

LEGENDARY BEGINNINGS



Trail of the Apprentice

The Bandit's Cave

Part 1 of 5





The Bandit's Cave

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BY PARIS CRENSHAW

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Welcome to Legendary Beginnings

This supplement is the first adventure in a series of family-friendly supplements from Legendary Games for 5th Edition! These can be played with the standard 5E rules or with the simplified rules in the starter set. The themes and style of these adventures are suitable for all ages, though they've been crafted with a particular eye toward younger gamers and those who are relatively new to tabletop roleplaying. Each one is packed with action, adventure, and danger, with opportunities to work as a team whether you're straight-up fighting the bad guys or finding more creative solutions to the challenges those villains put in your path.

Roleplaying is a fantastic hobby, and whether the people sitting down at your table are your own kids, neighbors, youth groups, scout troops, or just friends who've never sat down to roll the dice before. This product line gives you the material to create a fun-filled experience that sidesteps the more mature subject matter sometimes found in roleplaying products but without sacrificing the fun and excitement. Anytime you sit down with one of these adventures, you and your group are sure to have a **Legendary Beginning!**

Special Electronic Features

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with references to the official System Reference Document (SRD) and 5eSRD. If it is in the core 5E rules, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

About Legendary Games

Legendary Games is an all star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. and managed by Jason Nelson, Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers first, and we believe that passion shows in our products. So check us out, and Make Your Game Legendary!

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What You Will Find Inside The Bandit's Cave

The people of Corbin Village are hardy folk, familiar with the dangers of the region. But when a band of orcs raids the village, Sheriff McBride realizes she has more troubles than she can handle and calls on a group of heroes to bring the orcs to justice. To complicate matters, the orcs have stolen an item of great historical value from the local sage, and he wants it back. Can the PCs survive the dangers of a nearby marsh and locate the bandits' hidden lair? If they do, can they take down the orc raiders and recover the sage's precious statue?

The Bandit's Cave is an adventure for 1st-level characters. It is part one of *Trail of the Apprentice*, a full campaign made up of 5 interconnected adventure modules for the 5th Edition of the world's most famous roleplaying game! The *Trail of the Apprentice* saga and all adventures in the **Legendary Beginnings** line from Legendary Games are designed as exciting adventures suitable for all ages, but specially designed for those new to roleplaying and those on the younger side. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, allowing you to enliven and enrich your campaign in amazing and exciting ways. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

- Jason Nelson



THE BANDIT'S CAVE

The Bandit's Cave is a short adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 1st-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into two parts, and each part is designed to be run within a few hours. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 2nd level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

The Bandit's Cave is the first adventure in a mini-campaign entitled *Trail of the Apprentice*. A campaign is a series of adventures that are connected by a larger plot. You might think of a campaign as a television series, in which each adventure is like a different episode of the series. This campaign will play out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level. Game Masters can use this adventure on its own, as the beginning of *Trail of the Apprentice* or to kick off their own campaigns.

The story is set in the area around the village of Corbin. In the assumed setting, Corbin is part of the kingdom of Threll, located on the Terrallien continent of the planet Aeva. This module provides enough information to run the entire adventure, but is designed to be portable. As the GM, you can use it “as is” or set it in any setting you choose.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Moresby County, in the kingdom of Threll, rests on the northern banks of the Imlenite


FAMILY GAME NIGHT

One design goal for the *Trail of the Apprentice* adventures is to provide modules that an adult can quickly and easily prepare for use in a “family game night.” The adventures are designed to be appropriate for younger audiences, and our hope is that families will use these games to run at home, just as they would play board games or card games.

The adventures contain more straightforward plots with clear objectives. Killing monsters and fighting “the bad guys” is a big part of most fantasy RPGs, so we didn’t take that out, but we’ve kept the themes lighter and presented situations in which the player characters are heroes facing enemies who are obviously bad guys. The adventures’ challenges also present opportunities for teamwork and for individual players to shine.

Throughout the module, sidebars like this will give advice on running this adventure and on how to use the ideas presented here to build adventures of your own. Together with the presented combat maps and simplified stat blocks, this advice should make it quick and easy for the Game Master to prepare and start running each *Trail of the Apprentice* adventure.

River. The people of Moresby County are mainly farmers who sell their goods in the surrounding communities or to merchants who use the river to transport them elsewhere. The most active river port in Moresby County is the village of Corbin.



Several months ago, a group of orcs traveled out of the Westwatch Mountains and settled into Moresby County, where they have conducted occasional raids on merchants passing through the area. The county government knows about the bandit activity but has not yet put a stop to the raids.

The orcs attack at dusk, so word doesn't get to a town's sheriff until long after the bandits are gone. They also don't conduct attacks very often and don't always attack in the same area. Although people have been hurt in these bandit raids, the orcs don't seem to have a very large force, so the king's advisors don't see them as dangerous enough to assign a large team of soldiers to the task of stopping them. The lack of action, however, has allowed the orc threat to become even more serious.

An evil wizard named Belazeel contacted the orcs' leader, Gorocs, and hired the bandits to steal something from the sage who lives in Corbin Village. Gorocs is not very creative, even for an orc, and has decided to raid the town, let his bandit bandits take what they can, and steal the item from the sage during the chaos created by the raid. Belazeel offered the orcs a lot of money for the item, so Gorocs decided the risk is worth the reward.

The sage, Ithamar Ruggles, is a wizard and a historian. He possesses a strange artifact believed to be from Threll's ancient past: a statue of green jade carved to look like a snake whose twisted body looks something like a corkscrew resting on a flat base. On the outer edges of the spiraling crystal are carved runes in a language Ithamar has yet to decipher. Belazeel wants that statue for his own purposes, and he has paid dearly to get it.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins in the village of Corbin, where the characters might be resting at the local inn. They might instead be village locals who have yet to start their lives as adventurers. However they come to be there, the heroes are in Stone's Ordinary, the village tavern, when the orcs attack the village. Springing into action, the player characters must defeat one group of orcs before the rest of the raiding party withdraws from the town, taking their stolen prizes with them. The PCs are asked to track down the bandits and put a stop to any further raids. The local sage, Ithamar Ruggles, also asks them to recover the Green Serpent, a statue that was taken from his house.

The characters must follow the orcs' trail, which leads them into the swamp known as Tiller's Marsh. After braving the dangers of the swamp, the heroes find the orcs' hideout. Inside a hidden cave, the PCs must overcome the remaining orc bandits, traps and other dangers before facing Gorocs in his lair. If they succeed, the heroes can recover many of the town's lost possessions and end the threat the bandits have posed to travelers in Moresby County. Both of these accomplishments earn them rewards and praise from the leaders of Corbin.

They heroes will not be able to find Ithamar's statue in Gorocs' hoard, though, because the orc handed over the package to Belazeel's hawk familiar in accordance with the wizard's instructions. Instead, the PCs discover the gold that Belazeel paid the bandits to get the statue. The treasure chest also contains a note explaining the orcs' mission, signed only with a mysterious letter "B."

The PCs can learn from Ithamar Ruggles that the Green Serpent's sister, a nearly identical statue called the White Serpent, is held in the private collection of a nobleman living in the nearby city of Port Fairglade. If this mysterious "B" person wants one statue, it is likely that he will try to get the other, as well. This knowledge could set the characters on the course for an urban adventure, in which they might learn more about their hidden foe and why he wants these statues.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players have created their characters, are gathered around the gaming table and are ready to begin, start by reading the text below. When you've finished reading, set up the first combat area, either by hand-drawing the scene on a battle mat with dry- or wet-erase markers or using a printed copy of the combat map.

As you are enjoying each other's company in the common room of Stone's Ordinary, your conversation is interrupted by the sound of a bell ringing outside in the village square. The bell rings for a few moments, followed by a man's voice shouting a warning.

"To arms! To arms! Raiders inside the palisade!" The man repeats his warning, then begins ringing the bell again.

While the elders and the children in the Ordinary move to the back of the common room, away from the door, many of the villagers move toward the door, preparing to defend themselves and the village from the raiders.

Once the PCs move outside, continue describing the action in the town square:

To the east, the village's main gate would normally be closed to fend off an attack like this. Now, it is wide open and blocked by a covered wagon with several arrows sticking out of its side. A few villagers are trying to shove the wagon out of the way so they can close the gate, but they are not having any luck.

They aren't getting any help, either, because most people are busy running for their lives or fighting bravely against several big, green-skinned humanoids. The sight of these man-like creatures with their yellowed tusks jutting up from their lower jawbones, quickly reveals what is happening.

Corbin village has been invaded by orcs!



Players can attempt a **Intelligence (Nature)** checks to determine what they know about orcs. Succeeding on a DC 8 check tells the players that orcs are brutish humanoids who have darkvision. They are rarely found within Threll's borders but are more common in the nearby Westwatch Mountains. Characters with proficient in **Intelligence (Nature)** whose check result is 13 or higher also know that orcs are ferocious fighters who are mobile and ferocious in a fight (explain to the players that orc's aggressive special trait allows them to maneuver around the battlefield very quickly).

FIGHT!

Although you can spend as much time as you like letting the players introduce their characters and speak with some of the town's other residents, starting an adventure with an initial combat scene is a good way to get everyone involved. A combat encounter tells the players right away that it's time to settle down and focus on the game.

PART I: ATTACK ON CORBIN VILLAGE

While the town's militia fights off most of the orcs, the heroes must prevent a group of the bandits from breaking into the weapon smith's shop and stealing high quality swords and other weapons that would make them stronger in a future raid.

By the time the PCs arrive on the scene, militia members are already starting to engage the enemy. The characters can see a

wagon just inside the northern gate. Start by describing how a battle rages through and around the town: Militia members are fighting two orcs near the cart, and there are several orcs menacing other villagers along the road to the village square. Most of the villagers are common laborers, simple men, women and children with no weapons or other means to defend themselves. These folk run away from the orcs until armed militia members arrive to help defend them. Militia members have some training and can manage most of the bandits, but it should be clear that the PCs need to help.

1A. WEAPON THIEVES (300 XP)

The PCs soon see three orcs heading for the weaponsmith's shop:

Across the square, four orcs are trying to force their way into a house that is also the shop of Edwin Pierce, the village weapon smith. One orc is hacking at the door of the house with his axe, while three other orcs stand by, looking around for any villagers who might try to attack them. But it doesn't look like the town militia is coming any time soon.

If the PCs do not recognize the danger, point out to them that the smith probably has good quality weapons stored in his shop. The bandits could use them against the villagers or anyone else in Moresby County if they aren't stopped. That should get them moving.

If it doesn't, tell the players that their characters can hear cries for help coming from inside the house. The smith locked his family inside to keep them safe while he went to fight with the militia. It's up to the PCs to defend the family from the orcs!

ORC BANDITS (3)

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

16 (+3) 12 (+1) 16 (+3) 7 (-2) 11 (+0) 10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

HOW TO BE AN ORC

There are two main things that everyone needs to remember when playing a tabletop RPG. First, you're playing a character in a make-believe world. Second, you're playing a game that's supposed to be fun.

Many people who play RPGs want to portray a fantastic setting with an intricate plot and characters with deep motivations and a compelling back story. For gamers who have a lot of interest and experience in creating those elements, it is a big part of what makes playing RPGs fun. Other players may be more interested in developing and displaying tactical and strategic skills, but very few people start playing RPGs with that kind of experience. You need to keep that in mind, particularly if you are running games for young players.

