



# ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

## DRUMS IN THE MARSH

For the past several nights, drums have been heard on the wind, coming from the Twilight Marsh. Each morning, more turn up missing from the nearby farms, leaving only muddy, clawed footprints heading towards the marsh. Can you help find the lost and bring justice to the abductors? An adventure for 1st-4th level characters.

**Adventure Code: DDEX1-7**

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# EXPEDITIONS™

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Drums in the Marsh*, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Tyranny of Dragons*™ storyline season.

**This adventure is designed for three to seven 1st-4th level characters, and is optimized for five 3rd level characters.** Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. Players with ineligible characters can create a new 1st-level character or use a [pregenerated character](#).

The adventure occurs along the Trank River and within the Twilight Marsh. Both are located east of the city Phlan on the north shore of the Moonsea in Faerûn.

## THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a [DCI number](#). This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the [D&D Adventurers League home](#).

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the [D&D basic rules](#) or the *Player's Handbook*™.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

## BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an [official adventure logsheet](#) for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player

is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

## ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 3rd-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

## DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

**Average party strength** indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

## DUNGEON MASTERING THE ADVENTURE

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

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

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

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*<sup>TM</sup> has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

## DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the [D&D basic rules](#) or the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including -faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some

downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

## SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services. Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

### SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

### ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

## CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

### DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules). If a

character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

## DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

**Create a New 1st-Level Character.** If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

**Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead.** If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

**Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead.** As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

**Faction Charity.** If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The thundering boom of distant drums has emanated from the dangerous Twilight Marsh for the last tenday. Since they began, overnight disappearances of individuals and theft of valuable livestock have plagued

farms, travelers, and small settlements around the Twilight Marsh and Trank River. The lizardfolk clans of the Twilight Marsh are immediately suspected. However, if the rumors are true, the clans are acting far more aggressively and ranging much farther outside the marsh than normal. Area residents are frightened, but would be absolutely terrified if they discovered the trouble is due to a black dragon exerting control over the Twilight Marsh and subjugating the lizardfolk clans for Throstulgrael's own ends.

## THE DRAGON AND THE LIZARDFOLK

For years, Lizard King Scalecrusher ruled three lizardfolk clans in the Twilight Marsh. Under Scalecrusher's leadership, the Muckmarsh built crude huts and fashioned weapons to conquer the primitive Rootwater and Dusk-Dusk clans. Continued clan clashes concealed the takeover from outsiders.

About a month ago, the black dragon Throstulgrael, otherwise known as "Velvet," left his former home in the Flooded Forest (near Mulmaster) and decided to lay claim to the northern Twilight Marsh, including Scalecrusher's lands and underlings. Throstulgrael attacked the camps and villages of the Rootwater and Dusk-Dusk clans as a show of force, killing their shaman and leaders. The un intimidated and defiant Lizard King refused to bow to Throstulgrael. Predictably, Velvet attacked Scalecrusher's crudely fortified island and the surrounding Muckmarsh village. Throstulgrael's acid breath laid waste to the islands and its fierce but overmatched defenders. Throstulgrael put Scalecrusher's half-dissolved head on a pike on the king's island as a reminder to those who opposed him. Unknown to anyone, Bogclaw, the young lizard king heir, survived the attack and retreated into the marsh.

Throstulgrael declared he would select one member of the three greatly diminished clans as chief. The chief would answer to and carry out Throstulgrael's orders – or else. Each clan selected their own candidate. In order to prove their leadership, loyalty, and combat skill to Throstulgrael, the candidates must lead their clans in kidnapping as many humanoids and large livestock as possible. They must bring them to cages and corrals on the deposed King's Island.

Throstulgrael is impressed with powerful captives. Stealing livestock (a pig or larger) is acceptable but the least impressive. Capturing humanoid children is regarded as weak and cowardly for a chief. Humanoid adults or young adults are more desirable and particularly strong or dangerous humanoids are the

most impressive.

Further challenging the lizardfolk, all prisoners must remain alive and uneaten until Velvet returns in two tendays. One tenday has already passed. The best captives become tribute to Throstulgrael, while the rest become the main course in a grand feast celebrating the new chief.

## OVERVIEW

The characters are invited or hired to investigate kidnappings along the Trank River. They meet their initial contact at the Crossing Inn and given known clues and the happenings of the past tenday. As the meeting wraps up, a farmhand named Taroo bursts in and frantically reports that his employers were kidnapped last night. Taroo pleads for help and the characters are encouraged to go with him downriver to the Renons' farm, where he lives and works.

At the farm are clues further implicating the lizardfolk. The characters may visit nearby farms, only to discover additional overnight disappearances and livestock theft. The clues spur the characters to head further downriver towards the Twilight Marsh.

The weather turns cold and rainy. Overnight, the characters hear the drums for the first time. They are ambushed by the Dusk-Dusk clan, following up from the night before. The attackers try to seize the characters, recognizing that captured adventurers should highly impress Throstulgrael. The exact location depends on the characters' progress, though it is likely to be on or near the river.

When the characters arrive at the Twilight Marsh, they are free to search however they wish. Along the way, they must contend with a giant toad attack and avoid or defeat lizardfolk patrols.

They also likely run across a prisoner raft escorted by Dusk-Dusk or Rootwater kidnappers (depending on the territory). The adventurers may rescue the prisoners or follow them to the Ringcurrent Islands where the rest are held. Rescued prisoners can provide more clues to the events in the marsh, and are capable of finding their way out of the marsh without the party escorting them.

The characters eventually locate the Muckmarsh village in the Ringcurrent Islands. They get the chance to investigate the outer islands and find further clues as to Throstulgrael's attack and the kidnapping contest. They discover a mysterious large lizardfolk lurking about, but he disappears without making contact. He is Bogclaw, the deposed king's heir, looking to retake control.

The characters find the prisoners held on the King's Island. Each clan holds their prisoners in set of cages. When the characters put their rescue plan into action, the lizardfolk on the island are thrown into further chaos when Bogclaw makes his move to seize control of the clans and destroy those who contest him.

The characters must deal with the lizardfolk, the chief candidates, Bogclaw, and their rescue operation simultaneously. They get some aid from the prisoners. If successful, they can use the lizardfolk's primitive prisoner rafts to transport the kidnap victims out of the marsh.

While the characters do not encounter Throstulgrael in this adventure, disrupting the contest and the lizardfolk further weakens the clans. This makes them less useful to Throstulgrael, and much less effective over the long term. This is especially true if Bogclaw survives. The characters can warn the local inhabitants around the marsh about Throstulgrael.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventurers start at the Crossing Inn. They may meet or arrive there via one or more of the following adventure hooks.

