

# LEGENDARY BEGINNINGS



Trail of the Apprentice

## The Thieves' Den

Part 3 of 5







# The Thieves' Den

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BY PARIS CRENSHAW

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# Welcome to Legendary Beginnings

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

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

## Special Electronic Features

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to the official **Pathfinder Reference Document** as well as **d20PFSRD**. If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

## About Legendary Games

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

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# What You Will Find Inside The Thieves' Den

Lord Mayor Wolfe of Port Fairglade has discovered that someone hired the notorious thieves' guild, the Elverin Skulk, to steal a valuable statue from his private museum. The nobleman wants to know who the guild's client is, but the only person who knows the secret is the guild's leader, the infamous Fox Prince. The heroes must venture into the monster-infested Umberwood to locate the hidden entrance to the guild's headquarters, but once they find it and try to sneak into his lair, they find that few things are what they appear to be. Can the heroes survive a deadly gauntlet of traps and win the Fox Prince's favor and the help of the prince of thieves?

*The Thieves' Den* is an adventure for 3rd-level characters. It is part three of *Trail of the Apprentice*, a full campaign made up of 5 interconnected adventure modules for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, which can be played with the standard Pathfinder core rules or the simplified rules presented in the **Pathfinder boxed set created just for beginners!** The *Trail of the Apprentice* saga and all adventures in the the **Legendary Beginnings** line from Legendary Games are designed as exciting adventures suitable for all ages, but specially designed for those new to roleplaying and those on the younger side. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, allowing you to enliven and enrich your campaign in amazing and exciting ways. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

- Jason Nelson





# THE THIEVES' DEN

*The Thieves' Den* is an adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 3rd-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

This story is set in the wilds of northern Threll, a kingdom located on the world of Aeva. The module provides enough information to run the entire adventure in this setting, but you can set the adventure in any gameworld location where a forest is near a swampy area.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into three main parts. Each part can be run within a session or grouped together for longer play time. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 4th level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

*The Thieves' Den* is the third adventure in the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, which began with *The Bandit's Cave* and continued with *The King's Curse*, but GMs can use it as a stand-alone "one-shot" event or as a side-quest in their own campaigns. The *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign plays out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After years of searching, the wizard Belazeel finally possesses the Green Serpent and White Serpent statues. Stolen by hired agents, the statues are the two keys necessary to release a spellcaster of legendary power from her eons-long imprisonment in the Basilisk Shroud.

## FAMILY GAME NIGHT


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

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

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

Belazeel is certain that when he completes the ritual, the spellcaster will take him as her apprentice and teach him the secrets that once made her enemies fear the very utterance of her name. If Belazeel is not stopped, it is a name that will eventually be uttered in hushed, fearful tones by the people of Threll.





While Belazeel makes his final preparations for the ritual to lift the Basilisk Shroud and free his nameless mistress, more noble-minded souls suspect a sinister plan is in the works. Heroes in Threll's northern counties have tried to stop bandits and thieves from getting their hands on the serpent statues. They tracked down a marauding band of orcs who stole the first statue from the village of Corbin. Then, in Port Fairglade, they faced the vengeance of a long-dead king from the empire of Akhutan after thieves disturbed his rest. In both cases, the heroes brought villains to justice and performed valiant deeds in service to the people of Threll, but they could not keep either statue from falling into the hands of the mysterious person they know only as "B."

The heroes discovered that the criminals in Port Fairglade are members of a notorious thieves' guild, the Elverin Skulk. The guild runs operations throughout northern Threll from the capital city of Solaerin all the way down the Lashelenite and Imolenite Rivers to the Elverin Bay.

The thieves were told to steal only the White Serpent Statue Lord Mayor James Wolfe's private museum. But once the statue was safely on its way to the guild's client, the thieves decided to take advantage of the secret entrance known only to them to gather a few more valuables from the nobleman's treasure trove. By disturbing the remains of the mummified King Udimu of ancient Akhutan, the thieves brought down a curse on the museum. Only the heroic deeds of brave adventurers prevented the Akhutani spirits' anger from spreading beyond the walls of the museum.

Now, the race is on to discover who hired the Elverin Skulk and why. But the only person who knows client's true identity is the infamous "Fox Prince," leader of the Elverin Skulk. Finding the Fox Prince is just one of many challenges that lie ahead.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins in the wilds south of Port Fairglade, as the PCs search for the Elverin Skulk's hidden lair. They know that thieves who wish to join the Elverin Skulk must find a hidden clearing in the Umlerwood, a tangle of trees and wetlands just down the river from the city. The area has a bad reputation and, although dangerous creatures rarely venture out of the place, few people venture into it. The PCs must brave the dangers of the forbidden wild in search of more clues.

After running afoul of the Umlerwood's unfriendly denizens, they meet a young man who claims to be looking for the guild's headquarters, himself. What's more, he claims to have a pretty good idea where it is and offers to take the PCs with him.

The PCs follow their guide deep into the forest, where they stumble into a band of goblins and their tribe leader, a monster known as a barghest. After they defeat the barghest, their guide reveals himself to be a hag who gloats over tricking the PCs into getting rid of the barghest, who had challenged her dominion over part of the forest and the nearby marsh. She thanks the PCs for their "help" and promptly disappears. Leaving them stranded.

Continuing their search, they eventually find the entrance to the thieves' hideout, which at first appears to be a cleverly hidden



pit. They discover that the bottom of the pit is actually the first chamber of the Gauntlet, a dungeon designed to test the mettle and skill of potential guild members. The PCs must navigate a series of traps and puzzles to reach the guild hall, where they at last meet the Fox Prince.

Even after passing his tests, the Elverin Skulk's leader at first refuses to share what he knows, but then decides he is willing to trade for the information. The Fox Prince offers to tell them what they wish to know if they procure a special stone with the power to heal one of his agents who recently fell ill with a terrible disease.

The PCs must track down Grunhild, the green hag who taunted them before, and take the stone from her. If the PCs can get the stone for him, the Fox Prince will make them honorary guild members and share what he knows of the mysterious client who hired the Skulk to steal the Serpent Statues.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players have their character sheets, are gathered around the gaming table and are ready to begin, read aloud or paraphrase the following passage. If your PCs have played the previous *Trail of the Apprentice* adventures, you can just recap the events of the previous adventures and use the last two paragraphs of this text to provide them with guidance for the way ahead:

---

*A short while ago, the Lord Mayor of Port Fairglade hired you to help him get some information about the theft of two statues. He used to think that the statues only historical value, but someone has gone to great trouble and expense to steal them. The Lord Mayor wants to know who this unscrupulous "collector" is.*

*Orc bandits stole the first statue, called the Green Serpent, from the home of a sage, Ithamar Ruggles, during a brash raid on the village of Corbin. Although adventurers put the raiders to the sword, they could not recover the statue. They found a note found in the bandits' hideout that indicated the orcs had been hired to steal the statue by someone who referred to himself only as "B."*

*The second statue, the White Serpent, disappeared when someone robbed Lord Mayor Wolfe's family museum. This unfortunate series of events called a curse down upon the museum. Terrible things could have befallen Port Fairglade, but heroes intervened and put the spirit of a ruler of ancient Akhutan to rest. Unfortunately, they could not recover second statue.*

*The heroes did learn that the robbers were elite members of the Elverin Skulk, a notorious thieves' guild in northern Threll. Though the thieves escaped, Lord Mayor Wolfe believes their leader, the mysterious Fox Prince, knows who hired his guild to steal the statues. The mayor's agents in Port Fairglade informed him that thieves wishing to join the Elverin Skulk are sometimes told to go to the UMBERWOOD to be tested before entering the guild's ranks.*

*The UMBERWOOD is a dense forest downriver from Port Fairglade, ringed by marshes and shallow waterways and full of dangerous creatures. The people of Northumberland County avoid the place, as do travelers who know of it. If you are to learn more about the theft of these statues, it is there you must go.*

*Lord Mayor Wolfe will pay you well for your efforts. If you discover the identity of the Skulk's mysterious client, the Lord Mayor will pay Port Fairglade's spellcasters and craftsmen to create one magically-enhanced item for each member of your party. Aside from this substantial reward, finding the hidden mastermind's identity will bring you one step closer to learning why he wants these statues.*

---





## ARCADIA

LG Village

**Corruption** -1; **Crime** -1; **Economy** +0; **Law** -1;  
**Lore** -1; **Society** -1

**Qualities** Pious (Losinia), Strategic Location  
(crossroads)

**Danger** +0

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** Autocracy (Elder Scattergood)

**Population** 150 (130 humans; 8 dwarves; 7  
halflings; 2 elves; 3 other)

### Notable NPCs

Elder Dorothea Scattergood (LG female human  
commoner 3/expert 4)

Father Custis Tintsman (LG male human cleric 7  
of Losinia)

Sheriff Name Name (LN male human fighter 7)

Finley Freeland (N male halfling rogue 5/expert 2)

Lucina Godfrey (CG female half-elf wizard 5)

Marketplace

**Base Value** 550 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp;

**Spellcasting** 4th

**Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4

For information on how to use this settlement stat  
block, see the *Gamemastery Guide* from Paizo, Inc.

Although the story begins when the PCs are about to enter the Umberwood, the players may want to prepare for their quest. They can purchase things they need in Port Fairglade or in the village of Arcadia, near the Umberwood. If you wish to roleplay the shopping experience, use the information in the village's settlement statblock. Arcadia also makes a good base of operations, where the PCs can rest, heal, or purchase more supplies.

When the party is ready to proceed, continue to Part I: The Umberwood.

## PART 1: THE UMBERWOOD

East of the village of Arcadia, on the shore of the Lashelenite River, nestled between Plympton Cove and the Lamslith Run, lies a small section of land, shrouded beneath a canopy of dark evergreen trees. Known as the Umberwood, this densely forested mix of flatland and tidewater has a reputation for being a dangerous place where goblins and other horrible monsters roam.



The people of Northumberland County avoid the place. Travelers on the road leading from Port Fairglade down to cities along the coast of Elverin Bay arrange to pass by the woods during the full light of day. Those who venture too close to the forest at night often disappear, as do those foolish enough to actually enter the woods after dark. Children will sometimes dare each other to see how far into the woods they can go during the day, but there have been enough disappearances that parents forbid their children from going anywhere near the Umberwood.

The Umberwood is home to many dangerous creatures. A tribe of goblins known as the Clawbiters dwells close to the shores of Darkwater Creek, guided to some unknown purpose by their leader, a mysteriously powerful goblin they call Clawripper. An ogre named Kergus also stalks the woods, making sport and small meals out of goblins or lone travelers he manages to catch in the traps he sets. Kergus and the goblins have lived in the wood for some time, but there are a few newcomers, as well.

Recently, lizardfolk have been scouting the wood for places where their tribe might establish a settlement. Four orcs, members of Gorocs' bandit army, are hiding here after they learned of Gorocs' recent defeat at the hands of adventurers. And perhaps most dangerous of all, a green hag's hut sits on the edge of a reed-choked inlet.

The Elverin Skulk takes advantage of the Umberwood's dangerous reputation. Seeking the most daring and capable rogues as members, the Fox Prince established a hidden testing ground in the wood. Whether

he constructed the dungeon or merely took advantage of one that was already there, "The Gauntlet" is a challenge that nearly all prospective guild members must face.

Guild candidates are told only that thieves who wish to join must go to the Umberwood to be tested. They are given vague directions to the hidden entrance to the Skulk's Den, but must find the location on their own. Even entering the Umberwood is part of the test, for only those willing to brave the dangers of the forest have a chance of becoming Skulk members. Since those who enter the Gauntlet do not leave the forest by any visible means, their "disappearances" add to the mystique of an already dangerous location.

Most of the encounters in this section can occur in any order. After completing encounters 1A. and 1B., show the players the unlabeled map of the Umberwood and let them choose which hex they want to explore next. If the hex corresponds to an encounter on the GM's version of the map, that encounter takes place. Otherwise, there is no encounter unless you wish to introduce a random encounter of your own.