In general, kids will respond more to a story if they are engaged in what is going on. Not every child—or adult, even—is going to enjoy listening to a long description of the scene. But most everyone will respond to a memorable, vividly portrayed character. Bringing those characters to life in a recognizable way is both a talent and a skill that good GMs develop over time.

An easy and fairly quick way to do this is to pick a single characteristic or mannerism that defines a character. Ithamar Ruggles may speak with an “old man’s” voice, while Sheriff McBride might have a much lower voice than most women. It’s up to you. Just do whatever is fun for you. If you’re having fun, the players will have more fun, too.

Gorocs’ orcs are big, mean, green-skinned brutes who take what they want and don’t think very much about anything. It’s okay for you to play them up as dumb and angry. You can even make it comical, switching from scary roars as the orcs attack to whimpers and cries as the PCs beat them up. The orcs don’t have to say anything at all during the fight, but if they do, things like “Me smash!” or “OW! You hurt Grunk’s head!” (spoken in a booming voice, of course) are perfectly fine.

Junior players will get into the action if you portray the orcs and any other characters using voices, facial expressions and hand gestures that make them entertaining and easy to recognize. Don’t be shy or embarrassed to give your characters your all. Your players will give it right back, and you’ll all have more fun.



A. WEAPON THIEVES

After the battle ends, read the following:

As the last of the orcs in the town either run away or fall to the villagers' blades, a few cheers go up around the square. Several militia members rush toward the gate, chasing the surviving orcs out of the village. Archers on the palisade fire arrows after the fleeing bandits, but the orcs quickly disappear into the dense foliage of the surrounding marsh.

The villagers pull the wagon all the way inside the walls and close the gate. For now, everyone is safe from further attack. Now, there is time to figure out what has happened and who needs healing.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Trail of the apprentice works best we feel using the milestone method of rewarding experience and gaining levels. Instead of tracking each individual number, concentrate more on the story and just level up each character at the conclusion of each adventure. You are certainly welcome to reward experience points as you go, whatever you and your players will have more fun with.

Treasure: As soon as it is clear that the danger has passed, Edwin Pierce finds the PCs and offers them his deepest thanks to the heroes for saving his family and his shop from the orc attackers. Edwin has no gold or jewels to give them, but he promises to make four melee weapons of their choice for free. A weapon may be expensive, but he considers these gifts the least he can give in return for saving the lives of his wife and children.

Development: Give the PCs a chance to heal themselves. If they have money to purchase healing, they can visit Brother Cyrus Beckwith, the local priest and apothecary, who makes and sells medicines. Brother Beckwith is busy helping many injured villagers but can also help the PCs. He changes 50 gold for potions of healing (2d4+2 hit points) and 50 gold for a cure wounds spell (1d8+3 hit points for his casting).

Once the PCs have had a chance to recover from the attack, Sheriff McBride invites them to join her in her office at the village guardhouse. When they arrive, read the following:

Sheriff McBride settles into her chair and leans back, putting her hands on the top of her head. She closes her eyes and sighs deeply. After a moment, she opens them again and looks at each of you.

“You all did very well, today. I am glad that you are friends of Corbin Village. Those orcs would have been harder to defeat were it not for you. The bandits could have stolen Pierce’s weapons, and who knows what would have happened to his family if you hadn’t helped.”

The sheriff sits up and places her elbows on her desk.

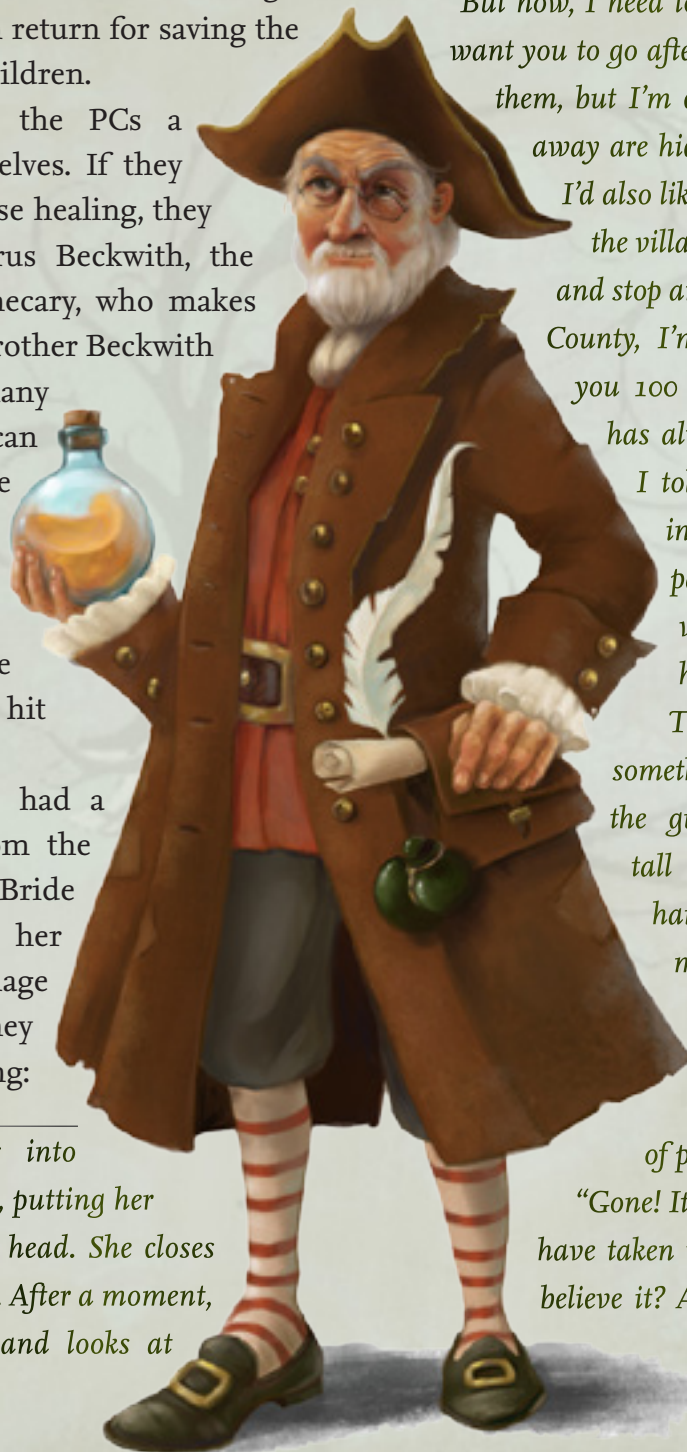
“But now, I need to ask for your help, again. I want you to go after those orcs. We got some of them, but I’m convinced the ones who got away are hiding out somewhere nearby.


I’d also like to know why they attacked the village. If you can figure that out and stop any future attacks in Moresby County, I’m prepared to pay each of you 100 gold pieces. Mayor Crump has already agreed to the reward.

I told him how good you were in the fight, and he’s ready to pay you if you can come back with proof that the bandits have been defeated.”

The sheriff is about to say something else when the door to the guardhouse bursts open. A tall man with disheveled white hair and a bushy beard and mustache comes barging into the room. His long brown coat is covered in dust and what look like scraps of paper.

“Gone! It’s gone, Sheriff! Those brutes have taken the Green Serpent! Can you believe it? And I’m sure I was close to deciphering its purpose!”





Once the man calms down, Sheriff McBride introduces him as Ithamar Ruggles, the town sage, who in turn explains that he was robbed during the raid. His house was ransacked and some items of value were taken. Although he would like to get back all of his belongings, he is most concerned that an item of particular historical importance was taken: a small, carved jade statue in the shape of a spiraling snake, with strange runes carved on the outer edges. He calls the statue the “Green Serpent.”

Ithamar has been trying to translate the runes for years. He always feels he is on the verge of discovering their meaning, but has yet to succeed. He still has his notes, including drawings of the statue, but they are worthless when compared to the statue, itself.

If the PCs ask for more information about the statue, Ithamar happily tells them that it seems to have been crafted by the people of an ancient civilization that once flourished in this part of the world. Oddly, the writing on the statue doesn’t match any known language, living or dead, that scholars have associated with the people of this continent. The exact meaning and purpose of the statue are unclear, but it was very intricately carved. It is obviously an item that some ancient, unknown civilization considered to be important, but he doesn’t know why. Ithamar can show the characters a picture of the statue, if they accompany him back to his home.

Sheriff McBride will interrupt Ithamar’s story and tell him that she was just offering the PCs the job of going after the bandits. Although she is mainly concerned with stopping any further bandit raids, she hopes that they can find the statue and the sage’s other belongings.

In return for recovering his belongings, Ithamar offers to cast spells for the PCs or to teach new spells to any wizards in the party. He is willing to cast or teach two 1st level spells or one 2nd level spell for each player if they bring back the Green Serpent and his other belongings.

When the party has finished negotiating with the Sheriff and Ithamar, they can move on to the next section. The party can rest for the night and start their search in the morning, after they have had a chance to recover their spells, if they wish. They will be better prepared to face the dangers of the swamp and will stand a better chance of surviving to find the bandit’s cave.

TRACKING THE BANDITS

The first thing the PCs need to do is determine where the orcs went. The best way to do this is to follow their tracks back to their hideout. These orcs are not very smart and didn’t do a good job of covering those tracks, this time. The PCs might follow the trail the orcs left after raiding the town, but the orcs scattered after they got past the main gate. Finding the right tracks that lead into Tiller’s Marsh is difficult, requiring a DC 15 **Wisdom (Survival)** check.

If the PCs succeed in making this check, they can follow the tracks directly into the marsh and save valuable time. The PCs will still face the dangers of Tiller’s Marsh, but they might find the hidden entrance to the bandits’ cave before sunset. The orcs have darkvision, so they may have an advantage over PCs who arrive at night. If the PCs follow this trail, you can proceed to **encounter 1b**.

After each encounter in the swamp, the PCs must succeed on a DC 8 **Wisdom (Survival)** check to regain the orcs' trail. If they fail that check, add one hour to the time it takes to find the entrance to the bandits' cave. Keep track of how many hours have been added. If they are delayed by three or more hours, the PCs will arrive at **encounter 1e** after sunset.

If the PCs can't find the more difficult tracks, they still have a path to follow. The orcs stole the wagon they used to get into the town from a group of merchants. The PCs can follow those tracks to where the orcs attacked the merchants then pick up the bandits' trail into the swamp. Although following the wagon tracks requires only a DC 8 **Wisdom (Survival)** check, it will add a two hours to the PCs' journey, making it almost certain that they will arrive at the cave after nightfall.

The wagon trail leads a few miles down the main road to where the heroes find evidence of a battle.

The wagon's tracks change as you reach this part of the road. In places they become very deep, and veer off to one side, as though the cart stopped suddenly. The wheel tracks are surrounded by deep boot prints, like the ones made by the orcs' boots back in Corbin. There are also smaller tracks that seem very disorganized.

Searching the area (and succeeding on a DC 8 **Intelligence (Nature)** check) reveals that the smaller tracks are probably those of the merchants who owned the cart. They appear to have survived the attack, and headed east, back toward Hagwatch Tower. If the players want to go after the merchants, inform them that even if the merchants are injured,

they will be able to find healing and other assistance from the knights who live at the Tower. The PCs should focus on following the orcs, instead.

The orcs' trail leads north, toward Tiller's Marsh. From here, the PCs will need to follow the tracks for about three miles through swampy terrain to catch the orcs. Along the way, the PCs must overcome a number of challenges before they find the bandits' hideout and take on the vicious orcs who attacked Corbin.