- The inn's proprietor Romsan Kal personally invites the characters to come and look into the kidnappings. They are disrupting travel, and therefore his business.
- The characters are traveling on the Phlan Path, or possibly down the Trank River, and hear about the kidnappings from other travelers. They also hear that Romsan Kal is organizing search parties at the Crossing Inn.
- **Optional:** One or more of the characters have received word that one of their friends or relatives have disappeared, and have come looking for them. They are already held by the lizardfolk. The characters hear that Romsan Kal has the best information and is organizing search parties.

# PART 1: STRANGE DISAPPEARANCES

The characters head to Crossing Inn and find out about the missing farmers. They then can investigate the farms, and that evening, are ambushed by lizardfolk.

## CROSSING INN

The Crossing Inn sits on the east bank of the Trank River, on the south side of the Phlan Path, next to the Trank River Bridge. The inn hosts travelers from the road and the river, making it a popular spot to meet and learn the latest news from across the northern shores of the Moonsea. Travelers between Phlan and Melvaunt are common.

The inn is owned and operated by Romsan Kal, a human from Amn. He is a large, brusque individual and a retired adventurer. Several jagged scars crisscross his bald head. He claims one set came from a lucky escape from a mind-flayer, and the other set from a dragon that tried to take off his head. He is quite capable of keeping order should travelers become unruly.

Romsan has a staff of a dozen humans and stoutheart halflings from across the lands. They serve the patrons as well as tend the kitchen, livery, barn, and docks at the river's edge. The inn provides the standard services of a typical tavern or roadside inn.

News of the disappearances traveled quickly up the road and river over the past week. With Phlan only a few hours away, travelers are altering their plans and avoid the area, or pass through it as quickly as possible. Romsan Kal's business dropped dramatically, prompting him to not only search for the cause, but discover a means to end the problem. Anyone with news or clues about the disappearances is to send word to the inn. A few search parties have been dispatched with no success, but no adventurers have taken up the task. Romsan needs the characters to be the ones.

### 01. ARRIVAL AT CROSSING INN

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The adventurers arrive in early afternoon. They may already know each other, or join together in a common cause. They may arrive by boat from upstream, but are more likely to use the Phlan Path.

The Crossing Inn is a well-worn, heavy wooden structure perched above a row of keelboat docks on the east bank of the Trank River, south of the Phlan Path. It is a single level, with short perimeter walls and a towering faceted roof around a large central stone chimney. Upon entering, you find a large, wood framed octagonal common room used for both eating and sleeping. It can comfortably hold up to 50 travelers overnight, and a good deal more if they squeeze in. At the moment, there is only a few staff with even fewer travelers.

A large man with a heavily scarred bald head watches you from a massive table near the front, next to a window. After a moment, he calls you over.

"Welcome to Crossing Inn. I'm host and proprietor Romsan Kal. We don't get many mid-day travelers, and few proper adventurers, so I'm guessing you're here to see me. Please, have a seat and introduce yourselves."

Allow the characters to introduce themselves to Romsan, as well as each other if necessary. If Romsan invited any of the characters, he greets them warmly and thanks them for coming to help. If they don't explicitly talk about the disappearances, he asks what they are doing at the inn. Once he knows there is any interest in pursuing the missing, he does his best to convince the characters to investigate the situation. He can pay the party 50 gold pieces, some of which was obtained in donations to help find the missing. If the characters try to negotiate, Romsan stops them, laughs, and tells them he knows all the adventurers' negotiating ploys. He then offers up a special item from his personal treasure – a *scroll of fireball*, when they return with the missing, or proof of their fates.

If any of the characters are pursuing a missing friend or relative, Romsan confirms that the individual is missing, and he has met them in passing. While discussing the situation, read or paraphrase the following.

"People are frightened. The disappearances began about a tenday ago, the first night of the drums. Most say it's coming from the south, maybe as far away as the Twilight Marsh. The drums beat throughout the night. Each morning, someone is gone, often along with some of their livestock if they have any. The farmers and travelers are scared. Once the drums start, no one travels at night and no one feels safe, even behind barred doors."

"We have a few clues. Some spotted clawed footprints where the kidnappings occurred. A few river dwellers claim to have heard splashing and movement on the river in the dead of night. Most fear that a new monster has moved in, but some think it's the lizardfolk in the Twilight Marsh. They're troublesome, but some of these disappearances are a long way from a marsh, and a few have even happened along the road. Not exactly lizardfolk hunting grounds."

Romsan can answer a few questions, but doesn't have a lot of information. By his tally, about 30 people have disappeared along with a couple dozen livestock. Romsan knows his list is incomplete. New reports trickle in with the occasional traveler or messenger. While there is evidence of skirmishes at the site of some disappearances, no bodies have been found.

When the characters are ready to begin their investigation, or ask Romsan where to start, they're interrupted by a new arrival. Taroo, a human farmhand, bursts into the inn and runs up to Romsan.

The front door flies open and a young human male dashes in. His appearance suggests he's a farmer. He pauses and looks around the room before running up to the innkeeper. He's clearly upset.

"Romsan! The Renons are gone! Come to the farm. You have to figure out what happened."

Romsan looks pained and says, "I'm not fit to come out of retirement for this, but these folks are here to help." He turns to you, "This is the best lead you're going to get. Taroo can get you downriver to the farm. It's much faster than riding the trails."

Romsan offers to stable the characters' mounts for free for the duration of their investigation. He can also provide a few days' worth of rations and a few minor supplies such as blankets or lanterns. Romsan leads the characters down to the docks and orders the staff to turn one of the keelboats over to the characters. The keelboat is 20 ft long and about 8 ft. wide. It has a shallow draft, primitive sail, and a tiny cabin at the stern. There are enough poles for everyone to use to push and guide the vessel.

Taroo guides the characters, and even helps steer the boat if needed. He ties his own small boat to trail behind the stern of the keelboat. It is midafternoon by the time they depart.

#### ROLEPLAYING TAROO THE FARMHAND

Taroo is an honest man in his late 20s who is truly concerned for his employer's safety. He's easily impressed if the characters tell tall tales or practice flashy magic. However, if the characters demonstrate they are ill at home in the wild he becomes very uneasy and questions their abilities.

Taroo knows the surrounding lands well, but he's never entered the Twilight Marsh. He rightly regards it as a highly dangerous place. He shares his great fear of the lizardfolk making a meal out of him or anyone else that wanders inside.

