to Use This Book

We designed each of the 55 Out of the Box encounters to stimulate collaborative storytelling between Game Masters and players. Puzzles, traps, hazards and creatures present challenges and problems for any group of adventurers. The intent of each encounter is to create opportunities for exciting and dynamic stories to emerge through these elements.

To help you discover the encounter best suited to your needs and the needs of your players you'll find helpful tools and guides throughout this book. Text appearing **in bold** within each encounter indicates the names of creatures, while spells and magic items are printed *in italics*. New creatures and items created for Out of the Box can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B at the back of this book. Anything else you need including creature statistics, rules and guidelines can be found in the Fifth Edition System Reference Document.

Each encounter in Out of the Box contains similar elements, outlined below.

Introduction

This section explains the origin or inspiration for the encounter. Out of the Box encounters developed through interaction, engagement and feedback from players of all sorts. Some are new interpretations of classic tropes, others influenced by music, film, literature or art and some are simply compelling scenarios to present adventurers. In all cases the emergent story depends on you and the players at your gaming table. We hope the insights and inside thoughts provide deeper context for the encounters and energize your imagination to create your own scenarios for players to engage with.

Description

Here you'll find the details and dynamic elements of the encounter. Illustrations pair with encounter maps empowering you to make each scenario come alive in players' minds. Suggestions on how and where to drop encounters into your campaign help you present them seamlessly. New mechanics, puzzles and obstacles provide unique ways to interact with the environment and creatures, including expanded discussions on several ways characters can meet and overcome challenges.

Complications

Encounters of any sort often produce unexpected and sometimes unintended results. Many creatures punch above their weight class, with rare and powerful features that put adventurers in peril. Consider this an alert for you to be aware of potential for catastrophic outcomes. But complications describe more than dangers to hit points and character resources. One common complication for Game Masters is player interest. What you thought was an innocuous or random encounter may capture players' imaginations. These are great complications to have! This section may discuss further adventure hooks and ways to incorporate encounters into longer quests or even entire campaigns.

Environment

Out of the Box encounters are versatile enough to use almost anywhere. Listed environments recommend the setting best suited to enhance encounter components.

Quick Reference Guide

Included with each encounter is a sidebar giving you a quick reference for each encounter. This tool serves as a glance at several components of the encounter, saving you time finding the content that will best serve your needs and the needs of the players at your gaming table.

Suggested Level

Encounter levels are calculated using the Fifth Edition Challenge Rating system, based on the creatures and situations designed for each one. The suggested level and difficulty — Easy, Medium, Hard or Deadly — is based on a party of 4 adventurers of equal level. Out of the Box encounters are designed to support any pillar of play, and the suggested level applies mainly to encounters with high potential to result in combat. A party of 20th level adventurers may experience the same challenge as a newly formed party leaving the tavern for the first time in some cases. Where applicable you'll find information about scaling encounters for parties of different levels.

Monsters

Any creatures involved in the encounter are listed here along with their quantity if there is more than one of a particular creature. You'll find any new creatures created for Out of the Box printed in bold here in Appendix A at the end of the book along with their stat block. This section also includes important NPCs adventurers might encounter. Out of the Box encounters are designed to support all pillars of play, and combat is one of those pillars. If a creature has a stat block, you'll find out which ones are included here.

Treasure

Any magic items, art objects, trinkets or other forms of wealth are listed here. You'll find new magic and mundane items created for Out of the Box in Appendix B at the end of the book. Some treasures are not objects at all, but rewards for overcoming challenges nonetheless.



Aces High

Environment

Aerial

Suggested level

2 — Hard

Scale up — add 1-2 of each monster per character level

Monsters

Sky Raider Goblins (3)

Sky Raider Bats (3)

Treasure

Grenados

wisdom at a celestial's aerie, creating encounters in the sky generally comes with the assumption of a higher level. Dragons, wyverns and the like come to mind.

This doesn't have to be the case. Further, encounters originating from above can be applied to any environment where space is available. Consider urban rooftops, open plains, mountainous regions and open seas as other viable locations for an aerial attack. Massive caves and canyons could also be perfectly suitable locations for such encounters. Additionally, combining lower level foes in an interesting way can create memorable encounters.

Aces High is written with an airship in mind, but feel free to change the location as you need. Anywhere with space for flying creatures to attack from above is suitable.

Introduction

Aerial encounters, rare and special scenarios, require a bit more imagination than a standard land based encounter. Whether travelling on an airship of some sort, wandering the lands of a cloud giant or seeking

Description

A cool wind blows across the deck of the airship as it glides through broken cloud cover. The sun sets aglow upon the ship though the passing mists. Moisture glistens on the surfaces, and mists dance through the rigging.

Characters who look up past the envelope (or balloon, depending how airships work in your campaign setting) of the ship to examine the clouds see strange irregular shadows appear from above.

Before they can shout a warning, riders on monstrous winged creatures pass by in a flash. Crossbow bolts pepper the deck like rain, and two ceramic spheres crash upon the deck, exploding into flames. Skeeve's Banshees have launched an assault and they circle around for another pass!

Skeeve's ambitions reach far beyond his goblin kin. Building on their natural affinity with rats and wolves to great advantage, Skeeve and his fellow **sky raider goblins** trained massive bats as flying mounts. Calling themselves the Banshees, they have been raiding airships for months now with great success and have improved their tactics over time.

The Banshees attack in waves called "slashes." They Flyby targets and focus more on creating mayhem for as long as possible before attacking the ship's occupants. Getting away with as much treasure as possible informs their every action.

Banshees ride **sky raider bats** equipped with goblin sized saddles, with the Banshee symbol — a white skull with bat wings — painted on both wings. The sky raider bats hold ceramic pots loaded with alchemist's fire in each claw, trained to drop them when given the right signal by their sky raider goblin pilot.

The Banshees are strapped into their saddles so they won't fall out — Skeeve is nobody's fool — and carry light crossbows. They wear leather pilot helmets with white bat wings painted on each side, goggles and red scarves.

Should they dismount and engage in melee, they carry shortswords and always have their light crossbows.

In addition, the Banshees carry a new weapon, *grenados*. The Banshees also have parachutes in case their mounts are killed, so it's possible the party may meet Skeeve's Banshees again later, or if Skeeve is defeated perhaps another sky raider goblin steps into the role of leader.

The sky raider goblins will not dismount until they think it's safe or until Skeeve orders them to do so. They would rather escape a strong opponent than dismount and face anyone in melee. The swords are a last ditch weapon when they have boarded and are looking for treasure and other loot.

The Banshees attack in slashes. Sky raider bats have a normal flight speed of 60 feet, but if they are in a dive then the bats use the Dash action to move 120 feet past the ship, with the sky raider goblins attacking midway as they pass the ship. Their speed makes it challenging for characters to make attacks against them. Characters have a difficult time determining the target between the sky raider bat and the sky raider goblin during a pass. During a slash, attacks against a sky raider goblin or sky raider bat are made with disadvantage.

Accuracy with alchemist's fire during a slash is similarly difficult. When a sky raider bat drops an alchemist's fire, determine the target randomly. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the blast. Alchemist's fire deals 1d4 fire damage, with an additional 1d4 at the start of each of the target's turns unless they succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity check and use an action to extinguish the flames. However, if an alchemist's fire misses, the ship begins to burn at whatever location it lands. This creates its own series of problems.

The Banshees meanwhile target the deck and fire at anything moving. They are experienced at attacking in this manner, so their attacks with light crossbows during a slash are not made with disadvantage. If they direct the sky raider bats to Flyby the target airship at normal fly speed, they can also throw a grenado.

Grenados are a new weapon. They are a black powder weapon with a new concept — weapon initiative. Grenados can be thrown and have a range of 30 feet, so the Banshees must fly close. When a grenado is thrown, roll initiative for it. The grenado explodes on its next turn. That means it may explode next, or last, or not even until the next turn. Grenados win any initiative ties.

When a grenado detonates, it has a blast radius of 10 feet, and creatures caught in the explosion must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 1d6 piercing and 1d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The grenado also ignites flammable materials in the blast radius.

Complications

Loads. There are two different ways for the ship to catch fire. The Basic Rules provide guidelines on object damage, to help determine how airships and other vehicles can be damaged. However, you can have separate areas of the ship burn with different effects.

If the envelope (or balloon) of an airship starts to burn, there's a real issue. This same thing applies if magical sails hold the ship aloft. What happens or how fast the fire spreads is up to you, but it's a great way to build tension in the fight between slashes by the Banshees.

Characters next to the rails can be knocked or thrown overboard using the guidelines for Shoving a Creature. Using the Attack action, a creature can make a special melee attack to shove a creature, either to knock it prone or push it away. If you're able to make multiple attacks with the Attack action, this attack replaces one of them.

The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Instead of making an attack roll, you make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). You succeed automatically if the target is incapacitated. If you succeed, you either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from you.

Characters have access to all sorts of abilities, features and magic to engage with Skeeve's Banshees in different ways. Spells like *animal friendship* cast on one of the sky raider bats can dramatically alter the scenario. And many characters have a penchant for collecting creatures and monsters as pets, so consider how the dynamic may change if the Banshees have to contend with mayhem of their own when their mounts turn against them. Charming the beast is one thing. It will be hard and take a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check at the very least to calm and potentially mount a sky raider bat.

Skeeve is a crafty goblin, too, and he might parley with the party under the right circumstances. Goblins are greedy and malicious, and delight in having the upper hand. Trying to trick Skeeve with a show of surrender might not be the best approach. But a chance for greater power of some kind would certainly pique the interest of the Banshee gang leader.





Alternatively, Skeeve might start off the Banshees' attack with threats in attempts to intimidate the party into giving up treasure so that there is no fight.

The direction you want to take this encounter is up to you. Skeeve is more than an average goblin, with more than average goals and skills. Feel free to give character class features if you want to ramp up the encounter or to make him a reoccurring villain. If any of the Banshees escape, they'll almost certainly raid the skies another day.

Stories of their wickedness spreads, and airship travel routes may be altered or heavily patrolled. Nobles or merchants who depend

on travelling the route may hire mercenaries for protection, and adventurers with some experience against the Banshees would find a great opportunity. Characters may very well try to find the Banshee's hideout and put a stop to their raiding all on their own.

Maybe Skeeve is in a sticky situation himself, with more dangerous monsters bullying the Banshees into paying tribute. Larger cousins like bugbears and hobgoblins could be the culprit here, or a manticore, a hill giant — you name it.

The party might have forewarning of the attack and are the hired hands of nobles in an effort to thwart this band of Banshees.

This encounter could also begin a whole tradition of humanoid/mount combos, depending on the challenge required. Orcs on griffons, hobgoblins on wyverns or sprites on giant wasps are a few possibilities. The sky is the limit — pun intended.

A great thing about encounters at low levels is the tremendous impact they have on the party of adventurers. They may come to hate goblins henceforth. They might witness terror as ship's occupants fall to their doom or even lose a companion themselves. They could wind up with a pet giant bat.

Particularly if **Aces High** is part of your first session of a new campaign, you may find the players so engaged that it becomes the campaign itself. Consider a fresh group of adventurers beginning a campaign aboard an airship en route to a fantastic city where surely they'll earn fame and fortune.

A run in with Skeeve's Banshees could very well take them in an entirely different direction altogether. And that's okay! If the players in your game become immersed with an encounter, and take away new goals, motivations and interests from the experience, congratulations.

It's my hope that Skeeve's Banshees creates an exciting and colorful encounter for your airship campaign. Enjoy!

Albatross

Environment
Wilderness

Suggested level
6+ — Medium/Hard (Depending on player character actions this is highly variable)

Monsters
Acridor (6+)
Elven scouts (6+)
Elven warden (1)

Treasure
Bracelet of elders

Introduction

I can't speak for other players or Game Masters but I get a lot of my inspiration from music. The simple act of listening to the radio in my car or a playlist on my phone can lead to outbursts of "I have to write that down!"

Songs inspire character concepts, backstories, encounters and scenes I want to lay out for my players, or images leading to character sketches and other artwork. This encounter was inspired by such a scenario.

In this encounter, the albatross is a metaphor. Since Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of The Ancient Mariner*, the concept of wearing an albatross around your neck has come to mean being saddled with a burden or a debt to be repaid.

It could mean being wrongfully vilified, perhaps even willingly so, just to serve a greater good. It could mean bearing an immense responsibility or taking on a curse to save another from it.

In this case, the metaphorical albatross creates a burden, and in a situation not normally expressed in a tabletop game, but which occurs frequently in video games — the escort mission. Testing the resolve of the party and their willingness to share a burden creates tension, the intent behind this encounter.

Description

As the adventurers travel through the wilderness along a twisting forest road, a hazardous mountain



trail or fog-covered tangled swamp passage, characters hear faint cries for help. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check determines the cries to be feminine, but in a voice that doesn't sound human. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check can find the source of this voice and discover an unusual scene.

Hidden in the space of a hollow trunk, a small cave or thatch of weeds an elven woman, obviously badly wounded, huddles with a swaddled infant. When the characters discover her, she looks up at them in a very unsure manner and speaks in very shaky Common.

"New chief. Please help."

She then holds the infant up to be taken. She looks weaker and weaker, finally expiring whether they take the baby or not. When she dies, it is unrecoverable, so a simple *cure wounds* or healer's kit does not help. It now falls to the characters on what they do. The baby starts crying almost immediately.



The characters are being hunted!

What begins now is a variable chase. The intent is to create enormous tension and to use the acridor in waves. The size and level of the adventuring group determines the size and number of each wave, taking into account any previous wounds the group might already have. The acridor attack from out of the fog, and always from a different direction — but never from the front.

Characters should almost feel compelled to run forward toward whatever they think is the right destination. It doesn't matter what the destination is, so long as they head for it. Hiding out simply makes the acridor eventually find them and essentially all the waves find them at the same time — not so good. Unless characters are keen defensive fighters with an understanding of cover, concealment, firing arcs, and are well-supplied, it's better to keep moving.

After a moment, characters hear noises in the distance. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check determines the sound of a hunting party. Echoing from out of sight in the wilderness the characters hear the sound of beating sticks, drums and the like normally used to flush large game. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check determines that whatever the creatures are, they're communicating with each other and are closing in.

If characters don't react swiftly, feel free to add this:

"As you stand there discussing what to do, two multi-bladed weapons strike the soft ground next to you. They look like if a spiral of three dagger blades were affixed to an axe haft. Their alien nature surprises you for a moment."

A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check determines these are **acridor** weapons called kpingas. Elf characters make this check with advantage.

Acridor love to eat all flesh, but elf is a favorite. The acridor will be upon the characters in a moment, intent on eating the infant and the dead mother.

To start off, one acridor attacks. Always have it start with ranged combat, with the fog making the area lightly obscured. The acridor launch two volleys of kpingas for two rounds before closing to melee.

When this acridor falls, add two more. When these fall, add three. If necessary, keep adding and make it seem more and more desperate. Keep the battle moving if possible and keep the descriptions intense. Impress upon the characters how important it is they keep moving.

If characters are absolutely against the ropes and badly outmatched, read aloud the following:

"You can see and sense the locust-like humanoids closing in. They know you have the infant, whose cries seem like a siren call to them. They approach, and you begin to hear a new sound, like wind whistling too loud from too high above. The fog begins to darken slightly. Arrows rain down and into the group of acridor. Dozens of arrows. The acridor dance like marionettes with half-cut strings and those who have survived your defense fall under the weight of these missiles. As the last of them fall, silhouettes emerge from the mists, slim figures in hooded cloaks colored to match the terrain. Many still have bows nocked with

arrows, but not raised yet. A single figure approaches and draws its hood back to reveal a beautiful elven woman with hair the color of autumn leaves. She puts away her weapon and approaches with arms outstretched.”

At first, the **elven warden** speaks in Elvish.

“We have come for the lost chief. Please hand over the child.”

If no characters respond, she repeats herself in Common, rolling her eyes. If a character hands over the child, she smiles and cradles the infant. All aggression from her fades. She removes a *bracelet of the elders*, an intricately forged and woven silver bracelet resembling tangled vines, and hands it to the party.

She adds, without even looking up from the baby, *“You have made safe the lineage of my people. The bracelet grants you safe passage through our lands so long as you respect them.”*



If no characters hand over the child, she asks again, but the **elven scouts** draw and aim their bows at the adventurers. If she asks yet again and no positive response comes, combat with them ensues as well.

Hopefully, though, the characters turn over the child. The elven warden then turns and walks back through the lines of surrounding elves, fading into the fog like a ghost. One by one, the armed elves do the same until none remain. They vanish into the fog like they were part of it.

Complications

Complications are many and varied. One thing that will not occur unless the party makes it happen is the child will never be the direct target of an attack by the acridor. They make it look like that, but any attacks are directed at the person carrying the baby so the baby can be taken alive.

If the character carrying the baby drops, an acridor gets close enough to grab the baby in two rounds. This could result in its own chase, but in reverse order, with characters chasing the acridor. If a character falls unconscious, characters have to decide if they leave that person behind, carry another body or stand and fight. Feel free to adjust the waves of acridor for this.

The intent is not to kill the party. The intent is to make them run and feel tension.

If characters choose to fight the elves, you may want to add a poison effect to their weapons that knocks characters unconscious. Again, these elves would rather not kill. They just want their heir back.

If you wish, add plot hooks around the *bracelet of the elders*. Perhaps tribes of orcs or goblins recognize it and it has exactly the opposite effect. Perhaps this elf community reaches out to the party in the future, as their contacts in the outside world might be limited, and they are the most trustworthy of all the other options.

You could even use this chase to get the party from point A to point B, or have it end among ancient ruins. It's all up to you.

All That Glitters

Introduction

These pages explore the concepts of monsters or treasure as encounters, but not monsters covered in treasure. It's one thing to face a foe and rifle through their pockets and pouches after defeating them. It's another thing entirely when the monster is plated in treasure risking damage being fought through conventional means.

All That Glitters deploys the infamous stone golem, but not in the usual format. Stone golems are essentially

Environment
Dungeon/castle

Suggested level
8 – Hard

Monsters
Golden Horse

Treasure
Paintings (8) worth 1000 gp each, rugs (4) worth 500 gp each, gold plating worth 5000 gp (unless damaged)

magically animated stone statues, which means any statue can suffice. Additionally, by plating this stone golem in gold its true nature is disguised and turns a monster into a lure to guarantee the encounter.



Taking it a step further, changing the form of the statue from a humanoid shape into something less obvious (yet totally believable as a statue) like a horse, we add elements to disguise the encounter. This enhances the lure.

Placing this encounter in a believable space becomes the task. Surroundings lend themselves to the encounter just like any monster does, likewise with the environment. One makes the other more acceptable and plausible.

We'll insert our golden stone golem where one might find one — guarding something even more valuable.

Description

Characters enter a vast and well lit chamber. Lighting comes from lanterns hovering without chain, rope or stands every 10 feet around the outside of the room and 15 feet in the air.

The chamber, a 50 foot square, has a 20 foot high vaulted ceiling. Patterned rugs dyed in rich reds, oranges and yellows cover the floors. Intricate paintings depicting landscapes and portraits of what may be important places and figures line the walls.

A low 1-foot tall stone plinth stands in the very center of the room, and upon it a large golden statue of a prancing horse. The statue's plinth bears a small brass placard on the base, facing the door.

Magic suspends the lamps and provides the light within. This magical light remains for as long as the **golden horse** is active.

If a character casts *dispel magic* on the magical light, or attempts to force a lantern to fall, they must succeed on a DC 12 check to break the levitation effect, but the lights will not extinguish until the golden horse is dead or the lanterns are removed from the room.

For those interested in the resident artwork, there are a total of eight paintings. Each painting is large — 2 feet by 3 feet for portraits and 3 feet by 2 feet for landscapes.

Should a character wish to discern the nature or origin of each painting this is an excellent opportunity for you to add some history into the encounter and reveal some background about your campaign. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check divulges details on important regional figures, castles or landmarks playing into the history of this region.

Protip: Never overlook an opportunity to tie campaign or adventure information into an encounter.

A character proficient in painter's supplies can determine these paintings are valuable works of art worth 1000 gp each to the right collector. Likewise, a character proficient in weaver's tools recognizes the four patterned rugs are also valuable, having been woven by master craftsmen in distant foreign lands. There are four rugs, each 5 feet wide and 10 feet long. Each rug is quite cumbersome, weighing 40 pounds, and difficult to transport. Each rug is worth 500 gold pieces each to the right buyer.

The placard below the golden horse reads, "Concorde — Brave steed and trustworthy companion." It is up to you if you wish to insert a legend about Concorde. This could be a further opportunity to insert campaign lore or it may just be a red herring.

In any regard this room remains a simple art gallery unless anyone removes a painting or rug from their place or tries to steal the gold plating on the golden horse or vandalize the room in any manner. The gold plating on the outside of the golden horse is worth 5000 gold pieces if removed carefully.

Consider giving a bonus to characters proficient with smith's tools or tinker's tools for the removal process. The value drops by 100 gp for every point of damage inflicted by magical fire or magical acid, as the gold either melts or becomes chemically altered.

Should any creature attempt any of the above, the golden horse activates and attacks the vandals and thieves. For those not wishing to deal with a charging golden horse, dropping the treasures and running away is their only chance. The golden horse pursues them for as long as they possess any such treasures, or until destroyed.



Complications

Golems of all kinds are challenging monsters to fight, but would be the first of any and all problems associated with stealing these treasures. Golems are guardians created by powerful figures. Powerful figures who have a golem made in the form of a prized stallion — and then covered completely in gold — might take offense to having the prized tribute defaced or destroyed, and would certainly look unfavourably upon having family portraits and other heirlooms taken. This may create another villain for the characters, if they haven't already earned the antipathy of such a figure or figures. The golden horse pursues any characters who flee from this encounter with any treasure they could steal until the purloined pieces of art are returned. That itself may create a series of problems or encounters the characters did not count on.

Another sort of complication, this time the good sort,

can come about through an encounter like this. It's a fantastic opportunity for exploration. The valuable art objects in the room all provide ways to expand the scope of your setting and campaign through character interactions. This can be the perfect chance to collaborate with players on history and myths in the setting. Consider letting players who use their tools, skills and abilities to explore the room and satisfy their curiosities add their own contributions to the setting. For example, ask the player whose character examines the paintings to describe a famous noble from the region and what they're known for accomplishing. Exploring a space like this and learning more about the world around them, without ever activating the treasure guardian, can inspire players to want to explore more, visit new locales or investigate a piece of myth or legend they learn about. When players respond to encounters this way, you gain invaluable information about the group and where their interests lie.



All That Remains

Environment

Various

Monsters

None

Suggested level

Any

Treasure

Special

encounters often strike when characters are down and wounded. At times like these, wouldn't it be just as fun to throw something equally engaging and not as dangerous at the characters?

Introduction

An emphasis on combat frequently defines encounters. Wandering monster encounters likely account for more character deaths than any other. This phenomenon isn't the root problem. Wandering monster

Description

On a foggy day, the adventuring party encounters either a cliffside sheared away with precision, a large monolith or the remains of a wall to an ancient structure. The particulars are left up to you and your imagination but any of these options are appropriate.

In bas relief, characters see a massive set of timeworn carvings showing the power and domination of a bygone ruler. An imposing 20 foot tall figure in armor and finery dominates the surface in the very center of the carvings. Gigantic compared to everything else, this figure smites several foes with a single blow. Scenes of conquering armies, falling foes, riches won, exotic beasts being captured and other signs of conquest — all carved from the same stone face — surround the mighty ruler.

Investigating the scenes, a character can ascertain the identity of the ruler or the culture they come from with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (History) check. Their identity is left to you to determine, but they should be from a time long passed and without a current hold on local politics. This is a terrific opportunity to share lore about your own setting, or alternatively to collaborate with the player to create such historical information.

As characters explore the surroundings the fog thickens. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals figures swirling through the mists in perpetual melee. These misty figures make no sound and do not react to any attacks, communication or other interaction from the characters. A deeper look, through a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check identifies these figures as those armies shown fighting on the carved stone surface, their battle unending even today.



The area surrounding the carvings and covered by fog glows faintly under a *detect magic* spell as long as the fog persists. If characters dig in the ground within 500 feet of the stone carvings, they may find a relic of the long ago battle. Any time characters perform an archaeological dig, roll d20 and consult the following table to determine their discovery. Any of the discoveries below, as well as any of your own creation, can be historical findings of varying value to the right people. Remnants and relics from ages past are useful and valuable to collectors, researchers or organizations in your campaign setting. Any item can have cultural, stylistic or other ties to the past.

d20	Findings
1-5	Nothing
6-10	A bone
11-14	A rusted buckle, button, clasp or similar metal fixture for a garment
15-17	A ruined and broken weapon hilt, spearhead, arrowhead or other weapon piece
18-19	A trinket
20	A gold coin

Complications

If the site is associated with any religious significance, defiling it by vandalizing the carvings or digging in the lost battlefield without permission may invoke some form of wrath from interested parties. If others find out even the slightest bit of treasure may come out of the ground here, it could also lead to all sorts of prospectors digging the area up for lost mementos and such. People may try to stake claims on the site for political or financial gain. The characters themselves could very likely be those people!

There is also the matter of the enormous figure in the carvings. No apparition appears at this time, but under different conditions something more sinister and dangerous than these misty figures takes form.

If characters grow more curious about this link to the past and your campaign setting doesn't already have a historic moment like this, consider encouraging the players to describe this ancient tale and add to the legends in your world.

Argument

Environment

Wilderness

Monsters

Urglegurgle – ettin

Suggested level

4 – Medium

Treasure

Helm of opposite alignment

Introduction

This is a concept based around a “what if?” Countless powerful magical items and artifacts exist throughout the multiverse. Swords wreathed in arcane flame, crystal lenses beguiling those who gaze into the wearer’s eyes and boots granting the power of flight are only a few.

But there are also dangerous, cursed items for those who attune to them, like armor that makes the one who dons it vulnerable to certain types of damage and weapons that drive their wielders berserk.

One of the most insidious of these cursed items can completely change the morals, values and perspective of the unfortunate soul who dons it. A *helm of opposite alignment* carries a terrible curse, converting the wearer’s alignment to its diametrical opposite, or to an extreme viewpoint in the case of a creature with neutral alignment.

Some veteran adventurers and Game Masters know of such awful items, either as victims of the curse or as the one who seeded a treasure trove with this harmful headgear to see if a greedy character would claim it. With that established, there are creatures out there for whom putting on such a magic helm would have a very unusual outcome for one main reason — they have more than one head.

So, what if an ettin put on a *helm of opposite alignment*?

If the caravan can be spared and the scattered horses returned, the merchants reward characters with 500 gp — should they make it to their destination (the nearest town or village in your campaign setting).



Description

While the adventurers travel a winding road through a forest, echoes of shouting and crashing sound in the distance. Before they can react, two draft horses still in full tack drag torn harnesses and charge past the party in the opposite direction.

As they close toward the noises of conflict, more becomes apparent to a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. Occasional cries of fear, mixed with the sounds of crashing, and then a guttural plea break up the loud shouting.

An odd sight greets the party upon exiting the forest and entering the grasslands. A 10 foot tall two headed giant overturns, and then rights, wagons, carts and other caravan vehicles. All the while, the two heads argue with each other.



The head on the right, long haired and shaggy, roars and creates the carnage. The other head, wearing a decorative iron pot helm, cries out and tries to stop the other, and immediately rights any overturned vehicle.

Two draft horses lie dead on the side of the road, butchered by a large, bladed weapon. A mule stands nearby the caravan, either unaware or uncaring of the carnage.

The occupants of the caravan hide in a nearby ditch. Their heads pop up like groundhogs to witness and then hide from the bizarre sight. Every time the giant roars and overturns a wagon, they scream and duck down, only to pop up one at a time out of morbid curiosity to witness the ongoing drama.

This weird spectacle all began the day before when this **ettin, Urglegurgle**, raided a merchant carrying a satchel which included a *helm of opposite alignment*. After a short argument, Gurgle put the helm on before Urgle could react. Now, every attempt to return to a life of raiding and carnage Urgle knows, Gurgle works just as hard to either stop or fix. This led to the current predicament, a bizarre circus of wrath and repair.

Characters can attack **Urglegurgle**, of course. Urgle roars and faces the challenge. Gurgle only attacks if pressed. Mechanically, this means Gurgle's battleaxe attack will not occur for the first round, meaning the Multiattack action is not in play for the first round of any combat, only Urgle's morningstar attack.

Gurgle may even try to negotiate for peace, although Urgle tries his best to sabotage those plans. Characters who attempt to negotiate using skills such as Charisma (Deception, Intimidation or Persuasion) have disadvantage on rolls, but these attempts are not impossible. Ettins respond to bribery, so if characters wish to call off Urgle's rage without harming Gurgle, a sufficient bribe might be enough to get the ettin to leave.



Keep in mind though, ettins only speak Giant and Orc.

Otherwise, Gurgle may be forced to defend himself along with Urgle. If characters can somehow get the helm off of Gurgle's head (with a *remove curse* spell), he reverts to his original chaotic evil alignment and joins in the carnage along with Urgle. This may not be a desired outcome unless they want to kill Urglegurgle with a clear conscience.

The events completely baffle the merchants, none of whom understand the giant's speech. They explain they were making a trip bringing goods to market, like they've done countless times before, when the two headed giant attacked. One of the caravaners claims the two heads were arguing with each other, and they swear the creature looked like it was fighting itself as much as smashing wagons, people and horses. They are all shaken up, and offer the party 500 gp for safe escort to their destination.

The merchants offer an additional reward to characters who round up and retrieve the runaway horses and help repair the broken carts. This can be a great opportunity for characters to use skills like Animal Handling and Survival, and proficiencies like carpenter's tools, tinker's tools or vehicles (land).

The merchants offer characters a discount on goods and services in their shops at the destination and perhaps beyond if you choose, for going above and beyond by performing these tasks.

Complications

There are several complications to consider. There is the moral conflict created when Gurgle asks not to be harmed or apologizes for the damage. He only speaks Orc and Giant, so the characters would have to know one of these languages to fully comprehend that attempt.

The *helm of opposite alignment* itself falls away from the ettin if Urglegurgle is killed, making it available to be worn by a character. A character so cursed by the helm should consider not immediately revealing the new alignment if it is contradictory to the party, as the character believes this is their rightful moral compass. That may mean this new alignment can lead to sabotages and infighting.

That complication may make a player feel like they lost agency, so it's important to give them an opportunity to have a *remove curse* spell made available if they are disheartened in such a way, either by finding a scroll or perhaps a beneficial NPC if no other means are available.

This could also be a great roleplaying opportunity and may create its own series of stories where a hero falls and then must be redeemed. It all depends on where the player wants to go with this.

Characters who are able to communicate with Urglegurgle, whether through the languages they speak or via magic like *tongues* can learn how the ettin came into possession of the cursed helm. Finding out who would have been transporting such a terrible item might be something the party is interested in pursuing. Surely its absence would not go unnoticed. If anyone escaped the encounter with Urglegurgle the previous day, finding them would be a good place to start an investigation.



Auntie Knows Best

Introduction

Greed.

It's the single biggest motivator among players. They may tell you otherwise until something shiny shows up. A clever Game Master can use this to their advantage and set up encounters, plot hooks, storylines and perhaps entire character arcs through this simple vice. And to that, I have an admission to make: I

Environment Swamp or forest	Monsters Flesh golem
Suggested level 4 – Hard	Treasure <i>Eye of fate</i> , carved scrimshaw scroll case worth 3 gp

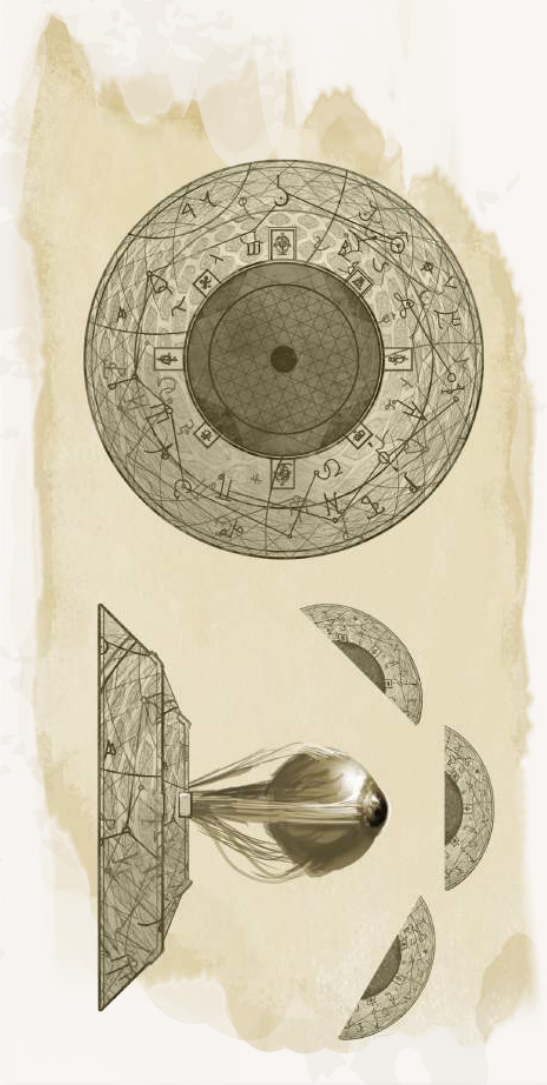
think hags are cool. They are an underrated villain, although not in fantasy and mythology. Therefore I'd like to implement a classic villain who plays chess while the adventurers still play checkers.

The intent for this encounter is less about combat (although potential exists for a fight) and more of a way to set up change or manipulate existing encounters on the fly. Auntie Treeshadow always has a way of manipulating others to her own ends and chooses discretion over combat whenever possible. For an immortal fey, there's always tomorrow.

Description

While attempting to cross a treacherous path through a misty swamp, characters discover the skeletal remains of a humanoid traveler nearly obscured in the twisting grass alongside the path. The corpse's belongings are corroded and rotted beyond repair or worth, except for a round glass orb in a gold filigree clutched in its bone hands. This is an *eye of fate* created by Auntie Treeshadow, a green hag. The remains are those of one of her many victims, forced to perform act after act to try and save a loved one from her manipulations. When one of these poor souls dies — usually during one of these tasks — she always takes the time to arrange a tableau for the body close to a path, ensuring the eye will be discovered again. Through it, she can see the bearer's actions based on the eye's capabilities, and so lead them into her service ... and likely doom, unless they can outwit her first.

While a creature carries the eye, Auntie Treeshadow sends them notes, letters and other messages to encourage them to take on her objectives. She always seeks to better her coven sisters through these actions and uses the unwitting so she cannot be blamed for these actions. She may even approach the party, always under an illusory form. She has been known to be both a quest giver for something and as the recipient, both under different illusory forms, simply for her own entertainment. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines the creature's skull and other bones were crushed by powerful blunt force. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character recognizes the remains were placed here after the creature was killed. If characters search the area and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check, they discover a sealed scroll case made of carved scrimshaw partially buried in the muck not far from the remains. Inside the scroll case, a rolled parchment holds the following message:



*“My sweet Oslo,
Do be a dearie and find my boys. They’ve gone and wandered off into the marsh again, and their auntie misses them terribly. Be careful if you look for them at night — you know how much of a scaredy poo they are around torch fire. Remember, your family is counting on you! I’m watching over you, always.
— Auntie Treeshadow”*

Auntie Treeshadow's “boys” — a **flesh golem** stitched together from the remains of three former victims — wanders the swamp nearby. The creature got loose from the green hag's lair and she coerced Oslo into rounding the monster up and returning it to her. Unfortunately, Oslo was in way over his head and was killed by the flesh golem in the attempt.

Complications

This entire encounter is all about complications, intended to set up other encounters or adventures, or to advise a villain of the actions of the party.

It is, in effect, a valid reason for a villain to know what the party is up to and where they might be. It removes any accusations of metagaming that might be directed at you.

The longer the party carries the *eye of fate*, the more Auntie Treeshadow learns about them. Because of the illusory powers most hags have, this allows her to interact with the party in person, tracking them using the eye.

Additionally, she could play the part of multiple persons through illusion, further confounding and manipulating the party into a massive fall from grace.

Consider as well: Auntie Treeshadow may not even

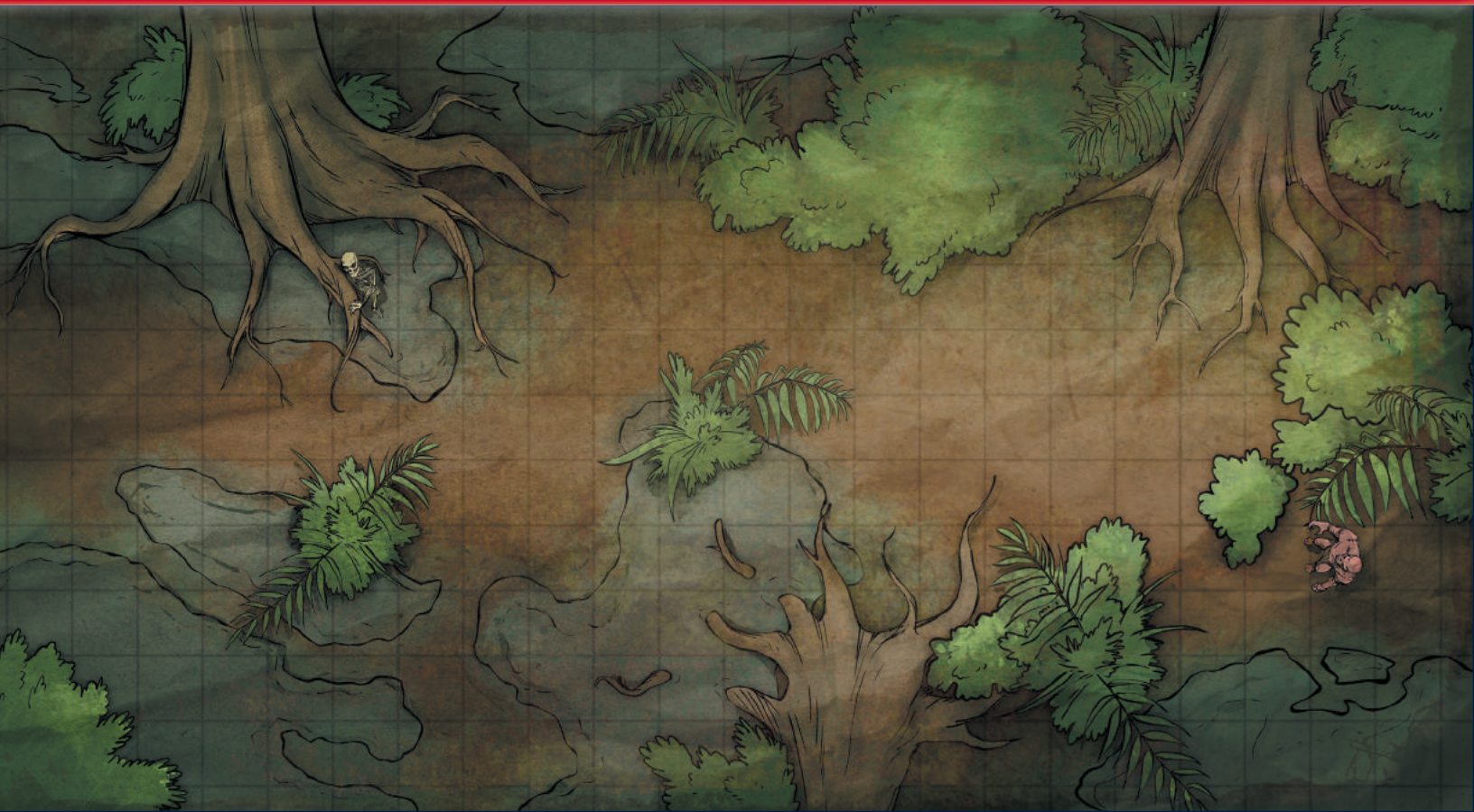
be an archvillain. What if she is also under the thumb of an even more powerful villain, and the eye of fate is the means for this even more powerful foe to track the party through their hag servant? There's always a bigger foe!

On top of all this, characters may wonder, who is Oslo?

Auntie Treeshadow does not discriminate in who she torments, and the hapless victim could be anyone from another adventurer to a commoner the green hag delighted in causing anguish.

The parchment in the scroll case suggests Oslo's family may have been threatened or worse by the hag.

If the party decides to follow through on an investigation, this can be an excellent way to introduce new adventure hooks and facilitate travel to other destinations as the characters search for more about Oslo's identity, family and situation.



Backstabber

Introduction

Many starting Game Masters struggle with how to make a new monster, one not already in an existing reference manual. The general advice is almost always “just re-skin it.” That can be tricky when the new monster doesn’t really fit into one category or another.

In an effort to assist starting GMs, this encounter blends aspects of two different “monsters” to create a new encounter and keep new and experienced players off guard.

We take part of the mechanics of a swarm of insects and blend them with a flying sword to create an animated swarm of daggers. This new creature mimics

Environment
Dungeon

Monsters
Swarm of daggers

Suggested level
2 — Easy

Treasure
Four gilded daggers with jewels set into the pommel, each worth 60 gp

some of the aspects of both entries, creating something new that is neither one entirely.

One method of approaching something like this involves picking two creatures of relatively the same challenge. It’s also important to remember when doing this you do not unnecessarily ramp up or tune down the new creature’s abilities without some consideration first.

You could, for instance, just create a swarm of swords, but this would significantly up the damage potential and thus the challenge. In this case, we’re trying to make a new encounter for starting characters, and thus we’re going with daggers instead.

The second step in generating a fresh encounter with a monster mashup is placing it in the correct setting and in a way that takes experienced characters off guard.

I’m a big fan of altering perceptions or challenging preconceptions, so creating something like this is key to establishing those preconditions where change is possible.

A swarm of daggers might very well mimic the appearance of certain spells, so immediately experienced players start looking for a spellcaster who might be concentrating on this spell. Imagine the look on their faces when the “cloud” begins moving toward them.

A single swarm might not be much of an encounter, so we’re going to add a trap as well. To make things fun, we’re going to make a magically and randomly moving pit.



This blends a challenge 1/4 with a challenge 1/2 and then adds a minor trap to take the challenge closer to a full total of 1.

Even if this challenge is still a little low, it accomplishes two things. First, it establishes things might be a little different from here on in. Second, it demonstrates that even encounters below a party's level should not be something to take for granted.

Can you tell I come from a tradition where funhouse dungeons were the norm?

Description

In their efforts to explore the confines of a dusty dungeon or crypt, characters come upon a square room, 30 feet on a side and with a 10 foot ceiling. A passageway opens on the far side and two closed doors stand in the center of each wall to the left and right. The doorway behind spills into the center of the near wall and is exactly across from the open passage beyond.

Two things of note are evident. A cloud of spinning, whirling daggers flies and darts in the dark opening to the passage across from the entrance where the characters emerge into the room. The **swarm of daggers** darts and twirls in this shadow like hungry mosquitos in the shade of a tree in the summer sun. In the very center of the floor is a full 10 foot by 10 foot square pit or shaft. From the current angle at the entrance door it's hard to see the bottom. The inside walls are painted in yellow and black stripes for some unknown reason.

Once all the members of the adventuring group stand within the room, the entry door slams shut and locks (DC 15 check with thieves' tools to pick the lock).

For a solution with less finesse, the door has AC 15, 18 hit points, and resistance to piercing and cold damage. That's just in case characters choose not to move forward and deal with this room. Refusal is just one of those things you have to deal with.

After the door closes, the magic of this hazardous

chamber activates. The pit inside the room begins to move, shifting from space to space but always as a 10 foot square shaft. The stone around this shifting shaft appears malleable under the influence of whatever magic created this chamber. Escaping the room now becomes a challenge of dodging the sting of the swarm of daggers and avoiding falling into the pit, which could end up right under the feet of an adventurer.

At this point, roll initiative. The pit acts on initiative count 15. The swarm of daggers acts on 14. On the pit's turn, roll a die. Initially, roll 1d8 and count clockwise around the pit, starting at the front facing the players. The pit moves into that 10 foot by 10 foot square. If the pit moves into a square against a flat wall, the next time it moves, roll 1d6, ignoring and re-rolling 6s, determining the square it moves into as before. If the pit ends in a corner, roll 1d3 (a d6, but count 1-2 as 1, 3-4 as 2, and 5-6 as 3), and use the same method.

If the pit moves into a square one or more characters occupy, each character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall in, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall. Of course, standard rules for jumping over a 10 foot pit apply, but the characters should be careful not to jump to where a pit might move.

The swarm of daggers attacks a random character in the room, unless someone tries to escape the room. In that case, the swarm of daggers attacks the first person trying to escape the room, even if it means changing opponents or risking an attack of opportunity.

Combat ensues thusly until one of two conditions are met – the swarm of daggers is destroyed or everyone escapes the room. If the swarm of daggers is destroyed while all characters are in the room, the pit ceases to move and remains in its current space. If everyone escapes the room and the swarm of daggers is not destroyed, it returns to its original place and the pit returns to the center of the room.

Re-entering the room begins the entire event again. Unless the swarm of daggers has been reduced to 0 hit points (and therefore destroyed), it reforms to full hit points at the dawn of the next day.

Complications

The greatest complication of this would be the potential lethality of this encounter at low levels. Reducing the swarm of daggers to at least half its hit points to reduce the damage, as well as avoiding the pit, are essential for survival.

This is the sort of task, especially at lower levels, that makes or breaks a party. Groups that work well together and stay focused succeed early on, whereas

a group that tends to split up and run around likely suffers one or two casualties at least.

You should not be disheartened by this. Sometimes a character needs a bloody nose to realize the adventuring world is a dangerous place — and that's okay. They become smarter for it, or become really good at rolling new characters. Hopefully this style of “some from column A, and some from column B” encounter building inspires creativity in both you and the players. Good luck!



Balance

Environment

Dungeon or any appropriate lair

Suggested level

4 — Hard

Encounter could be scaled upward by changing the contents of the iron flask

Monsters

Ophelia — succubus

Elwynn — sprite

Treasure

Iron flask, sprite companion

Introduction

Forcing characters to make a choice based on what they value creates tension and drama. Furthermore, different characters always have different motivations, so these choices can be rooted in the very basis of the character.

The right encounter might flush those motivations to the surface. This can often lead to heated discussions but can also serve to really clear the air on where characters stand with each other. That can only lead to character development.

Additionally, it has been said before any treasure or magic items in the possession of a villain should be used by that villain. Other Out of The Box encounters follow this mantra, and Balance follows the trend.

This encounter is intended as an extension of both concepts, as well as an opportunity to reward characters with a form of treasure that cannot be bought — a rare companion or familiar.

Chances to win such an ally crop up in games all the time, if the opportunity arises and characters act correctly. Inspiration for this encounter comes from the iron flask, a legendary magic item capable of trapping a creature native to a plane of existence other than the one you're on currently.

Adding a dramatic element, it becomes a balance between saving a potential ally and acquiring a magic item. Which will the characters choose?



Description

Two things greet characters immediately upon entering this large circular chamber. The stinging, acrid odor of strong acid hangs heavy in the air, and the appearance of the strangest scale they have likely seen stands before them.

A wide pool, 20 feet in diameter, sits in the center of the room. Bubbling, hissing acid fills the pool. A stone platform 10 feet in diameter balances upon a hemispherical stone platform with a central vertical pole rising 8 feet from the center. The top of the pole has a crossbeam of wood as well, giving the structure the appearance of a letter “T” upon the platform.

A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) or alchemist’s supplies check recognizes this acid has a more potent quality than standard corrosive liquid. It is capable of damaging or destroying even magic items!

A container on the end of a thin chain hangs suspended from each end of the crossbeam.

One container has the appearance of an iron jug 1 foot tall, covered in markings, and suspended by its stopper.

The round base of the jug rests upon the stone platform.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check indicates the jug is resting perfectly straight up because of the chained stopper, which will not move so long as the balance of the platform is not disturbed.

A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a character to recognize this container as an *iron flask*.

The other container is made of heavy glass and is also suspended by a thin chain attached to its stopper.

A tiny humanoid creature with insect wings sits inside the container, nearly immersed in a strange translucent blue fluid, craning their neck to keep their face above the surface. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check a character can tell their hands and feet are bound.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) shows they are in distress. A further successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check allows a character to determine this creature is a **sprite**.

Herein lies the challenge — the platform is perfectly balanced

so long as both containers rest upon it. If one is removed in some way, or disturbed in any way, the balance might be thrown off and one or both containers will have their stoppers pulled. One or both containers then fall into the acid.

Pulling the stopper on the sprite's container and tilting the platform causes the jar and its contents to fall into the acid. The sprite suffers a gruesome death as the bottle fills with acid.

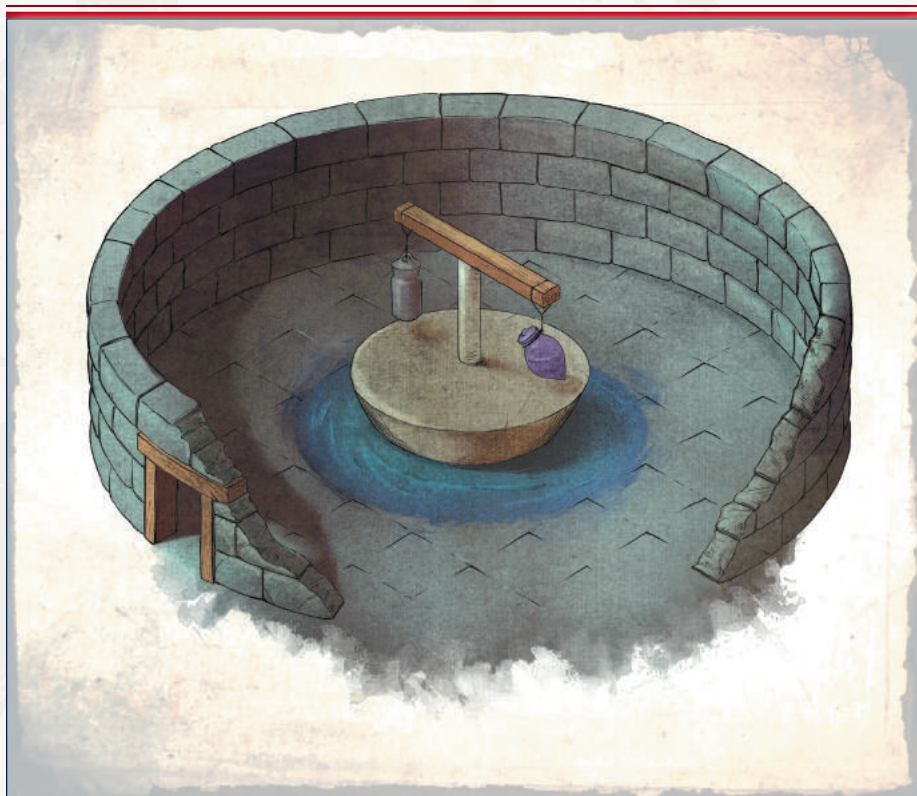
Pulling the stopper on the *iron flask* results in a loss of balance and the **succubus Ophelia** issues forth in a cloud of smoke, appearing on the outside of the pool.

Because the stopper was not pulled by someone in possession of the flask, but by the trap, Ophelia will not be under anyone's command but her own.

Because of this, she appears in the form of a terrified slave girl. Since she can appear in the guise of any Small or Medium humanoid, pick a race most appealing to the characters, be it elf, tiefling or whatever. She acts afraid of the party at first, but this is only a ruse.

When she has drawn the party close enough, Ophelia uses her Charm ability on the character who either looks the strongest, or who is giving the orders in the group.

Consider taking the player aside when this effect is used and have them roll their saving throw in private.



Ophelia asks any charmed character to give her the *iron flask* so she cannot be contained again. She will, of course, attempt to sway and coerce the character, and the party in general, into heinous acts out of “revenge for her capture.”

You may want to keep track of any actions performed by a charmed character. If the charm fails, she might simply use her Etherealness ability and escape — only to tempt and try to charm another character again later.

If the party can solve this puzzle and rescue the sprite, Elwynn, they automatically use their Heart Sight ability to learn the party’s emotional state and alignments and form a bond with a good aligned rescuer.

If Elwynn is rescued, but no good alignments are within the party, they might simply divulge a secret of their original captor — a great way to plug information into the encounter — then turn invisible and try to escape on their own.

Optionally, Elwynn may stick around while invisible to judge the actions of the party. Should they perform good deeds consistently, they may reconsider bonding with a character.

Regarding resolution to this puzzle, players always act randomly and can also come up with genius solutions to the most complex problems regardless of your input. A *fly* spell would certainly help in rescuing Elwynn or acquiring the *iron flask*. A *broom of flying* or similar magic items might also prove useful.

Keep in mind the edge of the platform is a full 5 feet away from the edge of the pool of acid. The pool is 5 feet deep. Contact with the pool deals 22 (4d10) acid damage.

If the *iron flask* falls into the pool, it ruptures after 1 round. When it takes 25 points of damage, it is destroyed.

If the flask falls into the acid there is a 50 percent chance the stopper comes out in the process and releases Ophelia. She is hostile from the start and still

uses her Charm ability but wastes no time in turning a charmed character on their allies.

A succubus is a very intelligent creature, so Ophelia is well within her means to charm fighters or rogues and turn them on the spellcasters.

Complications

There are many. This is a complicated puzzle, so the most obvious complication is the amount of time that may go into its solution. You should allow a large chunk of time for this. If you have little planned for an evening and want to make the players think more than roll dice, you have an opportunity here.

Furthermore, the acid is deadly. Falling into it is likely lethal to characters with low hit points. Both magical and mundane equipment without acid resistance or immunity could be damaged or destroyed by the potent acid.

