

Dungeon Module T1

THE CULT & THE TRIBE

An adventure for 4 to 6 characters
of 7th level



Goblins wielding blue fire are attacking peaceful lizardfolk in the swamps near Timbertown, and demons are roaming free. Can you save the lizardfolk and keep the town safe?

by R P Davis



The Cult & The Tribe

Lizards and Goblins and Demons Oh My!

DUNGEON MODULE T1: THE CULT & THE TRIBE

AN OSR-FEEL 5TH EDITION ADVENTURE OPTIMIZED FOR 5 CHARACTERS OF 7TH LEVEL.

BY R P DAVIS



This package (adventure, maps, and handouts within) forms a complete module for use with DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 5TH EDITION RULES. It is especially designed for Dungeon Masters to initiate play with a minimum of preparation.

In addition to descriptive and situational material, this module also includes special informational sections giving background history and legends, listings of possible monsters and treasures and how to place them, a list of adventuring characters, tips on various aspects of play for the Dungeon Master, and helpful advice for starting players.

If you enjoy this module, see the credits for more releases from R P Davis.



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries.

This work contains material that is (c) copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All other original material in this work is (c) copyright 2019 by R P Davis and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, Dungeon Master's Guide, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

A lizardfolk embassy arrives under a flag of truce, and the party are summoned to the castle to meet them. There they are given the quest to investigate these goblins who wield strange blue fire. Side quest: The Fraternity of Tharos in Impiltur is reeling but not dead, and there are rumors that a member of Timbertown's Council is a member of the Fraternity.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Before the Spellplague, the hordes of Kagiskz, an ancient kingdom below the Giantspire Mountains, terrorized northern Impiltur. Ruled by hobgoblins, its armies ravaged the kingdom where Timbertown now lies. When the Spellplague came, the goblinoids suffered greatly from the arcane devastation, such that no group larger than a dozen goblins has been seen in the land for a generation.

At the same time certain goblinoids were empowered by Spellscarring. These individuals, provided with awesome powers which also drove them stark, raving mad, quickly rose to the top of their tribes and factions. War tore Kagiskz apart. Tribe battled tribe, hobgoblins brutally suppressed a goblin uprising, bugbears fought anyone who came into view. Weakened by the Spellplague and their civil war, they remained below for generations. Over time the goblinoid society recovered, with those wielding the power of the Spellplague mastering their madness and ruling with an iron fist.

You're In The Army Now

For more information on how goblinoids organize themselves into military organizations, as well as the norms of goblinoid behavior, read and understand the relevant section of Volo's Guide to Monsters. Internalizing those norms will help you roleplay goblinoids, as well as influence how you play them tactically in combat.

The sages say the Spellplague ended with the Second Sundering, and that Spellscarred creatures no longer exist. Unfortunately, the sages don't know that nobody seems to have told the Kagiskz goblinoids. Recently a hobgoblin chieftain took control of Kagiskz and united all clans and legions under his rule. He has sent probing raids to investigate the lands under the sun and make a bit of mayhem in the process. He wishes to use the scouts' reports to determine how difficult it might be to conquer and enslave the entire region.

Since goblins are the ancient traditional enemies of Impiltur, and the raids have become frequent and violent, even the Fraternity of Tharos have cause to worry. After a devastating attack on one of their hideouts, they have sent patrols to seek and destroy the goblinoid raiding parties. The adventurers may find themselves with some strange bedfellows.

When reports of strange goblins wielding arcane powers come to the attention of their contacts in Timbertown, the heroes are tasked to investigate the area where the goblins have been seen in order to determine where they came from and why they are suddenly raiding in force.



DM'S INTRODUCTION

The adventure starts in the town of Timbertown in the far northern reaches of Impiltur. The heroes are summoned to a meeting with Baron Ferrand, who has received an embassy from the Throkkikizkiz lizardfolk bearing reports of marauding goblins with weird arcane powers.

The heroes travel to the Throkkikizkiz tribe's stronghold, in a swamp a couple of hours away from the town. Through questioning the lizardfolk, they gain information on the raiders and eventually the location of their camp. The heroes might also learn of a spy, and prevent that spy from warning the raiders of their investigation.

While en route to the camp, the heroes need to deal with a band of the spellscarred goblinoids as well as a group of demons and cultists sent by the Fraternity to deal with the goblins. Nothing ties the demons to the Fraternity, but the demons make it clear they are looking for goblins, leaving the heroes wondering about who is sending demons to do the same job.

Once at the camp, the heroes are approached peacefully by the hobgoblin leader, Mulgu. Mulgu tries to trick the heroes into revealing information **on the status of Timbertown's defenses without revealing anything about his own goals and origins.** The heroes can try to use the same tactics against the hobgoblin, or simply destroy the band, questioning any survivors afterward.

The adventure ends with the heroes returning to Timbertown to report their findings. If the heroes have done well, the raiders learned nothing and the characters much. Armed with such information Baron Ferrand is pleased, gladly paying the promised reward along with a bonus. If the heroes failed to acquire much information, he is disappointed.

Skill Challenges

This adventure makes use of Skill Challenge encounters. A Skill Challenge is used when the heroes are attempting something complicated that requires multiple steps and multiple contributors. Tasks like persuading a noble, fortifying a ruin, winning a court case, searching the wilderness, tracking down a criminal, escaping from prison, crafting a magic item, climbing a mountain, or figuring out a complicated clockwork machine are good candidates for skill challenges.

Skill Challenges organize roleplaying encounters and give you a framework in which you can decide what information to dole out to the players and in what way. They also give you methods by which you can determine how NPCs react to the characters, as well as possible reactions. In addition, they are a useful way to let the players leverage what might otherwise be little-used skills. Finally, Skill Challenges let the uncertainty of die rolling govern what some players see as a too-arbitrary DM decision-making process in non-combat encounters.

The practice of running a skill challenge is simple, and resembles the way a typical DM runs these kinds of exploration or social scenes, with one exception: You are secretly keeping score. The encounter ends when the heroes have accumulated a certain number of successes toward their goal, or suffered three failures.

Listen to the players describe their characters' actions, and call for rolls with the skills the players seem to be signaling they want to use when the outcome of the players' desired actions is uncertain or may lead to conflicts. For instance, the Rogue might decide to pick a guard's pocket to get a key. That's a conflict — the Rogue wants the key, the guard wants to avoid getting robbed. You call for a Sleight of Hand check, and record the result. Similarly, the Bard might wish to chat up the guard and talk her into letting the party go without paying the bridge toll. That's uncertain — the Bard wants to cross the bridge for free, and the guard wants to collect the 10 sp per person she's supposed to. You call for a Persuasion check opposed by the guard's Insight, and record the result.

Note: In this adventure, skills aren't listed with ability scores unless the check is specifically designed to depend on that ability. If a character wants to make a Strength (Intimidation) check by flexing their muscles threateningly, you can let that happen at your option.

At the end of the encounter, tally up the successes and failures, and choose the appropriate result to continue the adventure.

As with all game mechanics, Skill Challenge rules are not meant to be slavishly followed. Feel free to ignore the mechanical aspects of the Skill Challenge encounters entirely, and instead simply decide the outcomes and what information you wish to impart based on roleplaying.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The adventurers are gathered in the town of [Timbertown](#) in Impiltur. Use your favorite method to get the players interested, or try one of the following hooks:

R&R Interrupted. The heroes are in a tavern (or their lodgings) when they're approached by a young messenger girl, Mara, who gives them a message from Baron Ferrand. Read or paraphrase the following:

Enjoying some relaxation after your most recent adventure, you are approached by a teenage girl with long braided black hair. She wears the purple and yellow tabard of the Baron's Warsword, and she bears a sealed letter.

Characters who live in Timbertown recognize the seal as belonging to Baron Ferrand.

If the heroes open the letter, read or paraphrase the following:

"Adventurers, I am in need of your services once again. It seems as though there are yet more troubles for the people of my lands. Please come at once to my council chambers. (signed) Ferrand, Baron."

If the heroes are interested and go to the meeting, proceed with Encounter 1. If they choose not to, the adventure is over, and their reputation in Timbertown suffers.

Pardon the Interruption. The heroes are at the castle after just finishing a quest, either reporting to the captain of the Baron's Warsword, Dev Gavienus, or in the library with the wizard Federec Serrell, searching for information about a quest they have already undertaken. In the middle of their work, a guard arrives and asks the heroes to accompany him to the council chambers. Proceed with Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1: GOBLIN TROUBLE

Cast of NPCs:

Ferrand Galadhor, male human, Baron of Timbertown
Yvonus Grandore, male human, Ferrand's chamberlain and majordomo
Chinguk Chokkuyozk, male lizardfolk, ambassador

Setup:

The heroes have been summoned by Baron Ferrand to his council chamber in Timbertown's castle. Read or paraphrase the following:

You are received in a luxurious room with thick carpets on the floor and family portraits and hunting trophies on the walls. Baron Ferrand is a middle-aged man with graying hair and a short beard. Next to him is his ancient chamberlain, Yvonus Grandore. Stranger than this, though, are the half dozen lizardfolk in what must be ceremonial raiment. They wear scraps of bright silk, and their scales are painted with vibrant hues. The one who wears the most ornate paint, as well as an alligator skull for a hat, must be their leader. It looks to Ferrand, then you, and bows. "Baron man says you are strong," it says. "Throkkikizkiz people wish to make words with pink-skins."

