

CORE1-10

DANCING SHADOWS

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

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On most occasions, the trip from the ruins of Spellgard back to civilization is reasonably safe. But what happens when the road is more dangerous than expected - especially when shadows bite? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the Fallen Lands for characters levels 4 - 7. First part of *Bane of Shadows* trilogy.

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

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By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DM REWARDS program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2012.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

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

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

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

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

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

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

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

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

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

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

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

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

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give**

out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Not far from the Gray Vale, and the towns of Loudwater and Llorckh, lie the Fallen Lands - a ruined, mysterious remnant of Netheril's past empire. Atop a ridge at the eastern edge of the Fallen Lands, is an ancient fortress known as Spellgard. Many people are drawn to the ruins of Spellgard, seeking answers from Lady Saharel, a

powerful undead oracle. One such "Seeker" is Dernan Moonbrow, a Silverstar of Selûne, who came looking for a weapon to use against his most hated enemy: the Shadovar of Netheril. He is one of the lucky ones - he got an answer to his question. As is often the case, the answer was cryptic, but Dernan believes the weapon lies at the Well of Dragons, although the exact nature of the weapon still remains a mystery.

The easiest path to the Well of Dragons is through modern Netheril. But that is a road Dernan dares not take. He has made too many enemies in that realm. The only other path is to return to Loudwater and travel north of the High Moor and the Marsh of Chelimber - skirting past Evereska - and from there proceed to The Well. It is a dangerous path, but Dernan believes it is safer than the one through Netheril.

The trip would have been relatively easy if not for one mistake.

Before Dernan left Spellgard, he boasted to Sister Cherra, herself a seeker at the Monastery of the Precipice, that he knew the location of a powerful weapon against the Shadovar. Cherra became uneasy at Dernan's openness and urged caution whilst trying to learn more, but Dernan realized that he had already said too much and shied from any more conversation.

Unbeknownst to Dernan, a Netherese agent, Kal Clewsoro, overheard Dernan's conversation with Sister Cherra, and Clewsoro saw this as an opportunity to do some work for his Netherese masters. However, Clewsoro was unable to leave the ruins to pursue Dernan for more information, so he turned to a nearby ally: the young, female black dragon, Terrizmoraskar - known locally as simply, "Terror".

Terror is looking to establish a lair in The Smear, a swamp region between Spellgard and civilization. Terror has herself enlisted the aid of a few of the denizens of the swamp. In return for her ongoing assistance, Clewsoro ensures that Terror gets a cut in "merchandise" pilfered from Spellgard. Clewsoro has persuaded Terror to capture Dernan alive and find a way to get more information about the weapon he seeks. Terror has also been ordered to kill anybody who gets in her way.

Unbeknownst to Clewsoro, Terror is a member of the Cult of the Dragon. The cult consists of a group of misguided humans who think that dragons are going to one day rule the world. They serve black-hearted dragons that use this worship to their advantage. The Cult's activities mainly involve recruiting dragon members, appeasing them with lots of (stolen) treasure and offering them the ritual to become dracoliches. Terror sees no clash of interest and, hence, gladly helps Clewsoro.

To assist Terror in her mission, Clewsoro gives her a ritual scroll that destroys roads and pathways - making travel through The Smear extremely difficult - and slow.

Sister Cherra's words of caution have made Dernan feel unsafe. Before he left Spellgard, Dernan asked if he could travel with the goods caravan run by the Gargengrim dwarves. The caravan is returning to Loudwater after dropping off supplies to the Monastery. Coincidentally, the PCs have been guarding the caravan of late and whilst things have been generally uneventful - that is all about to change.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The basic assumption is that the PCs are hired as caravan guards for the Gargengrim trading caravan. The Gargengrim clan is a family of dwarves who are the sole suppliers of the Monastery at Spellgard. You are free to design a plot-hook tailored to your group. For example, when running CORE1-10 as a sequel to ADAP1-4 *Scepter Tower of Spellgard*, the PCs might merely have teamed up with the dwarves on their way back to civilization. Worshipers of Selûne might have been sent to Spellgard with a message for Sister Cherra and Cherra asked them to protect Dernan on the trip back.

For the past few weeks you have found yourselves doing guard duty on a caravan route between Loudwater and the ancient fortress of Spellgard. Spellgard is a ruined fortress that lies atop a ridge at the eastern edge of the Fallen Lands. It was built during the time of the old Netheril Empire, and is famous for an oracle called Lady Saharel. Seekers travel to Spellgard in the hope of finding wisdom. Seekers need provisions, and those provisions are delivered by the Gargengrim dwarves - all the way from Loudwater, and then back again. Such a caravan, traveling on dangerous roads, needs protection - and that is why you travel with them. Today, you are preparing for the return journey to Loudwater, the only difference being that you've picked up a nervous seeker whose only desire is to return to civilization - very quickly.

If anyone asks, Corlacc is paying each character 30 gold pieces to guard the caravan. Payment is upon completion of the journey back to Loudwater.

DMs INTRODUCTION

This adventure is set in an area known as the Fallen Lands. A map has been provided for the DM in the Appendix, and there is no problem showing the players this map before they begin (or even where they are on a

larger map - such as the one included with the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*).

This adventure takes the PCs on a journey to protect a Selûnite seeker on his way back to Loudwater. With the party is a caravan of dwarves and their pack mules. The party find themselves lost in a swamp, and besieged by lizardfolk and a nasty black dragon.

The DM has a couple of choices with how he/she uses miniatures to represent Dernan and the dwarves. The DM can either: place them on the battle mat and have the party and NPCs interact with them during the combats; or simply state to the players that Dernan and the dwarves are staying safely out of any combat zone until the PCs deem it safe for them to proceed.

The DM should adjust the text of the adventure to suit whatever decision he/she makes in regards to this.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE OPEN TRAIL

SETUP

Dernan, male human priest of Selûne

Corlacc Gargengrim, male dwarf merchant

6 Gargengrim dwarves, dwarf teamsters and warriors

This is a role-playing encounter. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

It is early morning on the open trail and the sun is shining. Even Corlacc Gargengrim, normally quite a gruff old dwarf, appears in better spirits. His six other comrades watch over various points of a line of eight pack mules. The stranger you know only as “The Seeker” rides a pony in the middle ranks. He seems content to keep to himself, though he acknowledges you all with a nervous smile.

This is an opportunity for the PCs to speak with Corlacc, the other dwarves, or even Dernan (“The Seeker”, a term used for those people that went to Spellgard to seek answers from Lady Saharel, the undead oracle at those ruins). If the PCs don’t take nods and smiles from the NPCs as an invitation to talk, then have the NPCs initiate conversation themselves.

Corlacc Gargengrim: Corlacc Gargengrim is the leader of the caravan. Whilst he carries a battle-axe, he is no warrior. He is a merchant who runs the caravan against his better judgment. Corlacc believes that more money would be made trading to the southeast of the Gray Vale. He is not interested in “seekers” or Spellgard. He is interested only in making a profit and, lately, he has been barely scraping by. Dernan offered Corlacc 150 gold pieces to allow him to travel with the dwarves (and their PC protectors) on the return journey to Loudwater. That’s as much as the entire profit made by the caravan on this journey alone. Corlacc thinks that seekers are “witless fools” who follow “riddles and dreams” all too readily. Corlacc thinks Dernan is no different, though he is quite content to take his money. Corlacc doesn’t care why Dernan needed to travel with the caravan, so long as he doesn’t interfere or slow down the journey. So far, he’s proven no problem.

If the PCs inquire, Corlacc tells the PCs that it is quite unusual for travelers to Spellgard to ask to travel with the caravan - either to or from the place.

The Other Dwarves: Here is a brief overview of what the other dwarves might say if spoken to by a PC:

- The Gargengrim Dwarves have been going backwards and forwards from Loudwater to Spellgard for at least 20 years. At first, trade was good - but there aren’t as many “seekers” these days, so things have eased up a bit (though they still bring back a crate or two of whiskey which is produced at the monastery).
- The caravan doesn’t normally offer protection to travelers. The Seeker must’ve paid Corlacc a hefty sum to take him in for the return journey. The dwarves are superstitious and see such a deviation from regular business as an omen of ill luck.
- The return journey passes by several well-known landmarks. The first, Taransen’s Grave, is the final resting place of a dwarven hero who died three centuries ago. His grave rests on a hillside about 2 miles off the main trail. Getting to the grave is dangerous, as the creatures that killed him still patrol the area. The creatures never leave the area, and never bother the caravan.
- The second landmark is a region known as the “Valley of the Dogs”. Two tribes of hobgoblins - the Spittlemaws and the Fistclenchers - engage in perpetual war over their valley. The caravan has to be careful traveling through this region on the inward journey, as the hobgoblins often attack in an attempt to steal supplies to bolster either cause and gain an advantage. There hasn’t been an attack for several journeys (and the PCs haven’t witnessed any hobgoblin trouble as yet).
- The third landmark is “The Smear”. It is perhaps the most dangerous part of the journey, as the main trail winds its way through misty swamps and perilous bogs. A clan of greenscale lizardfolk lives in the swamp. They are mostly neutral in demeanor, though rumor has it that a nasty blackscale bruiser has formed his own breakaway clan, and is planning on doing no-good to his more peaceful greenscale brothers. Besides the lizardfolk, there are other horrors that reside in the swamp: basilisks, battlebriars, wild boars, crocodiles, and bog hags. There is even a rumor that a black dragon has been recently seen flying over the swamp!
- The dwarves confirm that Dernan doesn’t say very much, but seems pleasant and polite when spoken to.