Taroo is not a combatant. He has an Armor Class of 11, 4 hit points, and a long knife (treat as a dagger; +3 to hit, 1d4+1 damage) to defend himself if he must.

## A SHORT TRIP DOWNSTREAM

The farm is about a mile and a half downstream and only takes about 30 minutes to reach by boat. It is uneventful as long as the characters can handle the boat. If no one save Taroo has any experience with negotiating on a river, the journey takes double the time (one hour) and Taroo is noticeably frustrated with the party.

During the trip, the adventurers can take the opportunity to question Taroo about the disappearances, his doings, the river, and anything else about the area. Taroo knows the following.

- He's worked at the farm for two years and lives in a tiny house on the premises.
- He's been away from the farm for the past day and a half seeing family. He was supposed to get back yesterday, but it got dark before he could return, so he stayed at a friendly farm a few miles to the east. No one travels after dark.
- Upon returning, it was around midday. He found the doors to the Renons' house smashed in and they were gone. There were obvious signs of a struggle. A few pigs and a pair of cows are also missing.
- He quickly searched the farm, found nothing, panicked, and headed for the inn for help. He didn't think to check the two neighboring farms until he was far upriver.
- The Renons are a middle aged married human couple and have owned their farm for many years. They're not adventurers, but are quite capable of taking care of themselves, which is often required given their farm's proximity to the river and marsh.



## RENON FARM

The farm is on the east side of the river. There is a slight curve to the river, leaving a wide gravel bar on the east side. The characters can beach their boat anywhere along the gravel bar. The banks on each side are steep, though only about 10 feet tall. Both sides are heavily wooded. If the characters stop to search the gravel bar, see "Gravel Bar."

Pair of very wide, weathered wooden stairs go up the embankment. Taroo leads the characters to the smaller one because it leads directly into the Renon Farm. The other is at the end of the Farmer's Trail which connects to other farms and small villages many miles to the east of the river. Taroo used it during his trip.

There are three farms at this end of the trail: the Renon Farm, the Alyin Farm, and the Tralio Farm. The Renons' is the largest. Taroo occasionally works and socializes at the other two farms, so he knows them almost as well as the Renons.

### WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

While there are specific clues listed in the descriptions, you can use this overview to help fill in gaps and ad lib clues if needed as the characters investigate.

Last night, 15 lizardfolk came upriver, towing four large, crude log rafts which they beached at the south end of the gravel bar. They attacked Renon farm first, followed by the Alyin farm, and last the Tralio farm. In all cases the occupants were subdued after a brief skirmish and rounded up along with larger livestock such as cattle. A bull at the Tralio farm caused a few injuries and property damage.

The human captives were bound and thrown on the rafts while some of the cattle were tranquilized by a sedating poison of the lizardfolk, the majority were left behind. The lizardfolk drummer sounded the return cadence and the raiding party headed downriver before dawn. With their pace slowed by the unwieldy rafts, the raiding party hopes to return to get the bull and cows late tonight after trading rafts and sending the victims on to the King's Island.

### SEARCHING RENON FARM

The trail from the stair leads through a strip of dense woods between the farm in the river. When the characters emerge from the trees, they can see the stout wooden farmhouse. The farmhouse is about 230 feet uphill from the stair. The trail passes north of the plowed "south field," wraps around the farmhouse and ends in the middle of a small group of buildings. Another trail splits off to the southeast and winds downhill to meet the Farmer's trail.

The group of buildings includes the farmhouse, barn, chicken coops, well, and Taroo's farmhand house. The

two chicken coops are in a small fenced in area. The large barn has a pig sty to the north and green pasture to the east, both of which are fenced in. Beyond the barn is the "north field." All are in good repair or condition.

Taroo answers questions as best he can. He can lead them around the farm, but they are free to look around.

### BARN

The barn is a story and a half tall stout wood structure. Access is through the main doors on the west side, with two additional doors on the north and east sides. The north door leads to the pig sty, and the east doors open into the pasture.

**Clues.** All of the doors are smashed in, showing clear impacts from clubs. Taroo realizes several large pigs are missing. Smaller pigs remain inside the north side of the barn. The two cows and the ox are gone. Clawed footprints cover the dirt floor. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the cows were led out of the barn and down the Renons' path towards the stair.

### FARMHOUSE

The farmhouse is a well-built, low 20 ft. x 40 ft. sturdy wooden structure with walls stained dark green. The roof is wood shingles. There are front and back doors, and a pair of small rippled glass windows into each room. It has wood floors and a six-foot high ceiling. Inside the front door is a large living space with a fireplace. A narrow hallway leads past a small bedroom to the kitchen in the back. There are no interior doors. A large fireplace dominates the kitchen, and it is clear that food preparation occurs both inside and at tables behind the house.

**Clues.** The doors and windows are bashed in and broken. There was obviously a struggle throughout the house. Furniture is broken and stored items are damaged or displaced. Taroo says nothing is missing, even items of value. There are dried blood spots and splatters on the floor and walls, though it is not extensive.

A bloody woodsman's axe with a broken handle is stuck at an odd angle in the wall next to the front door. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the awkward angle is likely due to avoiding the room's low head height. The bed is unmade and the fireplaces are cold.

A broken, crude club is on the kitchen floor. A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals it is fashioned out of wood common to the

swamp, but also the riverbanks.

The wood floor has deep scratches from clawed feet. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that at least one person or creature was dragged out the back door and down the Renons' path to the river.

**Treasure:** In the bedroom under a floorboard is a small hidden chest that takes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigate) check to find. It contains 10 gp, 22 sp, 52 cp. There is also a silver necklace inlaid with finely cut agates worth 20 gp.

#### OTHER AREAS

**Chicken Coop.** The small chicken coop holds a dozen chickens that make a fantastic racket if someone steps inside. The lizardfolk ignored it, so there are no tracks here.

**Taroo's House.** Taroo's rough wooden house is a single 10 ft. x 10 ft. room with a small window next to the front door. The door is smashed in, but its worn table and chairs are undisturbed. The bed is overturned, as though someone looked under it. Nothing is missing.

**North Field.** The north field has the first green shoots of the spring grain planting. An ox-drawn plow sits at the south edge of the field, near the barn.

**South Field.** The south field shows the first shoots of a variety of vegetables. Three clear sets of clawed footprints lead from the compound through the field and towards the Alyin's farm to the south.

**Well.** The well is shallow and stone lined. A dozen battered wood buckets are stacked around the well next to a ragged rope.