OVERLAND MOVEMENT

When your characters need to make a journey, you don't need to describe every step of the way. You don't even have to describe what happens on each day of the journey, if you don't want to. Going into that level of detail can get boring, even if you roll for random encounters at frequent intervals.

You can use challenges like the ones presented in this section to illustrate progress in an overland journey. Even if some encounters don't have anything to do with the reason for going on the journey, punctuating the trip with difficulties or events helps the players get a sense that the PCs are crossing great distances to achieve their goals. By giving them a few exciting or interesting things to do, the players will feel they're traveling without having to hear the mundane details of every step along the way.

B. YOUNG ASSASSIN VINE



1B. YOUNG ASSASSIN VINE (200 XP)

The heroes first come upon an area overgrown with ivy (see the combat map provided). Hidden among the normal vines is a dangerous threat: an immature assassin vine. An assassin vine is a carnivorous plant that tries to strangle its prey. The vine can't move very fast, so it relies on its ability to magically animate normal plants and vines to entangle and hold its victims. This assassin vine is still young, so it doesn't have as many hit points, isn't as strong, and can't animate as many plants as a mature vine, but it can still be dangerous.

The daylight dims as tree branches come together and form a canopy over the marsh. The air is filled with the smell of damp earth. At first, the only sounds are the creaking of branches, the rustling of leaves moved by a light breeze, and the buzzing of flying insects rushing by. Then, a soft splashing sound erupts nearby as a frog jumps into a pool of water.

Movement: Walking through Tiller's Marsh isn't easy. Patches of land are covered in shallow bogs, which sometimes grow into deeper bogs. Bogs count as difficult terrain (moving through one square of bog costs 2 squares of movement). The PCs have to pick their way through the swamp along patches and pathways of dry ground to make progress.

Even dry ground can be difficult to pass when they become covered in thick undergrowth.

After you have given the players a sense of the creepiness of the swamp, have them roll **Wisdom (Perception)** checks. If one of the PCs overcomes the assassin vine's passive Stealth DC of 15, he will spot the dangerous plant, hiding among the normal vines. Check the results of the players' rolls, but don't tell them what they've seen, yet. First, read the following:

A thick patch of ivy grows over the path, here, where the higher, dry ground passes between two old trees. The vines climb up the tree trunks, covering them in deep green leaves, just as they cover the ground at the base of the trees.

PCs who succeed on the check see a thick vine, about the size of a child's arm, among the ivy. This vine's leaves are shaped like hands, and it twitches slightly, even though it should be protected from any breeze that might move

it. Allow players proficient in **Intelligence (Nature)** to attempt another check to identify the plant.

If they do not recognize the threat, or don't see the vine at all, the vine will attack the first character to pass through the patch of ivy between the two trees:

The leaves and vines around you suddenly begin squirming, twisting and thrashing. Some of them wrap around your legs, trying to grab you and pull you down. As you watch, one of the vines, thicker than the others, begins to wriggle and squirm toward you!

The assassin vine begins by animating the surrounding ivy and trying to make passage difficult for its chosen prey. The plant is mindless, so it only knows that the first character is a potential food source. Any PC in the ivy patch sees the plants moving and must spend two squares of movement to move through one square.

The assassin vine will attempt to grab and strangle the first PC caught in the vines. If that PC gets free, it will pursue any other PC caught in the vines or the nearest PC that is not entangled. If it can get within 15 feet of a character, it will use its entangle ability on vines and even roots in the ground, to try and hold him. The vine isn't very fast, but the entangling vines around it can make this a challenging encounter.

ASSASSIN VINE CHALLENGE 1

Assassin Vine

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 25 (5d8 + 6)

Speed 5ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 60ft.

Condition Immunities blinded, frightened, paralyzed, prone

Damage Vulnerability fire

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Animate Plants. As a bonus action the assassin vine can animate normal plants within a 15 foot cube originating from it causing the area to become difficult terrain.

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one

Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the assassin vine can't constrict another target.

Treasure: Half-buried in the dirt at the base of the tree lies a small silver statue of a Knight of Hagwatch Tower, worth 20gp.



ASSASSIN VINE TACTICS

The assassin vine can't move very fast and most characters who are paying attention—and make their Perception or Knowledge (nature) checks—can easily stay out of its way and either move past it or kill it with ranged weapons. However, don't forget that the plant can use its entangle ability as a free action **every round**. That means that it can move toward the nearest PC and then use its ability to move the area affected by its ability. By doing so, there's a chance that it can catch an unwary PC and hold him long enough to move over and try to strangle him.

1C. SWAMP GAS (100 XP)

The ground in this part of Tiller's Marsh is uneven and scattered with muddy patches that sink down to form shallow pools of black water. The usual, earthy smell of the swamp is replaced by the unpleasant odor of rot. Thin, straight pine trees rise up from the ground and spread their roots through the earth. The trees that stand in the pools are either sickly or completely dead, drowned by the same water that once gave them life.

Start this encounter by drawing or laying out the "Swamp Gas and Lizardfolk Attack" combat map and have all the players place their characters on the bottom of the map near the square marked with an X.

If you wish, you can scare the players a little by having them attempt DC 12 **Intelligence (Nature)** check to realize that this place would

be a perfect home for a black dragon. There is no dragon, of course, but the players don't know that.

Hazard: As the characters make their way through the swamp, a cloud of poisonous gas bubbles up from the muck. The cloud bursts through the surface of the pool at the spot on the map marked with a triangle and spreads to fill a 30-foot cube. The fumes are so strong that any creature in the cloud must succeed on a DC 12 **Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned.

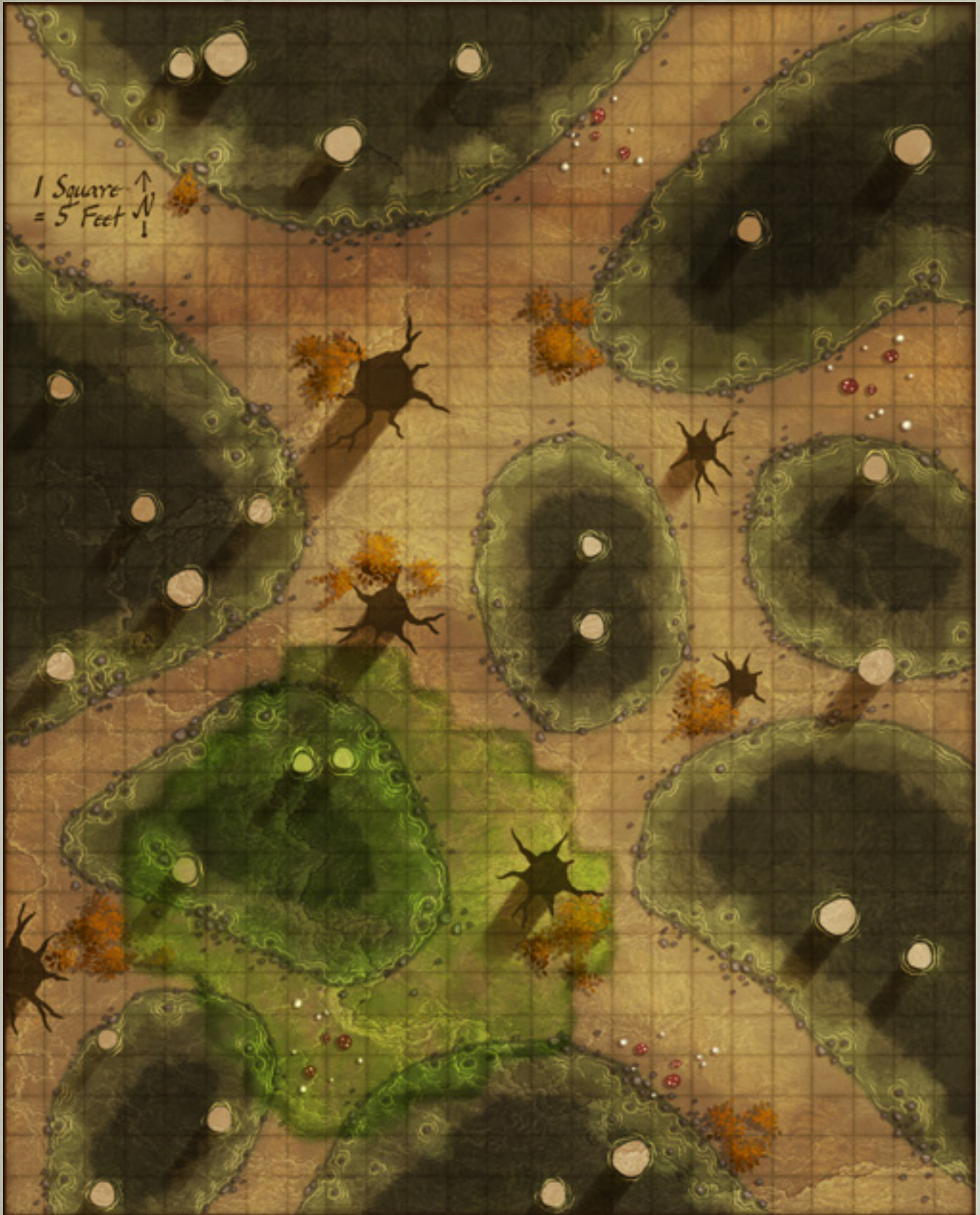
This condition lasts as long as the character is in the cloud and for 1d4+1 rounds after he leaves. (Roll separately for each poisoned character.) Any character that succeeds on his save but remains in the cloud must make a new Fortitude save each round on his turn. This is a poison effect. The cloud remains for 5 rounds before it naturally disperses and is no longer dangerous—although it still smells terrible.

PCs can make DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** checks to detect the terrible smell of rot and decay before they enter the cloud. Any PC proficient in **Intelligence (Nature)** can attempt a second DC 15 check to realize that the smell comes from poisonous gases and that the party should wait until the fumes have dispersed.

Experience Award: After the PCs have encountered the swamp gas hazard, divide the experience among the players, even if they were poisoned by the gas.

Development: If the PCs don't avoid the hazard, they might be at a disadvantage when they are discovered by the lizardfolk patrol in the next encounter.

C. SWAMP GAS AND LIZARDFOLK PATROL





1D. LIZARDFOLK PATROL (200 XP)

A small party of lizardfolk hunters is exploring Tiller's Marsh, hoping to start a new colony on the shores of Corbin's Creek. These lizardfolk are members of a cruel and evil tribe who would plague the people of Moresby County with great troubles if they establish a foothold in the area. They also know that anyone who finds them in the swamp may spread word of their presence and ruin their shaman's plans to take over the marsh. The hunters try to kill anyone they meet.

Unless the PCs were trying to be stealthy, the hunters noticed them just before the swamp released its gas cloud. Even if they were trying to be stealthy, the PCs' reaction to the poisonous fumes gave the lizardfolk plenty of clues about

their presence. Lizardfolk are familiar with the hazards of swamp gas. They hope that the PCs were poisoned by the cloud and plan to attack them in a moment of weakness, but they are nervous and will wait 1d6 rounds before attacking the party. Their hesitation may give sickened PCs a chance to recover before the lizardfolk attack.