Dernan Moonbrow: Dernan is very appreciative of the PCs’ protection, though he is frightened that he may

have already said too much about his ongoing quest to too many people, and that his life may now be in danger. Dernan happily talks about himself to the PCs – but as soon as they start asking questions about his “seeking” (or his quest), he will clamp up. He particularly clamps up if there are any shadar-kai, many of whom serve the Shades of Netheril, in the party. Shadar-kai PCs add +2 to the DC of Diplomacy checks to speak with Dernan. The PCs need to make a series of diplomacy checks to get Dernan to open up about more secretive matters. The DM should use the information below to answer PC questions, keeping in mind that some information requires a diplomacy check to acquire.

- **Appearance.** Dernan is a small man with blonde hair and very blue eyes. He is in his mid-late twenties. He wears robes associated with clerics of Selûne (DC 12 Religion check). In his hand he constantly grips a holy symbol – also of Selûne. The PCs also see that his knuckles are white from gripping so tightly for so long. As he rides his pony, his eyes dart from one side of the trail to the other, as if he is constantly on the lookout for an ambush. He is clearly *very nervous*.
- **Nervousness.** If spoken to, Dernan introduces himself a little gingerly. When he speaks to a PC it appears that he is continuously looking over the PCs shoulder to “some place beyond”. If asked what he is doing, he nervously replies: “Aren’t you worried about this trail? This journey? I hear there are a hundred horrors just waiting to devour us before we arrive at Loudwater!” A DC 17 Insight check reveals that although he is worried about monsters, there is *something more* he is worried about.
- **Seeking.** It takes a DC 15 Diplomacy check to reveal the following information. Dernan is a Silverstar of Selûne. He came to Spellgard to find the answer to a question: “Where can I find The Last Grasp of Shadowbane?”
- **The Last Grasp of Shadowbane:** The Last Grasp is a legendary weapon. It was created many millennia ago during the dragon wars, and was used in particular to slay shadow dragons bent on domination at the time. When the wars ended, the weapon no longer had any use, and it’s final location became obscured in time. Dernan does not know what kind of weapon The Last Grasp actually is (though the Lady Saharel told him he would know it when he found it).
- **Why do you want this weapon?** It takes a DC 20 Diplomacy check to reveal the following

information. Dernan is *very nervous*. Dernan believes that the weapon can also be used to slay shades. Shades are the true masters behind the Netheril Empire, and are creatures of shadow that long gave up the pleasures of physical existence. The Shadovar worship Shar, Selûne’s wicked nemesis, and this weapon may put a dent in Netheril’s spread across the face of Faerun.

- **So, where is it?** It takes another DC 20 Diplomacy check to reveal the following information. Again, Dernan is *very nervous*. He only talks because he believes he can trust the PCs. He whispers: “Lady Saharel told me that the weapon can be found at a place called The Well of Dragons. It is north-east of here, but the safest route is back to Loudwater, then north through the High Moor and the Marsh of Chelimber – skirting past Evereska.” If a PC succeeds in a DC 15 History check, he/she receives Player Handout 1.
- **Why so nervous?** Dernan only reveals this information *if* the PCs already know about the weapon and its location. Dernan reveals that he spoke about his quest for a weapon to fight the Shadovar to Sister Cherra at the Monastery of the Precipice. He says he was over-excited, and he stopped himself before revealing the weapon’s supposed location. However, Sister Cherra told him that there were “spies with big ears” all through the Monastery, and that he should be careful on his return journey to Loudwater. That is why he sought protection with the caravan. What *he knows* would be worth *a lot* to an agent of the Shadovar!
- **Are you alone in your quest?** Dernan only reveals this information *if* the PCs already know about the weapon and its location. “No. There are five of us: myself, Qhu-Khala of High Imaskar, Sassafras of The Great Dale, Lord Boone of Luskan, and Sunrise of the Sisters Three in Westgate (Note: Sunrise was encountered in DRAG1-1 *Many Hands Make Light Work*). I seek the weapon; the others are on journeys of their own – though we all serve the Mistress of the Moon.”

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have finished speaking with Dernan and the dwarves, move directly on to Encounter 2.

ENCOUNTER 2: AN ILL OMEN

SETUP

Dernan

Corlacc Gargengrim

Gargengrim Dwarves x 6

Tu'masz, male greenscale lizardfolk

This is another brief role-playing encounter. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

The journey passes uneventfully past Taransen's Grave, and on through the Valley of the Dogs. Now, the only obstacle between Dernan and the safety of Loudwater is the cold, lowland marsh known locally as "The Smear". After another half-hour's travel, your caravan comes to the edge of a vast swamp. Normally, the trail winds clearly into the mists, but this time something has gone wrong. The trail has been destroyed!

Lying at the edge of the swamp are at least two-dozen motionless lizardfolk. They are down the bottom of a 30 feet deep incline, right at the edge of a stinking bog-pit. You need to traverse the incline to discover more about their fate.

Inquisitive PCs discover the following with the appropriate skill checks:

- A DC 17 Nature check reveals that the disappearance of the trail is *not* a natural phenomenon.
- A DC 25 Arcana check reveals traces of a spent "magic ritual". The actual name of the ritual cannot be discerned, but it appears to be able to destroy man-made trails and roads - turning them back into the wilderness from which they came.
- A DC 17 Athletics check takes a PC safely down the incline to the motionless bodies of the lizardfolk. A PC that fails his/her check simply slips and tumbles down the incline - and spends a healing surge. The PC lands amongst the freshly melted corpses of the lizardfolk.
- A DC 15 Nature check reveals the lizardfolk to be of the "greenscale tribe".
- A quick investigation reveals all the lizardfolk to be dead - bar one! The corpses are all covered with burns. One of them is still breathing ever so slightly. But he is unconscious. A further DC 15 Heal check stabilizes him and brings him around. See the "Talking With Tu'masz" entry below.

- A DC 15 Heal check reveals the lizardfolk were slain by acid. *Lots* of acid. Their individual features are horribly melted and deformed. Nothing remains of their armor or weapons. The lizardfolk were killed about 90 minutes ago.
- A DC 15 Arcana check reveals the acid to be the kind expelled from some kind of creature.
- A DC 12 Nature check reveals the bog to be relatively harmless - though it smells really badly and you wouldn't want to swim in it because of dangerous wildlife.

TALKING WITH TU'MASZ

Tu'masz is the only surviving member of the lizardfolk group. When he is comfortable, and able to speak, he answers questions and relays the following information. Note that he speaks in either fluent draconic (for any PC who understands Draconic), or very broken Common.

- His name is Tu'masz. He is part of a team dedicated to patrolling the borders of the swamp. Lately, the scouts have been on the lookout for the blackscale lizardfolk, Gogog, and his band of renegades.
- Gogog used to be the best warrior in the swamp. He was allied to the greenscale lizardfolk, and they treated him like a brother. But then Gogog left the tribe and took with him many of the tribe's finest greenscale warriors. Rumor has it that Gogog was promised fame and fortune by a new master: a master that lives deep within the swamp and is evil to the core.
- Since then, Gogog and his renegades have been ambushing the greenscales every chance they get. Most of the time it is low-level bothering and scuttling - nothing too severe.
- Gogog did not attack the scouts. The scouts were attacked by something large, dark, and very sinister. It swooped down from above and took the party by complete surprise: a shower of acid reigned down upon everybody! The last thing Tu'masz saw were his companions melting into a disgusting mess. Tu'masz was able to take cover under a rotten log. It was enough to save his life.
- Before he blacked out, he saw the trail ahead disappear, and along with the other victims, he fell over and rolled down the embankment and onto the edge of the bog pit.

The PCs may ask Tu'masz if the creature that attacked them was a "dragon" or a "black dragon". Tu'masz is not

certain *what* it was. He only knows it was big, dark and spat acid. Tu'masz doesn't know what happened to the regular trail. He says it "must've been magic or something!"

The PCs may now be wondering how they get through the swamp and back to Loudwater safely. The regular trail is gone. There are a number of ways the party can progress forward:

- In return for saving his life, Tu'masz offers to show the party another trail through the swamp. It is more like a "track", and it is much more dangerous than the original trail.
- If the PCs don't trust Tu'masz, a DC 17 Nature check allows a PC to find the entrance to the alternative trail on their own. If the PCs don't trust Tu'masz, and they can't find the alternative trail themselves, then Corlacc Gargengrim and his dwarves will search about (and eventually find it).
- If the PCs try and go around the swamp, they find their way blocked by more and more swamp. There appears to be no way "around" - only "through".
- If they try to follow the now gone road, they quickly find that the entire way ahead has become a mire filled with quicksand and deep bogs - impossible for ponies to cross.