After encounter 1B., the hag Grunhild probably accompanies the PCs in her disguise as a human thief. If they listen to her directions, she leads them through the encounters in the order they are presented below until they come to face Clawripper. Once they deal with Clawripper, the PCs should be able to see that there is one unexplored area on the map. This area contains the entrance to the Gauntlet, which is the last encounter for this part of the adventure.



### THE CLAWBITER TRIBE

The Clawbiter goblins have eked out an existence in the UMBERWOOD for several generations. Given the goblins' short life cycle, several generations isn't a long time, but they have established a fairly stable life in the dense forest. They rarely feel the need to venture out of the forest in large groups, although one or two tribe members sometimes sneak into Arcadia to work mischief or steal food, or both.

Most of the time, the goblins scavenge the shoreline and swamp for food. They call themselves Clawbiters because much of their diet consists of crabs that live in the brackish waters of the river and creeks. The crabs are harvested by the Threllish people, as well, but goblins tend not to bother cooking them, so eating the claws first makes the meal less painful. Given the goblins' love of fire, their choice to eat this way is yet another sign of their racial insanity.

Less than a year ago, the tribe experienced a sudden change when strange goblin appeared in their den. The goblin was extremely powerful and brutally slew their chief, Slimewart. The tribe gave this new goblin the name Clawripper and made him their chief.

Clawripper is actually a barghest, a fiend that can take on the form of both a goblin and a wolf. He keeps his true nature hidden. Normally, such powerful creatures take over goblin tribes to use them as part of a larger army, but Clawripper hasn't even sent them on raids into the civilized lands around the UMBERWOOD. The goblins sense that Clawripper is restless. He waits for some sign to set his plans in motion, but even he may not know what that sign will look like.

### 1A. CLAWBITER GOBLINS (600 XP)

When the PCs enter the forest, they cross paths with a small group of goblins is tracking a wild turkey.

*The bushes nearby rustle, drawing your attention just as a small humanoid creature with greenish skin and a wide, oval-shaped head shoves through the branches and emerges onto the trail. Three more of his kind quickly follow. At first, he is focused on something directly ahead of him, but then he spots you. He mutters something before he grins and chomps his tiny, sharp teeth.*

**Creatures:** Have the PCs roll **Perception** checks (DC 15). If they succeed, they detect the goblins at about 60 feet away. Otherwise, the goblins and the PCs stumble upon each other at a distance of about 20 feet. Although goblins are almost always hungry, the band's leader, Mudgullet, is ravenous and orders his cohorts to "attack the food."

#### GOBLIN WARRIORS (4)

CR 1/3

135 XP each

**Hit Points** 6

**Initiative** +6

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14

**Fortitude Save** +3, **Reflex Save** +2, **Will Save** -1

#### OFFENSE

**Melee** (standard action) dogslicer +2 (1d4/19-20)

**Ranged** shortbow +4 (1d4/x3)

#### STATISTICS

**STR** +0, **DEX** +2, **CON** +1, **INT** +0, **WIS** -1, **CHA** -2

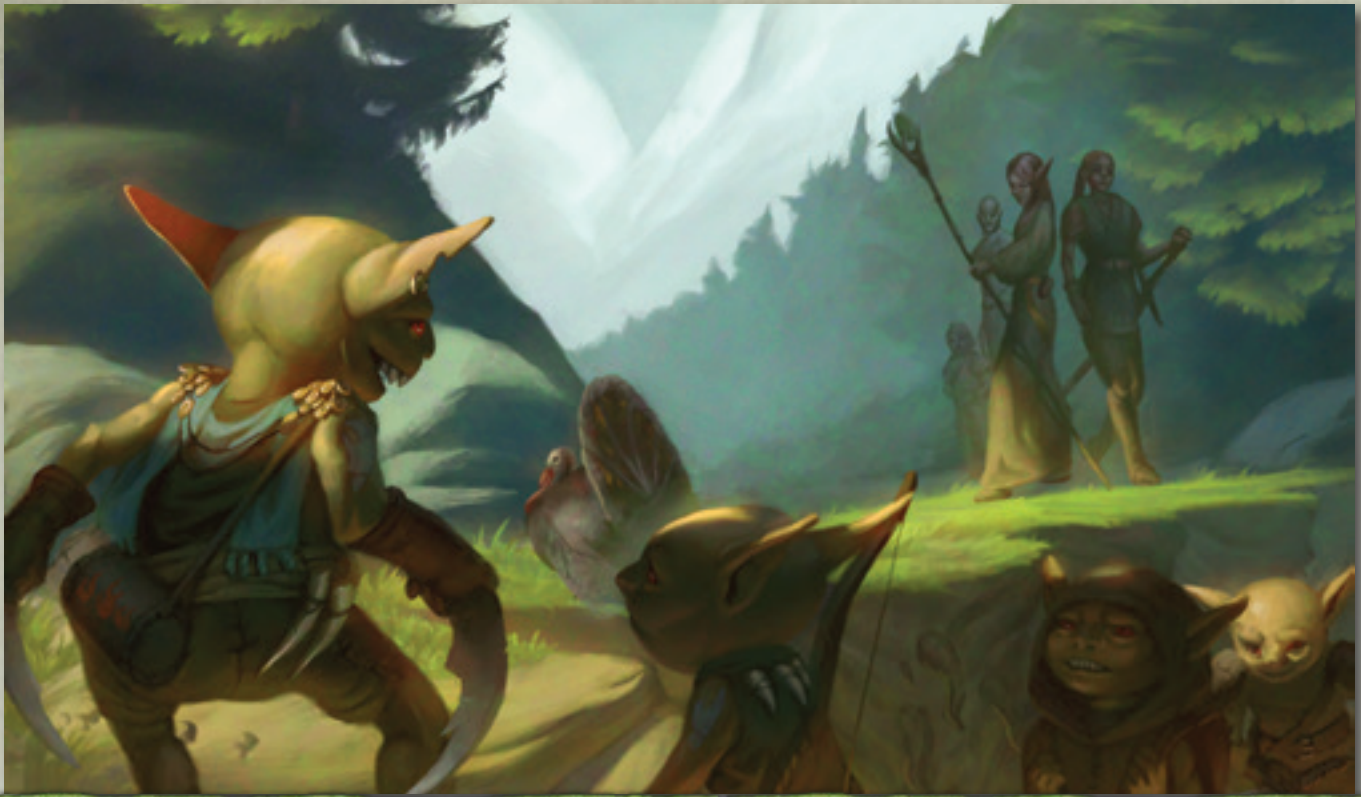
**Feats** Improved Initiative

**Skills** Ride +10, Stealth +10, Swim +4

#### ITEMS

**Equipment** leather armor, light wooden shield, shortbow with 20 arrows, dogslicer





**Treasure:** The goblins carry a total of 29 gold pieces and a single 25-gp gem. Mudgullet also has a *potion of feather fall* and a *scroll of burning hands*. He can't use the scroll, but keeps the "stolen thought-words" because it is also marked with pictures of fire.

### 1B. THE LOST TRAVELER

While battling the goblins, the PCs gain the attention of Grunhild, a green hag who claims Darkwater Creek as hers. She intends to build a coven and dominate the area, but such plans take time. For now, she practices her magic and brews potions, using her powers to ensnare desperate fools in Northumberland County who are willing to risk their lives for the power she sells.

Grunhild's most recent problem, though, is Clawripper. The barghest refuses to serve the hag and is likely to eat anyone entering the forest seeking her services. Although she

might eat a hapless traveler herself, she is more interested in corrupting them with her wares, for now. The barghest has to go, and Grunhild has been looking for a way to get rid of him. When she finds the PCs, she decides to disguise herself and test their mettle.

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*A young man dressed in ragged clothing stumbles onto the trail up ahead. When he sees you, he raises his arms, looks up to the sky and smiles broadly before rushing toward you.*

*"Thank goodness! I'm so relieved to see other explorers, here. With all of those horrible goblins and other beasts running around, I was beginning to think I was never going to get out of here."*

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Grunhild tells the PCs her name is Connor and claims to be a thief looking for the entrance to the Fox Prince's den. Connor says he can take the whole party with him, if they are willing to help him fend off the creatures lurking in the UMBERWOOD.





The hag actually took this name, story, and appearance from a man she met in the forest some time ago. Grunhild thought he was too handsome and her hatred of all things beautiful took over. She offered him a potion that she claimed would enhance his senses and help him find what he was looking for. Instead, he fell asleep and never woke up.

**Development:** As the PCs interact with Grunhild, they may suspect that the “man” is not telling them everything. A DC 20 **Sense Motive** check reveals that Connor isn’t being completely honest. A PC who touches or otherwise comes in contact with him gets a Will save (DC 13) to disbelieve her illusionary disguise.

If PCs cast *detect magic* on Grunhild or disbelieve her disguise, Grunhild first changes her image to look like an attractive woman and tell them her name is Elleonora. She still claims she is looking for the thieves’ den, but she thought it would be safer to travel in the

guise of a man. Unless a PC disbelieved the first illusion, another DC 20 **Sense Motive** check is required to see through this lie.

If the second disguise also fails, the hag becomes invisible and disappears into the forest. She remains invisible and follows the PCs, using false sounds or leaving other clues to guide them to the barghest’s lair, hoping they will get rid of him, anyway.

If the PCs use spells to detect her alignment, they can determine that she is evil. However, many thieves are evil. That alone should not give them a clue that she is not human.

No matter what her disguise, if the PCs accept her help, Grunhild leads them through the forest toward the Clawbiter tribe, where she hopes they will eliminate the barghest and several goblins. She doesn’t really know where the entrance to the Fox Prince’s den is, and she doesn’t care. (Grunhild’s path leads through the hexes labeled 1c., 1f., and 1g.)



Grunhild's statistics can be found on page 34. These statistics remain the same, regardless of what appearance she gives herself.

### 1C. HUNTER'S TRAP (600 XP)

The Umberwood's resident ogre, Kergus, occasionally sets traps to catch wild game, goblins, or wayward travelers to eat. Kergus is far away when the PCs encounter this trap, but it is still dangerous. Ogres are fairly stupid, except when it comes to making things that cause pain. This pit is no exception.

**Trap:** The trap is well hidden and covers 10 foot by 10 foot area to catch large creatures, as well as groups of smaller ones. It's possible that more than one PC will fall into it if they do not detect the trap, first. Each PC that falls in suffers 1d6 damage and is also subjected to 1d4 melee attacks from the spikes at the bottom.

#### SPIKED PIT TRAP

CR 2

XP 600

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Attack +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each spike); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

### 1D. LOST RAIDERS, ORCS (4), 600 XP

As the PCs explore this area, they encounter a small group of orcs who have made a camp near the shore of Plympton Cove. If they detect the orcs soon enough, they may be able to catch them by surprise or avoid them altogether.

After Gorocs and his orc raiders attacked Corbin Village, heroes tracked them down and put them to the sword, but not all of the orcs were in the cave when the adventurers arrived. Gorocs sent a small group out to hunt. When

they returned, they found that their hideout had been raided. Unwilling to return to the mountains, the band headed west and hid in the Umberwood to avoid capture by Threllish patrols.

**Creatures:** These orcs are tired of being penned up in the woods. They are angry and ready for a fight.

#### ORC BANDITS (4)

CR 1/3

135 XP each

**Hit Points** 6

**Initiative** +0

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13

**Fortitude Save** +3, **Reflex Save** +0, **Will Save** -1

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity

#### OFFENSE

**Melee** (standard action) throwing axe +5 (1d6+4/x3)

**Ranged** throwing axe +2 (1d6+4/x3)

**Ranged** javelin +1 (1d6+3)

#### STATISTICS

**STR** +3, **DEX** +0, **CON** +1, **INT** -2, **WIS** -1, **CHA** -2

**Feats** Weapon focus (throwing axe)

**Skills** Intimidate +2

#### ITEMS

**Equipment** studded leather armor, throwing axe, javelins (4)

**Treasure** each orc carries a belt pouch with 5 gold pieces

### 1E. KERKUS THE OGRE (800 XP)

All of Umberwood belongs to Kergus the ogre. At least, that's what Kergus thinks. Separated from his tribe at an early age, the ogre came to the Umberwood and settled here. He hunts the wood for game, which includes the humanoids that live here, and enjoys tying up his prisoners so they can watch him build his fire and make other preparations before he cooks and eats them.