Suddenly, hisses and shrieks erupt from across the marsh. Two figures rise up from behind a small mound of dirt. They appear humanoid, but their skin is covered with dark scales highlighted with yellow stripes and blue patches, their long faces have mouths with sharp teeth and they have long, whip-like tails. They raise wicked-looking throwing spears and unleash more of their challenging shrieks as they prepare to attack!

Creatures: The hunting party consists of 2 lizardfolk. PCs can identify these creatures by surpassing a DC 11 **Intelligence (Nature)** check. Characters who succeed know that lizardfolk are reptilian humanoids who have a tribal way of life and that they are known for eating their enemies. A check result of 15 or higher reveals that most lizardfolk tribes live far to the south and there are no tribes known to dwell in Tiller's Marsh. The real reason for the lizardfolks' presence here is a mystery the PCs may wish to investigate later.

LIZARDFOLK (2)

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30ft., swim 30 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA

15 (+2) 10 (+0) 13 (+1) 7 (-2) 12 (+1) 7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Heavy Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Spiked Shield. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Treasure: Each lizardfolk has a belt pouch containing crystals and semi-precious stones worth a total of 15 gold pieces.

Development: If the lizardfolk escape, they will return to their shaman with news that Tiller's Marsh is heavily defended by local settlers. The shaman may choose to investigate another swamp, or she may decide that she needs to build her tribe into a powerful army to take over the swamp by force. This could be the foundation for later adventures in and around Corbin.

If the PCs are heavily wounded after this fight, let them have a short or long rest. It is more important that they have fun than it is to impose a time limit on the adventure. If they do rest, however, the PCs arrive at the bandit's cave at night and will have to wait until morning if they wish to approach during the daytime.

1E. SAVING MALVIN DICKERSON (50 XP)

The heroes come upon a local hunter named Malvin Dickerson, who fell into quicksand while following the tracks of a large boar. If the heroes save him, he can share useful information about the area.

The map shows the area around the quicksand, which is located in a deep ravine that was once the bed of a flowing creek. Over the years, the slow-flowing stream deposited silt into the ravine, creating an area of fine mud that can easily trap a person's feet and drag them down if they are not careful. Unfortunately, Malvin was paying more attention to the boar's tracks and thinking too much about the large meal he would have when he caught it. He stepped too close to the edge of the ravine and fell in.

The PCs arrive on the scene via the trail at the southern end of the map. Malvin is trapped in the mud in the square marked with a triangle.

SCALING ENCOUNTERS

Although the Swamp Gas and Lizardfolk Patrol encounters represent two separate events, the effects of the gas can overlap with the lizardfolk attack. Combining a trap or hazard with a fight can add excitement and danger to an encounter, but it might also be too much for an inexperienced party or one that has been weakened by previous attacks.

As the GM, your job is to present challenging and entertaining encounters for your players. Sometimes, that requires adjusting an encounter “on the fly” to prevent a “total party kill” (TPK, for short). Since you don’t “win” the game by killing off all the player characters, you might want to scale this encounter to make it a little easier. Scaling an encounter means adjust how challenging it is, so the party has a chance to overcome it. Using options to scale an encounter in the middle of the game helps you keep it fun for everyone.

Before starting the lizardfolk attack, check to see how many characters are poisoned and how long those effects will last. Also think about how many hit points the characters have and how likely they are to defeat the lizardfolk in their current state. Do the PCs have good stats that would normally give them an edge over the lizardfolk? Are there more than four PCs? Have they shown a good use of tactics in previous fights? Factors like these can offset the effects of the swamp gas and make for a challenging, but not impossible, encounter.

However, if your PCs have been weakened by previous battles, their key ability scores are not very high, or most of them failed their saves and are poisoned, hitting them with a full-on attack might be too much for them. In that case, you can delay the lizardfolks’ attack until the PCs are closer to recovering from the gas. You might even decide the lizardfolk have been affected by swamp gas, too, and give them the poisoned condition.

On the other hand, if you think the encounter will be too easy for the PCs, you can add one or more lizardfolk to the encounter. For defeating 3 lizardfolk, the party should receive 300 XP. For defeating 4 lizardfolk, the reward is 400 XP.

A narrow animal trail passes through thick undergrowth in this part of the marsh. Up ahead, the pathway opens into what may be a clearing. A thin breeze blows through, carrying the rustling of leaves and small branches, but also the faint sounds of a man’s voice.

“Help! Please, can anyone hear me? Please help! I’m sinking!”

The PCs need to move forward to the edge of the ravine to investigate.

The animal trail doesn’t open into a clearing. Instead, it branches to the left and right, along the edge of a ravine that is perhaps twenty feet deep. The sides are very steep and look slippery. A pool of muddy water lies directly below where the trail branches, but most of the ravine is filled with dark brown mud.

In the ravine, a man is up to his chest in the muck. He struggles weakly to free himself, although he doesn’t seem to be sinking very fast. He sees you and waves his arm.

“Oh, thank goodness!” he cries. “Please help me. I’ve been here for hours, already. I can’t feel my legs, and it’s getting hard to breath.”

Malvin has been in the quicksand with the mud squeezing his legs for so long that they’ve gone numb. He cannot get out on his own. The PCs need to help him, but have to figure out how. Let the players improvise and come up with ideas of their own, but if they need some help, you can suggest some of the options below, most of which require the PCs to get to the other side of the ravine, first.

Crossing the Ravine: If the PCs need to jump or make some kind of bridge to get across the ravine, there is a chance they will fall into the mud, as well. Jumping across requires a DC

D. SAVING MALVIN DICKERSON



15 Dexterity (**Acrobatics**) check, because the undergrowth prevents the PCs from getting a running start of 10 feet. The PCs can spend a minute to clear enough of the bushes for a 10-foot running start. Another option is to throw a grappling hook to the other side and try to snag a bush or tree. Let the players talk through a solution. Malvin definitely needs help, but the PCs have a little time to figure things out.

Toss a rope and pull him out: If they have a rope, the PCs can tie one end into a ball and throw it to Malvin by making a ranged attack roll against Armor Class 5 to get the rope to Malvin's. If they miss the end of the rope is out of his reach. If they succeed the rope lands beside or in front of Malvin and he can reach

it. They can always pull the rope back and try again.

Once the Malvin has the rope, the PCs need to make a DC 13 **Strength** check and Malvin needs to make a DC 8 **Strength** check to pull him 5 feet closer to the edge of the ravine. Malvin has a Strength score of 12, giving him a +1 modifier to his check.

Unlike the rules for normal quicksand, Malvin does not sink beneath the mud. Instead, he gets a little more stuck, adding +2 to the DC of the next **Strength** check. These penalties add up, so failing too many times will eventually make it impossible to get Malvin out without help from the villagers. If the players think to have Malvin tie the rope around his chest, he cannot fail his **Strength** check and does not risk getting more stuck.

If the PCs can get Malvin to the edge of the ravine, they can pull him up the cliff. Malvin needs to make a DC 10 **Strength (Athletics)** check. Because he is weakened from his long stay in the mud, he has disadvantage on the check. If he fails the check by 5 or more, Malvin falls back into the mud and gets stuck, again. If Malvin has the rope tied around his chest, the PCs can just pull him up the cliff with another DC 15 Strength check.

Lower a long branch so Malvin can pull himself out: This only works if the PCs first cross the ravine. In this case, the PCs need to make a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find a branch that is strong enough to pull Malvin out of the mud. Using the branch

follows the same rules as if the party were using a rope, except that Malvin cannot tie the branch around himself.

Forming a chain of people to reach him and pull him out. As with the branch, the PCs need to cross the ravine for this method to work. The PCs must hold hands and lower their companions one by one down into the ravine. The cliff is 20 feet high, meaning that four medium-sized characters are needed to form a chain long enough to reach Malvin.

Each PC needs to make a DC 13 **Strength** check to hold onto his companions. This DC increases by +2 for each character beneath the PC. So, the PC pulling on Malvin must make a DC 15 **Strength** check, while the PC at the top of the cliff needs to make a DC 21 **Strength** check. A PC who fails the check by 5 drops all the characters below him. Obviously, this is the most dangerous method because most of the PCs risk getting stuck in the mud. At least one of the PCs (the one at the top) should still be able to go get help, but this will cause a serious delay in finding the bandits' hideout.

Development: If the PCs can't get Malvin out on their own, they must send someone back to Corbin to bring more help. The PCs can toss down a couple of small logs to help keep Malvin from sinking completely. Malvin won't drown by the time the PCs get back with help, but if the PCs get help from the village, they should only receive 25 XP—half the normal experience award for this encounter. If the villagers also have to rescue the PCs, they should receive only 25 XP.

Once Malvin is free, he is very grateful to the PCs, even if they had to get help from the villagers. He gladly shares what he knows about the area, giving them valuable information about the dangers ahead.

Malvin tells the PCs that he was particularly interested in catching the boar whose tracks he was following, because it was bigger than most of the wild pigs he's seen in this area. It would have been a good catch for him. Malvin doesn't know it, but the boar he was tracking is actually Gorocs' pet, Longtusk. The PCs should be able to recognize the boar's tracks when they see them in the bandits' cave.

Malvin has seen the orcs' tracks, himself, and thinks he knows where they went. The problem is he also knows that a giant grass spider has taken up residence in that area. The hungry spider attacks any who disturb her lair. He guesses that the orcs have a hideout near the spider's lair, using the monster to keep intruders away. However, he also knows that the orcs must have a way to get past the beast without being eaten. He tells the PCs to be on the lookout for clues that will tell them how they're getting past the spider.

Treasure: As a reward for helping him, Malvin offers the PCs his magical +1 longbow, saying that it has served him well in the past and that he hopes it will help them in their quest.

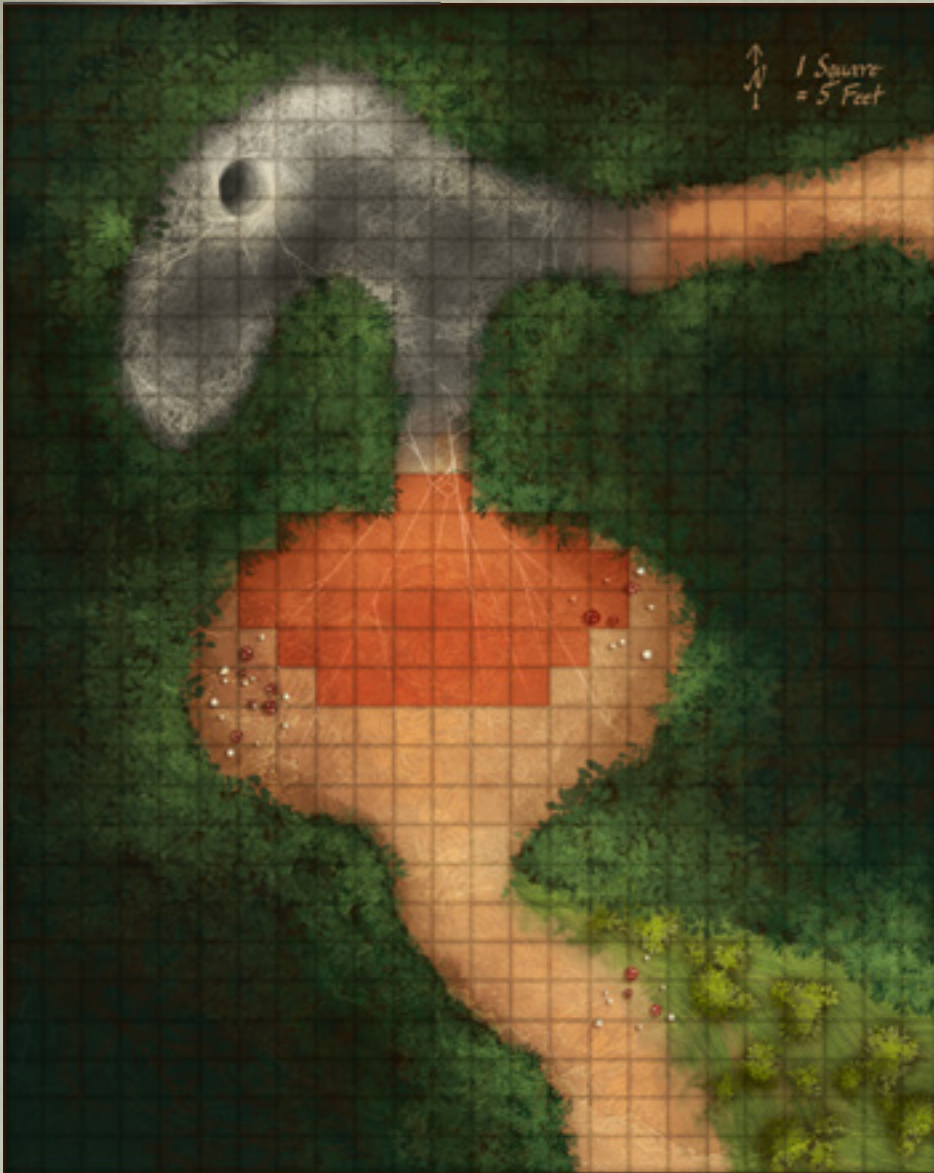
1F. GIANT GRASS SPIDER (200 XP)