The PCs may ask Tu'masz some questions. What follows are some common questions and standard answers:

- **Tell us something about this "trail".** The trail is an old road used by the "softskins" (non-lizardfolk) until it was partially flooded a decade ago. Most of it is still in tact, and the flooded parts are relatively easy to cross now.
- **Can you guide us through the swamp?** No. Tu'masz needs to go and warn the other folk in his tribe about the monster that attacked them. They need to fortify their village and ensure that no more lizardfolk die this day.
- **What might we meet along the trail?** Tu'masz tells the PCs that the trail will take them through the territory of a bog hag. The hag is evil, but likes to bargain. She has always kept her word when dealing with the lizardfolk. For the right price, she might even help the "softskins".
- **Duration of trip?** Roughly 2 days, depending on how good the PCs are at wilderness travel.

POOR DERNAN

This event is all too much for poor Dernan. It quickly becomes clear that Dernan has alighted from his pony and is missing! The PCs can call for Dernan and search for him. Eventually, a PC notices that Dernan is crouching in some bushes - not only hiding, but also quivering and shaking with fear. When found, Dernan has tears in his eyes. He speaks:

"By the stars of the mother goddess ... don't you see? It is not THEM it is really after ... it is ... us ... it is ... ME! It wants ME! It wants to know the location of the weapon! I can feel it. It is forcing us to detour. It is forcing us into the maws of its trap! I don't yet know what it is ... but I know it is watching us. Right ... now!"

Somehow, the PCs need to role-play and persuade Dernan to get back on his pony and move forward. He is paralyzed with fear. If spoken to, he reveals that he was called upon to do this quest for his church. He thought it would bring him glory in the eyes of his superiors. He now knows that such glory is only vanity, and that he is a coward and must find the strength from somewhere in order to move forward. He is not sure where he is going to find that strength, but he's certain the adventurers will help him - if they can find it in their hearts to forgive him for being such a fool.

Dernan will also now relate any information he was previously holding back on in Encounter 1.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs are ready to move along the alternative trail, the DM should paraphrase according to the situation. Tu'masz thanks them and goes his own way (back to his village).

As you begin to make your way along the trail, you quickly realise that a thick mist has settled over the entire swamp. A narrow winding trail disappears into the mist.

The fog limits visibility to 50 feet (10 squares). The trail is also only 5 feet wide (1 square) and requires the group to move through in a single file. Outside the trail it is mostly difficult terrain, but a more important reason to stick to the path is to avoid treacherous bogs that dot the swamp. It is a good idea to let the players devise a party order, now to determine where the PCs are in relation to the dwarves, Dernan, and the ponies.

As soon as the players have organized their party order, proceed to Encounter 3.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE BRIDGE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 5 / 7 (1000 / 1500 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Rokok, vine horror (V)

1 Gogog, lizardfolk blackscale bruiser (B)

3 Arkaar, Korkoo and Nugaar, lizardfolk greenscale darters (D)

The DM should note that all creatures begin this combat with concealment or camouflage of some kind. Keep in mind that the mist only allows a PC to see up to 10 squares from their present position. Do not draw/reveal the “other side” of the bridge until PCs are in a position to see it. Do not place the NPC figures on the battle mat until the creatures are ready to take an attack on the PCs (or a PC spots a creature as noted in the Perception checks below). As the adventurers enter the area, read or paraphrase (depending on the party order):

The alternative trail is as you thought: nothing more than a goat track. The ponies have a hard time finding their footing, and Corlaac Gargengrim is losing his earlier demeanor and becoming steadily more cranky. As he leads the way through the swamp, he hasn't said a word for over an hour. Suddenly, he speaks:

“Mighty Moradin! Would ye come an' take a giss a this!” he shouts from somewhere in the mist.

As you make your way towards him you see that Corlaac has stopped - at the edge of a precipice jutting out over a direct drop into croc infested swamp water! Several trees grow out of the sides of the cliff-face. A long, rickety wooden bridge spans the ravine. The bridge trails off into the mist and, at present, you can't see the other side at all!

The ravine is 30 feet deep at low tier, and 50 feet deep at high tier. Corlaac asks the PCs if they will kindly secure a safe way across the ravine. How they do this is up to the PCs to decide. They can go across first, or they can intersperse dwarves, Dernan and the ponies as they cross.

When ready, have the players place their figures in the area on the map that says “PCs Start Here”. If the players want to intersperse the NPCs, then place down some figures representing the dwarves, Dernan and the ponies.

During this encounter, Dernan and the dwarves do not get attacked (unless all the PCs are killed). Remember, Clewsoro wants Dernan captured alive for interrogation. The dragon, Terror, has ordered Gogog and his crew to:

- Eliminate the PCs first
- When the PCs are dead, eliminate the dwarves and eat the ponies
- Bring Dernan to Terror - alive.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

PC Starting Area: There are three medium-sized clumps of bushes in this area. The middle bush (marked V on the map) is camouflaging a vine horror. To notice the vine horror, the PCs need to make a DC 24 Passive Perception check to recognize the “sleeping” vine horror. Note that the vine horror does not move (or attack) until commanded by Gogog or until it is approached aggressively. There are no movement restrictions in this area (except the bushes cost 2 squares to pass through).

Area 1 - Rickety Wooden Bridge: Read or paraphrase the following description to the players when they examine the bridge, or one of them first steps onto it:

This rickety wooden bridge is a rotting relic, barely standing after a decade of neglect. Simply stepping on it causes the entire structure to groan and creak as if it might collapse in a splintery heap at any moment. The only thing holding it up is a precarious strut.

If the PCs test it some more they realize that the bridge might hold a maximum of two persons (or one person and a pony) at a time. The bridge is also quite wet and slippery. Any PC running or charging across the bridge would need to make a DC 17 Acrobatics check to avoid falling prone.

In fact, the bridge is fairly stable. It only *looks* unsafe. If you are running the game with fairly experienced players who express a wish for a challenge, feel free to rule that the bridge collapses twice as fast due to the lizardfolk actions (if more than two medium sized creatures stand on the bridge at the same time).

Area 2 - The Halfway Mark: As soon as any PC steps into this square, the greenscale darters (D) initiate combat by shooting their blowguns at that PC. Combat begins at this point. Note that if the lizardfolk miss with the blowguns, they remain unseen at this stage. Do not place their miniatures on the battle mat.

Area 3 - The Ravine: Any PC examining the ravine below the bridge sees the following:

This ravine goes directly downwards. At the bottom is a putrid, stinking swamp bog. Scuttling around the murky water are several large crocodiles. Every now and then they lift their heads from the mire and snap their massive jowls. It is as if they KNOW somebody is soon going to fall into their toothy traps!

Any PC or NPC falling into the ravine takes 3d10 / 5d10 damage and has an encounter with a visejaw crocodile (see page 44 of the *Monster Manual*). This scenario is, however, highly unlikely (unless the DM particularly needs to challenge the party beyond the norm). It is not part of the lizardfolk or vine horror's tactics to throw PCs into the ravine, but if the DM sees a good opportunity, then let them give it a go. Give the falling PC a chance (saving throw) to grab onto one of the trees growing out the side of the cliff. PCs may similarly attempt to throw NPCs into the ravine.

The Other Side of the Bridge: The other side of the bridge is another jutting precipice. The PCs won't initially see this side of the bridge (until they come within range) due to the mist. There are two large trees covered in a lot of foliage. The foliage allows the greenscale darters and the blackscale bruiser to hide quite successfully - although a DC 22 Perception check from Area 2 will notice Gogog hiding in his area. There are no movement restrictions in this area (except the trees cost 2 squares to pass through).

TACTICS

Below is a guide to how this melee might play out. Of course, things may alter due to actions of the PCs (and the DM should rearrange events if this occurs, so that things still play out as excitingly as possible). Keep in mind that this fight should be very cinematic. It is the "combat on a rickety bridge with crocodiles snapping below" scenario. Make the PCs feel they are in danger every moment. Keep the tension flowing by reminding the players about Arkaar (H) who is sawing away the struts underneath the bridge as soon as melee begins!

- As soon as a PC steps on Area 2 (or near enough), the darters attack with their blowguns. Combat begins. Roll initiative.
- Gogog stays behind his bush until he can get a flank on a PC who is attacking one of his darters. While ever there are two darters alive, Gogog tries to use his greatclub to push a PC over the edge. If they can, the darters wait (ready) for Gogog to do this, and then have their own attacks.

- Arkaar, a greenscale darter (H) is hiding under the bridge from the moment the PCs arrive on the scene. He is standing on a small ledge that can only be reached from the lizardfolk's side of the ravine. As soon as melee begins, Arkaar starts to saw through the struts on his side of the bridge. He laughs maniacally as he does this, so it is only a DC 12 Perception check for the PCs to hear, and then see him. Note that the bridge gives him total cover (until somebody jumps down on his ledge to attack him). It takes Arkaar 6 standard actions to saw through the struts on the bridge. These do not provoke. Give the PCs a DC 10 Intelligence check to figure this out. Use a 6-sided dice as a countdown marker. See the "What If The Bridge Breaks?" entry below.
- On his turn in round 3 (or sooner if things are going badly for the lizardfolk), Gogog calls out the following command (free action): "**Rokok! It is time for you to aid your friends! Awake! Slay our enemies!**" At this point, the vine horror awakes and attacks the PCs. The DM should describe the vine horror waking up. This should really surprise players who thought they were safe on the far side of the bridge! Note that the vine horror will move onto the bridge to attack PCs (though it prefers to stand its ground where it originates).
- All creatures fight to the death. The darters often call out Gogog's name and ask for combat directions. This lets the PCs know who Gogog is (and may be worth keeping alive for interrogation).