On the flip side, characters may wish to remove some of the acid and take it with them. This could lead in many directions, such as using alchemist’s supplies to temporarily neutralize the acid for transport and finding suitable vessels to contain it.

Intensely curious characters may wonder how the acid was created and came to be here, potentially leading to further adventures.

The death of Elwynn can be quite traumatic and might cause good aligned characters to respond accordingly.

The chaos that would ensue from a charmed adventurer at the hands of Ophelia has a wide array of complications all on its own. On the rare chance the characters can rescue both the *iron flask* (with the succubus intact) and the sprite, and Elwynn decides to stay with the party, Heart Sight sees through the fiend’s ruse immediately if Elwynn touches Ophelia, and the fiend knows this.

Ophelia tries to kill Elwynn at her first chance, with or without the charm.

Beast of Bellard

Environment
Hill

Monsters
The Beast

Suggested level
5 — Medium

Treasure
217 gp, 560 sp and 2,700 cp, red steel ring worth 50 gp, small marble statuette worth 100 gp

Introduction

Preconceptions permeate this game. We often view monsters in a singular way. Savage orcs. Cowardly goblins. Brutish trolls. Only vulnerable to acid and fire. This is a result of the long history of the game.

Much of the game's backstory is based in player and Game Master experience, and has influenced movies, novels, games and pop culture since its inception.

This is both good and bad. It's good to know your favorite hobby has such an impact, and it's bad when the preconceptions become not only normal, but expected. When a new player experiences the magic of discovery, experienced players miss that feeling and envy their sense of wonder.

I hope these encounters break some preconceptions from time to time and give experienced players the refreshing feeling of having their experiences turned on its ear — if only to have a eureka moment one more time. To do this, it's important to not only take things in new directions, but to also read the fine print. Be willing to give your monsters the benefit of the doubt, give them souls and thoughts and wants. Make them someone, not something. When you do that, the world is your oyster.

The side effect of this may well be you end up creating a series of great side villains who can show up from time to time and give your characters the same feeling comic book readers get when they see classic villains from a hero's rogues gallery. It makes them feel more like heroes because they start to develop their own rogues gallery of enemies.

This encounter takes one of those monster tropes, reads the fine print, gives the monster a motivation and generates a villain who may or may not return — perhaps different than the last time — all depending on the actions of you and the players. In this case, we use the much-used and stereotyped troll. This monster is almost always seen as an idiotic, gluttonous savage that only stops when someone holds a torch. We now ask the old question: "What if?"

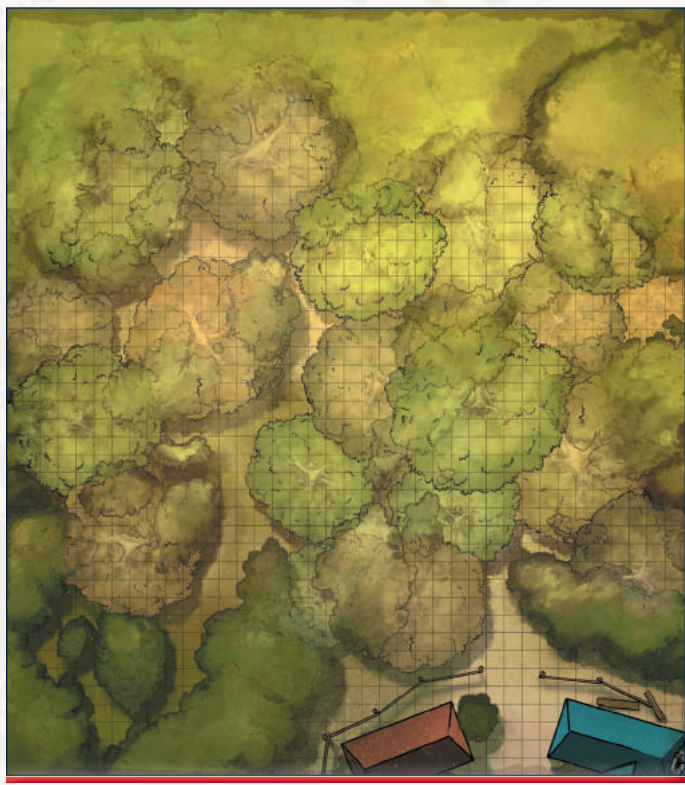
What if a troll ate something and mutated in a positive way? What if the troll gained some measure of intelligence or understanding of what just happened ... and wants more? Now you have a villain who, like the player characters, gains a story arc, a motivation and may or may not increase in power level.

This makes an already dangerous foe a much more deadly threat overall. This troll seeks to feast upon creatures, other monsters, NPCs or even the player characters to try and inspire a new and positive mutation, increasing its power.

More specifically, this troll is the Beast of Bellard. The Beast has already consumed one or two creatures in an ongoing life experiment, so when the characters encounter this mutated troll it'll already be something more than a standard troll.

Now, despite this being called the Beast of Bellard, there is no reference to a community of Bellard. This is an encounter, not a town. Feel free to make this the Beast of Your Town, wherever the town or village may be. That's the beauty of this encounter. This troll could have any number or variety of mutations and locations, all based on your needs.

For this encounter, we'll give the troll two plausible creature based mutations capable of making them a handful. The Beast has fought, defeated and eaten an ettin for control of this territory. Now they have two heads. The Beast also cleared out a ruin of hobgoblins, killing and eating many including a warband officer.



Now they're not only two headed, but smarter than the average troll. This, arguably, is the troll's greatest score to date. The Beast now not only gains greater self awareness, but ambition and some tactical sense.

Description

Characters undergo a search of the surrounding hills in an effort to assist the beleaguered citizens of Bellard (or other community of your choice). The mixed woodlands of hard and softwoods nearby have not been harvested by woodsmen for fear of **the Beast** for some time now.

Undergrowth chokes the spaces between the larger trees, making passage difficult. The canopy of ash and poplar, mixed with spruce and fir cast a near constant shade throughout. Crows and ravens fill the canopy with echoing caws and blackflies pester the ground life with itching bites.

Despite success in finding some of the traces of what would be a wandering predator of some kind (animal carcasses, dung, broken branches and other traces) the Beast has avoided capture at this point.

They've so far avoided being successfully tracked by local hunters by sticking to the trees. Long arms and strong grip facilitated a completely new hunting dynamic, combined with the Beast's newfound cunning from some recent victims.

Some unwary hunters who braved the woods in search of the creature have been grabbed from above and turned into a screaming meal high above the ground. The bones and clothes were discarded below in an attempt to throw off any future attempts to ascertain the Beast's methods.

Movement through the hills is considered difficult terrain. For those who insist on trying to track the Beast, feel free to allow Wisdom (Survival) checks. Keep track of time while doing this. The result of any Survival checks depends on how high the players roll. Characters can make one Wisdom (Survival) check every 10 minutes of movement through the woodlands.

Survival DC Result

15	A pile of broken and gnawed bones covered in ants. Half the remains are from wild animals, with the rest split between domestic animals and human remains.
17	Small scraps or rags of clothes hanging from a high branch 6-10 feet off the ground.
20	Smaller branches 20-30 feet up in the higher canopy have been sheared off.
25	Claw marks high in the canopy.

A character who succeeds on three DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) checks closes in on the Beast. Optionally, a character who succeeds on six DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) checks can accomplish the same results.

Furthermore, if any tracking character voluntarily realizes or suggests looking upward into the trees above, allow them to gain the benefits of the next highest results.

For every ten minutes characters spend tracking, roll 1d20. On a result of 20 the Beast becomes aware of the characters, modified as follows:



Circumstances

d20 Modifier

Each character moving through the woods in metal armor	+2
Each character singing, yelling or performing another loud action	+2
Any character holding a lit torch, lantern, smoking a pipe or otherwise generating smoke or light	+4
Any one character is below half hit points (the Beast can smell blood easily)	+1

If the Beast of Bellard becomes aware of the characters, the creature cannot be surprised. The Beast seeks out the characters and attempts to ambush them. The creature attacks from above and has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. To determine if the Beast has surprise, compare a character's passive Perception to the Beast's Stealth check.

The Beast attacks with cunning, and will not attack the obviously biggest foe. The creature has learned that what they eat may affect a future mutation. The Beast selects prey that looks differently than the humans they've been eating. Their motivation is not only survival, but gaining power and future mutations, so grabbing a target that is not only different, but special in some way is key. If a character displays some special feature like spellcasting or other unique abilities, the Beast might choose them. If no one shows obvious spellcasting, but looks unusual and nonhuman, the creature may go for them in the hopes of triggering some unknown mutation. Something, the cunning creature reasons, is always better than nothing.

However, the Beast also has a newfound self-awareness and value for their own life. Should the Beast be brought to half their hit points and is still outnumbered, they attempt to escape into the trees. This may trigger one or more opportunity attacks, but the Beast would rather survive, regenerate, and return later when recovered.

The Beast continues this trend until they either collect the desired prey or the characters successfully kill the creature. If the Beast can grapple and carry off a smaller character, they will. The overall effect of this hit and run war of attrition should be one of

tension. The characters should realize they're not up against a standard troll, if only because this troll has two heads and a climb speed. The characters are being hunted and watched by a cunning predator with a powerful desire to gain new abilities through mutations brought about by what they consume.

If the Beast is defeated or flees, characters who succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check can track back to a lair. The Beast keeps treasure from their kills in a filthy hovel. The assortment of coins comes from near and distant lands, distinguished by their minting and marks. A ring of red steel ring bears the inscription "from Ester" inside the band, and there is a marble statuette of a dancing woman. Were these taken by the ettin or by the hobgoblins, or the Beast? What was the troll's interest with them?

Complications

This encounter involves two aspects that can create issues: resource attrition and party separation. Resource depletion can be a serious problem when the foe you're fighting can avoid the terrain, comes with natural weapons and regenerates. The Beast's hit and run tactic works well for their hunting, especially in this sort of terrain. The characters must manage their resources in ammunition, healing, spells and even hit points. Furthermore, you may wish to consider the very real possibility of a Small character like a gnome being carried off, or a spellcasting elf being knocked unconscious and carried away.

The Beast may develop a taste for someone special who evaded capture, and then hunts that character. This may create a new reoccurring villain for the character or even the whole party. The Beast may take it upon themselves to track and devour friends, allies or relatives of this character to lure them into the open, or may take on a new obsession for a tastier and stranger fare in hopes of developing new mutations.

Left alone, there's no reason why the Beast won't take on further mutations, increasing their challenge even higher. Left too long, you may end up with an arch-villain who can challenge them much later in their adventuring careers. This is entirely up to you.

Chickening Out

Environment	use bandit captain)
Aquatic/shipborne	Cockatrice (4 — use as many more as needed to create panic)
Suggested level	
5 — Hard	
Monsters	Treasure
Smugglers (6)	Cockatrice eggs and componets, contraband goods, smuggler's ship
Smuggler captain (1 —	

Introduction

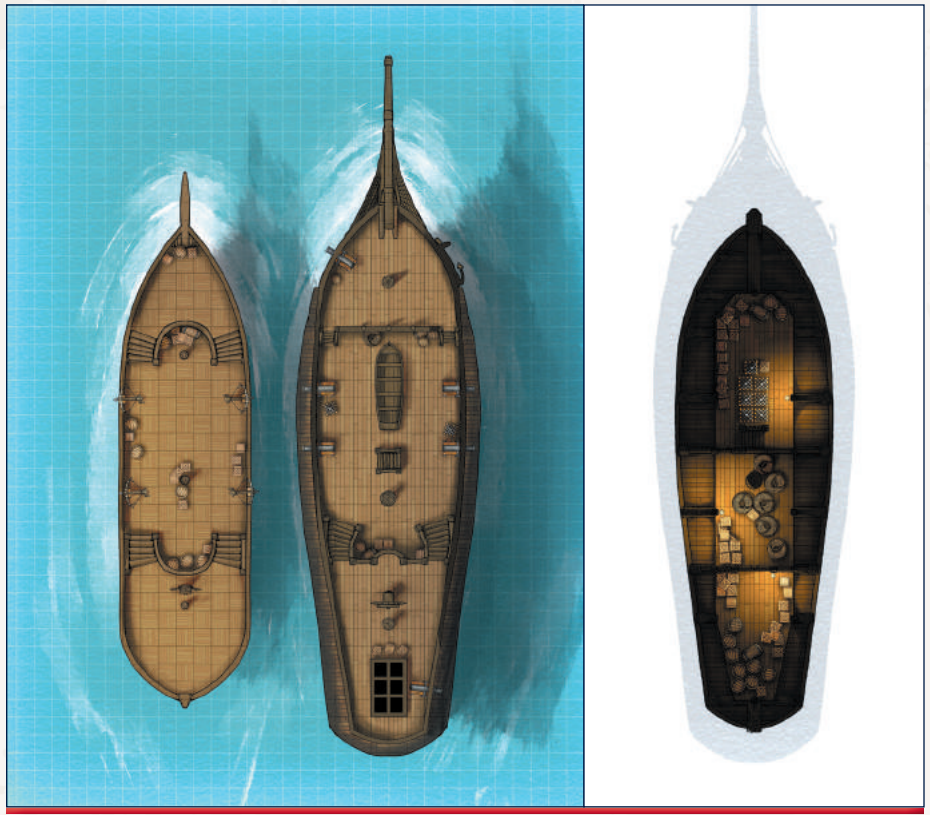
We often take travel for granted. Whether over land or by sea, travel can be an opportunity to create dynamic encounters. Combat, exploration and even social encounters become more complicated both above and below open waters.

Merchants ply trade routes, carrying legitimate goods to market. Nobles and commoners alike employ the seas for business or leisure travel. Creatures lurk in the depths and entire civilizations reside in the deeps.

And, of course, there are pirates and other nefarious sorts prowling the seas hunting for treasure and smuggling their ill gotten gains. But what happens when the illicit goods aren't too keen on being smuggled bounty?

Description

While travelling at sea or over a large body of water, the watch aboard ship spots an approaching vessel. By all estimates the vessel ought to pass closely by the ship the characters are on. Attempts to



avoid a collision seem fruitless, as the approaching vessel appears to be weaving back and forth, almost as if anticipating the characters' ship. The approaching ship's movements appear erratic and odd, as if the other vessel is not completely under control.

In the end, the approaching vessel veers at the last second to come alongside, grinding against the characters' ship in the process. Boarding grappnels shoot forth from the deck of the vessel, and it appears the characters' ship is about to be boarded.

Once secured, the anticipated attack becomes a disorderly disembark-

ing. The crew of the opposite vessel rushes past any defenders, regardless of opportunity attacks. Their terror is evident. The noise of panic mixed with squawking can be heard bellowing from below the decks of the other ship, with occasional loud thumps and a spray of feathers rising from the entrance to the hold below.

The ship, Starkissed, is crewed by smugglers, hired to transport, among other things, a crate of live cockatrices. The cockatrices were kept in a magical stasis. What they did not know is the crate had been weakened by mice who burrowed in searching for food, who then mistakenly activated the monsters and were eaten by the cockatrices within.

For an added wrinkle, the smugglers were unaware of the nature of this cargo. Captain Harbuck, the Stark-issed's bandit captain, agreed to make this dangerous delivery without informing their crew. Harbuck is usually more cautious and careful about the jobs they take on, and it is unusual for them not only to make this arrangement but also to keep their crew in the dark about it. The entity that hired these smugglers could have blackmailed or threatened Harbuck into transporting the cockatrices.

Awake, angry and in full panic, these squawking monstrosities broke free of their confinement and took out their rage on the startled crew. Some of the crew have been petrified below decks. Those who managed to escape have been desperate to flee their vessel. When they saw the characters' ship, they saw their chance to escape a death by beak, claw, petrification or drowning. The crew has no interest in returning to Stark-issed and would rather hijack the characters' ship and make their break for freedom.



Complications

The cockatrices laid eggs that could hatch at any time. Starkissed, if abandoned, could become a floating island sanctuary for a whole flock of cockatrices. This could certainly become its own wandering encounter if left alone. If the cockatrices pursue the escaping crew aboard the characters' ship, an egg or two might be laid there as well for future encounters, or one may slip aboard unnoticed as a stowaway. How the characters react to the smugglers can offer several opportunities for complicated interactions. Some characters might take umbrage at the idea of harboring smugglers — they are criminals after all. The smugglers may try to take the characters' ship by force, or through deception. If the characters offer to help with the cockatrice problem, the smugglers may be worried these heroes will discover contraband goods in their ship's cargo hold, leading to awkward situations or a potential standoff.

Cockatrice eggs and components might hold significant value to the right buyers and characters might also become curious where the cockatrice shipment was headed. The person or organization waiting for the shipment could be planning to use the cockatrices for some nefarious purpose, and the characters might have just stumbled on a greater plot, inadvertently inserting themselves into a potentially dangerous scenario. Because the petrification effect of a cockatrice bite ends after 24 hours, there could be victims left aboard the smuggler ship with quite different stories to tell than whatever tale the fleeing smugglers weave for the characters, when they are no longer petrified. One of the potentially more challenging complications for you to juggle is Starkissed itself. Even a small vehicle like this ship is worth thousands of gold pieces. Characters with access to this sort of wealth at lower levels can have a tremendous impact on a campaign. Additionally, a party with their own ship opens up their travel options immensely. These are both things to consider. On the other hand, adventurers with their own ship, one they can reasonably crew and pilot with a small number of people, can lead to many adventures of different sorts and in different locations. An encounter like this can lead characters in vastly different directions, so be prepared to indulge — and reward — your players' interest in these scenarios!

Coin Flip

Environment

Dungeon

Monsters

Whatever is randomly summoned

Suggested level

Any

Treasure

Whatever is randomly summoned

Introduction

Sometimes you're at a loss for how to run an encounter, or you may have a party that either can't or won't use tactics or think through solutions. This can easily become an issue, and Game Masters often find it frustrating to build encounters involving complex layers only to have characters charge through and look to the GM in dismay after a failure. I've seen this myself several times.

Embracing your party's chaotic nature from time to time is the key to overcoming this scenario. Engaging players who have this random outlook at least periodically can only improve rapport at the table. You might even find this can lighten the mood and satisfy the needs of the chaotic character so they might be open to more involved or thought provoking encounters later. This is where an encounter like Coin Flip comes into play.

Description

Somewhere within a dungeon the party enters what looks like an empty room. Once everybody stands inside the floor appears to fall away into clouds below, except for a ledge on the characters' side and a similar one on the far side.

A new floor appears occupying the empty space between the ledges — an interlocking pattern of giant round coins laid flat, floating like an interlocking floor with the solid ledge on the far side. Each coin bears one of two distinct symbols in ancient Giant, for fortune and misfortune. Each minute the symbols on a random number of coins change to the opposite symbol.

Each giant coin is large enough for one Medium sized creature to stand upon, and since they touch each other like circular floor tiles it appears the floating floor can be crossed. Each coin is a 10 foot diameter tile. The size of the floor is up to you, as the number of coins used determines the length and intensity of the encounter. The suggested number of coins is nine, forming a square. You can use any number of tokens for this, in any configuration you like but for the purposes of this encounter, I'm assuming a three by three square of coin tiles.

The coins form the floor for characters to cross the space. The area above the coin is considered part of the coin to a height of 30 feet. Characters cannot travel higher than this height as a magical force field restricts travel further upwards. The small diamond shaped space between the coins can be passed through by Tiny or smaller creatures but doing so teleports the creature to a random coin and activates the effect.

Each time a character steps on a coin, two randomized functions occur. First, a coin is tossed. The player whose character stands on the coin calls the flip. If they win they roll on the Fortune table of random effects appropriate to the character level. If they lose the coin flip, they roll on the Misfortune table. The symbol displayed on a coin at any given moment has no bearing on whether the effect will be fortune or misfortune. Entering the space of another coin activates the coin toss again, meaning a new coin flip, a new effect roll and possibly a new saving throw.

If the result generated on the table creates an area of effect, it only affects that coin's space. If the generated effect includes teleportation, the character can certainly take advantage to move to either another coin or to a ledge, so long as it's within range. Flying creatures are subject to the same movement restrictions as creatures using normal movement or taking the Dash action, as the area above the coins is subjected to the same parameters to a height of 30 feet.

Summoned creatures created by the table appear on a random adjacent coin next to the character who caused the summoning. The summoned creature is optionally then itself subject to the coin's effect — your choice. Standing on a coin once the effect has gone off does not generate an additional effect. Only one creature can occupy a coin at a given time. A character can choose to remain on a coin for any length of time, but when they move to a new coin, new effects can occur. If a character leaves a coin to occupy a new coin, and a different character occupies the coin that character just left, then the newly occupied coin generates a new effect randomly.

Characters could potentially use *teleport*, *dimension door*, *misty step* or similar effects to cross the floor quickly, so long as the floor size allows for the spell to cross from ledge to ledge in one go. Characters might still be able to cast spells on other creatures on the field of coins, so long as the target is in range. However, spells with a range of touch are difficult, as only one character can occupy a coin at a time, so characters on two adjacent coins have to be on exactly the right spot to do so. This continues until all the characters have crossed the coin floor and reached the opposing ledge. Neither ledge generates an effect and creatures on either ledge are immune to the effects generated by any of the coins. Once all characters are on the opposite ledge from where they started, the room reverts to its plain appearance and a secret stone door opens on the side opposite to which they entered.

Complications

The number of complications in this encounter are limitless. There are all sorts of dangers included on random effect tables. Smart players try to cross the field as quickly as possible, but players who revel in chaos may wander around the field until they no longer can. This could have two effects. They could satisfy their needs for random events, or they could end up rolling a new character. You might also note this is a great test to find out who among your players are truly invested in seeing their characters play out or who just want as much carnage as possible. For those players who want carnage, they soon discover Coin Flip only affects their choices, and they cannot enforce their style on others on the field.

Tier One Coin Flip Effects (Character levels 1-4)

Fortune

1. 50 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
2. 1d4 *potions of healing* materialize at your feet.
3. An art object worth 100 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
4. A random tool set appears in your pocket.
5. A suit of medium armor appears on you. If you are already wearing armor, the new armor immediately falls off of you.
6. You have advantage on any skill checks you make in the next minute.
7. You gain a +2 bonus to one ability score for the next 1d4 hours (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
8. A handful of gems worth 2d4x10 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're standing on.
9. Superior weapon (weapon type is Game Master's choice)
10. A parchment flutters to the ground at your feet. It's a treasure map! But where does it lead?
11. 100 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
12. You have advantage on all skill checks made with a particular skill for the next 24 hours (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
13. For the next 8 hours, any time you make an attack roll or saving throw, you can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the attack roll or saving throw.
14. A common magic item materializes on the ground at your feet (chosen by Game Master).
15. An art object worth 250 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
16. A handful of gems worth 4d4x10 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're standing on.
17. You gain the effects of a short rest.
18. You regain 1d4 expended Hit Dice.
19. A suit of heavy armor appears on you. If you are already wearing armor, the new armor immediately falls off of you.
20. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).

Misfortune

1. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).

2. You lose one Hit Die as if spent.

3. Your next 1d4 d20 rolls are made with disadvantage.

4. You forget a language you know for 1 minute.

5. You take 1d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).

6. You lose 10% of each type of coin you have on you.

7. You take 1d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).

8. You are petrified until you succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.

9. You take 1d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).

10. You are blinded until you succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw. You can make a saving
- throw at the end of each of your turns.

11. You take 2d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).

12. You are frightened until you succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.

13. You take 2d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).

14. You are reduced to 1 hit point.

15. You take 2d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).

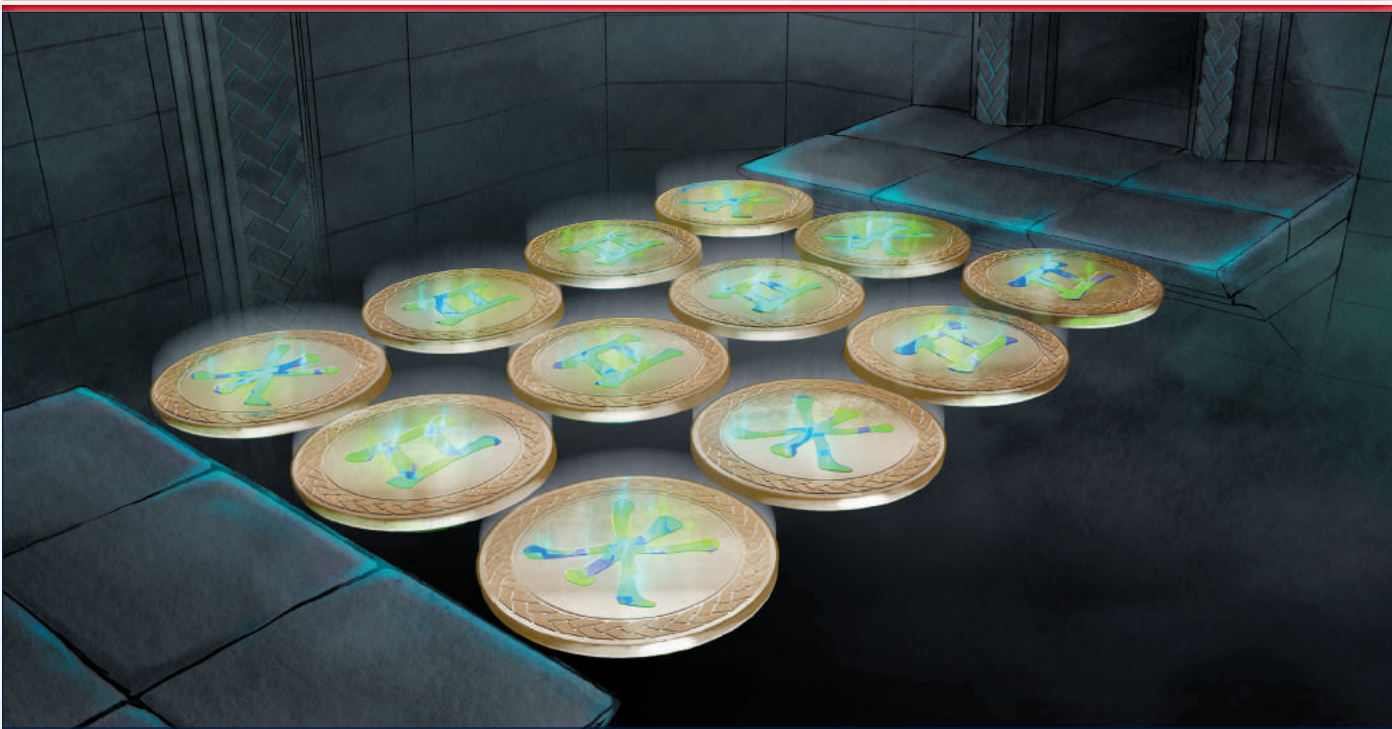
16. You are poisoned until you succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.

17. You gain one level of exhaustion.

18. You lose 20% of each type of coin you have on you.

19. You lose a 1st level spell slot as if it was expended (reroll if not a spellcaster).

20. You gain a rival.



Art Objects

d6	Item
1	Gem encrusted comb or brush
2	Picture
3	Sculpture
4	Mirror
5	Goblet
6	Ornamental weapon

New Weapon Property — Superior

This nonmagical weapon looks far from ordinary. Weapons of this quality are made of better materials by superior weaponsmiths and crafters. You get a +3 bonus to your attack roll with this weapon. A superior weapon has twice the hit points of its standard counterpart.

Tier Two Coin Flip Effects (Character levels 5-10)

Fortune

1. 250 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
2. 1d4 *potions of greater healing* materialize at your feet.
3. An art object worth 500 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
4. A random magical tool set appears in your pocket. You get a +1 bonus to skill checks made with this tool set.
5. A suit of heavy armor appears on you. If you are already wearing armor, the new armor immediately falls off of you.
6. You gain advantage on all skill checks you make for the next 1d4 hours.
7. One of your ability scores is increased by 2 for the next 24 hours (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
8. A handful of gems worth 4d6x10 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're standing on.
9. A +1 *item* materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on. The item is a weapon, armor or focus (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
10. An uncommon magic item materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
11. 500 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
12. You gain Expertise in one skill (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
13. For the next 24 hours, any time you make an attack roll or saving throw, you can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the attack roll or saving throw.
14. You learn a language or skill (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
15. An art object worth 1000 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
16. A handful of gems worth 10d10x10 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're

standing on.

17. You gain the effects of a long rest.
18. All of your expended Hit Dice are restored.
19. One of your weapons or a suit of armor on your person gains a magical +1 bonus.
20. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).

Misfortune

1. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).
2. You lose 1d4 Hit Dice as if spent.
3. Your next 2d4 d20 rolls are made with disadvantage.
4. You forget Common for the next 2d4 minutes.
5. You take 2d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).
6. You lose 10% of each type of coin you have on you.
7. You take 2d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).
8. You are petrified until you succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
9. You take 2d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).
10. You are blinded until you succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
11. You take 4d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).
12. You are frightened until you succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
13. You take 4d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).
14. You are reduced to 1 hit point.
15. Take 4d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).
16. You are poisoned until you succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
17. You gain one level of exhaustion.
18. You lose 20% of each type of coin you have on you.
19. You lose a spell slot of a randomly determined level as if it was expended (reroll if not a spellcaster).
20. You gain a local enemy.

Tier Three Coin Flip Effects (Character levels 11-16)

Fortune

1. 500 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
2. 1d4 *potions of superior healing* materialize at your feet.
3. An art object worth 2000 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
4. A +1 *item* materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on. The item is a weapon, armor or focus (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
5. You gain Expertise with one skill of your choice.
6. One of your ability scores is increased by 2, to a maximum of 20, or you gain a feat (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
7. Two of your ability scores are each increased by 1, to a maximum of 20 (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
8. A handful of gems worth 1500 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're standing on.
9. A +2 *item* materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on. The item is a weapon, armor or focus (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
10. A rare magic item materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
11. 3000 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
12. You learn a new skill (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master) and gain Expertise in it.
13. Your hit point maximum increases by 10 permanently.
14. Whenever you make a death saving throw, you have advantage on the roll.
15. An art object worth 5000 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
16. A handful of gems worth 5000 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're standing on.
17. You gain the effects of a long rest, remove all levels of exhaustion and gain 20 temporary hit points.
18. You learn a cantrip of your choice, and your spell-

casting ability for this spell depends on the class list you chose from.

19. You learn the spell *find familiar* and can cast it once a day. Your choice can be any creature of challenge 1 or lower.
20. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).

Misfortune

1. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).
2. You lose 1d8 Hit Dice as if spent.
3. Your next 3d4 d20 rolls are made with disadvantage.
4. You forget all but one language for the next 10 minutes (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
5. You take 3d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).
6. You lose 20% of each type of coin you have on you.
7. You take 3d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).
8. You are petrified until you succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
9. Take 3d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).
10. You are blinded until you succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
11. You take 5d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).
12. You are frightened until you succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
13. You take 5d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).
14. You are reduced to 1 hit point.
15. Take 5d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).
16. You are poisoned until you succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
17. You gain one level of exhaustion.
18. You lose 30% of each type of coin you have on you.
19. You lose 1d4 spell slots of randomly determined levels as if they were expended (reroll if not a spellcaster).
20. You gain a regional foe.

Tier Four Coin Flip Effects (Character levels 17-20)

Fortune

1. 2500 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
2. 1d4 *potions of supreme healing* materialize at your feet.
3. An art object worth 5000 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
4. A +2 *item* materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on. The item is a weapon, armor or focus (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
5. You learn a language, a skill and a tool proficiency (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
6. One of your ability scores is increased by 2 (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
7. Two of your ability scores are each increased by 1, to a maximum of 20, or you gain a feat (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
8. A handful of gems worth 8000 gp fall from above and land scattered on the coin you're standing on.
9. A very rare magic item materializes on the surface of the coin you're standing on (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master).
10. Whenever you start your turn with 0 hit points, you automatically stabilize.
11. 5000 gp appear neatly stacked around you on the coin you're standing on.
12. Whenever you make an Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma saving throw (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master) you do so with advantage.
13. Whenever you make a Strength, Dexterity or Constitution saving throw (determined randomly or chosen by the Game Master) you do so with advantage.
14. Your hit point maximum increases by an amount equal to twice your level.
15. An art object worth 10000 gp appears on the surface of the coin.
16. A diamond worth 10000 gp drops from above and lands at your feet.
17. You gain the effects of a long rest, remove all levels of exhaustion and gain 30 temporary hit points.
18. You learn a 1st level spell of your choice, and can

cast it at its lowest level. Your spellcasting ability for this spell depends on the class list you chose from. Once you cast it, you must finish a long rest before you can cast it again

19. You learn the spell *find familiar* and can cast it once a day. Your choice can be any creature of challenge 2 or lower.
20. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).

Misfortune

1. Roll twice (ignore this roll on subsequent rolls).
2. You lose 3d6 Hit Dice as if spent.
3. Your next 4d4 d20 rolls are made with disadvantage.
4. You forget all languages for the next hour.
5. You take 5d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).
6. You lose 30% of each type of coin you have on you.
7. You take 5d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).
8. You are petrified until you succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
9. Take 5d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).
10. You are blinded until you succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
11. You take 10d6 damage (Game Master's choice: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing).
12. You are frightened until you succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
13. You take 10d6 elemental damage (Game Master's choice: cold, fire, acid, lightning or thunder).
14. You are reduced to 1 hit point.
15. Take 10d6 radiant or necrotic damage (Game Master's choice).
16. You are poisoned until you succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. You can make a saving throw at the end of each of your turns.
17. You gain 1d4 levels of exhaustion.
18. You lose 40% of each type of coin you have on you.
19. You lose half of your spell slots, rounded down, of randomly determined levels as if they were expended (reroll if not a spellcaster).
20. You gain an extraplanar nemesis.



Council of Three

Introduction

This is yet another dungeon based encounter. It uses magic instead of monsters for its basis and provides a minor puzzle. Depending on how this goes, the characters could receive a boon, a trap or even a future adventure.

To be fair, since everything in this encounter is completely based upon player choice, they are truly in control of how good or bad this goes. This is player

Environment
Dungeon

Suggested level
Any

Monsters
None

Treasure
Augury spell, basilisk egg worth 500 gp to the right buyer

agency in action. If you run a lot of combat-based encounters, this encounter gives you a chance to switch things up a bit. Mind you, if the characters set off the trap in this encounter, they could get the sort of combat they might be looking for.



Description

The ancient and ritualistic feel of this chamber strikes characters as they enter. Characters who succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recognize the sinister and centuries old nature of their surroundings. Ancient carved reliefs decorate the walls and depict several scenes of primitive cultures dwelling in a jungle environment. Substitute any tribal society, culture or environment from your own setting if such a place is established in your world.

Characters find a long rectangular room inside the chamber. The entrance is in the center of a 20 foot wall, and the room extends out from this entrance to a distance of 40 feet. A raised, stepped platform occupies the furthest 10 feet of the room. Three heads sit atop a stone plinth erected upon this platform. Characters who examine the carved reliefs on the walls and succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover the following: The left wall depicts scenes of ancient figures in tribal garments. They kneel with their hands raised upward. Rays of light or energy beam down from above upon them.

The right wall shows figures in tribal garb cowering before an oversized entity wearing an elaborate feather headdress and wielding a massive saw toothed blade. A halo of blades hovers above the head of the oversized figure. The far wall behind the plinth depicts tribal figures worshipping some sort of small sphere. Characters who look behind the plinth find a small cavity. Three clay jars sit in this little storage area, each 8 inches tall and stoppered with clay plugs sealed with wax. One jar contains a small 1 inch diameter sphere carved from wood and painted white. It has a single black dot painted on it. The sphere is packed in sand which fills the rest of the jar. Another jar contains a small 1 inch diameter sphere carved from gray stone. It has a single red dot painted on it. This sphere is also packed in sand, which fills the rest of the jar. The last jar contains a petrified chunk of flesh. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines this is a tongue. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character also knows it's a human tongue. The tongue is packed in sand which fills the rest of the jar. The three heads on the plinth are as follows:

The left head is a severed, mummified head. It has empty eye sockets and its mouth is wide open. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals it is a human head, missing the tongue.

The center head is elaborately carved from stone and resembles the stylized carvings on each of the walls. Its whole construction seems square and has pronounced features. It has 1 inch diameter hemispherical indents where the eyes would be, an open mouth carved into it and a 1 inch wide, 3 inch long groove carved onto the top inside of the lower jaw.

The right head is carved from wood and possesses a smoother and more rounded quality. Its features are far smoother and seem carved by a different artisan than the stone head. The features are almost cherubic. It, too, has 1 inch diameter notches where the eyes would be, and a mouth carved to look like it's laughing. A similar 1 inch wide, 3 inch long groove exists inside the mouth on the top surface of the inside bottom jaw.

Here's the catch. A head activates if both spheres are placed in the eye sockets of a single head, and the tongue is also placed into either the carved slot of a carved head or the open mouth of the mummified head. A single head must have all three items to function. It is not important if the eyes are placed in the left or right eye sockets. So long as they go into the same head at the same time, they're good to go. If a single head receives all three pieces, they lock into place and the head glows with a greenish light for a moment, then floats upward 5 feet into the air. The following effects depend on which head receives the "eyes" and tongue.

Mummified Head. The head rises and says, "Wisdom shown is wisdom given." It then casts the *augury* spell. This allows characters to ask a question about the dungeon in which they explore. Once the head answers the question, the eyes and tongue disappear, and the head slowly descends to its previous resting place. The "eyes" and tongue will not reappear for another year and reappear where the jars were behind the plinth.

Stone Head. The head rises and says "From stone. To stone." A small panel opens in the back wall where the sphere being worshipped was carved. It reveals a small cavity where a gray and speckled stonelike egg is hidden. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals this to be a basilisk egg. It is unknown how long it has been here. The egg has been in stasis for several years. Now that it has been removed from its magical stasis, a **basilisk** begins to hunt the party. It is up to you when and where the basilisk attacks. It seeks the egg and attempts to kill or petrify any who possess it. Note that the egg will not petrify. If this head is activated, the eyes and tongue disappear forever.

Wooden Head. If the "eyes" and tongue find their way into this head, the head rises and begins babbling incoherently. One humanoid within 120 feet must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. Failure means the target must use its action before moving on each of its turns to make a melee attack against a random creature other than itself. This effect lasts for 1 minute. The target can make a Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, the effect ends. The effect can also be removed with *dispel magic*, *dispel evil and good*, *protection from evil and good* or any other effect that can end the charmed condition. Once the magic is activated and the saving throw is failed, you'll want to roll initiative and conduct combat as per normal.

Complications

There are a few possibilities here. The wooden head's curse afflicting the right character might have deadly consequences. The normal duration is 1 minute. Feel free to reduce that duration if you feel it's necessary. Possibly being hunted by a basilisk has its own issues. Drop hints to the players about tales of people being turned to stone wherever they have been. It's up to you when and where the beast strikes. Make it memorable. Whenever players are presented with a puzzling scenario, there is the possibility of play slowing down as they try different solutions. Along with this, players who don't figure out the solution may get bored and simply move on from the area. There's a couple of things to consider here.

First off, while this encounter does describe how the puzzle works, players famously concoct all sorts of methods for overcoming challenges and obstacles. While the players go about attempting various things, this is a good time to listen closely. They may come up with their own out of the box approach and if it sounds reasonable and cool to you, let that become your solution. Second, if the players don't engage with the encounter, or linger a bit but ultimately decide to move on, don't fret. They may circle back around later and give it another go. If they don't, consider the possibility of re-introducing the encounter in a later dungeon. There could be several of these encounters hidden throughout your campaign setting. Who put them there, and for what purpose?

Counting Sheep

Environment
Plains/farmlands

Suggested level
5 – Easy

Monsters
Grunk, hill giant

Treasure
Animal skin sack containing 1400 cp, 50 sp and a human hand wearing a ring worth 100 gp. Grunk's bag may also contain a variety of random objects or items related to your campaign

is the sound of sheep or goats in serious distress or fear. If the entire party fails to pick up on this clue, feel free to reduce the DC by one for every 10 minutes they continue to travel, as they get closer to the source. Once they succeed, they arrive at the entrance of what would be a cart path toward a farmstead.

Introduction

I can't speak for every table, but I know mine likes to inject a little humor into serious moments. A touch of the ridiculous can often turn a normally staid affair into one capable of hooking players into memorable encounters. Even darker humor often elicits better engagement than none. If you can add a description to a moment that earns you a "huh?" expression, all the better.

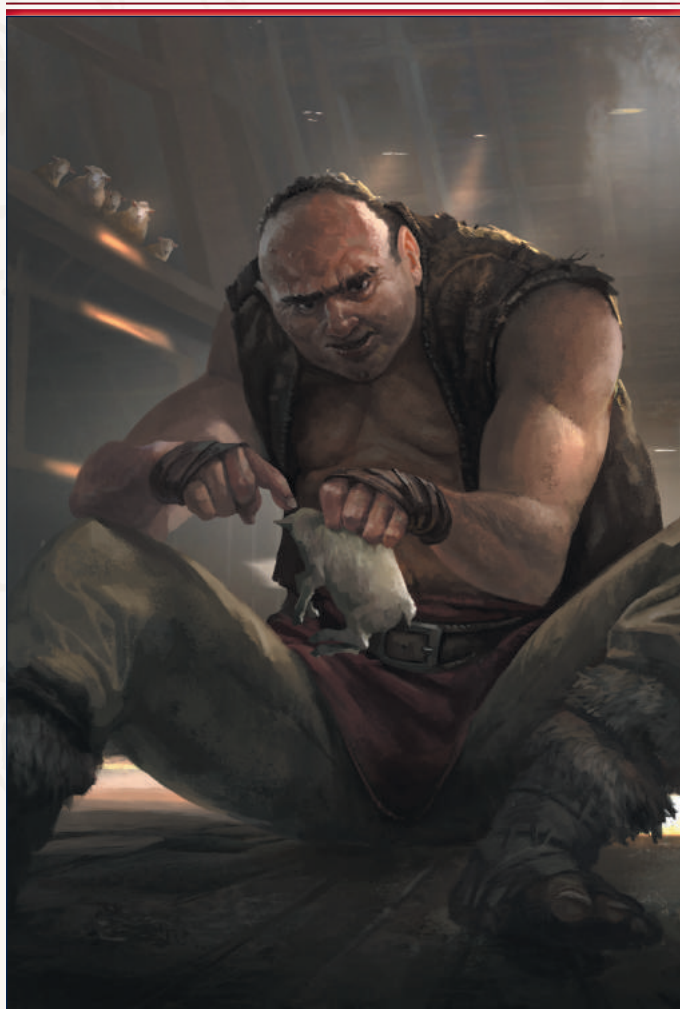
Counting Sheep is intended along this line of thinking. It takes what would normally be a simple and straightforward encounter but adds a touch of the ridiculous and the curious. How you run with those ideas is up to you.

Description

Characters who succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notice that traffic on the route they travel – normally busy – appears unusually sparse. This route normally sees more carts, wagons, oxen and the like as farmers transport their wares, travel to fields or otherwise frequent their crops.

The characters have been the only travel on this route for a whole day. This is unusual. As they break camp, or end a short rest, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check alerts a character to the distant sounds of animals in alarm. Should someone notice this and succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Animal Handling) check they ascertain it

The path cuts through high wheat or other applicable grain crops (even tall grass if you wish), and winds slowly for about 300 feet. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals massive footprints running parallel to the path toward the farmhouse, hidden in the tall crops or grass. The footprints are 2 feet long and humanoid in nature.



Characters who veer off the path as little as 20 feet after making this discovery find, hidden in the tall crops or grass, the body of a massive female humanoid. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms it is a hill giant. Investigating further, they see the back of her head has been broken open. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check of the head reveals her brain missing.

The crops open into a simple and rustic property at the end of the path. The mud brick farmhouse is 20 feet square, with a thatched roof standing 12 feet at its peak. Two windows in the front are shuttered in wood and the simple wooden door in the front is ajar. No light comes from within.

The closer characters get to the farmstead, the louder the cries of alarm from the livestock get. If the characters walk around the farmhouse, they see a small fenced in area. It is adjoined to the farmhouse, and spans 40 feet outward, making for a fenced area of 20 foot by 40 foot fenced area. A small sheltered area, which used to be 20 feet by 10 feet, sits outside the fence and along its far wall.

Or, it used to. Now it's flattened as if struck by a mighty blow through the roof. The reason for the alarm and the crushed animal shed becomes clear as the characters view the fenced in animal pen.

A large humanoid figure in skins and other primitive accoutrements sits in the pen. Even seated, he's easily 8 feet tall, and likely stands a



good 16 feet on two feet. He holds one sheep in his two hands, and four more shudder at the far end

of the pen. Two other sheep have been torn in two. Their remains are discarded into the pen, uneaten.

If the characters choose to watch what the giant is doing, perhaps hidden in the tall grass, they see **Grunk the hill giant** looking at the sheep in an odd manner. He holds it close to his face, examining it all over. After perhaps 15 seconds, he tears the sheep in two like a loaf of bread. He then continues to examine the sheep's two halves for another 15 seconds.

Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check surmise he is looking for something and he's confused. When he does not find anything, he grunts or snorts, throws the sheep carcass halves away, and gets another sheep — then repeats the process.

This whole affair lasts about 5 minutes if Grunk is left uninterrupted. Once all the sheep are annihilated he flies into a fury and begins destroying the farmhouse with his greatclub. If the characters attack at range, Grunk is surprised for the first round, so long as characters do nothing rash like yell or scream before attacking.

Grunk responds with ranged combat as well. There is a 50 percent chance Grunk throws the sheep in his hands instead of a boulder or rock. If he does so, the damage is 7 (1d4 +5) bludgeoning damage. If he throws that sheep, just for fun, make him throw the rest of the sheep first before ripping mud bricks from the farm house for his standard Rock attack. If pressed in melee combat he will, of course, use his greatclub.

Grunk continues to rant in Giant, in case someone speaks the tongue.

“Where it go?!”

If the characters still haven't attacked by the time Grunk has begun attacking the house, note the following. This is important if other characters are inside investigating the house while Grunk attacks the structure.

For each round Grunk attacks the farmhouse, roll 1d10. If the result is equal to or less than the number of rounds the giant has been attacking the structure, the house collapses. Anyone caught inside the house when it collapses must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to dodge out of the door. Those who

fail take 17 (3d10) bludgeoning damage and become restrained. Freeing a trapped character requires a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Should the farmhouse remain intact and not be destroyed, the characters determine the home was abandoned in a hurry with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Warm embers remain in the hearth and a half eaten apple rests on the floor. No valuables remain. A few simple cups and bowls of wood and clay remain behind, some of which were knocked over and broken during a hasty escape.

If a character charms Grunk, or uses *detect thoughts* or other means of nonviolent or telepathic investigation, they might find out his mate, Urga, flew into an unknown rage and attacked him. In defending himself, he killed Urga. When she fell, something “came out of” Urga and fled into the fields toward the farm house.

Grunk has been looking for it in the sheep. If you wish to continue this line of investigation and Urga's body has not been found, you might elect to allow the characters to backtrack Grunk's footprints backward from the farmhouse to the site of the body with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check.

Complications

The most obvious complication would be the collapse of the farmhouse with characters inside, as stated above. The reasoning for Grunk tearing apart the sheep can be altered by the Game Master as they see fit.

However, should you or characters wish to follow through on this investigation, the **Passenger** encounter is designed to work as a continuation of Counting Sheep. Run together as one, these two encounters become a Hard difficulty.

You could certainly run **Counting Sheep** as a stand-alone encounter, leaving characters with ambiguity but take note, players may become curious about this circumstance and wish to investigate further.

Crones and Their Cravings

Written by Lysa Penrose

Environment

Forest

each have 1 hit point and cannot use any actions)

Suggested level

11 – Hard

* Optimized for five characters with an average party level of 8-10.

Treasure

One or more of the following:

- A meat cleaver that acts as a berserker axe
- A bread knife that acts as a shortsword of wounding
- A rolling pin that acts as a rod of rulership
- An apron that acts as a cloak of protection

Monsters

Picnic hags (3)

Steam mephit

Weakened dragon wyrmlings (6 – two brass, two copper, two silver with the following exceptions: they

Introduction

Misers hoarding wealth beyond their needs, hunters felling prey out of simple bloodlust, thieves picking one too many pockets ... greed comes in many forms. In the Feywild, when creatures act on impulses of greed, gluttony and excess, picnic hags crawl from the waste left behind.

A bottomless appetite drives these hags. They are what they eat; picnic hags harness the abilities of creatures they consume and their bodies shift and change to reflect their latest meals. Acts of gluttony draw picnic hags forth and many find their way to the Material Plane where greedy humanoids might find themselves the hags' next meal.

Several hooks could lead adventurers to the cottage of picnic hags described herein, where a family of dragon wyrmlings has been captured. A gold dragon wyrmling, the youngest sibling of the dragons, might plea for the adventurers' help. Alternatively, the picnic hags might have captured a friend of the party and are poised to eat them. It is up to the adventurers to conduct a rescue mission!



Description

The adventurers discover a thatched cottage tucked into the forest wilds. The abode of a **picnic hag** coven, the cottage tempts tiny forest-dwelling creatures into gluttony. Bulbous bumble bees fly heavy with sacks of pollen from the cottage's flowering vines. Lethargic squirrels nurse their distended bellies as they lie in the cottage's vegetable garden, every vegetable marred by their greedy bites.

The cottage's front door opens into a 20 foot by 30 foot room with a central fireplace and chimney leading up through the 15 foot ceiling. A doorway in the northeast corner of the room leads to a smaller 15 foot square room. The cottage is home to a coven of picnic hags named **Famina**, **Hunga** and **Desiree** who lounge around a cauldron of soup in the fireplace. They hold two **brass dragon wyrmlings** and a **silver dragon wyrmling** bound in hemp rope and dangle them over the bubbling broth. The walls of the smaller room are covered with cages containing two **copper dragon wyrmlings** and one **silver dragon wyrmling**. A **steam mephit** wearing a chef's hat and a bandolier of cooking utensils menaces the caged wyrmlings. The mephit — whose name is the sound of a whistling kettle — was once trapped by the hags for dinner but spared due to its steam breath, a healthy way to prepare a meal of good creatures. The steam mephit remains in the hut as the hags' private chef and has developed a culinary obsession.

Unbeknownst to the steam mephit, one or more of its cooking accessories is a magical item. Choose one or more of these at random: a meat cleaver that acts as a *berserker axe*, a bread knife that acts as a *shortsword of wounding*, a rolling pin that acts as a *rod of rulership* or an apron that acts as a *cloak of protection*.



The picnic hags are ravenous. They wish to consume every dragon wyrmling and attack anyone who interferes with their meal. The hags also can be used as a quest hook for another encounter. If the adventurers succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the hags are willing to spare the wyrmlings if the adventurers fetch them a different creature or ingredient they desire.

The steam mephit is crazed. It has delicious plans for the wyrmlings and raises the alarm should anyone help the dragons escape. However, the mephit is easily fooled. It has disadvantage on Wisdom ability checks. The dragons want to escape. In their weakened state, they cannot use any actions.

Complications

If an adventurer is feeling daring enough to taste the cauldron's brew, they will find a picnic hag's lunch is only for those with a cast iron stomach. If a creature other than a picnic hag drinks from the cauldron, roll on the following table to determine the effect.

d6 Cauldron Brew Effect

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | The creature must succeed a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (5d8) poison damage and be poisoned. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and is not poisoned. A creature poisoned in this way must spend its turn retching. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. |
| 3-4 | The creature's skin turns a random color of the rainbow. Casting remove curse removes this effect. |
| 5 | The creature must succeed a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (5d8) poison damage and become infected with a disease. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and is not infected. Unless the disease is removed, the creature drops suddenly to 0 hit points in one hour. |
| 6 | The creature sprouts a physical feature of the last creature added to the soup as an ingredient. This feature has no mechanical effect. Casting remove curse removes this effect. |

Dance Macabre

Introduction

I love making players ask questions. “How did this get here? Why is that thing like that?”

A random encounter might be able to inject this sort of curiosity with the right setup. By doing so you can add depth, color and even a little history to a game when the well has run dry of ideas, then unleash the characters and let their questions build the world.

However, a player should always remember what happened to the cat in the cliché...

Description

Characters encounter an old ruin in a clearing obviously made for a massive structure. Many of the walls, towers and other structures have crumbled to rubble — all save one.

The remains of the columns and buttresses that supported a massive great hall remain, with its vast decorative tiled floor mostly intact. Figures in formal clothing dance endlessly to the eerie lack of music, like an eternal waltz in silence. Even as characters advance the figures remain dancing, seemingly oblivious to their approach.

When characters close to within 50 feet they can finally ascertain with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check the finery worn by the figures is in poor repair, and in some cases, tatters.

What the characters do not know is the former rulers of this castle dabbled in dark necromancy and held great celebrations and grand balls to lure unsuspecting victims into their lair.

During the height of a celebration, a victim would be lured away to a hidden chamber and sacrificed to some Dark God.

Environment

Ruins

Monsters

Skeletons (10), possibly 1-2 zombies

Suggested level

3-4 — Hard

Treasure

None



Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check identify the god or goddess. You can use Orcus or whichever god of undeath exists in your world. Over time, the machinations of the castle's rulers were discovered and the surrounding people allied to destroy them and their holdings. Now, ages later, their victims have animated to continue the dance where they died, a tortured reminder of the vast power of the demonic entity.