Ferrand makes introductions. The Ambassador - named Chokkuyozk, Yoz for short - gives the tribe's story.

"Goblins come. Nasty and mean. That not strange. What strange is goblins throw blue fire. Throkkikizkiz warriors strong, but Throkkikizkiz warriors cannot fight blue fire. You come, you help, yes?"

Ferrand clarifies, if necessary. Read or paraphrase the following:

“We apparently have a goblin problem. These goblins, however, are different from the ones in grandfathers’ stories. According to Chinguk Yoz, these goblins are more organized. The force consists of bugbears and goblins under the control of hobgoblins, which is never a good sign.

Also, if what Chinguk Yoz says is accurate, these goblins have powers that regular goblins do not have, that some of them have the ability to spontaneously create blue fire. I need you to investigate. Find out if the goblins want to negotiate. If so, find out what they want and report back. I know you have just returned from many trials, but this is not a job for soldiers. This is a job for adventurers. We do not want goblin raids to start again. We really don’t want organized goblins starting something big. At least, not until we get the Fraternity of Tharos sorted out. Make your way to Throkkikizkiz territory. See what these blue-fire goblins are up to, then report back to me.”

After a moment, he adds:

“Before you go, know also that we have heard rumors of a traitor in our midst. The Fraternity of Tharos’s web is intricate. If you hear anything about the foul cult and any person living in our lands, I would know of it at once.”

Baron Ferrand knows the following information if the heroes ask for it or if conversation allows it to be revealed:

- The heroes are to be paid 100 gold pieces each for their efforts. He is willing to pay half now.
- Ferrand wants to know how many goblinoids are in his territory, where they come from, and the nature of their new powers.

- Ferrand wants to know if there is a leader and, if so, what that leader is planning. “If there is a new enemy around, Timbertown needs to be prepared for it.”
- A peaceful resolution is preferable, especially if the goblins are part of a bigger band or tribe, as his military forces are neither large nor particularly well-trained, consisting mostly of militia.
- The goblins were last spotted near the Throkkikizkiz tribal stronghold, a day’s walk away from the town. Yoz assigns one of his assistants, a warrior named Oax, to guide the heroes to the stronghold. Ferrand advises the heroes to speak with the Throkkikizkiz to gather more information.
- Ferrand wants the heroes to start at once, before the goblins disappear or do any significant damage.
- If none of the heroes speaks Goblin, Ferrand instructs Grandore to fetch a [helm of comprehending languages](#) from his armory. He hints that the heroes might be able to keep this item if they finish the job to his satisfaction.



- Characters who ask about the blue fire are directed to Federec Serrell, who explains spellscarring during the Spellplague. Long-lived characters who were alive and practicing arcane magic before the Second Sundering, such as elves and dwarves, already know this information.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the heroes decline Ferrand's offer, the adventure is over. If their reason was not very good, Ferrand is less inclined to trust them in the future. If they simply decline, Ferrand is furious and banishes them from his lands. If the heroes **decline Qax's assistance as guide, all ability checks in tribal territory are made with disadvantage.**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The heroes do not earn any XP for this encounter. Players who roleplay particularly well, or engage with their Traits, Bonds, and Flaws, should earn Inspiration.

TREASURE

Heroes who insist on being paid in advance get 50 gp each. If necessary, the heroes receive the loan of a [helm of comprehending languages](#). This item must be returned at the end of the adventure, but if the heroes perform well, they are allowed to keep it.

ENCOUNTER 2: INTO THE SWAMP

Travel to Throkkikizkiz territory is uneventful. On the way, Qax says little, though he answers simple yes or no questions readily enough.

This encounter is a roleplaying or skill challenge encounter which takes place in the swamps of the Throkkikizkiz. The following assumes Qax led them **to the village**. If he didn't, the lizardfolk are much more reticent and wary; all ability checks made with social skills have disadvantage.

Rather than go straight to the village, the heroes might decide to explore the surrounding area first.

The Spellplague

The Spellplague was a disaster that struck Realmspace and even the planes themselves in the Year of Blue Fire (1385 DR), caused by Mystra's assassination by Cyric and Shar. It continued for a decade, leading to the Wailing Years, during which arcane magic ceased to function and the planet of Toril was transformed.

For eons, magic had been bound within Mystra's Weave, the universal structure of arcane forces, and her death tore the Weave apart and unleashed the raw magic contained within it. The breakdown of the Weave was felt by all spellcasters across Faerûn.

By 1480 DR, the Spellplague ended with Mystra's return. The Weave was resurrected with the goddess, and magic became what it was before the Spellplague, though sages suspect some areas with lingering effects from it remain.

Qax is happy to spend a few hours leading the **heroes through the tribe's territory, but is not prepared to do so for more than that**. If the heroes persist in searching, he insists on leading them to the village. While not exactly the fastest method of finding the goblin lair, it might work, especially if the party keeps their presence hidden from the villagers. Go to Scene 8.

Cast of NPCs

All NPCs are lizardfolk.

Zuss, female, alligator wrangler
 Draz, male, elderly retired adventurer
 Bhajaga, male, chief
 Shass, female, gatherer
 Jekno, female shaman, priestess of Semuanya, traitor

Setup

The heroes must acquire information. This is easier said than done, as the Throkkikizkiz have little regard for adventurers, who all too often simply kill lizardfolk. Moreover, the newly-arrived goblins have made the villagers fearful. When the heroes

arrive at the tribe's village, read or paraphrase the following:

Qax leads you through the forest into a swamp deep in the Dunwood, at the very feet of the Giantspires. You spend several hours traversing hidden paths through the humid reeds. Tiny insects plague you, though they don't seem to bother Qax at all, and the reek is formidable. You keep glancing over your shoulders, certain that some great monster will rise out of the mire and attack you, but no such mischance occurs.

Finally you arrive at a tiny community, little more than a few huts made of mud and sticks inside a palisade made of sharpened tree trunks, all surrounding a huge, ancient willow tree on a hummock of dry land rising a few feet out of the swamp. It is clear that conditions are primitive at best. Thin, weary lizardfolk stare at you with a combination of suspicion and fear showing in their haggard eyes. All seem ready to bolt at the slightest threat. Except for one lizardfolk, who looks nearly as old as the great willow against which he leans. To your marvel, he wears chain mail and smokes a pipe while he watches you curiously.

An elaborately-painted lizardfolk steps toward you from a hollow in the willow's massive trunk, accompanied by another smaller lizardfolk who wears a crown of colorful feathers and bears an ornately-carved staff. Both carry themselves with an air of authority.

The painted lizardfolk is Bhajaga, the chieftain, accompanied by Jekno, the shaman. Qax introduces the heroes. The important lizardfolk remain impassive to warm-blood eyes. A lizardfolk adventurer automatically recognizes that the leaders are nervous but putting on a brave face.

SKILL CHALLENGE:

Goal: The heroes need to learn where the goblins are before the goblins become aware of their presence.

Success Condition: 6 successes before 3 failures

Victory: The heroes find the trail towards the goblin lair in time to prevent the goblins from setting up an ambush. Astute heroes might prepare an ambush of their own, aided by a few of the tribe's warriors (see Scene 7).

Defeat: Although they still get the directions they need, the heroes are ambushed by the goblins on their way to the goblin lair.

Options. The heroes have the following interaction options:

- The elderly lizardfolk standing under the tree and smoking a pipe is Draz, a retired adventurer.
- A nearby group of villagers, who are working repairing fishing nets.
- The tribe's leaders: either Bhajaga, the elaborately-painted chief, or Jekno, the shaman and priestess of Semuanya.

Regardless of whom the heroes approach first, if they talk to someone else outside his presence, Bhajaga quickly interrupts to establish his authority and dominance.

Note 1: If the players invent a creative way to use a skill not listed in a scene, don't forget that skills are not necessarily always tied to certain ability scores. If someone wants to make a Strength (Intimidation) check by making an impressive show of rippling muscles, let them if you think it'll be fun for your players.

Note 2: If the players roleplay well, you can simply decide they succeed at the test, forgoing a dice roll.

SCENE 1: BHAJAGA

Primary Skills: Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation

Secondary Skills: Insight, Nature, Survival

Gaining the support of Bhajaga generates 1 success towards the skill challenge (see Scene 2 for more details).

Bhajaga is the tribe's chief. He has the largest hut and the most fishing nets, some leadership skills, and above all is able to appease through groveling and fast-talking the intelligent creatures who prey on the tribe. He is a squat, rather fat, middle-aged male lizardfolk with freshly-applied body paint and a leather loincloth.

Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation DC 14 (1 success; 1 maximum)

Through lies, reasonable words, or a show of might, you gain the support of Bhajaga. Bhajaga is concerned about the heroes' motives, as well as the reaction of the goblins once they learn about the heroes' presence in the area. Bhajaga knows a bit about the goblins, and either confirms the stories of the fisherfolk or takes the heroes to the fisherfolk to acquire the information.

Insight DC 14 (neither success nor failure)

Bhajaga is susceptible to flattery, but he is fiercely protective of his people. Rather than physical strength, to achieve his aims he uses his facility with words and kobold-level lack of pride. You gain advantage on your next social skill check to gain Bhajaga's support.

Nature, Survival DC 14 (neither success nor failure)

By showing knowledge in fishing you gain advantage on your next social skill check to gain Bhajaga's support. Characters with a fishing background automatically gain this bonus without a check being required.

SCENE 2: FISHERFOLK AT WORK

Primary Skills: Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation, Athletics
Secondary Skills: Insight, Nature, Survival

The villagers are mending nets for tomorrow's fishing. Worn down by their perpetual struggle for survival, they are suspicious and frightened of strangers, especially adventurers. The heroes have to earn their trust (or make themselves more frightening than the goblins or other intelligent

What The Fisherfolk Know

The fisherfolk tell the heroes the following after they earn three successes. (If the heroes gain the support of Bhajaga or Jekno, they need only two successes.)

- There have been a couple of goblin raids. No villager has been seriously hurt, but livestock and food have been stolen.
- The only deaths were suffered by a patrol of warriors sent to drive the goblins off.
- The fisherfolk have seen a band of large, brutish goblins. Faint blue sparks fly from them as they move. Some fisherfolk insist that the goblins control the blue flame as they attack.
- The most recent raid was at Shass's mushroom farm. A few villagers were hurt and most of Shass's animals and food were stolen.

creatures who prey on lizardfolk). Gaining the support of either Bhajaga or Jekno aids the heroes' efforts.

Note: If the heroes haven't played through Scene 1, once they score 1 success in this scene, Bhajaga interrupts the conversation, insisting on being the center of attention. Go back to Scene 1.

If the heroes score their 3rd failure during this scene, the fisherfolk provide the required information eventually. Proceed immediately to Scene 5.

Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation DC 14 (1 success; 2 maximum)

Whether through lies, reasonable words, or a show of might, you get the fisherfolk to divulge what they know.

Failure indicates that the fisherfolk reveal nothing. The exact reactions depend on the skill used: lies lead to mistrust, kind words are misinterpreted, and threats set them laughing.

Persuasion, Intimidation DC 18 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The fisherfolk admit that they suspect one or more of the villagers might be a spy for the goblins. They recommend talking to Jekno about it, not because she is at all likely to be allied with the goblins, but because the tribespeople confide in her.

Bribe (special)

The fisherfolk are practical. They accept minor bribes of food or useful items, but don't know what to do with money. Regardless of the size of the bribe, it grants the heroes advantage on the next skill check during this scene.

Athletics, Nature, Survival (special)

If half or more of the party help the fisherfolk mend their nets and hang them to dry, they make a very favorable impression. They score 1 success automatically.

Insight DC 8 (neither success nor failure)

The fisherfolk are frightened of something, and are conflicted about whether or not to tell you. They are proud and practical, knowing their value to the tribe.



Insight DC 16 (neither success nor failure)

While discussing the goblins, you note unease amongst the fisherfolk that more resembles terror than simple fear.

Nature, Survival DC 14 (neither success nor failure)

By showing knowledge in fishing (heroes with a fishing background automatically succeed in this check) and/or dealing with the dynamics of a crowd, you gain advantage on your next check to gain the fisherfolks' trust.

SCENE 3: JEKNO THE SHAMAN

Primary Skills: Deception, Persuasion
Secondary Skills: Religion

The Throkkikizkiz village is too small to have an official temple. Instead the shaman Jekno leads the villagers in their worship of Semuanya. Jekno is a middle-aged female lizardfolk who wears a hat of colorful feathers and carries a carved wooden staff. The villagers respect her because she supervises the care of the tribe's eggs and cares for their injuries. She thinks that angering the goblins does not solve anything and only endangers her people.

The heroes likely approach Jekno for one of two reasons: To get her support, or to learn the identity of the goblins' spy. Gaining her support is accomplished in exactly the same way as gaining the support of Bhajaga, and has the same effect. If the heroes already gained the support of Bhajaga, then gaining Jekno's support removes 1 failure, though it doesn't add an additional success.

Jekno refuses to cast spells or perform rituals for the heroes, even if they earn her trust and support.

If they want her to tell them about the spy, use the information provided below.

Deception, Persuasion DC 16 (1 success; 1 maximum)

Through clever questioning the heroes discover Jekno is the spy. The strange goblins stole eggs from the creche, and threaten to destroy them if she does not help them. Before she confesses, she asks the heroes to promise not to punish the spy. If that promise is a lie, a Deception contest against her Insight is required. If the check fails, she demands their true promise. If they refuse, she does not confess.

Religion DC 14 (0 success; 1 maximum)

Discussing the religious tenets of Semuanya helps to convince Jekno to trust the heroes. A success gives the heroes advantage on Deception or Persuasion checks. Followers of Semuanya automatically gain this bonus.

SCENE 4: DRAZ

Draz is an elderly male lizardfolk who's missing a few scales here and there, wearing a much-patched, rusty chain mail shirt. Oddly for a lizardfolk, Draz is chatty, and has seen much of the lands around the Sea of Fallen Stars. He has just returned from a trip to Uthmere, on the eastern shores of the Easting Reach, and doesn't know much about the goblins, nor is he particularly worried about them. He is more concerned about demon cultists of the Fraternity of Tharos than a simple band of goblins. If the heroes want information about the goblins, he directs them to Bhajaga or the fisherfolk. If they want to talk about demons and cultists, Draz will happily prattle on for hours.

If the heroes treat Draz as a fellow adventurer, they automatically gain 1 success in the skill challenge, and he vouches for them with the fisherfolk, giving them advantage on 1 skill check in that encounter.

Shortly before the heroes take their leave of him, Draz takes aside the hero who treated him most respectfully and offers them his dented silver whistle, a whistle of warning (see New Magic Items, below). The whistle has served him well, but he figures his adventuring days are over, for he is old. In addition, he says they were kind to him



when no one else has been for some time, and he appreciates that. Note: If no adventurer treated him well, he does not give this gift.

SCENE 5: PANICKING ALLIGATOR

This incident occurs when the heroes score their 3rd failure. If it happens before the heroes complete Scene 3, Jekno has disappeared.

Note: You can also use it in place of social skills if your table's characters lack those skills.

A hero with a passive History score of 14 or higher remembers the following: In a lizardfolk village, the alligator wrangler is almost as important as the chief or shaman, as she is in charge of the tribe's domesticated gators. Lizardfolk use the gators as mounts, to help them hunt game, and as a potent defense force.

Zuss the alligator wrangler is examining the eyes of one of her charges when the beast suddenly panics. Without aid the alligator is likely to seriously hurt itself. This poses a serious setback for the village.

The heroes can offer aid either by calming the beast through words or brute force in time to prevent serious harm, or by curing the beast after

it suffers injury. If they help the alligator, the heroes earn 1 success toward the overall skill challenge.

Heroes examining the cause of the incident afterward determine that someone apparently made the alligator panic by magic. Other than the heroes, Jekno is the only person in miles who can use magic. Jekno did it to give herself the opportunity to flee the village unobserved and warn the goblins (see Scene 7). If the heroes seek Jekno, she is gone. If they begin searching for her, 4 lizardfolk warriors join in the hunt.

Medicine DC 14 (1 success; 1 maximum)

You cannot calm the alligator, and Zuss eventually does so herself, though the animal is injured. You react quickly to heal its wounds before they have time to cause long-term damage.

Animal Handling DC 14 (1 success; 1 maximum)

You manage to calm the creature before it can hurt itself or anyone else.

Athletics DC 12 (1 success; 1 maximum)

You grab the gator and wrestle it into submission. A hero who fails this check takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from being battered by the creature during the ordeal.

SCENE 6: SHASS'S FARM

When the heroes approach Shass's hut, she comes to greet them pitchfork in hand. They can tell at a glance from her body language she's a little apprehensive, but if the heroes aren't openly hostile, she is friendly enough. If they tell her that they're investigating the goblins, she lets them examine her mushroom shed for clues.

The area around the mushroom shed is covered with tracks which go in almost every direction. The shed itself is intact, though it bears multiple scorch marks that still have a faint blue glow about them.

The heroes can earn 2 successes here. At the end of the scene, the heroes will likely attempt both a

Perception check and/or a Survival check to determine which direction to travel to find the **goblins' lair**. If these skills are not found in the party, Scene 7 provides an alternate means.

