



COLNMARK RIDGE

CASTLES & CRUADES[®]

Return to Blacktooth Ridge

By Davis Chenault
& Stephen Chenault

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Ekwood

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Port Trier

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RETURN TO BLACKTOOTH RIDGE

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This module is designed for characters of 1st-2nd level with a challenge level of 0-1.

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Blacktooth Uncovered

The encounters presented in this work were originally part of the module *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, but they were removed due to space requirements. We now offer them to you for use in further adventures along the Blacktooth Ridge. These encounters can also be used independently of *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* and placed in a campaign setting of your choice.

The level ranges on the encounters are between 1 and 3. Simple adjustments in the number of creatures encountered, hit dice, hit points and armor class should suffice to make these encounters more or less challenging.

Encounter One

Nargulf's Reavers

This is a band of vicious, cruel goblins and orcs who are lead by a particularly beastly hobgoblin named Nargulf. They journeyed from the far north, across the Grausamland on a scouting and assassination mission for their master to seek out none other than the leader of the Red Caps. Nargulf's plan was to locate the lair of this renegade goblin, bring him to tow and force him to serve their master or kill the goblin if he did not obey. After some searching, they located one of the Red Cap's bands and discovered that the number of goblins in the band was far too great for them to assault.

Nargulf has decided attacking the Red Caps would be suicidal so has chosen to hide and ponder his next move. He is aware that returning to his homeland and to his lord empty handed would result in a rather brutal ending to his short life. Remaining in the region has its own dangers, with the Red Caps and human soldiers wandering about. Nargulf is considering several options. He could join the Red Caps, but he would then have to serve under their leader. He could cross the Hruesan River, find and join Seroneous, the Lord of the Witch Queen's servants in the Barren Wood or he could leave the country altogether and move east to where the Hlobane Kingdoms of orcs lie. He is truly at a loss, lingering in this perilous state of indecision. The one thing he is certain of is the loyalty of his crew.

The members of his band are a desperate lot, even for their race. Most of them were branded criminal or worse in Aufstrag, and given over to Nargulf because it seemed a good way to get them killed. They have been unable to achieve their mission and for that reason are unable to return home. They are "in between the horns" as the folk of Aufstrag are want to say whenever they find themselves in impossible situations. The one thing they do have going for them is their master, Nargulf. He has proved a brutal captain, and for this reason alone, they have warmed to him. He has saved them from several potential fatal scrapes so that they have faith in him to bring them out of this latest one.

Nargulf's Reavers are a dangerous encounter for any venturing onto the Blacktooth Ridge. Nargulf is under tremendous stress and must contend with his own unruly band, the Red Caps, wandering knights and mercenaries and other such riffraff. He suspects the

Red Caps know he is about. Nargulf is aware the local human population will chase him down and slaughter him if discovered. He has become very protective of "his pretties" as he calls his roguish band therefore, and he does not want to be discovered and will do anything to prevent it. As such, he tries to avoid contact



with anything or anyone if possible and seeks to save the strength of his band for the important battles looming in his future.

The Stone House

Nargulf and his band are currently encamped in an old stone building. This once imposing stone fort was an ancient way post, but is now little more than a jumble of stones where the walls and donjon once stood. Nargulf's band have made the best of this encampment and built a makeshift wooden beam roof over a portion of the ruins. Here, they cook, eat, divide their meager spoils and sleep. All their cooking gear, blankets and other odds and ends are here. They also have a store of some armor and weapons they have acquired along the way. There are 3 suits of leather armor, 14 shields, 12 spears, 1 broadsword, 4 battle axes, 2 short bows and 100 arrows. It is all in fair condition and usable. It can only be sold at half value.

At any given time there is a 50% that 1-4 orcs and 1-6 goblins are out hunting.

Nargulf is an intelligent leader and has 2 lookouts constantly posted. They are positioned on either side of the stone fort, about 20 yards out on the south side facing the Hrueson River, and on the east side facing the wilderness where the Red Caps are located. They use a series of bird calls to warn Nargulf of approaching

danger. They also use hand gestures, learned from the ungern soldiers of Aufstrag, to silently communicate.

Nargulf is very intelligent and he does not spend his life nor the lives' of his troops needlessly nor foolishly. He has managed to organize and discipline his followers so that they actually obey his commands. If he is able to gather his order of battle, he places the goblins in the center and the orc foot soldiers on the flanks. The orcs help keep the goblins from running. His two archers he keeps in the rear on each flank and uses them to constantly pepper the enemy with arrows. Nargulf will order the Reavers to retreat a good distance in order to marshal his band and place them in a fighting position. They do not fight to the death. If pressed to hard, they scatter and will rally several days later north along the Blacktooth Ridge.