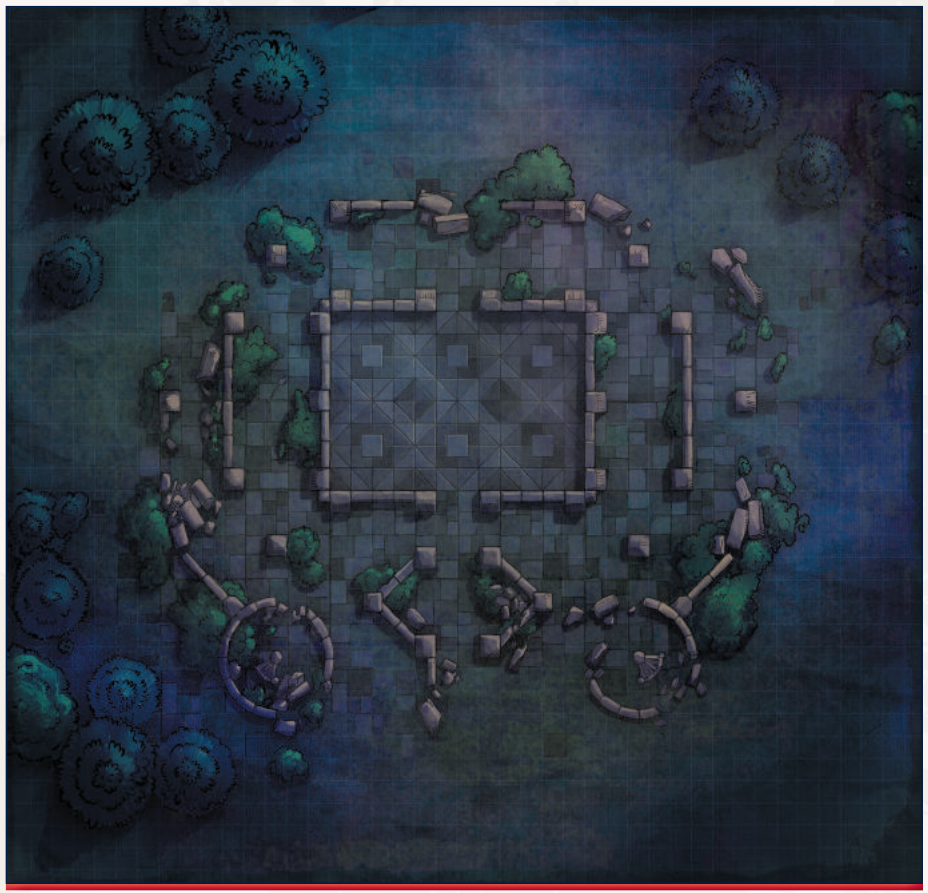
A character who succeeds on a difficult DC 17 Intelligence (History) check recalls this bit of information.

If a character steps upon the dance floor, they must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become affected by *irresistible dance*.

Within the finery are skeletons, who attack any creature who steps upon the floor. They do not discern if a character is under the effect of the irresistible dance or not, nor do they care. If you need to determine between several characters who is attacked, determine randomly. If the characters retreat, the skeletons do not pursue beyond the dance floor unless they are being attacked from outside the Great Hall, in which case they certainly attack.

Complications

If a character is knocked unconscious upon the dance floor, the skeletons ignore them and move on to another target. If a character is killed on the dance floor and left there, they animate as a zombie in 24 hours and continue to dance like the others. The skeletons are stuck here and even if killed rise again the following night at moonrise. Why are they stuck here and what could this mean? Some players might want to solve this and give the spirits rest. Consider the ideas presented by the players and if the solution makes sense allow it to set the dancers spirit to finally rest and potentially earn a reward.



Deep Breaths

Environment
Jungle or swamp

Blackjaw lizardfolk (8) — use lizardfolk but their Bite attacks do an additional 2 (1d4) fire damage

Suggested level
9 — Hard

Treasure
Jade bracelets worth 100 gp each, golden torc worth 500 gp, two fine gold necklaces worth 75 gp each, two jade rings carved to look like coiled serpents worth 50 gp each, staff of reptile command

Monsters
Xochipek — **lizardfolk shass** (1)
Yaretzi and Zolin — **lizardfolk voice of the depths** (2)

Introduction

Lizardfolk typically suffer from a reputation as primitive and simplistic brutes doing little more than thumping about the swamps and jungles of a territory hissing aggressively while brandishing primitive weapons. They take the worst cliché from any pulp film and add scales.

No society could last for any significant length of time without some form of sophistication. Even the most primitive societies in our own world lasted for centuries through cunning, adaptation and actively keeping with specific rules about the dangers of the world around them. They were not mere thugs brandishing weapons and lumbering about without learning.

Lizardfolk, in spite of the cliché, should know better. If they didn't, they would be extinct in a world filled with aggressive orcs, martial hobgoblins, hungry ogres and every other sort of creature looking to feed upon the ill equipped. Lizardfolk would be better suited to their settings if they were either fully bestial or far more advanced. Yet, somehow, they have allegedly been stuck in this proto-societal stage for millennia.

However, there is one example wherein there is some hope, albeit its own cliché. Should the rise of a powerful individual occur, lizardfolk society advances. What if these lizardfolk rulers were not prone to evil, but were god-touched as they claim?

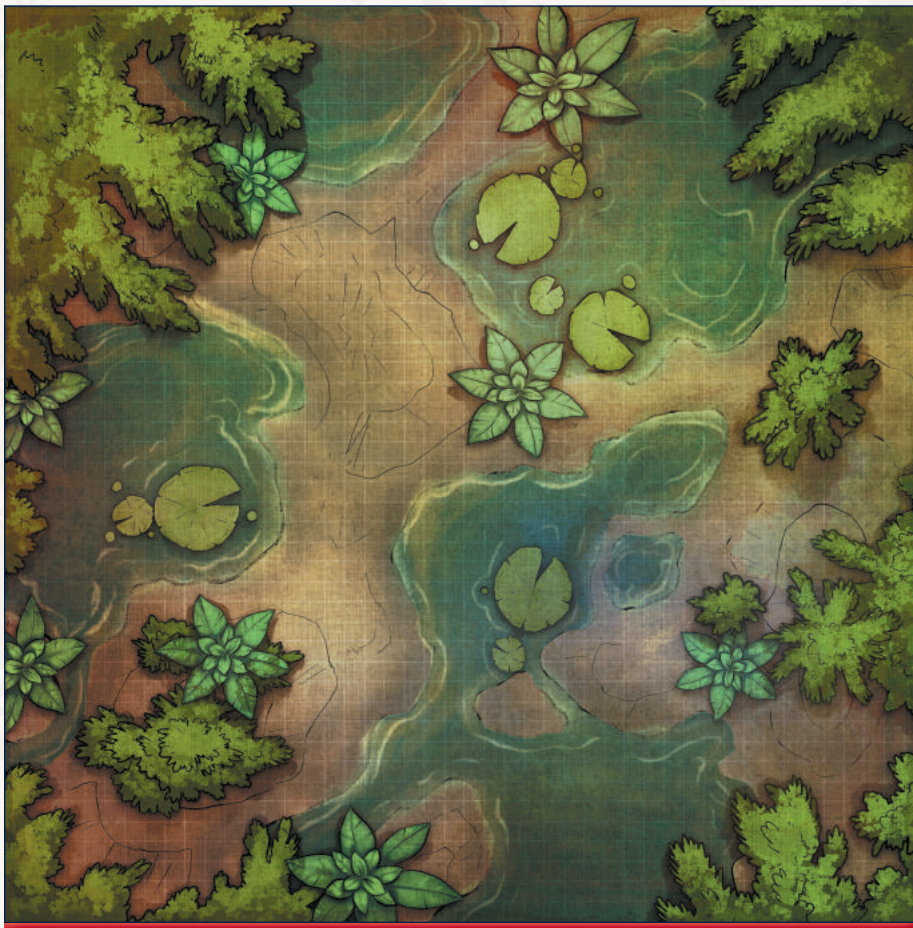
What if these higher lizardfolk worshipped some form



of the Old Ones, primordials, elemental entities or other form of ancient faith no longer in common practice?

Lizardfolk would then be a doorway into an ancient world where the current races could look back to what once was, for good or bad. These rugged lizardfolk may have endured rituals that would strike pale the softer, pinker races of the non-scaled folk. Some practices performed in daily life by other races may have spawned from these ancient people.

All that would remain would be to find out. This is the stuff of the greater tales from pulp novels of high adventure — ancient cultures, lost temples, hidden treasures and vast power of forgotten gods. Not blathering lumps of reptilian flesh hurling pointed sticks at vastly superior foes.



Description

The characters find themselves in jungle or swamp territory. The oppressive heat and humidity makes day-to-day activities stressful. Biting insects fill the air and the sounds of wildlife never, ever go silent. Huddled around their campfire for the night, if only to drive some of the mosquitos away with the smoke, characters who succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notice something amiss.

For a brief moment in the night the sounds of crickets, frogs, cicadas and other noisy vermin fall silent. If the result of the check is 17 or higher, the character notices the silence not only occurred, but moved. The silence picked up by the higher roll seemed

to pass by the camp as if moving slowly from one side to the next.

Nothing more happens that night. If characters set a watch use the opportunity to impress upon players the dense surroundings, unusual sounds and insect activity to increase the tension. The next morning characters wake to find their backpacks, doffed armor and other items left in open space to be inhabited by small, harmless grass and tree lizards, geckos and other scaly vermin. These tiny beasts skitter away if allowed to escape. As the party breaks camp, characters notice it periodically seems like the snakes in the trees watch them pass. The eyes on their slowly swivelling heads watch, unblinking. Tongues flick to taste the air as characters pass.

The undergrowth grows dense and unforgiving. Leaves wet with rain brush the characters and soak their clothes, hissing as large leaves brush leather and metal. Thick, wet vines drop upon them as if on command, brushing against bare skin and then slithering to the ground either by gravity or an unseen will.

It's important to harass the party this way for some time. They should become frustrated and likely wish to find some sort of clearing or break in the foliage to find respite.

Make note of the heat and humidity, and play up the insects getting into everything, including their drinking water.

Periodically introduce similar moments of pure silence as the night before. They likely won't notice it while moving because of the wet leaves, and characters must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to detect the subtle changes.

As the party proceeds through the thick wilderness, they begin to encounter thin vines with small, round fruit covered in thorny spikes. These vines create a tripping hazard, requiring a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice and a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid tripping and falling prone. These occur once every 10 minutes. This causes no damage, but the fruit rattles loudly when such a vine is struck. Once this has happened three times, the final phase of the encounter begins.

Watching through their reptile spies and signalled by the wild cucumber trip-vines, the Blackjaw lizardfolk know exactly where the party is and wait in ambush. Like the jaguar warriors of our own ancient world, they see the characters as fresh offerings for the Drowned One. They want them alive if possible.

Yaretzi and **Zolin** begin the offensive. They are both **lizardfolk voices of the depths** of the Drowned One, an ancient reptile Old One who dwells deep in the Elemental Plane of Water. They hide on either side of the marching order of the characters. Given the dense foliage, Wisdom (Perception) checks have disadvantage. The lizardfolk voice of the depths cast entangle centered on the party.

Xochipek the **lizardfolk shass** follows the offensive by ordering the sounding of a bellowing horn. Shass is a title given to a lizardfolk warrior after completing a ritual challenge for the right of rulership.

A procession breaks through the foliage, with a line of four **Blackjaw lizardfolk** bearing spears and turtle shell shields. Their lower jaws are painted with some form of soot or black paint, and hollow bone chimes clatter and jingle from the base of the spear points. Their shields are painted with a symbol like that of a great set of jaws opening upward, with a massive raindrop over the mouth.

From behind this wall of guards, an elaborately feathered litter carried by four muscular lizardfolk with similar black markings approaches. The bearers carry carved wooden warclubs with obsidian spikes, and have white teardrop markings on their chests. Inside this drop shape is what appears to be a toothy maw symbol.

A massive reptilian figure wearing a headdress of woven leather sprouting enormous multicolored feathers sits upon the litter. Across his lap rests a *staff of reptile command*.

Xochipek bellows in broken Common.

“The sacred line is broken. The Drowned One angers!”

Either a combat or a dialogue begins, fully dependent on the characters. To make this easier, we can break this down into key points to help out.

Xochipek demands compensation for the characters’ intrusion into his territory.

Xochipek cannot accept no for an answer once this has begun. It would be seen as weak, and he would be overthrown. Therefore, no matter how persuasive a character may be, only magical means can change his mind.

The presence of the lizardfolk voice of the depths all but guarantees Xochipek’s actions are viewed under the auspice of the Drowned One. Therefore, he has not only the political pressure to succeed, but a religious one as well.

The characters might be able to bribe Xochipek, but the bribe must impress not only the shass, but the voice of the depths as well. Simple gold trinkets won’t work. This sacrifice must be of some great value. It would be fair to say it must be more valuable than anything he is currently wearing — two elaborately carved jade bracelets and a golden torc. Xochipek also carries the *staff of reptile command*. Otherwise, they attempt to capture at least one, to be taken back to the village and ritually drowned.

Yaretzi and Zolin each wear a fine gold necklace and jade rings carved to look like coiled serpents.

Either intense negotiations or combat surely ensues.

Complications

There are a lot of pieces at play here, and either a social dynamic or combat. Having the characters outnumbered (most likely) means they’re on their back feet when this starts, with success or failure depending on their outlook. Keep in mind, even if the characters lose they are likely captured and brought back to the Blackjaws’ home base so they can be ritually drowned. This means they need to be alive and incarcerated — a perfect escape scenario. Even if they lose, they can still win.

Devil's Hospitality

Written by CJ Leung

Environment
Urban

Suggested level
15 – Hard

Monsters
Roper (1)
Gargoyle (1 per character)

Terrelian — erinyes (1) with the following change: Terrelian carries a *rope of entanglement*, which it can use in place of two of its Multi-attack attacks.

Treasure
Sabazian medallion, *rope of entanglement*

Introduction

Every devil's duty is to collect mortal souls to bolster the forces of Hell. Powerful adventurers turn the tide of their eternal war against the forces of the heavens and sunder the hordes of Abyss.

As for weaker souls, well, let's just say the nightmare stables don't clean themselves.

In Devil's Hospitality, you, the Game Master roleplay an ambitious upstart devil who has set their eyes on converting a band of adventurers into Hell's minions.

To aid in your endeavor you are provided with a diabolical toolkit of deception and trickery to challenge players.

Violence is not a necessary component of this encounter, but adventurers can certainly revel in it.

Primordial magic as old as creation itself governs the immutable agreements of infernal contracts. Even the most powerful archdevils can do nothing more than dance around the loopholes.

The signer of the contract must fully comprehend the terms for it to be valid. This is an ironclad rule.

However, through a stroke of luck you discovered the contract can actually be signed before the terms are understood.



Once both conditions are fulfilled, the voice of the cosmic arbiter informs the adventurers an infernal contract had been signed and they have a 1 minute cooling off period to cancel the contract. Certain conditions apply.

Your task is simple. Lie, cheat, weasel and do everything you can to prevent that from happening. But, there are still rules you need to follow, or the contract will be void.

The idea here is to test the players' ability to focus on the most important task at hand, which is cancelling the contract and pushing through the obstacles instead of reducing the hit points of everything they see to zero.

Description

You are an **erinyes**, and your true name is **Terrelian**.

Never tell anyone your true name!

On the Material Plane you have assumed the form of a suave half-elf socialite who goes by the name Besla Romain.

You own an exclusive social club called Velvet Vox frequented by the rich, famous and powerful.

Hidden in a remote part of the city by magic, few knew of the club's existence, and even fewer know its true nature.

In reality, it serves another purpose as an elaborate trap room for unwary adventurers.

The following is a rundown of the usual plan, but since adventurers are mercurial creatures of feline proportion, you may have to jump out of your hiding place in the club to intervene.

You have invited the adventurers to Velvet Vox, which is hidden under an abandoned warehouse.

To reveal the secret staircase leading to the club, characters must place their hands on top of a cylindrical onyx pedestal discreetly positioned in a corner of the warehouse.

When a hand is placed on the flat top of the pedestal, shining red brush strokes appear in the air above them.

Each hand placed on the pedestal causes more brush strokes to appear until the last hand completes the sequence of strokes to form three Paleo-Infernal logograph characters.

L1. A night of hospitality

L2. Is the right price

L3. For our souls.

Those are the terms for the infernal contract, and the foolish adventurers unwittingly sign it with their handprints.

They have literally sold their souls for a night of all expenses paid revelry in your establishment — a small compensation in comparison.

Without magical means, characters can't read such ancient language. But they may not even have the opportunity to do so as the explosive appearance of red carpeted stairs leading down into the club steals their attention.

Inside an immaculately dressed human attendant greets the characters.

He ushers them past an eastward 20 foot by 40 foot corridor flanked by eight exotic, natural stone pillars (one of these is a **roper**).

At the end of the corridor, the room opens up into an extravagant 100 foot by 80-foot event hall with a spacious 50 foot headroom.

Glamorously dressed devil worshippers have come to spectate, but currently enjoy a lavish spread while pretending to ignore the adventurers.

On the rafters, your **gargoyles** watch over everything silently.

At the opposite side of the hall is a stage with closed curtains. The adventurers are brought before it. If they look around, they see a huge unmissable banner bearing the L1 logograph with its translation hung on the northern wall. To the south is a similar translated banner for the L2 logograph.

L1



A NIGHT OF HOSPITALITY

L2



IS THE RIGHT PRICE

L3



FOR OUR SOULS

With all the pieces in place, all you need to do now is to open the curtain to reveal the translated L3 banner behind it and to activate the contract.

Just hope the characters understand what's happening. Having to explain a surprise is just sad.

This is what happens when the contract is activated:

The adventurers hear a disembodied voice in their head that can't be silenced.

"Infernal contract signed! The Hells have claimed your soul in exchange for a night of hospitality. To annul the contract, all signatories must return to the location the contract is signed and express their will to do so within one minute."

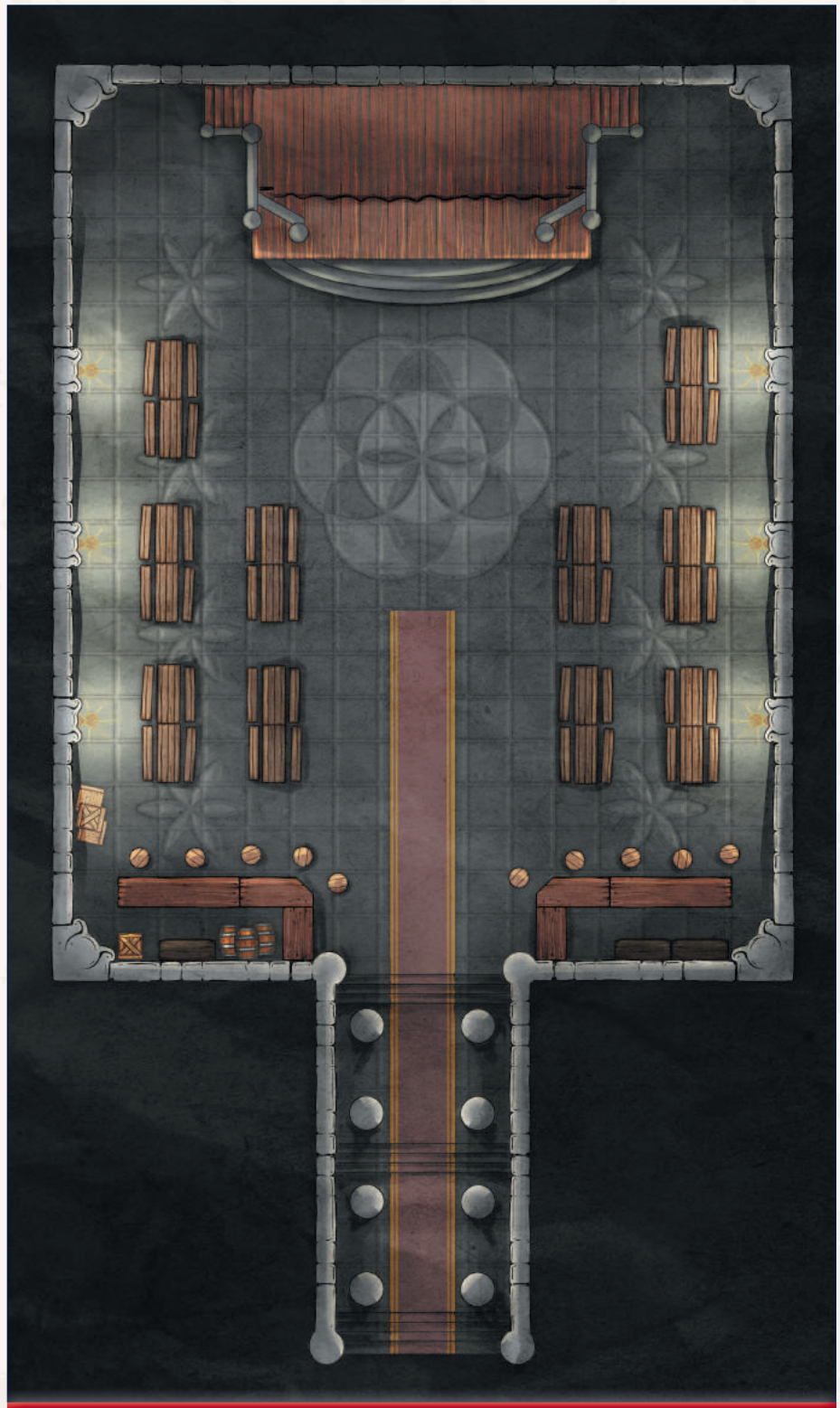
The voice begins counting down every 6 seconds.

To cancel the contract, all adventurers must be within 5 feet of the onyx pedestal, conscious and speak aloud their desire for the cancellation unanimously.

As a provisional member of Hell's legions, the adventurers can see through your disguise and perceive Terrelian's true form.

If the characters take any damage caused directly by you or your minions within the minute, the contract becomes void.

But, any actions or effects that do not cause damage, such as grapples and shoves, are fair game.



The characters were not told this, however. They don't know your intimidations are toothless.

You cannot say they have not signed an infernal contract or lie

about the repercussion of signing one, which is virtual slavery to Hell's forces.

Lying about these material facts voids the contract.

Your resources

- You have your *rope of entanglement*, as well as the monsters listed in the monsters section.
- The **gargoyles** are some of the best minions you could ask for — emotionless, disciplined and exquisitely obedient. If they grapple and carry an adventurer into the air, their friends might hesitate to attack. Unless they're utterly bonkers. Then again, it won't be your minion's fault if the adventurer is dropped.
- The **roper** is temperamental and dangerously nearsighted. You must order it every time you want it to do something, but at least it doesn't require you to use your action to do so. Just hope the adventurers are not clever enough to throw the other club attendants at it to distract it. Or worse, tempt it to bite them and void the contract.

Roleplaying and strategy for Terrelian

Without any obstacles, it takes 3 rounds of dashing for the average adventurers to return to the pedestal. Additionally, you cannot hurt them at all or the contract becomes null and void.

It may sound like the deck is stacked against you, but don't worry, you've got this. You are the cleverest devil you have ever known and there are lots of tactics in your old playbook. Try some of these classic stratagems:

Your tactics

Obfuscate! Never answer any question directly.

Occupy them with long speeches.

Play down the consequence of the contract and entice them with the delights of a sinful night of revelry in your establishment.

Leave your sentence hanging, if the players wait longer than 6 seconds, they lose 1 round.

Befuddle them by making them think only one person needs to return to the pedestal.

Focus your minions on the weakest adventurers.

Divide and conquer! Show special favor to one specific party member.

Pretend one of the adventurers is your accomplice all along.

Communicate with some of them secretly through telepathy and make deals.

Suggest drastic ideas that “may or may not work,” such as cutting off the slowest character's hand and have the fastest member bring it to the pedestal.

If they decide to attack you, pretend they are winning and their next attack will finish you off.

If they can successfully cancel the contract, you can save yourself from further embarrassment by accepting defeat gracefully and admit they show a lot of promise.

You can award them with a *Sabazian medallion* in the event they change their mind about joining the forces of Hell in the future.

Complications

There are a few foreseeable complications with this encounter. The most immediate one is the characters ignoring all the banners and preventing the contract from taking effect. This can be easily remedied by just showing or telling them what the logographs mean.

Longer term campaign complications may rise from this encounter if the characters are bound by the contract.

Obviously, they have less freedom and you need to find justification for the adventurers to continue the campaign.

Otherwise, the campaign can pivot into a redemption arc to get the infernal contract terminated or even turn into an evil campaign.

Special attention may need to be paid to warlocks, as they may already have a pact with a fiendish Otherworldly Patron. It is up to you to decide whether this overwrites the old pact.

If characters emerge victorious, selling off the *Sabazian medallion* — an infernal favor granting artifact — might come back to bite them in the butt some day.

Dinner Party

Introduction

There are countless sources full of tables, information and colorful references for our games out there. An encounter idea can come from a simple reference to an item, property or game mechanic discovered anywhere.

In this case, I stumbled upon the Sample Poisons listing while looking up Short Term Madness. What I saw was Truth Serum. Imagine the characters in

Environment
Urban/tavern

Suggested level
Any

Monsters
Only the player characters,
unless you have other plans

Treasure
None

your adventuring party sitting down around a table in an inn, tavern or restaurant and unknowingly imbibing food tainted with Truth Serum, an ingested poison.





Do characters have conflicting ideals or flaws? Do they have secrets? Do they have secret desires? If you thought your last holiday dinner was embarrassing, you ain't seen nothing yet, because this could get messy.

Description

Before you begin this encounter, set up is key. Each player must roll 1d20, and then a pair of d20s together. If possible, have them roll these dice at least one or two sessions early so they aren't focused so much upon it when you want to run this encounter.

Record those numbers on a list beside each character's name. Keep this handy in case the players protest they were not given saving throws. The first roll is the saving throw and the pair is for those who have advantage against poison. But if they are all rolling together they might not figure it out.

Keep track of characters who might have advantage on saving throws against poison and make sure you use the second roll. If you want to make it really random, use the random draw rule detailed below instead of the d100 percentile roll if you do not want it to be just truth serum.

Being a Game Master sometimes means being great at poker. Never let them see you bluff.

When the characters sit down to a formal meal, in any number of settings, the meal will be laced with the Truth Serum poison.

Truth Serum poison (ingested)

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature can't knowingly speak a lie, as if under the effect of a *zone of truth* spell.

Characters who fail their save after eating or drinking whatever's laced — make it everything so there's no guesswork — cannot knowingly tell a lie. Inform each character of this with a prewritten note.

When you hand out the notes, even though they all say exactly the same thing, sort through the notes like you're looking for something specific, and then be certain when you hand them out. Building the illusion there's a specific thing for a specific person is important to creating the right tone.

Now, insert the right NPC. Perhaps it's a barmaid or an inappropriate drunk. Perhaps it's an agent of the thieves' guild or a master spy serving the evil burgomaster.

The key is to have this NPC ask leading or private questions. Questions like “who really likes who?” or “who do you work for?” or “you look strong — which of you has magic items?” are all good examples.

If players say openly they stop eating when they're handed the note, feel free to end the effect there. But if they continue eating, even if they passed the secret saving throw, bump up the DC on the save by 5.

If their saving throw still makes it, use the random draw rule. The random draw rule takes a lot more set up but creates player agency.

Take the time to write each of the Short Term Madness effects on individual pieces of paper. Fold them up tightly and put them into a bowl, hat or similar container.

Should a character fail their second save, they draw once from the container and roleplay appropriately. Have them hand you the paper after they understand it and place the paper by their name you recorded earlier.

An evening of hilarity may ensue. The scenario could come to blows or end in bloodshed. Or maybe nothing happens. When it comes to player characters, one never knows.

Short-Term Madness

d100 Effect (lasts 1d10 minutes)

01–20	The character retreats into their mind and becomes paralyzed. The effect ends if the character takes any damage.
21–30	The character becomes incapacitated and spends the duration screaming, laughing, or weeping.
31–40	The character becomes frightened and must use their action and movement each round to flee from the source of the fear.
41–50	The character begins babbling and is incapable of normal speech or spellcasting.
51–60	The character must use their action each round to attack the nearest creature.
61–70	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
71–75	The character does whatever anyone tells them to do that isn't obviously self destructive
76–80	The character experiences an overpowering urge to eat something strange, such as dirt, slime or offal.
81–90	The character is stunned.
91–100	The character falls unconscious.

Complications

That's entirely up to your players. Depending on how much they like to roleplay and how willing they are to give themselves over to this encounter, there could be no end to its options. You might have characters who divulge flaws, secret loves, hidden plans or reveal they've been stealing from each other. It's a *zone of truth*, but through poison. If they fail the saving throw they might blab anything. If they fail the second save Short Term Madness could spell any number of random roleplaying opportunities.

I will add this: if your players are not much for roleplaying, Dinner Party could be frustrating for them. You and your players should be having fun together. But, if you and your players are willing to give some roleplaying a shot, and you don't want to run a combat encounter, this might be for you. All I ask is that you have the right frame of mind and have fun with it.

Dogs of War

Environment

Forest

Suggested level

4 – Hard

Scale up by adding 3-4 wolves per character level

Monsters

Bingley

Wolf (4)

Treasure

None

Introduction

Our games are filled with assumptions, perhaps because our lives are filled with the same. We often foolishly make assumptions about a person based on their appearance or dress, judging personal traits like intelligence or a person's wealth or other detail about their life. We assume someone may have a specific level of education if they have glasses.

These same assumptions carry over into our game worlds.

One thing I like to do is shatter assumptions. This encounter is all about doing so. Below you'll see a race filled with assumptions involved with a monster bearing its own.

When we turn these assumptions upside down, we can truly surprise even a jaded group of players.

Description

Whether travelling at night or while camping in the forest, the party hears signs of distress or arrives at an abandoned horse-drawn carriage.

The horse is dead, slaughtered as if torn apart by a wild animal. Surveying the outside of the carriage reveals both rear wheels shattered at the bottom.

A simple survey of the surrounding area with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals this carriage dragged on the damaged wheels for quite some time.



The carriage itself has doors on either side and a driver's bench on the front. No driver is posted at the front of the carriage, and both side doors hang ajar only a crack. No light comes from within. If characters check, the doors open easily.

The sight inside is horrific. Two Medium sized bodies lay within, brutally slain. The interior is an abattoir of severed limbs, blood and torn upholstery and clothing. There is nothing of value within. At this point, characters with passive Perception 10 or higher hear a low voice calling out from the dark forest ahead.

"Help me..."

Should characters investigate, peeking out from behind a large tree is a young male halfling in torn clothing. Characters with proficiency in weaver's tools or who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check recognize the halfling's clothing as driver's garb, covered in scratches, blood and mud.

The halfling appears frightened and suspicious of strangers. He engages the characters in conversation but does not readily come out of hiding.

If questioned, he confirms he is the driver, and that his name is **Bingley**. He says **wolves** attacked the carriage and he barely escaped

with his life. Feel free to require a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to get Bingley to divulge the information, or have it come out through roleplaying to speed things up.

When they get Bingley to divulge his name, the howls of wolves, not far away, echo through the woods. When that happens, Bingley whimpers audibly.

"Oh no..."

Bingley tells the party he is hurt and needs help escaping. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check determines some form of deception is at hand. If players do not ask for

an Insight check, do not volunteer one. Allow the event to unfold naturally to surprise the characters.

If the characters discover or realize Bingley is lying, or if he can lure them in close, he'll use his Shapechanger trait to transform into his hybrid form and howl to call in his wolf pack allies.

Those four wolf pack mates arrive at the beginning of the next round. They attack in two flanks, with two attacking from the right flank and two attacking from the left. Wolves are pack oriented team players. They work as a team.

Complications

The biggest possible complication is the possibility of being afflicted with lycanthropy. Anyone bit by the werewolf must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become infected with the curse of werewolf lycanthropy. It is up to you how gradual or instantaneous this change is, or if the full change into the lycanthrope places the character under your control.

A character who wishes to fight the curse should be given roleplaying or other avenues to seek a cure. The point of a game like this is to provide great stories, and a cursed hero seeking a cure is most definitely a great story. Feel free to allow that to unfold, but keep in mind, at the same time it should be a curse and it should offer a challenge to the party and the player.





Down on the Farm

Introduction

Often, the most basic settings can be a great place for an encounter. What seems like another boring problem turns out to be more.

When missing goods, livestock and the like become an issue, players always blame goblins, kobolds or the usual rogues' gallery of villains. Switching things up from time to time is a good idea, as it keeps the players guessing.

Additionally, players tend to forget that others operate as a team too. Characters use scouts, terrain, spells and the like to their best potential. They seek to flank their foes or find some way to gain advan-

Environment	spiders variant)
Forest	Giant wolf spider (8)
Suggested level	Treasure
5 — Hard	110gp, 70 ep, 250 sp, engraved pocket watch worth 50 gp, silver flask worth 25 gp filled with fine brandy, a gold wedding ring worth 100 gp
Monsters	
Fengus — ettercap	
Beatrice — large spider	
Swarm of insects (swarm of	

tage. Some monsters do this too.

What if a monster has another monster as a pet? What if the characters are surprised to find a typically solo monster acting like a team in concert with other creatures?

Description

A local village or farmer of renown has a problem with an increasing loss of farm animals. Chickens, geese, small goats and even domestic dogs or cats have gone missing of late. What started as a suspicion of a coyote problem has been made more mysterious, as no howls have been heard and no large tracks have been found. What's more disturbing is the lack of cricket song in the evenings, giving night-fall an eerie silence.

The farm borders on a large forest avoided by local hunters because of rumors of a haunting. To reinforce this foreboding sense, large webs have been spun deep in the forest, and a prized hunting dog has gone missing in pursuit of a deer very recently while exploring this area.

Fengus the ettercap runs a spider farm, breeding spiders bigger and bigger and creating a new species in the process. Their favorite spider is **Beatrice, a large spider** and protective companion. Before Beatrice, Fengus bred **giant wolf spiders** as well as fostering an entire **swarm of spiders** that have recently hatched. Fengus created a fenced spiral series of webbed walls leading to a large central pen for the spiders. This is where Fengus breeds them bigger and bigger. These spiders hunt, and are offered for sale to nefarious sorts as guards and pets.

The spider farm has webbed walls clinging to strong trees tall enough to discourage climbing. Anyone attempting to climb should be treated as if under the effect of a DC 14 *web* spell.

Within this spiral maze of webs, the walls crawl with giant wolf spiders, as well as the swarm of spiders from which they were bred. Fengus and Beatrice lair in an open area in the center of the maze.

Once the characters find their way inside the labyrinth of webs, they see the farm in all its glory. The carcasses of dead animals, wrapped in gossamer, cling to the inside walls or dangle from trees. Fengus and Beatrice are here and ready, having sensed the trembling webs as the characters either fought their

way through, burned a hole through or got caught in the webbing. They fight as a pair. Beatrice has been with Fengus since she hatched, so they are familiar with each other's tactics.

Hidden within the spider farm is a cache where Fengus keeps a crude ledger of their clients along with the profits of the business. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the cache within the labyrinthine web walls of the spider farm. Fengus keeps the profits of the business hidden along with the ledger, amounting to 70 ep and 110 gp.

All livestock are either dead or poisoned to the point where recovery is unlikely. A bounty for their return isn't likely, and their flesh couldn't be harvested for survival purposes due to the venom. However, it's likely one or more hunters, wanderers or other travelling folk may have fallen victim to this farm and were dragged back as part of the feeding pen.

If the wrapped bodies are cut down, characters can gather 250 sp, an engraved pocket watch worth 50 gp, a silver flask worth 25 gp filled with fine brandy and a gold wedding ring worth 100 gp.

Complications

There's a lot that could go wrong for either side. There are many creatures with poison, so there's a good chance one or more characters will have to deal with this problem.

On the other hand, many experienced players burn spider webs on sight. This has the benefit of likely removing all the giant wolf spiders in one go, but may start the trees ablaze as well. Each turn in which fire is used to remove webs, make a fire check (see below).

For a fire check, roll a d6, with flames catching on a roll of 1. Any such fire requires action by the characters to stop. How they do it is up to you and the players to resolve, but a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check might well do the trick.

This fire check is also required if characters miss with ranged spell attacks like *fire bolt*, or cast spells like *lightning bolt* that ignite flammable objects.

Living trees tend to not instantly catch fire, but dried leaves, pine needles, twigs and the like might.

Fengus does not fight to the death in this conflict. They're a successful farmer, after all, with clients who buy their pets.

If Beatrice falls before Fengus does, or their farm is engulfed in flame, they seek to escape. If they get away, characters can expect to be spied on by spiders, followed by them and otherwise suffer arachnoid harassment.

Ettercaps aren't terribly smart by default, but Fen-

gus is crafty and may barter information about their clients in exchange for sparing their life. Who these clients are, and why they're purchasing spiders, could lead adventurers far and wide.

Discovering the ledger Fengus keeps, which includes a client list, can lead to further investigations. The unusual electrum pieces kept with the ledger suggest strange origins for these clients.

Fengus could be only one strand in a vast web of spider farms, giving you another possibility for further adventure hooks.

Any number of entities could be financing these operations, breeding spiders and cultivating poisons, from a subterranean empire to a spidery demon lord hunting for an artifact broken into seven pieces.



Enemy at the Gate

Introduction

Oni are special among giantkind in that they are talented spellcasters and shapeshifters. They walk the line between brute and hag, making for a villain potentially accomplished as both.

Some hags might employ oni as minions, but to be honest, given their intelligence and accomplishments, any service to someone might be temporary at best. Dangerous, cunning and strong villains are rarely anyone's minions for long, usually having plans of their own and no small amount of ambition.

Environment

Urban

Suggested level

7 – Medium

Monsters

Katsuro – oni

James – guard

Treasure

70 gp, 110 ep, 10 sp, glaive, ring of mind shielding

The oni might be more dangerous when in the service of an even more powerful villain like a dragon, greater devil or demon, lich or mummy lord. This would give the oni access to greater resources, perhaps a helpful organization or even their own pool of agents like cultists or spies.

For the purpose of this encounter, the oni is the agent of some greater villain in your world. I've used medusae, succubi and more in this fashion, and they're all great in their own way. An oni, like a succubus, can be anyone, anywhere, and really ramp up the paranoia. The oni could be hidden among a tribe of orcs, then disguised as a human guard and then as a wandering monk. One never knows.

The Change Shape action states the entire appearance changes size if needed, and their glaive changes in size with them, meaning they'll always have a polearm. That makes it essential for you to place the oni in roles where the existence of such weapons would be logical and acceptable. You may even wish to make such weapons more common in local soldiers and among peasant militia.

This is supported in historical fact with such weapons as the bill and the military fork. You could even give the oni in question a magical glaive with the ability to temporarily change shape, or give it an ability to call the weapon from anywhere via some sort of teleportation.

There are lots of ways around the predicted metagaming of the experienced and cunning player.



In this particular case, the oni is ready to greet the adventurers as they return to civilization — either ahead of them as they arrive in a new town — or to welcome them as they return to a home community. Just remember, the oni is an intelligent opponent. They act with cunning and a decent tactical sense. They retreat if circumstances take a bad turn and strike when they have some sort of advantage. That's what makes them deadly.

Description

The road ends at the large wooden gates of the community before the party. Two individuals in chainmail and holding glaives watch the characters approach and appear to be conversing with each other out of earshot.

One of the guards is an **oni**, Katsuro, in disguise as a human guard he eliminated earlier. As Katsuro watches his chosen targets approach he casts *charm person* on James, the other **guard**, and tells him the approaching characters are trouble and should be stopped at all costs. To that end, the charmed guard is belligerent and seeks to deny passage to the characters.

If things devolve into combat, the oni says something to the effect of “These people are trouble. We cannot let them pass. Do you agree?” Then he'll grasp his weapon in an offensive manner. But he'll allow James to attack first. Given the suggested level of the party, they ought to make



quick work of this simple guard. That's when the oni casts *darkness* on the group then flies directly up and over the characters.

Unless the characters have a means to see through the magical darkness, they should not see the oni leave the melee. On his next action he casts *cone of cold* from directly 30 feet above the party. It would be reasonable to expect the party to either scatter or move away from the darkness at this time. Katsuro anticipates this, and uses the darkness sphere like a barrier to hide behind — using it to keep the party off balance so they find it hard to know where

he is. He seeks to separate one or two away from the group so he can properly deal with them.

Katsuro may even take a fallen character and place them in the darkness so he can assume their form. He may whisk away with an unconscious character so he can leverage the party to act on his benefactor's behalf. He may try to assess if some members are weak enough to succumb to a sleep spell after his *cone of cold*, and then take those individuals. He may try to surprise an individual and strike them with a pair of glaive attacks before casting *sleep*. The choice is up to you.

Parties change in composition and tactical application — allow the oni to act accordingly. In all cases, he seeks to fight another day if he can. He is cunning and intelligent. His goal is to either kill, capture or gain leverage over the party. If he cannot do one, he always does another. He never assumes his true form unless he has to. It's better to keep the party guessing. A party that cannot identify their adversary starts assuming everyone might be.

Because the oni has a *ring of mind shielding*, the characters cannot track him through the darkness with spells like *detect thoughts*. They also cannot pinpoint him with spells or abilities that track creature type. That means he really could be anyone and placed in a variety of circumstances.

James the guard carries a coin purse with 10 sp and keeps a handwritten note from his spouse asking him to come home safe tucked into his tunic. Katsuro carries 70 gp, 110 ep and a missive from his overlord identifying the party, with some special sigil the overlord uses to sign the missives in a concealed pocket and wears a *ring of mind shielding*, armed with his glaive.

Complications

There are a few that come to mind. Death, kidnapping, being accused or tracked by local authorities for killing their guard — the list goes on and on.

Keep in mind Katsuro couldn't care less about simple human guards (or dwarf guards, or elf guards, you get the idea), so such repercussions for his actions do not play into his motives. His singular motive is the killing or capture of the party. He may even kill one party member and take their place much like a doppelganger would. If this happens, feel free to take the dead character's player aside and discuss your plan with them.

You may be quite surprised when you discover the ruthlessness of the oni could be surpassed by that of the player who gets a chance to be on the inside. If this happens, go for it — if only because your table will talk about it for years to come.

This doesn't include the legal or political fallout that could ensue from killing the constabulary of a local community. You have a chance there to insert local politics if you like, but if your players are not interested, or if they are not of a mindset to deal with such issues, it's perfectly reasonable to have someone inside the wall discover the victim the oni killed to take their place.

You could have another guard on the wall, too far to get involved, see a flying, spellcasting version of what he thought was a compatriot, and thus facilitate an easier resolution of any forthcoming trial. You could even go so far as to have a spouse or older child of the guard slain by the party become a new villain for the party. The options here are truly endless.



Eyes Have It

Environment
Subterranean/dungeon

Suggested level
6 — Deadly

Monsters
Aberrant fungi (3)
Dark witness
Dark witness zombie (2)

Treasure
Handy haversack, 1000 gp, 2500 sp, 500 cp and a potion of energy

Introduction

The natural relationships between monsters sometimes go overlooked. Exploiting these relationships can justify other interactions and create a chain of logical encounters to generate a buildup of excitement.

Orcs and ettins, or goblins and wolves illustrate existing relationships to scale up the danger. Seeing one may not necessarily lead to another, but even the hint of a partnership could lead to some great tension or scene building.

Eyes Have It takes something relatively easy to deal with — aggressive plant life — and ties it in with aberration creature types to present a bizarre new threat to adventurers. These dangerous plants generate exclusively from dead remains.

These small details add depth to the fungal creature and perhaps elicit curiosity in the characters and players.

The key element of this encounter is the aberrant nature of the plant, linked in a way that could spell the undoing of the aberrant fungi source creature — a natural reaction to an alien species into an environment they're not adapted to for survival.

This not only builds on the theory of the natural ecology between monsters in some cases, but has a basis in actual biology.



Description

The adventurers discover a cavern entrance during their exploration in the wilderness, dungeon, subterranean environment or wherever you choose. Tool marks and signs of excavation mark a twisting tunnel 100 feet long, 5 feet wide and 7 feet high.

A dwarf's Stonecunning trait, or a character with proficiency with mason's tools who succeeds on a DC 10 check, notes the tunnel's slight descent. As the tunnel progresses tiny fungi appear at the midpoint growing on most surfaces.

The further along characters travel the larger these mushrooms get, becoming varied in color and many faintly bioluminescent.

The whole tunnel takes on a dim light in a variety of colors. At the end of this twisting tunnel the rough digging appears to have broken into a large constructed chamber, circular in shape with a domed roof.

The entire area is filled with massive mushrooms and other fungi almost like a secret mushroom forest or garden.

The room initially appears to have no other exit and is 100 feet in diameter with a domed roof reaching 40 feet at its apex.

The area is densely covered in **aberrant fungi**, counting as difficult terrain for movement. Characters can hack through the fungi easier than wood but because the mushrooms are damp they do not easily burn.

Creatures in the fungal garden are considered heavily obscured for visual purposes.

Taking an action to clear an area removes a 5 foot space of obscurement, or 10 feet if slashing damage is used, but the area remains difficult terrain for movement because of the debris. Characters who take the time to move debris back up the entrance tunnel can clear the terrain enough to allow normal movement.

A variety of fungi in many shapes and sizes, some quite massive, populate the mushroom garden. Bioluminescence dimly illuminates the whole area and casts odd shadows while clouds of glowing spores move about harmlessly in the air.

But the characters are not alone.



If you wish to ask characters for Wisdom (Perception) checks, do so, but it's easier to build tension by using their passive Perception scores. By whatever means, successful characters see some odd shapes moving through the mushroom forest. At first only shadows are seen but silently, eerily, characters see what looks like a humanoid shape moving through the farthest recesses of the chamber.

Characters who explore closer might notice the creature has what appear to be tentacles sprouting from its torso. Lit in flashes by spores or glowing fungi, they see flashes of pink or purple coloring on this mysterious creature. Only by getting within 20 feet can a character get a better look at the **dark witness zombie**. Further, as characters explore this domed garden they may notice this strange inhabitant is not the lone occupant. There are two of them.

Characters who ignore these wandering fungal monsters could potentially explore the remainder of this chamber unhindered. Doing so might reveal the exit on the far side of the chamber, which has been overgrown by a thick tangle of tough mushrooms. Characters within 10 feet of the exit who succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check spot the concealed passageway.

Attacking any aberrant fungi exposes nearby characters to its dangerous spores. However, this has an added side effect for those who successfully survive the spores. Aberrant fungi are born upon aberrations, and absorb some of their memories. Survivors of the spores have a random chance to learn one of these memories.

d100 Memory

01-50	The exact location of the hidden exit behind the tangled mushroom patch
51-80	The existence of another chamber some where beyond this one
81-95	The miners who discovered this chamber did not survive
96-100	There's a dais with a hidden compartment and possibly treasure inside

If characters find the hidden exit, they discover a 10 foot wide, 10 foot high hallway with an arched

ceiling. The inside of the hallway is also covered with fungi, although these are strangely not bioluminescent. The end of the hallway leads into another 100 foot diameter circular room with another 40 foot high domed ceiling. A 20 foot diameter dais stands in the center of the room, rising by two steps to 5 feet.

Spaced equidistantly from each other and 10 feet from the dais are four stone columns rising to the ceiling. The room is strangely clear of fungi, but there is one pile of fine gray dust next to a shovel, just inside the entrance to this room.

Hovering over the dais is a **dark witness**. The horrid creature takes the form of a humanoid torso with a face in place of arms and legs. The center of the torso is a tooth filled maw. The creature slowly rotates in place, and as it does so its terrible gaze falls upon the party.

This combat encounter could be straightforward, as characters contend with the aberrant and undead menaces. However, characters can increase their defenses by hiding behind a column, gaining three-quarters cover.

Should characters defeat the dark witness, a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a hidden compartment in which a leather haversack is stored. For a character who was attacked and survived the aberrant fungi, as well as received the appropriate random memory from them, this check is DC 15 and made with advantage. The leather container is a *handy haversack*. Inside is 1000 gp, 2500 sp, 500 cp and a clear bottle with air bubbles in the glass containing a bright green liquid regularly pulsing with dull light like a heartbeat — a *potion of energy*.

Complications

There are a lot of complications and they all span from the deadly abilities of all monsters considered. Those who are afflicted with the aberrant fungi could potentially die, and thus the *potion of energy* is included. It's important to consider whether or not the party has some ability to deal with poison and disease, be it through the use of spells, other magical items or a paladin's Lay On Hands feature.

Feeling Buggy

Environment
Underdark/Cave

Monsters
Figment*

Suggested level
3+

Treasure
Follower

Introduction

Subterranean adventures often include one ongoing theme — madness.

Whether it's creatures from the world below, the ambient radiation affecting teleportation or any storyline provided by the creators of this great game, underground became an icon for crazy settings, insane visuals, wild creatures and erratic behavior.

I've noticed a lack of what should be an obvious species in such an environment — insectoid humanoid. These are famously surface desert dwellers, and all other such creatures are either solitary aberrations or nowhere near humanoid.

This is a gap not only crying to be filled, but should be with a colonized hive-like society. The only problem with this is an organized species adapted for this life would quickly take over.

Therefore, a built-in flaw must exist to balance it with the rest of the subterranean cultures and also put it in line with the rest of the humanoid species dwelling in the neverending night of the world below.

Therefore, I introduce the coh-leop (a play on the Latin for the family of beetles), or beetlefolk if you like.

They are suitably adapted and odd in this setting, and filled with their own foibles and functions making them just as fun as any other underground species — except with their own inverted twist.



To introduce this species, I am proposing an odd encounter with a envoy-by-misadventure, who might then be the player characters' first insight into this new and strange race from the Beneath or life underground.

As regards the rest of this encounter and how it should scale, we'll do something a little different.

Instead of measuring the difficulty by the level of the group, we'll do it based on the number of characters in the group.

This sort of encounter works well at lower levels, so we'll factor this into the encounter.

Most characters can individually crank out a certain amount of damage, and given this encounter can repeat in a certain way, making it deadly would defeat its entertainment value.

Description

The characters travel down a winding path through twisted caverns and cracks in the earth. The sound of dripping water echoes through what seems like unending holes in the world, and the smell of damp earth, mineral water and the sour scent of molds and fungi fill the air.

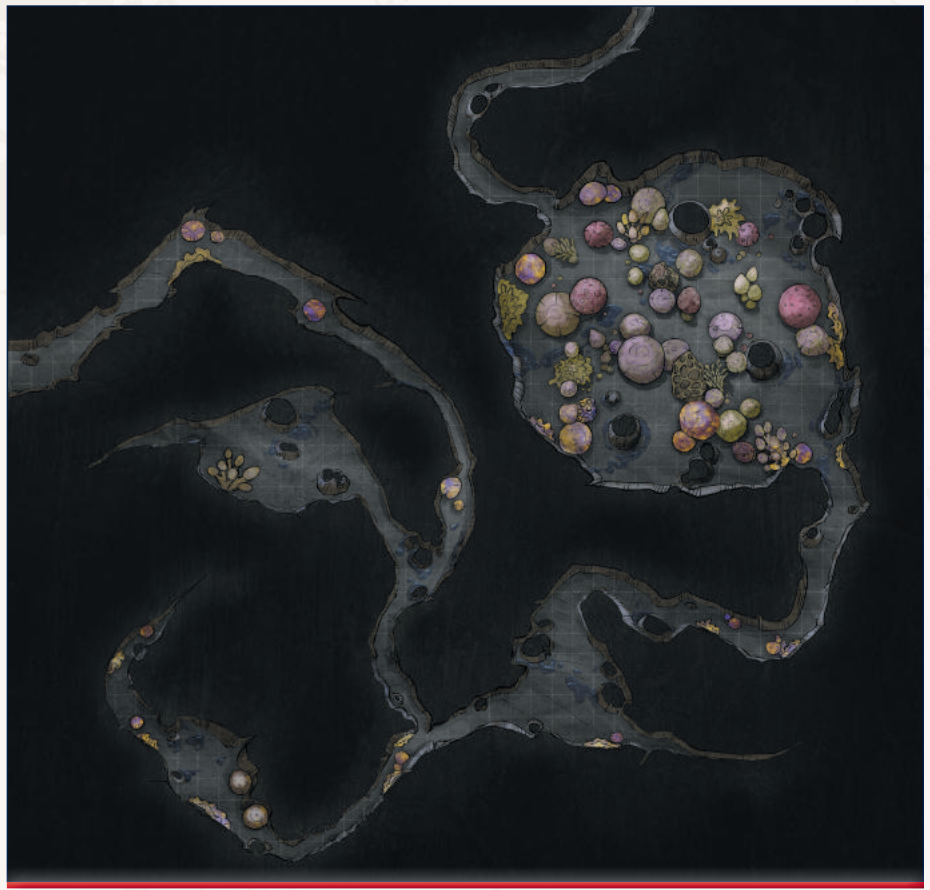
Tall mushrooms twist into the path, creating annoying barriers to passage and bumping into protruding gear every time something isn't properly stowed. Beetles, centipedes and other deep living creepy crawlies find their way into every open sleeve and pant leg.

The entire experience is unpleasant and strains the patience of even the most level-headed of compatriots.

Odd squeaks and clicks of alarm from beyond the next outcropping of stalagmites suddenly break the drudgery of spelunking.

When characters circumvent the outcropping, they witness the following:

The cavern opens up into a small, circular opening, 80 feet in diameter with a 30 foot high ceiling speckled with dripping stalactites. The cave houses a strange pantomime of alarm. A 5 foot tall beetlelike humanoid runs about the area, moving through a large patch of waist high multicolored mushrooms like a pinball through bumpers.



They shout, with their segmented arms flailing above a stooped and rounded head in alarm, running about in wild patterns. Their stubby legs and rounded body struggle to make any great speed through the bountiful fungi harvest.

The creature is pursued relentlessly by another, translucent creature. This second creature appears as a large mouth ringed with jagged yellow teeth, 5 feet in diameter, with wriggling black tentacles swirling about in an aggressive fashion.