## FAMILIAR ENEMIES

If your players have been following the “Trail of the Apprentice” campaign from the beginning, they will be reminded of their first battles against Gorocs’ raiders. The inclusion of remnants of that raiding band was intentional. We added these orcs because players often enjoy facing familiar foes as they rise in power.

While PCs are expected to face more powerful and dangerous enemies as they rise in levels, constantly increasing level of difficulty without a break can wear down the players. An occasional combat encounter that is below the party’s usual challenge rating gives the players a chance to fight something that they have an easier time defeating.

Weaker challenges, especially ones from recurring foes, lets the players see how much more powerful they are than when they started adventuring. A fight with an enemy that they fought earlier in their careers gives them the satisfaction of quickly taking down a creature that was much harder to kill at lower levels.

When running ongoing campaigns, consider using a “standard minion” for villainous organizations and let the players see how they can defeat more and more of these low-level foes as they gain more character levels.

When the PCs enter this hex, Kergus becomes aware of their presence unless the party is carefully hiding their movements (DC 20 **Stealth** check each hour). Once he detects the PCs, Kergus begins tracking them. If the PCs succeed on a DC 12 **Perception** check, they notice the large creature following them. Once spot him, Kergus charges to attack, thinking he can quickly knock out all of PCs and get several days’ worth of food.

### KERGUS, OGRE

CR 3

800 XP

**Hit Points** 30

**Initiative** –1

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +5





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**DEFENSE**

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**Armor Class** 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17

**Fortitude Save** +6, **Reflex Save** +0, **Will Save** +3

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**OFFENSE**

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**Melee** greatclub +7 (2d8+7)

**Ranged** javelin +1 (1d8+5)

**Special Attacks** Reach 10 ft.

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**STATISTICS**

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**STR** +5, **DEX** -1, **CON** +2, **INT** -2, **WIS** +0, **CHA** -2

**Feats** Iron Will, Toughness

**Skills** Climb +7, Perception +5

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**ITEMS**

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**Equipment** hide armor, greatclub, javelins (4)

**Treasure:** 25 gp, 50 gp in gems, +1 *shield*, *campfire bead*, *bird feather token* (Kergus has no idea that the *feather token* is magical, but he wears it as part of a necklace that is also made of shells, rocks, other feathers, and small animal skulls. He knows the shield has magical properties, but it is made for a medium-sized creature, so he can't use it properly. It hangs from a leather strap on his back.)

**Development:** If Grunhild is with the party when they fight Kergus, the hag pretends to be frightened for the first few rounds so that she can get a sense of how capable the PCs actually are. If she thinks they can't beat Kergus, she might leave and let the ogre have them. However, if the PCs are doing alright against him and just need a little help, she may choose to join them in battle.

If she can help it, she will not do anything to ruin her disguise, but she might try to sneak in and use her weakening touch on the ogre. With a successful **Bluff** check, opposed by **Perception** checks from the PCs, Grunhild can make it look like she uses some other form of melee attack to weaken Kergus.

## 1F. CLAWBITER TRIBE WAR PARTY (1,200 XP)

As the PCs explore this hex, have them roll DC 15 **Perception** checks. Also make a **Perception** check for Ironbelch and one for his followers. The DC for their checks is either 12 or the result of the PCs' **Stealth** check, if they are using that skill to sneak through the forest. Success on these checks means that the winning side detects the other at a range of 60 feet. If only one side succeeds, that side gets to act in the surprise round. If both sides fail, each party stumbles onto the other at a range of about 30 feet.

Since the death of Chief Slimewart, Ironbelch is the closest thing that the goblins have to a leader. He was getting ready to kill Slimewart and take over the tribe, himself, but Clawripper showed up and ruined those plans. Now, the goblin takes out his anger on the others while doing his best to keep Clawripper happy. Ironbelch doesn't know that Clawripper is a barghest, but suspects that his power comes from some magical source.

The barghest's appetite is even bigger than a typical goblin's and his constant demand for food is pushing the tribe to a breaking point. Clawripper frequently complains that wants something "bigger" and "more powerful" to eat than the animals that dwell in the forest, so when Ironbelch sees the PCs, his first instinct is to kill them and take them back to Clawripper. There are other options, but only if the PCs get a chance to talk to the goblins before they attack.

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**IRONBELCH****CR 1**

400 XP

Male Goblin Adept 3

**Hit Points** 16



**Initiative** +1

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

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DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13

**Fortitude Save** +1, **Reflex Save** +2, **Will Save** +4

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OFFENSE

**Melee** (standard action) dogslicer +2 (1d4/19–20)

**Spells** (caster level 3<sup>rd</sup>)

1<sup>st</sup>—*burning hands* (DC 12), *cure light wounds*, *sleep* (DC 12)

o—*detect magic*, *light*, *stabilize*

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STATISTICS

**STR** +0, **DEX** +1, **CON** +0, **INT** +0, **WIS** +1, **CHA** –2

**Skills** Diplomacy +0, Heal +5, Perception +2, Sense

Motive +2, Spellcraft +4, Stealth +13, Survival +5,

Swim +1

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ITEMS

**Equipment** leather armor, dogslicer, *potion of cure light wounds*

**Treasure** 75gp

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**GOBLIN WARRIORS (6)**

**CR 1/3**

135 XP each (see page 8)

**Hit Points** 6

**Treasure:** Each goblin carries a pouch containing 25 gp in gems and coins.

**Development:** The PCs may be able to negotiate with the goblins. Goblins can be unpredictable and downright insane, but they are not necessarily stupid. Ironbelch speaks very poor Common, but can communicate well enough. If the PCs can talk to them long enough to figure out what has happened in their tribe, they may be able to convince the goblins to let them go and find Clawripper.

If the PCs try to talk to Ironbelch as soon as they meet them, have them roll a **Diplomacy** check (DC 20). If they succeed, the goblins wait a few rounds before attacking. After telling the PCs the story of Clawripper, Ironbelch

complains that now he has to fight tall ones, too. The PCs can convince Ironbelch to let them go by promising to get rid of Clawripper and rolling another **Diplomacy** check (DC 15). If they fail to convince Ironbelch, he and his goblins attack.

If Grunhild is with the PCs when they encounter the goblins, she watches the interaction with interest. She doesn't really care if the goblins live or die. Her primary focus is in getting the barghest out of Umberwood. However, she can't tell the goblins what their leader is, without ruining her disguise.

As long as the PCs are going to fight Clawripper, she agrees to most any plan. However, if it looks like the PCs might try to avoid the barghest, she claims that she hears more goblins coming and starts a fight with the nearest enemy.

**Development:** As soon as the first person attacks, the goblins' violent nature takes over, and they continue fighting until they are killed. When the battle is over, Grunhild tries to convince the PCs that a goblin tribe with a strong leader is a real danger to the area and that they should destroy him. If the party refuses, she become very angry, but doesn't give up her disguise just yet. She keeps pretending to lead the party to the entrance of the thieves' den, while continuing along a path to the barghest's lair.

## 1G. CLAWRIPPER AND THE GOBLIN TRIBE (1,200 XP)

*The thick pine forest gives way to tall grasses and reeds as the ground slopes down to the muddy banks of Darkwater Creek. The brown and green grass arches over your head in places, forming darkened tunnels that branch off in two directions.*



A DC 12 **Perception** check reveals that the path to the right has been traveled by many goblin feet. This path leads to the goblins' den, which is little more than a wide clearing surrounded by walls made of mud and reeds and dotted with small huts made of a similar material. A trail leads from the camp down to the water's edge, where the goblins catch crabs and fish in the creek.

If the PCs defeated Ironbelch and his hunting party, the camp is mostly empty, with only three warriors and two other goblins left behind to keep the cooking fires burning—by tossing sticks, reeds, dead fish, crabs, or other small animals onto the hot coals. Usually, the burned animals are eaten later—usually. These goblins are hardly a threat to a group of

adventurers. They run and hide if the warriors are outnumbered.

If the PCs offered to help Ironbelch, instead, they find him here with his remaining warriors. When he sees the PCs, he quickly shouts down the other goblins and shoos the PCs back toward the other trail.

The other path has fewer goblin tracks. A DC 20 **Perception** check on this path reveals the presence of two other types of tracks: one set that appears to belong to a wolf and another that looks very much like human hands. This is the path that leads to Clawripper's lair.

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*Up ahead, what appears to be a goblin standing guard is soon revealed as only the head of a goblin mounted on a short wooden stake. Crab claws and other small bits of chitin hang from the goblins' ears and clatter in the breeze like disturbing wind-chimes. Up ahead, another stake with similar decoration marks the path forward.*

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The path to Clawripper's lair is surprisingly well-marked. The Clawbiter goblins made sure to mark the route with stakes upon which they mounted the heads of several tribe members who angered Clawripper, usually by simply daring to approach him. The heads are decorated with pieces of jewelry crafted from the shells of the blue crabs that make up the majority of the tribe's diet. These shells first turn a pale red or pink as they bake in the hot sun, but the red eventually fades to bone white.

The grass and reed tunnel continues to wind through the marsh until it widens to form a small clearing. On the other side, the PCs can see the dark opening of a rounded dome made of grass and sticks held together with the reddish-brown clay pulled from the riverbank.





This crude hut is covered with more crabshells and other goblin-made decorations.

Unless the PCs succeed on their **Stealth** checks (DC 22), Clawripper hears them approaching. As they enter the clearing, Clawripper assumes his goblin form and emerges from the hut.

*The creature that steps out of the hut looks like a goblin, but is obviously not a normal specimen. Muscles ripple under the skin of its tiny arms, as it picks something from its teeth with a sharp piece of crab shell. It stares at you, and the malicious expression common to all goblins holds a subtle intelligence.*

Remember, *charm person* spells don't allow the caster to control the target's actions or cause them to do something they would not normally do. They will, however, look favorably on the caster. A PC that falls victim to Clawripper's spell may try to convince the PCs not to attack, but will not harm his friends in the process.

**Creatures:** Clawripper is confident that his otherworldly nature will protect him from most attacks. He also believes that the other goblins will come to his aid. As soon as he sees the PCs, he calls out to his tribe members for support.

If the party avoided killing Ironbelch or if they have already dispatched the goblins in the camp, nothing happens. Otherwise, three warriors come crashing through the reeds 1d4 rounds after the battle begins. The barghest stays in goblin form for as long as he can, taking advantage of his small size to avoid

attacks, while also keeping the PCs guessing about his true nature.

He first activates his *displacement* spell-like ability, and then attempts to cast *charm person* on the PC he judges to be the greatest threat. He's smart enough to know that charmed PCs will not attack their companions for him, but he can at least be assured that a would-be hero won't attack his "new friend."

If Grunhild is still with the party, she helps in this battle as best she can. She tries to get close to Clawripper and use her weakening touch on him, so that the party can finish him off. The PCs may suspect something is wrong when this happens, but they won't be able to do much about it in the thick of battle against a dangerous fiend.

If things start to go poorly for him, Clawripper changes into his normal form and fights with his claws to do more damage before trying to escape the clearing. If he cannot get away without great risk, he fights to the death.

#### CLAWRIPPER, BARGHEST

CR 4

1200 XP

**Hit Points** 45

**Initiative** +6

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15

**Fortitude Save** +6, **Reflex Save** +7, **Will Save** +7

**Damage Reduction** 5/magic

#### OFFENSE

**Melee** (standard action) dogslicer +10 (1d4+4/19–20)

**Spells** (caster level 5<sup>th</sup>)

3<sup>rd</sup>—*displacement* (at will, self only)

2<sup>nd</sup>—*levitate*

1<sup>st</sup>—*charm person* (DC 16)

#### STATISTICS

**STR** +4, **DEX** +2, **CON** +2, **INT** +2, **WIS** +2, **CHA** +2

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude



**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +11

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ITEMS

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**Equipment** greataxe +1

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SPECIAL ABILITIES

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**Change Shape** As a standard action, a barghest can turn into a goblin or a wolf, or back into its own form. In goblin or wolf form, it uses the AC, speed, and attacks of that form, but its own statistics for everything else. It can cast its spells in any form.