#### ALYIN FARM

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If the characters investigate the Alyins' farm, they discover the couple (Walos and Jinns) has gone missing. Taroo describes them as young adult humans who inherited their farm and moved in only a few months ago. They don't really know the area. The farm has an old small farmhouse similar to the Renons' but in poorer condition. It likewise has been broken into and shows signs of a struggle. However, there are no signs of anyone being dragged away (the Alyins were actually carried).

A search turns up a broken wooden drumstick among the stuff on the floor with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (investigation) check. Taroo can confirm it isn't the Alyins. The Alyins' field is partially planted – Taroo says they're late this year due to illness. The house has no valuables in it. The decayed wood barn is

wide open, and an ox was obviously led away down the path to the road and river.

#### TRALIO FARM

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If the characters investigate the Tralios' farm, they see a number of cattle inside and outside of a large pasture. Part of the pasture's wood fence along the trail from the road to the house is down. A big bull remains inside the fence, and watches anyone who walks by. If a character enters the pasture (or attacks), the bull charges the first one in. Use the **giant goat** statistics; the animal can be calmed down with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the bull's horns are caked with blood. There appears to be three small blowgun darts stuck in the bull's side (from a failed tranquilizing attempt). A trail of blood leads back to the Farmer's Trail and all the way to the river. The lizardfolk gave up for now, but plan to come back tonight.

The Tralios (Hilloo and Gerona) are also gone, and their small house and barn broken into, all of which are similar to the Renons. Taroo says the Tralios regularly dealt in livestock with the local farmers. He watched their farm when they traveled, or helped with the livestock.

#### THE GRAVEL BAR

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Characters searching the gravel bar might discover (with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check) that something large was beached here. They might also notice (with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check) muddy footprints and a small trail of blood from the stairs to the Farmer's Trail (leading back to the Tralio farm).

Anyone searching the water's edge soon finds a gourd canteen wedged between two large rocks. It is empty but the inside has a nasty odor to it. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that it might have held some type of poison. It was, in fact, dropped by one of the lizardfolk while struggling to get the livestock aboard a raft.

#### MOVING ON

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By now, the characters should realize all the clues point towards the lizardfolk, and head towards the marsh.

The characters might deduce that the lizardfolk might return tonight to the Tralio farm. Otherwise, they likely set off for the marsh. You should determine how long

the investigation has taken so far, and how much time remains before sunset. The characters might opt to stay at a farm and leave at dawn or may head out no matter what the time and camp near or in the marsh. At dusk, the drums start up and run through the night. See “The Drums” and “Dusk-Dusk Ambush.”

Taroo has absolutely no interest in pursuing the kidnappers into the marsh. He says he'll stay at the farms to tend to the remaining animals and lock up the buildings. He'll go back upriver for the night.

A steady cold rain starts in the late afternoon, continues overnight and stops just after dawn the next morning. Along the river, the characters occasionally discover the corpse of a pig or cow that didn't make it, but never any people.

### TRAVEL TO THE MARSH

Once the party embarks to head from the farms to the marsh, have them choose activities they might be engaged in while traveling. Each character should choose one of the activities listed below, in addition to helping guide the keelboat with poles. See Chapter 8: Adventuring in the basic rules or the *Player's Handbook* for more information.

- **Keep a lookout:** Characters doing this are able to use their passive Wisdom (Perception) scores to keep an eye out for threats.
- **Navigate:** Characters can find the quickest path downstream. If a character succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, the travel time is reduced to 3/4 of its normal time.
- **Map the area:** This could be vital if the characters become separated or leave the immediate area of the river. Without a map, it is possible the characters could become lost.
- **Track:** While traveling on land or by water, a character could continue to track the lizardfolk. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check made every six hours keeps them on track with the lizardfolk, eventually leading back to Ringcurrent Islands and the Island of the Lizard King.

**Travel Time and Distance.** The edge of the Twilight Marsh is about seven and a half miles downstream. The Trank River is relatively easy to navigate, with no whitewater and few rapids. Some sections are deeper than others.

If the characters use the keelboat, the first five miles takes about two hours. For the last two miles, the current slows significantly, and the river seems to take forever to traverse. It takes about two hours to reach the northern edge.

If the characters try to go overland, it takes about 20 hours by foot due to the rugged landscape and trails. If the characters somehow brought horses, it cuts the time to 15 hours. However, the horses are next to useless beyond the borders of the swamp. Taroo can point this

out.

### THE DRUMS

The lizardfolk drums are used for communication and intimidation. Due to the extraordinary nature of Throstulgrael's contest, they are using their drums continuously each night. Certain patterns convey different messages.

Lizardfolk who hear the drums are emboldened by them. Each lizardfolk gains advantage on one attack or saving throw during combat.

The drums get louder the closer the characters are to the marsh. They also notice there are occasionally quieter drums from other directions. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that, far from being random drumming, the boom drums are a means of communicating amongst the lizardfolk and that the drums signal the start and end of hunting each night as well as the coming and going of raiding parties.

- **Start:** Four distinct thundering beats echoing across the marsh and surrounding lands. Locals panic and barricade themselves indoors when it starts.
- **Drumroll:** The thunderdrums keep up a continuous low rumbling roll accented by louder staccato patterns and the occasional thundering boom.
- **End:** At sunrise, the drums end with three low booms and two rapid thundering shots.

Playing up the tribal, menacing nature of the drums during the trek through the swamp can do a lot to heighten tension and create great atmosphere.

## DUSK-DUSK AMBUSH

The lizardfolk set their sights on the party after sunset. Canny and observant parties might be alerted to their presence before they strike. Six **lizardfolk** move in on the party in the evening. Adapt the ambush to the characters' specific circumstances. The likely scenarios are:

- The characters stay at Tralios' farm to ambush or follow the lizardfolk returning for the livestock.
- The characters stay at one of the other farms for the night and are discovered by lizardfolk scouts.
- The characters head downriver but travel or camp in or near the boat overnight.
- The characters make it into the marsh where they travel or camp overnight.

If the characters do take care to conceal themselves, they must avoid detection by two **lizardfolk** scouts. The scouts use Dexterity (Stealth) to sneak into the area sometime after sunset. If they manage to avoid detection and succeed in spotting the characters, they withdraw and return with the rest of the raiders. If the scouts are killed, the rest of the lizardfolk come looking for them an

hour later. Should the characters spot the scouts, they have advantage to spot the rest when they arrive.

#### **TWILIGHT MARSH LIZARDFOLK RAIDERS**

Raiders out to capture quarry carry a net or blowgun in addition to the attacks listed in the stat block.

**Net.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or one Small target. *Hit:* target is restrained and falls prone.

**Blowgun.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 30 ft./60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d4 poison damage and become poisoned for one hour.