A large tongue darts out from the maw of this creature, dripping with saliva.

Despite having no visible eyes, the creature seems to chase the

insectoid with unerring precision about the clearing, who only narrowly evades their pursuer.

At first the insectoid takes no notice of the party. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals the slightly obvious fact this creature is in fear.

The insectoid, whose black segmented exoskeleton shimmers with iridescent shades of purple and green in the light of spells and torches, has bright red multifaceted eyes.

They wear no garb save for a few belts fashioned from strange leather. What looks like a flat wooden club rimmed with jagged pieces of black stone or glass lies in the middle of the clearing.

This **coh-leop**, named **Klik-Klak**, is chased literally by a **figment** of his own imagination. Here's the trick — they fully believe this creature exists, and based on the freakish nature of the mushrooms they've eaten it does exist, if only temporarily.

Klik-Klak is unique in that their reaction to these mushrooms is powerful, but only affects themselves. These mushrooms might well be hallucinogenic, but only if it serves a story or creates humor or drama. Otherwise this feature might get abused. It's always wise to build safeguards into this sort of thing.

This figment of his imagination is a horrendous creation, which for the purposes of this encounter scales with the number of characters in the group. This imaginary creature has 20 hit points for each character in the group. It has a base AC 10, plus 1.5 for each character in the group, rounded up. The figment has a number of attacks equal to the number of characters on the group divided by 2, rounded up. The bonus to attack is equal to the number of characters in the party, divided by 2, rounded down. The damage per attack is 4 (1d8) bludgeoning, plus 1 for each character in the group. It has no skills, and its saves are all +1. It flies (hovers) at a speed of 30 feet.

Therefore, a party of four faces a creature with AC 16, 80 hit points, 2 attacks at +4 each, dealing bludgeoning damage equal to 1d8 + 4, with +1 to all saving throws. If or when the party defeats this creature, which has the construct creature type, whoever delivers the killing blow becomes the “savior of Glokanlok.” Whoever this individual is, they gain Klik-Klak as a follower. Klik-Klak becomes a coh-leop knight. Use the statistics for a coh-leop with the following changes: add proficiency in Strength and Wisdom saving throws and Multiattack. Klik-Klak makes two melee attacks with his **macuahuitl** (the weapon in the center of the clearing) as his chosen weapon. Treat the macuahuitl as a greatsword with the **Savage** weapon property. The macuahuitl is not made of metal, making it invulnerable to rust. Klik-Klak also gains the following action, which they use to benefit their new liege whenever possible.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

For 1 minute, Klik-Klak can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature they can see within 30 feet of them makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Klik-Klak. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Klik-Klak is incapacitated.

Klik-Klak remains a loyal and devout follower of the character and tries to follow their orders to the letter. They gain the ability to understand the character's native language, but only speak the coh-leop garbled version of Undercommon.

It's up to the character to find a way to speak with Klik-Klak.

Complications

This encounter bears the standard dangers of an encounter where physical danger exists, but also gains the additional fun of a possible follower the party is not ready or trained for.

This adds an element of roleplaying to a normally combat oriented series of events, and also adds a social element where the “liege” will have to develop methods of communication with their new follower, as well as any new and unusual behavioral traits you want to insert for Klik-Klak to challenge or entertain the characters.

Given the range of these possibilities, I'll leave this up to you. That sort of freedom can allow you to insert plot hooks for Klik-Klak like where they came from, why they thought this monster was attacking, how they came to be in the clearing and so on, as well as challenge the party in other ways apart from combat.

New Weapon Property

Savage. A weapon with the savage property leaves fearsome wounds. When weapon damage is rolled for a savage weapon, any damage result of 1 is treated as though it was a 2. A savage weapon costs ten times more than a typical weapon of its kind.

Fibble's Fantastic Familiars

Environment

Urban

Suggested level

Any

Monsters

Fibble (commoner)

Lanoosh — **oculider** (1)

The other creatures are up to you.

They are either mundane coun-

terparts of monsters but with 1 hit point each, or they are actually what Fibble claims.

Treasure

A transformed beast of supernatural origin with a great backstory, a mundane creature they have been bilked out of honest coin to acquire or a brand new oculider familiar. It's your choice.

Introduction

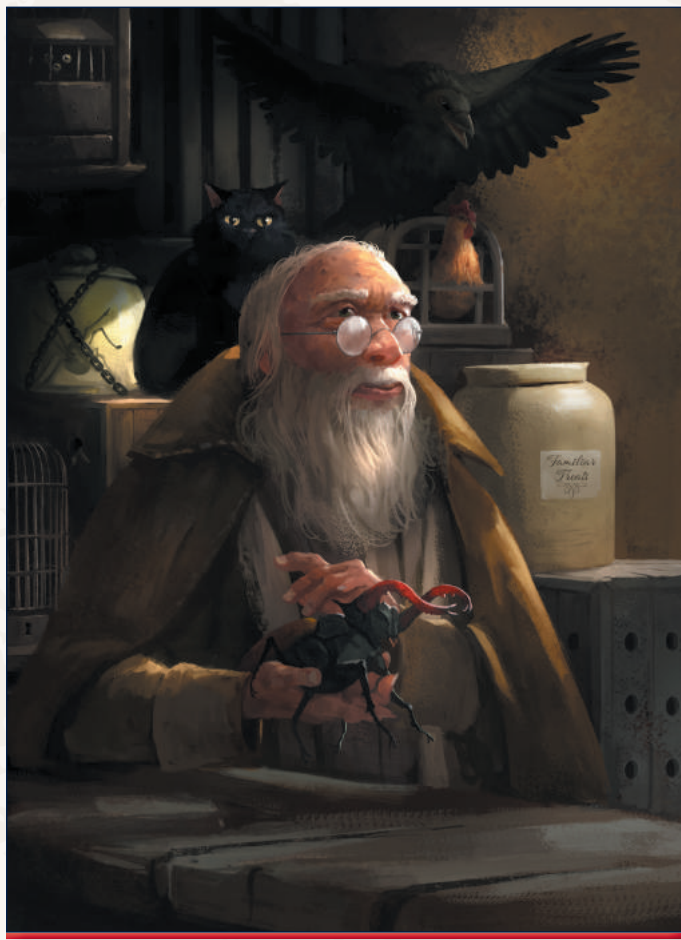
Okay Game Masters, how many times have your players asked you about familiars and other companions? If at least one wizard or warlock in the group displays how fun this relationship can be, that may lead to a desire for others to have their own little friend.

Some want one for color or roleplaying. Some want one for the power it gives in scouting and the Help action. Some want one out of sheer envy. Players are all different.

Despite any plot hooks you might think are obvious, or clear indications the characters should take on a task or head in a specific direction, they still seek out something they want. Feel free to jump on this opportunity as a way to create new encounters, plot threads and campaigns.

No player could honestly or fully shrug off any culpability in any events which spawn from their agency, if and only if you allow the story to follow their direction.

To that end, you might even wish to have a district in a larger community filled with places like the one in this encounter, along with potion apothecaries, arcane focus dealers and material component markets.



Even in a lower magic setting, so long as you have no magic item dealers, you could run such establishments in their own section. They might even come with their own social stigma, or their own array of con men and charlatans who would more than gladly pawn off their junk as magical.

You may even wish to make some of these vendors transient. They could take their wares from town to town like the snake oil salesmen of our own history. Imagine mixing fake magic trinkets with actual oddities as the makeup of their wagon bound inventories.

The options here are truly endless.

In this specific case, we address Fibble and his Fantastic Familiar shop. For the purposes of this encounter we'll place this shop in an urban setting whether it's a city, village, town or thorpe. But the shop could just as easily be mobile, and adventurers could pass by the merchant wagon on the roadside.

Description

The characters are in a town, village or city that allows for a shop of oddities. Nestled in this section, a simple wooden shop front exists with shuttered windows painted with stylized pictures of small animal companions. The shutters and door are closed. A sign painted in peeling bright blue with a stylized black cat upon it hangs above the simple wooden door. Painted in yellow upon the door is "Fibble's Fantastic Familiars."

Knocking on the door brings a verbal response in a high-pitched squeaky voice speaking Common, followed by the sounds of a commotion within.

"Come in! Come in! Hey! Get back here!"

Inside this dusty shop is an 8 foot by 15 foot customer area, blocked by a 3 foot high wooden counter to a larger area beyond blocked by a curtain. Upon the counter is a large glass jar filled with sand and twigs, in which resides a fist sized black beetle. Another jar, ceramic and opaque, has black painted letters indicating "familiar treats."

A voice issues from behind the curtain, followed by the sound of a bucket being knocked over, a ceramic object breaking and a chicken clucking loudly.

"Be there in a moment!"

Immediately thereafter, a face pokes out from a split in the middle of the curtain and greets the characters with a large toothy grin. **Fibble** is a scrawny human male commoner, 5 feet tall and wearing broken spectacles, with graying black hair pulled back into a tight ponytail. He smiles broadly and nervously, all the while holding the curtain closed and laughing nervously.

"Busy day, busy day. So, what can Fibble do for such fine folks as you?"

Fibble claims to run a shop selling only the finest animal companions to those seeking something unusual. This may or may not be entirely true, but Fibble always upsells everything in his shop.

Behind the curtain, there is a larger 15 foot wide by 10 foot deep storage area filled with crates and cages containing the following for sale. Here are some examples of Fibble's Fantastic Familiars. Fibble upsells all of them with a tale.

- The beetle on the counter is actually just a beetle. Large, well fed and imposing, but just a beetle. He sells it as a rare and unusual specimen rumoured to actually be a dragon under a polymorph spell. A victim, Fibble might say, to punitive and powerful adventurers. He keeps this specimen on the counter in open view as the former dragon was also rumoured to be quite vain, and loved to be viewed by its victims and captives. Fibble hopes the dragon takes this public display into account when it finally breaks free and shows mercy upon Fibble if and when the spell fades. The base price for the beetle is 25 gp. Alter that price up or down up to half based on negotiations.

- A black cat named Nexus. Fibble claims this cat is actually the former property of a hag named Auntie Treeshadow, allegedly slain at least a decade ago. The cat survived the fireball that killed her, and Fibble has not been willing to test what the cat actually is for fear of demonic retribution. The cat has a habit of staring unblinkingly at all who sleep as if planning something. Fibble suggests it may be a great way to buy favor from any hags they know, as a hag may appreciate the returned property. "Anything to prevent being turned into a frog." The base price for this cat is 25 gp. Alter that price up or down up to half based on negotiations.

- A chicken, panicked and constantly making noise. Its cage is covered in discarded feathers. Fibble claims this chicken was sold to him by a farmer. A cattle farmer. That had no chickens. This farmer's wife went missing one night, and the farmer,



Frederick, brought this chicken into his shop in a strange, almost controlled state. If Fibble remembers correctly, this chicken is actually not the wife, but the milkmaid taken on by the farmer who the wife claimed was having relations with her husband. The wife, in her rage, called out to diabolic forces and the milkmaid was cursed to be a chicken. The farmer and the wife have since gone missing, but the milkmaid's beauty was reputed to be near angelic. She might be grateful to her rescuer. The base price for this chicken is 20 gp. Alter that price up or down up to half based on negotiations.

- A spider in a small glass jar wrapped in chains with a heavy padlock. Fibble claims this is no spider, but actually a demon. The demon took this form to escape judgement by its pursuers. He would gladly sell this spider at a bargain price if the party would promise not to release it inside the town border. The

base price for this spider is 50 gp. Alter that price up or down up to half based on negotiations.

- A raven with free reign to fly about the place but never tries to leave the shop. This raven, Edgar, is trained to speak several words and phrases and also starts to mimic the characters if they stay long enough. Edgar has a habit of crying out "watch out" or "be careful" when it's dramatically appropriate. It's unknown if this is a repeat of something Fibble has said or something a wise customer has claimed. Fibble avoids discussing a price on this raven and will not divulge why. If pressed, everything is for sale, but Fibble at least makes it look like he's losing out by selling Edgar at all. The base price for this raven is 100 gp. Alter that price up or down up to half based on negotiations. The raven could lead to a new quest or a new adventure depending on what you want to do with it. Consider the raven repeats secrets or clues for curious characters to decipher. Is Edgar passing on mysteries uttered by its former owner? Can the players coax answers from a stubborn bird?

- There's an empty cage that, when discovered by either Fibble or the characters agitates Fibble. He claims "it looks like a rat ... but that's what they all look like." He'll take up his broom and encourage the characters not to enter any sewers for the next little while. If pressed, he claims he's had problems with shapeshifters in the past and having one of their kind in captivity kept him safe for a while.

- Lastly there's a square wooden box, approximately 3 feet to a side covered in a black sheet. If the sheet is removed characters see small, half inch diameter air holes in each side. Fibble avoids this box when possible. He says this box is only for the most powerful of adventurers, and not to be taken lightly. When pressed about this box, his normally confident and social air chills and he becomes serious. He says this box contains a powerful familiar for only the most bold and has to be won, not earned. It was sold to him by travellers from the far side of the realm and has cost him no small amount of other potential familiars and companions, but he fears releasing it unless the buyer is truly strong and capable. Negotiations for this creature only begin if a character offers a good price of 250 gp or more.

A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check allows such a negotiation to begin. The characters have to win his trust to begin this sort of process, and a Persuasion check is reasonable. The covered box contains an **oculider**.

The creature can see through multiple air holes and creates havoc in the shop, so Fibble tends to keep the box draped to reduce the damage done by this creature. **Lanoosh**, the oculider, wants nothing more than to be released and generate as much carnage in this shop as possible. Fibble knows this.

If a character wishes to purchase this creature, Fibble wants a great price, but is willing to let it go. Here's the catch. Fibble wants this creature sold without releasing it from the box. He claims it's too dangerous to be released inside the confines of the shop.

The oculider has other ideas.

From inside the box, the characters hear this creature mimicking Fibble in a high pitched and sarcastic way. This should be a great way to inject humour and basically make the characters distrust Fibble's warnings of how dangerous this creature is.

This results in one of two things:

- The creature is released inside the shop — Lanoosh gets out. It's a massive eyeball the size of a large melon, with 10 spindly legs below the eye that sits on a wide mouth filled with sharp teeth. The creature goes on a rampage and targets the other small beasts of the shop with its fury. This can only be prevented by either killing or incapacitating the oculider or by being brought under the control of a spellcaster of 3rd level or higher. This control can be through a social contest initiated by the character with a relatively high spellcasting DC (say like a 17 or so) or by magical means like a *suggestion*, or a focused *find familiar* spell targeting the oculider.
- Lanoosh is released outside the shop — This is the bane of any small animals, pets, other familiars and children. Lanoosh scuttles and darts about the community creating chaos in its wake, as it punishes everyone and everything for his captivity with its

bite attack and eye beam. This can be brought to an end the same way as inside the shop. Doing so quickly likely reduces the ire of the public at large. If Lanoosh can be won over by the right person, it serves as a familiar.

If Lanoosh is successfully sold or released outside the shop, Fibble locks up for the day immediately after the characters leave and the door magically adds the word "CLOSED" in large red-painted letters. The door is sealed with an *arcane lock* (DC 15 to pick).

If the characters all move their attention to the box, its contents or anything else for more than a few rounds, feel free to have the very building Fibble worked out of take on a completely different identity, as if the shop took over that space magically and is now gone elsewhere.

Complications

Again, this is dependent upon a lot of aspects.

Lanoosh might destroy a pet store. Lanoosh might create no end of havoc in whatever community this shop is in, followed by its fair amount of angry villagers, pitchforks torches and the like.

Based on your whims, one or more of Fibble's claims might be true, even unknowingly. There might actually be transformed dragons, damsels and the like. There might actually be demons and misplaced familiars of hags in play. This all depends on you and if you want a charlatan or a magical salesman in play.

Fibble could be a constant arrival in towns, villages and market squares. Fibble could have ripped off the characters or sold them an angry creature only to try and pull the same sort of thing again with someone else — and the characters show up and have to clean up after him.

Fibble could be even more than he seems. Fibble himself could be a fey or even archfey, a wandering fiend, djinn or other creature seeking to create chaos for his own pleasure and amusement. The whole menu is open to you and how far you want to take this sort of encounter.

Fire for Effect

Environment
Urban

Hobgoblins (4)
Hobgoblin troopers (4)

Suggested level
12 – Deadly

Treasure
1000 gp, 105 ep, 70 gp, gold bracelet worth 250 gp, silk robe with gold embroidery worth 250 gp, bronze coronet worth 250 gp, handy haversack, spell scroll (blight)

Monsters
Kurskaar - **fire giant howdah**
Mergol and Hershekk - **hobgoblin marshals** (2)

Introduction

One trope in tabletop roleplaying games in need of work is the concept of the encounter as a “one thing shows up and does one other thing.” There’s no reason why multiple monsters of similar alignments and motivations would not work together.

If these creatures work together more than once, they should have some sense of how each other operates as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Grouping like-minded individuals might turn what would be a typical encounter into something a little less predictable.

The following is one such encounter where two monsters, tactically minded and ruthless in combat, work together to create a small fighting force that would be dangerous to deal with, especially in a confined setting where collateral damage is something to consider.

As an example of this, I am presenting two races that fit the bill — fire giants and hobgoblins. Both love war, are tactically sound and would likely work in concert to achieve a goal. Both share the lawful evil alignment, so you can expect them to behave in similar fashions and seek similar solutions to the same problems.

In the correct environment to add complications, you have a problem that needs to be solved — quickly! The introduction of this encounter might well be a doorway to the start of something larger.



Description

While stopped for the night in a small town or village, or when and wherever normal life carries on around the characters, suddenly there’s a rumble, followed by a slight tremor.

A 20 foot diameter sinkhole opens up in a crowded small street or alleyway, with the wooden structures to either side creaking and losing at least one outer wall. In the dust and screams, what surprises you are the tops of ladders quickly appearing, with red-skinned **hobgoblins** issuing forth.

They immediately begin attacking any nearby villagers.

As bad as this is, what really worries you is the abrupt appearance of a massive black metal gauntleted hand, which grips the edge of the hole and pulls up an enormous 16 foot tall figure. Their black plate armor glints off the light of torches and lamps, and long red hair appears from the bottom of a frightful black metal helmet.

A small structure not unlike a hunter's blind or a small guard post sits upon the back of this fire giant howdah. The framework is difficult to see, and it's covered in either fired mud or ceramic plates. One wide horizontal slot below a capped roof spits arrows tipped with burning rags.

All around is chaos. Fires begin in several locations as flaming arrows stick into wooden structures. Any guards quick enough to act in response to the **fire giant howdah** before the characters are cut down like kindling by its massive greatsword.

Hobgoblin troopers quickly take advantage of the carnage and advance in a line to protect the legs of the juggernaut. The titanic figure roars in challenge, with only the screams of civilians in response. The hobgoblins cheer and advance even more.

Who will save the town?

What you have is little guesswork on who or what the problem is and a few problems to deal with as a group. The fire giant, **Kurskaar**, acts as a siege machine, destroying structures and launching boulders into guards.

Anyone who gets close enough to them to be a threat will be dealt with by either the hobgoblin troopers on the ground or the two **hobgoblin marshals, Mergol and Hershekk**, in the howdah Kurskaar's back.

Mergol and Hershekk protect Kurskaar's back with spears and longbows. They have a stock of arrows in the structure tipped with rags soaked in pitch, and a small covered lantern they use to light the arrows and start fires.

The fires they start present no problem for Kurskaar, so the fire giant can walk confidently through any created fires, using their great strength, heavy armor and immunity to great effect.

Hobgoblin troopers take advantage of holes created by this colossus to either attack guards or effect carnage on the civilian populace.

Mergol and Hershekk are protected from outside flames by the structure on the Kurskaar's back and have three-quarters cover from other outside attacks.

They also have a store of 10 alchemist's fire vials they throw at the feet of the fire giant if attackers try to get below their arc of fire.

Note that Mergol and Hershekk can assist their allies, including the fire giant, with their Leadership ability. There are two of them, so you have two opportunities to use this ability.



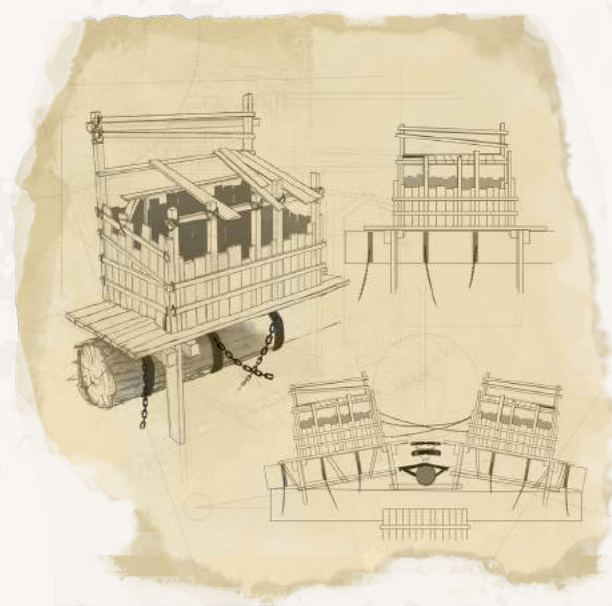
If characters choose to attack the structure itself it has an AC 15, 100 hit points, resistance to piercing weapons and vulnerability to bludgeoning weapons. If destroyed, Mergol and Hershekk fall to the ground, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage, and all remaining alchemist's fire ignites.

The hobgoblin troopers below fight as a unit. Think Roman shield wall. They protect each other and flank opponents if possible. Hobgoblins believe in martial supremacy and will not take foolish chances. They seek to protect their juggernaut as best they can, trying to keep annoying guards or constabulary from getting too close. They avoid engaging foes the giant is swinging his massive blade at, as they are well aware of what happens when things go wrong.

The hobgoblins fight with longswords and shields, and the hobgoblin troopers behind them attack with glaives over the shoulders of their allies. This means any one Medium-sized foe might face up to four opponents (two wielding swords, two with polearms) at once. These troopers are not immune or protected from fire in any way, so if the giant wanders into a conflagration they need to hustle around the fire to get to a place where they can assist again.

A unit of this size must have something in their pockets! The hobgoblin troopers carry a total of 105 ep and 70 gp. The fire giant has a *handy haversack* worn on their belt like a pouch that contains a *spell scroll (blight)* crunched up into a ball out of frustration, 1000 gp, a gold bracelet worth 250 gp, an elf-sized silk robe with gold embroidery worth 250 gp and a coronet forged of bronze in the dwarven style worth 250 gp. They also have a large sack which holds a rocking chair (medium sized), a large bag of salt and a wagon wheel, or whatever assortment of random mundane items you choose.

Keep in mind that monsters working in tandem with each other might well give each other advantage on attack rolls against common foes. The entire forces' objective is to suppress this entire community, thinking all they would face is simple guards. They might seek to capture any powerful or political figures for ransom and control of the area. The giant may not be a long term thinker, but Mergol and Hersekk certainly are.



Complications

Aside from dealing with an organized mob of monsters, the biggest complication is the threat of fire. Mergol and Hersekk set blazes about as often as they can. Consider all wooden structures to ignite if they are shot with flaming arrows or hit with alchemist's fire. The damage for entering these blazes should be determined by the length of time they have been burning.

A recent blaze might be easily extinguished with a successful DC10 Dexterity check and the right method (perhaps water). For each turn the blaze continues, add 1d6 to the damage on a failed check and raise the DC by 2. When the DC reaches 20, nothing short of magical means like a water elemental or appropriate spell stops the conflagration. Use your judgment when dealing with this.

The sinkhole from which the enemies entered is your doorway to another adventure. How did the hobgoblins get here? How did they get a giant underground? Where did they all come from? Why did they attack here?

All of these and more are questions you can present to the characters or choose to expand on yourself. This may be a part of a larger giant/hobgoblin offensive, or it might be a singular raid by a small but organized group. That's your choice. Run with it!

Fish Food

Written by Guy Sclanders

Environment

Ocean, sea or any large body of water

Monsters

Merfolk (5)
Water Elemental (1)

Suggested level

5 — Hard

Treasure

Crystals of water breathing

Introduction

Any encounter at sea or on water is dangerous. Several factors contribute to this and few are employed often enough to truly bring terror into the game. When dealing with aquatic encounters the focus should be on the very real potential of drowning, so make sure to check the rules for suffocation and underwater combat to understand the mechanics.

Another consideration is water tends to disrupt magic. Fire often fails, visibility is poor and verbal spells fail if the caster cannot breathe water.

Finally, when knocked off a ship there is a risk the ship sails on without noticing, missing the chance to stop and recover a lost companion. Swimming 30 miles to shore is nearly impossible. Once in the water, there are many, many monsters that can be seriously dangerous to one's health.

What this allows for us to do is create a trifecta of terror: drowning, water issues and being lost at sea. This encounter is designed to play on all three, and demonstrates that level isn't always useful in surviving an encounter with low level monsters.

Description

The characters are aboard a ship skimming across the surface of the water like a graceful skater on ice. Waves slick past and the air is fresh with sea spray. The crew are in a great mood as the harbor is but three days away — roughly 250 miles distant.



One of the sailors, a younger one named Meos, suddenly interrupts the near perfect moment.

“Isn’t this the domain of Mar’haaroo?”

Meos is instantly shushed by Captain Thedius Pew, a slimy fellow with a scar across his left cheek trying to earn as much coin as he can, who dismisses the lad’s notions as old superstitions.

If characters press him, Captain Pew lets them know that according to legend if you don’t toss 1000 sp overboard when entering Mar’haaroo the Merking’s domain, he gets angry. But the old cod has been silent for years, and who wants to waste such money?

(If the characters are higher level, consider making it platinum pieces.) Captain Pew dismisses the lad as listening to old myths and sends Meos into the hold to clean the bilge for causing such consternation amongst his passengers. Make no more fuss about it and stretch your descriptive muscles allowing the characters to engage in ship activities.

Playing Dice with Sailors. What do the sailors smell like? Is it a game of Deception versus Insight skill? Perhaps it's Sleight of Hand versus Perception. Is money involved?

A simple game they might play is Grog or Rum. Players roll two four-sided dice usually carved from the tooth of a whale and keep the result secret. The first player declares Grog if they have a low number or Rum for a high number. Then each other player declares. At the end of it, based upon the calls, players put a copper piece into the middle of the table, or bow out. They can then reroll one of the dice in their pool. Now they can call Rum, Grog or Ration. Ration means hold — they pass but remain in the game. If all players pass, they reveal their scores and the highest wins the money. If one declares Rum they must all place a new bet into the pool and run another round, rerolling one die (or not).

How this works in game terms is simple: A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check determines if a sailor is telling the truth. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check allows a player to reroll a die of their choice before the reveal. If you want to run the game in full, have NPCs make Charisma (Deception) checks to foil the other players.

Sight Seeing. Characters can watch a pod of dolphins dance in the ship's wake. What do they sound like? Describe the minimal movements of the beasts, and the sailors' joy at watching creatures. Can you develop any myths around these saviors of the sea?

If a character succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check they realize the dolphins are following the ship, and not the fish they typically feed upon. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check reveals dolphins typically work with merfolk, aquatic elves and the like, doing simple tasks for these races.

Thar' She Blows. Characters see a whale breach and splash down not 30 feet from the side of the ship. What does the water taste like as it splashes upon the characters' lips? Does the ship rock? How can you make them feel the scale of the whale and its impact on their ship?

The characters must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone from the massive impact of the waves suddenly rocking the boat. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check realizes whales typically don't travel alone, but usually in pods, and this behavior is erratic.

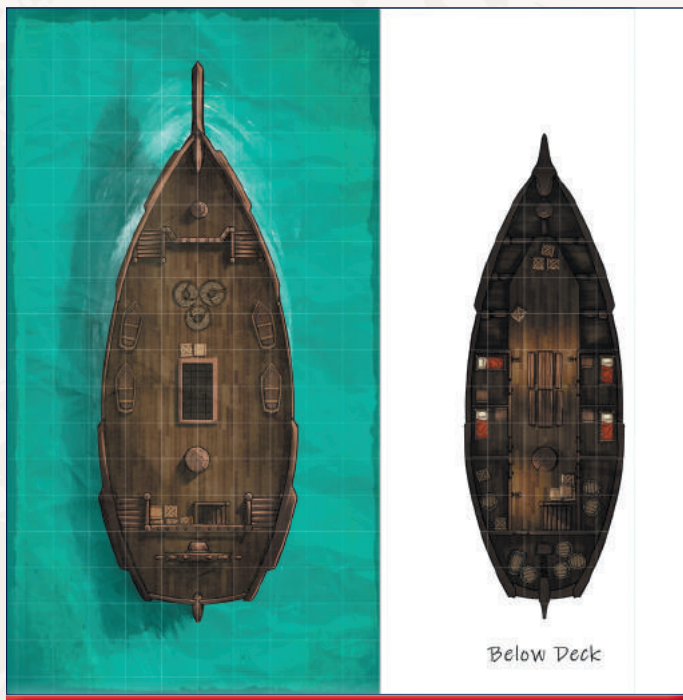
Let the characters relax. That night as the ship makes her way slowly forward under the watchful eyes of the heavens, Captain Pew invites the adventurers to his quarters for a meal. It's a good feast of roast meats, vegetables and fine wine. He regales them with tales of the sea, daring and epic adventures from when he was a lad. Now he's old and sails the trades.

Just then the ship lurches to a stop. Characters must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage as they are thrown across the room. The ship is in disarray. It's ground to a halt for no reason.

That's when **merfolk** attack. Five merfolk leap onto the deck and engage the ship's crew, a total of 10 **bandits** plus Captain Pew (**bandit captain**). These merfolk are not your average sort either — their long fish tails split into legs, allowing them to engage and giving them a movement speed of 20 feet. They are not tough, but there should be enough of them to keep characters engaged for at least three rounds. The merfolk are a distraction.

The merfolk attack the crew. They only seem interested in ganging up on crew and throwing them into the water. The characters need to avoid being grappled by merfolk and thrown overboard. After a few rounds of combat, a badly wounded Captain Pew calls for help.

"They're in the hold! They're trying to sink the damned ship."



If the water elemental is defeated it drops 1d6 *crystals of water breathing*. Any character can easily spot these crystals, which shine with a bright blue light.

If characters fail to repair the ship in time, there is a single row boat everyone can pile into. This leads to the instant problem of overcrowding. The boat can hold 10 people — just barely the captain and crew. Anyone else flounders in the water.

With crystals of water breathing characters can descend into the depths and try to make contact with the mysterious Merking, his kind, or someone else to help them survive. But that is another encounter altogether.

Complications

Start the sinking counter. Each round the characters do not stop the ship from sinking should add 1 to the total counter. When the counter reaches 15, the ship sinks and the characters are stranded. Describe how the ship is already starting to list to one side as it takes on water. Characters who head down into the hold discover the ship is already waist deep underwater.

A **water elemental** attacks the hull from inside, focused on destroying the ship. A water elemental is nearly invisible while in water so spotting and attacking it is not easy. Remember, for each round the characters do not engage with fixing the holes in the ship's hull it continues to sink, the counter increasing by 1 every round.

Meos is down here and badly wounded. He can help seal one of the holes. Meos is a commoner. He has no interest in fighting.

Characters who succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check spot three large 1 foot diameter holes in the bottom of the ship. Characters can use barrels floating nearby as suitable plugs to seal these holes. It takes a full round action to fill a single hole. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check allows a character to patch over a hole. The ship stops sinking only when all three holes are filled.

The characters might attempt to negotiate with the merfolk by calling for peace and offering to pay the Merking his fee. The merfolk stop attacking for a moment long enough to sneer:

“King Mar’haaroo gave you two opportunities to pay – and you ignored his couriers then. Now you pay with your lives.”

On the other hand, if the merfolk and elemental are annihilated and players seem interested in more aquatic adventures, you have the opportunity to have another merfolk arrive — this time, someone quite humbled.

“The great Merking Mar’haaroo is in awe of your power, and begs your services. He requires aid from those as skilled as thee.”

It is a great plot hook to get into another adventure.

Finally, if the players surrender, or make it look as if they are captives of the evil Captain Pew, the merfolk take them down into the waters below to meet with their King Mar’haaroo. He has a need for such pathetic souls ... another adventure!

Fountain of Fortunes

Environment

Dungeon/urban/wilderness – anywhere you want a fountain

Suggested level

3 – Hard

Monsters

Animated armor (3)
Add 1-2 animated armors per character level to scale up

Treasure

50 gp, 750 sp, 1000 cp

Introduction

Players and characters have a wide array of value sets and see value in many things. More than a few see value in monetary things, but this may be simply a pragmatic outlook and not greed. The reality is things generally cost money.

However, many others place value on the intangible. Some place value in concepts or ideals. Love, honor, faith, hope, justice and freedom, or even death, carnage, corruption and tyranny.

This encounter touches on the overarching theme of value in a small way. What do the characters value or deem sacred?

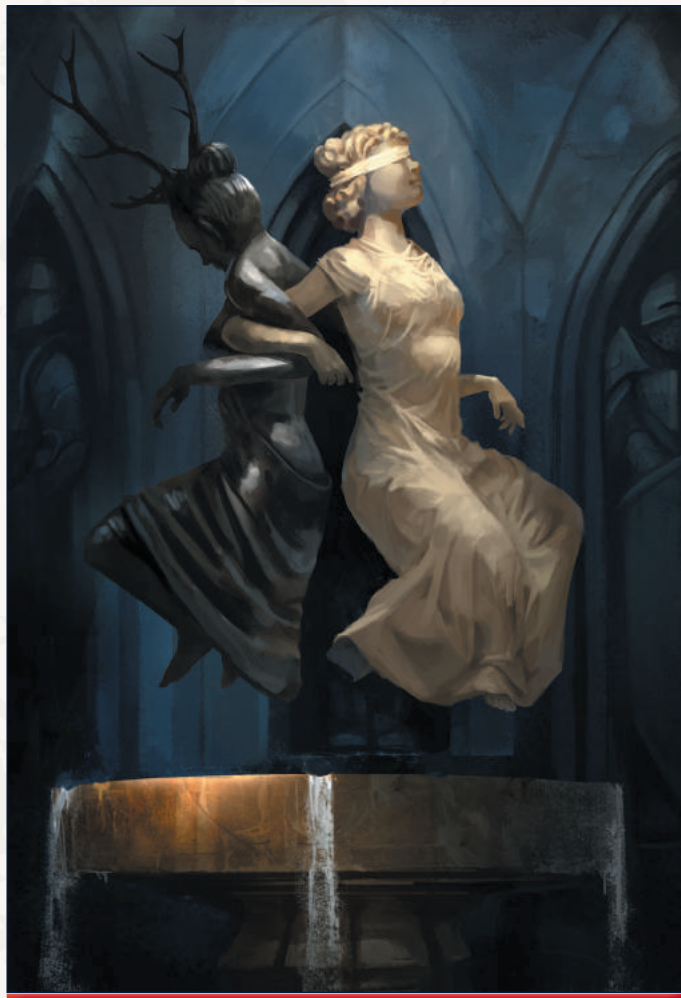
Description

The characters come upon an elaborate fountain with a floating statue above it. The fountain is 10 feet in diameter, only 2 feet deep, and filled to a depth of 1 foot with clear water.

Above it floats an unusual and striking statue. Two women in robes face away from each other with their arms interlocked at the elbows.

The 10 foot tall statue floats 5 feet above the top of the pool, surrounded by three warrior effigies represented by suits of metal armor standing 6 feet tall that float in an orbit around the main statues.

The warrior figures, as well as the main statue, rotate in a circle like a slowly spinning top held aloft



in the air. Both women are beautiful, but different in appearance. One is either painted purple or carved from purple stone. Massive deer antlers adorn her head, and her expression is judgemental and imperious as she looks down.

The other is either painted yellow or carved from yellow stone. She wears a blindfold and smiles gently, looking upward to the sky. Make them whatever religious or arcane figures you choose for your setting. Perhaps they represent goddesses of luck or fortune.

The steel warriors' armor is embellished with elaborate engravings and scrollwork, standing at attention with no weapons in hand.



Taking Wealth from the Pool.

The purple goddess statue speaks if a character removes any coins from the fountain.

“Those who rob a fortune win only poor fortunes!”

Three warrior statues (**animated armor**) come to life and attack. They use their first turn to descend to the ground, after that acting normally on the next round.

Scaling or adjusting this encounter for the number and level of characters is made easier in several ways. You can begin the encounter by describing any number of floating warrior statues, and have them attack in waves.

One animates on the first round, two on the second and three on the third for example. If characters survive three rounds, the attacks end. Once the waves end all destroyed statues reform and hover back into place.

The room could contain many warrior statues — many more than you intend to involve in any combat — and this can greatly increase tension in the group when they wonder what they’re getting themselves into.

For a deadlier encounter, you might even have a character killed by a warrior statue become petrified and take the place of a destroyed one.

Consider including access to greater restoration or similar magic to remove the petrification.

Characters who approach within 5 feet of the pool can see coins scattered upon the floor of the fountain.

Some gold, silver and copper lie about the fountain’s basin, and the distortion of the water makes it hard to count them accurately.

Because of the distortion caused

by the water and the slippery coins inside, it takes characters 30 minutes to collect the 50 gp, 750 sp, 1000 cp scattered inside. (Optionally, you can choose to add a few low value gems of between 10 to 25 gp each, but not too many.)

The encounter becomes a choice. Do the characters drop coins in the pool, or do they take them?

Once the statues have been defeated, the purple goddess statue speaks again, in an ominous tone.

“Your fortune has been cast.”

The characters can take this however they want. You can choose to have this mean future misfortune or use it as a reason to set up an ambush or add a trap. You could even use this as an explanation for a failed saving throw or ability check in the future.

“You know, that strange purple statue did say something about future misfortune...”

Donating Treasure into the Pool. The yellow goddess statue speaks if a character puts any coins or gems into the fountain.

“Fortune left is fortune gained.”

A character who donates to the fountain receives a boon based on what they leave:

Donation	Boon
Up to 1 gp value	Gain a one-time bonus of +1 on the next ability check they make.
Up to 10 gp value	Gain a one-time bonus of +1 on the next saving throw they make.
More than 50 gp value	Gain a one-time advantage on the next ability check or saving throw they make.

If characters ignore the pool, examine the pool and take nothing or otherwise leave it physically unmolested, nothing happens. Once a donation is made, the yellow goddess statue speaks again in a gentle and maternal tone.

“Your fortune has been cast.”

The characters can take this however they want. You can choose to have this mean future fortune or use it as a reason to set up a timely rescue or discovery.

You could even use this as an explanation for a successful saving throw or ability check in the future.

“You must have done something pretty special to impress that strange yellow statue...”

Complications

Aside from the obvious complications arising from the death or injury of a character as stated in the section above on characters transforming into warrior statues, sloshing around in a pool to steal its wealth creates issues. If the fountain is in a public park, citizens — especially superstitious ones — protest this act and might even call for a constabulary or city guard. You might even wish to have a series of mysterious events, all unlucky, befall any fountain robbers until the coins are replaced or reimbursed. The extent of this poor luck is completely up to you.



Friend in Need

Environment

Variable. The original intent for this encounter placed it in the wilderness, but there's no reason such a location couldn't be found in an urban environment. It could even occur within a dungeon setting. Outhouses exist wherever intelligent or civilized species dwell.

Suggested level

5 — Hard

Monsters

Mimic

Otyugh

Treasure

Characters who go through the repulsive task of investigating the otyugh's lair discover 700 cp, 4000 sp, 1900 gp, 80 pp, a feathered talisman worth 15 gp, a pair of ceramic dice worth 10 gp, a finely-crafted iron buckle worth 5 gp, a pair of leather boots with copper buckles worth 5 gp, a rabbit fur belt worth 12 gp, an iron pectoral worth 25 gp, a carved wooden mask worth 25 gp, a potion of climbing and four potions of healing. Filth covers everything. Or feel free to create your own treasure hoard. Use any of these items or include others to potentially lead to further adventures if characters become curious about the former owners of any interesting objects.

Introduction

Symbiotic relationships exist in nature, as do social groups. We have accepted this fact for many years. We see it in insects, mammals, reptiles, and even people. So why not monsters? Friend in Need explores such a relationship where two creatures, an otyugh and a mimic, share a living space, companionship and tactics.



Description

As the characters traverse a lonely country road, they happen upon the ruins of what must have been an old cottage. A large tree, fallen from natural causes, destroyed the building by crashing through the roof.

The former residents' outhouse remains the only intact structure, which escaped the fate of the main building by only a few feet.

A glimmer of light can be seen through a crack in the outhouse wall. Should characters investigate the outhouse, they discover the glimmer seen before is the remnants of a mirror hung on the back wall of the outhouse. The open seat of the outhouse remains intact, and it is the usual single-hole sort of layout. The smell of dung hangs heavy in the air.

Investigation of the main farmhouse reveals harmless vermin, weathered and tattered wreckage of furniture, and collapsed walls. Shrubs now sprout through the floorboards and moss grows on the inner walls. There is barely enough roof left for any sort of shelter, as the massive tree fallen upon the roof of this structure crushed most of it inward.

Something reflecting light from below ought to intrigue characters. Spaces between the planks in the roof allow some sunlight through, which shines into the toilet hole, and reflects light being caught in the mirror.



The entire bench seat of the outhouse is a **mimic**, working in tandem with its best friend, the **otyugh** in a large pit below, to snare prey and feast on unsuspecting travelers.

The shine is produced from treasure fallen below from several travelers taken in by this ruse or their own curiosity. If the mimic drops below half of its total hit points, the otyugh engages from below via its tentacles.

Complications

There is a decent chance one or more characters become infected with a disease inflicted by the otyugh's bite attack. If you so desire, add wild berries

and other healing flora to the area or inside the ruined cottage giving advantage on Constitution saving throws to cure the infection. Characters who succeed on Nature, Medicine or herbalism kit checks can recognize these curatives.

If the characters try to shift or move around the structure or tree inside the cottage, there might be a complete collapse. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation), carpenter's tools, or mason's tools check can determine this structural danger. If they ignore this fact and proceed anyway, characters must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to escape the structure, taking 2d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save.



Gang of One

Introduction

How many times have you heard this phrase?

“Wait, a (insert monster)? In (insert environment)? Don’t they normally occur in (insert different environment)?”

How many times has that been a headache?

This encounter addresses the dilemma. True, many random encounter generators, whether digital or printed, separate the reasonably possible creatures into the environs they should be expected in. However, you may wish to use a creature because you may never have tried a new one, or find the list of possible encounters uninspiring. The simple solution is to reskin a creature in such a way as to make it plausible. If real world species have variants that occur in strikingly different climates, then why not

Environment

Arctic

Suggested level

6 – Easy

Monsters

Dregedag — **arctic chimera** with the following changes: its Intelligence is 19, and it can speak Draconic.

Treasure

Headband of intellect

fantasy creatures? If foxes could have species variants ranging from the arctic to dry deserts, and we already know dragons have very specific subspecies for different environs, then applying that same logic to other monsters might be not only possible, but opens up an entirely new toolbox for you to use.

Building on both of those concepts, I intend to use the chimera as the basis, but we’re placing it in an environment it is not native to. Then, we’ll either swap or re-skin the heads so it is thematic with the terrain as well as believable.

Taking lessons from our own world, the chimera's lion head becomes a Siberian tiger, and the ram becomes a mountain goat. The dragon's head is the easiest to change. We simply change the red dragon head to a white dragon head, and therefore change the Fire Breath to Cold Breath, and the saving throw from Dexterity-based to Constitution. Now we have an arctic chimera.

Using the same logic, you can create a monster for different climates, including such extremes as aquatic or elemental depending on how much work you wish to put into monster creation or alteration.

All that remains now is to create a motivation for any monster. Chimera are typically proud, greedy and stubborn. They are also not that intellectually gifted, to say the least. This can be quite limiting in the context of usage. Experienced players may know of the chimera's intellectual limitations, and coupled with action economy, turn a typical chimera encounter into a quick exchange of blows to resolve it.

The easiest way out for you to make this less predictable is to increase the monster's Intelligence score. While this could be explained as an atypical mutation, such explanations have always earned at least one set of rolled eyes in my experience.

Magic then becomes the next easiest answer. This tactic is used in Argument where a magic item is applied to one of the two heads of an ettin to alter behavior. Whereas that created a possible roleplaying opportunity with the injection of some humor, in the case of the chimera we seek to make the monster less of a standard encounter and perhaps more of a villain.

Playing on the dragon head's greed, it's entirely plausible that a magic item like a *headband of intellect* might fall into the paws of a chimera and be taken by the greedy dragon head.

This would alter the monster's outlook in a wholesale manner and would make one head far superior in its ability to direct the actions and schemes of a creature normally subject to infighting. This is in keeping with the trend of turning two-dimensional monsters into something more.

Description

The party trudges through snow and cold on their way to a distant destination. The wind bites where gaps in clothing occur, and snow falls, making anything at a distance difficult to see. The air is cold and crisp, smelling of ice crystals. The path winds through small hillocks and snow banks, channelling the wind like a snake.

Now, **Dregedag the arctic chimera** tries to ambush the party. Given the snowfall, Wisdom (Perception) checks to spot the ambush are made with disadvantage. Dregedag is well camouflaged in this environment and is hidden in a soft snow bank. That makes any passive Perception check to spot the creature outright a difficult DC 20, and a similar chance to notice anything unusual when actively using Perception.

Bursting from one of these snow banks is a massive white creature. With a roar, it exhales the essence of the weather upon the group, chilling the first two ranks to the bone. Dregedag breathes a 15 foot cone upon the first ranks and then takes flight into the sky, gaining 60 feet of altitude for at least two rounds.

Dregedag hopes to use its natural coloration along with the snowfall to hide its progress.

The chimera has stashed away several icy boulders in multiple locations that it uses to bomb travellers. It returns five turns later with an ice boulder it stashed behind another snow bank, and tries to drop this among the largest group of characters to create havoc and panic.

The chimera flies by at full speed at a height of 60 feet and drops this ice boulder among the party. This requires random targets to succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d8 bludgeoning damage. Dregedag performs three such passes before descending upon one character.

Because Dregedag is now far more intelligent than the average chimera, it chooses a target either outlying, injured or poorly armored.

Dregedag then uses its Cold Breath again if possible. Follow the standard chimera battle tactics after this, with one exception: Should Dregedag drop to one third of its hit points, it attempts to flee.

The chimera is proud and will not endanger its territory with a show of weakness. Once it recovers, it'll be back again.

This chimera understands the territory and knows the dangers of the cold — it might wait for a moment of weakness or perhaps the cover of darkness.

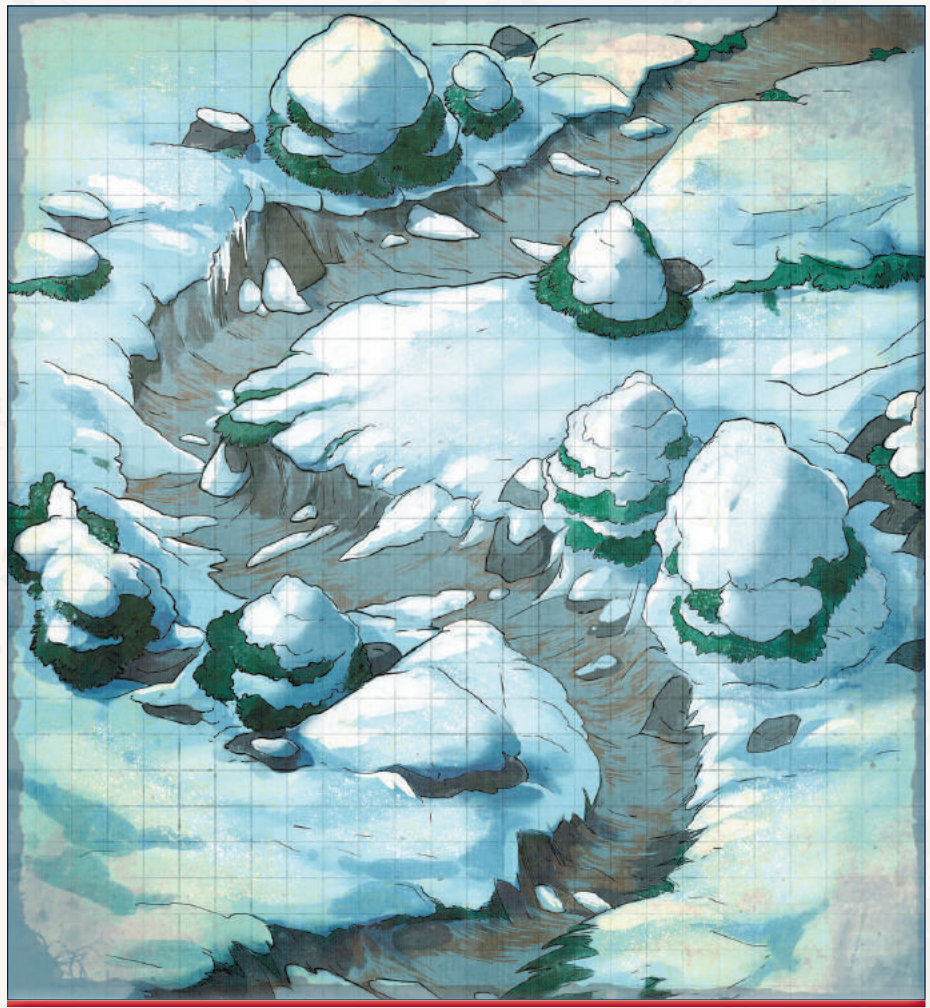
For hints on how to play this creature, remember that it still bears the flaws of a chimera. It may have a much increased Intelligence, but remains prideful, greedy, and stubborn. That may lead to hubris.

That's something smart players can exploit.

Complications

Softer targets are the preferred prey for this chimera, so they might be more at risk in this encounter. Tension and surprise are key in this encounter, as is a willingness to capitalize on both the strengths and weaknesses of the monster in question.

Combat with this creature demonstrates certain actions that should be possible by intelligent flying creatures who are also strong enough to take advantage of it. You should expect more than



one character to raise an eyebrow when creatures act outside of how they are traditionally portrayed and presented.

Remember, traditional monster themes and tropes represent the average or typical monster, and not unusual examples like Dregedag.

Keep in mind, with the *headband of intellect* Dregedag is exceptionally smart. A ferocious creature like a chimera, combined with this vast Intelligence, can make for a fantastic recurring villain in your campaign. Dregedag could very well command a fairly large territory, and an encounter with

adventurers could get the wheels turning in its mind. It may decide to follow the party from a distance, staying hidden, and expand its ambitions. Characters who travel to settlements in the vicinity may unwittingly bring danger if Dregedag sees an opportunity for treasure. The chimera could manipulate others into serving it, and potentially grow a network of minions with far-reaching plans and goals.

Hopefully, such reskinning and retooling adds flavor and keeps experienced players on their toes while adding new wonder and variety for newer players. Good luck!

Girl with the Dragon SNAFU

Environment

Urban/Town/Village/Inn

Suggested level

7 — Hard

Monsters

Vallius of Annap - incubus
Commoners

Aescypra — young copper dragon with the following additional action: Change Shape. The dragon magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Treasure

Alliance and friendship with a copper dragon

Introduction

For this encounter I thought it would be appropriate to use the one creature likely the most difficult to run — a dragon. Dragons wield immense powerful capable of destroying a party outright within a few rounds if played to their potential. It then falls to you, Game Master, to create an encounter both reasonable to the characters and yet fair to the creature in question. You want the moment to be memorable, and do the creature justice.

This can be tricky, because older dragons create regional effects and gain lair actions — on top of flying past the characters and breathing fire, cold, poison gas or the like. Younger dragons are less refined and can be easier to corral for the more cunning player. So, where does one fit a challenging, yet rewarding, dragon encounter that is neither a total party kill or murder-hobo-fest? I think it's in the young-adult range. And to make it more interesting, make it a metallic. Most metallic dragons are not only known shapeshifters, but all come with personality quirks making them more relatable as individuals, despite their vast power.



At either the adult or ancient phase of their lives, metallic dragons gain the ability to Change Shape. Taking the guise of a humanoid or beast these dragons can interact with the world without arousing the terror or awe their natural forms would undoubtedly elicit. I see no reason why a dragon could not manifest this ability earlier in their life. Perhaps they have a special talent for it, a powerful mentor, a genetic tendency for shape changing earlier in their life or some other trait that triggers this effect ahead of the typical age.

To flesh this encounter out, you need a reason for a young copper dragon to be in disguise, and some reason for the characters to help them. Powerful creatures are generally more capable of helping themselves out of a problem, so you need to create a scenario requiring character input.

If you have a dragon show up in dragon form, you either have characters who seek to avoid them, or the murder-hobo gene is triggered and it becomes a bloodbath one way or another. To reinforce a dialogue, it's also a good idea to make sure there's some reason to keep the dragon out of the affair as much as possible. Cursed magic items, high level spells or enchantments or interference by an entity more powerful than the dragon are all possibilities. The following encounter suggests some of these directions.

Description

The party visits an inn, tavern or similar establishment filled with music, laughter and lots of conversation. On this occasion, the place is filled with its normal array of patrons. The smells of ale, pork stew and pipe tobacco fill the air. A human minstrel, dashing in appearance, sits upon a wooden stool on a low wooden stage on the far side of the common room. He sings of heroes and villains, tall ships and taller castles. He stops occasionally to add a joke or two to break the tension, much to the delight of the crowd.

The crowd sits arranged in an odd circle around a young and attractive woman. She sits at a table at the edge of the stage, with her head in her hands looking up at the minstrel. She wears beautifully embroidered travelling garb in earthen tones under shining copper-plated scale armor. Her auburn hair is long and full, with lush curls spilling over her armor and clothing. Emerald green eyes beam up to the minstrel with a content expression.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the rest of the crowd, although also enjoying the show, remain a distance of several feet away from the girl. A character examining the crowd who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check determines none seem outwardly afraid of her.