If the area around the old guard tower is searched carefully and rubble removed from the central portion of the encampment (one day of work for 4 people), an iron trapdoor is located. It opens into the donjon and a series of six large rooms containing old and rotted foodstuffs, beds and other accouterments that are usually stored in these places. This was a place of last refuge for several of the fort's inhabitants during its final siege. The wall collapsed over the door and the few remaining who were trapped here, died here. There are a dozen or more skeletons in the place, as well as some old rusted and pitted weapons and armor. In the farthest room, behind a locked door is a treasure chest. It was the last tax collection for this region before the fort was destroyed in a battle.

Treasure (The chest contains 125gp, 670sp and 1240cp, all of ancient make.)

Note: The area beneath the tower ruins can be expanded as desired, perhaps haunted by the undead spirits of those lost in the battle.

Nargulf, hobgoblin (*This chaotic evil hobgoblin's vital stats are HD 3d8, hp 21, AC 16. His prime attributes are physical. In battle he wields a morningstar for 2d4+1 points of damage and a wickedly curved tulwar for 1d6+1 points of damage. Nargulf receives a +1 to AC, "to hit" bonus and damage due to his combat experience. He carries a medium shield, scalemail, morningstar, tulwar and 25sp. He has a small pouch on his belt with a ulep charm in it. He is constantly rubbing this charm between his finger and thumb.*)

Gogren, orc (*This lawful evil orcs' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He wields a scimitar in battle that does 1d8 points of damage. Gogren can track like a 4th level ranger and has a ranger's survival ability. He carries studded leather armor, scimitar, short bow, dagger and 5sp.*)

Orcs x 10 (*These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, dagger and 1-6sp.*)

Orcs, archers x 2 (*These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather*

armor, shield, scimitar, short bows, 10 arrows, dagger and 1-6sp.)
Goblins x 14 (*These goblins' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield shortswords and do 1d6 points of damage in battle. They carry light crossbow, shortsword, studded leather armor and 1-10sp.*)

Ulep Charm's are made from the bones of dead dwarves, gnomes, halfling or elves. They are carved from the knee caps of the fallen demi-humans and made very smooth. They are often attached to a chain or bracelet. These charms, fashioned by the shamans of Hlobane orc shamans from Aufstrag and the south are highly prized by folk of that ilk, as they impart a sense of calm and reason to the bearer. Those with Ulep Charms cannot be demoralized or affected by fear spells.

Encounter Two

The Wizenig Branch

Tales of the Wizenig Branch abound in the lands south of the Hrueson River, especially in the Barony of Botkinburg. Folk tell all manner of tales about that ancient tree and the meadow that surrounds it. Old Man Nester (*Assault on Blacktooth Ridge, page 6, Area 10*) seems to be the very source of much of this material.

"It is a dangerous place. I know. I've ne'er been there meself, but I've known many a folk that went seeking that old sliver of bark, and they aint ever come back . . . and if they did they wouldn't of talked about it no how. The Wizenig Branch. The Wizenig Branch. Aye, some tell you that it don't exist, that 'tis an 'oldout from the ancient times, long gone to dust with the power in the north. But that ain't the truth of it. That old tree is evil and its roots are evil and the birds that nest in its branches are evil and anything to do with it is evil to boot. Avoid it I say, don't seek her out or it'll gobble yers up, heart and soul. But mind ye, them fey folk of the Barren Wood, they hid up their treasure at the feet of that old tree and there be mounds of it!"

Nester doesn't know where the tree is, only that it lies south of the Hrueson River. If pushed about who or what he knows, he'll spin a yarn or two about people he knew in the old days who have long since died.

The tree itself is very old, having rooted upon the Blacktooth Ridge for many hundreds of years. In the deeps of the Winter Dark, Meltowg, the lord of the Vale Knights, planted its seed upon this ridge in a hidden meadow. He named the tree Ineng, which means "beacon" in the elvish tongue of those days. He made the meadow a rallying place for his soldiers in their war upon the dark with the cry of "be with Ineng" so that they knew in their haste where to meet. Time and again they gathered beneath the young tree and made what merriment they could in that long dark season. But with the passing of the years, the Vale Knights came to the tree less and less. Their wars carried them into the west and there they withered away. Many died at the hands of the horned god's minions, others faded in the sorrow of their loss. Meltowg fell as well, slain by his own kin in the Castle of Spires.

But the tree lived on. In time its lonely vigil came to an end. An owl had come to roost in its higher branches. No ordinary owl, this creature was one of an ancient species that thrived in the Days before Days. They were always friends to the sentient trees, men and elves. In time, the tree and owl grew inseparable and they lived their lives out together, their fates becoming intertwined, one with the other.

Lonely upon the ridge, nestled in the comfort of the hidden meadow, Ineng and the owl stood thus for hundreds of years.