The swamp is even darker here, and the trees grow closer together and take on a blacker hue than the plants closer to Corbin. Although weak light still filters through the trees, the scene ahead could easily make you wish for darkness to cover it.

The orcs' trail leads into an area where the trees and bushes are completely covered by a thick layer of webs. A web-shrouded tunnel seems to be the only exit from the clearing, but that way does not look at all inviting.

Scattered around the mouth of the tunnel are the bones of several small animals, still neatly wrapped in silk—the grisly remains of a feast for what must be a very large spider.

E. GIANT GRASS SPIDER



This narrow path is the only way to get to the bandit's cave. Unfortunately, the tunnel is the home of a large, hungry spider. The orcs have figured out that they can throw rabbits or other small animals into the creature's web to distract it while they pass through. They use the spider's escape tunnel at the other end of its lair and quickly head down the trail toward their cave. The orcs make sure to keep a few animals on hand at the cave to feed the spider when they need to leave their hideout, as well.

Observant characters recognize the evidence of the orcs' tactic scattered around the area. There are just too many animals here for all of

them to have wandered in by themselves. Characters who study the bones can attempt DC 11 **Intelligence (Nature)** checks to identify the animals. If the result of the roll is 13 or more, the PC know that many of these animals are not even swamp-dwellers, meaning that someone had to bring them to the spider's web.

Creature: If the party misses these clues or decides not to use the orcs' methods, they have to fight the spider. The spider is a giant grass spider, which builds its web in a funnel shape and covers the area around the funnel in sheets of webbing. Aside from the way the web is built, this spider has the same statistics as a giant black widow spider.

Have each of the PCs roll a DC 17 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. If they succeed, they notice the spider hiding just inside the mouth of the webbed tunnel. If the PCs fail the check, they are surprised when the spider attacks.

Refer to the combat map provided for this encounter. The first PC to step into any of the red shaded squares sends vibrations through the spider's web, alerting it to the PC's presence and causing it to attack that character. The spider uses its action in the surprise round to move up to the unfortunate character. Clever PCs may choose to throw a large rock or other

item onto one of these squares, first, causing the spider to move to that area, instead. The spider loses its surprise action but turns to attack the nearest PC on the first round.

On the other hand, if the PCs throw a small animal or some other morsel of food big enough to interest the large spider (the GM can decide if the food is big enough), it spends 1d4+1 rounds wrapping the prey in its silk before it attacks anyone else. The PCs can use this time to get into the tunnel and through the web. If the PCs stop to explore, the spider catches them in its lair. If they attack the spider while it is wrapping its prey, the spider will defend itself.

GIANT GRASS SPIDER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)

Speed 30ft., climb 30ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 16 (+3) 12 (+1) 2 (-4) 11 (+0) 4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +7

Senses blindsight 10ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed *save*, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (*Recharge 5-6*). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage). To snare its prey, a giant spider spins elaborate webs or shoots sticky strands of webbing from its abdomen.

Treasure: If they manage to kill the spider, the PCs can search its lair, which has a few items of value mixed in with the remains of previous meals. Some time ago, an adventurer learned about the giant spider and came here hoping to kill it. He was unprepared to handle the beast on his own, however, and became its meal. His belongings include a few items that would have helped him against the spider, but he never got the chance to use them. Mixed among the remains are a shortsword, small wooden shield, leather armor, a potion of lesser restoration, four potions of healing, two potions of shield of faith, and a leather pouch containing 25 gold pieces.

Experience Award: The PCs do not have to fight the spider to earn experience for this encounter. However, if they do not kill the spider this time, they have to either fight it or

sneak by it again when they leave the bandits' cave. The PCs should not get any extra XP for defeating the spider a second time.

Development: The spider is a dangerous foe and it is possible that one or more PCs will die during this fight. If this happens, you may consider replacing the four healing potions with a scroll of raise dead. Although the scroll's value is much higher than what would normally be found by a low-level party, it may be better to let them have it so players can continue with the adventure. If the party has no cleric—or the cleric is killed (and no other character has the spell *raise dead* on their spell list)—the PCs will need to return to Corbin Village and ask Brother Beckwith to use the scroll for them.

APPROACHING THE BANDIT'S CAVE

Once they get past the spider, the PCs can quickly move down the trail and make the approach on the bandit's cave. The orcs' tracks are easy to follow, here, and it is obvious that the bandits are not concerned about being found. Their hideout must be close by.

If the PCs left the spider's web after sunset and don't have the ability to see in the dark, they need to use torches to see. Approaching the cave while carrying torches ruins any chance the PCs have of surprising the orcs. It is also likely that many of the PCs' depleted many of their spells or other resources on the journey here, making an attack on the caves as soon as they arrive a dangerous proposition.

Let the characters rest, if they wish, even if they rested after fighting with the lizardfolk. The orcs have plenty of food and are still enjoying the thrill of their raid on Corbin, so they will not leave their cave for another day or so. The PCs can still approach the cave on the

following morning without losing the benefit of surprise.

On the other hand, if the PCs choose to return to Corbin and come back later, there are things to consider. If they snuck past the spider, the PCs won't alert the orcs to their presence. They can get back to Corbin and return to the cave with no problems, although you may choose to add a few random encounters for their journey through the swamp.

If the PCs killed the spider, remind them that the orcs might find its body and will know that someone killed it. The orcs will be expecting an attack when the PCs return.

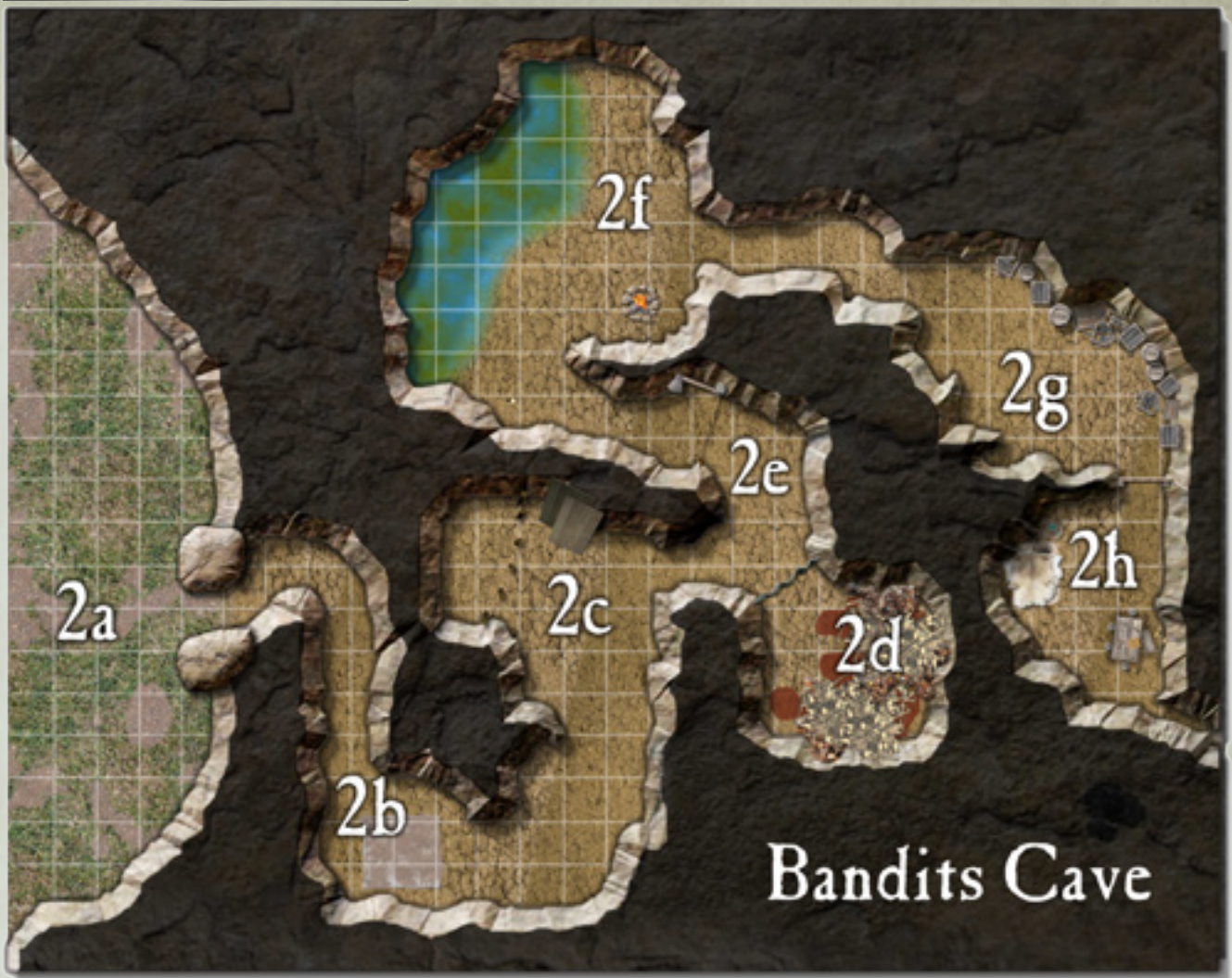
If they choose to go back to Corbin, anyway, Gorocs finds the dead spider and stations his wolf, Bloodbite, at the cave entrance, along with a fourth orc (remove one orc from **encounter 2F** and remove the wolf from **encounter 2H**). This makes it even more difficult to get into the cave without alerting all the orcs inside.

PART II: INTO THE BANDIT'S CAVE

Now that they have found the bandits' hideout, the PCs have to figure out how to get in without alerting all the orcs there. Including Gorocs, there are 14 orcs in the cave, plus their pets, Longtusk the boar and Bloodbite the wolf. The orcs have a few other surprises for intruders, as well, and even have some uninvited guests who might cause problems for the PCs.