As regards the woman herself, a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals she truly appears to be enjoying the performance. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the woman has what looks like a thin steel collar around her throat. It is neither part of her armor nor matches her garb in any way.

Should the characters ask the patrons or barkeep who the woman is, they explain they don't know. Depending on the patron and your individual tastes, they are either intimidated by her presence for some reason, or regard her as "the prettiest flower in the place." One patron might be jealous of her or suspicious of some strange witchcraft, but none feel she is such a threat as to be negative toward her in any way, and none really know why.

The barkeep, Angus, is the exception to this rule. He knows the woman as **Aescypra**. Angus relates that the woman comes in from time to time to enjoy the local entertainment, loves to laugh and is generally well behaved when she's not heckling a travelling jester.

He remarks she seems quite taken with tonight's entertainment, **Vallius of Annap**. Vallius came into town almost immediately after Aescypra arrived and volunteered to entertain for merely a night's lodging. He's been singing, joking and playing his lute for almost an hour now.

Should the characters inquire further with Angus and succeed on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check he also reveals the last three times Aescypra came to town, Vallius also showed up — an odd coincidence he'll pass off as just the way things are sometimes.

Aescypra is willing to discuss whatever the characters like (within reason) — but after Vallius finishes playing in another few minutes. If they are patient and polite, she certainly addresses them in kind. If they are rude, she ignores their questions. Keep in mind NPCs of any kind are people too and have their own motivations and desires. If characters are rude or obnoxious, NPCs are well within their rights to act appropriately to their core dynamic.

When Vallius finishes his set, the woman applauds the loudest of the crowd and smiles at him broadly. She watches him leave the stage, and even looks around the characters and the crowd to watch him go upstairs. She might even sigh before turning to the characters to address their inquiries. Keep in mind Aescypra is very intelligent, wise for her age and quite charming. She is well spoken, polite unless offended, smiles readily and may even be flirtatious with the right character. She does not reveal her true nature and may be evasive when questioned where she comes from, with answers like “far away” or “not local.”

A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Aescypra to reveal more. A character proficient in Performance or with an Entertainer background makes this check with advantage. When she answers a question, characters in front of her who can see the thin steel choker she wears and who succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notice tiny runes appear when she answers a revealing question. She is even more vague when this happens. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check catches on that this collar has something to do with it.



If a character points this out to her, she might nod or shake her head in yes or no to some direct questions. These responses do not activate the runes.

If asked, she says the choker is a gift she treasures it dearly. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check — or a really good roleplaying trick question opportunity — gets her to reveal she received it as a gift in a small box the last time Vallius came to town and she assumed he left it for her as a reward for her patronage and appreciation of his talents. Unfortunately, she’ll say, she hasn’t been able to go home since, and fears her father’s anger with her if he sees it. So she’s stayed here in town and has been wondering what to do about it. She admits she dreads having to give it up but knows she’ll have to deal with going home at some point.

Should a character cast *detect magic*, they see Aescypra glow with an aura of transmutation, and the necklace flares with a brighter glow of the same enchantment. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check after casting *detect magic* reveals a curse upon this necklace. It’s important to note that such auras are only visible to the caster when they use their action to see them.

Casting *dispel magic* with a successful DC 19 ability check or casting *remove curse* temporarily suppresses the collar’s effect on Aescypra’s speech, but the collar cannot be removed. She explains the collar can only be removed with a special key, which she does not have. Aescypra also admits she would rather remove it. This freedom to speak openly only lasts for a moment (how long is up to you, depending on dramatic flow and if you feel you’ve passed on what you desire for information).

At no point does Aescypra reveal she is a **dragon**. A character who casts *detect thoughts* might pull out this sort of information, but that’s up to the player to arrive at and achieve. Characters who follow Vallius upstairs find him in his room. The door to his room is locked, so a character must either unlock it with a successful DC 17 thieves’ tools check or a knock spell, break it down with a successful DC 17 Strength check, or ask for permission to enter. Vallius needs some convincing to allow a guest, but he is not without his weaknesses either.

Vallius is vain and a seducer. Appealing to either might help to get the door unlocked, with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If a character chooses the right flattery (your discretion) or if the charms of an attractive character are involved, characters can make this check with advantage.

Vallius is in his room tuning his instruments and enjoying some wine. He is gracious and welcoming, polite and charming. His goals are secret and he is not one to divulge them. He enjoys polite conversation and discussions of music and poetry. He avoids direct answers and claims to only be a humble wandering entertainer. He does not admit to any specific knowledge of Aescypra, nor claim to have any knowledge of her collar. However, what the characters don't know is this — Vallius is indeed up to no good.

Vallius of Annap is an **incubus** in the employ of a greater devil. This patron has tasked Vallius with tricking Aescypra into wearing this collar. The collar prevents her from using her Change Shape ability to transform back into her natural dragon form. In fact, the collar can only shrink, and never gets bigger, so if she tries to shapeshift into a sparrow to get out of the collar, she'll just be a sparrow in a metal collar. If she tries to grow to a shape or size larger than the collar allows, the collar simply gets smaller and she'll lose her head. The intent is to force Aescypra's father, an ancient copper dragon known as Rexuroptolus (say that 10 times fast!) to yield his territory and hoard over to a diabolic cult in the greater devil's name. Feel free to have other diabolic schemes instead to more closely fit into your campaign.

Vallius does indeed have the key to opening the collar — his own fiendish blood. He is obviously unwilling to hand this over. With all of this in play the characters have a mystery to solve, a creature to rescue (who is ironically a dragon too) and lots of roleplaying to do — and perhaps some combat. Should they suspect, discover or turn on Vallius his first objective is escape. He may try to charm one of his interrogators or attackers. If pressed, he might also reveal his true form and try to fly out the window. Once out of sight he assumes a new form — always too vain not to be a handsome, rakish type, which may lead to his undoing.

The intent here is to start a story arc or adventure. It might lead to a real cat-and-mouse affair as the party seeks to track down Vallius and rescue Aescypra from her collar. The reward for doing so comes not in the form of gold and silver. The characters gain a young copper dragon as an ally and possibly friend, which could be its own double edged sword. Along the way, she might befriend a bard within the party, as copper dragons seem drawn to this sort with their love of jokes, pranks, music and conversation. That's up to you and the associated characters to unfold and discover. Aescypra tries to stay out of her father's sight until the collar is off and is deeply thankful.

Complications

Vallius has a few tricks up his sleeve. He can either charm one of the characters, turning that person on their fellows, or if cornered could use his Draining Kiss. The charm only works on one person at a time but can be done whenever the fiend wants to outside of that constraint. This means he could charm local law enforcement, a mayor, a character's loved one — anyone — to elude capture. He might also charm any of the **commoners** currently inside the inn, using them as leverage against the party. His job is to keep that collar on as long as possible, and certainly not to have his blood spilled. Furthermore, please note Aescypra does not reveal herself to be a dragon in front of the fine folks in town. She did not and does not wish to alarm anyone. It was always her intent to just enjoy a good time away from the boredom of sleeping her years away like many dragons do.

Things could go sideways with Aescypra as well. The collar presents a potentially deadly threat to her, and if the characters exacerbate her demise — even if trying to help — they most certainly make an enemy of Rexuroptolus. Her father is furious, and an ancient copper dragon is not the kind of foe to trifle with.

The forces at play here involve archdevils and ancient dragons, which could lead invested characters into all sorts of investigations and discoveries. One minute they're stopping at a roadside tavern for rest and refreshment and the next they're embroiled in a dragon vs. devil war. No one ever said adventuring was easy!

Golden Test

Written by James Introcaso

Environment

Forest

Suggested level

3 – Deadly

Monsters

Awakened trees (2)

Giant eagle (1) (really an adult

gold dragon in disguise)

Stirges (1+)

Swarm of quippers (1)

Wolves (1+)

Treasure

Spell scroll of raise dead

Introduction

This encounter adds a burst of frenetic energy into what might otherwise be typical travel through the forest.

If the characters succeed, they impress a gold dragon and have a way to cash in their gems for magic items rather than stockpiling all their money at higher levels like a certain duck billionaire.

Description

As the characters rest in a forest, a **giant eagle** steals an important item (preferably a magic one or an entire backpack) from a character and flies off, giving a loud screech that wakes any sleeping characters.

The eagle is really the female **adult gold dragon Gildonox**, who wants to have some fun and leads the characters on a chase through a series of challenges she has arranged. She wants to see if the characters are powerful enough to work for her.

Gildonox has arranged three challenges for the characters. At the start of this encounter and after the first two challenges, she appears with the stolen item and tries to get the characters to chase her until they come to a test.

You can use the **Gildonox Chase Complications** table to spice up these chases.



During each challenge, the eagle watches from a high tree until the characters complete the test. The first two chases last 3 rounds each.

If a character dies, Gildonox returns the item, reveals her true form then uses her *spell scroll of raise dead* to revive the character. She tells characters they failed and flies off, though she could visit them later once they have gained some experience.

The first challenge is a 30 foot wide, 10 foot deep raging river in the characters' path inhabited by a **swarm of quippers** that attacks any creature that enters. Swimming across the river requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.



Failing the check results in the character gaining a level of exhaustion and becoming restrained by the current in the river midstream. A character can repeat this check once per turn, ending the restrained condition on a success. Two slippery rocks poke above the water at 10 foot intervals. A creature that jumps onto a rock must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall into the river. The characters can cross in other ways like felling a tree or using magic. Let them get creative.

Gildonox's second test is a battle in a clearing with two **awakened trees** she brought to life. The trees leave characters dropped to 0 hit points by their attacks unconscious and stable.

The final challenge is the characters must catch up to Gildonox and touch her. After the battle with the trees, she dives down into the woods, starting the chase 90 feet away from them, never flying more than 10 feet above the ground. If the characters pass all three tests, Gildonox cheerfully introduces herself, returns their item and thanks them for

the fun. She gives her *spell scroll of raise dead* as a reward for passing her tests and tells the characters she can give them more magic items in exchange for gemstones. After giving the adventurers directions to her lair, she explains she can give them a common magic item from her hoard for 100 gp worth of gems, an uncommon magic item for 500 gp worth of gems and a rare magic item for 5,000 gp worth of gems. You decide which items Gildonox has in her hoard she is willing to trade.

Complications

Roll or choose a complication on this table at the start of each character's turn during the chase portions of the encounter.

Gildonox Chase Complications

d20	Complication
1	A wolf chases after you
2	You scare an elk that kicks at you (+5 to hit, 2d4 +3 bludgeoning damage).
3	You run through a cloud of mosquitoes. You must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.
4	You run through a tainted puddle. You must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or get infected with filth fever .
5	A stirge chases after you.
6	You disturb a skunk who sprays you. You must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 10 minutes.
7	A patch of brambles is in your way. You must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check or take 1d4 piercing damage.
8	A snake falls from the trees and bites at you (+4 to hit, 1d8 +2 piercing damage).
9	You run through a magic pond. Roll any die. On an even result you become invisible for 1 minute. On an odd result, you are <i>polymorphed</i> into a goat.
10	You run through ancient hallowed ground. You must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or you cannot tell a lie for the next 24 hours.
11-20	No complication

Gone But Not Forgotten

Introduction

The fascinating thing about our own world is that history is still being discovered every day. We are still finding lost relics, tombs and clues to ancient civilizations — sometimes in the most surprising places. Mythology and rumor sometimes persist around these ancient sites, but just as often all living memory is lost. Records may not have been taken, rumors are forgotten or a civilization may have been totally wiped out. Then all that stays behind becomes a mystery waiting to be discovered. However, in a fantasy realm even when others forget, the dead remember.



Environment
Wilderness — grasslands/hills

Suggested level
3 — Hard

Monsters
Awakened tree (1)

Awakened shrub (6)

Treasure
Silver torc worth 100 gp, two silver bracelets worth 25 gp each, silver horse head belt buckle worth 25 gp, shield +1

Description

In a lonely area, away from the wanderings of most civilized folk, a large and odd hill rises in the middle of nowhere. Its nearly perfect domed shape stands out as unusual given the surrounding terrain.

Were it not for the single tree growing atop it, and the several shrubs marking its base, you would think it made by humanoid hands.

This hillock is a barrow mound, an ancient burial site for an individual of importance at least two centuries old. It contains a burial chamber for these remains.

If the characters approach within 50 feet of the hill a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a stone door ajar in a flagstone door frame hidden behind one of the many shrubs. It is only open a crack, with only darkness visible beyond.

If characters approach the door within 10 feet, it becomes obvious that several bones litter the ground around the doorway. Weathered and tattered remains of clothing and scraps of leather armor lie in the grass with them.

Rusted, useless and destroyed remains of two swords and a few daggers lie among the bones.



Success on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that at least two, possibly three individuals remain here. It's hard to be exact, as wildlife may have either devoured or removed at least some of the organic remains. The earth around the door is overgrown with tall grass and the door is difficult to move due to settling of the door frame. Opening the door is difficult, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check. If the door is opened, an ancient curse activates that was intended to protect the interior, and the **tree** and surrounding **shrubs awaken** to defend the sanctity of these remains. These plants won't retreat, and fight to the end — unless characters retreat away from the barrow mound to a distance of 60 feet at which point the plants return to their original locations. Any damage the plant creatures suffered is healed upon this return and they become normal plants again until reawakened.

If the characters are victorious and proceed in, they only travel a short and low hall 5 feet tall, 5 feet wide, and 10 feet long. Inside is a single chamber 20 feet in diameter with a domed flagstone roof and a recessed floor, also lined with flagstones. The dominant feature is a stone sarcophagus with a cracked lid. Its surface still possesses the weathered remains of tribal designs, showing a heroic figure upon a war chariot. The upper body and face have been obscured and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)

reveals some sort of scraping damage created when the lid was unsuccessfully opened at an earlier date.

The mummified remains of a tall figure lie within the sarcophagus, its face covered with a dusty wooden and metal bound *shield* +1. Its former armor has corroded away in the humidity, but the remains of silver finery remain: two thick bracelets engraved in woven patterns, a silver torc around its neck and a silver buckle in the shape of a horse's head upon a rotted leather belt. Upon the recessed floor are the rotted remains of two wooden wheels, an axle and a cart that was formerly a chariot, wax sealed clay pots containing spoiled grains, wine now turned to vinegar and tools — all intended for use in the afterlife. Two massive, halving sized clay pots hold larger bones. Success on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check determines the bones are those of two horses.

Complications

Aside from the reactions of the awakened plants, here are a couple of options to continue this encounter as a plot hook or the creation of a villain.

Curse of the Dead. A curse befalls those who rob this tomb. Until all the jewelry and the shield are laid to rest where they were found, those who robbed the grave suffer disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws, especially those involving fear or madness. The open door and remains nearby, and the wealth remaining inside, suggest looters were unsuccessful. But maybe one of them got away, and has been suffering the curse for days, months, or even years.

Revenge of the Dead. The dead figure rises from the grave to hunt their lost items down. Depending on the level of the characters, this restless creature could be a ghost, mummy or specter. It's all up to how far you wish to take this. If your party is low level, the ghost is your best method, as it would have the option of possessing loved ones or associates of the characters to hunt down or retrieve the lost item without having to damage them. But a specter can present a significant challenge for inexperienced characters, with its hatred and inability to move on to the afterlife driving it to pursue characters with vengeance.

Heart of Darkness

Environment
Dungeon

Dungeon Slime — Hazard

Suggested level
6 — Hard**Treasure***Eight expertly cut turquoise worth 50 gp each, 10 garnet worth 100 gp each, 1000 gp worth of gold inlay***Monsters**
Black Pudding (2)

Introduction

There are many kinds of players, but one that never goes away is the murderhobo/vandal. Their style of gaming lay in the foundations of the roleplaying game genre when it first hit the market. It's still a popular style of gaming, especially with the rise of video games. Monsters and puzzles are sources of loot. Everything is opened, broken, killed or avoided if it can't be one of those.

Despite the harsh style of play, these players are also the fire under the bottoms of players who struggle with decision making or need to follow 16 steps before opening a door. The murderhobo/vandal is always the first to launch into combat, explore a new passage or open a stuck door.

As much as they lead the way, the style of play can sometimes cut off roleplaying or problem-solving opportunities, or create problem solving issues for others in their party. The following encounter is for when you might have a runaway murderhobo/vandal. Here's the catch — if the murderhobo/vandal doesn't act, there's no treasure. But if the murderhobo/vandal does act, there's danger.

Isn't life awesome?

Description

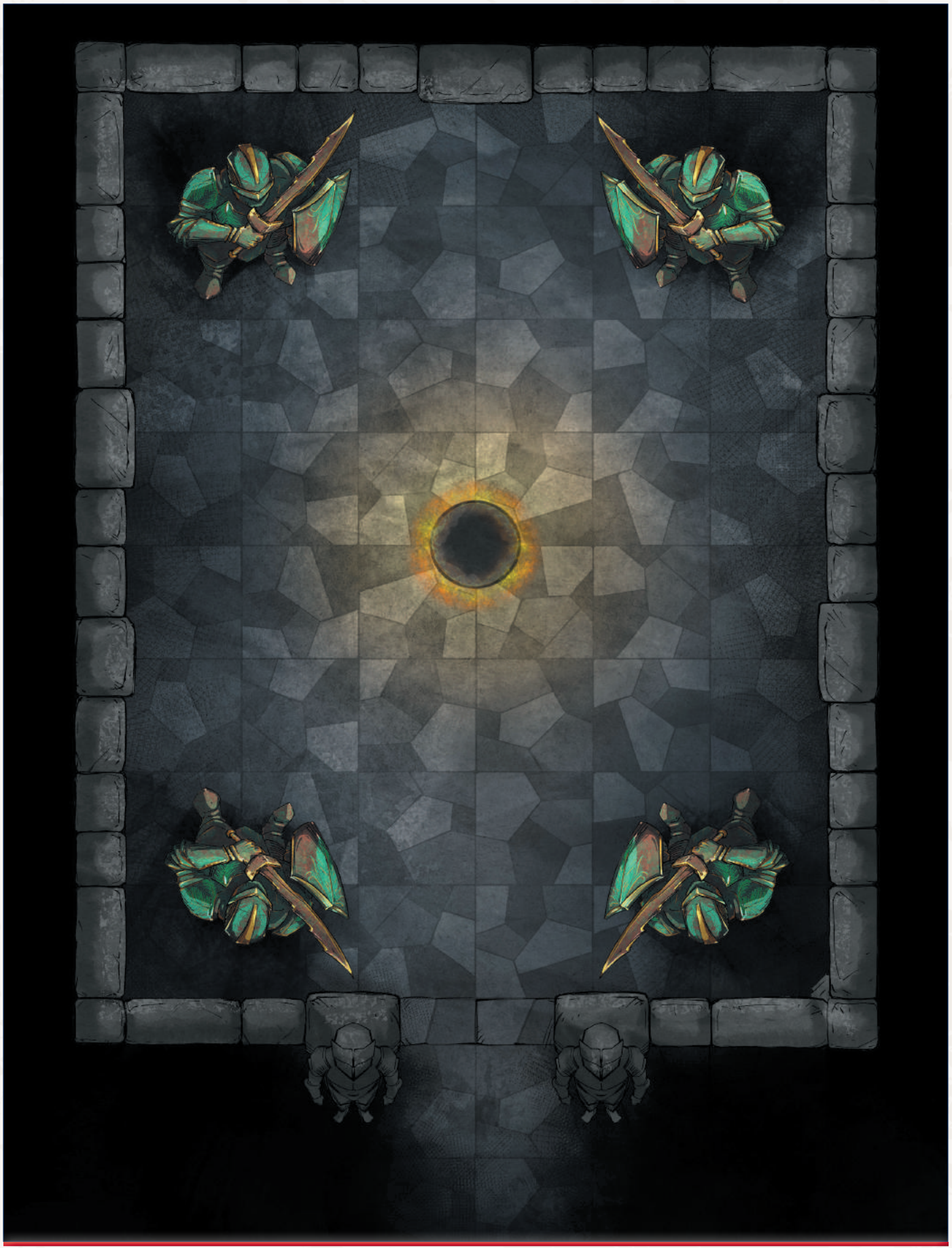
The door to this chamber is expertly carved to depict ancient warriors in elaborate feathered garb holding aloft toothed swords. Upon entering the

chamber, characters can see why. The chamber is 30 feet wide and 40 feet long with a flat ceiling supported by a singular pillar in the center of the room.

There are four statues made from reddish-brown terracotta. Each is an exquisite reproduction of the warriors seen upon the door and stands 10 feet from a corner of the room, and all hold the same saw-tooth bladed weapons to their chest.

Faded and chipped paint in shades of turquoise and red remain on the depictions of feathers upon the warriors' garb. More striking is the gold inlay that crisscrosses the carved terracotta breastplates on each of the warriors and the large turquoise eyes in each statue.





The central pillar in the room is 3 feet in diameter and reaches from floor to ceiling. It has what looks like long flamelike decorations rising from the floor and down from the ceiling at 3 foot intervals. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while inspecting this pillar finds small chips of black paint remaining in the flame decorations. The remaining areas of the pillar not covered by the flamelike carvings are covered with yellow painted hemispheres with a garnet in the center of each yellow hemisphere. If characters take the time to count them, there are 10 such yellow hemispheres with garnets.

The walls show scenes of an army of warriors like those depicted in statutory form or upon the doors forcing an enemy army into a sea of some sort. The waves are irregular and long and look like they are reaching for the enemy army as they fall into the sea.

The ceiling is covered in painted terracotta tiles of yellow, green, red and black. The floor is also covered in stone tiles of the same size, but travel may have worn off any sort of painted decoration long ago. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check discovers hints of an ancient reference to worship of a long lost Demon Lord of Oozes. Feel free to make your own demon lord name or use one that already exists.

If any character removes any of the garnets from the central pillar, a *magic mouth* appears on the face of the statue in the far left corner of the room. It declares in an ancient dialect of Common, requiring a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check to understand, that this warrior punishes any tomb robbers. For every round the characters continue to loot, another *magic mouth* appears on the next statue, moving clockwise around the room, and shouts warnings and insults to all heretics, infidels and thieves.

Once all four statues have broadcast a warning, they go silent. A *programmed illusion* then takes over. The illusion depicts the statues animating and preparing to throw their saw-toothed swords.

Have the players roll initiative to begin the combat phase of this encounter.

The characters may elect to attack the statues of their own accord. You may optionally choose to actually roll initiative, but save the roll for if or when a statue is broken.

If a character removes the turquoise eyes or gold inlay from the statues, the statues are rigged to crack or break like a house of cards when they are robbed. These statues have 5 hit points and are vulnerable to bludgeoning and thunder damage.

The far left and near right statues each contain a **black pudding**, which attacks any intruders in the room and pursues outside the room. Note the doors to the room are made of wood, and the black puddings can dissolve their way through the doors in a single round. Their acid does not destroy gems or gold.

Far right and near left statues are filled with **pink dungeon slime**, which spatters any characters standing within 5 feet of these statues should they be broken by any means. Once this spatter has occurred, the slime collapses into a 10 foot diameter pool centred on where the statue stood.

Complications

Black puddings create their own complications due to the fact it can end up dividing multiple times when struck with certain weapons or attacks. This division affects the total hit points of the divided black pudding sections, but not the damage per attack — meaning the damage can really pile up. Oozes of all kinds tend to choose hunger over all decisions, so they may end up pursuing the characters into a separate encounter depending on where you place this room, so be aware of that sort of event possibility.

Dungeon Slime — Hazard

Dungeon slime is a corrosive substance that occasionally bubbles and pops. It can be a variety of colors but typically is a hue of pink. Any creature that comes into contact with it, either by willingly touching it, or if it pops and covers an area within 5 feet of it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 points of acid damage.



Island in the Storm

Environment

Any

Monsters

Emelia - ghost

Suggested level

4 — Medium

Treasure

Lantern of Eternal Night

Introduction

Random encounter tables are a great resource for Game Masters. Whether you're preparing for a game session or scrambling when players take an adventure in an unexpected direction, tables and charts can provide the solution.

Mixing and matching different elements from encounter tables can further customize these scenarios. The following idea combines the concepts of a circle of standing stones, a skeletal ferry captain and

floating earth motes from one such random table.

Next, it's important to note the special abilities of monsters or NPCs and pay special attention to any flavor text too. When all the pieces fall into place you can really have an encounter with depth. The intent is to give your players something unusual and thought provoking.

Now your encounter creates a moment for players to ask more questions than receive answers. They'll struggle with how to proceed socially and may even have moral or ethical questions, adding depth to the character dynamic.

That's the basis for this encounter. You might even use something like this to start an adventure or expose a character's background elements. How you fully utilize it is up to you.

Description

One evening as the characters settle in for the night they witness an unusual event. Fog builds up all around. In the distance, they witness a green flash. A small, bobbing green light no bigger than a lantern slowly approaches. The light never approaches closer than 100 feet from their encampment.

If characters ignore the light it slowly fades away after an hour, only to return the next night in the same eerie manner. If they investigate, once they breach the fog to a distance of 100 feet they see a strange sight. A gondola made of a black wood floats slightly off the ground. The gondola is lit by a lantern suspended by a central post, the source of the strange green light. The lantern sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

The gondola's pilot is a singular figure, the size of a human child, in dark clothing and a hat, with a decorative mask like that of an expressionless boy's face. The childlike figure beckons the characters to board silently, and a ramp lowers to allow them access.

If characters choose to attack the figure or the gondola, they find their attacks passing through harmlessly. The gondola and the figure are extensions of the Eternal Night, and thus cannot be harmed by conventional means. Should any characters board, the gondola silently turns around and the fog takes on the appearance of a milky pool upon which the gondola glides.

In the distance is a small island no greater than 200 feet in diameter surrounded by the same milky white fog. Upon it several ancient standing stones mark a border, all at least 15 feet tall. In the center of the island a single figure stands.

This is **Emelia**. She turns to face the party in a nonthreatening manner. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals her expression is sad and filled with longing. She is young, beautiful and dressed in a white hooded robe.

Emelia is a **ghost**, cursed to remain on the island in the Eternal Night. She cannot leave voluntarily. She pleads with one of the characters to allow her to possess them. Only then can she board the gondola and escape the island.

Characters can engage Amelia in conversation if they so choose. With a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check they find out she was once the wife of a noble, whose name is lost to eternity. She fell in love with a rival noble and had an affair with him. Emelia became pregnant with his child. When this fact was discovered, she and her unborn child were murdered and buried in secret.

This island prison now holds her spirit. If one character allows her to Possess them, she can cross the barrier and pass on. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check unveils that the gondola pilot is the spirit of her unborn son. If Emelia becomes free, so does the pilot.

If the party allows for possession, and Emelia successfully escapes the Eternal Night, the *lantern of eternal night* from the gondola remains behind with them.

Complications

Lots can happen here. The ghost defends itself if attacked. Emelia does not wish to engage in combat but fights if pressed. Her intent is to escape, not fight to the death. She might wait for the right moment to possess an attacking foe if need be. Her preferred path is for one of the characters to willingly allow her to possess them. If this happens, that character feels a disturbing chill, and hears her voice in their head. They are overcome by an uncontrollable urge to leave the island.

Players unfamiliar with ghosts may not even know their character is possessed. This can be a great opportunity to collaborate directly with an individual player, without the rest of the group's knowledge. If a character fails a saving throw against the Emelia's Possession, consider not telling the players the results of the failed save.



Take a break from the session, and speak with the possessed character's player privately, explaining the situation. Remember – the ghost controls the body, but doesn't prevent the target's awareness.

The possessed character knows they can use the gondola to leave the island. They recognize the boy for who it is. If the possessed character can cross the barrier (the milky water) and leave the fog, then the ghost exits the char-

acter's body unharmed and fades into nothing. The fog disappears, and the characters return to their campsite.

A character who stays behind on the island risks becoming trapped forever in the Eternal Night. This by itself is a massive complication that may require the stranded characters finding a way home. That is up to you and the players to work out. This can be a great way to introduce planar adventures.

Any character who jumps over the side of the gondola while its in transit similarly be lost in the Eternal Night. If the characters refuse and wish to leave in peace, that too is possible. A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check allows a character to negotiate a release from the island. However, should they successfully leave the island via the gondola in this manner, visions of this girl and her child, who might return via a similar encounter in a month's time, haunt them.

As stated before, this can test a party. Many characters (and players) have plain views on undead of all kinds. Some faiths are clear on their approach. The number of variations on personal views, faith, morals and ethics can have this encounter go several ways. It may start a discussion upon the island that may affect how the party interacts for a long time. It's important for you to watch this carefully and adjust accordingly. It may also be a great opportunity for character growth and may add to the depth of the party.

Jailbreak

Environment
Dungeon

Owlbear (1)
Rust Monster (1)

Suggested level
5 - Hard

Monsters

Goblins (6)
Gnolls (2)
Gnoll Huntmaster (1)

Treasure

Mirror of Life Trapping (if the players do not break it and cast dispel magic on the spell holding it in place. This requires success on a DC 19 Intelligence check to break if the spell is cast)

Introduction

While researching something else entirely, I glanced at the passage on the *mirror of life trapping* purely by happenstance.

Because of the fluid nature of this mirror's possible past, it may contain up to 12 random creatures already.

How they got there and why they ended up near the mirror could be any number of reasons.

That means this encounter, if you set it up right, could be infinitely adjustable to your group's level and abilities. It could be a campaign starter. It could be a campaign ender — even if only by accident.

Since the contents set the challenge level, take care in making sure you stock the mirror wisely. For the purposes of this encounter, only one of the 12 cells is free, so as to not trap the entire party, and to deliver enough random oddities to truly challenge your group.

This encounter should only trap one character, leaving the rest to solve the problem. It may well set up one of those moments where the entire party says, "What have we done?"

It could also be used for a session where one of the players couldn't make it, and narratively their character winds up trapped in the mirror.



Description

The characters enter a room or cavern roughly 50 feet by 50 feet with a ceiling 30 feet high. The room is covered in patches of bioluminescent fungi, giving the entire room an ambient glow.

The most unusual feature in this room appears to be a thin rectangular object floating flat and horizontal over the floor at a height of 15 feet. It has an elaborately carved 1 inch thick wooden frame around its outer rim.

It shows no obvious signs of suspension and hovers silently in the air. It is roughly 4 feet by 2 feet.



A steel ball is suspended 5 feet above this object by a rope. That rope continues straight up to the ceiling, where a pulley redirects the remainder on an angle downward to a metal ring attached to the far wall. The rope is attached by a thick knot to this ring.

No occupants can be seen in the room and no other exits are visible. The only way in and out appears to be the entrance the characters came through. Aside from this odd display, only the dank smell of the glowing fungi greets them.

The object is a *mirror of life trapping* and it's suspended by ancient magic. The reflective mirror surface faces downward directly at the floor below. Should anyone underneath the mirror look up at it, the magic of the mirror kicks in.

The first person to look up must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw to avoid the mirror's effect. Optionally, if more than one character looks up have

them all make the saving throw then determine who suffers the effect among the failed saves randomly, by whichever character's saving throw was lowest, by the direction the narrative or whatever method works best for you and your group.

A character who fails is trapped in one of the mirror's foglike cells along with everything they are carrying and wearing. The command words are written on the back of the mirror if anyone can make their way above it without breaking the mirror.

The words have to be read aloud. Feel free to make up your own command words or even a riddle. This itself might be a great hook for a later adventure.

Here's a riddle to get you started:

"I can trap many objects, colors and light. I am ever changing, never boring. Look closely and you may find yourself also caught in my trap." (A mirror)

Additionally, the mirror can be attacked with ranged weapons. It has an AC of 11, 10 hit points, and vulnerability to bludgeoning damage.

Breaking the mirror releases all the creatures trapped inside. Should anyone do this while standing directly under the mirror, they are subject to having all the creatures fall on top of them. If the mirror breaks in this manner, each creature standing directly below must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage when the creatures fall on top of them. The falling creatures also suffer 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Furthermore, the characters might elect to untie the rope holding the ball or cut the rope to do the same. The ball falls and shatters the mirror, also releasing all the creatures trapped within. This simple mechanism should be self evident, but if your players are struggling with it, success on a DC 10 Intelligence check allows them to figure out the procedure.

If the mirror is broken, the following creatures fall from it to the floor below:

1. Any trapped player characters
2. A grown **owlbear** that was chasing goblins
3. A **rust monster** who ate a gnoll huntmaster's breastplate
4. Six **goblins** who were fleeing an owlbear
5. Two **gnolls** following their gnoll huntmaster in pursuit of a rust monster
6. **Gnoll huntmaster** chasing the rust monster that ate his chainmail

If the goblins survive the fall, they'll be frightened of the owlbear. The owlbear pursues the goblins. If none survive the fall, determine its next target randomly from all the creatures present in the room – including the characters.

The rust monster immediately seeks out the largest source of metal in the room. This is likely one of the characters.

The gnoll huntmaster is in hot pursuit of the rust monster. If the rust monster dies, the gnolls do what

they do and attack something else. Determine this target randomly, as gnolls live for carnage, not logic. If anyone attacks a monster that has its sights set on another that fell from the mirror, that monster then turns its attention to whomever attacked it.

Complications

Getting permanently stuck in the mirror is the single greatest complication here, followed closely by being crushed by falling monsters.

Depending on who attacks what and when, this could go well, or it could go poorly. There may be characters running around with rusted or destroyed armor and weapons. A lot of chaos is certain, so this encounter requires you to stay focused and organized.

In the end, I hope you have an encounter both memorable and possibly hilarious. Or you'll have naked and dead characters ... which might still be memorable and hilarious. Who said adventuring was easy?

You'll find this encounter is easily scaled. The mirror has no size limit on what it can contain. It only requires the creatures look at the mirror and fail a Charisma saving throw. So long as you do not stock it with blind creatures, anything else is legal. Anything from a tiny stirge to a grown dragon can be stuffed in the mirror. Heck, the tarrasque can fit in the mirror if you could get that close, make it look and survive for 4 rounds while its legendary resistance wears off. (Good luck with that.)

As stated in the introduction, this encounter could serve as a campaign starter. The release of vile villains, a dragon, a demon or any number of horrors upon the world could be the start of an epic adventure to capture or kill these escapees. Conversely, a lost queen or heir to the throne might be trapped in this mirror, along with the monsters also trapped within as a safeguard to make sure they never see a true escape.

How you use and scale this encounter is up to you. Have fun and make it something the players talk about for a long time.

Keeper's Teavern

Written by Jacob Budz

Environment

Anywhere, but for this encounter we'll imagine a busy city square

Suggested level

6 — Deadly

Monsters

The Keeper (archmage)

Treasure

Grudd's Tea of the Multiverse

Introduction

In one of my old campaigns I needed a way to transport characters whose players were absent. I implemented a supernatural guardian of the universe who knew the exact time and place certain people needed to be in certain times. You know, for fun.

This character's identity and source of power then became a mystery for my players. I had no idea, I was just trying to come up with reasons for missing characters. The Keeper's arbitrary appearances and disappearances grew into a legacy amongst my games.

This encounter introduces the Keeper, and you can easily continue to re-use this encounter only with the Teavern portion of it to pull away characters or bring in new ones. Be as creative as you want!

Description

A door appears, and tea is served...

A mysterious traveller appears in the right place, at the right time, just to help you — the Game Master! This door is effectively a *magnificent mansion* spell, but instead of the inside being a mansion, it is an old tavern instead.

The spell has gone awry, and the **Keeper** has appeared in the wrong location, confusing any characters for the nobles with whom they were supposed to share tea.



The Keeper was never given their description, so they question nothing.

The adventurers leave with newfound purposes or maybe even abilities. Use this encounter if you want to add some flair into your game, and if you want the player characters to have some newfound strange quirks. The Keeper acts as an omnipotent wizard of almighty power who “accidentally” appeared here. They’re willing to help you, so long as you stay for tea.

At any point in time of your choosing, the characters hear a knocking noise followed by a thud. If they investigate, they discover a wooden door has magically appeared from nowhere. There is a single hanging sign above it reading “The Teavern.”

Inside the Teavern is empty but for one single person: the Keeper. The humanoid figure is dressed head to toe in dark leathers, a hood and plague doctor's beak mask.

They act as if the characters are some kind of royalty calling upon them to try their widely known *Grudd's Tea of the Multiverse*.

The Keeper prepares cups of tea for each character. Each cup of tea tastes like the most favorite flavor of whichever character drinks it and has a random ability that affects the character once they drink it. These abilities can be permanent, or temporary. It is entirely up to you.

Complications

If the characters are unhappy with their newfound powers, the effects can be undone with a Neutralizing Tea from the Keeper, which causes the effects to wear off after 1d4 hours.

If the characters ask who the Keeper is, they explain they are an ancient cosmic being of power intent on keeping the multiverse intact. Yes, they really only have tea to serve. The universe works in mysterious ways.

If the characters decide to stay in the Teavern, the Keeper doesn't force them out. But they are whisked off to some other random location!

Combat is not a consideration in the design of this encounter, but players are players and adventurers are adventurers. In the encounter turns into a conflict, a party of four 6th level characters has a slim chance in this well beyond Deadly encounter. An **archmage** is assumed to have several defensive spells in place.

If the situation turns to combat, the Keeper takes the first opportunity to cast time stop and the characters are ejected from the Teavern, which promptly vanishes. A bizarre encounter for any party, who may grow curious about the Keeper. Were they friend, foe, something in-between?



Madam Versiliplex's Magical Wonders

Environment

Anywhere. You could make this a small shop in a city or a cabin in the woods. For the purposes of versatility this encounter uses a horse drawn wagon

Suggested level

6 — Hard

Monsters

Madam Versiliplex — night hag

Skek — imp

Animated armor

Flying sword

Rug of smothering

Treasure

Goggles of night, +1 longsword, plate armor of vulnerability (acid), potions of healing, potion of ogre strength, spell scrolls

Introduction

I'll bet one of the most commonly asked questions placed at the feet of any Game Master is, "Is there a place where I can buy magic items?"

This might have been a common occurrence in the past, but Fifth Edition assumes a baseline limited access to magical marketplaces. That's not to say they don't exist, or characters can never find purveyors of such rare and wondrous items. Far from it. But the danger in dealing with such a market bears the risk of trying to prove its own economic worth.

Rare components or those gained through dangerous tasks would make most proper magic items either impossibly expensive or priceless. Components common enough for sale would be overpriced due to their difficult creation or high demand. It truly would be a seller's market.

This encounter is for when you're feeling brave and wish to rise to the occasion with difficult bargains to address characters needs and desires.

The answer to the question, "Is there a place where I can buy magic items?" might be, "How bad do you want it?"



Description

The characters seek someone who deals in magical wares, or even more suspiciously, are just discussing where to find such a place. At that time, feel free to have a local unnamed peasant wordlessly direct them to an approaching oxen-drawn cart.

The cart is drawn by a single ox, the bell hung from the yoke below its neck loudly clanging to the rhythm of the beast's stride. The cart is an elaborate affair.

Constructed from wood with simple wooden wheels, it has several strings of bone, crystals and small bells hung from a low arched roof. Lamps hang from both the front and the back, both giving off an eerie green glow. Tiny wisps of smoke trail into the wind from each lamp.

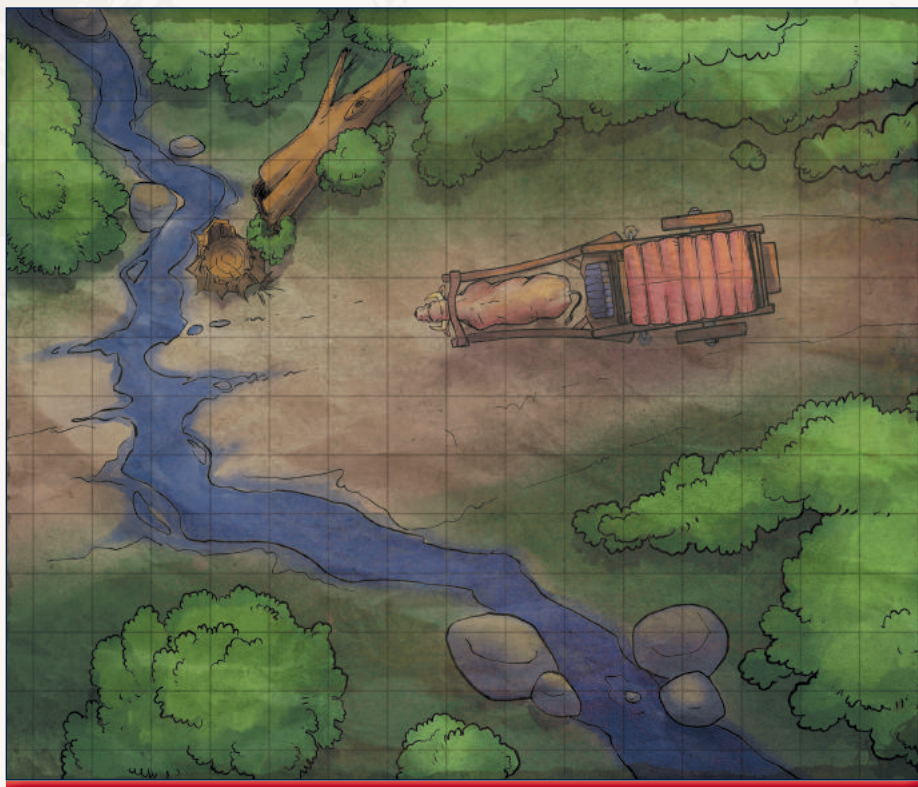
The walls of the cart are covered in sunbaked paint, peeling in some areas from wear and neglect. A single window, tightly shuttered, marks each side and the front of the cart, and a small metal stove pipe trails white smoke from the ceramic tiled roof.

Painted in elaborate, yet faded, paint are the flowing script-like words in Common:

“Madam Versilplex’s Magical Wonders”

A single small door allows entrance. A knocker in the shape of a grinning child’s head biting a loop bids all welcome. If the characters approach, the cart stops. The door remains locked until the characters knock. If they knock with their hands, they wait at least 1 minute. If they use the knocker, each knock sounds thunderous from the other side — like a massive empty room lies beyond. When they knock three times, steps of wood unfurl below the door like they were made of cloth. Several locks click and clack beyond the door, and it creaks open.

A small gnome woman of great age greets the characters. Her long white hair is tied up in a



massive bun and adorned with tiny bones and gold chains with delicate charms. Red robes covered in sigils are tied at the waist with a belt heavy with pouches, vials and scroll tubes. Her arms hang with many bangles, and rings decorate each finger.

A rat, its eyes reflecting red in the lamp light, pokes its head out of her robe to peek at the strangers. Madam Versilplex introduces herself and bids the characters welcome.

“Ah, my curious little children. I wondered when you would finally arrive. Come in, come in.”

She beckons them in and offers tea. When the characters enter, what unfolds might be surprising. The interior of this tiny cart is a 20 foot by 20 foot cabin. A roaring fireplace adorns the far wall, with a

large pot bubbling over it. Shelves line the walls, covered in books, scroll tubes and dusty bottles. A suit of armor stands quietly in one corner, while a dusty rack of several melee weapons stands in another. A large round table sits in the very center of the room surrounded by six chairs, and a rocking chair sits beside the fireplace.

In the center of the table sits a large, sealed glass jar filled with a smoky, swirling fluid or gas. The table sits upon a fat wooden barrel instead of legs. The whole place smells of wood smoke, tallow candles and fresh bread. The taint of mildew and sulfur are also present.

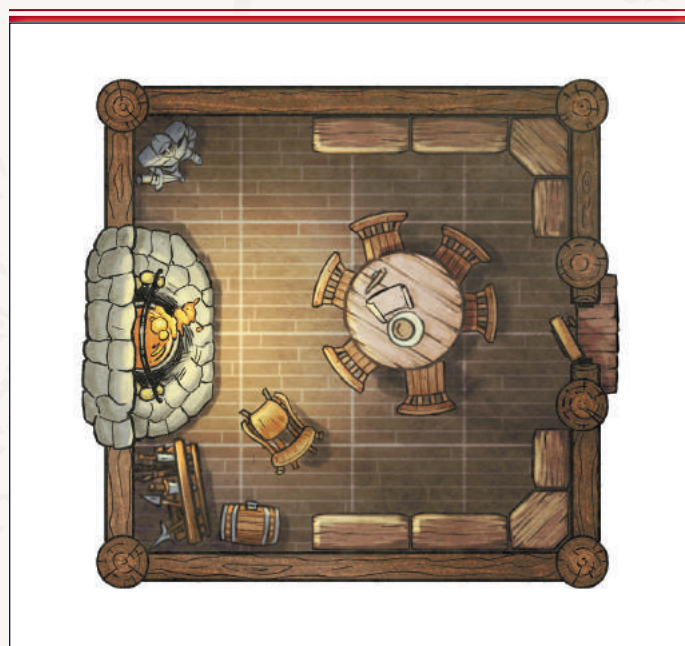
Madam Versilplex greets the characters and is inviting. She listens attentively to their needs and concerns and offers hot tea to those who wish it.

But always keep this one fact in mind: Madam Versilplex is a **night hag** who has used her Change Shape ability to *polymorph* herself into this gnomish guise to throw off suspicion. She is cunning and experienced and will not reveal her intentions until she has the characters truly hooked.

If characters ask for simple magic items like potions or scrolls, she might have a few common or even uncommon ones on hand. The first couple of *potions of healing* might be a little more expensive than normal (75 gp each). If the characters cannot afford them, she offers them a deal.

Madam Versilplex is willing to trade potions and such for simple tasks. She might claim a local magistrate has been taxing her unfairly, so she only has a few items to spare. If the magistrate were dealt with, maybe she could be more generous. Or perhaps she'll claim wolves are harassing her ox, and she has a special bait for the wolves to eat to make them stop attacking. Feel free to invent your own task, but the task should have a twist.

The magistrate is unreasonable, or has a bully son, but perhaps they are trying to find out more about Madam Versilplex. She cannot allow this, and she'll set up events so the offenders fall victim to a tragic accident, likely when the characters are present.



Her pet rat **Skek** is actually an **imp** familiar, and works behind the scenes while invisible to track the characters and set up any of these “accidents.”

Perhaps the wolves truly are a threat to local cattle, but her bait transforms them into death dogs, and they ravage the countryside. Should the characters track down and kill the death dogs, they'll still have to somehow deal with any creatures diseased by the death dogs. Madam Versilplex may have the cure ... but there's this thing she needs you to do. These are but examples.

Madam Versilplex has the following items in her shop. Each has its own complication, as noted under the item. She warns characters that everything is either older or has “a personality” due to former owners.

- *Potion of healing* — Five in stock. Madam Versilplex can make more after a few days. These function like normal *potions of healing* but for each one consumed similar potions from other sources work less. For every one of Madam Versilplex's *potions of healing* consumed, reduce the number of hit points regained from other *potions of healing* by 2. This effect is cumulative. For example, if you drink two of Madam Versilplex's *potions of healing*, you regain 4 fewer hit points from the next *potion of healing* not made by her. A *remove curse* spell cast on the character removes this penalty.
- *Potion of ogre strength* — Three in stock. This potion acts like a *potion of giant strength* that changes your Strength score to 19 for 1 hour. The first time a character drinks a *potion of ogre strength* they must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be consumed with a desire to eat raw flesh that can include insects, small animals and the like. The DC increases by 1 for each *potion of ogre strength* the character drinks. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the character becomes cannibalistic until a *remove curse* spell is cast upon them.
- *Goggles of night* — One in stock. Madam Versilplex needs a task done for this equivalent to stealing an item from one innocent victim, and “returning it” to another unknown innocent victim. She is adamant about the character not being discovered. She'll claim the item was wrongfully taken, and she would like her friend to get it back without violence

or further embarrassment to either family. Her plan is to reveal the item and start both families fighting with each other — likely leading to someone being beaten or killed — if she has her way. The characters do not know this and aren't told this willingly. Furthermore, the goggles carry an additional property. Madam Versiliplex sees everything the character wearing them sees. Otherwise they work like standard *goggles of night*.

- *Spell scrolls* — Madam Versiliplex has access to *spell scrolls*. She explains her list of spells is limited and that her resources have depleted over time. She'll say the only spell scrolls she has left are: *bestow curse*, *contact other plane*, *counterspell*, *detect magic*, *eyebite*, *hold person*, *identify*, *lightning bolt*, *locate object*, *magic missile*, *phantasmal killer*, *plane shift*, *polymorph*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *scrying* and *sleep*.

- *Plate Armor of Resistance (acid)* - This suit stands in the corner, and although dust covered and neglected it bears fine engraving and looks well made. The design of a giant squid covers the breastplate, with the engraved tentacles spreading to the arms and the legs. Madam Versiliplex claims she can't possibly part with it and takes some convincing ... which is all a ploy of course. She demands a high price for it, perhaps 5000 gp, but can be talked down to half that amount. She carries on like the suit was meant for that character, as it fits so well. The armor is cursed, and is actually *Plate Armor of Vulnerability (acid)*.

- *+1 Longsword* — One of the many weapons on the dusty rack is an enchanted sword. Madam Versiliplex is resistant to parting with it but may let it go for a character who succeeds on a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check and offers to pay 1000 gp. She'll claim a dangerous beast has been lurking about the area, terrorizing the populace, and she intends to use it to slay the beast. If a character volunteers to do so for her, she'll let it go for half the price. The beast she wants slain is a local **druid in brown bear** form. She claims the druid is a lycanthrope gone mad with an ancient curse beyond her ken to cure. Should the character or party fail to kill this druid within eight days, the sword animates, becoming a **flying sword** and attacking its former wielder.

Complications

The items all have their own complications, as do the associated tasks. Madam Versiliplex wishes to have as many complications as possible. Keep in mind it is always Madam Versiliplex's intention to have the characters gain these items if they want them, but she tries to make them think these items are more precious than they are. She's a long lived night hag with centuries of experience in lying, manipulating and duping mortals.

When the characters are in negotiations with her, do not prompt them to make Wisdom (Insight) checks to tell if she's lying. If they ask to make a check, by all means allow it. Night hags are devious and Madam Versiliplex is no exception. A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell she is being generally deceptive. If a character's check succeeds by 5 or more, they know Madam Versiliplex intends them harm. She's been running this con well for over 200 years.

Should the characters attack the night hag in her wagon, she is not alone. Skek is always with her (unless it's spying on the characters elsewhere). In addition, the *Plate Armor of Resistance* and *+1 Longsword* attack as **animated armor** and **flying sword**. Worse yet, the carpet on the floor is a **rug of smothering**.

Madam Versiliplex's first action is to use Ethereality and escape, letting the animated objects fight in her stead. The wagon itself is enchanted and obeys her commands. The ox is there simply for show and is pushed along by the cart. If the animated objects are defeated, and the hag is not within, the wagon also enters the Ethereal Plane, leaving the characters behind wherever it was last.

Madam Versiliplex simply gathers her forces and moves along to another place to sell her wares. She may take the time to harass the party with her Nightmare Haunting. Pick one character at random and have her target them, unless one character was pointed in dealing with her. If that's the case, they become targets of her Nightmare Haunting.



Menagerie

Environment
Wilderness

Suggested level
7 – Medium

Monsters
Goblins (3)

Eagle (3)
Elephant (3)
Rat (3)

Treasure
Wand of polymorph

such a way as to give the players more agency within the confines of this encounter. At the same time, this special region is a wild magic zone, introducing another element to the encounter. Mayhem!

Description

The party travels along a lonely road or twisting path through dense woods, and the foliage abruptly opens into a single enormous, roughly circular glade.

A thick and tangled copse of trees, vines and brambles grows at the center of this glade. The central tree is an ancient oak, twisted and enormous with branches reaching to the sky and bending to the ground like an umbrella. Woven within these branches, innumerable vines twist and turn like a green tangle of webs, dotted by large white lily like flowers.

Introduction

It's always important to read the flavor text. For monsters, magic items and spells, the flavor text can turn a blasé encounter into something more.