Arcana DC 14 (neither a success nor failure)

You examine the strange scorch marks and realize they are the result of the magical ability imparted by a spellscar.

Characters who were alive and practicing arcane magic before the Second Sundering (such as elves and dwarves), as well as those who sought the advice of Federec Serrell on the subject, automatically recognize the spellscarring.

History, Nature DC 14 (1 success; 1 maximum)

You recall historical accounts or remember your own experiences of goblin behavior, goblin raids in this area, or talk of traditional areas where the goblins made camp while they were raiding the countryside. Together with the tracks (see Perception), you think you can **locate the goblins' lair**.

Nature DC 14 (neither a success nor failure)

You find it ludicrous that goblins used magic to seize mushrooms. Rather, it might be an attempt to **scare the villagers**. It's either that or the goblins can't control their magic very well.

Perception DC 14 (1 success; 1 maximum)

You find goblin tracks that lead away from the village toward the foothills of the Giantspires.

SCENE 7: STOPPING JEKNO'S TREACHERY [BONUS SCENE]

Primary Skills: Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation
Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Survival, Perception

Jekno is detailed in Scene 3. The goblins threatened to destroy the entire clutch of eggs unless she agreed to spy for them. She knows where the goblins have their lair, but she is much

more afraid of the goblins than anyone else. The heroes can confront her by acting quickly after Scene 5.

Acrobatics, Athletics, Survival, or Perception DC 14 (special)

Jekno tries to escape as soon as you approach her, forcing you to try and capture her before she gets away.

On a success, remove 1 failure from the skill challenge. In addition, the heroes catch up with Jekno just before she meets the goblins. On a failure, the heroes do not catch up with Jekno and they find her tied up amongst the goblins in Encounter 3.

Deception, Persuasion, Intimidation DC 12 (1 success; 1 maximum)

Once caught, it does not take much to get Jekno to spill the beans. She is apologetic, and goes through an inner struggle about who to fear more: you or the goblins.

If the heroes promise (truthfully or otherwise) to protect the tribe or deal with the goblins permanently, she talks. Pressure through intimidation works just as well.

Jekno doesn't know why the goblins are here. Goblins have not been seen in a long time in the swamp.

SCENE 8: THE WILD SWAMP

The above assumes the heroes visit the village, which is the best place to acquire information. However, if the heroes choose otherwise, adapt using the following information:

The area consists of, well, swamp. The village is surrounded by pools of stagnant, smelly water, at the bottom of which is a seemingly bottomless pit of muck and ooze. Near the village's willow there are hummocks on which are a few detached, abandoned huts, which Oax reports are kept intact for roaming bands of lizardfolk hunters and fisherfolk to shelter in while practicing their craft.

The swamp contains myriad places for goblins to hide. Finding the goblin lair without speaking with the villagers is difficult. A successful DC 16 Nature or Survival check remembers the layout of the swamp, and a successful DC 12 History check remembers the habits of goblins.

Any group of armed individuals skulking about the countryside, including the heroes, is also likely to **be spotted by the tribe's increased defensive patrols**. Each creature in a group searching for the goblin lair without visiting the village first must make a DC 16 Stealth check to prevent being spotted by the villagers. If half the heroes fail this check, they gain 1 failure in the skill challenge and are accosted by 6 lizardfolk warriors, who do not attack but insist the heroes accompany them to the village.

If the heroes get completely lost, they run across a party of lizardfolk out fishing. See Scene 2 for ideas on how to run such an encounter.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the heroes succeed in the skill challenge, they can approach the goblin lair on their own terms. Proceed to Encounter 3. They are not surprised by the goblins, and can set up an ambush of their own (make the necessary adjustments to Encounter 3).

If the heroes fail the skill challenge, the goblins have been warned and set up an ambush along the trail towards their lair. Add one additional bugbear and run Encounter 3 as written.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each hero receives 500 xp if they succeed on the skill challenge.

TREASURE

A whistle of warning (see New Magic Items).

ENCOUNTER 3: IF YOU LOOK FOR GOBLINS, YOU TEND TO FIND...BUGBEARS?



SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

4 [bugbears](#), 10 [goblins](#), 2 [hobgoblins](#); 1 hobgoblin captain (see Monsters).

Add the following to each of the above creature's melee attacks: "In addition, on a hit the target takes 4 (1d6) fire damage."

Replace each creature's ranged attack with the following attack, using the creature's ranged attack bonus:

Blue Fire Bolt. Ranged Weapon Attack. +X to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d10) fire damage. In addition, the target begins burning. At the start of each of its turns, the target takes 4 (1d6) fire damage. A burning target can use its action to put out the blue flames, ending the effect on itself. Another creature within 5 feet of a burning target can use its action to put out the flames, ending the effect.

Note: Ongoing fire damage stacks! A creature with multiple ongoing burning effects takes all the fire damage at the start of its turn. Putting out the flames removes all instances of ongoing burning effects.

If the heroes were successful in Encounter 2's skill challenge, they may encounter the goblinoids along the trail to their lair. The raiders have set up

camp in an ancient ruin near the northern border of the swamp, from whence they can spy anybody searching for the lair.

If the heroes failed the challenge, the raiders are ready for battle. They have hidden themselves, leaving obvious signs of their recent presence, hoping to lure one or more of the characters inside the ruins.

If the heroes set up their own ambush, adjust the encounter and develop your own map.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You follow the trail that you were told will take you toward the goblins' lair. The path takes you out of the northern edge of the swamp into a hollow in the knees of the Giantspires. The rocky hills are covered with bushes and trees. You immediately note some kind of roofless stone ruin, perhaps an abandoned house, next to the trail, overlooking both the road and the valley below.

The heroes spot the ruin when they are 100 feet away.

Friendly Ambush

If the heroes succeeded at the skill challenge, the raiders are within the ruins, unaware of the heroes and not making any effort to hide. One of the goblins is on guard duty, sitting on a branch in one of the trees (marked G on map). Heroes with a passive Perception of 16 or higher spot the guard, noting the glint of the guard's spear.

The heroes can try to ambush the raiders by **sneaking**. This is a contest of the raiders' passive Perception scores versus the heroes' group Stealth check. If the heroes succeed, the raiders are surprised on the first round of combat.

Jekno's Eggs. The raiders keep the hostage eggs under **wet straw in the house's old well, in the center of the courtyard**. When defeat approaches, the raiders use the eggs as a bargaining chip. The eggs might also hinder the heroes somewhat in combat, as area spells may affect them. If Jekno accompanies the heroes, she knows about the eggs, and does everything in her power to stop the heroes harming the eggs.

Enemy Ambush

If the heroes failed the skill challenge, the raiders **are actively hiding**. This is a contest of the heroes' passive Perception versus the raiders' group Stealth check. Heroes who fail to spot the raiders are surprised on the first round of combat. Heroes sneaking towards the ruins spot an egg left in the open in the crumbling arched entrance to the courtyard. The raiders deliberately left it there to lure the heroes into the ruins.

When one or more heroes enter the ruins, the raiders attack. If no hero appears likely to enter the ruins, the raiders use the ruins as cover from which to attack approaching heroes with ranged attacks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Unless the heroes opt to approach during the night, the area is brightly illuminated. During the night there is dim light within the tower from a campfire.

Stairs: The interior of the ruin has a ruined stair which once led to the upper storeys of the tower. The raiders keep the lizardfolk eggs in the shaded empty space under these stairs.

Stone Walls: The ruined stone walls vary between 7 and 10 feet tall. Creatures can clamber over the walls by succeeding on a DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check. Failure indicates the creature returns to the space next to the wall and falls prone. Creatures can use the walls as half cover.

Surrounding Terrain: The surrounding terrain is natural wilderness. It consists of open terrain, bushes, and trees, potentially offering cover and concealment to creatures approaching the ruins. The heroes enter from the right of the map.

TACTICS

The raiders are not stupid. They know they are blessed with a weapon unavailable to lowly

goblinoids who are not Spellscarred, and use it every chance they get. They prefer to attack from range if possible, because they know the ongoing damage from their *Blue Fire Bolt* attacks stacks. The hobgoblin captain prefers to shout orders and use his *Blue Fire Bolt* attacks rather than engage in melee, and will only do so if pressed.



When half the raiders fall, any remaining bugbears Disengage and flee. Hobgoblins fight to the death. If no hobgoblins remain alive, surviving goblins grovel at the feet of the heroes in surrender.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The heroes may wish to question the surviving raiders. Encounter 5, Scene 1 provides the details on what the raiders know. Any ability check successes scored while questioning captives count towards the skill challenge in Encounter 5.

The heroes can force captives to guide them to the main lair. They can also easily follow **the raiders' tracks**. If they do either of these things, proceed to Encounter 5.