The cave in which the orcs are hiding is mostly a natural formation, created by water eroding a limestone deposit long ago. The cave opens to the surface as a low, narrow crevice in the side of a hill beside the creek. The floors of the cave are stone, covered with a thin layer of hardened clay and mud. There

F. THE BANDIT'S CAVE



are no lights inside the cave, except for the campfire in **area 2F**, because the orcs have darkvision. Gorocs does have a few candles in his quarters in **area 2H**, but he only lights them when he needs to read or write, which is very rarely.

Except for Gorocs, all the orcs in the cave use the same statistics as the orc bandits in **encounter 1A**.

2A. CAVE GUARDS (300 XP)

A group of three orcs stands guard next to a ten-foot wall of earth where collapsing dirt has created a small cliff about thirty feet away from water's

edge. Two boulders lean together at the base of the cliff, forming a gap that looks like the entrance to a cave. One guard mills about the clearing between the cave and the water, while the others lean against the cliff wall.

If the PCs arrive at the cave without alerting the orcs, they stand a pretty good chance of getting inside without giving themselves away to every bandit in the place. The area around the cave mouth has bushes to hide behind and the orcs on guard here are not very alert. The PCs can sneak up to within 30 feet of the orcs if they each succeed on a DC 12 **Dexterity (Stealth)** check.



A SIMPLE MAP

In groups of younger players or those just learning to play roleplaying games, it is often helpful to have tools that keep the players focused on the mission. Older and more experienced players learn to handle distractions that pull them away from an adventure's main objective, so they can deal with "side quests" and still get back on track.

But side quests may pull novice gamers too far off course. While it's always possible for any group of players to latch onto a distraction and take the game in a wildly different direction than you had intended, adventures that present the players with many choices increase the chances of that happening.

The map of the bandit's cave presents one simple way to control the flow of an adventure, limiting player choices while still presenting them with interesting challenges. It strongly encourages the players to handle each

challenge in a specific order. At 1st level, the characters do not have any abilities that allow them to skip these encounters or go straight to the end, so they start outside the cave and finish in the chamber where Gorocs is waiting.

Clever players may see the cave and wonder if there is a way to get in from somewhere else, but even if the PCs find the other end of Gorocs' escape tunnel they couldn't be certain that it connects to the cave they are interested in. Therefore, the structure of the map keeps the encounters in order.

As players gain experience with 5th Edition or other roleplaying games, dungeon maps and adventures can become more complex, with branches and optional encounters that add interest to a location or story but may not be directly connected to the adventure's final objective. To start with, though, it's usually best to keep things simple.

BANDIT TACTICS

The encounters in this part of the adventure can be challenging for 1st level characters. The orcs are a fairly even match, but on a lucky roll, they can knock a PC unconscious with a single hit. Grouping them together can cause serious problems for an inexperienced group of players, especially if the dice rolls turn against them. The game should be challenging, but if all of the encounters are too difficult, then the players aren't going to have much fun.

In order to offset the challenges, you can adjust the orcs' tactics. You can have the orcs divide their attacks, rather than ganging up on a single character. You can also have them choose to fight the PCs with the toughest armor, making it less likely that they will knock out weaker PCs, first. Although, if the orcs do fight in a group, it can give spellcasters with area effect spells like burning hands opportunities to use them.

Another challenge is the orcs' aggressive ability, allowing them to move around the battlefield with extra movement. On the other hand this can also help the PCs, if they frequently do this against a foe that hasn't dropped to 0 hit points, that character will get an opportunity attack against it as it moves away.

If the PCs are doing especially well, you can allow the orc to alert his allies before he falls unconscious. Just pay attention to the group's status and their resources so you can be reasonably sure that the final battle will be harrowing, but winnable.

However, if the PCs arrive at night and are using torches or other lights to see by, they receive a -20 penalty to their Stealth checks, making it almost certain that the orcs see them.

The PCs might also choose to sneak around and climb on top of the cliff above the cave entrance. As long as the orcs don't see them, they can jump down next to the orcs leaning against the wall to initiate combat. This jump counts as a PC's action during the surprise round.

Creatures: The orcs attack as soon as they see any of the PCs. At first, all the orcs attack together, but if they do not defeat the PCs in the first round, one of the orcs tries to flee and get help from its companions in area 2F.

ORC BANDITS (3) CHALLENGE 1/2

100 XP each

Male orc

Hit Points 15

Development: If one of the orcs escapes, it takes him three rounds to reach the orcs in area 2F. On the fourth round, he informs those orcs of the danger, then spends three more rounds moving to Gorocs' chamber to make his report to the boss on the eighth round. All the orcs in the cave will be ready to respond to an attack on the tenth round (one minute after the orc escaped).

The orcs do not rush out to meet the PCs, however, because they hope to take advantage of the cave's natural and other defenses, first. The PCs may not face a horde of orcs all at once, but they probably won't be able to surprise any orcs and those in nearby rooms will be ready to respond to a call for aid.

2B. PIT TRAP (40 XP)

The narrow entrance widens to reveal a larger chamber. The ceiling is only about six or seven feet high. You feel a little cramped but can easily move around. The cave's stone floor is covered in dry dirt. A draft of air blows from a wide passageway on the opposite side of the chamber, carrying a variety of smells, most of them unpleasant. These caves must be well lived in.

The orcs took advantage of a natural hole in the floor to devise a simple trap.

Trap: The floor of this room hides a 20-foot deep pit, covered by a tarp and disguised with a thin layer of dirt. PCs who look for signs of danger and succeed on a DC 11 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check notice boot prints and boar tracks on the ground. The tracks lead up to the edge of the covered pit and seem to disappear. (The orcs just jump over one corner of the pit. They put pieces of wood over that corner when Longtusk walks over it.)

If the PCs do not detect the trap, the first one to step on the tarp must succeed on a DC 11 **Dexterity saving throw** or fall through and take (7) 2d6 points of damage. If two PCs are walking side-by-side, both must save or fall.

Remember that the PCs gain experience by simply surviving a trap. They do not have to detect or disarm it in order to gain the experience award for overcoming the obstacle.

2C. LONGTUSK THE BOAR (100 XP)

Wooden stakes have been pounded into the floor and tied together with rope to make a simple fence in this chamber. The reason for the fence becomes clear as an angry boar charges out of its pen to attack!

DETECTING TRAPS AND HIDDEN SECRETS

Traps and other hidden objects in the game can be challenging for a GM to manage. Players want their chance to find these secrets, especially if those secrets can hurt their characters, but part of the fun is not knowing when a trap will spring or where a secret is hidden. Giving too much information away at the wrong time can ruin the surprise. Sometimes, even asking a player to make a Perception check is enough to tip them off that something might be hidden nearby.

One way to handle this is to make some of the rolls, yourself. The players don't need to know why you are making a roll or who you are making it for. You can even take note of important modifiers from each player character, like Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Insight) skills, and saving throws. This is a quick way to handle such checks, and if you do it often enough—sometimes, just so the players hear your dice rolling—you can keep them on their toes without alerting them to an important secret.

On the other hand, some players really want to roll all of their checks. In those cases, you can use your records for important modifiers and just ask the player to roll a d20. You don't have to tell the player what the roll is for because you'll be able to use their result and add the modifier, yourself. This is a useful technique for maintaining suspense.

Give these options a try and see which one works best for you.

The orcs brought Longtusk with them from their home in the Westwatch Mountains. While they are out on raids, they set the boar free to forage in the swamp. He returns to the cave, when the orcs come back from their raiding. They bring Longtusk in with them and put him in his pen, though they often leave the gate open. The boar tolerates the orcs, but attacks intruders with great fury and fights until slain.

There is no treasure in the pen, but two wide, flat pieces of wood are propped against the wall. The orcs use these to get Longtusk across the pit in **area 2B**.

LONGTUSK THE BOAR

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 40ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 11 (+0) 12 (+1) 2 (-4) 9 (-1) 5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charge. If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the boar takes 10 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

2D. MIDDEN (100 XP)

A heavy curtain covers the entrance to this chamber. The curtain hides the room from view, but does nothing to contain the smell. The stench of rot curls around the drape's edges, promising something even more disgusting inside. Scratching sounds come from somewhere beyond the curtain. Someone, or something, is hiding in the chamber.

If the PCs enter the room, read the following:

On the far side of the room, a heap of garbage rises almost to the ceiling. Rivulets of reddish-brown liquid flow out of the bottom of the pile, forming small pools on the floor. At first, there is no sign of who or what might have been moving in the room. Then, the pile of bones and other trash comes alive as four filthy rats, each the size of a small dog, erupt from beneath its surface. They rush toward you with red eyes and bared teeth.

This room is where the orcs throw their trash, which mainly consists of the refuse from meals, although it is probable that the lazy orcs have used the place as a latrine, as well. It smells terrible. That doesn't seem to bother the orcs, because they spend very little time here. The curtain keeps most, but not all, of the smell from spreading into the rest of the cave.

Hazard: Inside the room, the smell of the garbage is dangerous. Anyone in the room must make a DC 13 **Constitution saving throw** each round or gain the poisoned condition from the stench. Holding one's breath before entering can prevent this effect. The poisoned condition lasts until they character exits the room and for 1d4 rounds afterward.

A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath, it can survive for a number

of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying.

Creatures: The powerful smell of garbage has drawn a family of four dire rats to this room. They are not affected by the stench and have chosen to stay because the orcs constantly provide them with more food. The rats jealously guard their home from any intruders who are not orcs. All of the rats climb out of the trash heap and attack at once, fighting to the death.

GIANT RAT (4)

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

7 (-2) 15 (+2) 11 (+0) 2 (-4) 10 (+0) 4 (-3)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

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

Pack Tactics. The rat has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rat's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

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

Treasure: Characters brave enough to search the midden can roll a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find a satchel that the orcs threw away before they properly searched it. Inside are three vials of healing potions. The satchel protected the bottles from being contaminated by garbage.

2E. SWINGING AXE TRAP (40 XP)

As they pass through this corridor, the PCs risk setting off another of Gorocs' defenses

Trap: This trap consists of a spring-loaded arm attached to two large axe heads. The trap is triggered by a tripwire that runs along the floor. When intruders step on or pull the wire, the arm swings out and attacks each character in the two squares indicated on the map, making a melee attack with a +6 bonus against the PCs' AC. The trap deals 1d8+3 points to each character it hits. The PCs can find the trap with a DC 11 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. Characters proficient with their's tools can disarm the trap with a DC 10 Dexterity check.

2F. COMMUNAL CHAMBER (400 XP)

The passage ahead opens to a larger chamber, where the ceiling climbs to almost fifteen feet. The light of a torch or small fire from around the corner reflects on the surface of a pool of water that covers half the space. The sounds of movement and the rough voices of orcs echo through the chamber.

This large chamber holds a pool of fresh and relatively clean water and serves as the resting and dining area for the orc bandits.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, only a few orcs are here. If they have managed to avoid alerting the bandits, there are four orcs lounging in this room. If the PCs catch them by surprise, the orcs spend the first round picking up their weapons before they can properly fight.

If the orcs were warned by a guard from **area 2A**, they are alert and ready for battle. If the bandits discovered that the giant spider has been slain, there are only three orcs here, because one of them has already moved to help guard the cave entrance.

ORC BANDITS (4) CHALLENGE 2

100 XP each

Male orc

Hit Points 15

Development: The guards in **area 2G** hear the sounds of battle in this room if they make a DC 7 **Perception** check. Two of those orcs arrive to help on the third round of combat.