But the absence of the elves did not go unnoticed. As is common knowledge, the whole of the Hreusen River Valley and the accompanying Blacktooth Ridge and Barren Wood have long been the homes to the fey. These creatures, who come in a variety of shapes and forms, have ranged here since time immemorial. One particularly evil fey has taken a keen interest in the tree because of the owl. Mallow's Bone is a fowl creature, small, spindly and bent with his crooked ways, this fey knows of the owl's nature; that it comes from the great void beyond and that it came to Erde in the days of its creation. He longs to slay it and devour its feathers for the wisdom that they will bring. But the owl is safe in the old tree and beyond the reach of Mallow Bones.

So he has gathered a small army of pixies and the like and they have set out to kill the tree. They are doing this by digging tunnels deep beneath its stem, chewing up its roots with the ultimate hope of finding the heart of the tree and suffocating it. When the tree falls, the owl will have no home.

Mallow Bones and his crew of fey have been secretly digging beneath the tree for several years. Time has no meaning for the fey, so there is no 'hurry' in the traditional sense, but Mallow Bones does guard the meadow from all comers, trapping and slaying the good and evil alike and keeping them from the tree and its great prize.

The Old Man of the Forest

The tangled game trail gives way to a wide meadow and before you, in a clearing, is a tree of massive size and ancient lineage. The tree is nearly dead with only a few branches still bearing leaves and piles of deadfall at its base. The tree stands a staggering 200 feet high and the bowl is a good 20 feet wide at the base. Gnarled bark and stumped limbs bedeck this old man of the forest and it leans a little as if longing to fall to the earth from which it came. Roosting in the top of the tree is a huge owl, nearly the size of a stout Grundliche dwarf.

The Ineng tree is dying and with it the owl. The owl has a symbiotic relationship to the tree and as it dies, so too does the owl. Currently the owl is not capable of flight because its feathers are falling out. The tree is dying because Mallow Bones has so viciously attacked its roots. The owl is aware of this, but unable to do anything to stop it. He watches anyone's approach with keen interest. He has seen others come, even talked to a few, but they have failed to root out the horrible fey that inhabits his home.

The owl notes any approaching people that are goodly aligned or have an elf with them. If he deems they can aid him and the tree, he hops to the lower branches and relates his plight and that of the tree to them. For those who manage to engage the owl in conversation, he asks for help and hopes the party will enter under the roots of the tree and engage whatever it is that is down there and kill it. This, the owl believes, will allow the tree and himself to become healthy again.

If the party agrees to do this, the owl begins hooting and after a time the bowl of the tree splits open until a wide portal of twisted and raw wood is open to the party. It descends down beneath the bowl of the tree. The opening extends down to a narrow corridor cut through the ground.

Beneath the tree the party will find Marrow Bones and his crew of miscreants.

The tunnels beneath the tree are narrow, cramped and slick with mud and debris making them very difficult to walk through. They spill into rooms of many sizes, obviously denoting where Marrow and his band were looking for the Heart.

Heavily armored characters simply cannot manage to move through them as the tunnels are only 2-3 feet wide in some places. Combat in the tunnels is difficult. For anyone other than small creatures, large weapons are used at a -4 to hit and even small weapons receive a -2 to hit. Movement is halved for everyone. Using lanterns and torches produces enough smoke to fill local areas with noxious fumes relatively quickly. Within 20 minutes, any given 20 foot space, not in a corridor, will be so full of smoke and lack oxygen that anyone in there will have to leave or make a constitution check every minute to stay conscious.

The tunnels twist and turn and bend and fall back in on themselves. There really is no rhyme nor reason to this series of tunnels as they follow root lines, loose dirt and the rather incoherent thought patterns of some nasty but determined fey. The one thing the tunnels do have in common however, is going down deeper into the earth.

NOTE: No map has been supplied for this encounter due to the nature of the tunnels. The Castle Keeper should feel free to sketch the tunnels out. Caution should be taken however to not make the tunnels so vast that the party becomes fatigued with their exploration.

Encounters should be rolled once for every hour of time in the tunnels. A roll of 1 on a d8 means an encounter of 1d6 fey will occur. The fey will generally try to flee and may or may not warn Marrow Bones (for more on the dark fey, see the notes below).

The fey leave by their exit located some 200 yards to the west of the tree, just outside the meadow when they feel the desire to be beneath the sun or moon. The owl will note this fact for the characters and they may set up an ambush for those fey who come out. In any instance, the ambush will not be easy to manage as a harpy, sister to those found at the Shrine of Water in the Barren Wood (see The Slag Heap, page 12, Area 1), keeps watch over the entrance. She isn't expecting any company however, and anyone who attempts to sneak up on her gains a +4 to their relevant

checks. However, the ambush will not kill all the faerie. Marrow Bones and a handful of other fey should always be in the tunnels.