**Normal Form:**

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armor Class** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15

**Melee** (standard action) bite +10 (1d6+4)

**Melee** (full attack) 2 claws +10 (1d4+4)

**Wolf Form:**

**Speed** 50 ft. (10 squares)

**Armor Class** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

**Melee** (standard action) bite +10 (1d6+4 plus trip)

**Development:** Once the battle ends, Grunhild immediately begins gloating over the dead barghest. While still in her disguise she laughs and points at the fallen fiend, saying things like, "Move in to take over *my* swamp, will you? That'll teach you to meddle in my affairs!"

As she speaks, the hag drops her disguise and transforms into the hideous creature she really is. She thanks the PCs for ridding her of the barghest. As a "reward," she lets the PCs live. She also allows them to keep whatever treasure the fiend has hidden in his lair. Before the PCs can attack the old crone, she makes herself invisible and disappears into the swamp.

**Treasure:** In his hut, scattered among the bones from his previous meals, the PCs will find the small amount of treasure the barghest has managed to collect: *potion of shield of faith*, *scroll of bless*, 21 gp, 68 gp worth of gems and jewelry,

and a silver holy symbol of the moon goddess, Losinia (25gp). Clawripper took these items from a wandering cleric of the Losinia captured by the goblins some time ago. Nothing else remains of the cleric.

## 1H. THE GAUNTLET'S GATE (600 XP)

After the battle with the barghest, the PCs must still find the entrance to the thieves' den. Grunhild guesses that the entrance was somewhere in this area, but has little interest in it, and would never help them find it, anyway.

*The trees here do not grow as closely together as they do elsewhere. In some places you can see rather wide areas of flat ground, covered only by a thick layer of pine needles and small branches. By some odd trick of nature one of the clearings seems to have taken on a rectangular shape, as though a house or other structure once stood here, only to have been picked up and moved by a giant, unseen hand.*

If Grunhild is still with the party when they first enter this area, describe the scene, but have her hurry them along with claims that she knows the way to the entrance and stories about Kergus or some other dangerous monster that frequents this area.

Once the party has dealt with Clawripper, you can also remind them of Grunhild's apparent haste to get through this region. That should be enough to get them back on the right track.

When they have time to fully explore the area, have each PC make a DC 20 **Perception** check to notice strange tracks that pass into the clearing, but not out of it. If Grunhild is not with them, the PCs can take 20 on their rolls to find these tracks automatically. Make it clear to the PCs that they would likely have seen these tracks before, had Grunhild not kept them in such a hurry.



As they explore the area, the PCs risk falling into the pit trap that is actually the entrance they seek. The pit is covered with a reinforced stone slab that fits perfectly into its frame. Fallen pine needles and leaves cover the pit, hiding it from those not actually looking for it.

Unless they succeed on the **Perception** check to notice the trap, the first PC to step in the middle of the clearing activates the trap, causing one end to drop, becoming a very steep slope that leads down into the ground. The PC who triggered the trap and anyone within 5 feet of him must make a DC 20 **Reflex** save to avoid sliding down the slope. The pit is 30 feet deep, but due to the angle, the PCs take only 1d6 damage from the fall.

#### COVERED PIT TRAP

CR 2

600 XP

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** 30-ft.-deep pit with angled slope (1d6 falling damage); DC 20 **Reflex** avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

PCs who do not fall into the pit have an easier time getting into the chamber below, but only slightly. First, the trap closes and automatically resets on the second round after it opens. Unless a character successfully jams the mechanism (DC 20 **Disable Device**), they have to trigger the trap again. With the door jammed, it is fairly easy to lower a rope and climb down without any danger of being hurt.

Otherwise, the surest way to get in is to jump when the door opens. This still requires a **Reflex** save to avoid damage, but choosing to jump in grants a +5 bonus to the save.

## PART II: THE GAUNTLET

Once they recover from their fall, the PCs soon realize that they are not actually in the Fox Prince's lair. This dungeon is merely the test by which the thief assesses potential new members. If they cannot work their way through the dungeon and escape via the magical portal at the end, they are not worthy to be members. If candidates do happen to make it through the dungeon, but are severely wounded, the Elverin Skulk heals them, but the cost of that healing is taken out of their pay for the first few jobs they perform for the guild.

The Fox Prince won't say whether he had this strange site constructed for his own purposes or if he simply took advantage of something that was already there. Though it is in very good condition and seems to have kept out the dampness of the surrounding area very well, there is something about the stonework and layout that speaks of great age. If the Fox Prince did have the entire Gauntlet built, himself, then he must be very, very old.

Special wards and spells placed on the entrance to the Gauntlet notify the Fox Prince when new candidates enter. Either he or a trusted lieutenant in the guild begins scrying on the potential thieves immediately. He follows their progress through the whole dungeon and is ready to receive them when they finally make their way through the portal. If you want to keep them on edge, you can occasionally tell the players that the PCs have the sensation they are being watched as they progress through the Gauntlet.

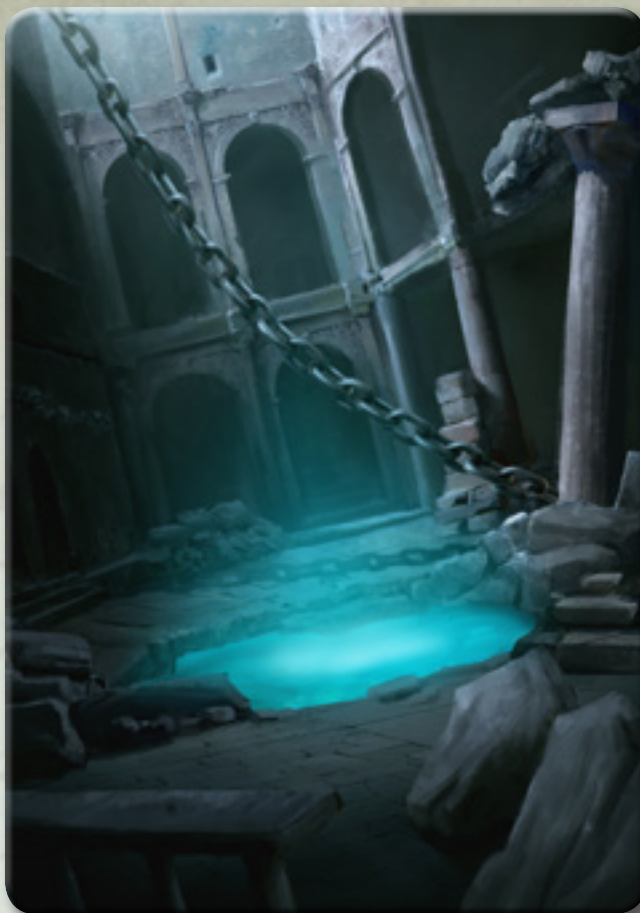


## WHAT? NO COMBAT?

The Fox Prince designed the Gauntlet as a test for potential thieves, not warriors. The tests within these halls determine if hopeful guild members have the minimum wit and skill to survive and focused on skill checks and thinking ability. Surviving traps and solving puzzles is a traditional aspect of tabletop RPGs, but some players may find an entire dungeon full of puzzles a little boring.

By the time your PCs have reached 3<sup>rd</sup> level (the suggested level for this module), you should have a sense of what the players want out of their game. You should also be able to gauge their reactions to events in the dungeon as the session goes on. If it looks like the players are getting bored or frustrated, you may want to give them something to hit.

You have a couple of options for how to do this. One way is to replace traps with opponents that represent an equal amount of XP. An evil 4<sup>th</sup> level rogue (CR 3, 800 XP) might be hiding the dungeon, waiting for a chance to knock out some competition. The Fox Prince may even assign a group of four human warriors (CR 2, 600 XP) to threaten those trying to get through the dungeon. As long as you can think of a reason for an appropriately difficult enemy to be in the Gauntlet feel free to add it in place of, or even in addition to, one of the challenges presented.



## 2A. ENTRY CHAMBER

*The chute ends abruptly, emptying into a roughly octagonal chamber. The chamber has been carefully crafted by a master mason. The floor, walls and ceiling of the place are all made of tightly-fit stones. The work here would make a dwarf proud, but some of the stones have fallen and lie scattered among the dirt and debris from above.*

*The room is bathed in a pale blue glow emanating from a shallow pool of clear water in the floor at the foot of the ramp.*

*Piles of dirt, gravel, and stone have been pushed to either side of the chute. Apparently, any dirt and rocks that follow “visitors” down the ramp gets is moved to clear a path leading through a wide archway into a hallway and what appears to be another room beyond.*



## SUCCESS IS ITS OWN REWARD

Even if the PCs managed to jam the door above to keep it from closing, the PCs soon realize that there is no other entrance or exit to the Gauntlet. They have to explore the place if they want to find the Fox Prince. However, with the door open, the PCs have a way of getting out to purchase more supplies and perhaps even ask for help. Let them take advantage of that boon, especially if they are having a tough time. They've earned a benefit through the use of a skill, and they should be able to use it.

However, to keep the adventure on track, you should limit the number of trips they can make. They shouldn't have more than one opportunity to leave the dungeon and return without consequences. The time limit that the Fox Prince imposes, himself, will help urge the players along, but giving them too much help makes defeating the dungeon less of an accomplishment.

Remember that the Fox Prince is watching the PCs the whole time they are in the Gauntlet. Once he realizes that the door is broken, he sends workers to repair it. The workers make the repairs when the PCs are farthest from the entrance to ensure they don't interfere. The PCs might hear the "boom" of the closing door and come to investigate. Otherwise, when they try to go back to town a second time, they find that the door is closed.

The PCs can try to climb back up the chute (**Climb** DC 15). The chute is 30 feet long and very steep. For most PCs, getting to the top requires four move actions (four skill checks). Once they reach the top, PCs find that the trap door has closed and cannot be opened from the inside. Trying to smash the door would require powerful magic or great strength and sure footing. If they wish to get out, the party has to move forward.

## 2B. VESTIBULE (600 XP)

This chamber contains a large double door, which leads to "The Gauntlet's Grip," the Fox Prince's biggest challenge for new recruits. But to get to it, applicants must pass through the door, which is held fast by a complicated lock requiring two very special keys. The Fox Prince, himself, tells the PCs what he expects of them.