2G. GUARD ROOM (400 XP)

Stacks of small crates, boxes and barrels—obviously the spoils of the orcs' previous raids—line the far walls of this chamber. Some of the crates have been smashed open and their contents, removed. Inspection of the other items is impossible, however, as the orcs standing guard on the other side of the room shout out challenges and attack!

Four guards stand uneasy watch in this room. They have been given specific orders not to interrupt Gorocs' meeting with his two favorite advisors. (The three orcs are working out how to divide the payment their mysterious employer sent. They want to keep the biggest shares for themselves without creating a mutiny among the other orcs.)

Creatures: If the guards failed to hear the battle in **area 2F**, the PCs may be able to surprise them, or at least gain initiative. If they did hear the sounds of battle, the two guards who remain outside of Gorocs' quarters throw their javelins at the first PCs they see, then pound on Gorocs' door to warn him of intruders before moving forward to engage their foes.

ORC BANDITS (4) CHALLENGE 1/2

100 XP each

Male orc

Hit Points 15

Treasure: This room contains all the belongings taken from Corbin village during the raid, and the villagers want their valuables back. The orcs also have things they have stolen in previous attacks: wine and ale casks, some dry goods, and other materials left over. Most of these are too bulky for the PCs to carry, themselves, but if they tell the Sheriff about them and arrange to get them back to the village, the Mayor will reward each PC with an additional 50 gold pieces for helping to return the lost goods to local merchants.

Development: If alerted, Gorocs and his lieutenants spend two rounds preparing for battle while his guards keep the PCs busy. When they are ready, the orcs burst out of his chamber, with Gorocs' lieutenants and his wolf, Bloodbite, leading the way. See the statistics for Gorocs and Bloodbite in the description for **area 2H**.

2H. GOROCS' CHAMBER, 500 XP

Beyond the makeshift door at the entrance, you find a chamber that is richly appointed, compared to other parts of the cave. A thick bed of furs lies in one corner, next to a small table holding a pan of water and a pitcher. Opposite this sleeping area is a small table with short wooden logs surrounding it for use as stools. A crude map of Moresby County rests on the table, along with wooden cups and a few empty wine bottles.

This room is where Gorocs and his two trusted companions divide the spoils of past attacks and plan future raids. It is also Gorocs' private chambers.

Creatures: Gorocs and his advisors remain here, unaware of the danger until the sounds

of battle and cries of orc fury prompt them to act.

When he fights, Gorocs immediately starts raging and shouts dire threats at his enemies. Most of these threats are in the orc language. When he speaks the Common language, he still has a heavy orcish accent. The PCs don't need to be able to understand his words to know that he's saying things that aren't very nice.

If he hasn't already sent Bloodbite to help stand watch at the front of the cave, Gorocs orders the wolf to attack and then does his best to maneuver his bandits and himself into flanking positions.

GOROCS ORC BOSS

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 42 (5d8 + 20)

Speed 30ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA

18 (+4) 12 (+1) 18 (+4) 12 (+1) 11 (+0) 12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +5, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gorocs makes two handaxe attacks.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

AN EPIC BATTLE

The final battle with Gorocs and his minions should be a very challenging fight, the kind of battle that players most often remember. After all, the climactic encounter with the story's main villain in his lair is a mainstay of fantasy adventure. Now is the time to pull out the stops and really let your PCs have it. Or is it?

The PCs are probably low on resources after fighting their way through the rest of the cave. They aren't at full hit points and have fewer spells or limited-use abilities left. On top of that, Gorocs can dish out quite a bit of damage on his own. It is even possible that he could knock out a PC in a single hit. Just as you did with the fight against the lizardfolk, you need to determine if the fight ahead will be too challenging for your players, and you decide if you need to adjust this encounter to avoid a TPK.

If they have already dealt with Bloodbite, then a party of four PCs will outnumber Gorocs and his two lieutenants and should be fine. If you have fewer than four PCs or if Bloodbite is still with Gorocs, you can even the odds by removing one or both of the lieutenants. A powerful enemy and his wolf companion can still make for a battle worthy of retelling over a few mugs at the tavern.

However, the module assumes that the PCs face all of the enemies presented. As with the lizardfolk encounter, removing foes reduces the amount of XP they can earn, so they may not rise to 2nd level by the end of the adventure. There is no requirement to have the PCs "level up" at the end of an adventure, but it can be a satisfying reward for completing a quest. Random encounters, or even bringing in the two remaining orcs after the main fight is over, can provide those final experience points, if necessary.

BLOODBITE THE WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

12 (+1) 15 (+2) 12 (+1) 3 (-4) 12 (+1) 6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Development: Once the battle ends, the PCs can search the room to find the treasure the orcs were paid for raiding the village, as well as clues to the reason behind the attack.

Treasure: If they succeed on a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check or just do a thorough search of the room, the PCs can find a small wooden chest, hidden in the back of

the room under some of the animal furs. The chest contains hundreds of coins and a smaller box with five vials of liquid (400 gold pieces, four *healing potions* and one *potion of hill giant strength*).

The chest also contains a letter, which you can read aloud or print and hand to the players as a handout. As the letter says, Gorocs delivered the Green Serpent to Belazeel's hawk familiar immediately after the raid, so the statue is not among Ithamar's belongings in the cave. However, the letter is an important clue. If the PCs give the letter to Ithamar when they return to town, he will take this evidence as proof that they tried to find the statue and will honor his agreement with the PCs.



Searching the room also uncovers a very narrow tunnel leading from the back of the cave. This tunnel is only big enough for a small creature to move through it at full speed. A medium-sized creature must squeeze through it, while any larger creature cannot fit through at all. Gorocs would have used this escape tunnel if he had expected that the PCs could actually defeat him.

PLAYER HANDOUT: LETTER

TO THE BANDITS

Gorocs,

Greetings, honored son of the Dread Lord! Here is the agreed payment for retrieving the serpent statue from the Corbin sage's home. I hope that these coins, along with the spoils of your raid, will serve you well.

I know that I can trust you to accomplish this task. That is why I have sent the payment in advance. Once you have the statue, take it to the appointed place, place it in the bag I have sent you and give the bag to my hawk, who will bring it to me.

Succeed in your mission—deliver the statue to my servant—and you can enjoy your treasure for as long as it lasts. If you fail or try to cheat me, however, I will know it, and even your orc god's fury will be nothing compared to the swift and terrible punishment I will unleash upon you.

— B (Print-friendly version on page 40)

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs defeat the bandits, they have officially reached the end of the adventure. If they survived all the encounters presented and found all the treasure, they should have enough

experience to become 2nd level characters.

You can describe the return trip to town and how the villagers receive the PCs as heroes. Sheriff McBride gives pays them for ending the bandit threat, and they can arrange a meeting with Ithamar Ruggles to discuss what happened to the Green Serpent.

If the PCs have not reached 2nd level, and you were dividing experience points among the players as you go, you may include some random encounters with creatures or hazards of the swamp on the return journey. Be sure to consider the condition the characters are in after their fight with Gorocs and his gang. If they are too weak, they might be killed by a random encounter, which isn't much fun. Alternatively reward them a story award just enough to get them to 2nd level.

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

You should feel free to explore some of the story hooks presented in this adventure. The presence of lizardfolk in the swamp, the movement of orcs from the Westwatch Mountains into the civilized territories, or even the fear of hags returning to the Dread Marsh could all make for fun campaign arcs to explore with your players. However, *The Bandit's Cave* is also the first part of a 5-part "mini-campaign" entitled *Trail of the Apprentice*, which provides a ready-made campaign for you to run with your players.

The clues the PCs uncovered in Gorocs' cave tell the players that something bigger than simple thievery is going on. When the PCs meet with Ithamar to tell him that they could not recover the statue, the sage becomes concerned that the villain may try to steal the statue's twin, the White Serpent, which is

owned by Lord Samuel Wolfe and kept in his family's private museum.

The museum is on the Lord's estate in Port Fairglade, which lies on the banks of the Lashelenite River about a day's ride north. Ithamar encourages the PCs to hurry to Port Fairglade and do what they can to stop this mysterious "collector" from stealing the second statue. This sets the PCs off on a chase to recover the lost artifacts and stop a madman from unleashing an ancient and powerful evil upon the kingdom of Threll.

APPENDIX 1: THE VILLAGE OF CORBIN

Corbin is a large village resting on the shores of the Imlenite River. It is the primary waterfront community in Moresby County in the kingdom of Threll. Most of the overland travel that passes from the city of Port Fairglade to towns farther inland passes through Corbin.

A wooden palisade surrounds the village with a main gate controlling access to and from the east. Several piers allow river travelers access to the village from the northwest. The wall around the village is necessary because Corbin sits on a patch of dry land between Tiller's Marsh and the Dread Marsh. Both of these swamps are home to dangerous animals and monsters. The walls are sufficient to deal with most of these creatures, though this wasn't always the case.

The Dread Marsh is particularly infamous, for it was once the domain of a terrible coven of hags. Many years ago, the hags terrorized the people of Moresby County and all travelers on the Imlenite River. A group of heroes finally ventured into the swamp to defeat the coven.

Though they lost a good friend in the battle, they were able to free the region from the hags.

After the battle, one of the heroes stayed in Moresby County to oversee the construction of Hagwatch Tower. He petitioned the king of Threll to station several knights in the tower, and trained them to make sure they would always be ready to fight hags and their minions. To this day, the people of Corbin help the knights of Hagwatch Tower stand guard against the return of those horrible creatures to the marsh.

PEOPLE OF CORBIN

The village holds almost 200 permanent residents and is actually on the verge of becoming a town as more people are drawn to this influential location. The population will soon reach a tipping point, and the village will have to grow beyond the palisade. For now, however, Mayor Crump prefers dealing with the minor problems of overcrowding over protecting citizens living outside of the village walls.

Corbinites are open to outsiders, because many in these parts have come from elsewhere, and they know what it is like to have to settle into someplace new. They also know that turning away a visitor means turning away business. Although there are few elves or dwarves living in Corbin, both races are well known to the villagers, who welcome them just as they would humans.

The villagers do tend to focus more on trade and commerce, which gives them a more business-like personality that some might interpret as stiffness or even greed. The villagers and those who truly know them, however, would disagree and assert that Corbin is a hub through which all manner of goods

must flow. They feel it is in the best interest of the kingdom that the people of Corbin pay attention to things that might affect that flow. Few can argue with that logic as Corbin villagers seem to thrive by applying it to their day-to-day activities.

GOVERNMENT

Mayor Darius Crump is the official head of the government in Corbin. He also serves as the village harbormaster, however, and spends more of his time on the waterfront. He is a jovial man with a booming voice and is always ready to tell or hear a good joke. His focus on his business limits his political aspirations but allows him to keep his finger on the pulse of things so he can make the right decision when necessary. The mayor actually conducts official village business at the Merchants' Office, where he has a private room for such affairs.

CLERICS


Brother Cyrus Beckwith mainly serves the town as an apothecary, selling medicines and occasionally treating those with illnesses or injuries. But as a 4th level cleric of Losinia, the moon goddess, whose religion is strong in Threll, he uses his divine powers to promote the health and well-being of all people in Corbin. Brother Beckwith keeps a small shrine to Losinia in his apothecary shop and holds weekly services for any who wish to worship with him. Normally quiet and reserved, Brother Beckwith reveals his true passion in the uplifting sermons he delivers at these services. A few other priests work out of small shops or street-side portable shrines, selling healing potions or offering prayers or spells in return for coins that will support their churches.