Harpy (This chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 13. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks from the air with two claws for 1d3 points of damage each, or with darts for 1d3 points of damage. Her special abilities are captivating song.)

Dark Faerie x 8 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 15. Their primary attributes are mental and physical. They attack with darts for 1d3 points of damage or by using small swords and axes that do 1d6 points of damage. They are able to polymorph twice per day and possess all first level rogue abilities. They are also able to cast obscuring mist, entangle, pass without trace, light and silence image once per day.)

Within the tunnels are always 3d4 fey and Marrow Bones. They do not suffer any negative effects of fighting in narrow confines. Marrow Bones is presently in the room described below along with 50% of the fey remaining in the lair.



Heart of the Tree

The narrow, dirty tunnel spills into a large chamber, about 40 feet by 40 feet. The whole room is entangled with ancient, twisted roots, rocks and other debris. The floor is covered in thick loamy mud. Over it all hangs one huge, gnarled root with a massive knotty protrusion jutting from its length. Within this protrusion is a tangle of root about 2 feet thick. The whole hangs about 5 feet above the floor. This large green, gem-like mass of green wood is the heart of the tree. A thin, small leather-skinned creature stands beneath the tree holding a flickering torch with the obvious intent of burning the tree's roots. All about him are a dozen or so other fey, evil and wicked looking.

Marrow Bones has just found the heart of the tree. He is attempting to set fire to it while the other fey are planning to dig it out of the root, which is wrapped around it.

Marrow Bones (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16, AC 15. His primary attributes are mental and physical. He attacks with magical +1 darts for 1d3+1 points of damage. He is able to enchant sticks so that any stick he picks up and breaths on turns into one of these darts. It remains magical until broken, dispelled or it wounds someone. He also uses a magical whip, a pine branch with which he slashes and whips his victims. The whip acts as a +1 weapon in Marrow's hands and does 1d6+1 points of damage. He is able to polymorph twice per day and possesses all the first level rogue abilities. He is also able to cast obscuring mist, entangle, pass without trace, light and silence image once per day.)

For the other fey refer to the stat block above.

The Dry Gulch

This gulch is about 100 yards beyond the fey entrance, hidden in a thick part of the wood. Here is where the fey drag their victims and toss their bodies, the same place they will throw the characters if they should fall in the attempt to rescue the tree. They do not steal anything for themselves, so whatever valuable the unfortunates were carrying are lying with them still in the gulch.

Treasure (There is one set of good chain mail, two shields and a variety of good weapons and helms. There is also a spell book, clutched in the hands of Aaron the Prestidigitator. In it are the first level spells comprehend language, feather fall, magic missile and one second level spell protection from arrows. He also has a +1 dagger. There is some scattered jewelry worth no more than 125gp and a total 55gp, 123sp and a gem worth 25gp.)

DARK FAERIE

No. Appearing: 1-6, 20-100

Size: Small/Medium

HD: 1 (d6) or 2 (d8)

Move: 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks: Dart (1d3), short sword (1d6)

Special: Spell-like Abilities, Twilight Vision, Polymorph, Rogue traits

Saves: M & P

Int: Average to Superior

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Treasure: 1, 3

XP: 35+1, 90+3

Dark Faerie are outcasts from the land of Faerie, and for this reason they hate beauty of any sort. They take many shapes and forms. Their natural form is that of a small winged, humanoid creature, mottled dark green in color. They have long faces with deep set eyes and unusually horrible teeth. Occasionally, they take on the shape of deformed gnomes. They are found in most climes and almost any terrain. However, they much prefer deep, temperate forests where they live in dens or warrens dug beneath the roots of very old trees. Dark fey are violent creatures and do not work well with one another. When encountered in large groups, there are always several factions that frequently fight one another.

Dark fey work to undo all that is good in the world and they long for the return of Unklar and the Age of Winter's Dark. They tend to seek out powerful, evil creatures and aid them against other lesser folk. They love to steal and rob human establishments and are frequently responsible for kidnaping the young.

Dark Faerie have an inexplicable hatred, which borders on fear, of birds.

Combat: Dark Faerie rarely stand and fight unless they feel that they have a better than average chance of overcoming the enemy. They prefer hit and run tactics that keep the enemy unbalanced, gradually weakening them until chances of a successful attack improve.

Polymorph: Dark Faerie have the ability to *polymorph self* twice each day as a 7th level caster.

Spell-like Abilities: They can cast, as a 6th level wizard, the following spells once per day – *obscuring mist*, *entangle*, *pass without trace*, *light* and *silence image*.

Rogue Traits: Dark Fey have all first level rogue abilities and act as 5th level rogues.



MALFORTEN TO BOTKINBURG

The A Series

Map #1