WHAT IF THE BRIDGE BREAKS?

If Arkaar successfully cuts through the struts of the bridge, the whole structure goes crashing down into the swamp below. Any PCs or creatures standing on the bridge at the time also go crashing down into the swamp. Unlucky Arkaar also loses his balance on the ledge and goes plummeting down with the bridge.

The crumbled bridge lands on the crocodiles below and kills them. Arkaar laughs maniacally as he falls. Unfortunately, the bridge falls on top of him and kills him outright. All PCs and creatures falling into the ravine take 3d10 / 5d10 damage. If still alive, the vine horror gives up and slinks off into the swamp. Any other lizardfolk still alive continue the battle down below (if they can), or disappear into the swamp (never to return). The DM is left to wing this one as events unfold.

It is very difficult (DC 25 Climb check) to climb up the cliff-face of either side of the ravine. However, looking around reveals another way down, across, and up the other side. This route could only be seen from the floor of the ravine (and it's why nobody notices it earlier).

INTERROGATING THE LIZARDFOLK

If captured, Korkoo, Nugaar and Arkaar are easily intimidated (DC 12) and tell all they know (see below). Gogog is harder to intimidate, but knows more information (DC 17). Here is what they can tell the PCs:

- **Lizardfolk (other than Gogog):** Their new mistress, a black dragon named "Terror", tasked them to kill the adventurers and the dwarves, and capture the one called Dernan. Terror wants to find out what Dernan knows about some kind of weapon.
- **Gogog:** As above, plus: Terror is now mistress of the swamp. She is better than all the weakling lizardfolk. She is making alliances with people in Spellgard. She eventually wants Spellgard as her lair. Turn it into a swamp, she will! But for now she must do as her associate wants, and a man called Kal Clewsoro wants Dernan captured and brought back to Spellgard alive. Clewsoro works for the Netherise. Terror is not yet strong enough to cross him. It was *he* who destroyed the trail. He does not know where she lairs. Terror contacts him when she wants something done, not the other way around.

Once the PC are finished interrogating the lizardfolk, they can tie them up to some nearby trees. A DC 10 Intelligence check figures that they will be found by Tu'masz and the other lizardfolk soon enough.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one greenscale darter from the combat.

Six PCs: Add one greenscale darter to the combat. His name is Bokaar.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the lizardfolk and the vine horror, they can proceed forward. Go to Encounter 4.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 200 / 300 experience points each for defeating the creatures in this combat.

TREASURE

The lizardfolk have a small camp set up on their side of the bridge. A search of the camp reveals an old, worn backpack that must have belonged to Gogog. Inside the pack the PCs find various bits and pieces of cheap jewelry and coin. The total worth is 30 / 50 gp per PC.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE BRIDGE STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Blackscale Bruiser	Level 6 Brute	
Large natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 250	
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +9	
HP 86; Bloodied 43		
AC 18; Fortitude 19, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Speed 8 (swamp walk)		
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.		
M Tail Slap (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +14		
Str 22 (+9)	Dex 16 (+6)	Wis 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 5 (+0)	Cha 6 (+1)
Equipment greatclub		

Greenscale Darter	Level 5 Lurker	
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 200	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +9	
HP 50; Bloodied 25		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 14		
Speed 6 (swamp walk)		
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.		
R Blowgun (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
Loading the blowgun takes a minor action; Ranged 6/12; +10 vs. AC; 1 damage, and the greenscale darter makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +8 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).		
Sniper		
A hidden lizardfolk darter that misses with a ranged attack remains hidden.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +11		
Str 13 (+3)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 15 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 8 (+1)
Equipment club, blowgun with 20 poisoned darts		

Vine Horror	Level 5 Controller	
Medium natural humanoid (plant)	XP 200	
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +9; blindsight 10	
HP 67; Bloodied 33		
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 15		
Speed 6 (forest walk, swamp walk) swim 6		
m Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
C Vicious Vines (standard; encounter)		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +10 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both) as magical vines spring up out of the ground and crush it.		
Maleability		
The vine horror can compress its body enough to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and other openings that are more than 1 inch wide do not slow the vine horror at all.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Stealth +12		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 21 (+7)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6)	Int 9 (+1)	Cha 10 (+2)

ENCOUNTER 3: THE BRIDGE STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Blackscale Bruiser (level 8)	Level 8 Brute
Large natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 350
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +9	
HP 106; Bloodied 53	
AC 20; Fortitude 21, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Speed 8 (swamp walk)	
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
M Tail Slap (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +15	
Str 22 (+9) Dex 16 (+6) Wis 12 (+4)	
Con 16 (+6) Int 5 (+0) Cha 6 (+1)	
Equipment greatclub	

Greenscale Darter (level 7)	Level 7 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 300
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +9	
HP 62; Bloodied 31	
AC 20; Fortitude 16, Reflex 19, Will 16	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.	
R Blowgun (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Loading the blowgun takes a minor action; Ranged 6/12; +12 vs. AC; 3 damage, and the greenscale darter makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +10 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 7 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
Sniper	
A hidden lizardfolk darter that misses with a ranged attack remains hidden.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12	
Str 13 (+3) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)	
Con 14 (+4) Int 8 (+1) Cha 8 (+1)	
Equipment club, blowgun with 20 poisoned darts	

Vine Horror (level 7)	Level 7 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (plant)	XP 300
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +10; blindsight 10	
HP 81; Bloodied 40	
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 17	
Speed 6 (forest walk, swamp walk) swim 6	
m Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
C Vicious Vines (standard; encounter)	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +12 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained and takes ongoing 12 damage (save ends both) as magical vines spring up out of the ground and crush it.	
Malleability	
The vine horror can compress its body enough to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and other openings that are more than 1 inch wide do not slow the vine horror at all.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Stealth +13	
Str 18 (+7) Dex 21 (+8) Wis 14 (+5)	
Con 19 (+7) Int 9 (+2) Cha 10 (+3)	

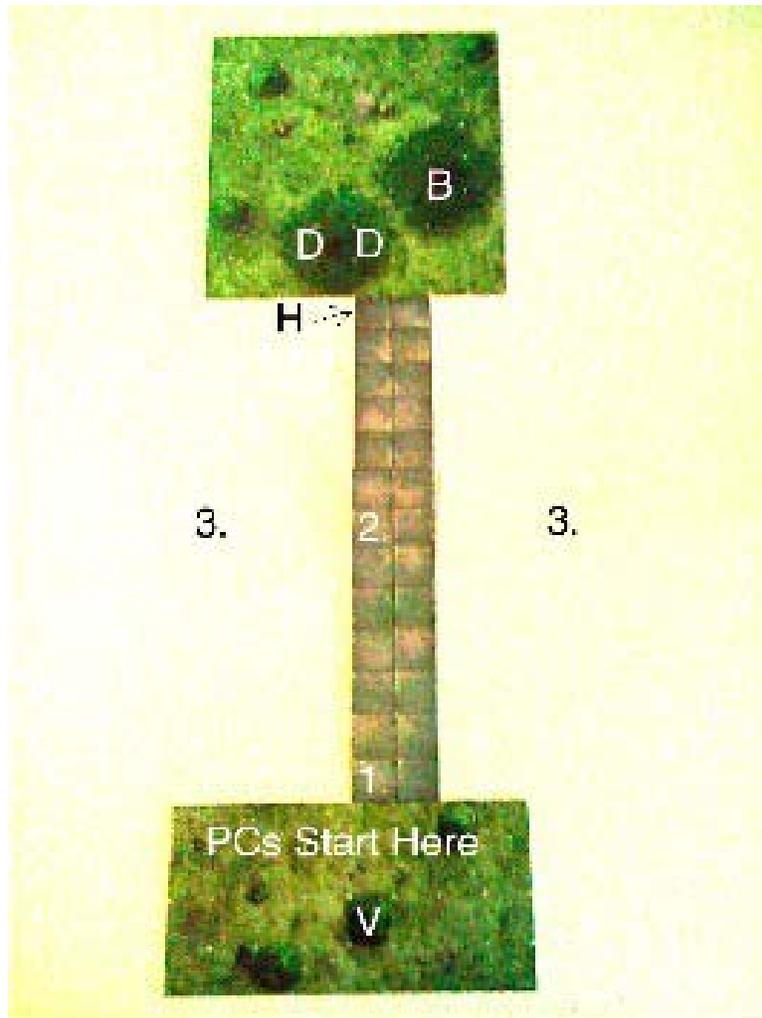
ENCOUNTER 3: THE BRIDGE MAP

RUINS OF THE WILD

Field w/ two large trees	8x8	x 1
Field w/ three clumps of bushes	8x4	x 1

DUNGEON TILES

Corridor	8x2	x 2
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ENCOUNTER 4: THE VOICE OF TERROR

SETUP

Dernan

Corlacc Gargengrim

6 Gargengrim dwarves

Terror (Black Dragon - Voice Only)

This is another brief role-playing encounter. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

Although you bested the ambush at the bridge, things are not looking good. On the other side of the ravine, the goat track gradually fades in and out - swamp bogs taking the place of the trail every half a mile. Corlacc Gargengrim is about to burst with anger and frustration. The other dwarves are also grumbling. You overhear one dwarf suggest they jettison Dernan and make a break for it. Corlacc calms them, but you can see that he too is considering taking such an action. After another mile or so through mist and bog, Corlacc turns to your party and says:

“Well, it looks like I’m lost. Unless ye got any portals in ye pockets, or a way a flyin’ ... we’re ne’r gonna git outa here ...”