If Jekno (or other lizardfolk) accompanied the heroes, she parts company with them, telling them she must return the eggs. If the heroes offer to help, she declines, urging them to strike the raiders immediately, before they run away.

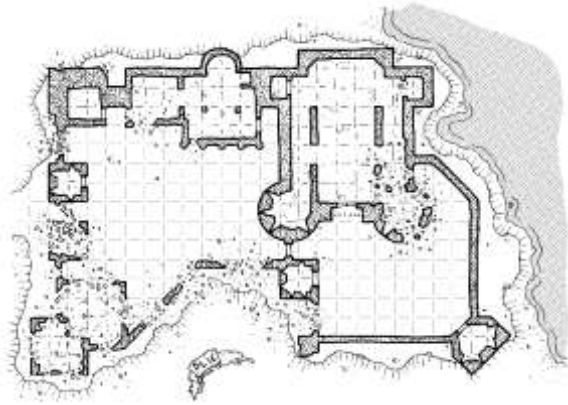
EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 440 experience points each for defeating the raiders.

TREASURE

The hobgoblin captain wears +1 scale mail and carries 36 gp in a coin pouch.

ENCOUNTER 4: AND DEMONS TOO? WHAT THE ACTUAL?



SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

6 [dretch](#) and a [barlgura](#) (see Monsters), accompanied by 6 human [cultists](#) commanded by a human [cult fanatic](#).

As the heroes track the raiders from Encounter 3 back to their lair, they run afoul of demons summoned by the Fraternity of Tharos. The Fraternity does not appreciate the goblinoids. The Fraternity is intent on finding the source of the goblinoid invasion and ending the threat to its claim to the Dunwood.

Following the stream from the the ruined house you found earlier, you pass several waterfalls as your path climbs steeply, ever higher into the Giantspires. The ruined house was apparently part of a larger settlement or complex, for the path approaches another ruin. It clearly was once a fortified manor house or small castle. Before the Spellplague, Impiltur's kings built many such outposts along the kingdom's borders. This ruin is in very bad condition. It includes a single-story hall and several partially-intact towers. The towers look like they are about to collapse.

There is no sign of goblinoids. Captive goblins, if questioned, reveal that this ruin is too far away from the swamp to be of use. Bypassing the ruin is time consuming, due to the terrain which rises

steeply to either side of the narrow valley, but is not impossible. It won't let the heroes bypass the encounter, but it will require adjusting the demons' tactics.

Read or paraphrase the following once the heroes decide to explore the ruins:

The wind shifts and a chill overcomes you. Suddenly, crashing out of the trees comes a hulking orangutan with a gruesome, drooping visage and tusks jutting from its jaw. Easily 8-foot tall, its eyes glitter with fiendish intelligence and malevolence, and you feel hatred coming off it in waves. The reek of brimstone and rotten meat assaults your nostrils. You catch glimpses of other, smaller demons, accompanied by humans wearing dark robes and wielding crossbows.

If the heroes captured any goblinoids, read or paraphrase the following:

The creature glares at you and rumbles threateningly. Suddenly, you hear a harsh, metallic voice shout in your head. "Our hunt succeeds! We have found some of those we seek! Come! Let us slay them!" It roars a challenge, and leaps to attack!

If the heroes are not traveling with any goblinoids, read or paraphrase the following.

The creature glares at you and rumbles threateningly. Suddenly, you hear a harsh, metallic voice in your head. "You reek of goblin, mortals, and we are hunting goblin. Perhaps we shall hunt you; you look like good sport. Run now!" It roars a challenge, and leaps to attack!

All the demons are out for blood. Sent by the Fraternity of Tharos, the cultists summoned the demons, who did not welcome the summons.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Towers: The towers are 15 feet tall. Each is lined with arrow slits. The door to each guard tower is barred from the inside.

Stone Walls: The walls are ruined, and are between 7 and 10 feet tall. Characters can climb over the walls; treat the map areas containing walls as difficult terrain. A creature attempting to clamber over a wall must succeed on a DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check.

In addition, creatures can attempt to cause the walls to collapse on creatures on the other side. A creature attempting to topple a wall must make a DC 18 Athletics check. On a success, the creature topples a 10-foot-square section of wall. Any creature behind the toppled wall must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and is knocked [prone](#). On a successful one, it takes half as much damage and isn't knocked

prone. The 10-foot-square area becomes difficult terrain.

If wall sections next to a tower collapse, the tower itself collapses, battering those sheltering therein and burying them alive. A creature inside a collapsing tower must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 24 (4d10) bludgeoning damage, is knocked prone, and [restrained](#). On a successful one, the target takes half as much damage and is neither prone nor restrained. A creature can use its action to escape being buried in the rubble (or help another creature escape).

TACTICS

The barghura revels in mayhem. It uses its *Running Leap* and *Reckless* abilities to wade into the party's front ranks. As a secondary tactic, it tries to stop aid from reaching the victims of the dretch and cultists.



The dretch try to maneuver around the party to attack a lightly-armored adventurer at the back rank with *Fetid Cloud*.

All demons fight to the death.

The cultists snipe from the walls and towers. They use the gaps in the ruins to give themselves total cover except when they attack (they use 5 feet of movement to step into the gap, fire, then 5 more feet of movement to move back behind the wall/rubble; lather, rinse, repeat). Add the following attack to each cultist:

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80/320, one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

The cult fanatic exhorts the cultists and tries to push walls over onto heroes using the walls as cover.

When the bargura falls, the cultists Disengage and Dash away.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the demons are defeated, the heroes can **continue on to the raiders' lair in encounter 5**. If the heroes capture a cultist, questioning reveals they know little, either about their mission or who is in charge of the Fraternity's cell in Timbertown.

The cult fanatic has a bundle of letters in his pocket. The letters detail where to meet the demons to begin the hunt for goblins, and are signed by Tomkin, Timbertown's miller. Any search of the bodies finds these letters.

The heroes can securely rest in any intact tower.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

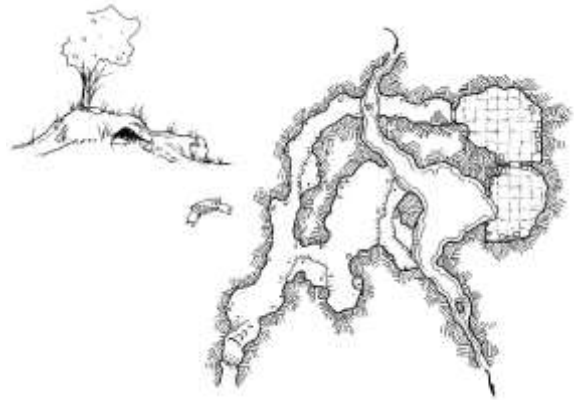
The characters split 2,700 experience points for defeating the hunting party.

TREASURE

The demons carry no treasure. The cultists have a total of 40 gp between them. The cult fanatic has a medallion covered in Abyssal script which has a

strong aura of abjuration magic. Any character proficient in Arcana knows such medallions are often used to bind and control demons, though this one is spent.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE LAIR



SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps:

6 [hobgoblins](#); Pevlir, a hobgoblin devastator (see Monsters); and Mulgu, a hobgoblin warlord (see Monsters).

Replace each hobgoblin's ranged attack with the following:

Blue Fire Bolt. Ranged Weapon Attack. +3 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d10) fire damage. In addition, the target begins burning. At the start of each of its turns, the target takes 4 (1d6) fire damage. A burning target can use its action to put out the blue flames, ending the effect on itself. Another creature within 5 feet of a burning target can use its action to put out the flames, ending the effect.

Note: Ongoing fire damage stacks! A creature with multiple ongoing burning effects takes all the fire damage at the start of its turn. Putting out the flames removes all instances of ongoing burning effects.

As the heroes approach the lair, read or paraphrase the following:

The trail has led you ever higher into the Giantspires. The stream dwindled until it is a mere trickle splashing over the stones, barely enough to make your feet wet. It tumbles downhill from a spring just below the top of a hill, on the crown of which is a single oak tree. In the roots of the tree is a cave opening. You see no signs of life around the hilltop.

When the heroes creep right up to the mouth of the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

Judging by the smell that wafts from therein and the many tracks around the opening, the goblins seem to have made themselves at home here. Just inside the cave you clearly see a set of stairs going down.

At this point, there are two ways the encounter can go: The heroes can negotiate, or they can just kick in the door and start killing.

Mulgu does not attack. He negotiates unless given no other alternative. He restrains his warriors unless the heroes do something like just hurl a fireball without so much as a word. Indeed, as soon as he is aware of their presence Mulgu welcomes the heroes into what he calls his "quarters" and offers them wine. If the heroes are intent on violence, Mulgu attempts once to parley, and if they remain hostile, the goblinoids defend themselves.

If the heroes attack, defeating the raiding party **certainly deals with Timbertown's immediate problem**. However, you should note that the goblinoids will thereafter have an abiding hatred towards Timbertown and Impiltur. **Tactics for the fight are described below. The heroes' mission of information gathering can still be completed, as they can acquire nearly all of the information by interrogating prisoners (or speaking with the dead) and investigating the lair as detailed in the skill challenge.** However, they gain no experience points for completing the skill challenge.