### **NIGHTTIME AMBUSH**

**The Dusk-Dusk's main goal is to subdue the characters.** If they are clearly overmatched or lose half their number, the lizardfolk retreat into the river or darkness. They attack after sunset, at a time you wish to enhance the characters' circumstances.

**Light.** None due to the rain, aside from the light sources the characters have. It could be twilight if the attack occurs just after sunset or before dawn. The lizardfolk carry torches, but not during the ambush.

**Sound.** The drums continue to boom through the night, bolstering the lizardfolk; see "The Drums."

**Weather.** A heavy downpour makes surfaces slicker or muddier (treat as difficult terrain) and further reduces visibility. **Dexterity (Stealth) checks have advantage.**

#### **ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER**

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party or weak party:** remove one lizardfolk
- **Strong party:** add one lizardfolk
- **Very strong party:** add two lizardfolk

#### **SEQUENCE OF EVENTS**

The lizardfolk plans are as follows.

- Attack from multiple directions, including surprise attacks from the water.
- Characters subdued in the attack are pulled to and into the river. They are hauled downstream to a hidden raft. Captives are seated on the uneven log raft deck, hands and feet tied with ropes, as well as tied to the logs themselves. The lizardfolk head for the swamp before dawn.
- The lizardfolk retreat to and into the river if they lose more than half their number.

#### **LAND TACTICS**

If the ambush takes place on land away from the water, the lizardfolk leave a raft at the water's edge where they can return to it quickly, but keep it out of sight. They split up into pairs, except for the four tasked with kidnapping. They try to draw the target away from the others. They sneak up as close as they can and then launch their ambush from all directions. If the characters are outside, the lizardfolk fire blowgun darts coated with tranquilizer poison. The kidnapers rush their target, trying to throw a net over their victim. If the characters are in a building, the lizardfolk hammer at the doors with wooden clubs and fire through open windows.

#### **WATER TACTICS**

If the ambush occurs on the boat, river, or riverbank, the lizard folk use the water to maximum advantage. They leave the raft as close as they can downstream out of sight. They swim underwater to surround the boat or be parallel to the bank, as limited by water depth. They suddenly break the surface to start the ambush, immediately firing their blowguns at any visible target. The four kidnapers attempt to climb on the boat, or rush their target from the darkness if on land.

#### **TREASURE**

The lizardfolk carry clubs, blowguns, poisoned darts, crude nets, and a few personal but otherwise valueless items. There is a half-full gourd of the lizardfolk tranquilizing poison; enough for six more doses. Their half-barrel sized signaling drum and drumsticks are on the log raft.

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

If the lizardfolk succeed in capturing one or more of the adventurers, the fight turns into a pursuit. It might include a chase between the raft and the keelboat, neither of which are particularly fast or maneuverable. The lizardfolk direct the raft while swimming. If they get away, they head for the Lizard King's Island, which is several hours away. Allow players to be creative in how they try to track down and rescue captured comrades.

If the lizardfolk are defeated, the survivors flee downriver to return to the Dusk-Dusk village. Lizardfolk who are captured resist giving information for a short time, before a realistic threat makes them talk (or a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check). They do not speak Common.

They say their clan leaders ordered them to kidnap

people and livestock to please Throstulgrael and become king of the Twilight Marsh lizardfolk clans. If the characters asked for locations, they receive vague directions to the center of the marsh. If the characters try to bribe or force them to lead them to the kidnap victims, the lizardfolk willingly leads them into the swamp. They deliver them into Dusk-Dusk territory, looking for an ambush by their clan's patrols.

# PART 2: INTO TWILIGHT MARSH

The characters head into the marsh to confront the lizardfolk abductors and rescue the missing farmers.

## TRAVELING IN THE MARSH

Once the party make it to the edge of Twilight Marsh, have them choose activities they might be engaged in while traveling. Each character should choose one of the activities listed below, in addition to helping guide the keelboat with poles. See Chapter 8: Adventuring in the basic rules or the *Player's Handbook* for more information.

- **Keep a lookout:** Characters doing this are able to use their passive Wisdom (Perception) scores to keep an eye out for threats.
- **Navigate:** Characters can help Taroo find the quickest path through the marsh. If a character succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, the travel time is reduced to 3/4 of its normal time.
- **Map the area:** This could be vital if Taroo is killed, rendered unconscious, or taken by the lizardfolk. Without a map, it is possible the characters could become lost.
- **Track:** While traveling on land or by water, a character could continue to track the lizardfolk. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check made every six hours keeps them on track with the lizardfolk, eventually leading back to Ringcurrent Islands and the Island of the Lizard King.

## SEARCHING THE MARSH

The Trank River spreads out and flows between the multitude of shallow islands, wetlands, and dense vegetation. Fog is common in the morning hours. During the day, the marsh lives up to its name, as the high tree branches create a dense canopy, making much of the light underneath as dim as an evening's twilight. Travel during the day is dangerous, but traveling at night is certain to draw an attack. See "Marsh Dangers."

Searching something the size of the swamp is challenging, but the characters have a number of leads.

- Periodic successful DC 13 Perception and passive Perception checks turn up trinkets, clothes, or other items dropped by the captives, and suggest a direction deeper in the swamp.
- The urgency of the contest has made the lizardfolk less careful and stealthy than usual. The characters may discover fresh footprints, or see lizardfolk rushing around in the distance, only to find them long gone by the time they catch up.
- The characters may detect a pair of lizardfolk

scouts, or a patrol may find them. The characters enter the swamp in Dusk-Dusk territory, but can cross into Rootwater territory to the south, or enter Muckmarsh territory two miles into the swamp.

Stealthy characters might follow the patrol, or capture and question them about the kidnappings.

- Several hours into the search, the adventurers discover lizardfolk escorting a prisoner raft. See "The Prisoner Raft."
- At night, the thundering drums serve as a beacon that leads straight to the Ringcurrent Islands. If the characters haven't noticed already, they can also hear the lesser drums of the other clans and kidnapping groups, but always far in the distance in other directions.

## MARSH DANGERS

Typical marsh danger are a constant threat, but much harder to deal with at night. They should make travel challenging and dangerous, but not completely impossible.

**Terrain.** The vast majority of the marsh is difficult terrain. Travel is slowed by tangles of tree roots, wetlands thick with water grasses, muddy bogs, unexpected deep underwater holes, and undergrowth. Some areas require walking through the water, or hauling the keelboat a short distance overland.

**Light.** The twilight-like light is treated as dim light throughout the day, and darker during rainstorms. Direct sunlight does break through the canopy in some areas, temporarily piercing the gloom with a bright oasis. Lizardfolk use some of these areas to sun themselves on cold days.