Some of the dwarves openly blame Dernan for all their troubles due to their mistrust of “Seekers”. They now brazenly suggest that Corlacc gives him his money back and moves forward without him. After all, they reason, somebody is trying to get Dernan. If he’s left behind, that somebody might leave them all alone.

Let the PCs discuss the matter between them, whilst the DM plays doubting dwarves and angry/frustrated Corlaac. Some PCs might want to try Nature checks to discover a trail out of the bog. But all seems hopeless. Whoever is doing this is causing them grief and wants them to lose their way - certainly while ever Dernan is with them.

At an appropriate (argumentative) moment, read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, there is a blast of fetid air that everybody feels and is alerted to. You feel it because with it came little droplets of acid - that now singe and smoke on your clothes, armor and skin. It’s not enough to ruin anything, but then ...

... A terrible voice booms all around you:

“I am Terrizmoraskar, scourge of The Smear and mistress of the swamp. Attend to my words, little ants, or feel my wrath!”

Let the PCs make Perception checks as they look for the location of Terror. Seeing Terror requires an active DC 24 Perception check. All they see is a “black shape” hovering “far above the swamp in the mist”. Terror is projecting her voice so that she appears much closer than she really is. If the PCs try to attack, then Terror just laughs at the PC’s pathetic attempts (as she is way out of range).

Allow the PCs to respond to Terror’s initial salvo, and then continue:

“I will make this very simple so your tiny brains can process my demands,” the hissing, female voice continues, “Leave the seeker behind. Travel on without him. When you are one mile away your path will clear and you will no longer be lost. If you do not leave him, prepare to wander in this muck until you drop. Once your wretched corpses decay I will suck up your sloppy remains and use you as fuel for my power. Decide now. Or die!”

Another blast of fetid air blows through the swamp ... then it’s gone. Silence is all that remains.

The adventurers, the dwarves and Dernan now have to make some decisions:

- Corlaac wants to leave Dernan behind, but that’s not very profitable. At some point, Corlaac turns to Dernan and promises to keep guarding him - so long as Dernan gives him *another* 150 gold pieces. Dernan doesn’t have the money, but if the PCs pay up, Corlaac is happy to go forward.
- At another moment, the other dwarves grab a rope and pull Dernan from his pony. They start to tie him to a log, arguing that he’s trouble and best left to rot along with everything else in the swamp. Of course the PCs may step in here and stop them (DC 17 Diplomacy or Intimidate) ... or maybe not.
- Dernan offers to sacrifice himself and stay behind. He makes a very courageous speech and tells everyone to go on. It is clear he has failed in his quest, but others will follow.
- If the PCs don’t want to leave Dernan, they can choose to go on with him (and leave the dwarves behind to find their way clear). The dwarves are happy to do this. Later, the PCs find their sloppy bodies regurgitated as part of Terror’s acid breath weapon.

- If the PCs choose to leave Dernan behind (and go on with the dwarves), Terror double-crosses them and attacks them in Encounter 6 anyway. When they meet Terror, Dernan is trussed up at the back of Terror's cave.

The next two encounters assume that the PCs end up getting the dwarves to go forward and keep on protecting Dernan (either by paying Corlaac or making the Diplomacy or Intimidate checks). The DM should adjust the adventure from this point forward if decisions were made differently.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs are ready to move onwards, go to Encounter 5.

ENCOUNTER 5: BOG, SWAMP AND GUTS

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 4 / 6, COMPLEXITY 5 (500 / 1000 XP)

This skill challenge is divided up into three scenes, each with its own minor challenge. Scene One has a complexity of 2. Scene Two has a complexity of 2. Scene Three has a complexity of 1. The total complexity of the Encounter is 5 (thus earning the XP listed above). Each “scene” has its own Setup, and the scenes should be played in the order in which they are written.

SCENE ONE: HERB GATHERING

Complexity: 2

Number of Successes: 6

Number of Failures: 3

Primary Skills: Various - see suggestions in text.

Important NPCs: Mab (bog hag)

Your party presses on through the swamp for at least another hour. Most of the time, you are up to your thighs in murky green muck, and it is so relentless that you start to forget about the leeches sucking at your exposed flesh, or the filthy flies crawling in and out of your noses, ears and mouths.

Then you spot what looks like a reprieve. The swamp water gives way to a raised clearing of land. In the centre of the clearing is a huge bamboo tree. Underneath the tree sits an old, unclothed woman covered in hideous sores: her matted black and silver hair drips wet down over her sightless, pockmarked face. She reveals an unsettling smile as you approach. With a slow, menacing voice, she cackles:

“Hail, travelers. I have been waiting for thee.”

The old woman calls herself “Mab”. She is a bog hag (presently choosing human form). She does *not* wish to initiate combat, but if the PCs attack her she fights until she is bloodied, then escapes by jumping into the swamp (ending this scene). Use the stats on page 150 of the *Monster Manual*.

As the PCs approach her, she reveals the following:

- Her name is Mab. She is a “creature of the swamp”. She doesn’t get visitors very often, so she is glad the PCs have arrived so they can “help her” and/or “amuse her”.
- Every PC must now find some way to help or amuse Mab. If they succeed in helping or

amusing her, she offers the party information that will help them survive the swamp.

If the party succeeds at the skill challenge, go to “What Mab Knows” below. If the party fails, they notice that Mab has slipped quietly away into the swamp ... not to return.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Each PC can use their best skill to decide how to help or amuse Mab. The DCs for success are: 17 / 18. Here are some suggestions Mab will make to the PCs:

- Mab likes collecting “fairy lights” from around the swamp. Help Mab collect fairy lights and put them in her pocket (Athletics or Acrobatics).
- Mab knows that some of the flowers in the swamp are magical and can be used in love potions. Find some magic flowers and bring them to Mab (Arcana).
- Mab thinks she is ugly and she gets the urge to kill defenseless wildlife due to her low self-esteem. Convince Mab that she is beautiful and help save a poor creature’s life (Bluff or Diplomacy).
- Mab doesn’t know the names of a lot of wildlife in her swamp. Knowing their names might make her think twice about biting off their heads. Search the swamp for wildlife; identify the wildlife for Mab (Dungeoneering or Nature). The DM is free to make up some strange names of local “fantasy” wildlife.
- Mab has a nasty gash on her upper left thigh. She thinks it’s from when she accidentally sat on a poison toadstool. Help heal Mab’s wound (Heal).
- Mab likes to hear stories about older folk who are still leading active and healthy lifestyles. She sees herself as a bit of a “go-getter”. Tell Mab a story about a successful elderly person whom she might be impressed with (History).
- A successful Insight check reveals that Mab is actually lonely for a mate. Give Mab some hints on how to find a boyfriend.

Note that DMs may think of other things to get PCs to use their skills to help or amuse Mab. The list is endless and only as long as the DM/player imaginations. Have fun with this challenge!

WHAT MAB KNOWS

Mab gives the PCs the following information:

- Up ahead, the first place they come to is a field of geysers that release acidic vapors (known as inferno vapors). There is a particular way through the geysers that is safer than others. Knowing this information gives all PCs +2 to any skill checks made in this scene.
- Next, the PCs come to the worst place in the entire swamp. It will take all of their knowledge and endurance to pass through unscathed and without getting lost. Knowing this information gives all PCs +2 to any skill checks made in this scene.
- There are many spots in this swamp where explosive volcanic gas escapes regularly. Slamming a weapon in the ground at the right spots might be useful in those areas - to let the gas escape at a time the characters want. The gas is highly flammable.
- Finally, she gives the PCs a large crocodile egg covered with weird looking rune. She speaks the following cryptic words: *“When terror eludes you, show the egg and speak its words.”* She does not offer any more explanations. It requires a DC 12 Arcana, Nature or Religion check to recognize the ritual words hidden on the egg.

ENDING THE SCENE

Once the PCs have either helped Mab, or not, they can make DC 22 Perception check. If they make the check, they see “something long and black rise up quickly out of the water and pull Bruunac (one of the dwarves) under in an instant.

It is now time to move onwards. As you gather your belongings, Corlacc Gargengrim lets out a gasp and says:

“Mighty Moradin! Alert! Alert!”

Corlacc appears to be searching the swamp water nearby. As he searches, he turns to you all and says:

“It’s Bruunac! He’s disappeared! One minute he was standing by the water’s edge ... now he’s gone! All that’s left is his wee little hat! Oh my! Something’s watching us! Something’s picking us off one ... by ... one!”

It appears that one of the Gargengrim dwarves has been snatched by some kind of creature. Corlacc asks the PCs if they saw anything. This is most ominous indeed. The only way forward is to walk directly onwards ... back into the thigh-high swamp water. Proceed directly to Scene 2.

SCENE TWO: INFERNO VAPORS

Complexity: 2

Number of Successes: 6

Number of Failures: 3

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Nature, Perception and Stealth.

Warily, your party presses onwards. It is coming on late afternoon. Soon it will be dark.