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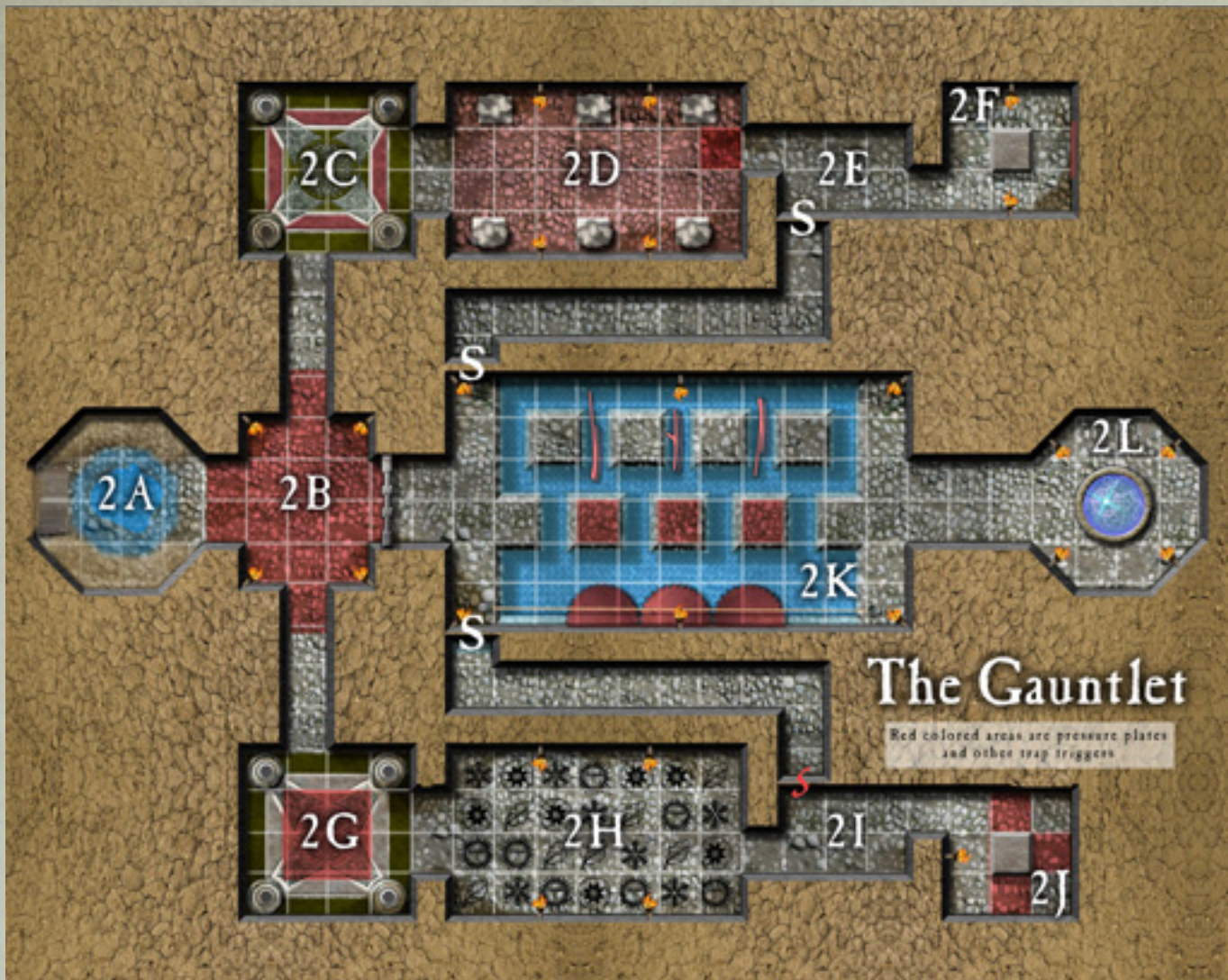
*Four sconces on the wall hold metal rods that emit an orange flame, similar to torchlight. They illuminate this rectangular room but produce no smoke or heat. The sconces are located in each of the room's four corners and rest above stone carvings of dragons' heads. The dragons' eyes stare menacingly at you.*

*On the wall opposite the archway from the entry room is what appears to be a massive metal-clad door. Covered with a brilliantly cast relief depicting several constellations found in Threll's night sky, the doors seem to have no handle or other device by which to open them. However, one of the figures, the clever fox, presented with a goose in its mouth, is actually an indentation in the door, unlike the other images that protrude from it.*

*There are also two open archways, one in each of the two side walls. The chambers beyond those archways are shrouded in darkness.*

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**Treasure:** The metal rods on the walls are enchanted with *continual flame* spells, and provide light equivalent to a torch. They can be safely removed from a sconce with a DC 20 **Disable Device** check. A DC 25 **Strength** check removes an entire sconce from the wall, which makes for an awkward, but workable torch. Trying to get the rod out of the sconce by brute force damages the rod and ruin the magic.

If the PCs have the skill to remove these rods from the wall, the Fox Prince lets them keep them. Each *everburning torch* sells for 65 gold pieces. (*Everburning torches* normally cost 110gp, but these are made of iron instead of wood, so they would normally cost 130gp to make.)

The first time the PCs step up to the metal door, read the following:

*As you approach the finely crafted door, the image of the fox suddenly moves. It places the goose on the ground, looks around the room, and begins to speak in a strong, clear voice.*

*“Greetings! Welcome to the Gauntlet! Within these chambers, you will be tested for your worthiness to become a member of the most powerful and successful organization in all of Threll. You, of course, know what organization I mean, or you wouldn’t have gone to all the trouble of finding this place.” The fox laughs at his own joke then continues.*



*"The challenges within these halls will force you to think, move, and act with the level of talent and skill that I expect of all of my associates. These tests are dangerous and may very well take your life. I'm sorry if you think I am being too harsh, but one does not become the Fox Prince by accepting anything less than the best from those who work for him.*

*"Your task is quite simple. Beyond these doors lies the path out of the Gauntlet. The doors, themselves, however, are very special, as you can probably guess, and will not let you pass unless you have the proper keys. There are two such keys stored elsewhere in these halls. You need to find both of them to open this door. If you try to pick the lock or break the door down, my four reptilian friends will put an end to you. Their breath is just terrible.*

*"So, there you have it. Collect the keys and gain the egress. I should tell you, though, that I also expect timely completion of assignments. If you are unable to gather all the keys quickly enough, I'll have to send someone in to help move things along. Good luck!"*

*With that, the fox appears to pick up the goose in its mouth before resuming its place in the relief.*

The lock can be disabled with a DC 40 **Disable Device** check, but the PCs are not likely to succeed at the attempt. Failing the check by 5 or more triggers a trap that causes each of the four dragon heads to spew a cloud of poisonous gas.

#### **POISON GAS TRAP**

**CR 11**

600 XP

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 27

#### **EFFECTS**

**Trigger** touch (door lock mechanism); **Reset** repair

**Effect** Poison gas (burnt othur fumes); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets in the room)

**Burnt Othur Fumes:** Any creature inhaling these poisonous fumes must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or immediately suffer a –1 penalty to Fort saves and CON checks and take 1 hp of damage per hit die. Affected creatures must make a new save each round, for a total of 6 rounds, and each failed save increases the penalty by –1 and deals new damage. Creatures must succeed on two consecutive saves to end the poison's effects.

The poison gas trap is extremely dangerous, but the PCs know it's there and have been told there is at least one way to bypass it. If they avoid the trap by using the proper keys, they earn 600 XP. If the PCs' manage to actually disable the trap or survive its effects, they could earn 12,600 XP from this single encounter. However, the poison can easily kill 3rd-level PCs. It's okay to encourage players to go along with the Fox Prince's game, but ultimately, the choice is theirs.

**Creatures:** The Fox Prince's threat about sending in someone to keep them moving is real. If the PCs take too long, he will trigger a spell effect that will summon a minotaur into the dungeon. The exact timing of this effect is left up to the GM, and this should be adjusted if the PCs are really having a difficult time. If they managed to jam the trap door and are able to get out of the dungeon, you can delay the summoning or you can use the minotaur to keep them in the dungeon. Once summoned, the minotaur hunts the PCs for one hour before the spell duration expires.



**SUMMONED MINOTAUR****CR 4**

1,200 XP

**Hit Points** 45**Initiative** +0**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

Defense

**Armor Class** 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14**Fortitude Save** +6, **Reflex Save** +5, **Will Save** +5**Defensive Abilities** never flat-footed**OFFENSE****Melee** (standard action) +1 *greataxe* +9 (3d6+6)**Melee** (full-attack action) +1 *greataxe* +9 (3d6+6), +1 *greataxe* +4 (3d6+6), gore +4 (1d6+2)**Special Attacks** long reach, powerful charge (gore +11, 2d6+6)**STATISTICS****STR** +4, **DEX** +0, **CON** +2, **INT** -2, **WIS** +0, **CHA** -1**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack (-2 attack/+4 damage)**Skills** Intimidate +5, Perception +10, Stealth +2, Survival +10**ITEMS****Equipment** *greataxe* +1**Treasure** If the minotaur is killed before its summoning expires, his +1 *greataxe* remains behind.**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Long Reach** A minotaur can make its melee attacks against creatures 5 feet (1 square) or 10 feet (2 squares) away from it.**Powerful Charge** If a minotaur charges, it can make a gore attack (+11 attack bonus, 2d6+6 points of damage).**2C. CROSSFIRE DARTS TRAP (600 XP)**

*This 20-foot square chamber is unlit. Light from the previous room filters in to cast deep shadows on the floor. Four massive, fluted columns rest in the corners of the room. Thin lines etched into the floor radiate from the base of each of these columns, forming a geometric pattern.*

Floor of the room is etched with lines in a strange design. The etching connects the

four massive pillars that seem to hold up the ceiling. The etching also serves to conceal the presence of four pressure plates in the floor (designated by the light shading on the map). Stepping on one plate arms the trap, stepping on a second plate sets it off.

**Trap:** This room appears to be identical to the Spiked Pit Trap room (area 2f). PCs who already know about that room may believe there is another pit in this room and try to avoid it by jumping or stepping around the suspect squares. Unfortunately, doing so forces them to step on at least one of two pressure plates and triggers the trap. Each PC in the room is targeted by 1d6 darts.

**CROSSFIRE DARTS TRAP****CR 2****600 XP****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20**EFFECTS****Trigger** touch; Reset none**Effect** Attack +10 ranged (1d6 darts per target, damage 1d3 per hit) ; multiple targets (all targets in the room)**2D. THUNDERSTONE TRAP (800 XP)**

This room tests the PCs' stealth. It contains six statues, each one enchanted to "listen" for sounds.

*This elongated chamber has a high, arched ceiling and is illuminated by four more enchanted torches. Their flickering light falls on six statues, three on each wall. From the doorway, it appears that the statues are arranged in pairs, with the three statues on the right mirroring the three on the left. The closest statues portray a gigantic male figure dressed in a long robe and wearing a scholar's miter on his head. The finger of one hand is pressed to his lips in a "shushing" fashion.*



As the PCs pass through the room, they will see that the other pairs of statues represent a woman with her lips pressed tightly together and a young man with his hands clasped over his mouth.

**Trap:** The PCs must cross the room while succeeding on one or more DC 20 **Stealth** checks. Once a PC reaches the far end, he can step on a pressure plate to open the portcullis and disarm the trap. If he fails, the statues “hear” him and a thunderstone drops from each of two holes in the ceiling. The stones strike the floor and explode, releasing their sonic attacks on anyone within their areas of effect (highlighted on the map).

#### THUNDERSTONE TRAP

CR 3

800 XP

**Type** special; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 35

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** special (sound); Reset none

**Effect** Thunderstones (targets in the area of effect must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be deafened for one hour). A deafened creature, in addition to the obvious effects, takes a –4 penalty on initiative and has a 20% chance to miscast and lose any spell with a verbal component that it tries to cast.

### 2E. NORTH ANTECHAMBER

This room is unlit, making many of the relief’s details hard to make out unless the PCs bring a light source.

*This room is empty, but the walls are lavishly decorated with a detailed and complex relief depicting a variety of hunting scenes. Game animals of all kinds are mingled with images of trees, hills and open fields along with hunters on foot and on horseback, some working with hunting dogs and others without.*

A thorough examination of the walls, and a DC 25 **Perception** check, reveals that part of the relief in the southwest corner is shaped exactly like the fox and goose image on the door in the vestibule. The fox portion of the relief forms a hole that perfectly matches the fox key found in room 2F.

Clever and lucky PCs can insert the fox key into the slot and open a secret passage that leads directly to the Gauntlet’s Grip. This “trick” is the Fox Prince’s lesson that a thief should “break the rules” whenever possible.

### 2F. PUZZLE ROOM

*This small chamber seems to contain nothing but two wall sconces and an odd mural. The mural is mounted on the wall opposite the entrance and appears to be made up of numerous squares. There are pieces of an image embossed on each of the squares, but they are mixed up and do not seem to make much sense.*

The mural is actually a sliding puzzle that the PCs must solve in order to retrieve one of the two keys to the door in the vestibule. By moving the tiles around the board, they can rearrange them to form a replica of the relief that covers the door in area 2B.

PCs can accomplish this task by succeeding on a DC 20 **Intelligence** check. Alternatively, if you have a real sliding puzzle at home, you can give that to your players and have them try to work it out. Even though the image won’t be the same as what the PCs are seeing, working through the puzzle can give them a sense of what their characters are doing.

When the PCs put the last piece of the puzzle in place, a pedestal rises out of the floor in the middle of the room. The top of the pedestal



is disguised to match the stones in the floor and covers a compartment holding a small, fox-shaped brass statue. It looks like this statue would fit perfectly into the fox-shaped indentation on the locked door (or the one in 2E, if the PCs found it).