NEGOTIATION

If the heroes accept Mulgu's offer to negotiate, read or paraphrase the following:

You go through the cave entrance and down the steep, roughly-hewn stairs. Below, a long, narrow cave leads into the earth. There is a small group of goblins just ahead, and one stands a few paces ahead of his fellows, apparently the group's proud leader. Faint blue flames dance from his palms. "You come see Mulgu. We take," he says as he turns on his heel and walks further into the cave, waving for you to follow.

Note: The heroes were tasked to negotiate on behalf of Baron Ferrand, to discover the prospects of peace between Timbertown and the goblinoids if they can't get the creatures to leave. Mulgu has no intention of remaining, so getting the raiders to depart is simple. In a negotiation encounter, how the characters negotiate -- and what they learn in the negotiations -- is the important question. The heroes can leave whatever impression on the goblins they choose, leading Mulgu to **underestimate the barony's defenses**. The heroes can also convince the goblinoids that an invasion would be folly, that it is wise to be cautious towards Timbertown. The heroes can also acquire useful intelligence about the goblinoids themselves.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Goal: Convince the goblinoids to leave Timbertown's lands without angering them, and **learn more about the goblinoids' power and motivation**.

Success Condition: 6 successes before 3 failures

Victory: The heroes convince the raiders to leave without violence. The characters learn of the existence of Kagiskz and the threat the goblinoid realm poses to Timbertown.

Defeat: The heroes get the raiders to leave, but the goblinoids leave angry. More importantly, they fail to learn enough about the threat from

Kagiskz. As an option, if the heroes really upset the goblinoids and the players are eager for another combat, the raiders attack the heroes on a defeat in the skill challenge.

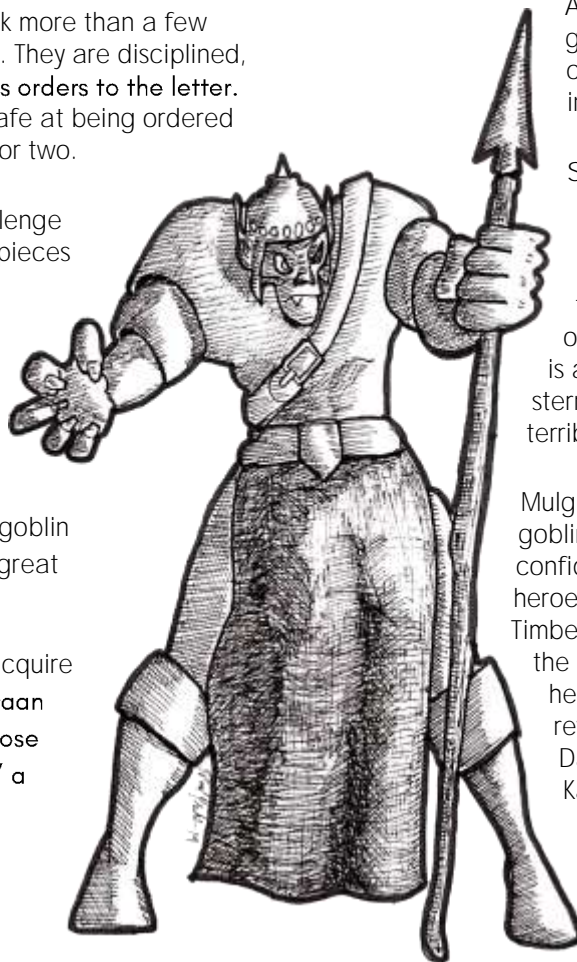
A full success is only possible by talking with Mulgu, but the heroes can score more successes by talking to the other goblinoids and investigating the lair. The heroes can score a maximum of 4 successes without talking with Mulgu. **Don't forget the heroes might already have gained some successes from interrogating prisoners in the aftermath of Encounter 3!** The final 2 successes can only be acquired in Scene 2 of this encounter.

Scene 1: Talking With Goblins

None of the hobgoblins speak more than a few words while Mulgu is present. They are disciplined, **and follow their commander's orders to the letter.** The hobgoblins, however, chafe at being ordered about and might tell a thing or two.

Each success in the skill challenge reveals one of the following pieces of information:

- The raiders come from the underground city of Kagiskz, beneath the Giantspires.
- Kagiskz is ruled by a hobgoblin named Dagtok who has great magical powers.
- The raiders are here to acquire loot and teach the "duuraan duun dach akaar," or "those who walk under the sun," a lesson.
- The hobgoblins are displeased with the raid. Lizardfolk are not worth attacking, since they provide neither loot nor glory nor prisoners to torture. They want to get closer to Timbertown, but Mulgu is holding them back.



Note: Heroes who speak to the hobgoblins in Goblin gain advantage on their skill checks.

Deception or Intimidation DC 12 (1 success, 4 maximum)

Through lies or threats you convince the hobgoblins to reveal 1 piece of information.

Persuasion DC 12 (1 success, 4 maximum)

Through praise and promises, you gain 1 piece of information.

Insight or Nature DC 12 (neither a success nor failure)

A successful in this skill check grants advantage on the next check made to acquire information.

Scene 2: Talking with Mulgu

Mulgu is a hobgoblin legion commander through and through. He is a close cousin of Dagtok, ruler of Kagiskz. He is a lifelong soldier, disciplined, stern, unforgiving, and has a terrible temper.

Mulgu is arrogant and holds non-goblins in contempt. He is confident that he can convince the heroes to reveal too much about Timbertown and its defenses. At the same time, in his arrogance he might be provoked into revealing too much about Dagtok and his plans for Kagiskz.

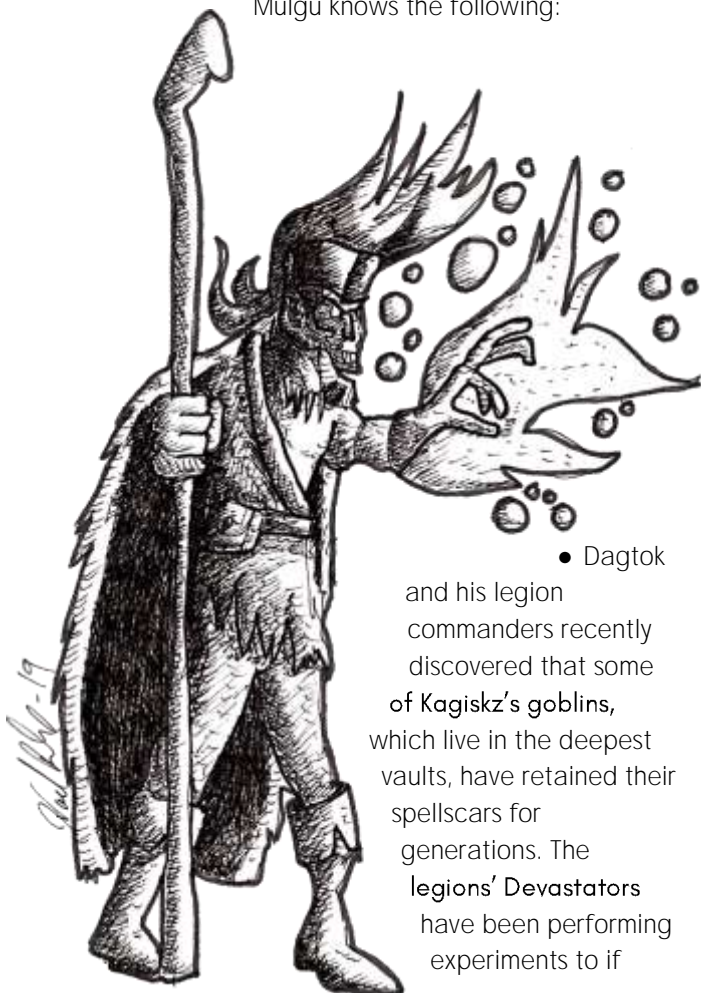
This scene has two goals:

1. The heroes must earn **either Mulgu's complete respect or utter contempt.** Either furthers Baron Ferrand's goals, since Mulgu's contempt causes the goblins to underestimate the barony's defenses

(potentially attacking too early) and his respect causes them to overestimate Timbertown's defenses (giving Ferrand more time to prepare). Each hero must make 1 check towards this goal. If more than half succeed, it counts as a success towards the overall challenge. Note: The heroes can mix the two goals. If this happens, the end impression is the one at which the majority of successes were aimed.

2. The heroes must get Mulgu to divulge information about the Kagiskz goblinoids. The heroes need but one success to accomplish this, but do not reveal all the information at once. Reveal the information by giving bits and pieces of information here and there while role-playing Mulgu.