ROGUES

Corbin is a prosperous village, so it attracts a certain criminal element, but there is no organized crime in the village to speak of, yet. To date, the most powerful rogue in town is Laura Briggs, owner of Briggs' Exotic Wares. Ms. Briggs is a 4th level rogue, a role she keeps secret from everyone except very select people (such as an apprentice rogue). Briggs is also a member of the Elverin Skulk, the most powerful thieves' guild in the region, but she will not even share this information with an apprentice until they have reached 3rd level. Laura is charismatic and possesses a wry humor that many people find attractive, though there is an obvious hint of mystery behind her deep green eyes. She is also a skilled merchant who is well-known for acquiring "hard-to-find" items.

FIGHTERS

Sheriff Lucy McBride is the real law in Corbin. She works closely with Mayor Crump and respects his position, but has little patience for his limited involvement in governing the town. A driven and serious woman, she has appointed herself to take up the slack. This keeps her far too busy to undertake missions outside of town, so she often hires adventurers for special tasks. When not walking around the village keeping an eye on things, Sheriff McBride can be found in her office at the village guardhouse. It is also just a short walk from her office to the gaol, where lawbreakers are held until the county judge arrives for weekly court proceedings or until they can be sent to Port Fairglade for trial.



Sheriff McBride is a 4th level fighter and takes it upon herself to train the militia. This makes it even more difficult for her to ever leave town. Several other fighters live in the area and tend to come and go with the tides on the Imlenite River, but none are as powerful as Sheriff McBride, yet.

WIZARDS

Ithamar Ruggles is a 4th level wizard who also serves as the village sage. Although there are one or two other practitioners of magic in Corbin at any one time, none possess the wisdom and knowledge that Ithamar possesses. What these lower-level wizards do possess is greater presence of mind and a willingness to leave their homes on a more regular basis. As such they may be more likely to make and sell potions or scrolls for the right price. For his part, Ithamar is always willing to help, if one can get his attention and hold it long enough. The best way to do this is to relate your request to some major historical event.

SHOPPING

Aside from the characters listed above, there are several places that the PCs can go to get supplies and, perhaps, assistance. One of the most prominent is Edwin Pierce, Weapon Smith and Founder. In addition to making and selling melee weapons, Mr. Pierce crafts things from metal castings in his foundry, including parts for flint-locks and other guns, though the process is very difficult, making prices for these weapons too high for most folk to buy them. Mr. Pierce is not a highly skilled armorer, but he can make most of the types of armor and shields available in the rule book.

He cannot craft masterwork armor, though.

There is also Nathaniel Peabody, who operates Peabody's Dry Goods and Tools. Mr. Peabody is an unremarkable man who nevertheless manages to keep his store stocked with all the mundane items located in the Equipment section of the rulebook. He drives a hard bargain, but will offer special discounts to heroes who perform a particularly worthy service to the village.

Lastly, Michael Chapman is the village blacksmith. Although his skills are different from those of Mr. Pierce, he is still well respected throughout the village for the quality of his work. He crafts important things like nails and horseshoes and can sometimes be commissioned to produce specific items made of metal.

STONE'S ORDINARY

Stone's Ordinary is the village's only tavern—Corbin just isn't big enough to handle more than one, yet. There are a few residents who open up a portion of their homes to visitors and sell food, beer, wine and spirits, but Stone's is the only true public house—a distinct, separate building where visitors can purchase a variety of beverages, as well as a meal. The owner, Melania Babcock, is a stout, matronly woman with a strong back and an iron will. Her cooking isn't the best that travelers on the Imlenite River have ever had, but it is hearty fare that fills the belly and rarely leaves one wanting for anything else.

THE RAVENSWORTH INN

The Ravensworth Inn is a new addition to Corbin, but it serves an important purpose. Every year more people stop at the village, waiting for a ferry to Riverside or for an overland carriage to Port Fairglade. The Ravensworth gives travelers a place to stay and spend their money. Danforth Gibson and his family own and run the inn. The Ravensworth Inn has eight rooms that can sleep four comfortably, though “comfortable” in these times still means that two people share a bed. Mister Gibson also offers two “common” rooms where up to sixteen guests can sleep on the floor. During the day, the common rooms are cleared of people and aired out, for use as meeting rooms or fest halls, until the night falls and the inn’s staff lays out the mats and blankets on which the guests will sleep.

HEALING

Brother Beckwith is the most likely—and reliable—source of healing in town. Other priests may be available to cast lower-level healing spells, but for really serious situations, the PCs will need to rely on Beckwith.

MAGIC

The PCs can purchase most any scroll or potion for a spell of 2nd level or lower if you think it is appropriate to have magic items for sale. Some GMs find that offering magic items for sale reduces their special quality or meaning and should therefore only be found during adventures. If you do decide some minor magic items are for sale, see them DMG for prices based off an item’s rarity.

APPENDIX 2: EXPANDED RULES

Although *The Bandit’s Cave* encounters present creatures in a simplified format for quicker play, you may wish to reference the full 5th Edition (5E) SRD for the challenges your PCs will face.

All of the creatures in this module use the standard entries found in the SRD and official monster books, with the exception of Gorocs and the young assassin vine. Full stat blocks for both the vine and Gorocs are provided here. If you are using the core rules for the other monsters in this module, in cases where the description of an ability contradicts what is written in this module, use the rules that apply to the core rules version.

NEW DEITY: LOSINIA, GODDESS OF THE MOON

Many people in Threll worship Losinia, the goddess of the moon. The first settlers of Threll brought her faith with them when they travelled to these lands and those who live on the rivers and shores throughout the kingdom have a particular fondness for her. Additionally, as a deity who promotes order and good health, she is popular throughout the realm.

LOSINIA

Goddess of the Moon

Other Names	The Pale Lady
Alignment	Lawful Good
Holy Symbol	White or silver disc with a woman's face
Portfolio	Moon, Tidewaters and the Shore, Rhythms and cycles, Health
Alignments	LG, NG, LN
Suggested Domains	Knowledge, Life
Favored Weapon	Spear

Losinia is the Threllish people's name for the goddess of the moon and for the moon, itself. She is one of the Five Celestials, the greatest and most ancient powers among Aeva's divine cosmology. The other four Celestials are the deities of the Sky, Sun, Time and Weather.

As the moon influences the ebb and flow of tides and currents in the waters of Aeva, it is Losinia who is associated with those roles. The cycle of the silver-white moon aids farmers and others who rely on timekeeping. Eshpa, the sun, is still the primary reference for Threll's calendar, but the moon aids in refining astronomical calculations, and many of the cycles on Aeva are seen to keep time with her, rather than the sun.

The church of Losinia is strong in the kingdom of Threll, due to the fact that the original settlers brought the worship of moon with them from their original homeland. Losinia is primarily worshipped by those who live and work on the shores of great bodies of water, such as oceans and large lakes and rivers, where the tides influence daily life. She is also worshipped by those who believe her influence on the water within living things affects mental and physical health.

Losinia is a foe of dangerous creatures and monsters of the night and a protector of those who worship her, but she is a stern and seemingly unemotional being, who often treats her followers as a strict mother would treat her children. Some who have studied the ancient, forbidden texts claim that she behaves this way because she harbors a dark secret.

These scholars claim that Losinia is actually a two-faced deity. The face known to Aeva is bright, caring and devoted to helping her followers and protecting them against sickness and destructive night creatures. But this hidden lore says her other face is dark and cruel, a being of madness and hatred that wishes to unleash undead and even more horrible beings on the world. Losinia continually struggles to keep that face hidden. According to such tales, the new moon is the time when moon goddess must hide herself from the world so she can renew the magic keeping the madness within her bound and the world protected.

No mortal can say if this legend is true, however, and Losinia's church leaders deny it. None of the gods speak of the darkened side of the moon or why its face never turns toward Aeva. But to many people in Threll, the legend gives one reason that Losinia directs her clerics to struggle against creatures of darkness and chaos and spread the light of order in the world.

PLAYING A CLERIC OF LOSINIA

If you are using a simplified version of the *Pathfinder* rules, players who create a cleric of Losinia gain proficiency with the spear and may choose any two of the following abilities:

CALMING TOUCH (COMMUNITY) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use binding ties a number of times per day equal to your 3 + WIS. When you use binding ties, touch a creature to heal it of 1d6 points of nonlethal damage + 1 point per cleric level. This touch also removes the fatigued, shaken, and sickened conditions (but has no effect on more severe conditions).

ICICLE (WATER) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use icicle a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use icicle, you launch an icicle from your finger, targeting any foe within 30 feet as a ranged touch attack. The icicle deals 1d6 points of cold damage + 1 point for every two cleric levels you possess. Activating icicle is a standard action.

REBUKE DEATH (HEALING) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use rebuke death a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use rebuke death, touch a dying ally (at -1 hit points or lower). You heal the ally 1d4 hit points plus 1/2 your cleric level (minimum +1). Activating rebuke death is a standard action.

TOUCH OF GLORY (GLORY) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use touch of glory a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use touch of glory, your hand shimmers with divine radiance. Touching a creature with this hand gives it a bonus equal to your cleric level on a single Charisma-based check or Charisma ability check. This ability lasts for 1 hour or until the creature touched chooses to use the bonus to a roll. Activating touch of glory is a standard action.

TOUCH OF LAW (LAW) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use touch of law a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use touch of law, you can make a touch attack to infuse the target with the power of divine order. For the next round, the target treats all attack rolls, checks, and saving throws as if the natural d20 roll resulted in an 11. Activating touch of law is a standard action.

PLAYER HANDOUT: LETTER
TO THE BANDITS

Gorocs,

*Greetings, honored son of the Dread Lord!
Here is the agreed payment for retrieving
the serpent statue from the Corbin sage's
home. I hope that these coins, along with the
spoils of your raid, will serve you well.*

*I know that I can trust you to accomplish
this task. That is why I have sent the
payment in advance. Once you have the
statue, take it to the appointed place, place
it in the bag I have sent you and give the
bag to my hawk, who will bring it to me.*

*Succeed in your mission—deliver the statue
to my servant—and you can enjoy your
treasure for as long as it lasts. If you fail or
try to cheat me, however, I will know it,
and even your orc god's fury will be nothing
compared to the swift and terrible
punishment I will unleash upon you.*

B.



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The



The Bandit's Cave

A MARVELOUS TREASURE GONE MISSING!



The people of Corbin Village are hardy folk, familiar with the dangers of the region. But when a band of orcs raids the village, Sheriff McBride realizes she has more troubles than she can handle and calls on a group of heroes to bring the orcs to justice. To complicate matters, the orcs have stolen an item of great historical value from the local sage, and he wants it back. Can the PCs survive the dangers of a nearby marsh and locate the bandits' hidden lair? If they do, can they take down the orc raiders and recover the sage's precious statue?

The Bandit's Cave is an adventure for 1st-level characters. It is part one of *Trail of the Apprentice*, a full campaign made up of 5 interconnected adventure modules for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*. The *Trail of the Apprentice* saga and all adventures in the the **Legendary Beginnings** line from *Legendary Games* are designed as exciting adventures suitable for all ages, but specially designed for those new to roleplaying and those on the younger side. The *Legendary Games* tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, allowing you to enliven and enrich your campaign in amazing and exciting ways. Make your next family game night *Legendary!*



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