**Weather.** The rain ends in the early morning, and the sky slowly clears. The temperature is cool overnight and stays low during the day. It is difficult to stay warm, especially for soaking wet characters. It is difficult but not impossible to light a fire in the marsh, though a large one also attracts attention.

**Creatures.** The marsh has a multitude of insects, animals, and fish. You should feel free to use any of these for additional ambience, such as annoying the characters with swarms of biting (but otherwise harmless) bugs, or snakes dropping into the boat from above. Giant toads and other monsters are less common.

## GIANT TOADS

The most dangerous creatures the characters encounter

are two **giant toads**. About an hour into the marsh, the characters pass through a wetland with a few giant toads hidden in the tall grass. A variation of this encounter can be used almost anywhere in the marsh, day or night, though it should only occur once.

You are passing through a wetland with tall, wide, and dense blades of greenish brown grass bordering labyrinthine waterways. The wall-like growths make it appear as though the boat is traveling watery hallways. Crossings occur frequently, opening suddenly to one or both sides. A slow current guides your way.

Standing on the boat, characters six feet in height can barely see over the tops of the grasses, which wave and rustle in a strong, breeze. The plants are growing in the shallower areas, and the channels you are using are only a few feet deep.

The characters might detect the hidden toads (roll Dexterity (Stealth) checks for the toads) as they pass by. Characters that succeed are not surprised when the toads attack, realizing something is out there.

The first toad to strike sits in the thick grass. It shoots its tongue out to grab one of the characters on the boat, which seems to suddenly get yanked into the grass and disappear from view. The DM should play up the suddenness of the shocking disappearance and the realization that they are being dragged through the grass to some kind of hidden monster. The current continues to push the boat along, even if the characters stop guiding it. A second toad sits at the next crossing, ready to pick off another character.

#### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** remove one giant toad; the remaining giant toad has 27 hit points
- **Weak party:** each giant toad has 27 hit points
- **Strong party:** add one giant toad
- **Very strong party:** add one giant toad; each giant toad has 51 hit points

#### DEVELOPMENT

If a toad grabs and swallows a character, it hops into a waterway and jumps away as fast as possible. Toads that take more than half damage also flee.

#### TREASURE

The toads don't carry treasure, but a quick search in the shallow waters around the ambush site turns up skeletons of less fortunate halfling travelers, along with

their ruined weapons, packs, and purses with a total of 53 gp, 39 sp, and 24 cp.

## THE PRISONER RAFT

About four hours into the swamp, the characters see through the trees, a group of three **lizardfolk** and one **lizardfolk shaman** in the distance guiding a prisoner raft. The characters have not been detected and won't be unless they draw attention to themselves. This encounter can occur at any time. At night, the lizardfolk use torches to light the way.

A flurry of movement catches your attention. In the distance through a thick stand of old trees, you see several humanoid shapes, most likely lizardfolk, guiding a long raft. The raft appears to carry more humanoids that are sitting on the raft's surface, but it is difficult to make out who or what they might be. The guides are waist deep in water in front, behind, and next to the raft. They don't appear to have noticed you.

It shouldn't take long for the characters to realize that the raft is carrying prisoners. The lizardfolk are taking the captives to the Lizard King's Island, which is still about an hour away. Eight escort the raft, while two others scout around for dangers and the other clans. The lizardfolk are from the clan whose territory the characters are passing through, most likely the Rootwater clan. If they are in Muckmarsh territory, the lizardfolk are armed.

The characters have several options:

**Follow.** If the characters follow the raft, they must make Dexterity (Stealth) checks every 15 minutes, or four times before reaching the Ringcurrent Islands. If the characters are successful, they reach the outer Ringcurrent Islands. If they are detected, the lizardfolk push the raft faster while the scouts and two others break away to engage the characters.

**Attack and Rescue.** If the characters attack the lizardfolk, they have about 10 minutes to plan before they are out of sight. The characters may make Dexterity (Stealth) checks to position themselves for an ambush. The lizardfolk attempt to flee if they detect the characters. The scouts and two others engage the characters. If the adventurers succeed in ambushing the raft, all of the lizardfolk engage and none flee the confrontation no matter the outcome. If the lizardfolk beat back the attack, they rush their cargo to the King's Island.

If the characters are successful, they are left with a

raft full of kidnap victims. There are three male humans, two female humans, three female halflings, and two male dwarves. If the characters manage to free the victims during the fight, the dwarves, two humans and a halfling join the battle (use the **commoner** statistics).

All of them have minor injuries from their kidnapping, but nothing debilitating. They tell the adventurers everything they can, filling in some gaps about what is going on. See “Rolk Talks” for more information and roleplaying notes.

The victims can use the raft to get out of the marsh. They are appreciative of weapons, but make do with improvised clubs for defense. They don't require an escort. The way is dangerous, so it is possible that the characters might try to dissuade them. The victims are reluctant, but might agree to hiding somewhere nearby until the adventurers returned to take them out.

**Negotiation.** Though unlikely, the characters might try to negotiate with the lizardfolk or intimidate them into giving up their prizes. If the characters clearly have the upper hand, intimidation might scare the lizardfolk into fleeing for their lives. If the characters try to simply negotiate, they have made a poor choice. The lizardfolk see them as highly desirable targets and waste no time to try to capture at least one of the characters. See “Attack and Rescue,” above.

#### ROLK TALKS

Rolk is a talkative dwarf merchant who is exceedingly grateful for his rescue. The dwarves (Rolk and Nik) were taken three days ago while traveling on the Phlan Path. The rest come from surrounding farms. Rolk understands a bit of Draconic and can relay what he has surmised is going on.

- Three lizardfolk clans are having some sort of contest whereby the winner is the clan with the most captives. It has been going on since the drums began a tenday ago, and appears to end in a few nights.
- Rolk doesn't know what the prize is or anything about a dragon.
- Most everyone believed there was only one lizardfolk clan, not three. He knows their names.
- The drums call out the leading clan somehow.
- Before the contest, something powerful attacked the lizardfolk villages and killed a powerful lizard king called Scalecrusher.
- The lizardfolk constantly complain that they can't eat any of their victims until the contest is over.
- The lizardfolk have been pushing them steadily in the same direction for days. Rolk assumes it leads to their ultimate destination and thinks it translates as the Island of the Lizard King in the Ringcurrent Islands.

#### TREASURE

The lizardfolk aren't carrying valuables, just clubs, blow

guns, and a dozen poisoned darts.

#### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party or weak party:** remove one lizardfolk
- **Strong party:** add one lizardfolk
- **Very strong party:** add two lizardfolk

## THE RINGCURRENT ISLANDS

The Ringcurrent Islands are named for the source and shape of their ring-like arrangement. A large, slow moving circular eddy formed along one of the Twilight Marsh's deeper water channels, and the circular motion shaped a number of islands. The Muckmarsh tribe lives on and around the islands, which surround the King's Island.

### OUTER ISLANDS

Throstulgrael damaged or destroyed half of the Muckmarsh huts. About 40 survivors have temporarily abandoned the north and west islands and retreated to the best remaining huts to the south. The characters arrive at the abandoned islands.

Ahead you see a series of wooded islands in an expanse of muddy water. A slow current seems to revolve around them like a massive eddy. Waterbound trees continue the canopy over the water. There is an irregular line of crude wood huts built partially in the water along each island's bank. Many are damaged or knocked over and look abandoned.

At night, the drums are tremendously loud and clearly located somewhere in the middle of the islands. The characters gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks when the drums overwhelm the ambient sound.

Sharp eyed characters might pick out details of the damaged huts from afar. Read or paraphrase the following as they approach the islands.

Up close, it is obvious that some of the huts have been physically knocked over or crushed, with logs snapped like



twigs. However, many more of them are oddly destroyed, and the remains show signs of being dissolved or rotting away.

Further inland, you see several a pair of ragged winged shapes hanging like decorations high in the tree branches. The silhouette of a large and powerful lizardfolk appears from behind the trees. It jumps high in the air, grabs one decoration in each hand and rips them from their ropes. It lands, throws them to the ground, and stomps them flat. The lizardfolk strides into the gloom.

The young lizardfolk king, Bogclaw, is ripping down dragon effigies hung by surviving clan members in honor of Throstulgrael. He is too far away for most character actions, but if they try a quick long range attack, call attention to themselves, or carry a bright light source at night, he attempts to disappear into the vegetation. Seeing Bogclaw for the first time, someone knowledgeable about lizardfolk might realize they are seeing a variation called a lizard king that is more powerful and smarter than the average lizardfolk.

The islands show the direct results from Throstulgrael's attack. If the characters land and investigate the area, they find no other living lizardfolk. They discover lizardfolk bodies in the rubble of some of the ruined huts. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check suggests that the bodies and huts show signs of being burned partially away by a very powerful acid. Searching the huts reveals basic weapons, shields, and other items common to a primitive village. If the characters look for the ruined decorations, they discover they appear to be crude effigies of a dragon.

The island is long, but only a hundred feet or so across. On the other shore, they find another series of destroyed huts. Beyond the huts, they can see the King's Island in the center of the enormous eddy. If the party succeeds at a group DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check they can follow Bogclaw to the Island of the Lizard King before losing his trail in the water.

#### **BOGCLAW**

Bogclaw is a young and strong lizardfolk king, now the rightful king of the clans. He secretly escaped death, though he had to hide and treat his wounds for a few days. He plans to take back control by ruining the contest. He can't stand Throstulgrael and won't allow the clans to work for the creature or worship it. Bogclaw is destroying the honor effigies out of frustration and to remind the lizardfolk who is in charge, once he reveals himself.

Bogclaw eventually notices the characters, hides, and watches them from the deep shadows or water. He flees into the water if discovered. Bogclaw hides and waits to take

advantage of any distraction the characters might give to disrupt the contest.

## ISLAND OF THE LIZARD KING

When the characters first see the island, read or paraphrase the following.

In the center of a massive, slowly swirling eddy is a long island that appears to be taller and larger at one end. From your vantage point, you can see two distinct encampments of lizardfolk. Each has a ragged banner with different markings on them. You can just see the top of a third banner hidden behind a cluster of six massive drums in the center of the island. Destroyed wooden huts and crude fortifications sit on a low mound around the drums, and down into the water.

Two large wooden cages lashed together from tree limbs dominate each encampment. One appears to contain humanoids. Animal-like sounds from the other ones imply they hold livestock. Each cage has tall poles with winged decorations similar to those on the outer island.

About a dozen lizardfolk roam each encampment. Some are guarding the cages, while others work on large rafts at the water's edge. The lizardfolk seem more interested in keeping an eye on the other groups than watching for other dangers.

If the characters arrive at night, the marsh thunderdrums boom away, covering most sounds in the area and making speech difficult on the island. The drums pulse with a magical blue energy each time they are struck, a side effect of the minor enchantment that drastically raises the volume. It lights the whole island.

Each clan has their own encampment on each arm of the Y-like island. The King's huts, and those of his lieutenants and bodyguards are mounds of wood and debris. In the center of the island stands a pike with Scalecrusher's half-dissolved skull on it. It's Throstulgrael's reminder of the fate of those who oppose him.

The mound, bordered by the drums, is something of a no-man's land between the clans. The clans only deliver captives to their own encampment. Deliveries are guarded to keep the other clans from stealing their catch enroute.

The Muckmarsh are on the northeast arm, the Rootwater are on the southeast, and the Dusk-Dusk are due west. Each group has ten lizardfolk, plus an average lizardfolk turned-clan leader who would be king. There are three or four rafts beached on at each camp. The Muckmarsh clan is armed with primitive swords,

## DRUMS IN THE MARSH

shields, and javelins. Only the clan leaders and shaman of the other two clans are so equipped.

The Muckmarsh cages hold 18 humans and strongheart (stout) halflings, plus about 25 various livestock. The Dusk-Dusk have 12 humans and wood elves, along with 32 mostly large livestock. The Rootwater hold 10 strongheart halflings and shield (mountain) dwarves, along with 14 assorted livestock.

The characters can take their time planning their next move. Show them the King's Island map. They might wait for darkness or dawn, depending on their ideas. The distance between the cages make rescuing all three groups of victims challenging. Saving the livestock is likely impossible due to the lack of enough rafts and time. However, the characters have some circumstances on their side, though they won't realize it at first.

- The clans do not help each other defend the other's captives.
- Once the captives are let loose, about half of them fight the lizardfolk (as **commoners**) while the others run for the rafts. The adventurers' force grows significantly with each rescue. The DM should handle all but the characters' actions cinematically.
- If the characters defeat Bogclaw, the rest of the lizardfolk flee, abandoning the island.
- The drummers continue until Bogclaw appears, or they are attacked.

### TREASURE

The Muckmarsh tribe has a stash of treasure in stolen old saddlebags hidden away in the hut of the old leader, Scalecrusher. If they search the Muckmarsh's huts, they can find the treasure. It consists of 6 pp, 196 gp, an agate worth 100 gp, and a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment* with 3 doses remaining.