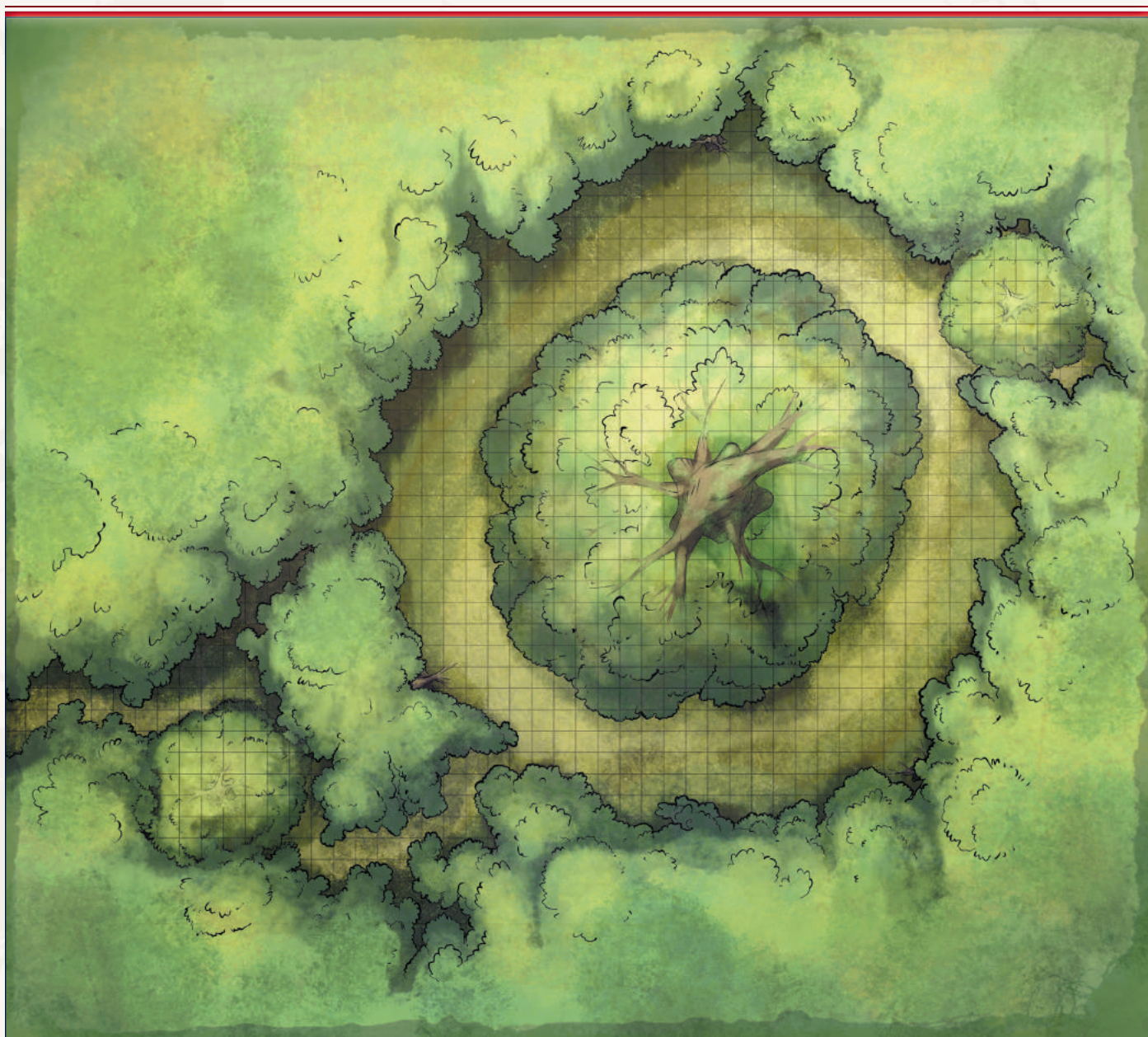
This encounter is based upon the little details of one particular spell – polymorph. However, instead of just using the spell as written, adventurers discover a special region affected by the spell, designed in

An equally abundant number of thorny brambles shoots from the ground, entangled among the vines and trees. A very much out of place **elephant** stands next to the mass of vegetation feeding on leaves and flowers, unaware of the characters' entrance into the glade. An **eagle** soars at treetop level in a circle.

This imposing and tangled growth is not the most surprising feature, however. A dimly glowing and ever sparkling spiral of light upon the clearing floor emanates from within the growth and spirals outward toward the edge of the glade. Shifting through the colors of the rainbow, it gives the glade a feylike quality. The air feels charged with some sort of energy.

The area is a wild magic zone, centered on the trunk of the oak tree with a radius of 150 feet. The main concern, however, is the *wand of polymorph* lost decades ago by a wizard, which has since grown into the center of the base of the tree canopy. The oak grasps it without intent, and yet, grown into the center of the wild magic zone, it now powers this wand eternally so long as it remains lodged in this tree.

Both the elephant and the eagle are not native to this zone. Instead they are **goblins** who wandered into the zone and were changed by the wand within the tree. A third goblin scurries among the brambles in the form of a **rat**.



The fun begins if any creatures approach or start their turn within 60 feet of the tree. Once per turn, this “polymorph tree” acts. Each creature in range must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be *polymorphed* randomly into either an elephant, eagle or rat. Every time someone becomes one of these creatures, whoever was the creature beforehand is released from the spell. While *polymorphed*, a creature is immune from the magical effect and does not need to make saving throws while in the area of effect. A creature released from any other form is susceptible to a saving throw to take on a new form.

A transformed creature retains their mental attributes and personality, unlike the spell. Otherwise the spell effect is standard. Should any creature move more than 150 feet from the tree in any direction, the spell ends. Re-entering the glade does not make the spell reactivate but closing to within 60 feet of the tree certainly makes a creature a viable target.

The goblins have been here for so long they have lost all sense of self and will not behave like anything other than their animal counterparts until they are released from the spell. At that point they try their best to flee from the region and never return. Should they be captured alive, they could be questioned about why they were here, and may divulge they know about the wand.

If the party lets the goblins go without questioning, they might yet discover the wand. A character *polymorphed* into an eagle, flying above the trees and looking down, can spot the wand with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. The eagle’s Keen Sight gives advantage for this check. A character *polymorphed* into a rat can navigate the brambles with ease and sniff out the wand with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. The rat’s Keen Smell gives advantage for this check.

They could find the wand by navigating the tangles and succeeding on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation check). Once per turn, any character could make a DC 20 Strength check to pull branches away to search the foliage. Each check, successful or not, requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking 1d8 piercing damage from the mas-

sive thorns. A character *polymorphed* into an elephant makes the Strength check with advantage and has resistance to the piercing damage of the thorns due to their thick hide, even on a failed save.

Once the wand is removed from the tree and moved more than 150 feet away from it, the random *polymorphing* stops as the wand is no longer in contact with the wild magic source. The wand then becomes a standard wand of *polymorph*.

Complications

Holy smokes, the complications. For one thing a character could be *polymorphed* into an unsafe new form. For example, a character in eagle form who flies 150 feet away from the tree risks falling when they change into another form or back into their normal form. Even if they are transformed into an elephant, depending on the damage taken, any damage that takes them to 0 hit points still carries over into their normal form. It’s important to remember that any damage that reduces a creature to 0 hp or lower carries over into their normal form and dispels the magic. Since a rat has only 1 hit point, a fall caused by changing from eagle to a form with no flying speed could be significant, as only 1 hit point would be removed from the damage.

A character within the brambles in rat form who gets changed into a larger form has to deal with those Strength checks and Dexterity saving throws to free themselves, along with the associated damage. A character among the brambles in elephant form loses any advantages and resistances of that form if they are transformed. A character in elephant form who may be engaged in dangerous Strength related activities within the wild magic zone could endanger their safety if they are transformed into a smaller form. Holding a large branch, rock or other heavy item over themselves at the time of transformation could be in a lot of peril.

With all this in mind, the intent of this encounter is not to kill or overly endanger the party, but rather to celebrate the sort of mayhem that ensues when words like “Abra-ca-pocus” are invoked.

Mirror, Mirror

Environment

Swamp

Suggested level

3 — Easy

Monsters

Hearth hope

Treasure

Mirror of heart and home

“It’s lost. I’ll never see them again...”

Characters can engage the spectral figure socially.

Characters who succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check recognize a **hearth hope** as an good aligned undead spirit akin to a ghost, held back from the afterlife by a pressing need in the mortal realm. Hearth hopes do not seek harm against the living but merely wish to carry out one last task, fulfilling a strong desire or powerful expectation of completion. Some use their ability to take over a body to accomplish these tasks while others simply attempt to communicate.

Introduction

Everyone has a story. Players create stories for their characters and bring them to the table where we tell a broader story together. Campaign villains often carry complex tales of dark desires and twisted motivations but what’s often overlooked are the stories of the minor monsters, including random encounters during larger adventures.

Undead creatures present perhaps the most tragic of these stories. With a few notable exceptions like vampires and liches, undead can sometimes come across as cardboard villains. I find this to be a lost opportunity.

There’s a huge wealth of story building potential, side quests, plot hooks and the like from any single undead if you are willing to make them more than generic villains. This encounter ensnares adventurers in one such story.

Description

Late one night while adventurers rest at camp whether still awake, during a turn at watch or while everyone is asleep the distant sound of sobbing cuts through the murmur of the wilderness. The direction is hard to ascertain given the echoing nature of the surrounding environment.

A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check determines the direction. After a period of searching the party discovers a small ghostly figure with long braided hair wearing simple, practical traveling robes in pale shades. Its ghostly face weeps into equally ghostly hands.





In life this hearth hope was a halfling named Schir Gold. She has been dead a long time so her social skills are foggy and long forgotten. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check allows a character to determine this.

While traveling through the wilds in life Schir was killed by a troll, never to see her beloved husband or children again. Schir was a community leader and whenever she left home to visit other halfling communities she carried a magical mirror enchanted to show her children in the reflection. Before Schir's restless spirit can move on she hopes to see her children one last time. A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check can get Schir to divulge the details of her death and grief over missing her family in between sobs.

To add to the event you can optionally require a DC 13 Charisma saving throw for characters with-

in 20 feet of the hearth hope, with failure causing the character to begin weeping. Crying characters make the Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) checks mentioned earlier with advantage, as they feel Schir's pain of loss. Characters can make a saving throw at the end of each of their turns to end the crying effect.

Characters who search the area around the hearth hope and succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover the *mirror of heart and home* buried beneath the dirt, decay and muck. Once it is cleaned up anyone who peers into its reflective surface sees their children, or themselves as a child if they are not a parent.

A *detect magic* spell reveals a magical aura of the illusion school but the mirror possesses no other unusual properties.

If the characters realize the hearth hope is looking for the mirror of heart and home and return it to her, she looks into the mirror and her tears of grief turn to tears of joy. Schir's gaze remains fixed on the mirror for just a moment before her spectral form fades away, never to return. If the characters try to trick the hearth hope with another mirror, Schir becomes angry and attacks.

If the adventurers give up and decide to move on the hearth hope could react in a number of ways. Schir could become angry and lash out with her Psychic Feedback. She may also attempt to use Possession on a character, desperately searching through the swamp after she takes control of the character's body. Or she may take no action and her grief stricken sobs fade into the night as the party moves on.

Complications

Unless the hearth hope is destroyed, if it knows the characters have the *mirror of heart and home* it will not rest until it regains possession of it. This could lead to several pursuit encounters or the hearth hope turning on the friends or loved ones of the characters to see to the mirror's return.

It's even possible the characters might find the mirror and ignore the hearth hope's cries. For a twist you might give the party an opportunity to find the mirror before encountering Schir. If that's the case they may never interact with her and the hearth hope may begin to haunt the characters with its mournful sobs each night until it gets resolved.

The characters might think destroying the mirror is the answer. If they destroy the mirror in the presence of the hearth hope you could have the hearth hope descend into a rage and open with its Beatific Visage action. If the characters sell the mirror of heart and home to anyone, the new owner might inherit the nightly sobbing, which might then lead to having the characters hired to deal with it yet again.

Looking into the mirror could elicit strong emotions for characters with their own distant loved ones, or those who have lost loved ones. Likewise, this



encounter could potentially cause a strong emotional response in players themselves, so consider the experiences of the players in your game when using this encounter. It might also pave the way to roleplaying if a character reveals they are a parent, something they may have kept secret.

Alternatively you might introduce a previously unknown child into a character's life, but do this only with careful consideration for the player and their character. Being a parent is not something to take lightly! It's also worth noting the mirror shows any parent their children, and this does not require biological ties.

Characters who learn about Schir's fate may wish to find her remains and return them to her family, wherever they may be. Schir was killed long ago by a troll who brought her corpse back to a loathsome lair to eat. Consider the possibility the party may continue adventuring in the swamp, seeking a troll lair in hopes of avenging Schir and bringing news to her family. It could even be the **Beast of Bellard** what killed the poor halfling.

Mirrors of the Soul

Introduction

Game Masters everywhere often agree on one thing: players metagame, even if subconsciously. Because of this it can sometimes be hard to get players to try certain paths, enter portals or take new risks. More experienced players tend to be guilty of this whereas brand new players are not. Sometimes the trick to getting more adventurous characters is to use players' own metagaming outlook to trick them into taking a new chance or trying a new thing. In essence you must out-meta the metagame.

This encounter is one of those pieces of trickery, and all through the use of a classic — the secret note. This encounter requires a little bit of preparation ahead

Environment

Any — This encounter could be a room in a dungeon, but it could just as well be a pocket dimension, dream sequence, appear in a magical fog or other strange method

Suggested level

Any

Monsters

None

Treasure

One-time Legendary Resistance

of time. You need to prepare two stacks of notes, one blank and one prewritten, all on identical paper. They need to be kept hidden, perhaps behind your screen or in a box or other container so players have no foreknowledge. If you play online, you can create these notes digitally and send them as a text or direct message, or through your virtual tabletop of choice.

Each card in one stack has the same message. The other stack is blank. Both sets of notes should be individually folded up so no content can be seen. When you produce these notes for the players, it's important no one sees they come from two different piles. A good poker face helps here.

Description

The characters enter a room, roughly 60 feet in size, with a number of walls equal to the number of characters in the group (minimum three). As they enter, the door behind them seals and appears like a wall with no apparent exit. All the walls are translucent, and mists appear to dance and shift beyond the polished surface.

If a character succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they can tell the mists do not blend from one mirrored wall to another. They may be of slightly different hues, colors or move in different directions (your choice). Any character who approaches a mirrored wall sees their reflection in it. However, only the first character to move to a given wall sees it clearly, and only in the first wall they approach. This applies to all characters in the room.



The intent is to make sure every character has a clear reflection in only one wall. Regarding any other wall other than the first one a given character approaches, their reflection appears faded and ghostly compared to the clear reflection. Any reflection, clear or faded, does not behave in any other manner than as a reflection.

If no character approaches a wall, or if some characters refuse to approach a wall, randomly assign their reflection to a wall.

If a character touches a mirror or looks their reflection in the eye, or otherwise examines their reflection, hand the player a pre-written note.

Any character who refuses to approach a mirror under any circumstances gets a blank note.

Do not let the players open their notes until every character has either been given a prewritten or blank note. Once this has been accomplished, have each player open the note and read it to themselves. These notes are not meant to be read aloud.

The pre-written notes say:

"You have entered a mirror realm. Mists surround you. You are standing on the other side of the glass from where you were facing a translucent version of yourself."

Any character transported to the opposite side of the glass (actually a glasslike force field) can see through to the inner chamber where they entered, as well as

see any characters who did not approach the glass.

They cannot see any other rooms or into other chambers where other characters may have gone. They cannot hear what goes on in the main chamber and cannot communicate by any means short of telepathy with anyone else.

The glass cannot be broken, and if they try to wander the mists they always end up right back where they started. Feel free to use some sort of teleportation to do so if a character obsesses over wandering the mists.

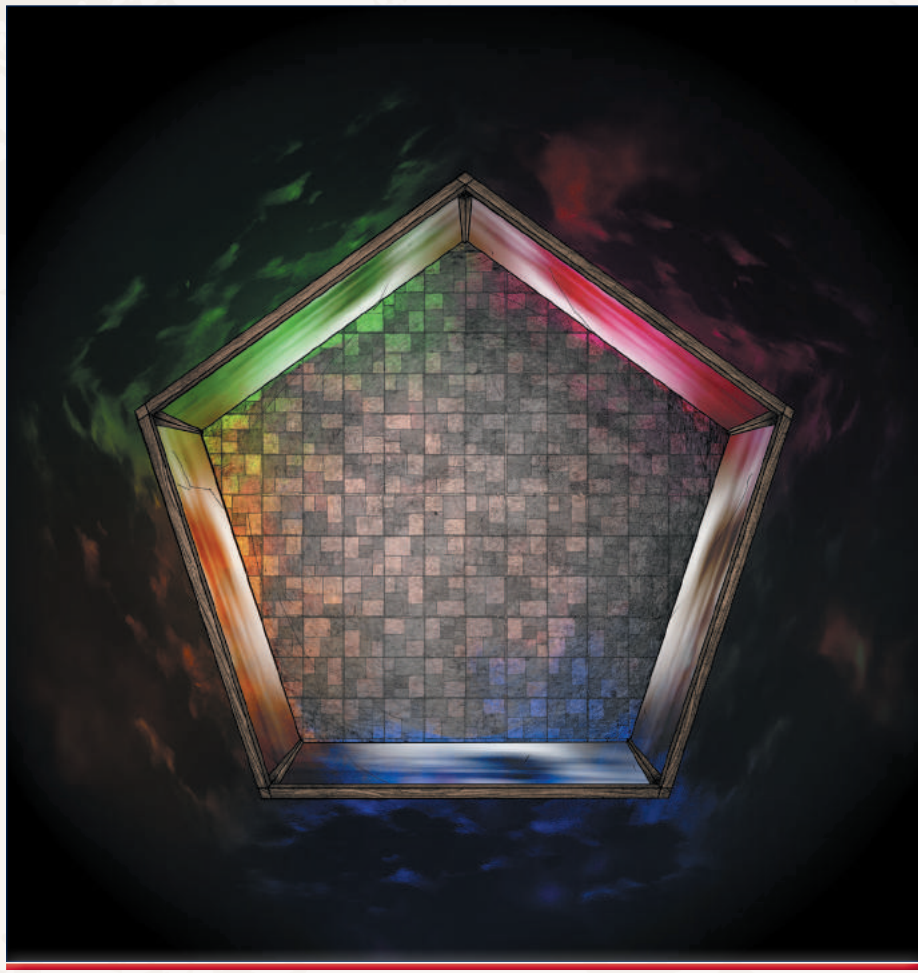
This established, they have to deal with their reflection, which

stands there patiently with two hands outstretched.

One hand holds a tiny box. One hand holds a knife. Until the character selects one or the other by statement, pointing, touching, grabbing or whatnot, the reflection stands there looking at them quietly.

Once the character chooses, whatever they choose, as well as whatever they did not disappear in a puff of smoke.

Choosing the box. The once silent reflection states a riddle in an eerie, echoing voice. No one else outside the chamber hears the riddle.



“You saw me where I never was, and where I could not be. And yet within that place, my face you often see.”

The character has three guesses to answer the riddle (reflection). If a character guesses correctly, they are transported back to the main chamber and awarded a one time Legendary Resistance effect (when the character fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead).

A character who guesses incorrectly all three times or refuses to answer within 1 minute (feel free to time it to add tension) is spat back out upon the floor in the main chamber.

The reflection then moves to its side of the glass and shouts for all to hear in the main chamber the failing character’s flaw, from the character’s personality traits, in a language everybody understands. Alternatively, each character hears this in their native tongue.

Choosing the knife. The idle reflection initiates a Charisma challenge. No initiative needs to be rolled, as both sides act at the same time. Each side makes a Charisma check. Whoever wins the best two-out-of-three wins the challenge. Use the character’s Charisma ability score for both the character and the reflection. However, only the character can benefit from any magic items or spells that affect Charisma. The reflection does not.

A character who wins the challenge is transported back to the main chamber and awarded a one time Legendary Resistance effect so when the character fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

A character who loses the challenge is spat back out upon the floor in the main chamber.

The reflection then moves to its side of the glass and shouts for all to hear in the main chamber the failing character’s flaw, from the character’s personality traits, in a language that everybody understands. Alternatively, each character hears this in their native tongue.

Complications

Complications arise in a roleplaying sense and are based on exactly who is in the room if or when a reflection shouts a flaw.

This can create an interesting dynamic where players gain a chance to have their characters either build trust or distrust of other characters simply by knowing something flawed about another party member.

Characters may end up with shared secrets, building bonds with each other. Characters might likewise hoard these secrets and blackmail, distrust or become wary of those who they thought to be closer allies. It all comes down to the players and character types.

The revealed secrets need not be a flaw from a character’s personality traits, but could be any sort of secret or detail they wish to keep hidden from others — even their closest allies.

You should remain aware of how you think players may interpret this intrusion in their characters’ privacy. The intent is to use metagaming to make otherwise over thinking players more open to roleplaying and character development.

If you think a player may take such a violation personally, perhaps this encounter isn’t for you. However, if you think this might put more roleplaying into your game, then by all means go for it.

Additionally, the party may have NPCs with them, and their secrets could be laid bare. You can use this to your advantage to reveal lore or other important information in an interesting way.

If you want to inject danger or peril into the encounter, consider having the reflections become manifestations of characters’ dark secrets with appropriately challenging creatures. Simply reskin whatever monsters you like, describing them as ugly psychic representations of their character’s flaws or hidden truths.

One Crow, Two Crow, Three Crow, Scarecrow

Environment

Farmlands

swarm of ravens and one harvest scarecrow every other level.

Suggested level

2 - Easy

Scale up by adding one swarm of ravens and one harvest scarecrow for every two character levels.

To make the encounter more difficult, alternate between adding one

Monsters

Harvest scarecrow

Swarm of crows (use swarm of ravens)

Treasure

None

Tension is an important element for some campaigns, and defines the nature of the ongoing undercurrent to all other events that follow. This specific encounter draws upon the cultural acceptance or fear of scarecrows, as well as the almost ubiquitous presence of their intended target, crows. Both set within farmlands should be a normal and expected occurrence, allowing you to spring this encounter on lower level parties with little or no set up.

Introduction

A continuing challenge, especially for starting Game Masters, is taking the mundane and making it special. Fortunately, there are a wide array of creatures that fit the bill. Each has their specialty. Mimics can stand in as mundane items. Darkmantles are indistinguishable from cave formations like stalactites and stalagmites while motionless. Gray oozes can resemble wet stone or pools of water.

After a time though, players come to expect this. Then it's time to bring out classic themes from horror and surprise characters when they least expect it. In a dungeon setting, they might well be ready for something.

But when travelling between towns and villages in patrolled or protected lands, characters might let their guard down. Farmlands are perfect for this setting, as they are cultivated lands typically already under the auspices of a local sheriff, regent, baron or other leader. They should be safe.

That's when you spring the surprise. Doing this sort of thing early in a campaign can set the tone for the entire event. This is perfect for when you intend to later add a hag, evil wizard, or other supernatural foe as a central villain to a campaign. It provides the correct feel for the rest of the adventure or campaign.

Description

The road is the same. More dirt trail with more ruts made by wagons laden with goods, and more corn fields lined with tall grass. Crows caw in the distance and scarecrows stand silent vigils over crops. The birds either circle and caw at the crops' guardians to mock them or to warn them of your passage. You cannot say which. You've seen it all before myriad times.

Or maybe not.

A character who observes the crows more intently picks up something unusual with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The **harvest scarecrow's** eyes flash with an eerie yellow light. A further successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines something magical is at hand. Otherwise, it might be the fatigue of walking long hours, or it may just be the leaves of the corn flashing before their button eyes. Sometimes a GM just has to shrug and be vague.

As the characters take their eyes off of them, they may ignore this sight as their minds may be playing tricks on them, and continue on with their travel. When they look back at these silent guardians, they are no longer at their posts.

The harvest scarecrows are now active and cross the fields quickly. Characters who failed their Wisdom (Perception) check do not see the yellow flash, and thus are surprised by the incoming harvest scarecrow(s) that burst out of the tall cornfields and wade into melee with the group, using the Hay Fever action once they come within range of a character.

Once combat begins and the harvest scarecrow(s) enter melee, a **swarm of crows** attacks on the following round. One swarm enters for each harvest scarecrow in play.

The hope is to make this combat confusing and cha-

otic. Feel free to tune this encounter up or down as you desire, adjusting for any difficulty. The intent is to create shock and fear, not to wipe out the party.

If it fits within the theme of the party, have any defeated harvest scarecrow burn or create a strange magical sigil into the road upon their death. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check might reveal the sigil to be the signature of a specific hag, wizard or other related magical foe.

This attack, therefore, could be the first salvo in the long campaign to defeat this dark and sorcerous villain. That sort of detail is completely up to you.



Complications

Given the special abilities of both monsters in this encounter, balancing is important. The intent is to create fear and paranoia, not to wipe the party. The supernatural and unexpected nature surrounding this combat should create plot hooks and drive the players forward, if only for revenge.

Keep in mind that although the harvest scarecrow does not retreat, the swarms of crows just might. Furthermore, should a party be defeated, they might find themselves outside the hut of a hag and forced into some sort of magical deal to release them from a gigantic cooking pot, or in the prisons of a magical overlord who punishes all residents who enter his realm without paying a hefty tax. That's your call.



Passenger

Environment

Anywhere

Monsters

Cerebug

Suggested level

2 — Medium

Treasure

None

There are many monsters capable of this with the right delivery. What should follow is the generation of tension, and perhaps a little player paranoia, to add depth to the next few encounters. The right moment or delivery of this bait and switch can set the tone and give your players pause.

Introduction

There's an old cliché stating “not everything is as it seems.”

Of all the genres in gaming, books, or movies, horror follows this the most. Good horror has a bait and switch or a surprise hook to take viewers or participants by surprise.

The following encounter is but one example. The threat presented here can be utilized with every single NPC and beast, and almost every living creature — so long as it has a brain. The methodology for this foe has been seen in the horror genre many times.

It can be anywhere. It can be anyone. It could be the person standing right next to you ... or the duke's loyal hunting dog at his feet. Anyone.



Description

Continuing their journey towards the next community or adventure location, the adventurers come upon an odd sight.

They find the remains of an adult male human laying face down on the ground. He wears simple peasant garb, carries meager belongings and holds a shepherd's crook in his hands.

A large stone lay upon his back. The stone is out of place with the local natural stone, and it looks handled by large, muddy hands.

Three stray sheep wander the local area grazing upon local grass and weeds.

A quick investigation (rather obvious to any who take a moment or two to look at the body) shows the victim's skull has been broken open. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the brain is missing. If the result of the check is 15 or higher, the examiner knows the skull was broken from within, and does not relate to the chest wound.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check shows more sheep were in the area but are now missing. They moved further down the road in the direction the characters are traveling. If the result of the check is 12 or higher the character discovers one set of human footprints.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the site also shows another shepherd's crook in the tall grass beside the road.

Nothing more can be found, regardless of how much the characters look. Success on a very hard DC 17 Intelligence (Nature) or even Wisdom (Survival) check allows a character to realize there are no predators or scavengers watching or prowling the area, despite the carnage and easy meals.

Should the characters realize this, it is important for them to get a sense of how unusual this might be.

Allow the characters to get farther down the road several miles or hours of travel before entering the second phase of this encounter.

They come upon a roadside campsite. A human peasant facing away from the party sits near the campfire. Sheep graze nearby, seemingly unattended. If the party approaches or attempts to communicate with the peasant, they receive no response.

Should the party approach the sheep they see blood stains on the wool of three of the sheep with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. The sheep otherwise act placid and do not panic unless attacked.

Should a character approach the sheep in a peaceful manner, the three bloodstained sheep slowly walk toward them.

If a character looks at the face of the seated peasant, they see the face is missing, vacating the skull as if blown open from inside. Blood stains the front of the peasant's garb. His body sits with his elbows upon his knees, propping him up artificially.

Here's the bait and switch moment.

Inside one of the sheep is a **cerebug**. The cerebug erupts from the sheep as a bonus action. Unless the characters are immune to surprise, or implicitly state they are watching the sheep in some suspicious manner, allow the creature to do so as only 5 feet of movement. This allows it to assault the party in its quest to both escape into the countryside and to acquire a better host to do so.

The cerebug leaps at a character's face in an attempt to spread its horror, and starts with their Burrowing Claws and Sonic Drill ability.

Complications

The single most obvious complication is what if the cerebug wins a new host? This can be potentially a very deadly encounter, with all the repercussions of character loss one might expect.

This established, it could easily set the tone for an entire adventure, and opens up a plot hook of “how many have been taken by parasites?”

You might wish to have any NPCs be attacked first, and then have them escape into the woods. This one cerebug might then become a recurring villain.

This could lead to a whole aberration conspiracy, as the cerebug continues to undermine society with key host victims.

Should the party triumph with no hands (or brains) lost, the urgency of such an encounter could potentially offer a journey into horror that many campaigns overlook — even for the time being.

It should also be noted this encounter could be tied to **Counting Sheep** either before or after it occurs.

That’s up to you as the Game Master and how you wish for this to play out.



Pay to Play

Environment

Any

Monsters

None

Suggested level

Any, but more appropriate for low to mid levels

Treasure

A temporary boon is treasure like, right? And who doesn't like picking shredded coinage out of their hair?

Introduction

Sometimes, you need to lighten up and have fun. A series of high tension encounters filled with danger and worry can certainly establish the right tone, but sometimes you just need to laugh and have a good time. It is my hope the following encounter combines what would normally be dangerous imagery with good old fashioned random fun.

In this case, what we'll do is create a moment or encounter you can drop into various settings, whether it's a dungeon, marketplace, circus or randomly appearing in a wilderness setting.

The encounter itself is random and unpredictable, so it could logically be placed anywhere. The location is less important than the purpose — to have unexpected fun and lighten the mood.

Furthermore, to make sure this has less to do with an overarching issue or have any permanent detrimental effects, we'll make any effects of this encounter temporary — an hour or less. These effects should not severely hamper characters and the short duration should aid in this respect. The effects are randomly generated by the players themselves, just to add to the fun and inject agency and fairness.

Description

For the purposes of this encounter, place this moment in time in a dungeon to remove outside influences so you can focus on the encounter itself.



Entering into this 30 foot square chamber, the central feature is immediately evident. A low one-tier circular platform 1 foot tall and 5 feet in diameter is home to a levitating device of the strangest origin. Hovering 2 feet above this platform is a 5 foot diameter spherical construct slowly rotating, revealing a 1 foot diameter, circular and shuttered portal along its equator. Atop the sphere rests an oversized jester's cap with four tails. Each tail ends in a white 3 inch diameter sphere. Each hat tail is painted a separate color. There is one each of red, yellow, blue and green.

In scratched and peeling gold paint above the closed porthole, written in Common, are the words "Play Your Fate."

Those who succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notice a small 1 inch vertical slot next to the porthole.

Gold trim that would normally make it visible is worn and faded, making it difficult to spot from any distance.

Tiny writing above it, also in Common and equally worn reads “1 gold piece per play.”

If characters speak to this odd construct, nothing happens.

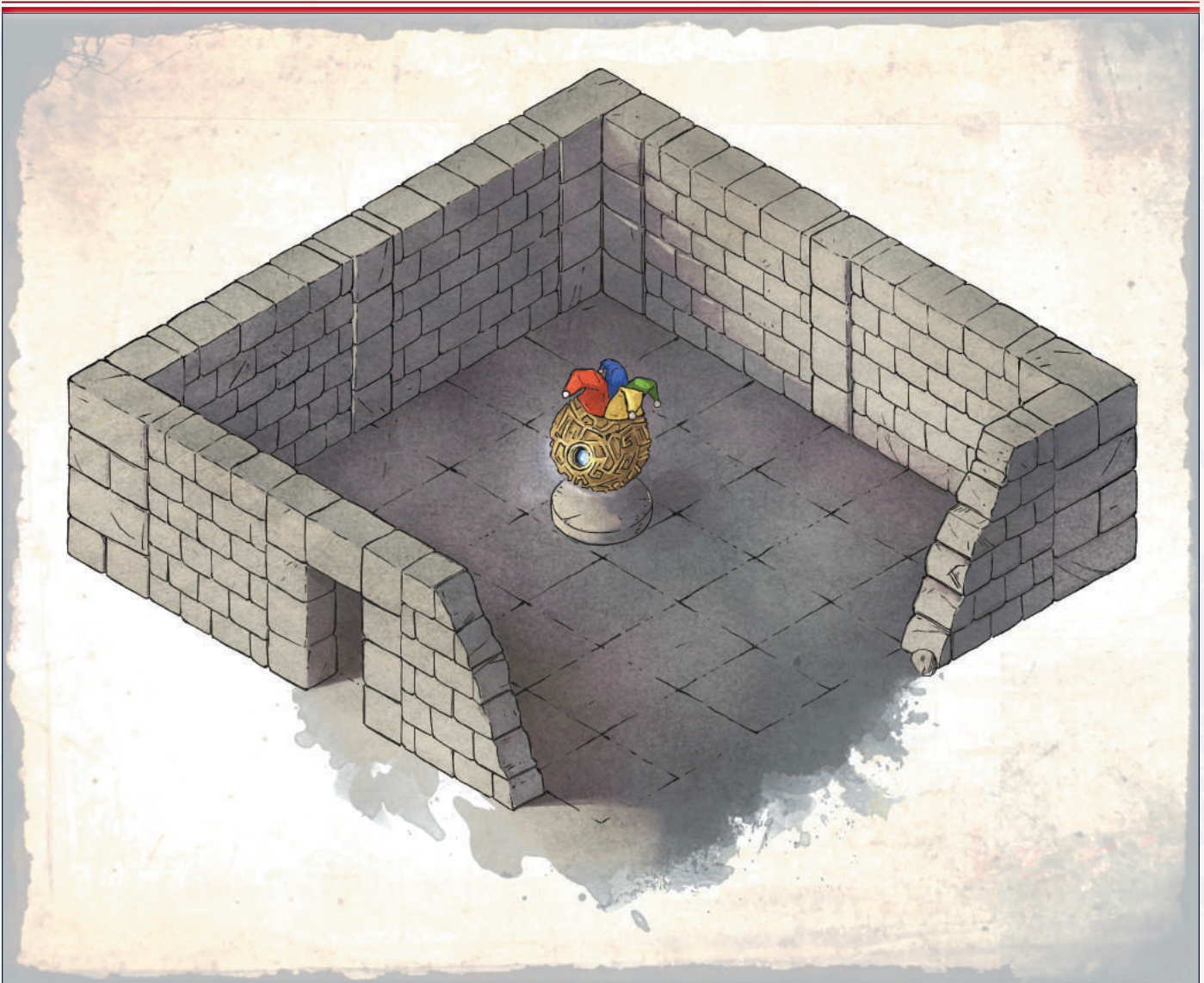
In fact, unless one of them puts a coin into the slot (and it doesn't have to be a gold one, in case the specific player is especially thrifty), the machine remains inactive.

Should this one condition be met, things start to change.

Loud calliope music starts to play, audible out to 200 feet. The four tails of the hat start to slowly spin like helicopter blades, but not faster than making one rotation every 6 seconds.

The shuttered portal opens revealing a large, metal, hand painted eyeball. This eyeball darts around as if to randomly look at each character, then looks in random locations.

The eyeball isn't actually looking at anyone, but feel free to play up when it does, especially when it looks past the characters at something that may not be there at all.



So long as the person who put the coin in the slot remains in the room, they are the target of a random ray from one of the balls at the end of one of the hat tails.

The beam of light matches the color of the hat tail. A creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to dodge the ray of light. Otherwise the ray strikes the creature and an effect occurs according to the ray color that strikes it.

If the creature who placed a coin in the machine leaves the room during the activation or successfully dodges the ray, the machine becomes inert at the end of the turn and requires another coin to start the cycle again.

When a ray strikes a creature consult the table below to determine the effect.

Ray color	Effect
Red	+1 to a random ability score (maximum 20) for 1 hour
Yellow	-1 to a random ability score (minimum 3) for 1 hour
Blue	+1 saving throws for 1 hour
Green	-1 saving throws for 1 hour

At the end of the duration the effect of the ray fades. The machine only works for a creature once and the rays do not stack with each other.

A creature cannot be affected twice by a ray by any means. The machine can detect what creatures have been affected and does not target the same creature twice. Any attempt to do so always fails.

If the characters come up with the idea to try and break into the machine to see how many coins are inside, the construct has an AC 19 and 27 hit points.

Reducing the construct to 0 hit points causes it to explode into shrapnel. Each creature in a 20 foot radius must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 6d6 piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The construct contains 50 gp, 25 sp and 50 cp.

These are scattered about the room by the explosion and take 1 hour to collect among the debris, divided by the number of creatures collecting.

Complications

There are a few complications. The most significant change of ability score modifications is the alteration of hit points and hit point maximums.

This could alter characters' fates for the next hour significantly and should be monitored.

It's important to note this machine in no way unfairly inflicts anything upon a creature — they chose to place a coin in the machine. Mind you spells like *suggestion*, *dominate person* and the like could alter this voluntary choice.

That's important to note as well.

The intent of this encounter was to inject some old school funhouse dungeon hilarity into a game setting. That's why the effects are temporary and relatively short lived.

It means, however, you should keep an accurate track of time as of the first ray effect's initiation. It may well be the case that the characters gain some benefits, want their coins back for some reason and end up dying in the blast or wasting the duration of the ray collecting coins from the constructs wreckage.

You could certainly change the effects of the rays to anything you like. The rays could produce spell effects from *enhance ability* to *disintegrate* and anything in between.

Or they could cause random effects like those from a *wand of wonder*.

Try to have fun with this in any regard. I hope it inspires similar randomness at your table to break up what may be some serious or high tension moments and remind us all we are still playing a game.

Phoba's Bet

Environment

Anywhere. That's the point, but the example below will be in the wilderness

Suggested level

12 – Hard (This difficulty assumes Phoba engages her target one-on-one. Against a party of four,

the suggested level is only 5-6 for Medium difficulty)

Monsters Phoba

Treasure

200 gp, portable hole, ring of invisibility

It's good to think of who you have selected for the role of bounty hunter. In this case, I present to you the one and only Phoba. Phoba was an experienced rogue who tricked, seduced, lied and manipulated her way across the continent. However, she stole from the wrong temple and was transformed into a medusa. Making the most of her curse she takes bounty after bounty in the hopes of earning enough to find a cure for her condition – and she doesn't care who goes down to cure her affliction.

Introduction

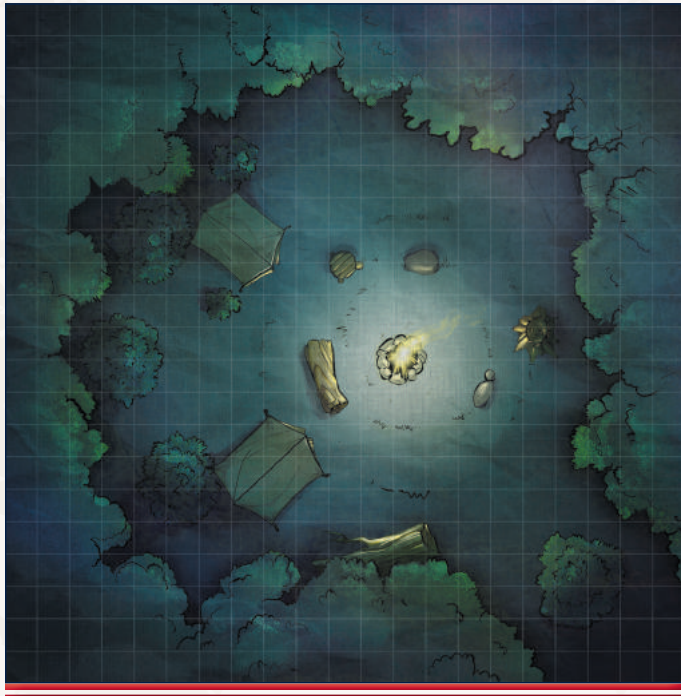
The following encounter takes on two challenges. First, it addresses an issue brought up around many gaming tables where a Game Master puts something like a bounty hunter or assassin on the trail of the adventurers. This could be due to some offense the characters have created against a king, noble, wizard or guild master, or perhaps to address some action the characters took in a city where vital laws were broken. Second, it looks at the unique issue of adding class levels to a monster. It falls on you to make the final call on how the challenge rating of the monster is affected, on a case by case basis. The secret here is to ask yourself "What do I want this monster to do?" And then building for this purpose. The purpose here is to capture characters in a dramatic fashion and return them to the employer – be it king, criminal boss or angry mob – alive, or at least relatively.

Description

To properly set this encounter up, you need to put the players in the right frame of mind. Players can become complacent when they do not have random encounters for a few days or nights. Go out of your way to make things peaceful and calm. Make fake random encounter rolls that don't count and gloss over them as if you're unconcerned. This gives you a great feel for who they put on watch and when. Consider this time the bounty hunter **Phoba** spends observing the party at a distance. She might even be handling those who might be thinking of attacking her valuable bounty. One can't collect on a fee if the target has been killed by ogres.

Phoba's services come with a high price. Not everyone can hire their own medusa. She is cold and ruthless, and also patient and methodical. She waits for the right time to pick off her prey. She cannot end her curse if she dies either. And she always – always – keeps to her contract.





Keep all of this in mind should you choose to employ Phoba. I've also given her one unique ability. She can return one of her victims to life with a kiss. This kiss is given rarely, and costs extra. Phoba carries a few magic items to help her. She has a *portable hole*, a *ring of invisibility* and 200 gp of pocket money for bribery and other necessities. Any additional treasure she might have on her comes if she collects on her bounty on the abducted character. This is up to you to decide.

Phoba is intended as an ongoing villain, which requires something extra. The characters hole up for the night. They might have a campfire burning, swapping stories, but they likely have a watch posted. The sound of crickets or peeper frogs fill the air, along with the crisp, fresh air only the night can bring.

Aside from the tension that comes from sleeping in the wilderness, all seems calm. Phoba, under the cover of her *ring of invisibility*, approaches your chosen member of the party while they are on watch. She's not the kind to rashly attack when everyone's ready. When she's near enough and her target is unaware, she'll get close enough to see them face to face. Only when she's good and ready does she reveal herself, so the person can see her. Hopefully, the target is petrified. If not, she'll use her Cunning Action to Use Object and activate her ring again to escape.

If the target is petrified, she opens her *portable hole* next to the target, pushes them in, folds up the *portable hole* and escapes. Everything is done via Stealth, so be sure to account for this should passive Perception be required to know what she's up to.

She may leave some calling card or sign behind to give a clue to any characters who would be otherwise unaware of the event. If Phoba truly succeeds on her Stealth check, you may want to gather your selected party member away from the table to role-play what happens next, or to let them know what you have in the works. Players are generally willing to be part of a storyline if you let them in on it.

Complications

The most evident complication is petrification. Phoba is an intelligent foe and consummate professional, and would rather flee to gather a bounty on another day than die. She has no problems with petrifying multiple foes if she can just to collect on the one who carries the best price. She should not be trifled with. The second most obvious complication comes with intentionally splitting the party. Both can resolve problems you may have in play already. If you have an angry tyrant/lich/other mean villain that has been wronged and you want to use Phoba, consider the following: Does one of the party members suffer from a disease? If so, petrification stops all aging or disease action. It's like suspended animation. That character is not cured, but their condition cannot get worse. Choosing this character may buy you time to resolve the issue to the benefit of the character.

Do you have a player who cannot show up on a regular basis? Will they be away for a period of time? This is a great way to remove the character and create a story arc to occupy the rest of the party while that one player is away from their character. It's important to remember an encounter can not only be a way to challenge the party or fill time between adventures, but it may also be a way to resolve issues in a fun and different way. Phoba may be your answer, while providing a reoccurring villain who can pop up from time to time to create her own story arcs and interactions with the party.

Procession

Environment

Coastal/riverside

Suggested level

8 - Hard

Monsters

Apophisis

Apep and Khagesh — Wights (2)

Treasure

Ring of spell storing — Contains lightning bolt and misty step at the beginning of the encounter. Two gold snake bracelets worth 100 gp each, a gold torc worth 1000 gp, a gold and ivory crown worth 5000 gp and three gold rings worth 50 gp each

Introduction

An environment that goes unnoticed in many settings or campaigns is the importance of rivers. Rivers were the first highways of the ancient world and are still major thoroughfares to this day. The same can be true in a fantasy setting. Rivers should be a constant resource for encounters of all kinds, be it lizardfolk, pirates, goblins in rickety steamships, or orcs in war canoes.

In this instance we'll draw from ancient history and base this encounter around a funeral procession. To build on the concept, this funeral procession is not just a funeral barge, but an elaborately carved vessel with a large single sail and a single cabin. Imagine, then, that this vessel is not of this world, but the next. The vessel itself is an expression of a Realm of Shadow. Now you have a river encounter you could have at night, with all the haunting dread of what happens when the dead meet the living.

The intent behind this encounter is simple — sometimes it's best to leave well enough alone. Curiosity killed the cat for a reason. In this case, the cat might end up worse than dead.

Description

Either while travelling on or near a waterway at night, or while berthed at the river's edge, the characters see a vessel moving quietly in their direction. It is difficult to see at first, even with darkvision, as



the ship is almost completely made of a black wood. As it closes, lanterns hanging from the bow and stern become visible, much like in a dream when one accepts that things were always there, even when you did not see them before. The green glow of the lanterns barely illuminates the deck of the vessel.

Gold inlaid engravings and other scrollwork decorate the upper edge of the hull along its length. A single, almost ephemeral sail flutters upon a single mast standing at the center of the deck of this nearly 100 foot-long vessel. Long and narrow, its 13 foot-wide hull cuts the water silently.

A single steersman in ritual hooded regalia commands the till at the stern, while a single similarly-dressed watchman stands silently at the prow. A small and elaborately decorated cabin, only 5 feet tall, but 10 feet wide and 10 feet long sits just behind the mast. It is covered in further elaborate and gold-inlaid carvings in some ancient language.

The whole craft moves unerringly upstream, as if moved by unseen oars, yet without disturbing the water at all.

What happens next is up to the characters. If they ignore it, it simply passes by quietly. If this happens, feel free to have its passengers appear later in your campaign as villains up to no good. If they board or attack the vessel, the two figures seen on deck react first.

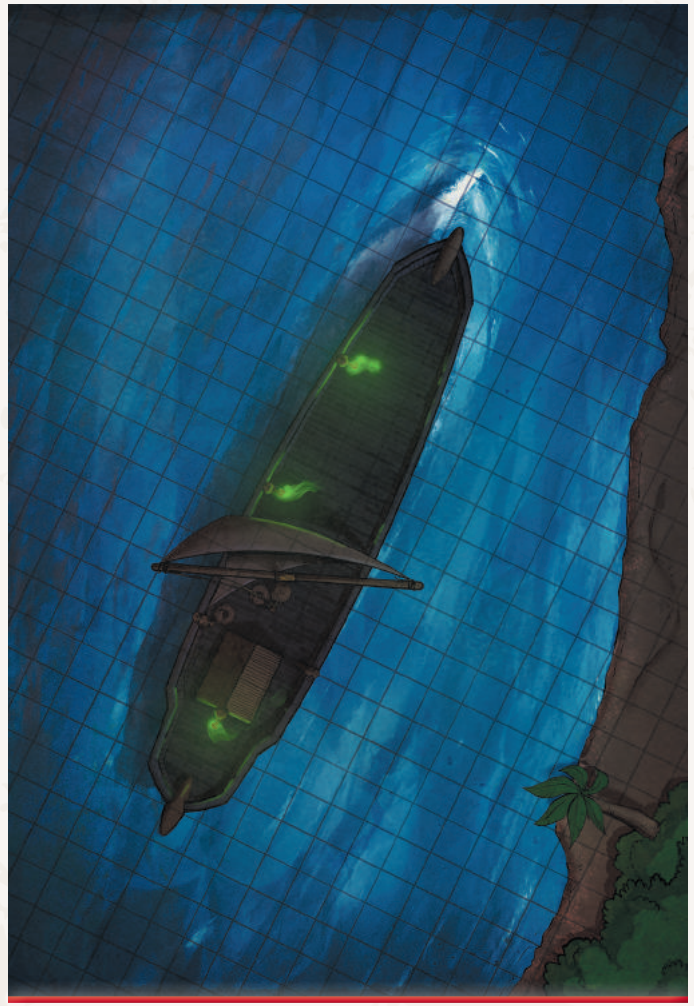
These passengers, **Apep** and **Khagesh**, are both **wights** and produce bronze longswords from under their vestments if attacked in melee or lift longbows and fire from the deck if attacked at range.

The wights serve their master without distraction, and meet any attempt to alter their procession with malevolent purpose. They attack relentlessly to remove any obstacle or impediment. That being said, wights are intelligent and there is potential to interact with them. Engaging with either wight in a nonaggressive way can yield positive outcomes.

Both wights have served their master for centuries, and have their own perspectives on how to best fulfill that purpose. They are evil undead creatures, so those perspectives stem from their dark desires for eternal war on the living; nevertheless, they can be a source of information and further adventures.

Details about the Realm of Shadow, the masters they serve, and the procession itself can be revealed. Characters proficient in Religion, clerics, paladins, and rangers with undead as a Favored Enemy get advantage on any rolls to interact with Apep and Khagesh due to their insights into the undead. Consider giving other characters with strong ties to undead this benefit as well.

Players may simply observe the procession as it passes by on the water. Apep and Khagesh pay no mind to other creatures as long as their journey is not impeded. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the clothing and accoutrements of the wights as coming from an ancient civilization. Characters with proficiency in vehicles (water), carpenter's tools or woodcarver's



tools who succeed on a DC 15 check notice the boat is made using ancient techniques and constructed of an unrecognizable material that definitely isn't any wood from their world.

If Apep and Khagesh are in danger of a fight, the top of the cabin opens, and **Apophysis** rises. She is a gray skinned woman with a striking appearance. Upon her head she wears a carved ivory headpiece with gold accents, including a small cobra in the front. Her eyes glow a dim red below this crown. Gold snake bracelets twist around her wrists, and she wears an elaborate gold torc around her neck. Rings adorn her fingers, and a gossamer dress of white drapes her striking figure.

Apophysis declares the attackers as heretics and usurpers, and opens with her *ring of spell storing*. She casts *lightning bolt* (spell save DC 15) at the first opportunity on opponents attacking at range.

If she is pressed and must escape, Apophisis casts *misty step* and retreats to the far side of the river. She then attempts to escape through the wilderness beyond, only to return later to seek vengeance upon the characters. Once she casts both spells from her ring, the ring contains no further spells, and requires recharging.

Apep and Khagesh defend their liege to the best of their ability. They may even grapple with living creatures and then dive into the water, knowing their undead nature spares them from having to breathe underwater.

Complications

Fighting undead carries many complications. Fighting any creature on the water has additional ones as well. There is the risk of hit point loss from the wights Life Drain, which makes any future encounters much more dangerous if only until characters can finish a long rest.

Similar hit point loss can occur at the hands of Apophisis, should she bite a grappled, incapacitated, or restrained character. Not only do subsequent bites by the vampiric creature heal her for the damage done, but any character reduced to 0 hit points in this manner dies. Apophisis fears running water and so does not risk falling in, instead choosing to *misty step* to an escape if that occurs.

Characters slain by the wights arise as **zombies** under their control the next day, unless their body is destroyed or is restored to life. These zombies then seek out Apophisis and the wights if any of them have survived, or maraud in her name if she and the wights have not.

You may even wish to precede this encounter with a zombie horde chanting “Apophisis... Apophisis...”

Wights and Apophisis are intelligent foes. They should fight as such. The wights do not fear the water, but Apophisis does. The wights have no reason to retreat unless commanded to do so by Apophisis. Apep and Khagesh do so like loyal soldiers when so commanded.

Apophisis is a tragic figure, and the Procession is a journey she makes every decade or so to pay respect to the child she lost in life. She is a complicated creature with conflicting motivations.

There is ample opportunity for a social encounter with Apophisis, and sympathetic characters may even wish to help her gain freedom from her vampire master. She can certainly become a recurring creature in your campaign.

Whether or not she remembers much else about her mortal life she does remember one thing with burning clarity — the death of her only child. Her emotional attachments to all other people and places have withered and fallen away to rot but she still laments the child’s passing through the procession of the years.

Every decade or so her master gives her leave to pay respect for the dead. Each time their permission is granted Apophisis sets about the task to make the journey from the Realm of Shadow to the realm of mortals. It is fraught with its own perils, for both a vampire moving through the world of mortals and for those poor unfortunates who come upon her during her grieving procession.

Where the procession is going exactly is completely up to you. Characters might wish to accompany Apophisis on her journey for any number of reasons, or seek out her destination on their own. Since this procession originates in the Realm of Shadow, adventurers may find themselves in that dour place as well. Being aboard the ship when it returns to the dark dimension is one possible avenue of planar travel, whether the characters are willing travelers or not.

The funeral barge, though carved of mysterious wood and possessing gold inlays, fades back into the Realm of Shadow five minutes after the wights and Apophisis are defeated. If the wights are defeated and Apophisis retreats then the funeral barge remains for ten minutes, but fades after that. Any parts of the boat that are scavenged from it also fade.



Rube's Cube

Introduction

Sometimes an encounter occurs because of a single “what if.” It can lead in all sorts of unexpected directions. Imagine an illusionist’s castle, dungeon or other lair. Imagine an environment filled with puzzles, tricks and other dangers. Within such confines, Rube’s Cube exists.

For this encounter, I wanted to use an under-appreciated monster — an ooze — in a way other than a hit point sponge or ambush predator. What followed was a series of “what if” questions.

What if a normally nonspellcasting creature had access to a spell or spell like effect? In this case, I thought of *mirror image*. No item to my knowledge creates such an effect outside of a *ring of spell stor-*

Environment Dungeon	Monsters Gelatinous cube
Suggested level 2 – Hard	Treasure <i>Ring of mirror images</i>

ing with the correct spell, so a little extra creativity was called into play.

What if you made such an item? In the end, you take what would normally be an ambush predator who may not survive more than three rounds, and create a mystical shell game with one ooze and one item.

What if you take this creature and the magic item and place them in a room custom made for both in a fun way? **Rube’s Cube** is born.

Description

Deep within a wizard's lair, the party enters what looks like a simple room, 40 feet by 40 feet, with a low 10 foot ceiling. The door they enter through is in the center of one wall, with an identical door on the far side on the opposite wall. What looks like a translucent square pillar is suspended from the ceiling in the very center of the room. It glows faintly from within.

Once the party is fully in the room, the door slams shut and locks under the *arcane lock* spell requiring a successful DC 20 check to pick or break open. Once the door is locked, the floor appears to light up in primary colors, with each 10 foot square in a shifting and changing primary color.

If no other light source has been in the room to this point, this shifting light source easily lights the room in a rainbow of changing colors. It might be distracting but is not harmful in any way.

A *magic mouth* spell appears on the far door and begins singing whatever dance music you desire. Once this light show begins, the pillar in the center of the room leaves its suspended animation and begins to move. The **gelatinous cube** is now active. Remember the gelatinous cube has blindsight, so any creature within range cannot hide from it by means of invisibility.