After another few minutes, you arrive in a rather strange area. Ahead of you ... the only way ahead ... are numerous geysers sticking up out of the swamp. They look like bubbling geysers, but there is no smoke coming out of the top of them. It appears you can weave in-between them, but who knows what might happen at any moment?

If the PCs got information from Mab, then they already know these are called “Inferno Vapors”. Otherwise the PCs have no idea what they are.

The idea behind this skill challenge is to weave a way through the bubbling geysers ... without touching them, or allowing anything else in the swamp to brush up against them (thus sensing movement nearby).

Every PC moving in between the geysers must make a relevant skill check. A success means they get through OK - a failed check sets off a geyser (see below). It is assumed that the PCs are shepherding Dernan and the dwarves (and *they* get through if the PCs get through). Remember that Mab’s information gives every PC +2 to all skill checks for this encounter.

A failed skill check sets off a nearby bubbling geyser. When this happens, it explodes in a burst of acid. The acid bursts up and out, covering the entire area. The acid *always* hits two of the PCs (roll randomly to see who gets it) - no matter where they are standing. The acid causes any affected PC to immediately lose a healing surge. A PC who has any acid resistance is *not* affected. PCs may be hit more than once, but never twice in the same round.

Note that even though a PC sets off a geyser, he/she still gets through to the other side. Dernan and the dwarves won’t go through until all the PCs go through first. Once the PCs “blaze the trail”, they make a safe path for the other NPCs to follow.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Acrobatics (DC 12 / 13): A PC can use this skill to weave and balance his/her way through (and in between) the bubbling geysers.

Athletics (DC 17 / 18): A PC can use this skill to jump over the geysers so that he/she never has to try to weave around them.

Nature (DC 12 / 13): A PC can use this skill to find solid ground through the geyser-field - thus preventing a possible misstep that sets off a geyser.

Perception (DC 17 / 18): The PCs can actually see a safer route through the geysers and may attempt to walk that route.

Stealth (DC 17 / 18): The geysers are sensitive to movement, so a PC who can move stealthily might be able to avoid setting off the geysers.

ENDING THE SCENE

Once the PCs have negotiated the geysers, read the following text aloud (adjust the text if Dernan is/was next to a PC under guard - Terror instead picks another dwarf or if that is impossible breathes once over the PCs before disappearing again):

You are about to move on, when Corlacc Gargengrim lets out another cry. Corlacc is extremely distressed as you reach his side. "I got some bad news ... it's the seeker ... one minute he was here ... then ..."

Corlacc Gargengrim points to a ripple in the swamp water where young Dernan once stood.

"It got what it wanted. Only problem is, we di'na give it to it."

The only thing everyone can do is move forward. Bruunac and Dernan are not dead. Terror has taken them to her lair. If the PCs defeat Terror in Encounter 7, then they can rescue them both at that time.

SCENE THREE: LOST IN THE SWAMP

Complexity: 1

Number of Successes: 4

Number of Failures: 3

Primary Skills: Varies

It is nearly evening. Dancing shadows flicker through the brambles and the stumpy trees of the swamp. It is getting difficult to see the path ahead. You are still regularly wading through water up to your knees and thighs. Something is watching you. Something is waiting to grab you one by one and take you away.

And then you come to another obstacle. The mist thickens and you can't see any dry land to walk on!

It appears that the only way forward is to use all your skills to find a safe path - before you are eaten alive by the leeches and mosquitoes.

The PCs must now use their skills to find a way out of the swamp - whilst enduring the bites of leeches and mosquitoes. If a PC fails a skill check, then this means the entire party was bitten that turn. Every PC must burn a healing surge every time a skill check is failed. If the PCs fail the skill challenge, they still find a way out of the swamp - but they would have lost precious healing surges to achieve it.

The PCs should also note that the dwarves have been particularly slow and grumpy. This is holding the party back and causing them to get bitten more and more.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Acrobatics (DC 17 / 18): A PC can use this skill to weave in and out of the water and avoid the leeches.

Athletics (DC 17 / 18): A PC can use this skill to climb up and through the twisted trees of the swamp, thus finding another path and avoiding the leeches.

Diplomacy (DC 17 / 18): A PC can use this skill to get the dwarves to move a little faster through the swamp.

Intimidate (DC 17 / 18): The PCs can threaten the dwarves - thus getting them to move faster through the swamp.

Heal or Nature (DC 12 / 13): The PC finds some local swamp flowers that stave off leech and mosquito attacks.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have negotiated the swamp, read the following text aloud:

On the other side, you see that the swamp opens out. Ahead, in the far distance, you can make out a small rise of land ... but everywhere else is swamp. You have no choice but to push onwards ... in the dark.

Proceed to Encounter 6.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters each receive a total of 100 / 200 experience points for this skill challenge.

TREASURE

The only treasure the PCs can acquire is the crocodile egg. Outside of its use against Terror it is a useless curiosa. It crumbles to dust when used. Otherwise a PC can write it down on his notes, but it has no value.

ENCOUNTER 6: TERROR IN THE SWAMP

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 7 / 9 (1500 / 2000 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Terror, young black dragon (T)

As the final flicker of daylight fades, the dancing shadows of the murky swamp become even more ominous. You are certain that you saw some dry land somewhere up ahead, and you will need some light sources to help you get there.

Allow the PCs time to get their light sources organized. The DM should now get the players to arrange their miniatures on the battle mat. This encounter does not use any dungeon tiles. Just lay down a grid square that is at least 16x12 squares.

Roll a 4-sided dice. Have Terror rise up out of the water in the designated position on the map. Before you place her miniature, read the following:

Suddenly, there is a blast of fetid air that everybody feels and is alerted to. You've felt this before and, once again, it comes with little droplets of acid - that singe and smoke on your clothes, armor and skin.

And then, up out of the swamp water, rises a beast of terrible visage. It is a dragon - jet black in color, wiry but not gaunt. Its forward-jutting horns are attached to a skull-like head with sunken eyes.

"I am Terrizmoraskar, scourge of The Smear and mistress of the swamp. Now that I have what I want I will kill you all. But not before having a little fun with you first ..."

Roll for initiative. The DM should note that Terror only wants to "soften up" the PCs in this encounter. As soon as she is bloodied, she uses her *bloodied breath* power and dives beneath the swamp water and disappears (for the time being).

During this combat, Corlacc Gargengrim and the other dwarves stay right back out of the combat zone. Terror is not particularly interested in them right now, as they pose no threat.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Swamp Water: This entire melee takes place in swamp water. Medium sized PCs find themselves in water up to their thighs. This is not enough to give them cover, but it does make all movement in the swamp water difficult terrain.

TACTICS

In the first round, Terror uses her *frightful presence* first and then spends an action point to use her *breath weapon*. If her *breath weapon* recharges, she uses it again. If this fails, Terror moves into melee and does a *double attack*. She also uses her *tail slash* whenever she can. In this encounter, Terror uses her *cloud of darkness* power only to help her escape (if needed). She also saves her second action point to spend in Encounter 7.

Remember, as soon as Terror becomes bloodied, she unleashes her *bloodied breath* power and dives beneath the swamp water. Terror quietly returns to her lair. Here, she spends 1 healing surge and regains $\frac{1}{4}$ of her total hit points. She also gathers two blood sea zombies. When she is ready she returns to battle in Encounter 7.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Terror has 220 hit points (bloodied 110) at Low Level; and 250 hit points (bloodied 125) at High Level.

Six PCs: Terror has 300 hit points (bloodied 150) at Low Level; and 330 hit points (bloodied 165) at High Level.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter ends as soon as Terror becomes bloodied and disappears under the swamp water. If the PCs (somehow) kill Terror before she gets the chance to escape, then the combat is over and the PCs get full XP and the opportunity to search Terror's lair. Don't play Encounter 7. Otherwise, allow the PCs a short rest. Then go to Encounter 7

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The experience for this combat is given at the end of Encounter 7.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 6: TERROR IN THE SWAMP

(LOW LEVEL)