### BOGCLAW'S COUP

Immediately after the adventurers disrupt the proceedings, Bogclaw emerges from the water and swiftly kills the Muckmarsh would-be leader, preferably in sight of the characters. The Muckmarsh guards immediately follow his orders.

Bogclaw leads them against the next clan (the one none or the least number of characters are fighting). Some fight back, while others switch sides. Afterwards, they turn to the last clan. If the characters are quick, it is possible they can free the captives while the infighting is going on.

Only after all of the surviving lizardfolk are under Bogclaw's control does he turn and attack the characters. He defends himself if they engage him directly. The lizardfolk pursue the characters to the edge of the Ringcurrent Islands, then Bogclaw turns them back to stabilize his control. Most of the valuable captives are gone, which suits him fine.

### DEALING WITH THE LIZARDFOLK

At this point, the adventurers have a variety of ways that they can approach the situation.

- **Dive in and start thrashing the lizardfolk in hopes of driving them off.** This is the most dangerous course of action; feel free to alter the fight as you see fit. The tribes will fight amongst themselves, but members of each tribe will attempt to defeat the party in hopes of winning glory for the tribe
- **Negotiation with the tribes.** Rolk can assist if no one speaks Draconic. Award the party for clever role playing, possibly by making the final battle easier as the tribes ally against the Muckmarsh.
- **Stealth and assassination.** By sneaking up to free captives and eliminate key guards the party could garner a decent sized fighting force and throw the lizardfolk in to disarray.
- **Something else the party thinks up.** Roll with their ideas if they seem plausible.

Whatever the outcome, the party should face Bogclaw and some of his tribesmen. Narrate the battle raging around them until Bogclaw is defeated or the party falls.

Unless the party decides to rush headlong in to battle, they should face Bogclaw (use **lizard king** statistics), a **lizardfolk shaman**, and two **lizardfolk**.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** remove the shaman and one lizardfolk
- **Weak party:** remove the shaman and add one lizardfolk
- **Strong party:** Bogclaw has 102 hit points
- **Very strong party:** Bogclaw has 102 hit points; add one lizardfolk

### ESCAPE AND AFTERMATH

With the loss of the clan leaders and possibly Bogclaw, the remaining lizardfolk don't have the will or the numbers to reasonably recapture the escapees. The

large group scares most marsh predators away. It takes many hours, but the characters eventually escort the rafts out of the marsh and up the river.

The characters should end with the knowledge that a dragon is stirring up trouble in the marsh. They might surmise that the destruction of the contest and so many lizardfolk over the past two weeks that the remainder won't pose much of a threat for a while. A few captives speak some Draconic and inform the characters that Throstulgrael was due to return in the coming days to pick the clan leader and feast on all of the captives. They also relay Rolk's information if the characters missed it somehow. Now, Throstulgrael might take its wrath out on the lizardfolk.

The characters are fully paid their gold and spell scroll upon returning to the Crossing Inn with some of the captives.

## REWARDS

Make sure note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

## EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

### COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Lizardfolk king	1100
Lizardfolk shaman	450
Giant toad	200
Crocodile	100
Lizardfolk	100

### NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Investigating the farms	75
Saving the prisoners on the raft	50
Saving the prisoners on the island	50
Negotiating with the lizardfolk	50

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **600 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **750 experience**

**points.**

## TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

**Consumable magic items** should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

**Permanent magic items** are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

### TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Coins from the Renons' farm	12
Necklace from the Renons' farm	20
Halfling coinpurses	57
Scalecrusher's hidden treasure	256
Rolk's reward	100
Romsan's reward	50

### KEOGHTOM'S OINTMENT

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This rose-colored glass jar contains 3 doses of the ointment. Once the last dose is used, the certificate is void and can be removed from your magic item list. A description of this item can be found in the D&D basic rules.

### SPELL SCROLL: FIREBALL

*Scroll, uncommon*

This *spell scroll* contains a single *fireball* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record

permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

## REOWN

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**All faction members** earn **one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

**Emerald Enclave** characters earn **one additional renown point** for negotiating with the two tribes to ally against the Muckmarsh tribe, and leaving the other tribes to forge their own peace.

## DOWNTIME

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Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

## DM REWARDS

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You receive **200 XP** and **ten downtime days** for running this session.

# APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

## COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

## CROCODILE

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 19 (3d10 + 3)  
**Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Stealth +2  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The crocodile can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

## GIANT GOAT

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 19 (3d10 + 3)  
**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Senses** passive Perception 11  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Charge.** If the goat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Sure-Footed.** The goat has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

### ACTIONS

**Ram.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

## GIANT TOAD

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 11  
**Hit Points** 39 (6d10 + 6)  
**Speed** 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Amphibious.** The toad can breathe air and water.

**Standing Leap.** The toad's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the toad can't bite another target.

**Swallow.** The toad makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the toad dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

# LIZARDFOLK

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft., 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.

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

### TWILIGHT MARSH LIZARDFOLK RAIDERS

Raiders out to capture quarry carry a net or blowgun in addition to the attacks listed in the stat block.

**Net.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or one Small target. *Hit:* target is restrained and falls prone.

**Blowgun.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 30 ft./60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d4 poison damage and the Poisoned condition-disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws-for one hour.

# LIZARDFOLK SHAMAN

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +6

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

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

**Spellcasting (Lizardfolk Form Only).** The lizardfolk is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The lizardfolk has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, produce flame, thorn whip*

1st Level (4 slots): *entangle, fog cloud*

2nd Level (3 slots): *heat metal, spike growth*

3rd Level (2 slots): *conjure animals* (reptiles only), *plant growth*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Lizardfolk Form Only).** The lizardfolk makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage in crocodile form. If the lizardfolk is in crocodile form and the target is a Large or smaller creature, the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the lizardfolk can't bite another target. If the lizardfolk reverts to its true form, the grapple ends.

**Claws (Lizardfolk Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

**Change Shape (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The lizardfolk magically polymorphs into a crocodile, remaining in that form for up to 1 hour. It can revert to its true form as a bonus action. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

# LIZARD KING/QUEEN

*Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +2

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

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Abyssal, Draconic

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

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

**Skewer.** Once per turn, when the lizardfolk makes a melee attack with its trident and hits, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage, and the lizardfolk gains temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

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## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws or trident or two melee attacks with its trident.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

**Trident.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

# APPENDIX: MAP OF THE ISLAND OF THE LIZARD KING