The gelatinous cube's internal survival instinct activates the object glowing faintly within it — the *ring of mirror images*. The gelatinous cube uses an action to expend 1 charge to cast *mirror image* on itself. Now, instead of one gelatinous cube lit from below by brightly shifting primary color, there appears to be four. Only one is real, and the rest are illusions.

Trapped in a 40 foot square room, a shifting shell game of gelatinous cubes ensues. Fortunately the gelatinous cube has a low Armor Class so it should not take long to reduce the number of mirror images. However, if the party outsmarts the number of images through some sort of area of effect spell (like *fireball*, *lightning bolt* or the like) or targets each of



the separate images with a multiple target effect like *magic missile* or *scorching ray*, simply have the gelatinous cube expend another charge from the ring. The *ring of mirror images* has 3 charges.

In the meantime, the gelatinous cube does what it normally does — advances slowly and tries to consume the party. Should the party defeat the gelatinous cube both doors in the room unlock, the floor ceases to light up and with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check a character finds the *ring of mirror images* among the slimy remains of the gelatinous cube.

Complications

The obvious complication from this encounter is the engulfing of a character by the gelatinous cube. Should this occur while the gelatinous cube is under the effect of a *mirror image*, then the image of the engulfed character also appears inside any of the duplicate images of the gelatinous cube. This has obvious dangers but may have the hilarious side effect of creating an illusory dance party inside the brightly colored cubes. I would encourage you to try and pull off this effect, if only to break any tension and inject more humor into the encounter.

Scaling Up

Introduction

Creature templates are gems often unnoticed. They are a great way to take what the players are familiar with and shake them up. What this does is twofold. First it generates an encounter the players are not ready for. This is its own reward as it freshens up what would be an ordinary and possibly predictable encounter.

Second it takes the omni-present metagame aspect and turns it on its head. Ask a Game Master what value they would place on making one experienced metagaming rules lawyer at their table give a puzzled expression, and I'll bet they'd rate it pretty high.



Environment
Swamp

Suggested level
5 – Hard

Monsters
Lizardfolk (4)
Giant toad (5)
Blacktongue, Half-Black Dragon
Lizardfolk (1) — Use lizardfolk with the following changes:
Blacktongue has blindsight 10 feet, darkvision 60 ft. and resistance to acid damage. Blacktongue also has the following action: **Acid Breath**

(Recharge 5–6). The lizardfolk exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Blacktongue has +1 AC because of the +1 shield they carry.

Treasure
shield +1, 50 gp, 100 sp, 2 pearls worth 50 gp each, carved bone statue of a grinning Muckwuggle the Frog God with tiny ruby eyes worth 150 gp

The following encounter is intended to do both by applying the half dragon template. This template can be applied to a beast, humanoid giant or monstrosity.

That's a lot of choice.

This is but one example of such an application and might open up a series of encounters where a rather amorous dragon has seeded a campaign with its brethren, creating a whole list of choice encounters.

Convincing the dragon of the value in more considerate parenthood to end this series of events could become the motivation for several adventures, if the players show interest in discovering the origins of the draconic creatures encountered here.

In this instance, we enter the swamps to deal with a squad of lizardfolk cavalry mounted on giant toads, led by a half black dragon lizardfolk.

Description

As they traverse a lonely swamp the sounds of all the wildlife in the area surround them. Insects, birds, toads and the like chime and chirr to create a cacophony of sound.

Suddenly, the birds and insects go silent. Only the toads remain. After a minute the toads, too, go silent.

The tall grass around the characters parts as the silhouettes of large amphibians leap over them, raining down javelins into the crowded travelers — only to disappear into the thrushes again.

These **lizardfolk** are mounted on **giant toads**.

They wait silently for their chance and then leap over the party into the swamp beyond, throwing javelins from the backs of their mounts.

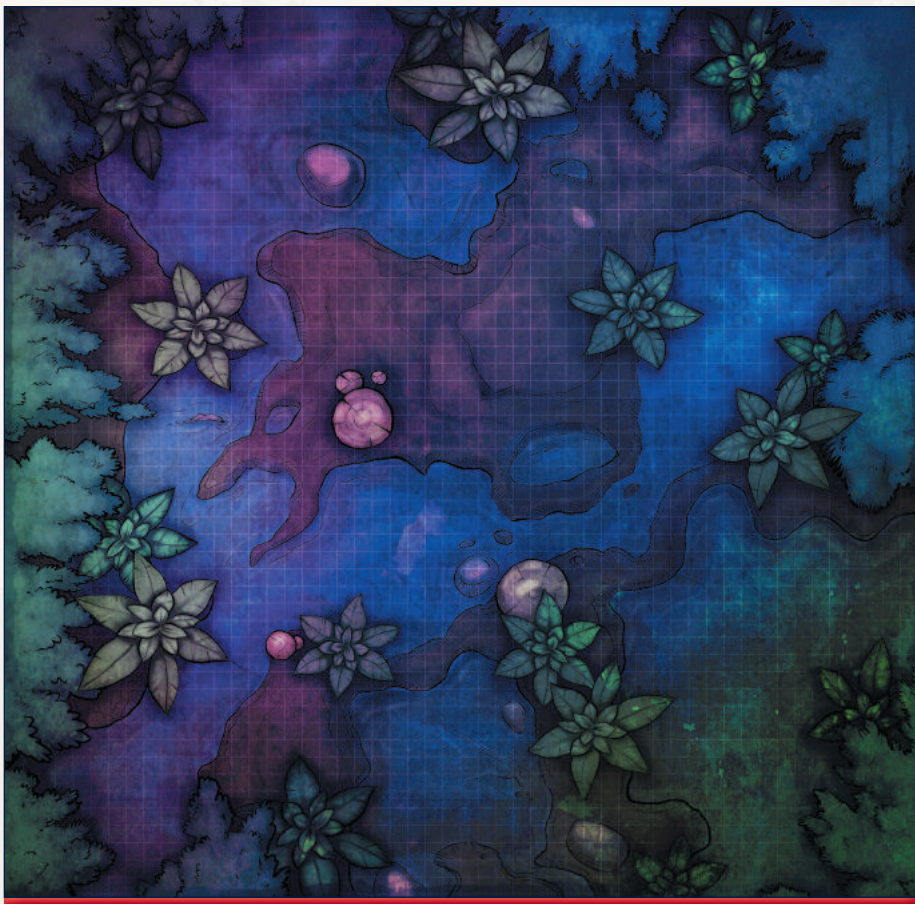
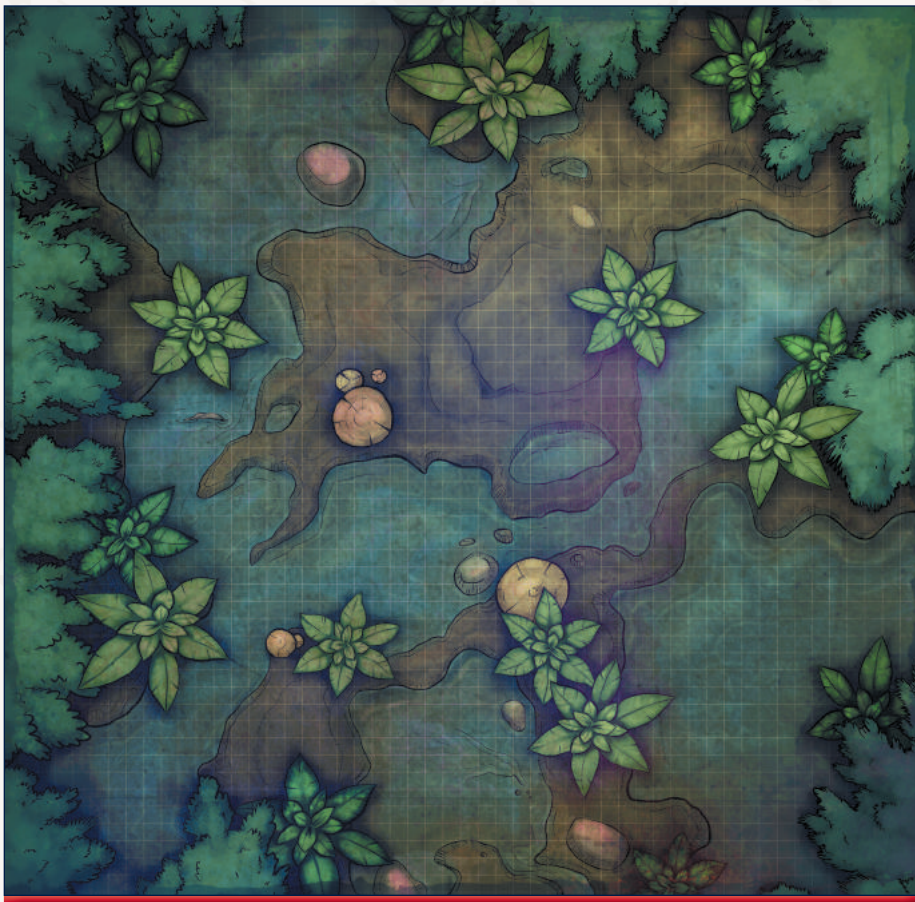
Only characters who cannot be surprised can react. The first wave comprises two lizardfolk giant toad cavalries.

If they gain surprise they each throw a javelin with advantage on the attack. Determine the targets randomly.

If the characters turn to face the direction where the lizardfolk went, or change their facing from the front at all, the second wave has advantage on their initiative roll.

They burst from the front through the reeds and launch a brutal offensive.

Three more mounted lizardfolk appear led by **Blacktongue**, an imposing lizardfolk with black scales carrying a polished steel shield *+1* in sharp contrast to the primitive tools and weapons of the other lizardfolk.



Blacktongue is powerfully built, especially for a lizardfolk, and makes their presence known this round by using their Acid Breath before charging into the party.

The lizardfolk beside him hurl javelin and then follow suit. Both of their mounts attempt to bite a foe, potentially grappling — and swallowing — the target. Once these two are engaged, the other two lizardfolk cavalry leap into battle and join in with spears and giant toad attacks.

Should the party turn the tables on the lizardfolk, they retreat if either Blacktongue falls or their numbers drop below half. They attempt to leap away on their giant toad mounts, or if the mounts are dead, on their own.

The giant toads, if riderless, certainly press the attack unless brought to below half their hit points. They are, after all, wild beasts without the influence of the lizardfolk. Feel free to have them return with reinforcements later, especially if Blacktongue is one of the escaped.

Complications

The biggest complication from this is being swallowed by a giant toad. This could become a real risk if the lizardfolk surround the adventurers, limiting or cutting off escape routes and room to maneuver. Those who are swallowed take damage at the start of the giant toad's turn and become blinded and restrained, adding further complications where combat could spiral out of control and land adventurers in serious trouble. Perhaps part of the lizardfolk plan is to capture some of the party, returning to their home in the swamp for ritual sacrifices or feasting.

The lizardfolk and their mounts are a coordinated unit being led by a half dragon. The nature of their unexpected attack and potentially grappled characters from the giant toads make these raiders a serious threat. Add a breath weapon on a leader who is more than a common lizardfolk (even beyond being a half dragon), and you have a conflict that may surprise the average experienced gamer.

Keep this in mind when you scale the encounter upward. A massive area of effect spell like a *fireball* could potentially end this encounter prematurely, but given everyone being intermingled, it poses as much danger to the characters as it does to the lizardfolk.

Whether the party defeats all of the lizardfolk and their mounts or some escape, players may be curious about Blacktongue's magical shield and where they might have gotten such a powerful magic item. Characters knowledgeable about dragons might surmise Blacktongue's draconic origin and seek greater answers. The shield may have come from the hoard of a black dragon lairing in the swamp. Or characters could hear tales of another adventuring party that went missing recently. The shield could bear a distinctive mark, and those living near the swamp might recognize it as belonging to one of the missing adventurers.



Shadow of Your Former Self

Introduction

Ask any Game Master what the most dangerous thing in a game is, and I'll bet the majority come back to you with "the players."

Characters range in power and abilities more than any monster, and players always find the cracks in any system and crawl through.

Players think outside the box more often than not, and work around problems you might think they need to face head on. I remember playing a video game forever ago, and the most frustrating encounter was fighting a shadowy mirror image of yourself.

If you're stuck with how to resolve an evening's encounter you can pull from this resource without worrying about level requirements, Challenge or terrain. All you need is the right setting.

The one drawback to something like this comes down to the same resource — the players. Some players can be defensive about their characters and may not be open to sharing character information, or they may worry their character concept will somehow be violated or disrespected.

This is sensitive ground. Tread carefully.

Environment

Any

Suggested level

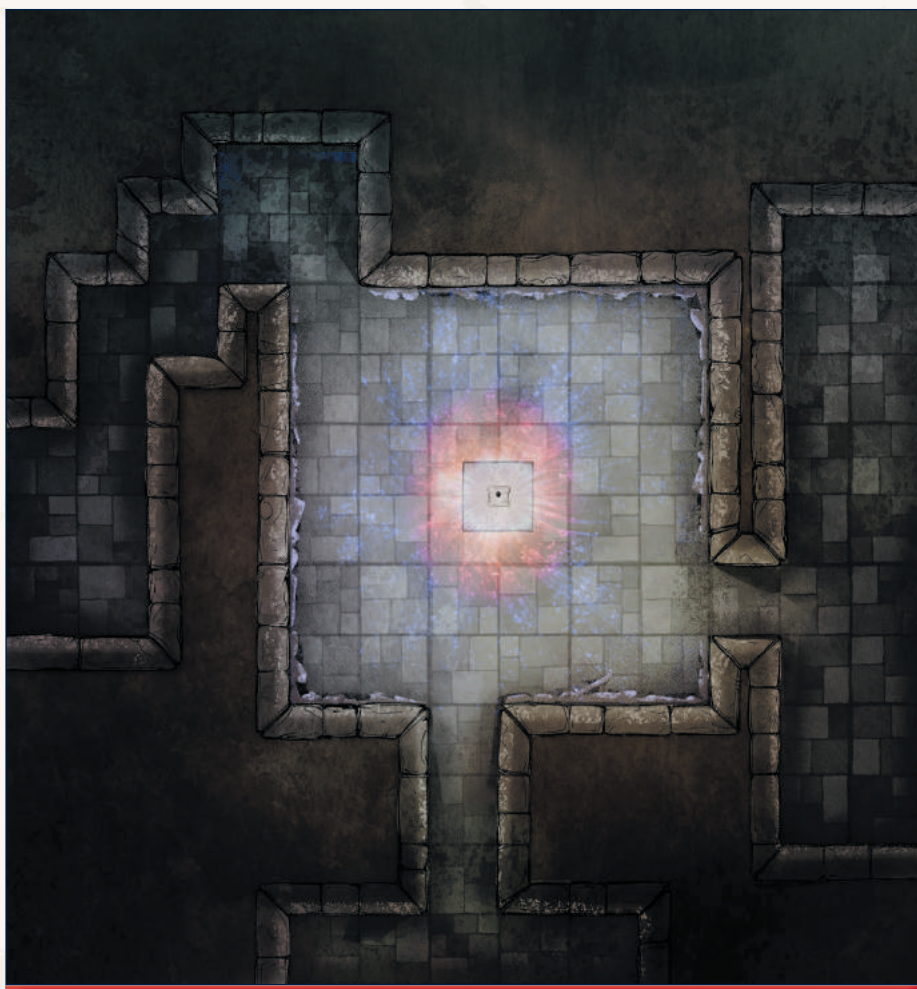
Any

Monsters

The adventuring party

Treasure

Diamond worth 2000 gp



However, with their cooperation and agreement you could use this sort of encounter with rewarding results. This encounter requires a little bit of preparation. Players may have private information on

their character sheets like alignment or secret flaws. You may be able to get the players to more easily cooperate with the mechanics behind this encounter if you respect their privacy.

Therefore, you should gather the character sheets at some point and record publicly known information like ability scores, saving throw, armor class, hit points, hit dice and a few trademark abilities, attacks or spells. Create an alternate character sheet with this limited information and hold it in store for when you need it. When the time is right, you can spring this almost like a trap.

Description

This encounter can be placed anywhere you imagine it, like an art gallery, wizard's inner sanctum or temple. For the purposes of this encounter consider a dungeon environment.

The characters enter a 30 foot cube-shaped room with reliefs carved into the walls showing figures in combat. In the very center of the room, hovering above a 3 foot tall podium of carved stone is an opaque black gem. This 3 inch diameter gem silently and slowly spins above the podium as if blown by an unfelt breeze. Each facet reflects the light of any torches or light spells used by the party, reflecting them about the room and filling the chamber with lights that dance over the carved reliefs.

A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the figures in combat on the wall carvings are exact duplicates of each other, right down to their weapons, armor and method of combat.





The podium under which the gem hovers is carved to resemble two faces. One is calm and placid, and the other is furious.

A character with proficiency in jeweler's tools recognizes the gem is expertly carved and shows no physical means of remaining aloft. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check indicates some sort of transmutation magic in effect, as well as a *detect magic* spell.

If *detect magic* is cast, it also reveals the gem is a source of some sort of conjuration magic as well. It's important to ask how the characters are examining or investigating the contents of the room.

The reason for this is clear — the second anyone touches the gem in any way (including throwing a bag over it), the next phase of the encounter begins.

Once anyone touches the gem for any reason, black rays shoot out and target each creature in the room. Targets must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or their own shadows rise up to face them.

The abridged character sheets created earlier become the “monsters,” each targeting their own real counterpart. The shadows disappear if they defeat their host. Should all the shadow duplicates be defeated the gem transforms. Its opaque black nature clears, as does the magic suspending the gem in place, and the gem becomes a normal and nonmagical diamond. The evil magic has flawed the gem, so despite its size the value is only 2000 gp.

Complications

Given that characters can be their own worst enemies, the concept of defeating the player characters is a real possibility. Also, given how much any character can do this encounter requires a lot of preparation on your part to create the character shadows. You might want to trim down the number of spells or abilities to a few key and easy to run abilities that make each shadow character distinctive. The characters may well walk away from this encounter with an increased respect for their own abilities, and perhaps a newfound understanding of what you face when you pull out an encounter to challenge the player characters.

For added complications, consider having one of the shadow duplicates escape. The encounter assumes the shadows manifest characters' skills and abilities, but they could also take on their personality traits to some extent. If any of the adventurers tend to be cowardly, their shadow might try to cut and run. Over time, who knows how this shadow duplicate might evolve, perhaps questioning its existence, or causing havoc elsewhere. The party might return to the chamber periodically to see if the gem is still there. If they find it laying on the ground, clear of the darkness or even missing, their curiosity could draw them into further adventures.

Shell Game

Environment

Dungeon, or anywhere you wish to set up the conditions

Monsters

None

Suggested level

1-3 (if you want to use this on higher levels make sure you increase the rewards and difficulty)

Treasure

A ceremonial golden bowl worth 1000 gp, free skill proficiency

A series of odd geometric shapes carved from a variety of substances like wood, stone and crystal lie scattered randomly around the room, each with a unique shape. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines some pieces might fit into each other. You might even allow the party to know the pieces can be stacked in such a manner with the result of the roll, or ask for another.

Introduction

Not every encounter requires a lot of setup or preparation. Some encounters just need the players to show up willing to have a good time.

Shell Game is one such encounter. It uses the resources on the table as the encounter starts and uses those limited resources to maximum effect to create an oddball moment that might come up in later conversations.

And really, isn't creating memorable experiences what the game is all about?

Description

The characters discover a room or cavern that presents a series of puzzles to challenge their Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence and Wisdom. The puzzles are essential to proceeding to the next room.

Notably, this entire chamber is under the effects of an antimagic field. No spells or magic items function within the chamber save for the magic empowering the bizarre scenario that unfolds.

The characters enter a chamber 30 feet in diameter that soars upward like a cylinder with a ceiling 100 feet above.

Looking way up, faintly lit by bioluminescent fungi, is the outline of the exit way above.

No rope, ladder, steps or handholds exist to reach this upper exit.

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check can lift these heavy objects so they stack one on top of another. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices where the first piece locks into the floor to allow other pieces to be stacked like a climbing surface up to the exit.



Subsequent puzzle pieces are identified through Investigation like above. When lifted to shoulder height through Athletics like above, they glow slightly then hover upwards slowly to just beside where they can fit on the piece below.

A character can climb the odd shapes like a ladder with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check brings the piece in line and locks it into place.

Here's where it gets tricky.

Every time anyone grasps a shape, a flash or arcane energy occurs within the chamber. Choose two characters at random. Each character must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw.

If both fail, have them swap character sheets.

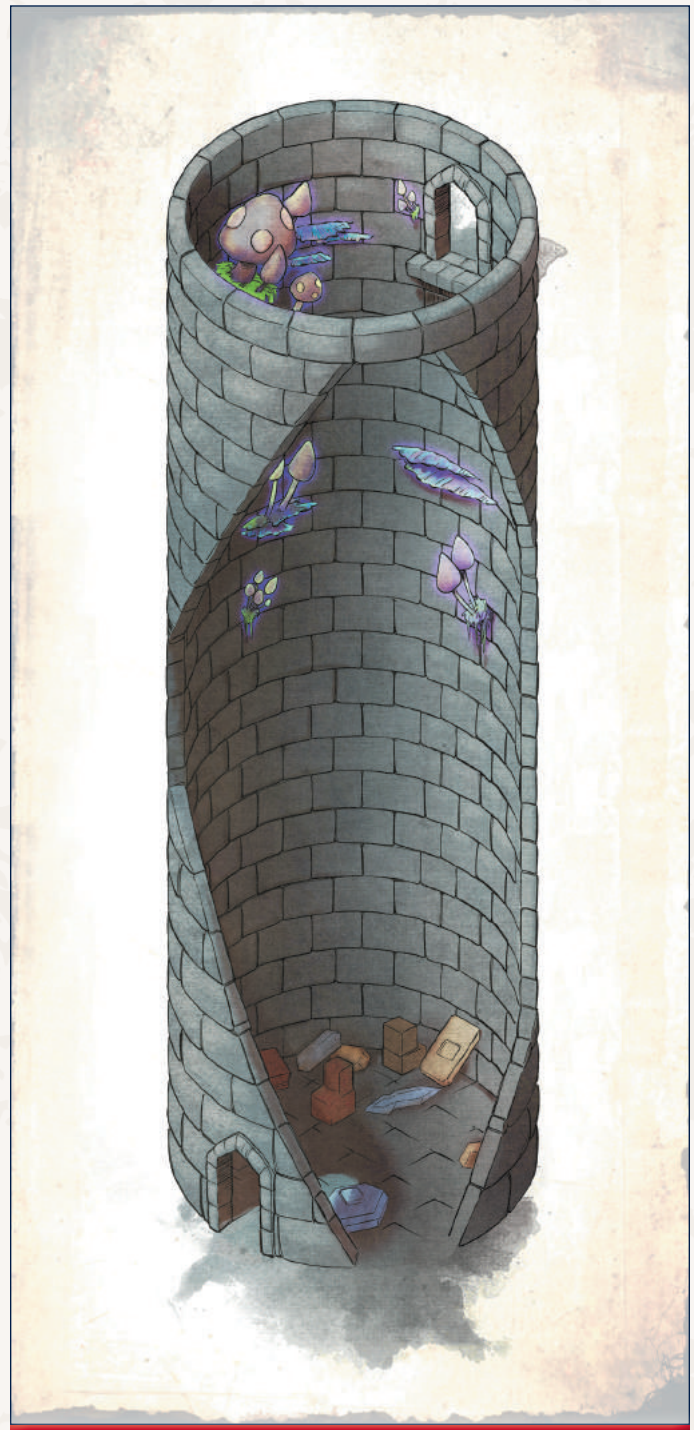
The spirit of one character swaps bodies with another character. The personality and such does not transfer — just the physical body. You might have a studious wizard's traits, ideals, bonds and flaws inside the body of the barbarian, and the primal barbarian in the body of the tiny wizard.

To make it simple, have the skill sets, racial abilities and the like stay with the host body. Otherwise this could get too complicated. This continues every time a piece is touched. A character may end up being swapped multiple times.

This makes every player try to figure out a puzzle perhaps outside of how they normally would, but with the personality they are accustomed to playing.

Once a dozen pieces have been assembled, characters can reach the exit to the room high above. When the challenge is completed and characters exit the room, all swapped personalities revert to normal.

There is one final challenge. Once characters reach the exit, they can see a secondary hole in the ceiling. From below or as they ascend the strange ladder, fungal growth conceals this hole, but when the ladder is complete characters have a better angle of vision.



The hole leading to the Treasure Room is 20 feet away from the top of the ladder. There are no rough edges to catch a grappling hook or otherwise reach the hole by conventional means.

If a character succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check they recognize the magic of the chamber keeping the ladder intact no longer depends on the foundation for stability.

In other words, blocks can now be removed from the bottom of the ladder without compromising the integrity and causing the structure to collapse. Armed with this information, the ladder can be altered and built horizontally from the top, forming a bridge to reach the Treasure Room. A total of eight pieces must be detached from the ladder and re-connected to the top piece to create the bridge. You thought it was tricky to create the ladder?

To create the bridge a character must first succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check with disadvantage to disconnect the bottom piece. Next, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check with disadvantage to lift the piece to shoulder height while maintaining their balance on the piece above. The piece hovers upwards slowly to the top of the ladder. Finally, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check with disadvantage to find the proper anchor point and lock the piece into place.

During this process, if any single Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check fails, the ladder piece cannot be disconnected and remains firmly locked into place. Note that this entire effect might be disconcerting — the entire ladder floats without touching the ground once the first piece is moved this way.

If any Strength (Athletics) checks fail, the character falls to the ground, 10 feet for each piece moved this way. For example if three pieces have been moved and a character fails this check, they fall 30 feet. If any Intelligence (Investigation) check fails, the piece locks into place in such a way that the bridge leads away from the Treasure Room entrance.

After three such failures of this check, the Treasure Room is unreachable. The characters stand on the only remaining piece, with a 90 foot drop below. All the other pieces are arranged in a line too crooked to reach the treasure, with the exit their only option.

Treasure Room. If you want to reward your players for the puzzle you can place this room at the top with some treasure in it — a ceremonial gold plated bowl worth 1000 gp. If characters with swapped bodies reach this hidden chamber and touch the bowl

simultaneously with their swapped counterpart, each character can select one skill from their host character's list that they are now proficient with and both characters gain proficiency with the selected skill. For an added twist, the body swap comes with random memories of how the character learned this skill, which could create interesting consequences. Ask the players to describe the circumstances around how they gained the skill proficiency, perhaps splitting the group into pairs for players to share these stories privately with their swapped partner.

Complications

There could be secrets written on a character sheet that another player may not know. In such a case, use a sticky note or other method over such secrets to protect the original players privacy.

Characters might not be so quick to change back into their original bodies. This could be for any number of reasons, including that they're players and an opportunity for antics like this doesn't come around too often. The powerful transmutation magic in the chamber could wear off over time, returning characters to their original bodies.

Characters could all agree to remain in the swapped bodies, or if a character is reluctant to give up their new body, if the puzzle is completed by other characters, all characters revert to their original bodies.

Reaching the treasure room, which characters won't discover even exists until exit from the chamber is at hand, could cause some players to become frustrated. The process of building the climbing structure, and swapping bodies with their allies, may already have grown old for some players, so keep aware of player attitudes. You may want to make the Treasure Room easily accessible, without the need for further challenge. Or, you could skip it completely if your group is satisfied with the experience. The process for reaching it carries extreme challenge and risk, so be careful!

Otherwise, aside from the simple possibility of falling from a great height, there should be no issue.

Standing Warning

Environment

Wilderness/any

Suggested level

4 — Hard

Monsters

Spirit of Agaroz — wraith

Treasure

Harbinger ring

Introduction

Many experienced Game Masters know the key to tension is the right touch of paranoia. The right description and setting can establish the right mood and put the players on edge. This can allow you to set up other encounters or drop hints from your campaign setting. Such encounters may just be red herrings intended to throw characters off the trail or to make them think. Couple these descriptive moments with noncombat elements and a group puzzle might challenge the characters in a way they were not expecting.

Description

Along a lonesome path, the characters discover two black obelisks on either side of the path. One still stands and the other lies on its side, broken at the base. Both are constructed of a smooth black stone that defies identification. Players might ask to use skills like Arcana or History. Feel free to let them roll but they gain no information about the origin of the stone. This can be a useful tactic in similar situations — even with a high result — as players come to understand the obscure nature of whatever it is they're hoping to learn about. The standing obelisk is engraved with markings in an exotic language appropriate to your campaign (Infernal, Abyssal, Draconic, Deep Speech, etc.) that perhaps only one character in the party might speak. It's important this is difficult to translate. The markings on the standing obelisk are divided by deep horizontal grooves which break up the obelisk into even sections, each containing roughly the same number of markings. The fallen obelisk has the same horizontal sections but no markings apart from these grooves can be seen.



A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check, along with proficiency in some exotic language of your discretion determines the standing obelisk contains part of a warning. Such a warning might be worded like “Behold and be warned! For now, you enter the domain of...” The warning should be incomplete and not contain the actual names of the region or the identity of any ruler. That’s where the fallen obelisk comes into play.

Both obelisks are constructed of a strange stone that defies description, as noted, and are of a semi-magical nature. A *detect magic* spell determines they glow faintly with divination magic.



Examining the fallen obelisk with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals sections of the obelisk can rotate along its axis but require some force through a successful DC 15 Strength check. Spinning these sections to align correctly reveals the remainder of the message.

In secret, cut up a piece of paper into pieces. Write each letter of the ruler's name on a separate piece of paper. This sets up the puzzle. To get everyone involved, since you have those who are strong, some who are smart and some who are just great at puzzles, initiate a group check of a different sort. Have everyone roll a d20. Instead of noting the actual values, success or failure is determined by the number of even and odd numbers rolled. Do not tell the players this fact. Keep them guessing. If the party rolls a majority of even numbers they gain 1 success. If the players roll a majority of odd numbers they gain none. Every time they gain a success, hand the party a piece of paper with a letter on it. Then let them solve it.

If they guess right, have the obelisk right itself and the name of the ruler — Agaroz — appears in the appropriate exotic language. A crack of lightning, darkened clouds overhead or a peal of thunder accompanying the magical display as the enormous stone lifts from the ground and rights itself could add appropriate drama if you're going for that tone.

When the puzzle is solved the spirit of this ancient ruler materializes to see who has called them back from beyond. After the **Spirit of Agaroz** is summoned it gives the adventurers a chance to bend fate if they can best him. But if they are not willing to fight to the death, the spirit bids them to leave now and allow it to rest. If reduced to 0 hit points, the Spirit of Agaroz calls off the attack. It offers a *harbinger ring* made of obsidian inscribed with its name on the inside to the character whose attack reduced it to 0 hit points. The spirit is also willing and able to share lore and offer insight if asked in regards to the party's current quest.

Complications

As stated earlier, it's up to you if these messages still have relevance. The ruler might be long gone. Then again ... they might not. That's up to you to determine for your campaign. Solving the puzzle may awaken a long-thought-lost ruler like a sleeping dragon, slumbering vampire, ancient lich, mummy lord or trapped devil or demon. It may awaken an ancient device, open a portal or activate another set of obelisks for the party to find. This is limited only to your imagination or campaign setting. The intention is to spark imagination and paranoia in the players and their characters. They get a chance to work as a group to solve a puzzle and might well start investigating other such monuments in their region. This opens new avenues of exploration and could lead to other encounters.

You might also consider tying the sigils on the obelisk to the **One Crow, Two Crow, Three Crow, Scarecrow** encounter. If these sigils begin appearing here and there during the party's adventures, they could be connected to a larger, growing threat looming in the future. The return of Agaroz and his dark empire are one option, for example.

Three Eyes are Better

Environment
Wilderness/ruins

Suggested level
5 – Hard

Monsters
Furgle – cyclops warlock
Gizmit – imp

Treasure
Two gold engraved bracelets worth 25 gp each, three ivory chicken statuettes worth 250 gp each, masterwork painting of an ugly cyclops woman titled Mom worth 500 gp to the right collector

The monster in question this time is the cyclops, classically seen as a dimwitted, superstitious and ill tempered brute who might fall victim to any assortment of late night infomercials. Whereas this preconception should bear some merit, and some elements may be contained in this encounter, leaving it as is defeats the purpose of delivering an encounter to challenge preconceptions.

Introduction

In conjunction with previous encounters this expands on the concept of making monster encounters less vanilla. Like Phoba's Bet this is another foray into granting class levels to a normally predictable monster.

This encounter is designed to take on the concept of a danger interjected with moments of humor. To accomplish this, we'll give the cyclops three levels of warlock with an Otherworldly Patron: the Fiend, and a great little helper in the form of an imp for its Pact of the Chain familiar. The entire encounter is driven by this relationship. Though technically a servant, the imp familiar is actually the brains of the outfit.

This cart before the horse dichotomy should generate moments during the encounter where more than one character should raise an eyebrow and wonder who calls the shots. The hope is players walk away with both moments of laugh out loud ridiculousness and wincing when their characters are thumped by the cyclops.

This encounter also includes some sample dialogue for you to insert should you so choose to give the players the right mix of the ridiculous and the dangerous.

Description

The characters may be on the way to another location or may be exploring the wilderness for their own reasons. For the purposes of this encounter let's imagine them upon a lonely wooded trail.

Out of nowhere a domestic chicken runs across their path. A character who succeeds on a DC 5 Intelligence (Nature) check determines this is obviously out of place and such a creature would never exist long in a wooded area given the existence of foxes, weasels and birds of prey. This chicken came from somewhere – it can't be wild.



Characters who remain still and listen, succeeding on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check hear distant clucking. Characters may of course kill the chicken and keep on moving. A free lunch is a free lunch. That's players for you.

Those curious, though, may take the time to search or listen. Those who succeeded on the Perception check know to head off the path to the left in the direction of these fowl. They may be motivated to return this chicken to its owner, or you may place this encounter close enough to where the characters seek to camp for the day and so may request a night's lodging with a local farmer.

Heck, they just may be hungry for more chickens. No judgement.

When they have travelled 300 feet from the edge of the path they come upon an odd sight. The trees part to reveal a small clearing where an old and forgotten ruin stands. Flagstones poke up through the grass, weeds and fallen leaves. Low stone wall remnants create a ring 30 feet in diameter. The wall remnants vary in height from a few inches to 8 feet with no real pattern in evidence.

The highest wall section has part of a stone chimney on the outside leading to a hearth on the inside. Skins are sewn into a peaked roof, suspended by a cable of several woven ropes and attached to a young but tall maple tree, which is slightly bent. The skins are secured to the ground around the base of the broken structure by several other ropes, and appear secured to the ground by large wooden pegs. The appearance is like a peaked tent roof.

The outside of the ruined wall is packed with tree boughs. Since this practice is common enough among the citizenry feel free to volunteer that many homes do this for insulation and to block drafts. The tree boughs are freshly cut, and still smell of spruce, maple and ash. These boughs almost cover the pegs. Chickens wander about everywhere, contained within the low walls for the most part. A large pile of still green leaves are stacked away from the hearth yet still along a strong wall. This pile of leaves seems to have a central depression.

Bones lay scattered about the property. Characters who succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check determine the leaf pile is some sort of bedding, and a check that succeeds by 5 or more reveals the owner of this bedding is big.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals these bones are a mix of wild deer, boar, chickens and scattered humanoid bones that have all been gnawed upon.

Also inside the low stone wall ring are several Medium sized sacks containing common items like grains and dried corn, rolls of cured animal skins, a large wax-sealed ceramic pot filled with honey and a collection of smashed, dented helmets and ruined shields.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to look for tracks finds chicken tracks along with wild animal spoor (deer, boar, etc.). A check of 15 or more reveals massive soft booted feet, and a check of 25 or more check reveals an additional set of tiny clawed humanoid feet.

You should wait for either everyone in the party or at least the vast majority to enter the structure before proceeding to the next stage. The party may send a rogue or ranger first as a scout to check it out. If they do, have them make a Wisdom (Perception) check for fun but so long as they do not botch the roll they find 10 gp of scattered coins among the flagstones. You might even wish to have a small open bag with what looks like gold nuggets — but is actually worthless fool's gold (pyrite ore). Nothing gathers characters upon a zone like greed. Unless the party member in question has some sort of expertise in ore, like a dwarf's Stonecunning, proficiency with jeweler's tools or similar skills then there should be no reason for them to know the difference between pyrite and gold.

Buried under the ground in the center of Furgle's home is an unlocked chest filled with two gold engraved bracelets sized for Small humanoids worth 25 gp each, a collection of three ivory chicken statuettes worth 250 gp each and a masterwork painting of an ugly cyclops woman titled Mom worth 500 gp to the right collector.

Furgle the cyclops warlock has been hiding in plain sight under the cover of a *potion of invisibility*. Her constant companion and familiar, **Gizmit the imp**, can become invisible at will, and so stays with its master watching the party.

This was Gizmit's idea from the start, who released the chicken for the party to find so its large friend would get angry if the party tried to either take Furgle's belongings or killed a chicken. Gizmit has also convinced Furgle to drink her only *potion of invisibility* (taken from the body of a previous intruder) so as to lay an ambush for the incoming party.

Furgle casts *darkness* centred on the middle of her home and walks in. Her Devil's Sight allows her to see in the darkness, but she has the odd flaw of being scared of magical darkness.

Gizmit can also see within the darkness, and always convinces its master to proceed. This spellcasting breaks her invisibility, but it's Gizmit's plan that the party does not know this as they should be covered in darkness. The entire area becomes an inky black — impervious to torches and even darkvision.

"Now Gizmit?" A low voice rumbles from close by.

"Yes! Furgle, you dim....I mean...my 'glorious master'...now KILL THEM!" A high and scratchy voice retorts in a hurried and sarcastic fashion.

"Oh, okay little buddy. Gizmit smart."

Any character with a passive Perception 14 or higher hears something over the sound of this dialogue like a rustling all around them and the sound of trees moving quickly. Gizmit has pulled a tripwire allowing nets, previously hidden in the boughs around the ruined walls and connected to the ropes all around the structure, to be cast upwards as the maple suspending the roof is released.

This creates a net wall barrier around the entire structure. Those inside the ruin now have a problem. They are inside a low stone wall, in complete darkness, are surrounded to a further height of 10 feet on all sides by a net and have a leather roof blocking the top.



Furgle stands outside the structure, her invisible imp Gizmit on her shoulder, with a pile of boulders ready to be thrown at the first person to try and cut their way through the netting covering the large opening in the wall the characters likely used to enter the structure in the first place.

At this point Furgle claps her hands like a child and celebrates.

"Gee, Gizmit. It work! It work!"

"Of course it worked you imbeci.....I mean, 'incredible master.'"

Feel free to continually interject this sort of dialogue throughout the encounter.

The characters have a few options. They can try to cut through the netting to escape. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) allows one Medium-sized creature or smaller to exit through a hole. Characters could burn a hole as well if they choose.

They could try to target the ropes or netting with attacks like *fire bolt* or *scorching ray*, which would ignite the netting on a successful hit, but any attacks against the rope have disadvantage due to the darkness. Disadvantage versus an AC 10 isn't much of an issue, but it can certainly set up hilarious critical failures.

Should any character fail such an attack, feel free to have Gizmit give them a hard time about it. The characters could certainly cast *dispel magic* or *daylight* to get rid of the darkness. One might *dimension door* to safety so long as the conditions are met. There is a risk of trying to teleport into an existing tree for 4d6 force damage. Anyone who wishes to misty step to safety needs to have Devil's Sight or some other means to see their destination, like seeing through the eyes of a familiar of their own that could sneak outside of the net. Leave such options up to the characters to discover, and be open to new ideas.

If the characters do not come out of the darkness for two or more rounds, Gizmit flies above them and cuts the master suspension rope. This takes 2 rounds. During this time Furgle threatens as best a simple cyclops can, and remains protective of her chickens. If the characters harm or threaten to harm her chickens she loses her temper, and likely her concentration on *darkness*. She then starts hurling boulders at the party with absolute fury once the tent has collapsed or a character breaches the netting. Gizmit can always Help Furgle in melee by remaining invisible and harassing the giant's target. This can be devastating under the right conditions.

Gizmit certainly advises who the softer targets are — it is, after all, the brains of this outfit. If Gizmit is killed early, Furgle certainly becomes confused and her tactics become far more straightforward and less clever. If Gizmit is still around to advise, Furgle casts *mirror image* on herself in combat to give herself a better chance.

If things go badly for Furgle, she might try to escape by pushing over smaller trees and such on top of the characters and then running for it. She casts expeditious retreat to speed up the process of getting away, or mirror image to make it harder for him to be hit.

That choice is up to you. Keep track of Furgle's spell slots. She only has two, and used one to cast *darkness*. What she casts next depends on her success or failure, and if she or the party has the advantage in combat.

Dodging any tree used as a delay requires those within 10 feet of the cyclops to succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d10 bludgeoning damage and be restrained until freed from underneath. Freeing oneself requires a successful DC 15 Strength check. If Furgle can get away, she might become a recurring villain later on — and always brings up her lost chickens.

Complications

There are a few complications that could arise from this encounter, but they are all based on who has the upper hand and when. The characters may never enter the structure, in which case Furgle might let them pass so long as they do not harm her chickens or take her stuff.

Furgle might, on a lucky hit given any advantage, absolutely decimate softer characters in the party. Anyone foolish enough to cast large area of effect spells like *fireball* in the confines of the structure might turn the broken structure into a short term oven. Characters who start throwing fire spells around in a wooded area might risk ignition on any miss, starting any number of brush fires. Gizmit won't mind, but I'm sure that Furgle, nearby communities, any elven or Sylvan communities and the animals care. If you choose to make this a realistic possibility, some consequences are covered in the **Down on the Farm** encounter. To recap, you can roll 1d6 every time such an event might occur. A fire of some kind starts on a roll of 1, which requires actions by the characters to stop. How they do it is up to the players and you to resolve, but a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check does the trick. A chicken on fire running around the woods setting everything alight might sound morbidly funny, but it becomes less so when the characters are surrounded by a burning inferno. Gizmit just sees it as an opportunity to expand some contracts.

Touch of Gray

Environment
Dungeon

Gray mold (8 patches, one on each zombie)

Suggested level
5 – Medium**Monsters**
Zombies (8)**Treasure**
Silvered dagger, spell scroll of bestow curse, religious items to dedicated Orcus made of precious metals worth 600 gp

Introduction

Monster synergy. It's something I do not hear all that much. Surely we all know different goblinoids work together, or creatures like ettins and ogres work for others for the right bribe. We see lesser animated undead like skeletons or zombies work with each other or the creature that animated them, but not with something equally mindless. Way back when I first started playing the world's greatest roleplaying game, what are now considered "dungeon hazards" were monsters. Slimes, molds and other colony based organisms were included alongside other monsters and added to wandering monster tables. You could stumble into a growth of them while walking about. Organisms like these can prove deadly, but lack the ability to move on their own. This doesn't prevent them from growing on something with its own mobility, provided it could be a viable host. It is entirely plausible for overgrown dangerous mold growth developing on zombies. The trick would be explaining and delivering this encounter in a way both unpredictable and believable.

Description

Entering a large, circular chamber, characters are immediately struck by a beam of what may be sunlight shining straight down from the center of the apex of the domed roof. The beautiful and haunting light showcases the central feature of the room – a tall, circular dais at least 8 feet tall. The bottom of this feature is 10 feet in diameter, getting progressively smaller on each of its four steps to support an ornately carved throne above the floor. A lone

figure, gaunt and skeletal, sits upon the throne. Its mouth lies agape with its head tilted to one side, with empty eye sockets staring straight at the characters entering the chamber. Something shiny in its forehead glints and sparkles in the light.

The smell of mildew hangs heavy and sour in the air. The darkness of the surrounding chamber possesses highlights of a faint purplish gray in spots around the outer regions, which might be faded mosaics, subterranean fungi or maybe even the remains of grime covered gilding. It's hard to tell for sure in the darkness. There's a story unfolding before the characters without their knowledge. The dais itself is ornately carved with tiny figures of humanoid figures in gaunt and skeletal forms holding up the step above them.

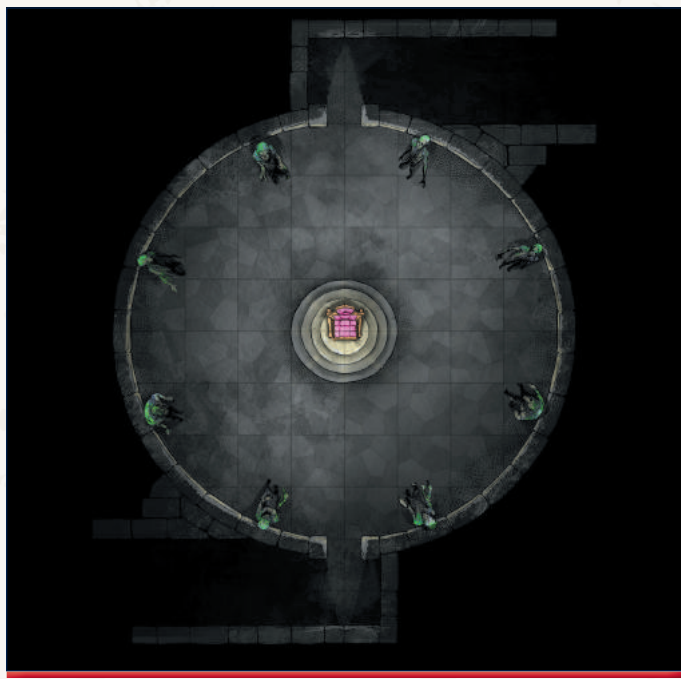


A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies these figures as worshippers of Orcus, and the figure atop the dais as the remains of a former wight, its forehead still pierced by the silvered dagger that killed it. The figure is still adorned by the tattered remains of rusted metal armor and ruined weapons. Aside from the silvered dagger, it possesses nothing of value.

Stationed equidistant around the perimeter of the room, against the wall in the dim light, are **8 zombie servants**. These zombies wear tattered and destroyed ceremonial garb of an ancient religion. Whatever demonic rituals took place in this chamber have caused **gray mold** to flourish and each zombie is covered in these deadly fungal spores. The purplish gray patches they are standing in are temporarily inert, having already covered the zombies themselves in the deadly spores, but the patches covering these undead are still active and capable of delivering their deadly burst. The zombies remain motionless unless attacked, approached or if any character approaches within 5 feet of the dais. The first time any zombie is struck with a weapon the gray mold colony growing on it bursts, releasing spores in a 10 foot diameter sphere. The sunlight shining down on the dais destroys a gray mold patch on a zombie if it begins its turn there, and neutralizes any spore bursts that occur within its area. The sunlight does not end a frightened condition nor stop or reduce an already infected character, as the spores grow internally.

Complications

The greatest danger is if a character gets hit by multiple bursts of gray mold at once. The damage can add up in a hurry. If you are truly concerned about how much damage might occur, reduce the number of infected zombies. Note the zombies are immune to the gray mold. The encounter could be scaled down by changing the zombies to skeletons, or scaled up by applying the zombie template to a larger monster or even using zombie ogres. Characters curious about these Orcus devotees might wish to find out more, leading to all sorts of side quests. This can be a terrific way to introduce a villain into your campaign, or simply reward player engagement later on by inserting opportunities for them to learn more. They could discover historical



records related to a necromantic cult or perhaps encounter living cultists bearing symbology identical to that found in this chamber.

Dungeon Hazard — Gray Mold

Gray mold grows on dead flesh, and one patch is enough to cover a Medium sized creature. If touched, the mold releases an ash like cloud that fills a 10 foot cylinder originating from the mold. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (1d10) necrotic damage and become frightened for 1 minute. While frightened this way, the creature takes a 5 (1d10) necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. A frightened creature can make another Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the condition on a success. If a creature drops to 0 hit points as a result of this damage, it dies and animates as a zombie covered in a patch of gray mold after being dead for 24 hours. The gray mold is destroyed if the creature is raised from the dead before it can transform into a zombie, or if the corpse is targeted by a remove curse spell or similar magic before it animates.

Sunlight, radiant damage, or Channel Divinity: Turn Undead instantly destroys one patch of gray mold. Undead are immune to gray mold.



Walk in the Woods

Introduction

There are a great many spells that could be the key to an interesting encounter. One with particularly great potential is *awaken*. According to the spell it grants a 10 Intelligence to a single plant or beast under the right circumstances. It also allows plants the ability to move along with speech in one language. These effects are permanent.

Imagine applying the entire array of abilities to any number of beasts or plants. Not only can this spell affect expected beasts like horses, dogs, elephants

Environment Forest	Monsters Many Leaves — awakened tree
Suggested level 2 — Medium	Treasure <i>Foliote gorget</i>

and fish, as well as plants like trees and shrubbery ... but also fungi and giant beasts. The only limit is a starting Intelligence of 3 or less and size of Huge or less, and the beast or plant creature type. It is worth noting *awaken* is an expensive spell to cast, requiring an agate worth 1000 gp, which the spell consumes.

This awakened beast or plant could fulfill multiple roles in your campaign or encounter. Since it has average human Intelligence, human-like senses and can speak a language, you could run this as a role-playing encounter in addition to a combat or puzzle encounter. This beast or plant could be a full NPC or companion to another NPC. In this case we're aiming for a social encounter, but also a more specialized version of a social encounter because the NPC in question is an awakened tree with a service to offer.

For this encounter to work, you'll need a forest of a decent size, and hard to traverse for more reasons than just having trees in it. Treacherous gullies, jutting rock formations or even a forest on a steep incline of a mountain are all valid choices. Feel free to use these or any others you might think of. The awakened tree acts as a way to connect two parallel roads at different — and difficult to access — elevations. This encounter arranges travel through difficult terrain that would otherwise slow, hamper and endanger the party. If those conditions are met, insert something akin to this in your world to engage players and turn a travel situation into a rich opportunity for roleplaying.

Description

The party finds themselves at the end of a path through the wilderness. The trees and underbrush have become thick and overgrown. Nettles and vines make the journey even more frustrating. The terrain rises despite this growth, making forward movement even more arduous. Frustrated, the party typically starts discussing or arguing about what they should do. Should they turn back, camp and start fresh tomorrow morning, or plug on and make what progress they can before it becomes too dark to safely proceed?

All you'll need is for the players to ask something akin to the following:

"What do we do now?"

If they do then they'll hear a voice, deep and methodical, speaking from above them.

"You could ask."

Many Leaves, an **awakened tree**, waits and watches the party. Many Leaves judges the party's actions and questions or comments to ascertain if they do it or the surrounding wood any harm. Since an awakened creature speaks one language known by its creator, feel free to have Many Leaves speak Common or perhaps a more exotic language known to one of the characters, like Sylvan or even Druidic.

If they question Many Leaves further it remains elusive in its answers. Remember, it is trying to find the truth behind their motivations. Should Many Leaves think the party intends harm, it does not reveal itself. If they try to engage Many Leaves in a positive and meaningful way, then feel free to have it reveal itself. This is not only an opportunity for great roleplaying but a chance to reveal Many Leaves' story.

Social engagements like this can be hard to gauge. Many Leaves starts off indifferent, but should characters gain its trust it reveals itself the next morning (or sooner should they wish to move through the thick wood before then). You can then have Many Leaves tell its tale to those who ask. Many Leaves weaves a tale of a former friend and ally. This is a great opportunity to insert an important figure from your own world here. Many Leaves tells them in its ponderous manner about how it was once only a simple sapling, but was sung into awareness many years ago by a young girl named Elise. He tells of their many walks through these woods, and how it had carried her through these treacherous woods so she would never come to harm in the many crevasses and tangles of nettles. Many Leaves does not know of any current political or other events the characters may be currently enduring, unless you choose to have such events affect the current woods where Many Leaves presides.

Many Leaves waxes nostalgic about its time with Elise, and has no understanding of the vagaries of class or race if pressed for specifics. It may go on about simpler times, when fewer roads carved through its kin, and it may yearn for such a time again. Should the characters actually be patient enough for Many Leaves to ramble on about this at length, it recognizes them as soulful beings and offers a ride among its boughs to cross this wood.

Should this unfold, crossing the forest to the upper reaches takes only an hour, as Many Leaves' superior knowledge of the terrain and ability to avoid obstacles due to his size and expertise allow travel in a near straight line upward. Even a ranger with forest or mountain as their Natural Explorer favored terrain cannot move as fast. The only faster way over this terrain



is flying. Should this event unfold as such, Many Leaves regales passengers with tales of saplings growing to full trees, litters of fox kits living under its roots and of the time a goblin tried to chop him down – and was kicked over a gully for their trouble. This is also an excellent opportunity for you to drop any vague lore about the surrounding region an awakened tree might have experienced. Odd weather conditions, noises, sights or unusual creatures travelling the forest might be valid clues to pass on while the characters are transported.

Once Many Leaves has gotten them to the top where they need to be, likely at the edge of a forested area, it bids them farewell. Awakened trees have long memories of all the good and the bad. If they treat Many Leaves well the awakened tree never forgets, and may even return to help them back down the mountain. Should they treat it poorly, Many Leaves likewise never forgets and may make future travel through these woods hazardous for cruel and evil characters. If Many Leaves is happy with the adventures and how they treat the forest around him he presents one character with the *foliole gorget*. It is a treasured item Many Leaves parts with wistfully. But the old sprout appreciates the adventurers' respect for the natural world and wants to help them grow and achieve.

Complications

The complications are pretty clear, and are all based purely on the characters' social interactions with Many Leaves. They need to be on their most respectful and patient behavior for this odd NPC. If they can pull this off, they end up with a loyal ally who can help them through the local treacherous wooded terrains for years to come. Presenting the encounter as a way to traverse challenging terrain also means if the encounter with Many Leaves goes poorly, the adventurers still have a tough time navigating the landscape. They may run into additional problems like random encounters with hostile creatures or areas that take much longer to get past like deep ravines. If their interaction with Many Leaves goes badly, the forest itself could actively impede the characters. Roots wriggle and writhe underfoot at crucial moments, potentially causing a fall. Paths and trails emerge to lead adventurers astray, only to vanish behind them once they're lost.