In addition to what the common goblins know, Mulgu knows the following:



- Dagtok and his legion commanders recently discovered that some of Kagiskz's goblins, which live in the deepest vaults, have retained their spellscars for generations. The legions' Devastators have been performing experiments to if

spellscars can be awakened in other Kagiskz goblins. Mulgu does not know any details of these experiments.

- Virtually all goblinoids of Mulgu's own legion, the White Hill Legion, have been blessed with a spellscar.
- Mulgu's orders are to scout Timbertown and test its defenses. He has already submitted one report, in which he says the humans of Impiltur are weak and divided, easy prey for Kagiskz's legions.
- There is another group of goblins scouting south and west of Timbertown, infiltrating down the coast of the Easting Reach toward Ilmwatch and its surroundings.

Arcana contest (DC varies) (part of the group check to gain Mulgu's respect)

Mulgu has a keen interest in arcane matters, though he cannot cast spells himself. He demands you compete with his Devastator, Pivlir, in a contest of harmless magic. This is a best-of-5 contest of Arcana checks between the heroes and Pivlir. If the heroes succeed, they earn Mulgu's grudging respect.

Athletics, Intimidation, or Performance (DC varies) (neither a success nor failure)

You try to impress the goblinoid underlings of Mulgu through feats of strength, martial prowess, or by creating the most vile threats and insults. This is a contest of checks between any of Mulgu's raiders and any character. If the heroes succeed, they win the roaring approval of the raiders and gain advantage on either the check to earn Mulgu's respect or to acquire information from him (pick one per success). Failure imposes disadvantage on these checks as the heroes make fools out of themselves.

Note: If multiple heroes try to make a good impression, treat it as a group check. If more than half of those trying the check score a success, the group succeeds.

Deception DC 14 (1 success; 1 maximum)

You get Mulgu to reveal information, either by working on his nerves, setting a verbal trap with subtle questions, or by wounding his pride.

Deception DC 16 (part of the group check to gain Mulgu's respect)

You use subtle lies and half-truths in an attempt to either give Mulgu an impression of himself as a **weak bumbling fool**, or of **Timbertown's defenses** (e.g. **you've met untrained and inexperienced lizardfolk**, but there are many strong soldiers are in **Timbertown's strong castle**).

Intimidation or Persuasion DC 12 (1 success; 1 maximum)

If you captured a goblinoid in an earlier encounter and brought it captive to the lair, Mulgu is impressed with your prowess. If you return the **prisoner to Mulgu's custody**, he **respects you as honorable soldiers**.

Persuasion DC 18 (part of the group check to gain Mulgu's respect)

Mulgu has little regard for bargaining and honeyed words, making earning his respect thereby difficult, but not impossible.

Insight DC 14 (neither a success nor failure)

You realize that while Mulgu is a disciplined soldier, if he is somehow made nervous he might **reveal more than intended**, or **you sense Mulgu's pride as another weakness to exploit**. You gain advantage on your next check to acquire information.

Nature DC 15 (neither a success nor failure)

You remember that hobgoblins are a martial race. They respect strength and discipline, not honeyed words. Their leaders are picked for their martial prowess, and while they are sensitive to the opinions of their underlings, they often ignore it, for ultimately they rule through fear. You gain advantage on your next check to manipulate Mulgu.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Since the goblinoids all have darkvision, most of the cave is in darkness. The worked-stone rooms are lit only with dim light from warming braziers.

Pit Traps: The hidden pits are marked on the map.

TACTICS

Should the encounter come to fighting, Mulgu stays close to his warriors to use his *Martial Advantage* ability. The warriors also do their best to use their *Martial Advantage* ability to good effect, but otherwise spread out to reduce the odds of a cluster being hit by a single area of effect spell or power. Pivir tries to stay out of range in order to cast spells, using his *Army Arcana* ability to reduce friendly-fire casualties. The hobgoblins try to maneuver the heroes into one of the worked rooms of the complex so they can escape.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the heroes defeat the hobgoblins, whether through words or through swords.

Success on the skill challenge means the heroes acquire information about the goblinoids. In addition, they are able to manipulate the goblins into getting the wrong impression about Impiltur. After the encounter, the raiders begin packing for their return trip to Kagiskz. Proceed to Encounter 7a.

If the heroes slew the hobgoblins and search the caves, they realize that these ruins have held more goblins than they slew here or encountered elsewhere. The location of these other goblinoids is a mystery. In addition, they find traces of spell components strongly suggesting the use of the animal messenger spell ritual. Proceed to Encounter 7b.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Divide 4,000 XP among the heroes for

successfully completing the skill challenge. If they fail the skill challenge, they instead divide 2,000 XP.

If they defeat the hobgoblins in battle, divide 4,000 XP among the heroes.

TREASURE

The hobgoblins have a chest containing 6 [potions of healing](#). As these are hobgoblin make, a creature which drinks one must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is [poisoned](#) until the end of its next turn.

Pivir has a satchel containing spell scrolls of [create food and water](#), [floating disc](#), and [unseen servant](#).

ENCOUNTER 6: UNMASKING A CULTIST

Important NPCs:

Adeliz Anscoul, elderly human female [commoner](#), controller of the Merchant Venturers' Guild.

Rolph Barnabas, middle-aged human male [commoner](#), head of the Foresters Guild.

Bhargrack Brightshield, middle-aged dwarf male [veteran](#), owner of Bhargrack's Metalworks.

Adalhard Undertree, elderly human male [commoner](#), owner of Undertree's Ales.

Tarathiel Elagieros, young wood elf female [scout](#), ambassador of the Elagieros clan.

Tomkin Giddurim, middle-aged human male, miller/cult leader

SETUP

Should the heroes decide to investigate the bundle of letters, they can do so by asking around Timbertown. See the Timbertown NPCs list for roleplay details, then read or paraphrase the following:

You discreetly show the documents to prominent Timbertonians, and you discover the

handwriting is that of Tomkin Giddurim, Timbertown's miller.

Tomkin is playing a deep game, concealing himself as a simple-minded miller. In reality he is the third son of a wealthy family with extensive holdings in Lyrabar. He joined the Fraternity many years ago out of a need to further himself, learning its sinister secrets as he rose through its ranks. The Fraternity sent him to Timbertown to seek power from the nearby Dun-Tharos, as well as **infiltrate Timbertown's society and pass information about the barony to his superiors.**

In the two years he has lived and worked in Timbertown, he has considerably increased his authority in the Fraternity, first by summoning demons of greater and greater power at a secret **location deep in Timbertown's woods in the direction of Dun-Tharos, and second by passing along any gossip or information he can find out.**

Tomkin is never known to leave the mill unless summoned to the castle by the baron.

SKILL CHALLENGE

If the heroes accuse Tomkin directly of being a member of the Fraternity of Tharos, he denies any affiliation, responding to accusations with **cow-eyed ignorance. He claims that "I ain't nothing but a simple miller. I don't do nothing but grind grain. I ain't got nothing to do with no demons or them folk."**

This is a contest between Tomkin's Deception (+5) and the heroes' best Insight, passive or active. Role-play Tomkin's "I never done nothin'" responses to the heroes' accusations, then let the dice decide.

Even if the heroes see through his act, it is unwise for them to simply attack him. Even if their intent is to capture or subdue him, they know that **Timbertown's denizens take a dim view of vigilante justice, preferring that accusations be made formally and publicly.** If the heroes simply attack or slay Tomkin, they might themselves be arrested and brought before the baron, on the insistence of the Council. Feel free to pass a note to the most goody-two-shoes character's player to remind them of that fact, and let the player

debate flow. They won't be arrested if you don't want them to be, but it's always good to keep your players guessing.

ARRESTING TOMKIN

If the heroes accost Tomkin in the mill and he discovers his prevarication is not working, when they attempt to arrest him (or simply attack him) he reveals himself as a skilled warrior (see Monsters). He employs 6 laborers at his mill, all of whom are [cultists](#) who rush to his aid if he's attacked.

TACTICS

Tomkin's AC is 12, as his thick leather apron acts as hide armor. He uses his *Dreadful Aspect* on his first turn, hoping to keep the heroes from engaging in melee with him so he can escape. The cultists maneuver to facilitate this, attacking **heedless of their own safety**. Tomkin's glaive is hidden using magic; he can use a free action to command his weapon to materialize out of thin air. If he cannot immediately escape, on his turn he Disengages and flees. Only if he is cornered does he fight to the end; in this case he uses every Smite in his stat block, intending on taking as many of the heroes with him as he can.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the heroes subdue and capture Tomkin, they may wish to interrogate him in an attempt to find out other Fraternity members in the town. If so, he arrogantly claims to be the local leader, which is true. If asked if he gets instructions from elsewhere, he claims that he operates on his own recognizance, which is false; he receives instructions from New Sarshel via a sailor named **Long Jake**. **The cultists he can name are all ne'er-do-wells** from the docks, itinerant sailors, laborers, or vagabonds.