## 2G. SPIKED PIT TRAP (600 XP)

This room looks identical to the Crossfire Darts Trap room (area 2C.), including the etchings on the floor.

*This 20-foot square chamber is unlit. Light from the previous room filters in to cast deep shadows on the floor. Four massive, fluted columns rest in the corners of the room. Thin lines etched into the floor radiate from the base of each of these columns, forming a geometric pattern.*

**Trap:** PCs who already know about the trap in area 2C. may try to avoid it by jumping or stepping over what they think are pressure plates. However, stepping onto any of the highlighted squares in the middle of the room drops them into a pit full of spikes.

### SPIKED PIT TRAP CR 2

600 XP

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Attack +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each spike); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

## 2H. BURNING HANDS TRAP (800 XP)

The object of this test is to cross the room without triggering one of many burning hands traps.

*This long room appears to be empty, save for the four sconces on the walls. The floor, however, is etched with various symbols, apparently scattered throughout the room at random. There are four different symbols: a sun, a leaf, a flower and a snowflake.*

**Trap:** The safe way to pass through this room is to follow the pattern of the seasons, represented by the symbols on the floor: summer (sun), fall (leaf), winter (snowflake), spring (flower). It doesn't matter what season a character starts with, but once they start they must continue on the path they have chosen.





Going backward or choosing a symbol that is out of order triggers a *burning hands* spell focused on the square the PC is in. There is one path through the room that allows a PC to simply walk from square to square. Choosing any other path requires the PC to attempt **Acrobatics** checks to jump to the correct square. PCs failing the check land in the wrong square and trigger the trap.

#### **BURNING HANDS TRAP**

**CR 3**

600 XP\*

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

#### **EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** Spell effect (*burning hands*, 2d4 fire damage, DC 11 Reflex save for half damage); Targets in the affected square.

**Development:** When the PCs return from the goose key room (area 11.j.) they find that the trap only works in one direction. They can cross the room safely on their way back to the vestibule, but will have to follow the correct path if they choose to return to the key room.

## **2I. SOUTH ANTECHAMBER**

This room appears to be a mirror image of area 2E.

*This room is empty, but the walls are lavishly decorated with a detailed and complex relief depicting a variety of hunting scenes. Game animals of all kinds are mingled with images of trees, hills and open fields along with hunters on foot and on horseback, some working with hunting dogs and others without.*

A thorough examination of the walls, here, and a DC 25 **Perception** check, reveals that part of the relief in the northwest corner is shaped exactly like the fox and goose image on the door in the vestibule. The goose portion of the relief can be removed to form a hole that perfectly matches the goose key found in room 2j.

Clever and lucky PCs can insert the goose key into the slot and open a secret passage that leads directly to the Gauntlet's Grip. This "trick" is the Fox Prince's lesson that a thief should "break the rules" whenever possible.

## **2J. VENOMOUS SNAKE TRAP (1,200 XP)**

*A 4-foot high pedestal dominates the center of this room. The top of the pedestal is covered with the same stones set into the floor, making it appear to have been pushed up from below. A metallic object rests within a hollow compartment in the pedestal.*

This key room has a pedestal identical to the one that rises from the floor in area 2F., but it is already sitting in the center of the room. The key is visible: upon closer inspection it appears to be a brass statue of a dead goose. Getting the key, unfortunately, is a little more difficult than simply picking it up.

**Trap:** The pedestal is actually counterweighted and balanced by the weight of the goose key. Removing the statue removes the weight from the pedestal causing it to rise, which opens doors to niches on three of the room's walls. Each niche holds an angry poisonous snake, which is dumped out onto the adjacent square (highlighted on the map).

The PCs must estimate the weight of the statue. Unfortunately, the statue is actually a brass casting filled with lead, making it difficult to use the fox key as an example. Too much weight causes the pedestal to drop, opening the doors. Too little raises the pedestal, and the doors open.

If they think of it, the PCs can use the rocks from the first chamber as weights to balance out the missing weight. Alternatively, they might notice that the doors open in a sequence, starting with the northern door and



moving clockwise. Only by grossly misjudging the weight will they release all three snakes at once. Clever PCs can remove the weight slowly, allowing only one snake into the room at a time and dealing with each one individually until all are dead.

The other complication is that, as the doors to the snakes' niches open, a portcullis drops to close the entrance to the chamber. Putting the statue back opens the portcullis, but the PCs must figure out how to get the statue out of the room without getting themselves trapped in it.

The PCs can use a variety of skills to properly estimate the weight of the key. A successful **Appraise** check (DC 25) reveals that the statue is not made entirely of brass, without even needing to pick it up (flaws in the coating are obvious to those know what to look for). A successful DC 15 **Knowledge (engineering)** check or a DC 20 **Intelligence** or **Wisdom** check will also work.

If a PC is willing to remain trapped in the room, he can hand the key through the portcullis to another PC, who can then take the key to the entrance chamber and get just the right amount of rocks to balance the weight with a DC 5 **Dexterity** check.

#### VENOMOUS SNAKE TRAP

CR 4

1,200 XP

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** special; **Reset** manual

**Effect** A venomous snake drops from each of three wall compartments onto the squares indicated. They are very angry and will fight until dead.

#### VENOMOUS SNAKES (3)

CR 1

400 XP each

**Hit Points** 13

**Initiative** +5

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Senses** Low-light vision, scent; Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13

**Fortitude Save** +5, **Reflex Save** +4, **Will Save** +1

#### OFFENSE

**Climb** 20 ft., **Swim** 20 ft.

**Melee** (standard action) bite +2 (1d4–1 plus poison)

#### STATISTICS

**STR** –1, **DEX** +1, **CON** +2, **INT** –5, **WIS** +1, **CHA** –4

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Climb +9, Perception +9, Stealth +9, Swim +9

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison** Creatures bitten must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d4 additional points of damage from the poison.

### 2K. THE GAUNTLET'S GRIP (1,600 XP)

When the PCs have collected both keys, they can take them to the door in area 2B and insert them into the appropriate niche. The door emits a series of clicks and grinding noises before opening inward to reveal the room beyond.

Alternatively, the PCs might enter through the secret tunnel, via a door that slides up into the ceiling.

*As the door opens, the room beyond erupts with the sounds of heavy machines lurching into motion. Whirring, whooshing and popping sounds are accompanied by the mechanical staccato of hidden gears and timing devices that give life to what lies ahead.*

**Trap:** There are three obvious paths across this room, but each one poses its own danger.





Just inside the main entrance, the room's floor drops away, yielding to a pool of murky water ten feet below. The surface of the water is dotted with hundreds of black specks—the tips of spikes rising to barely break the water's surface. It's difficult to tell how deep the water is, but the spikes must be at least a few feet long.

Falling into the water for any reason results in 1d6 points of falling damage and attacks from 1d4 spikes (+10 melee attack, 1d4+2 damage per spike). If a PC survives the initial fall, he can carefully navigate to the wall (moving at one fourth of his speed) and attempt to climb out. Moving at half speed requires a DC 15 **Acrobatics** check to avoid slipping and falling onto a spike (automatic 1d4+2 points of damage). Moving at full speed increases the DC of the save to 20.

Several square columns rise out of the water running down the middle and left side of the room, spaced about 5 feet apart. One might easily jump from one column to the next, were it not for some obvious obstructions.

On the left, three great axes swing back and forth, threatening anyone caught in their destructive path. In order to cross the pit this way, PCs must succeed on a DC 10 **Acrobatics** check to jump from one column to the next. If they pass the check by 5 or more, they have timed their jump to easily dodge the axe. Otherwise they must roll a DC 20 **Reflex** save to avoid the swinging axe. If they fail that save, they take 1d8+3 points of damage and must roll a second DC 20 **Reflex** save to avoid falling into the water and landing on the spikes below. Due to the danger of the swinging axes, PCs may not take 10 on these rolls.



In the middle of the room, the columns are the dangerous places to be, because arcs of electricity leap from the ceiling down to metal plates embedded in the stone on top of them. The arcs flash in a regular pattern, starting at the column closest to the entrance and moving away each round, then starting back at the beginning.

Again, PCs must roll DC 10 **Acrobatics** checks and may not take 10 on the roll. If they succeed, they have 2 rounds in which to attempt to jump to the next column before the arc of electricity reaches the column they are on. If they move too slowly, the lightning targets them (4d6 electricity damage, DC 20 **Reflex** save for half). Taking any damage from the electricity requires the PC to roll a DC 15 **Reflex** save to avoid falling into the water.

The right side of the room offers a different means of crossing. A single, taught rope stretches between two sturdy-looking supports. PCs can use their climbing ability to get across, but to do so they must avoid three scythe traps that come whirling out of the wall beneath the rope. They can accomplish this by making **Acrobatics** checks to walk across the tightrope (usually three DC 20 checks when moving at half speed) or **Climb** to pull themselves across (eight DC 10 checks when moving at 1/4 normal speed). PCs may not take ten on any of these checks. Failing any check requires the PC to roll a DC 20 **Reflex** save or be subjected to an attack from one of the wall scythes (+20 melee, 2d4+6/x4). If that attack hits, a second DC 20 **Reflex** save is required to avoid falling into the water.

#### SWINGING AXE TRAP (3)

CR 2

400 xp

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effects See above

#### ELECTRICITY ARC TRAP (3)

CR 4

1,200 xp

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effects See above

#### WALL SCYTHETRAP (3)

CR 4

1,200 xp

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effects See above

**Development:** When the first PC makes it across the room, all of the traps instantly wind down, allowing the remaining PCs to cross in relative safety. With the other traps out of commission, PCs may take 10 on their **Acrobatics** checks to jump from column to column or shimmy across the rope. Landing on the opposite side also causes the iron portcullis to open, allowing the party to move into the final chamber of the dungeon.

The combination of traps in this room makes getting across it very dangerous. Knowing the traps are there provides some help, but there are many of them to overcome and getting to them to disable them is almost impossible. Award the party experience for a CR 5 encounter when they manage to make it across the room. Additionally, if they manage to disable any of the traps, award them experience for each trap they defeat.





## 2L. TELEPORT CHAMBER

This chamber contains the candidate's final test of daring.

*This room is octagonal in shape and is well-lit by four sconces. In the center, a large pool of clear water reflects the torchlight. The rim of the pool is marked with a variety of strange-looking symbols. As you look into the pool, you get the impression that the water possesses a luminous quality of its own, even without the help of the other lights in the room.*

The pool is actually a teleportation circle which transports those who step into it directly to the great hall of the Fox Prince's headquarters, which is far away from the Gauntlet. Only by braving the danger and choosing to enter the circle can a thief finally leave the dungeon and become a member of the Elverin Skulk.

The PCs may be able to guess the nature of the pool by a number of means. A DC 15 **Knowledge (arcana)** check reveals that the runes are associated with teleportation magic. A successful casting of *detect magic* along with a DC 20 **Knowledge (arcana)** or **Spellcraft** check reveals that the pool is a teleportation device. Alternatively, they can simply toss something into the pool and watch it vanish to get a clue about what the pool does.

Once the last PC steps into the pool and vanishes, move on to area 2J.

## 2M. GREAT HALL OF THE THIEVES' DEN

The PCs appear in the middle of the Great Hall of the Fox Prince's headquarters, surrounded by dozens of gang members who seem genuinely pleased to see them.



A sound like rushing water fills your ears, then suddenly recedes and is replaced by the sound of cheering. The cheering quiets down as your surroundings come into focus. You realize that you are standing in a large room, like the grand hall of a castle or keep. Before you, on a raised dais, sits a figure which looks like a man except he has the head of fox. The figure stands and bows with a flourish before addressing you.

*"Welcome, initiates, to the den of the Elverin Skulk! Congratulations on completing your trials!"*

The Skulk enjoys watching candidates make the attempt through the Gauntlet. The viewing is made possible by a combination of divination and illusion magic worked by a wizard who serves the Fox Prince. More than a few of the guild members have made money by wagering on the PCs performance. The ones who lost money seem to have taken the loss fairly well.