Watchdog

Environment

Hills

Suggested level

4 – Deadly

Monsters

Fido – zombie tyrannosaurus rex
— Use a tyrannosaurus rex with the following changes: its type is undead, Dexterity reduced to 8, Wisdom reduced to 6, Charisma reduced to 3, -1 AC, immuni-

ty to poison and the poisoned condition, and gains the following special trait: Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Treasure

Eventual edifice

Introduction

A popular cliché or trope that seems to endlessly occur in Fifth Edition games is this: defeat monster, check its pockets, take its stuff. Here's a way to re-think the scenario. What if the magic item is part of the encounter? What if a magic item defined the encounter such that it makes it very difficult to acquire without damaging it? What if that same magic item was also highly desirable?

Adding to this concept we'll apply a template to the encounter, taking a common everyday monster (zombie) and applying it to a monster less common ... say, one that makes it harder to just take the magic item.

Here's my interpretation of that concept — start with an instant fortress, make a few customized adjustments and place it on your selected terrain already deployed, with a zombified tyrannosaurus rex inside it on the ground floor.

How? Why? That's not important.

"A wizard did it."

Add locks and traps. Then ask yourself — is the eventual edifice worth the problem of dealing with the watchdog trapped inside? Even better, if they deal with the watchdog and get greedy, there could be even more issues...



Description

A journey leads the characters to a lonely hilltop, upon which stands a 30 tall tower. Polished stone walls glisten in the daylight, each 20 feet on a side and 30 feet tall with two arrow slots stacked vertically, to watch out over the waving yellow grass upon the hillock.

The structure stands a quiet sentinel over the landscape. No sounds issue from within and no torchlight appears from behind the darkened arrow slots. A single stone door faces outward from the southern wall, closed and silent. No guards appear to be posted. This structure is a fully deployed *eventual edifice*.



It has been abandoned (or perhaps not...) by a powerful wizard, who has deployed some safeguards to protect their property. The front door is sealed with an *arcane lock* (DC 16 to dispel or suppress). The roof also has a trap door. It, too, is protected by an *arcane lock*, and further trapped by a *glyph of warding* if opened. The glyph is inscribed on the bottom of the door and has explosive runes (DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, fire damage). The runes activate if the door is opened without the command word being spoken.

The ground level is guarded by **Fido**, a **zombie tyrannosaurus rex**, confined there due to its sheer size. It cannot leave through the small door, but it can certainly fill the door with a large biting mouth. A medallion with the name Fido stamped on it hangs from a thick chain around its neck. Depending on who you decide the tower's owner is, the script could be any language from Common to Abyssal.

The second the door is opened by anyone but the wizard who animated it, Fido attacks. Since it makes no noise until it attacks, it gains surprise on the first round unless some method of scrying is used to detect it ahead of time. Fido cannot leave, and anyone who enters the lower level to fight it also opens themselves up to the possible tail attack. Inside the tower, the interior is divided into two floors, both with a 15 foot tall ceiling. A single metal ladder connects the ground floor to the third floor, with trap doors between each floor.

The second floor trap door has a further arcane lock (DC 16 to dispel or suppress), with a *programmed illusion* ready to go if it's opened without a command word. The illusion is of a small glowing ball of fire the size of an egg hovering in the very center of the room. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines it looks like an untriggered *delayed blast fireball*. If a character uses their action to examine it with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check they determine it's an illusion. Once the illusion plays for 5 minutes, it fades for 10 minutes then restarts. The ball sputters and threatens to detonate, but never does.

The second floor contains an odd piece of furnishing. A human corpse lays on the floor. It is not undead, nor is it trapped. It is the remains of a captive the wizard kept, left to starve to death when they left. Their hands and feet are shackled. They have rags for clothes and no obvious treasure. Should a character cast *speak with dead*, they can find out all the command words used in the tower, including the word used to shrink or deploy the tower. The captive was clever enough to remember the words but could not free themselves to take advantage of them.

The captive's name is up to you and could also be a source of plot hooks should you decide.

Complications

There's a few traps, one monster and several spells to overcome. The biggest risk is depleting spells or healing, only to run into something else. If you want to ramp up the risk, feel free to add extra *glyphs of warding* to other doors, or convert the captive to undead of some kind.

The point of the encounter is not to kill the party. It's to test their resolve and see how many resources they are willing to throw at a desirable item — if they know the tower is a powerful magic item. The tower isn't a gimme, even if they overcome it.

The wizard who owns this fortress may well be dead or on another plane of existence. Or they may come looking for their edifice. How many magical fortresses are there anyway?

Wooden Dragon

Environment
Mountain

Kobolds (6)

Suggested level
3 – Medium

Treasure

Each kobold carries 3d6 gp. In addition, Kikra has 2 gems worth 50 gp each, a large, finely crafted silver key worth 10 gp to a curio collector, and a chatty ring

Monsters

Kikra — kobold ringleader

Introduction

One standard preconception modern gamers often have about any fantasy world we game in is this — the common person is just as sophisticated as we are.

Before you laugh, allow me to explain. It wasn't too long ago in our history we collectively believed Earth was the center of the universe. We believed medicine was witchcraft. We believed tomatoes were evil. We believed washing was bad for us. We believed royalty were godlike beings.

Visiting anything outside an hour's walk was too far. News came by strangers, rumor, superstition or what your local leader told you.

We've come a long way in our understanding of science, politics, geography, communication and travel. Planes, cars, modern roads, medicines and the internet have connected the world in a way our ancestors in the Middle Ages could never have dreamed.

This advancement creates a sophistication even the most ignorant among us have over our ancient counterparts. Building an encounter around this ancient ignorance and lack of sophistication means you can create a rumor in a local town, village, hamlet or crossroads that could spread fear and superstition as quickly as a virus. Something we would, with our modern understanding, quickly dismiss as something else would have been accepted as fact back in the day.

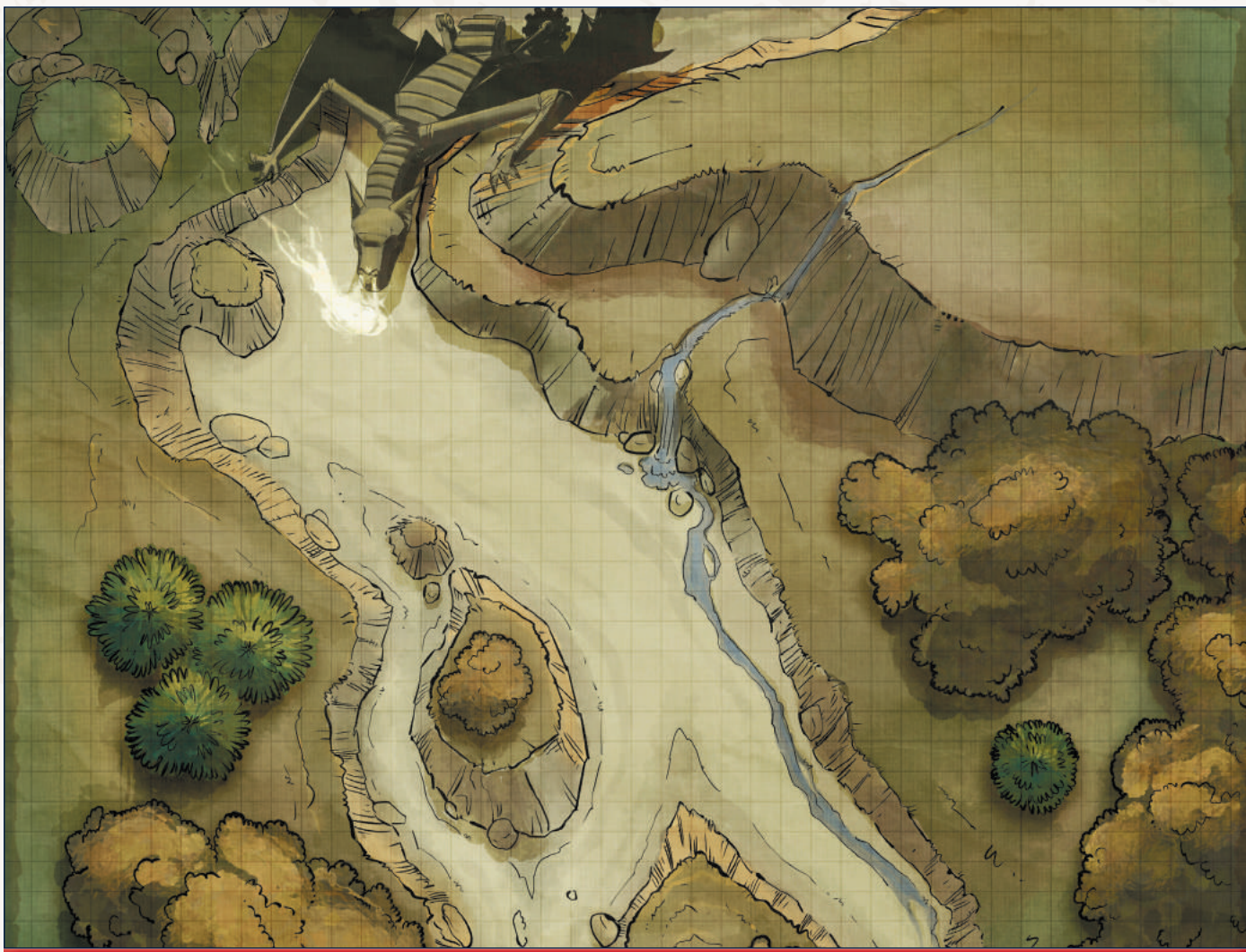


This gives devious villains or monsters a method of terrorizing a populace and may well be a great spark to start your campaign.

Presented below is one such circumstance whereby a clever and devious sort uses simple timing and puppetry to paralyze a populace.

Description

Many campaigns start with a bandit encounter or some other highway robbery. This encounter is one such highway toll but with a different spin.



As characters make their way through a winding pass, the view ahead is obstructed by the terrain — typically rocky and difficult to negotiate. The sun peeks through the pass, so time of day and your setting’s geography is important here, when the characters encounter a striking silhouette. A large dragon head with bright eyes and a gaping mouth at the end of a stout neck peers low around the pass, blocking it. Smoke issues from its maw. The beast lets loose a loud roar, and then a voice speaking in Common makes a proclamation.

“Leave your valuables and turn back, and I might spare your lives!”

The dragon head awaits a response. The characters have a few avenues open to them. They can retreat. If they do so, the head does not move, and no dragon pursues. Feel free to keep this fact from them

unless they directly ask about it. The characters can talk to the dragon head. It speaks in a booming voice and the responses issue forth in this order, regardless of what the characters say.

- *“You will find only death here.”*
- *(in Draconic): “Silence, insolent whelps!”*
- *“I desire privacy — leave me be.”*
- *“The key to the prophecy is inside the vault.”*
- *(in Draconic): “You show too much trust in the lesser races.”*
- *“You are an adventurer? You must be very brave.”*
- *(In Draconic): “Slay them all, curs — leave none alive.”*
- *“There are deeper secrets, more ancient even than I.”*
- *(in Draconic): “How does this thing work? Wait, I think I got it.”*
- *(loud roar)*
- *“Leave your valuables and turn back, and I might spare your lives!”*

The characters can charge and attack. If the groups I've played with are any indication, I'm betting this will be the majority of cases.

The dragon head is a construct of wood and canvas operated by ropes and pulleys mounted to a framework behind the immediate pass out of view. A team of 6 **kobolds** operates the contraption under the direction of **Kikra**, a **kobold ringleader**. It's she who's talking and producing the roar with her *chatty ring*. Kikra used this magic item to record the kobolds' former master, a red dragon, before the wyrm was destroyed by adventurers. The other kobolds operate the wooden dragon's movements and the makeshift flamethrower made from a clay pot of oil, some hosing and a bellows.

If the characters flee, Kikra laughs and taunts the party. If they try to negotiate, she demands their belongings or threatens to roast them alive and supply further roars and likely confusing dialogue from the chatty ring, magnified by the natural rocky structure of the pass.

The flamethrower has 3 charges. If Kikra feels pressed, she'll order one of the kobolds to use a charge to intimidate the characters.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check easily determines something's afoot and figures out this isn't a real dragon. Success on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals a deception at hand.

If the dragon head is attacked the kobolds use another charge of the flamethrower if any remain. The flamethrower has the same effect as a *burning hands* spell (DC 13). The dragon head is made of wood and painted canvas, with AC 13 and 30 hit points. While inside the dragon head Kikra has three-quarters cover and the kobolds inside have total cover. When the dragon head has half its total hit points this is reduced to half cover for Kikra and three-quarters cover for the kobolds inside. Destroying the head exposes Kikra and the kobolds to normal attacks.

The wood and canvas dragon head is flammable.

If the dragon head catches fire, roll a d20. At the beginning of the kobolds' turn, the flamethrower explodes on a result of 5 or less. Every round thereafter, add 5 to the chance. If the head explodes all creatures in a 10 foot radius must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Kikra makes this saving throw with disadvantage.

If any characters attack the dragon head with melee weapons, the kobolds abandon the puppet show and climb out through a small, cleverly concealed door at the back of the dragon head, taking up position on the rocks and attacking the characters with slings. They have half cover from the rocks when attacking from this position.

Climbing the rocks requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to engage the kobolds in melee. Kikra has a hard time trying to escape if things go poorly for her, but the other kobolds certainly flee when things go bad.

Complications

This encounter is pretty straightforward. It's not intended to be too complicated. The worst thing that could happen is the explosion of the improvised flamethrower device. This can cause significant damage to a low level party and may prove fatal.

The improvised flamethrower itself is bulky and cannot be easily carried. The whole contraption weighs 200 pounds and takes three large components and at least two creatures to operate. It's cobbled together and will not survive travel. If characters insist on trying, a successful DC 20 check with tinker's tools allows for safe disassembly of the flamethrower. On a failure there is a 50 percent chance the flamethrower explodes. Otherwise it is rendered useless. A successful DC 15 tinker's tools check allows for safe reassembly and operation of the flamethrower.

The key Kikra has could be used as a plot device for further adventures, or fulfill a need the characters already have. Perhaps it opens the vault mentioned in one of the *chatty ring's* recordings.

Appendix A: Creatures

Aberrant fungi

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 6 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 5ft., climb 5 ft.

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

Damage Vulnerabilities Fire

Damage Resistances Slashing

Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened, Exhaustion, Prone

Senses Blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius)

Passive Perception 5

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Death Burst. When the aberrant fungi drops to 0 hit points, it explodes. Each creature within 20 ft. of it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and become infected with a disease. If a humanoid drops to 0 hit points as a result of this damage, it dies. After 24 hours, 1d4 Tiny aberrant fungi sprout from the body, growing to full size in 7 days.

The spores are destroyed if the creature is raised from the dead, or if the corpse is targeted by a *remove curse* or similar magic, before the aberrant fungi sprout.

Spores invade the affected creature's mind, afflicting the creature with short term madness for 1d10 minutes. After that time elapses, the creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become afflicted with long term madness for 1d10 x 10 hours. The creature must then succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be afflicted with indefinite madness. The madness can be cured by a *lesser restoration* or similar magic.



Acridor

The locust like humanoid acridor possess unending hunger. This gluttonous drive bands them together out of a common need for prey and nothing more. When the skies darken with their chitinous bodies and buzzing wings, little survives their feeding frenzies — whether plant or animal, alive or dead. Of all prey, elves are the favorite of the acridor. They focus on any elves and fight each other for the right to consume such a delicacy.

The Strong Feed First. Acridor eat in order of might, with the strongest eating first among equals. This “might makes right” mentality extends to almost everything they do and embody, which makes them a violent species. They can be cowed, if only for a short time, by a strong master willing to get their hands dirty. Acridor are a willful species, so frequent reassertion of authority is necessary, making them difficult minions to command. For a strong willed leader though, they can be a frightening force to unleash.

I Smell What You're Saying. Acridor communicate silently with one another through pheromones.

Hopping and Savage. Acridor are skilled jumpers, but poor flyers. When airborne, they delight in softening targets with a hail of thrown kpingas (savage multibladed axes) before descending on prey with claws and mandibles dripping with acid.

Acridor

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +3, Survival +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Pheromones (between acridor only), Undercommon

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Natural Jumpers. The acridor's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Limited Flight (Recharge 4-6). Acridor are not skilled fliers, and can only fly over short distances. As a move action, an acridor can fly 60 ft.

Actions

Multiattack. The acridor makes two attacks, one with its bite and one with its claw or kpinga, or two kpinga attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 +2) piercing and 3 (1d6) acid damage.

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

Kpinga. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 +2) piercing damage.

Apophisis

Dreams in an Empty Night. Existing always in an endless night, Apophisis dreams of her child's face. It burns within her mind and gives her a vibrance and intellect uncommon to the average spawn of a vampiric lord. Though her wits remain as they were in life, she hungers as all vampires do for the life they have lost.

Unnatural Nature. Her supernatural existence sets her apart from the world of mortals. She never casts a shadow, nor a reflection. More than anything, her vulnerabilities and current unnatural form reminds her of a hated existence instrumental in all of her misfortunes. To avoid anything that reminds her of this cursed existence, she travels in darkness and avoids reflective surfaces. Apophisis does not require air.

The Devouring Mother. After visiting the grave of her beloved child, those once pure feelings of sorrow bend towards a greedy longing to bear progeny once again. Her pure love is turned into a distorted obsession. As sure as the sun sets, Apophisis returns from her journey, with a stolen child in tow to sate her grief before it rages out of control. She does not attack or harm the child but is overly protective. But a vampire's lair is a dangerous place for mortals to dwell, even one's under that very same vampire's protection. Throughout the years several of the children she has raised, now adults, have met untimely ends or joined the ranks of her master as they have aged into adulthood.

Forever Amongst the Dead. Like other vampire spawn, Apophisis hungers for blood. Although she has been allowed a higher level of autonomy than most of her kind, she still remains beholden to and under the control of her master. While she asked to be free early on in her immortal life she no longer requests that of herself but for her "children." Those who have not escaped by the time they are adults have eventually been transformed into vampire spawn by the master. If so inclined this master could free any of its vampire spawn by sharing its own blood and transforming them from vampire spawn into true vampires. Apophisis' master has yet to feel so inclined but that does not stop her from asking as frequently as she believes she can without angering her master. Apophisis and all of the vampire spawn would be free willed when the master dies.

Apophisis

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (16 with *Mage Armor*)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Damage Resistances Necrotic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, And Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks

Saving Throws DEX +6, WIS +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Apophisis is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Apophisis has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *ray of frost*, *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkness*, *suggestion*

3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*

Regeneration. Apophisis regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Apophisis takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Apophisis' next turn.

Spider Climb. Apophisis can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Apophisis has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. Apophisis can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. Apophisis takes 20 acid damage when she ends her turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. Apophisis is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into her heart while she is incapacitated in her resting place.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Apophisis takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. Apophisis makes two attacks, one with her bite and one with her claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Apophisis can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Apophisis, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Apophisis regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Apophisis' Lair

Every decade or so Apophisis makes a trek upon a funeral barge bound for her dead child's grave. While she traverses both the realm of mortals and of shadow her barge is affected as though it is her permanent lair.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Apophisis takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Apophisis creates fog as though she had cast the *fog cloud* spell. The fog lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The barge lets out a long low gong sound. All creatures within 100 feet who can hear that are not undead must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one.



Arctic Chimera

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +8

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Understands Draconic but can't speak it

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Arctic Camouflage. The arctic chimera has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in arctic terrain.

Actions

Multiattack. The chimera makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its horns, and one with its claws. When its Cold Breath is available, it can use the breath in place of its bite or horns.

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

Horns. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

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

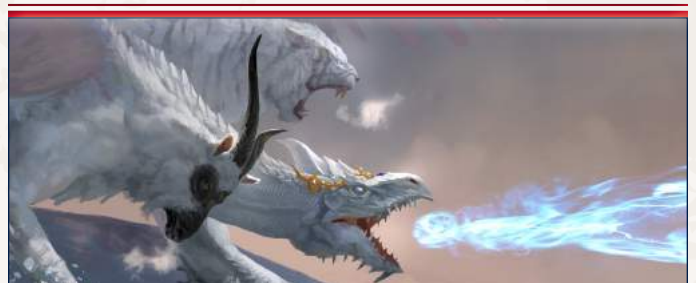
Cold Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon head exhales a freezing blast of icy air in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 31 (7d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Regional Effects

The region surrounding Apophysis' barge is warped by her unnatural presence, creating any of the following effects:

- There's a noticeable increase in the populations of bats, rats, and wolves in the region.
- Plants wilt within 500 feet of the boat. This effect lasts for the next 24 hours.
- Shadows cast within 500 feet of the lair seem abnormally gaunt and sometimes move and flit about as though alive.
- A creeping fog clings to the ground and water within 500 feet of Apophysis's lair. The fog occasionally takes eerie forms, such as grasping claws and writhing serpents.
- Anyone traversing the water within 500 feet of her lair feels things pull and snag on their watercraft, garments, and feet while they are in or near the water. While this does not impede their movement, it is disconcerting

If Apophysis is destroyed, these effects end after 2d6 days.



The Beast

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Regeneration. The Beast regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Beast takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the Beast's next turn. The Beast dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Two Heads. The Beast has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Wakeful. When one of the Beast's heads is asleep, its other head is awake.

Actions

Multiattack. The Beast makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws, or two with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

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



Bingley

Small humanoid (halfling, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 in humanoid form, 13 in wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 49 (9d6 + 18)

Speed 25 ft., 35 ft. in wolf form

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

Damage Immunities Bludgeoning, Piercing, And Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks That Aren't Silvered

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Halfling (can't speak in wolf form)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. Bingley has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Halfling Nimbleness. Bingley can move through the space of a Medium or larger creature.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Bingley has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Lucky. When Bingley rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Shapechanger. Bingley can use its action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Actions

Multiattack. (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Bingley makes two attacks: two with his spear (humanoid form) or one with his bite and one with his claws (hybrid form).

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

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

Spear (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Cerebug

There are parasites even other aberrations avoid. The deadly cerebug is one of them. Resembling fat, eyeless fleas about the size of a large domestic cat, their speckled, coppery brown exoskeletons tend to glint in the light when exposed, which is a rare thing. Possessing four forelegs ending in sharp barbs, they are avid diggers propelled by two strong and larger rear legs.

Perpetually hungry for new brains to feed upon, and almost always buried below the surface of the ground or within cave walls and ceilings, these foul creatures always try to strike with surprise to find a new host. Bodies of its former hosts may even be found nearby as a lure, still wearing or carrying what treasure they had in life. The cerebug cares not for trinkets, only for the fresh brains of the warm blooded.

Living Landmines. erebugs always seek to bury themselves near populated areas of warm blooded creatures, picking off stragglers. Once they find a host, the cerebug uses that host to lure new victims away. If the host body begins to decay, they abandon it and burrow into a nearby surface, using the dead body as a lure for predators or the curious, only to begin the process over again.

Proficient Diggers. Cerebugs have several small burrowing claws used to dig through earthen materials, including softer stones like shale, slate and limestone. They cannot burrow through metals harder than lead. They dig through bone and chiton like it were earth beneath their tiny legs.

Territorial Hunters. Cerebugs, once hatched from their clutch, scatter to the four winds. They stake out territorial hunting grounds with which to find prey. They do not suffer the presence of other cerebugs. If two meet in the same given territory, whether they are in a host or not, the two fight to the death to control the area. This behavior is likely the only reason these parasites have not grasped more territory or endangered larger populations.

Cerebug

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Condition Immunities Blinded

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft., Passive Perception 12

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Languages understands Common, Telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hunger for the Warm Blooded. A cerebug can smell the presence of warm blooded creatures even when buried below the surface to a range of 30 ft. even if those scents are covered by perfumes, rot or other strong odors.

Spider Climb. A cerebug can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Multiattack. The cerebug makes one attack with its burrowing claws and one with its sonic drill.

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

Parasitic Domination. The cerebug targets a stunned creature within 5 ft. and attempts to burrow into its skull cavity. The cerebug makes an attack with its burrowing claws, and any successful attack is a critical hit. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the cerebug burrows into the skull and eats the brain, killing the creature. It then occupies the skull cavity and takes control of the host body. The host body begins to rot within 24 hours, and the cerebug attempts to use the host body to lure new victims and consume more brains. If the cerebug leaves the host body, the dead creature can be restored to life with a *resurrection* spell or similar magic to restore the missing brain.

Sonic Drill. The cerebug targets one creature it can sense within 10 ft. It emits a focused droning beam of sonic energy intended to stun the target. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw or take 11 (2d10) thunder damage and be stunned until the end of the cerebug's next turn.

Coh-Leop

In the depths of the world, there exist many weird and strange creatures. Among them the coh-leop, or beetlefolk, fit right in.

Their insectoid shape, sharp vision and sturdy build allow them to overcome many of the challenges found underground, save for one — themselves.

Coh-leop have lived in such tight confines and under hive rule for so long that their dogma and twisted series of beliefs and theories cloud their judgement when dealing with outside cultures.

You're With Them. One would think their insectoid nature, hive culture and ability to burrow would make the coh-leop highly organized and rich with mineral wealth. This would be true if their culture wasn't rife with insane factions filled with wildly disparate beliefs and near constant civil war. This is compounded by the fact that any single coh-leop might itself evolve into a queen at any time, and none of them are aware when or if this might happen. Paranoia, rumor mongering and propaganda over such a fact spur more internal conflicts than the need or struggle for food.

I Smell What You're Saying. Coh-leop communicate when necessary with outsiders through Undercommon, but when among their own kind they use pheromones to convey ideas, emotions and plans. This form of communication is silent and invisible, but leaves a hive reeking. To make matters worse, each queen's trigger pheromone smells differently, so each hive stinks uniquely. Whereas one might smell of sulfur, another might be sour milk, and the next a dank pond.

Organized Chaos. Each hive is somewhat controlled by the current queen, but factions always evolve.

The queen has spies in many factions, further sewing discord to maintain her control. Outsiders are distrusted, viewed as spies, dissenters of whatever crazy dogma that a hive or faction believes just as much as they might be seen as signs or portents of a change.

Non-beetlefolk have a very difficult time understanding what might be going on, as the near identical insect faces show little to no expression from which to judge intent — until the visitor is either captured or hailed as a justification for a wild theory.

Coh-Leop

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	9 (-1)	14(+2)	10 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Skills Perception +4

Languages Pheromones (between coh-leop only), Undercommon

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Multifaceted Perspective. Because of their large and multifaceted eyes, coh-leop are hard to surprise. The coh-leop has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and on all initiative rolls.

Spider Climb. The coh-leop can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Multiattack. The coh-leop makes two claw attacks.

Macuahuitl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 +2) slashing damage. When weapon damage is rolled for a savage weapon, any damage result of 1 is treated as though it was a 2.



Reaction

Stink. When the coh-leop is the target of an opportunity attack it can use its reaction to spray a cloud of noxious gas from its abdomen. Each creature within 5 ft. must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the attack is lost and the creature cannot make opportunity attacks against the coh-leop until the start of its next turn.

Cyclops warlock

Huge giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 8, see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical 120 ft.

Languages Giant

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Beast Speech. The cyclops warlock can cast *speak with animals* at will, without expending a spell slot.

Spellcasting. The cyclops warlock is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 10, +2 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells: Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *true strike*

1st-2nd level (2 slots): *darkness*, *expeditious retreat*, *find familiar*, *hex*, *mirror image*

Poor Depth Perception. The cyclops has disadvantage on any attack roll against a target more than 30 feet away.

Actions

Multiattack. The cyclops makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Dark Witness

There are those who worship entities on the edge of reality. They are promised power. They are promised knowledge.

What they are not told are the repercussions of this choice. Not all loyalty is rewarded in the expected or desired way. Sometimes, it's better not to be involved in the first place.

Price Of Power. A dark witness spawns from only the most powerful – or mad – cultists dedicated to aberrant entities. Their desire for knowledge and power is rewarded with an agonizing and horrific transmutation into a dark witness. Limbs wither and fall away, revealing twisted faces in their place with blinking and darting eyes wishing only to share the mind shattering sights they've seen with others. The cultist's head and neck dissolve into the torso, leaving a wide mouth ringed with sharp teeth. This transformation leaves the cultist tormented and completely insane, either seeking more power or punishing those around for their own terrible mistake.

What Lived Before. A dark witness still retains some glimmer of their life from before, albeit in shattered and misplaced pieces of memory. This may lead them to behave in odd ways, as they view their past lives like jigsaw puzzles with the pieces in the wrong places. They may haunt former homes or places that resemble them. They may seek out old enemies, thinking them allies or vice versa. They may mistake paintings or statuary for actual members of their family, or possess similar misplaced truths. What they react to, often violently, is having these broken truths questioned.

Power Corrupts. A dark witness, regardless of what they were in their former life, is always altered by the power they wield. The power changes them on a fundamental level, and also alters the decision making process. What this means is a dark witness has no compunctions about using their abilities to enforce their twisted will without any thought to the repercussions.

Dark Witness

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Condition Immunities Prone

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 14

Skills Perception +4

Languages understands Common, Deep Speech, and Undercommon, but cannot speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., *Hit:* 5 (1d8) piercing damage.

Aberrant Gaze. The dark witness targets up to two creatures it can see within 120 ft. Eyes from two of its faces use one of the following effects on the target. The dark witness can use each effect only once per turn.

- **Paralyzing Gaze.** The target creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

- **Fear Gaze.** The target creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the dark witness for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

- **Shocking Gaze.** The target creature must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

- **Forceful Gaze.** The target creature must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be moved up to 30 ft. in any direction. The target is restrained by the gaze's telekinetic grip until the start of the dark witness's next turn or until the dark witness is incapacitated.



Reactions

Phase (3/day). If a dark witness fails a saving throw or check that would restrain, paralyze, or grapple it, it can use its reaction to briefly phase into an aberrant plane and repeat the saving throw.



Dark witness zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Condition Immunities Prone

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces a dark witness zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Con-

stitution saving throw with a DC equal to 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or a critical hit. On a success, the dark witness zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

Aberrant Gaze. The dark witness zombie targets a creature it can see within 120 ft. An eye at the end of one of its tentacle arms uses one of the following effects on the target.

- **Fear Gaze.** The target creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the dark witness for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.
- **Shocking Gaze.** The target creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Elven Scout

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic good

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The elven scout has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

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

Actions

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

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

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

Elven Warden

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +4, DEX +6, WIS +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The elven warden has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The elven warden makes three melee attacks: two with their longsword and one with their dagger. Or the warden makes two ranged attacks with their daggers.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 +2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 +2) slashing damage if used with both hands.

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

Reactions

Parry. The elven warden adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the elven warden must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Fire Giant Howdah

Huge giant, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 162 (13d12 + 78)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Damage Immunities Fire

Saving Throws DEX +3, CON +10, CHA +5

Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6

Senses Passive Perception 16

Languages Giant

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Howdah. The fire giant carries a compact fort on its back. Up to four Medium creatures can ride in the fort without squeezing. Creatures in the fort are 15 feet from the ground, out of range of melee weapons. Creatures in the fort have three-quarters cover against attacks and effects from outside it. If the fire giant dies, creatures in the fort are placed in unoccupied spaces within 5 feet of the fire giant.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (6d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Gnoll Huntmaster

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (rusty breastplate)

Hit Points 49 (9d8 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+2)	8 (+X)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Animal Handling +3, Survival +3

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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.

Thrill of the Hunt. When the gnoll hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum. The gnoll can deal this extra damage only once per turn.

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:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.



Golden Horse

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities Poison, Psychic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The golden horse is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golden horse has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golden horse's weapon attacks are magical.

Trampling Charge. If the golden horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the golden horse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. The golden horse makes two hoof attacks.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Slow (Recharge 5–6). The golden horse targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, a target can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its turn. In addition, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. These effects last for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Harvest Scarecrow

A harvest scarecrow resembles a normal inanimate scarecrow found in the average farmer's fields with one distinct difference — when they become active their eyes flash and then glow with yellow light.

Willingly Bound to Serve. A harvest scarecrow is crafted from a small doll of hay, hair, and cloth. The spirit of a willing humanoid is bound to the doll on their deathbed and resides within the doll crafted for this purpose. The doll is then placed in a constructed body of hay and cloth. These enduring sentinels protect the farms, fields and families long after their spirit's body is dead and gone.

Armed from the Farm. The harvest scarecrow uses whatever is lying around or placed next to them to guard the fields and deal with intruders. This usually includes old tools, which have become dirty and rusty as time passed.

Old Guard. There are many harvest scarecrows that stand guard over villages and fields long ago reclaimed by nature. They still remain and are now one of the only indicators there were ever people present in the first place. Over time the spirit can become confused if it was commanded to consider anything approaching its field as a threat, and many old ones attack anything entering the area. Others stay true to their command, allowing humans, elves and other peaceful humanoids to pass by unhindered but they fall viciously on any goblinoids coming through the same region.

Construct Nature. A harvest scarecrow doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Crafting a Doll. Herbs and other tokens of the person to be attached to the doll, exceeding 10 gp in value, are placed within the doll. Upon the willing creature's death the doll is set next to the deceased until nightfall. The next morning, the harvest scarecrow's body can be crafted and set upon its stand, where it remains until the commands it was given during creation call it to action.



Harvest Scarecrow

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities Fire
Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, And Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks
Damage Immunities Poison
Condition Immunities Charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

False Appearance. While the harvest scarecrow remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary, inanimate scarecrow.

Dust of the Field. Whenever a creature successfully makes a melee attack against the harvest scarecrow, the creature must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The harvest scarecrow makes two attacks with its old tools.

Old Tools. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour.

Hay Fever. The harvest scarecrow targets one creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or spend its next action coughing and sneezing uncontrollably. Creatures that don't need to breathe automatically succeed on this saving throw.



Hearth Hope

Small undead, lawful good

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 21 (6d6)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

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, Halfling
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The hope can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The hope 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.

Final Task. Hope is a creature with one goal. This goal is typically simple — delivery of a message, ensuring proper burial, or one last glimpse of a loved one. Whatever the task, once completed, hope is no longer fettered to the mortal realm and fades away to whatever afterlife awaits.

Actions

Beatific Visage. Each non-undead or construct within 60 feet of the hope that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. While frightened this way the creature is paralyzed. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target is awestruck and suffers the effect of a confusion spell for 1 minute, once the frightened condition ends. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition or confusion on itself on a success. If the target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this hope's Beatific Visage for the next 24 hours.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the hope can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the hope; the hope then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The hope now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The hope can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the hope ends it as a bonus action, or the hope is turned or forced out by an effect like

the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the hope reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this hope's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Psychic Feedback. Ranged spell attack: +4 to hit, range 30 feet, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) psychic damage as the target is assaulted with images of their own past failures.

Hobgoblin Marshal

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (half plate)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The hobgoblin makes two melee weapon attacks.

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 is used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Fiery Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 50/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage and 2 (1d4) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites and takes 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

Alchemist's Fire. *Improvised Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) fire damage. The target takes 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the hobgoblin can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the hobgoblin. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin is incapacitated.

Hobgoblin Trooper

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (Chain Mail)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Kobold Ringleader

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 17 (5d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Insight, +3 Intimidation +3, Investigation +4, Persuasion +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1 (100 XP)

Bossy Pants. The kobold targets one ally it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear the kobold, the target can make one weapon attack as a reaction and gains advantage on the attack roll.

Chatty Ring. As a bonus action the kobold ringleader can activate this magic ring and one of its recorded messages is played. The ring can store up to 11 messages. The messages replay in the order they were recorded. Any new recordings replace the oldest recording stored in the ring.

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

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

Actions

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

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

Large Spider

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 4 (1d6 + 1)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spider Climb. The large spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage. If the target is reduced to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned this way.

Lizard Shass

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Condition Immunities Frightened

Saving Throws CON +4, WIS +2

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

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Inspire Lizardfolk. As a bonus action, the lizardfolk targets an ally it can see within 30 feet that can see and hear the lizardfolk. The target gains 2d6 temporary hit points.

Actions

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

Blackjaw Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and 2 (1d4) fire damage

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

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

Lizardfolk Voice of the Depths

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

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

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Primordial

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Actions

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

Blackjaw Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 +2) piercing damage and 2 (1d4) fire damage.

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

Drowned One’s Curse (1/Day). The lizardfolk targets one creature it can see within 30 ft. and calls upon the Drowned One to reach out from its watery domain. The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or begin suffocating as their lungs fill with water. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can’t regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again. The curse has no effect on undead, constructs, or creatures that can breathe underwater.

Song of the Depths

When two or more lizardfolk voices of the depths are within 30 feet of one another they can work together and sing a hymn to the Drowned One, calling on its power to cast entangle. The DC is 12 + the number of lizardfolk voices of the depths casting the spell, and concentration is shared by all lizardfolk who contribute to the casting.

Oculider

Tiny monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 3 (2d4 - 1)
Speed 20 ft., climb 10ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Senses Passive Perception 13
Languages –
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Mimicry. The oculider can mimic any sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Eye Beam. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) damage. Roll 1d6 to determine damage type for each attack.

d6 Roll	Damage Type
1-2	Fire
3-4	Lighting
5-6	Acid





Phoba

Medium monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dexterity +5, Intelligence +4

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Intimidation +5, Investigation +7, Perception +4, Persuasion +5, Stealth +8, Thieves' Tools +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the thief can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, or Use an Object action, make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see Phoba's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of her, she can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if she isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Phoba until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Phoba in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. If Phoba sees herself reflected on a polished surface within 30 feet of her and in an area of bright light, she is, due to her curse, affected by her own gaze.

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

Special Equipment. Phoba wears a *ring of invisibility* and carries a *portable hole*.

Actions

Multiattack. Phoba makes either three melee attacks — one with her snake hair and two with her shortsword — or two ranged attacks with her longbow.

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.



Picnic Hag

Medium fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing And Slashing From Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Saving Throws Constitution +8

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The hag makes three attacks: one with her jaw and two with her claws.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Unhinge Jaw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the hag can't bite another target.

Swallow. The hag makes a jaw attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the hag, and it takes 10 (4d4) acid damage at the start of each of the hag's turns.

The hag can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the hag takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the hag must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the hag. If the hag dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

You Are What You Eat. If the hag has swallowed a creature, it can use one of that creature's actions as if it were that creature. The hag's physical form mutates to reflect its stomach's contents.

Reactions

Belch. When a creature damages the hag, she can choose to belch noxious gas. Each creature in a 15-foot cone originating from the hag must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. If the hag has swallowed a creature she can choose to eject the creature as part of her belch, depositing it prone within 10 feet of her.

Sky Raider Bat

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Echolocation. The bat can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Goblin Boomer (2/Day). As a bonus action, the sky raider bat drops a ceramic pot of alchemist's fire on a random target. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 2 (1d4) fire damage, and 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

Flyby. The bat doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemies reach.

Keen Hearing. The bat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Actions

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

Sky Raider Goblin

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Animal Handling +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)



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

Actions

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 +2) piercing damage.

Grenado (3/Day). As an action the goblin can throw a grenado to a point it can see within 30 feet. When a grenado is thrown, roll initiative for it. The grenado explodes on its next turn. When a grenado explodes, all creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) piercing and 3 (1d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The grenado also ignites flammable materials in the area.

Reactions

Parachute. The goblin can deploy the parachute as a reaction while falling, or as an action otherwise. The parachute requires at least a 10 foot cube of unoccupied space in which to deploy, and it doesn't open fast enough to slow a fall of less than 60 ft. If it has sufficient time and space to deploy properly, the parachute allows its wearer to land without taking falling damage. Once it has been used, the parachute takes 10 minutes to repack.

Smuggler

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

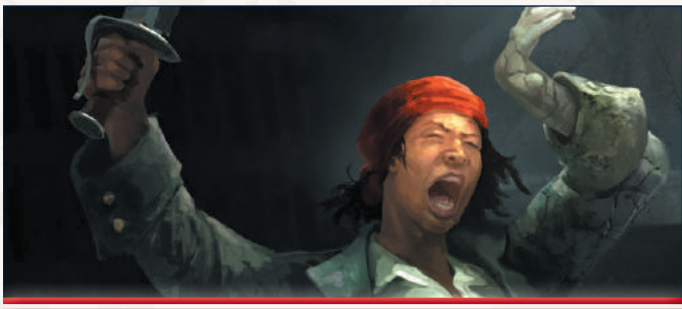
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2, Vehicles (water) +2

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)



Actions

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

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

Swarm of daggers

Medium swarm of tiny constructs, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities Poison, Psychic

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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 insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Appendix B: Items

Bracelet of Elders

To common folk, this will be just valuable jewelry of fine elven design worth 250 gp. Among elves, however, this bracelet signifies an ally of the fey folk, and grants safe passage to non-elves through their territory, so long as they respect the land and the people.

Chatty Ring

Wondrous item, common

This small circular amulet made of iron has a metal coil wrapped around it attached to a small ring. The coil unwinds when the ring is pulled and snaps back when released.

While wearing a chatty ring, you can speak the command word and record a spoken message up to 12 words long. The message is recorded in the speaker's voice.

As a bonus action you can pull on the ring and one of the amulet's recorded messages is played. The ring can store up to 11 messages. The messages replay in the order they were recorded. Any new recordings replace the oldest recording stored in the ring.

Crystal of Water Breathing

Wondrous item, rare

This small shard of crystal seems to contain a clear liquid inside it. The crystal is blue in color and about the size of a quail egg. You can eat the crystal and release the magic inside. As soon as the crystal is broken the water within is released. You gain the ability to breathe normally underwater for 24 hours.

You also gains a swim speed of 40 feet. Once the time expires, you will begin to drown if you are still underwater.

Eventual Edifice

Wondrous item, rare

You can use an action to place this 1 inch stone cube on the ground and speak its command word. Over the next 10 minutes the cube grows into a fortress that remains until you use an action to speak the command word that dismisses it, which works only if the fortress is empty.

The fortress is a square tower, 20 feet on a side and 30 feet high, with arrow slits on all sides and a battlement atop it. Its interior is divided into two floors, with a ladder running along one wall to connect them. The ladder ends at a trapdoor leading to the roof. When activated, the tower has a small door on the side facing you. The door opens only at your command, which you can speak as a bonus action. As an action you can choose to seal the front door with an arcane lock (DC 16 to dispel).

The fortress will not grow if a creature or object of Large size or greater occupies the space. Medium sized and smaller creatures and objects in the area where the fortress grows are pushed to an unoccupied space outside but next to the fortress.

The tower is made of granite, and its magic prevents it from being tipped over. The roof, the door and the walls each have 100 hit points, immunity to damage from nonmagical weapons excluding siege weapons, and resistance to all other damage. Only a *wish* spell can repair the fortress (this use of the spell counts as replicating a spell of 8th level or lower). Each casting of *wish* causes the roof, the door or one wall to regain 50 hit points.

Eye of Fate

Wondrous item, rare, requires attunement

While you carry this glass eye in a gold filigree, fate keeps watch over you.

Whenever you make a saving throw you can reroll the die. You must use the new roll.

As an action, you can speak the eye's command word to cast *telepathic bond*.

Once you use either of these abilities, the eye can't be used that way again until the next dawn.

Curse. The eye of fate is cursed by the hag who created it, and becoming attuned to it passes the curse onto you. As long as you remain cursed, as an action the hag who created it can see through

your eyes and hear what you hear for 1 hour or until they use their action to return to their normal senses. If you use the eye to cast *telepathic bond*, the curse extends to the creatures under its effect for the duration. Attuning to the *eye of fate* does not make the character aware of this curse.

Foliol Gorget

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this neckwear made of thin leaves carefully woven together, its appearance reflects the season of whatever environment you are in. You have advantage on Intelligence (Nature) and Wisdom (Survival) checks while in a forest terrain.

Grenado

A black powder weapon, grenados can be thrown and have a range of 30 feet. When a grenado is thrown roll initiative for it. The grenado explodes on its next turn. When a grenado explodes, creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 1d6 piercing and 1d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The grenado will also ignite flammable materials in the blast radius.

Harbinger Ring

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

When you finish a long rest while wearing this obsidian ring inscribed with the name Agaroz, roll 2d20 and record the number rolled. You can replace any attack roll, saving throw or ability check made by you or a creature that you can see with one of one of these rolls. You must choose to do so before the roll, and you can replace a roll in this way only once per turn.

When you finish a long rest, you lose any unused rolls.

Curse. If you are reduced to 0 hit points you must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or you die and your spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space.



Grudd's Tea of the Multiverse

Wondrous item, legendary

This tea set includes a kettle, cups, serving plates and bags of magical tea leaves. When the tea is brewed it smells and tastes unique to each creature that drinks it. More specifically, their most favorite flavor. Once consumed the tea grants a random effect on that creature. Roll a d10 on the table to determine the effect.

d10 Roll	Effect
1	Your eyes glow and shed bright light anywhere you are looking out to 30 feet.
2	Your shrink, and your size category is reduced by one.
3	Smoke billows out of your mouth whenever you speak the word "tea."
4	You can cast <i>scrying</i> once, but only on the next person you touch after drinking the tea. You can't do so again until you finish a long rest.
5	You can say the command word "Poof" and cast <i>misty step</i> once, but your destination is randomly determined. To determine the direction, roll a d4 and assign a direction to each die face. You can't do so again until you finish a long rest.
6	Your fingers fall off and are replaced by brand new spectral fingers. These spectral fingers can be turned on and off at will.
7	A small ghost resembling a baby sits on your shoulder. It has a deep, godlike voice and can answer one question each day. Its knowledge is limited to the Game Master's choosing.
8	You grow, and your size category is increased by one.
9	This tea is carbonated. You can cast <i>levitate</i> once. You can't do so again until you finish a long rest.
10	You grow small spectral wings on your feet. Whenever you are falling from a height of 200 feet or higher the wings flap as hard as they can to save you and cast <i>death ward</i> on you, effectively saving you, but still — that's a hard fall.

Helm of Opposite Alignment

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This iron helmet decorated with bronze highlights and twisting, swirling engravings appears to be a *helm of telepathy* to anyone who tries to identify it, and it confers that item's property while worn.

Curse. This helm is cursed, a fact only revealed when an *identify* spell is cast on it. When you place this helm upon your head, you must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or your alignment is changed to the exact opposite so long as you are attuned to it, and you will not willingly remove it. Lawful becomes chaotic. Good becomes evil. The neutral component remains unchanged. On a successful save you will immediately recognize that the helm has somehow tried to affect your internal morality and ethics and you can choose to remove it. Until the curse is broken with a *remove curse* or similar magic, you thoroughly enjoy your new outlook. You can make a new saving throw in seven days. If you fail the second saving throw, you must wait a month to make a new saving throw. If you fail the third saving throw then the change is permanent and nothing short of a *greater restoration* or *wish* will break the curse and repair your moral compass.

Lantern of Eternal Night

Wondrous item, common

This bullseye lantern's black candle never runs out and burns with a green flame. The candle sheds bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. The lantern can be shuttered to hide the light. The flame creates no heat and doesn't use oxygen.

Mirror of Heart and Home

Wondrous item, common

When you look at the reflection in this hand crafted silver mirror you see your children in the reflection. If you are not a parent you see yourself as a child in the reflection. Those who travel far or often frequently carry these hand mirrors so they can catch a glimpse of their beloved children anytime while away from home.

Potion of Efficacy

Potion, rare

When you drink this potion your entire body is invigorated. You regain 3d8 hit points, it removes the paralyzed condition and reduces your level of exhaustion by 1. For the next minute, the surge of energy coursing through you allows you to take one additional action on your turn.

Once you take this extra action, the effect ends.

Sabazian Medallion

Wondrous item, rare

This oblong clay medallion was created using Hell's cindersoil. On its front are etchings of an abbreviated infernal contract.

The breaker of this medallion will be bound to eternal servitude to Hell in exchange for the service of a devil for an hour. On its back is the image of the devil that will be summoned upon the breaking of this medallion. This medallion bears the image of a horned devil.

As an action you can break this medallion. By doing so the contract is signed and a horned devil will instantaneously appear in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you. It obeys your commands as long as they're not directly harmful to it. It will act on its own accord when no order is given. The horned devil has its own turns, so initiative should be rolled for it.

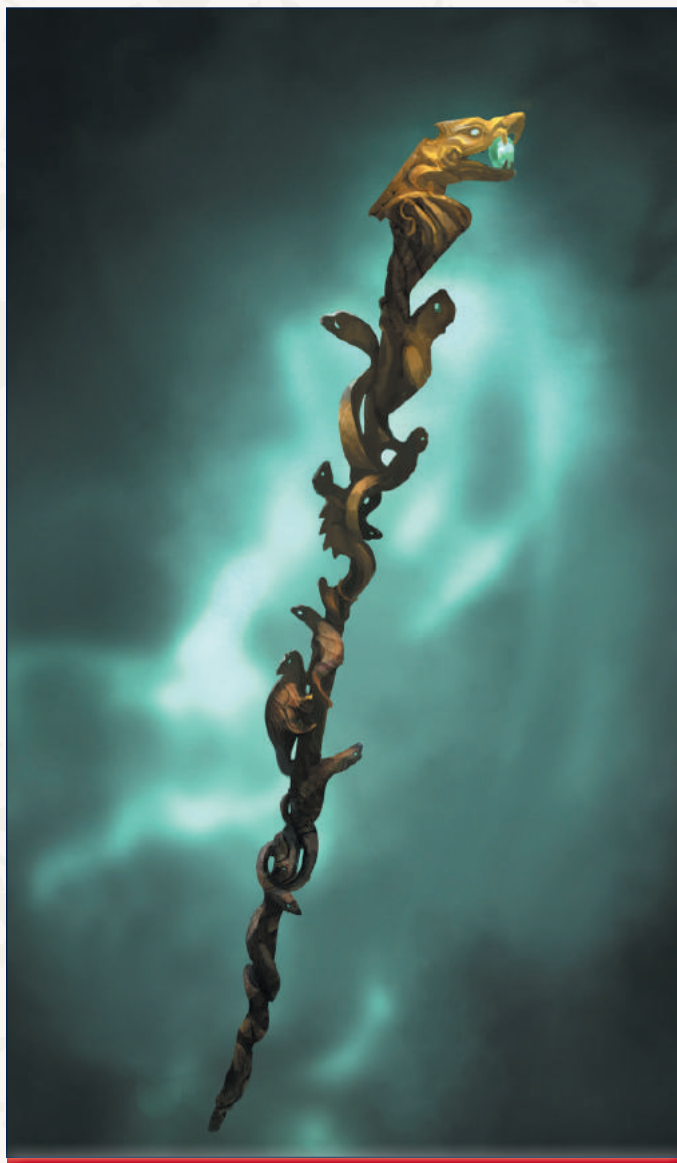
Ring of Mirror Images

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This magic ring has 3 charges. The metal band is polished to a gleam and highly reflective.

While wearing this ring you can use an action and expend 1 of its charges to cast *mirror image*. The ring regains 1d3 charges at daily at dawn.

If you expend the ring's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the ring crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.



Staff of Reptile Command

Staff, rare (requires attunement)

This staff has 3 charges and regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the staff's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff crumbles to dust and is destroyed.

Spells. You can use an action to expend 1 or more of the staff's charges to cast one of the following spells from it, with a spell save DC 15: *animal friendship* (1 charge) or *dominate beast* (2 charges). These spells only affect creatures with "alligator," "crocodile," "lizard," "snake," or "turtle" in their name, and *animal friendship* only affects Tiny or smaller creatures.

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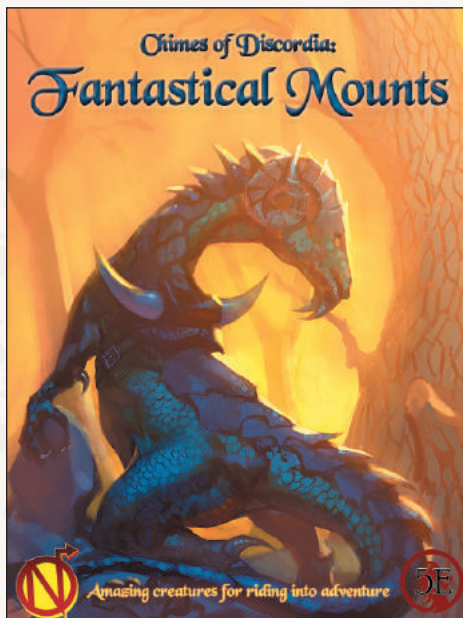
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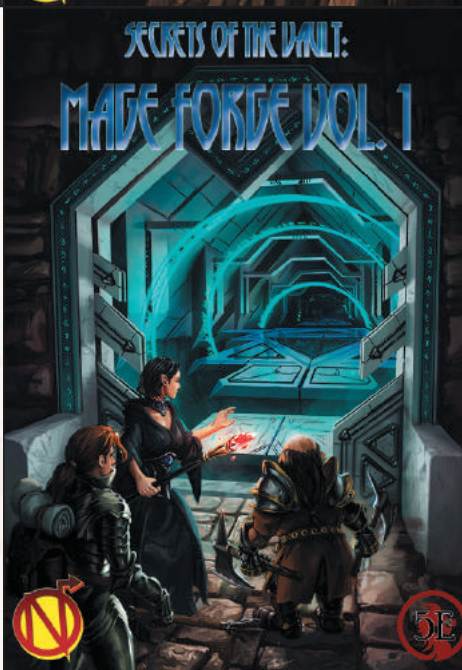
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