If the heroes search the mill, they find the room wherein Tomkin dwells. In it, they find a locked iron chest. Tomkin keep the key to this chest in his pocket on a fine silver chain.

Trap. Opening the chest without the key causes a needle to spring out, delivering a dose of poison. When the trap is triggered, the needle extends 3

inches straight out from the lock. A creature within range takes 1 piercing damage and 22 (4d10) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to **deduce the trap's presence from alterations made to the lock to accommodate the needle**. A **successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** disarms the trap, removing the needle from the lock. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check with **thieves' tools unlocks the chest**. **Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap.**

In the chest is a thick bundle of correspondence in a thin, spidery hand. Every page has some **reference to the Fraternity and Tomkin's role in it**. There is also a combination ledger and diary, in **Tomkin's own hand, which cross-references with the correspondence**. The ledger describes cash income and expenditure in Fraternity activities, as well as a map to the site where Tomkin led rituals to summon demons. (Note: This is left undefined for you to use as an adventure hook of your own! It should be somewhere outside of town in the direction of Dun-Tharos.)

The papers are conclusive proof Tomkin was a Fraternity member of prominence.

If the heroes arrested Tomkin, proceed to Encounter 7c.

If the heroes slew Tomkin, proceed to Encounter

Long Jake

Long Jake is a small-time smuggler and sometime merchantman who coasts up and down the Easting Reach **buying and selling small goods**. It's the **perfect cover for a Fraternity courier**, and one which Long Jake cannily exploits.

Long Jake is due at Timbertown's docks in two days.

This encounter is not detailed here, for it is intended to give you the opportunity to create adventure hooks by providing Long Jake with letters and communiques intended for other Fraternity cell leaders from the leadership in New Sarshel. If you wish to tempt the heroes down the coast to the more settled lands of Impiltur, this is your chance.

7d.

If Tomkin escaped, proceed to Encounter 7e.

ENCOUNTER 7: CONCLUSION

OPTION A: THE DIPLOMATS RETURN

This option assumes the heroes negotiated with the raiders (whether they succeeded or failed at the skill challenge) and gave a full report to Baron Ferrand.

If the heroes succeeded on the skill challenge in Encounter 5, read or paraphrase the following:

After a long, tiring hike back to Timbertown, Baron Ferrand seems happy that you have gained valuable information from the raiders. "My friends," he says. "I congratulate you on a successful mission. Chamberlain Grandore will pay you the remainder of your gold. As an extra reward -- consider it a little extra for your time - - please keep the magical helm I gave you."

If the heroes failed the skill challenge, but did not resort to violence, read or paraphrase the following:

After a long, tiring hike back to Timbertown, Baron Ferrand seems happy that you have gained valuable information from the raiders. "My friends," he says. "I am disappointed you were not more successful in gathering information. Chamberlain Grandore will pay you the remainder of your gold. On your way back to your lodgings, please visit Captain Gavienus and add yourselves to the militia duty roster, should the goblin raids begin anew."

Timbertown and her inhabitants are safe... for now.

OPTION B: RETURN THE CONQUERING 'HEROES'

If the heroes chose to fight the goblins without even attempting Encounter 5's skill challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

After a long, tiring hike back to Timbertown, Baron Ferrand thanks you for dealing with the immediate threat. "I wish you could have gathered more information. I would know more about the threat these strange blue-fire goblins pose. What with the Fraternity of Tharos and other threats, these goblins are yet another issue we must consider. At least the demon-cultists seem to dislike the goblins as much as we. Perhaps we can use that to our advantage."

The heroes get paid, but don't get to keep the helm.

OPTION C: TOMKIN CAPTURED

Append this option to either A or B, depending on the heroes' success or failure with the goblin raiders.

The heroes have captured Tomkin and have documents which incriminate him. Baron Ferrand is furious, as in Option B, and remands the cult leader into Captain Dev Gavienus's custody for trial on the morrow.

The heroes are called as witnesses. If they testify against him, he is sentenced to hard labor in the baron's sawmill upriver. The heroes receive a reward of 150 gp each. If they don't testify against him, he's still found guilty and sentenced (on the strength of the heroes' written evidence), but they get no reward.

OPTION D: TOMKIN KILLED

Append this option to either A or B, depending on the heroes' success or failure with the goblin raiders.

The heroes slew Tomkin and his followers. If they go immediately to the Baron and present the incriminating documents, he pardons them, which technically if not in fact exonerates them from any accusations of misdeed among the townsfolk. If they don't, Dev Gavienus and a troop of soldiers arrest them in their lodgings on the evening of the fight at the mill. If they present the documents, he exonerates them, but gives them a stern speech about not taking the law into their own hands.

OPTION E: TOMKIN ESCAPED

Append this option to either A or B, depending on the heroes' success or failure with the goblin raiders.

The heroes either attempted to capture Tomkin and failed, or didn't even try, and instead go straight to the Baron. If the heroes show Ferrand the miller's letter, read or paraphrase the following:

The Baron is quietly furious. "I suspected as much," he snarls. "Didn't I, Grandore? Didn't I say there was a traitor in our midst?" The aged chamberlain nods gravely. "Perhaps these brave adventurers can give us some ideas to deal with this new threat, my lord," he says as he looks at you expectantly.

Timbertown and her inhabitants are safe from the goblins... for now. But are they safe from the evil demon cultists? Use this exchange as an adventure seed to deal with Fraternity of Tharos cultists who have infiltrated Timbertown!



NEW FACTION

THE LUMINOUS SOCIETY

The most renowned demon-hunting society in the Forgotten Realms is the Luminous Society. The Society is based in Impiltur, and operates mainly in that kingdom and the Great Dale, but has members throughout Faerûn. Wherever there are **demons, chances are there's a member of the Luminous Society nearby, on the hunt for the foul fiends.**

GOALS

- Hunt and slay demons wherever they might be found.
- Protect and defend people demons treat as prey.
- Thwart cultists who empower and worship demons.

BELIEFS

- Demons are a threat to the multiverse and must be opposed.
- Battling demons is a task which requires skill, cunning, and bravery.
- **Don't wait for demons to attack. Take the fight to the enemy.**

MEMBER TRAITS

Hunters of the Luminous Society pride themselves on their self-sufficiency. They know when they track down a powerful fiend and its cultist **servants, there's no calling for backup.** Survival on the hunt demands great fortitude and mastery of certain fighting and survival skills. Hunters also give aid and succor to the weak, farmers and settlers whom demons and cultists dismiss as prey.

RANKS

- Hunter (rank 1)
- Cult-breaker (rank 2)
- Fiend-slayer (rank 3)
- Hunt Marshal (rank 4)
- Huntmaster (rank 5)

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

WHISTLE OF WARNING

Wondrous item, rare

As an action, you can blow the whistle to grant allies within 30 feet of you who can hear you a +2 bonus to their AC until the beginning of your next turn. In addition, any allies who were surprised are no longer surprised.



MONSTERS

HOBGOBLIN WARLORD

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3, Cha +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 6 (2300 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Hobgoblin Warlord makes three melee attacks. Alternately, it can make two ranged attacks with its javelins.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

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

Leadership (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the hobgoblin can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the hobgoblin. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin is incapacitated.

REACTIONS

Parry. The hobgoblin adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the hobgoblin must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

HOBGOBLIN DEVASTATOR

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception, 11

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Arcane Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a damaging spell attack if that target is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin and that ally isn't incapacitated.

Army Arcana. When the hobgoblin casts a spell that causes damage or that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, it can choose itself and any number of allies to be immune to the damage caused by the spell and to succeed on the required saving throw.

Spellcasting. The hobgoblin devastator is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The hobgoblin devastator has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, fire bolt, ray of frost, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud, magic missile, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind, Melf's acid arrow, scorching ray*
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, fly, lightning bolt*
4th level (1 slot): *ice storm*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.

TOMKIN GIDDERUM

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3900 XP)

Spellcasting. The tomkin gidderum is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The tomkin gidderum has the following paladin spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will):

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *protection from evil and good*, *thunderous smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *find steed*

3rd level (2 slots): *binding smite*, *dispel magic*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Tomkin Gidderum makes 3 attacks with its glaive.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage.

Dreadful Aspect (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest).

Tomkin exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of him must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from Tomkin, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

CREDITS

Editor: [Christopher Walz](#)

Cartography: [Dyson Logos](#)

Interior Art: Some artwork copyright Daniel F. Walthall, used with permission. Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games. Some artwork © 2015 Dean Spencer, used with permission. All rights reserved. Some artwork © [Noel Proulx](#), used with permission.

Cover Art: Cover template courtesy of Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R P Davis is a freelance writer, editor, and adventure designer. He has been a tabletop RPG player and referee the entire time he's been sentient, and a role-playing addict for more than 30 years. In that time he's written countless things, from simple spells and effects to complete game worlds to complete roleplaying games. You can find R P Davis on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Patreon](#), and his [website](#).

R P Davis is the creative brain behind products like these (click for links):