The Fox Prince lets the PCs take a moment to regain their bearings before asking them to introduce themselves. As the conversation continues, he realizes that the party did not brave the dangers of the Gauntlet to become members of the guild. While he admires them for their bravery and commitment, the situation puts him in a very difficult position.

When the PCs finally explain the purpose for their visit, he becomes visibly distraught. After shooing away all but his three most trusted lieutenants, as well as the wizard who stands quietly beside the Prince's throne, he shakes his head ruefully.

*"I am dreadfully sorry to hear that you have come all this way only to be disappointed. I cannot possibly help you. The anonymity of my clients is*

*of the utmost importance. To violate that could seriously damage the Elverin Skulk's reputation. And without reputation, an organization like ours does not survive for long."*

The Fox Prince is not completely heartless, however. He knows that the PCs have struggled and suffered to get here. In other circumstances, he would be forced to kill interlopers, but he instead tells them that he will have his wizard alter their memories and teleport them back to the forest.

### THE FOX PRINCE

The Fox Prince is an enigma. There is no sure way to tell whether he really does have the head of a fox or if he is merely cloaked in illusion. If the PCs cast *detect magic* on him, they find that he is under the effects of many schools of magic, including illusion. However, he and his guards won't let them get away with anything more intrusive that might reveal his identity.

Impress upon the players that the Fox Prince must be very powerful and he probably retained the others in the room for his protection. The Fox Prince and his allies possess character levels far above the PCs' ability to handle. The party would be foolish to attack him or try to force the information out of him.

If the PCs try to convince the Prince that whatever this client wants with the statues can only be bad for everyone, the Fox Prince tells them that he cannot be held responsible for the deeds of his clients. The PCs can try to use **Diplomacy** on him, but must beat a DC 20 to even get him to listen to their pleas.



During the course of the negotiations, or perhaps just as the wizard is about to cast the spell that wipes their memories away, an elderly woman comes rushing into the room and whispers something in the Prince's ear. Upon hearing her words, he looks down, shaking his head sadly. Then, as if suddenly struck by an idea, he looks up at the PCs.

*"If you truly are heroes, and wish only to do good in this world, then perhaps we can strike a deal. I need the help of heroes, right now, and if we can be of mutual service, then that means you are the heroes I need."*

The Fox Prince goes on to explain that during a recent job, one of his agents, someone very important to him, fell into the sewers beneath Port Fairglade. The agent became very ill a few days after returning to the Skulk's headquarters. None of the guild's healers have been able to cure him. They believe that the disease may be magical in nature. Powerful healing magic is required to save the sick guild member.

It just so happens that a local "swamp witch," actually the hag known as Grunhild, is rumored to possess a *healing stone* that be able to cure the disease. If the PCs go into the swamp and get the stone from her, the Fox Prince will repay the favor by telling them all he knows about the client who hired the Elverin Skulk to steal the White Serpent.

If the PCs agree, he shows them a crude map that describes the path through the swamp to the hag's lair. The Fox Prince does not care how the PCs get the *stone*, as long as they bring it back and heal his best agent, for whom he happens to care very much.

## PART III: A THIEF'S ERRAND

The Fox Prince lets the PCs rest, heal up, and replenished spell components or other mundane supplies they need, before the Skulk's wizard teleports them back to the Umberwood. Following the Fox Prince's map, the PCs must make their way to the hag's retreat and deal with her to get the *healing stone*. The PCs must face a few obstacles along the way, but they eventually find the old crone's hut. Unfortunately, Grunhild has no interest in seeing the PCs again. She and her earth elemental servant attack them as soon as they arrive.

### 3A. LIZARDFOLK (2) (800 XP)

A pair of lizardfolk are scouting the swamps around Blackwater Creek just as others of their tribe have been scouting other swamps in the region.

*Following a muddy path through the brush, you stumble onto a pair of reptilian humanoids skulking through the undergrowth. When they see you, they hiss angrily, raise their spears, and charge!*

The lizardfolk have been displaced from their original home by some terrible event and hope to find a place where their tribe can settle. The exact nature of this catastrophe is beyond the scope of this adventure, but could be a springboard for further adventures, once the PCs have completed their mission.

#### LIZARDFOLK (2)

CR 1

400 XP each

Hit Points 11

Initiative +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Senses Perception +1





The trees here grow together in a tangle that is only made worse by an abundance of unhealthy looking vines. On either side of the path, the plant life has been draped in white, silky fibers and formed into circular tunnels leading away into darkness.

**Creatures:** As the PCs approach the spiders come rushing out of their dens, hoping to surprise a potential meal. Each spider bites a PC and attempts to drag him back into its lair to finish him off. To avoid being surprised, the PCs must succeed on a DC 20 **Perception** check.

### GIANT SPIDER (2) CR 1

400 XP each  
**Hit Points** 16  
**Initiative** +3  
**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11  
**Fortitude Save** +4, **Reflex Save** +4, **Will Save** +1  
**Defensive Abilities** mindless creature

#### OFFENSE

**Climb** 30 ft.  
**Melee (standard action)** bite +2 (1d6 plus poison)  
**Special Attack** web

#### STATISTICS

**STR** +0, **DEX** +3, **CON** +1, **INT** —, **WIS** +0, **CHA** –4  
**Skills** Climb +16, Perception +4, Stealth +7 (+11 in webs)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison** Whenever a giant spider bites a foe, that creature must make a DC 14 Fort save or take a –1 penalty on melee attack and damage rolls for 1 day. This penalty increases by 1 each time the creature is bitten and fails its Fort save.

**Web** As a standard action, a giant spider can shoot webbing at a creature within 30 feet by making a +5 ranged touch attack. If the web hits, the target cannot move from its current space until it spends a standard action to make a DC 12 STR check to break free.

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17  
**Fortitude Save** +4, **Reflex Save** +0, **Will Save** +0  
**Defensive Abilities** hold breath

#### OFFENSE

**Melee** (standard action) club +2 (1d6+1)  
**Melee** (full round action) club +2 (1d6+1) plus bite +0 (1d4)  
**Ranged** javelin +1 (1d6+1)

#### STATISTICS

**STR** +1, **DEX** +0, **CON** +1, **INT** –1, **WIS** +0, **CHA** +0  
**Feats** Multiattack  
**Skills** Acrobatics +2, Perception +1, Swim +8

#### ITEMS

**Equipment** club, heavy wooden shield, javelins (3)

### 3B. GIANT SPIDERS (2), 800 XP

The PCs pass by the lairs of a pair of giant spiders.



### 3C. GRUNHILD'S LAIR (2,400 XP)

The PCs at last find their way to the hag's shack

*You don't need the Fox Prince's map to tell you that you are on the right track. Up ahead, the whole swamp signals that you are entering a place of great danger. The ground you walk on appears firm, but seems to squirm beneath your feet with every step. The trees have grown twisted and gnarled, crooked and bent like the back of an old woman. Mosses and vile-looking fungi hang from the branches or sprout from ruptures in the bark. All around, croaking, buzzing, and flapping sounds emanate from unseen sources giving the place an aura of slimy, crawling, unnatural life.*

The well-worn path takes the PCs over a series of bridges connecting areas of mostly dry land, the PCs soon see the hag's crude wooden hut up ahead, hanging over the water on pilings driven down into the mud. As they get closer, Grunhild steps out of her door onto the porch to observe them. When she recognizes them she shouts out, telling them they have already served their purpose. She tells them to turn around, if they know what's good for them. If the PCs do not leave, she orders her earth elemental to attack, jumps into the water, and becomes invisible.



*The ground before you seems to ripple like water. Then a dome of rock and mud bursts upward, rising to form a column about the height of a man before growing arms and legs. The dirt and rocks take on the appearance of a scowling face before the mouth opens wide and unleashes a roar that sounds like hundreds of stones cascading down a steep slope.*

**Creatures:** The earth elemental fights to the death, driving PCs closer to the water's edge where Grunhild can leap up and grab them. If she can't pull them down under the water and drown them, she uses her weakening touch to soften up her opponents and lets the earth elemental do the rest.

#### GRUNHILD, GREEN HAG CR 5

1,600 XP

**Hit Points** 58

**Initiative** +1

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 90 ft.;

Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

**Armor Class** 19, touch

11, flat-footed 18

**Fortitude Save** +6,

**Reflex Save** +7,

**Will Save** +7

**Spell Resistance** 16

#### OFFENSE

**Swim** 30 ft.

**Melee (standard action)**

claw +13 (1d4+4 plus weakness)

**Melee (full attack action)**

2 claws +13 (1d4+4 plus weakness)

**Spells** (caster level 9th)

Constant—pass without trace, tongues, water breathing

At will—alter self, dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 12),

invisibility, pyrotechnics (DC 14), tree shape, whispering wind



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**STATISTICS**

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**STR** +4, **DEX** +1, **CON** +1, **INT** +2, **WIS** +1, **CHA** +2

**Feats** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Deceitful, Great Fortitude

**Skills** Bluff +13, Disguise +13, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Perception +15, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +13, Swim +18

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**ITEMS**

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**Equipment** none

**Treasure** 60gp, scroll of *bless*, +2 leather armor, *potion of resist energy (fire)*, scroll of *sound burst*, wand of *lightning bolt*, healing stone

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**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

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**Mimicry** Grunhild can mimic the sounds of common animals near her lair, including forest animals such as bears or wolves. She can also change her voice to better match the image that she takes on with her *disguise self* spell-like ability.

**Weakness** The green hag's claws make the target physically weak. A creature hit by a green hag's claws must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or take a -1 penalty on melee attack and damage rolls and STR-based checks for 1 day. This penalty increases by 1 each time the creature is hit and fails its Fort save.

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**EARTH ELEMENTAL****CR 3**

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800 XP

**Hit Points** 34

**Initiative** -1

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

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**DEFENSE**

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**Armor Class** 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18

**Fortitude Save** +7, **Reflex Save** +0, **Will Save** +4

**Immune** critical hits, flanking, paralysis, poison, sleep, sneak attack, stun

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**OFFENSE**

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**Burrow** 20 ft.

**Melee** (standard action) slam +9 (1d8+7)

**Special Attacks** earth mastery

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**STATISTICS**

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**STR** +5, **DEX** -1, **CON** +3, **INT** -3, **WIS** +0, **CHA** +0

**Feats** Cleave, Improved Bull Rush<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack (-2 attack/+4 damage)

**Skills** Appraise +1, Climb +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2, Knowledge (planes) +2, Perception +7, Stealth +3

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**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

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**Earth Mastery** An earth elemental gets a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls if its foe is touching the ground.

The PCs can fight from the bridge to deny the earth elemental the earth mastery bonus on its attacks. There is still a risk of attack from Grunhild who stays hidden in the water until she is ready to strike at an opponent. The other PCs should have a chance to attack her before she slips beneath the water again. If they reduce her to less than 15 hit points, Grunhild will make herself invisible and jump into the water to escape and plot her revenge.





### FEAR IN THE SWAMP!

This should be a scary battle for the PCs. They are taking on a hag and an earth elemental on their own turf. The earth elemental attacks relentlessly, but even after it is defeated, Grunhild might still be lurking, waiting to get her revenge on the PCs. Take pauses, allowing the PCs to look around, wondering where the hag is before she erupts from the water to attack one of the characters.

**Development:** Once the battle is over, the PCs are free to investigate the hag's home. Among her other treasures, they find a large chunk of hematite that radiates a powerful aura of conjuration (healing) magic. This *healing stone* is the item the Fox Prince seeks. Once per day, the stone can be used to cure a victim of one disease as per a *remove disease* spell cast by a 15th level caster (1d20+15 caster level check against the disease's DC). Although the sick thief's ailment is potent, the *healing stone's* power can defeat it.

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs collect the healing stone, they can return to the entrance to the Gauntlet, where the Skulk's wizard is waiting to transport them to the guild's headquarters. There, the Fox Prince awaits word about the sick thief's condition before thanking the party for helping him. Once he is sure that his agent will recover, he shares what he knows about the client who now has the Green and White Serpent statues.