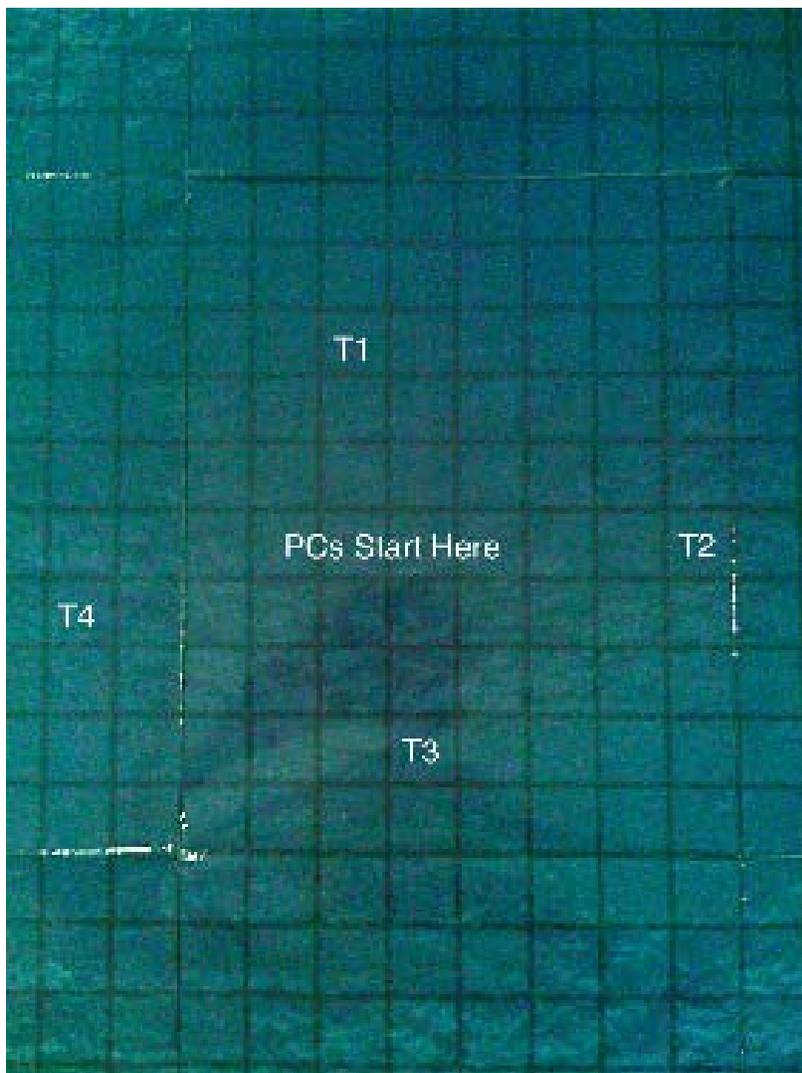
Terror, Young Black Dragon	Level 5 Solo Lurker
Large Natural Magical Beast (aquatic, dragon)	XP 1000
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 256; Bloodied 128; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
AC 23; Fortitude 19, Reflex 21, Will 18	
Resist 15 acid	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy), overland flight 10, swim 7	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ◆ Acid	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes two claw attacks.	
M Tail Slash (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the dragon; at-will)	
The dragon uses its tail to attack the enemy that missed it: reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5, 6) ◆ Acid	
Close blast 5; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and takes -4 penalty to AC (save ends both).	
C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ◆ Acid	
The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.	
C Cloud of Darkness (standard, sustain minor; recharge 4, 5, 6) ◆ Zone	
Close burst 2; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon. Any creature entirely within the area (except the dragon) is blinded.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ◆ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +6 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Nature +9, Stealth +17	
Str 16 (+5) Dex 20 (+7) Wis 15 (+4)	
Con 16 (+5) Int 12 (+3) Cha 10 (+2)	

(HIGH LEVEL)

Terror, Young Black Dragon	Level 7 Solo Lurker
Large Natural Magical Beast (aquatic, dragon)	XP 1500
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
HP 288; Bloodied 144; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
AC 25; Fortitude 21, Reflex 23, Will 20	
Resist 15 acid	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy), overland flight 10, swim 7	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ◆ Acid	
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes two claw attacks.	
M Tail Slash (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the dragon; at-will)	
The dragon uses its tail to attack the enemy that missed it: reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5, 6) ◆ Acid	
Close blast 5; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and takes -4 penalty to AC (save ends both).	
C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ◆ Acid	
The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.	
C Cloud of Darkness (standard, sustain minor; recharge 4, 5, 6) ◆ Zone	
Close burst 2; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon. Any creature entirely within the area (except the dragon) is blinded.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ◆ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +8 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Nature +10, Stealth +18	
Str 16 (+5) Dex 20 (+7) Wis 15 (+4)	
Con 16 (+5) Int 12 (+3) Cha 10 (+2)	

ENCOUNTER 6: TERROR IN THE SWAMP - SCENE 1 MAP

The DM should just place down a battle mat with grids - preferably a mat with at least an 18x14 grid space. The PCs start somewhere centre-map. Roll 1d4 to determine the starting place of Terror (in relation to the PCs).



ENCOUNTER 7: TERROR IN THE SWAMP

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 1 Terror, young black dragon (T)
- 2 blood sea zombies (W)

A short rest gives you time to regroup and tend to your wounds. You eventually make your way to several small raised areas in the swamp. It looks like you can get up and out of the swamp water at these points. From these positions, you can survey the area. It looks grim. You are surrounded by swamp, except for what appears to be a small cave against a cliff-face about 100 feet beyond.

Have the PCs place their miniatures on the battle mat. If they haven't yet had their Short Rest, then let them take it now. They may also take a moment to discuss battle tactics if (when) Terror returns. If any PC tries to get to the cave, have Terror appear immediately and start melee.

During this combat, Corlacc Gargengrim and the other dwarves should be placed on the battle mat. As soon as combat begins, Corlacc orders the dwarves to get out of the dragon's range as soon as safely possible, and stay out of the way. The dragon won't deliberately target Dernan or the dwarves - but the PCs won't know this.

Once everybody is rested and ready, read:

It comes as no surprise to smell the acrid air that signals the approach of Terrizmoraskar, scourge of The Smear and mistress of the swamp. As she appears again, she seems somewhat healed, and more than ready to do battle unto death!

Once again, the DM should roll 1d4 to determine where Terror first appears. If the PCs have been readying actions for her to appear, then let them have a surprise round on her before rolling initiative.

The blood sea zombies do not appear at first. Terror calls them into action on her turn in round 2 of the combat. It is a free action for Terror to do this. She calls the wisps her "gifts from friendly humans".

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Swamp Water: Part of this melee may take place in swamp water. Medium sized PCs find themselves in water up to their thighs. This is not enough to give them cover, but it does make all movement in the swamp water difficult terrain. Small size PCs find themselves in water up to their waists. This limits their movement to 2 squares per round, but it does give them cover (+2 to AC) for the entire combat.

Land Type 1 (Mounds x2): There is no difficult terrain on these squares. PCs who stand on squares marked with a "@" find themselves in a raised position (10 feet above swamp level). Any PC standing in a square marked "@" gets +2 to hit against Terror due to his/her raised position. Give PCs a DC 10 Intelligence check to figure this out before combat begins.

Land Type 2 (Cliffs x 2): PCs who walk up on the cliff face no difficult terrain. The cliff is 10 feet above swamp level. PCs who want to take a short cut and climb the cliff must make a DC 12 Climb check to get up as part of a move action. Give PCs a DC 10 Intelligence check to figure this out before combat begins.

PCs who stand on squares marked with a "@" find themselves in a raised position (10 feet above swamp level). Any PC standing in a square marked "@" gets +2 to hit against Terror due to his/her raised position.

Swamp Gas: The region is riddled with pockets of volcanic gas. Terror knows this is not the best of place to fight, but the PCs are getting too close to her lair for her own comfort. A PC who spends a move action to stick a weapon or something similar in the ground creates a zone with a burst 2 until the end of the next turn. If any fire is produced in that region, the gas explodes. Any creature in the burst is attacked with a +7 / +10 vs. Reflex or takes 3d6 + 4 fire damage; miss: half. The zone keeps burning until the end of the next turn. Creatures that enter or start their turn in the zone take 1d6 + 4 fire damage. Terror hates the fire, and always leaves a burning zone.

During the fight these pockets of gas can also erupt spontaneously on a roll of 6 on a d6 (determined at Terror's turn).

TACTICS

In the first round, Terror uses her *frightful presence* first and then spends an action point to use her *breath weapon*. On her next turn she tries to recharge her *breath weapon* and use it again. If this fails, Terror moves into melee and does a *double attack*. She also uses her *tail slash* whenever she can.

As soon as Terror becomes bloodied, she unleashes her *bloodied breath* power. During her turn, Terror looks for opportunities to dive under the water and swim so that she gets to attack as many of the PCs as possible. She also gets total concealment while-ever she is underwater. If she can't dive, she flies up and over the PCs to reposition herself.

Terror fights to the death. She is proud, and if she escaped she knows she would never truly be "mistress of the swamp" again.

The blood sea zombies are gifts from the Cult of the Dragon and they follow Terror's orders. Normally they just attack the nearest opponent, grabbing big looking melee opponents and keeping them 1 square away from Terror while she attacks with reach. Terror is aware of their *gory death* power, and tries to keep at least 1 square away. PCs with a passive Insight of 17 / 18 realize this is the case.

Note: It is possible the PCs acquired the crocodile egg from the bog hag. If shown visibly to Terror, and activated through the proper ritual (standard action to make a DC 12 Arcana, Nature or Religion check, retries allowed), she believes it to be a dragon egg. If the PCs threaten to destroy it she becomes furious, staying within melee reach of the egg while trying to get it back. It can be used to lure her closer, or out of a zone of darkness. She does not suddenly become stupid and suicidal, and will not needlessly endanger her own safety. The egg grumbles to dust after its use.

If the PCs do not have the egg, running towards the cavern also forces Terror to approach the PCs in melee. She does not want her lair to be looted. It takes 5 rounds to get to the cavern.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Terror has 220 hit points (bloodied 110) at Low Level; and 250 hit points (bloodied 125) at High Level.

Six PCs: Terror has 300 hit points (bloodied 150) at Low Level; and 330 hit points (bloodied 165) at High Level.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

As soon as the PCs have dealt with Terror, they are free to search the cave they saw earlier. Inside the cave they find Bruunac and Dernan (or another dwarf). They are wet and sore (from being dragged in Terror's mouth underwater). Dernan says that Terror was getting ready to interrogate him when she was interrupted by the arrival of the party.