*"Just because I don't share my clients' information with others doesn't mean I'm not interested in knowing who I'm working for. I do a fair amount of digging into the lives of many clients. What I find can be useful on the rare occasions someone decides to double-cross me. As we agreed, I will tell you what I know of this client."*

*"His name is Belazeel. He's a very intense fellow...a rather skilled practitioner of magic from what my sources can gather. He tends to keep to himself, though. He doesn't associate with the wizards of any of the major arcane universities, which leads me to believe his studies lean more toward the darker arts. I don't know exactly why he is interested in the statues, but I can tell you that it is very important to him and also that his motives have very little to do with money. Based on what he paid me to get the statue for him, he obviously has plenty of that already."*

The Fox Prince tries to answer any questions the PCs have, but he has little information to offer beyond what he has already given. If asked how Belazeel contacted the Skulk, he can provide a hand-written note that is similar to one in the possession of the sage, Ithamar Ruggles in Corbin village. The other note was used to hire a band of orcs to steal the first statue. This second letter also has a wax seal with an ornate sigil affixed to it. It might be of some interest to Lord Mayor Wolfe's investigators, and the Fox Prince allows the PCs to keep it, if they wish. This seal might be used in conjunction with certain powerful divination magic to help the PCs figure out what he is up to.



When their business is concluded, the Prince says his goodbyes. If there are any rogues in the group, and they performed well during their time in the Gauntlet, he privately offers them positions in the Elverin Skulk. Even if they decline, he makes sure they know the offer remains open. The Fox Prince considers the party to be allies, because they helped save his sick agent. Having someone like him for a friend can be a mixed blessing, but for now, at least, the benefits outweigh the costs.

After wrapping up any loose ends, which include making the PCs promise not to reveal the location of the Gauntlet, the Fox Prince directs his wizard to transport the PCs back to Port Fairglade.

If any of the PCs refuse to keep the location of the Gauntlet a secret, the Fox Prince is forced to have one of the Guild's spellcasters modify the PCs' memories with magic. The spell merely erases knowledge of the Gauntlet's location, not its existence or the experiences they had within. Once those precautions have been taken, the wizard teleports the party back to woods outside of Port Fairglade, then quickly disappears.

When they make contact with Lord Mayor Wolfe, the PCs can pass on what they know and collect the reward he promised them. Each PC gain one magic item of his choice. The item can be of any type (weapon, armor, wand, ring, or wondrous item) but its purchase price must be no greater than 2,500 gold pieces. The item is ready within a week of placing the request, during which time the heroes can work with the Lord Mayor's investigators and scholars to determine the next course of action to take in their plan to stop Belazeel.

## CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

*The Thieves' Den* can be used as a stand-alone adventure, but it presents a number of options if the GM and players wish to continue the campaign based on the events of this story.

The PCs have made an enemy of the barghest known to them as Clawripper. Killing an outsider on the Material Plane merely sends that creature back to its native plane of existence. The barghest will want revenge for his defeat and his hidden masters will want him to complete the task he was sent to Threll to accomplish. It is likely that, when he returns, he will bring help with him.

- The lizardfolk who live south of Threll are making more frequent incursions into the kingdom. Although they have been furtive in their search for a new home, the incidents of encounters with Threllish citizens are increasing. All that is known is that some terrible danger is driving the lizardfolk from their homelands. They will not speak of it to the "smooth-skinned" people. If the incursions continue, tensions between Threll and the lizardfolk could erupt into violent conflict.
- Grunhild may have escaped the battle with the PCs, making her yet another foe seeking revenge against them. Grunhild may seek others to form a coven to take out her anger on all of Northumberland and Moresby Counties, and perhaps beyond. Even if they finished her off, the confirmed presence of a hag in northern Threll is a troubling detail that must be reported to the Knights of Hagwatch Tower.
- The most likely continuation, however, and the one we hope you will choose, is in the next chapter of the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, in which the PCs seek the help of a powerful oracle to discover what Belazeel is up to and how he might be stopped. But in order to get the answers they seek, they must brave ancient ruins deep within a forbidden forest and pass a different series of tests to prove that they are worthy of the oracle's aid. What they learn puts them on a collision course with their long-hidden foe. Only their efforts can stop him from unleashing a terrible evil on the world.



## APPENDIX: HAGS, AN ANCIENT MENACE

*The crones of the Black Beast Coven huddled around their cauldron, the vessel from which they had called down pestilence, harsh weather, and countless other troubles onto the people of the Imenite River for years. Their hateful gazes were full of arcane power and fury. Zenami stepped forward to unleash Losinia's wrath upon them, but the illusory figures only hissed and snarled as they faded from view. The hags had seen them approaching, watched them cut their way through the ranks of their minions, and were ready. Then they came, shrieking and uttering words of foulest magic. The battle was at last joined—a battle in which the fate of generations would be decided.*

— from *A History of Hagwatch Tower*

Hags are vicious monsters that look like hideously deformed crones. Because of their appearance, some people think hags are just old women with dangerous and evil magical powers, but such misconceptions are foolish. Ignorant folk make terrible assumptions about harmless wise women living solitary lives, and those who would hunt a hag underestimate the depths of their quarry's evil. Some would-be heroes doubt themselves, and whole communities can turn against a woman who could be an ally.

Hags revel in such confusion. Above all, they wish to corrupt and twist all that is good until it breaks. People, animals—anything can be a target for a hag's manipulations. Some say even the land around a hag's lair changes in response to her evil.



### HISTORY & LEGEND

Nearly every culture has legends of hags or creatures like them. Some believe they are the kin of the fey, but the spirits of nature passionately refute such tales. Primitive and monstrous races sometimes worship hags, but such devotion is usually created by magic or after generations of domination through fear.

Scholars disagree on hags' true origins, but many hags around the world share a common belief in a dark patron. They claim to be blessed with their vile gifts by a powerful entity, which they call "Byora." Byora is a hidden deity who cannot or will not grant spells to her priests. But the hags believe that when she once again turns her gaze upon the world, Byora will make them masters of all. Fortunately, scholars have found no evidence that Byora exists and propose that she is merely part of a shared fantasy created and propagated by hags.



Hags have haunted the lands of Terrallien since before the arrival of settlers in 3684 OR. They harassed the settlers, but didn't become a real problem until 3764 OR, when the Black Beast Coven seized control of the Dread Marsh and surrounding area. They terrorized the region for nearly 20 years until a band of heroes entered the marsh and fought the creatures in their own lair. Only Sir Cyphus Parke survived that campaign. In 3784 OR, two years after he and his friends broke the coven, he used the treasures he found in the Dread Marsh to fund construction of Hagwatch Tower, the headquarters of a knightly order dedicated to defending the people of Threll against hags and their minions and, especially, against the formation of another hag coven.

The land has seen many changes in the centuries that followed, but the Knights of Hagwatch Tower continue to stand guard against evil. They learn to identify and destroy hags, but also fight other monsters when there are no hags to be found. Hagwatch Knights are known as grim guardians of civilization. They share what they know, help the people protect themselves, but trust no one. Hags are deceitful and always seek to destroy, especially those who oppose them.

## ECOLOGY


Hags are found in just about any part of the world. They live alone, unless they are part of a coven, but also prefer to live close enough to civilization to spread corruption and fear. Though they differ in size, appearance, and other characteristics, all hags have certain characteristics in common.

All hags look like terrifyingly ugly old women, though they are larger than most humans and live far longer. Some hags look less human than others, but many enjoy using their appearance to fool others and delight in frightening their prey by revealing their true nature at just the right moment. Most hags can magically change their appearance, making themselves look like normal old women or even beautiful ladies. Hags might use disguises to live among common folk, enjoying their handiwork up close as they corrupt the community from within. This can be dangerous for the hag, however, because certain magic can pierce her disguise.

All hags also have the ability to see in the dark. This makes them excellent hunters and gives them an advantage over their favorite prey, humans. Although some hags have the power to steal souls, all hags are man-eaters. There are many kinds of hags, but the most common are green hags, sea hags, and annis hags.

**Green Hags:** Rumored to be descended from a corrupted nature spirit, green hags are the most common among their hideous sisters. Dwelling in swamps and bogs near towns or villages, they often pass themselves off as wise women and offer potions and other magical aid in exchange for specific items or favors, which are usually far more costly than the paltry magic the hag provides. Hags have the innate spell-like abilities to change their appearance, breathe under water, understand and speak any language, make themselves invisible, and send messages to others on the wind. They can also imitate the sounds of animals of the swamp and forest. Most dangerous, however, is that a green hag's very touch can drain her enemies' strength until they cannot even move to defend themselves.





**Sea Hags:** Though not nearly as common as green hags, sea hags threaten the communities along Threll's coastlines often enough that people there move carefully along the docks and jetties, always looking out for dark shapes, that might be a sea hag preparing to attack. They are careful not to look too closely, however, for sea hags are so hideous that even looking at one can drain a person's strength. Not only that, but her gaze can carry the power of the evil eye. Evidence suggests that there are sea hags who dwell within the fresh or brackish waters of Threll's rivers, though none have confirmed such tales.

**Annis Hags:** Stronger and more physically powerful than their sisters, annis hags, sometimes called black hags because of their iron-like skin, are the third most common of the creatures to trouble the people of Threll. Their rarity is countered by the fact that annis hags are the most violent of their kind. Annis hags can change their appearance like green hags, but also have the ability to create a thick cloud of fog around themselves, which they use to disorient foes before attacking with their vicious claws.

One special power claimed by all hags is their strength in numbers—particularly if that number is three. When three hags of any type gather, they can form a coven, which grants them the ability to combine their magical powers and cast vile spells or conduct evil rituals. A coven of hags can change the weather, create zombies, gain visions of the past, present, or future, glean knowledge from beings outside of the Material Plane, and work other dark magic to terrorize the lands around their lair.

## FEARFUL WHISPERS

Most villages have tales of “old women of the wood” that parents use to keep children from venturing too far or being too trustful of strangers. Some of those tales are based on actual events or people in the village's history. While few of those tales come from encounters with actual hags, some of them do.

**Dark Chessa:** Those who fish the waters of the Elverin Bay spin tales of a sea witch whose skin is a mottled greenish brown and slimy, like that of a great eel. Most discount the stories, but abandoned boats sometimes wash up on the shores around Elverin Bay, and fishermen pound the water with oars or bowhooks before looking over the side to gather traplines, just to make sure they don't accidentally meet the hag's gaze.

**The Coldmere Witch:** The swamp just upriver from the Riverside-Corbin crossing of the Imlenite River has always been a strange place. Even in mid-Summer, when the rest of Threll swelters in the heat, the Coldmere's plants still have a rime of frost on them until well after sunrise. Many say that the swamp is claimed by a hag whose magic is as cold as her cruel heart, but no one has yet determined the true cause of the swamp's unnatural chill.

**Redclaw Annie:** The people of Riverside scare each other with tales of a monster that stalks the woods and streams of Durstab's Fen. They say a hag, whose massive talons are always red, stalks hunters and fishermen in the area. Some claim she was responsible for the tragedy at Bladefell Manor many years ago.



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# The Thieves' Den



# TO CATCH A THIEF



Lord Mayor Wolfe of Port Fairglade has discovered that someone hired the notorious thieves' guild, the Elverin Skulk, to steal a valuable statue from his private museum. The nobleman wants to know who the guild's client is, but the only person who knows the secret is the guild's leader, the infamous Fox Prince. The heroes must venture into the monster-infested Umberwood to locate the hidden entrance to the guild's headquarters, but once they find it and try to sneak into his lair, they find that few things are what they appear to be. Can the heroes survive a deadly gauntlet of traps and win the Fox Prince's favor and the help of the prince of thieves?

***The Thieves' Den*** is an adventure for 3rd-level characters. It is part three of *Trail of the Apprentice*, a full campaign made up of 5 interconnected adventure modules for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, which can be played with the standard Pathfinder core rules or the simplified rules presented in the Pathfinder boxed set created just for beginners! The ***Trail of the Apprentice*** saga and all adventures in the the **Legendary Beginnings** line from Legendary Games are designed as exciting adventures suitable for all ages, but specially designed for those new to roleplaying and those on the younger side. Grab this 46-page adventure today and **Make Your Game Legendary!** exciting ways. Make your next family game night Legendary!



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