The PCs can also search Terror's lair. They find the treasure listed below without too much difficulty.

When everybody is ready to leave, read the following text to the players:

With the dragon defeated, there is no more danger. After tending to those who were captured by the dragon, you use the lair to get some much-needed rest.

In the morning, you look outside the cave and realize that the path to Loudwater is right nearby. Such is the power of Netherese rituals, mighty black dragons ... and dancing shadows!

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters each receive 200 / 300 experience points for this combat.

TREASURE

The PCs find Terror's dragon hoard after a brief search. Here is what they find: Two open crystal vials sealed with the symbol of the Cult of the Dragon (a DC 12 History check concludes that Terror must be a member of this group); a treasure chest containing 40 / 50 gp, *barkskin armor* +1 (low-level version only); *gauntlets of ogre power* (low-level version only); *horn of summons*; *helm of vigilant awareness*; *dragonslayer weapon* +2 (high-level version only); *orb of reversed polarities* +2 (high-level version only); ritual scroll of Comprehend Language and Eye of Alarm (low-level); ritual book of Secret Page and Sending (high-level).

ENCOUNTER 7: TERROR IN THE SWAMP (LOW LEVEL)

Terror, Young Black Dragon		Level 5 Solo Lurker
Large Natural Magical Beast (aquatic, dragon)		XP 1000
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 256; Bloodied 128; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>		
AC 23; Fortitude 19, Reflex 21, Will 18		
Resist 15 acid		
Saving Throws +5		
Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy), overland flight 10, swim 7		
Action Points 2		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid		
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).		
m Claw (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)		
The dragon makes two claw attacks.		
M Tail Slash (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the dragon; at-will)		
The dragon uses its tail to attack the enemy that missed it: reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.		
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ Acid		
Close blast 5; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and takes -4 penalty to AC (save ends both).		
C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Acid		
The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.		
C Cloud of Darkness (standard, sustain minor; recharge 4, 5, 6)		
♦ Zone		
Close burst 2; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon. Any creature entirely within the area (except the dragon) is blinded.		
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +6 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Nature +9, Stealth +17		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 15 (+4)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 12 (+3)	Cha 10 (+2)

Blood Sea Zombie (level 4)		Level 4 B rute
Medium elemental animate (undead, aquatic)		XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
HP 67; Bloodied 33		
AC 16; Fortitude 18, Reflex 15, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant; see also <i>zombie weakness</i>		
Speed 4, swim 8		
m Slam (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage.		
M Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed. Attempts to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.		
C Gory Death (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic		
Close burst 1; 4d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
Zombie Weakness		
A critical hit scored against a blood sea zombie reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 13 (+3)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 1 (-3)	Cha 3 (-2)

ENCOUNTER 7: TERROR IN THE SWAMP – SCENE 2 (HIGH LEVEL)

Terror, Young Black Dragon	Level 7 Solo Lurker
Large Natural Magical Beast (aquatic, dragon)	XP 1500
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
HP 288; Bloodied 144; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
AC 25; Fortitude 21, Reflex 23, Will 20	
Resist 15 acid	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy), overland flight 10, swim 7	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid	
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes two claw attacks.	
M Tail Slash (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the dragon; at-will)	
The dragon uses its tail to attack the enemy that missed it: reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ Acid	
Close blast 5; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and takes -4 penalty to AC (save ends both).	
C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Acid	
The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.	
C Cloud of Darkness (standard, sustain minor; recharge 4, 5, 6)	
♦ Zone	
Close burst 2; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon. Any creature entirely within the area (except the dragon) is blinded.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +8 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. <i>Afterspell:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Nature +10, Stealth +18	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 20 (+7) Wis 15 (+4)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 12 (+3) Cha 10 (+2)

Blood Sea Zombie (level 6)	Level 6 B rute
Medium elemental animate (undead, aquatic)	XP 250
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 87; Bloodied 43	
AC 18; Fortitude 20, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant; see also <i>zombie weakness</i>	
Speed 4, swim 8	
m Slam (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
M Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed. Attempts to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.	
C Gory Death (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic	
Close burst 1; 4d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
Zombie Weakness	
A critical hit scored against a blood sea zombie reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 13 (+4) Wis 13 (+4)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 1 (-2) Cha 3 (-1)

ENCOUNTER 7: TERROR IN THE SWAMP MAP

RUINS OF THE WILD

Mound	4x4	x 2
Cliff	4x4	x 2

The DM should just place down a battle mat with grids - preferably a mat with at least an 18x14 grid space. The PCs start on the centre tile. Roll 1d4 to determine the starting place of Terror (in relation to the PCs).



REWARDS SUMMARY

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

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

It is critical that you enter the PC rewards accurately on the tracking form, and ensure that the information is reported and entered online in a timely manner. While players will be able to track their character's information on paper, the online information serves as an important backup and verification of play. Ask the players for their RPGA numbers and character numbers (usually a single digit) when you begin to fill out the tracking form.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

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

Encounter 3: The Bridge

200 / 300 XP

Encounter 5: Bog, Swamp and Guts

100 / 200 XP

Encounter 6: Terror in the Swamp

300 / 400 XP

Minor Quest: Protect & Rescue Dernan

40 / 60 XP

Total Possible Experience

640 / 960 XP

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or some other item of value. Each player makes one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Mark the one-letter bundle ID on the tracking form next to any character that selects a bundle; note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or

subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that to the gold all characters receive, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. You can have a negative number and enter that negative online. PCs receive 20% of a magic item's purchase price for any item they sell. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

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

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

Gold Per PC

100 / 150 gp

(Encounter 1: 30 / 50 gp, Encounter 3: 30 / 50 gp, Encounter 6: 40 / 50)

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

Bundle A: *barkskin armor +1* (level 5) (low-level version only).

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle B: *gauntlets of ogre power* (level 5) (low-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle C: *horn of summons** (level 7)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle D: *helm of vigilant awareness** (level 7)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle E: *dragonslayer weapon +2* (level 9) (high-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle F: *orb of reversed polarities +2* (level 9) (high-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle G: ritual scroll of Comprehend Language and Eye of Alarm (low-level)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle H: ritual book of Sending and Secret Page (high-level)

Found in Encounter 6

Consumable Plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of healing* plus 75 / 200 gp to their total gold per PC. The player should write the potion gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the potion plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 125 / 250 gp to their total gold per PC. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. If a PC earns three awards, they may only have 2 of them and must pick which two they want before ending the session. Make sure to mark the story award codes next to each character that earned them on the tracking form.

Also note: The PCs only earn the Wrath of the Gargengrim dwarves if more than half of the dwarves were (somehow) killed during any of the combat encounters.

CORE19 Favor of Dernan

Dernan hopes he can one day repay your staunch protection from the horrors of the swamp, and the dragon known as Terror. This favor also begins a major quest to retrieve the fabled weapon known as *The Last Grasp of Shadowbane* which is run in the *Bane against Shadow* Trilogy.

CORE20 Favor of the Gargengrim Dwarves

For protecting the dwarves and their caravan, you receive the gratitude of the Gargengrim dwarves. This favor may be called upon in future adventures.

CORE21 Wrath of the Gargengrim Dwarves

For failing to protect the dwarves and their caravan, you receive the wrath of the Gargengrim dwarves. This may affect events in future adventures.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

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

1. Did the PCs protect Dernan in Encounter 4?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. Did the party defeat Terror?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Never reached this encounter.

3. Did the party interrogate the lizardfolk and learn about Clewsoro's involvement and relation with Netheril?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. Did the PCs earn the favor of the Gargengrim dwarves?

- a. Yes
- b. No

NEW RULES

Horn of Summons

Level 7

This steel battle horn alerts even those allies you cannot see.

Wondrous Item 2,600 gp

Power (Encounter): Standard Action. When you sound the horn, all creatures within 1 mile hear its call. Allies within that range are awakened if they are sleeping, and instantly know your current location, hit point total, and any effects currently affecting you.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 173.

Helm of Vigilant Awareness

Level 7

The gems mounted above the ears and eyeholes of this steel helmet flash red when a deafening noise or blinding light appears.

Item Slot: Head 2,600 gp

Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when an attack would make you blinded or deafened. The blinded or deafened condition from that attack does not affect you.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 143.

APPENDIX I: MAP OF THE FALLEN LANDS



PLAYER HANDOUT 1: THE WELL OF DRAGONS

In the canyonlands near the Sunset Mountains, north of the River Reaching, is an extinct volcano known as the Well of Dragons. Legend holds that this was a dragon graveyard - a place where old dragons go to die. That story is true.

A group known as the Cult of the Dragon found the Well of Dragons. The Cult believes that undead dragons should (and will) one day rule the world and, when they found the well, the cult unleashed its ancient guardian: an undead shadow dragon.

The cult built a fortress on the site, and dragons who want to live on in a state of “undeath” now visit the well to bargain for immortality. Deep within the well lies the Chamber of Ascension - the dread place where members of the cult perform the ritual to transform a dragon into a dracolich.

Rumor has it that the well is heavily guarded, and that the lord of the well is a human death knight known as Naergoth Bladelord. In charge of the ritual is a lich called Vargo the Faceless. It is said that when he was human, Vargo used a ritual to infuse himself with black dragon blood. This allows him a good deal of control over black dragons in particular, and he uses them as his scouts and spies all over the world.