RANDOM MARSH ENCOUNTERS

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible GM's Resource by David Posener



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Got barely enough time to prepare the module? Want to include cool, evocative random encounters in your games, but just don't have the time to prepare them? Bored of pointless random encounters comprising bands of generic monsters that only seem to exist to attack wandering PCs? Then *Random Marsh Encounters* is for you!

Presenting eight ready-to-use random encounters ranging in EL from 2 - 8 (and 18 stat blocks ranging from CR 1/2 - 8) all suitable for use in any marshland or swamp, *Random Marsh Encounters* takes the pressure off the time-crunched GM, enabling him to concentrate on crafting cool, evocative adventures!



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BONUS MATERIAL

Thank you for purchasing *Random Marsh Encounters*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products. We at Raging Swan are committed to providing first class web enhancements for our products. Visit ragingswan.com to download bonus materials including maps, reorganised stat block listings, additional encounters and more!

ERRATA

We would like to think *Random Marsh Encounters:* is error free and that no mistakes have crept in during design. However, we are realists. So in that spirit, we shall post errata three months after first release on ragingswan.com. We won't correct typos, but we will correct any game mechanic or balance issues that come to light.

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ABOUT THE DESIGNER

David started gaming with the book *Grey Star the Wizard*, circa 1985, back when we eschewed that dice business and goddamn STABBED out random numbers. The next year, he received the D&D Basic Set red box as a birthday present and has been gaming ever since. His GMing style has been likened to a horrible Frankenstein combination of historical epic, gritty survival horror and *Flight of the Concords*-style song-filled whimsy.

He is yet to live down naming a NPC "The Crimea Reaver."

David adores his long-suffering wife and two sons who, frankly, have no idea what he's talking about most of the time. David is based in Sydney, and his work as a Logistics Consultant, much to his disappointment, contains fewer undead-filled warehouses and demon-possessed forklifts than he was led to believe.

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FOREWORD

If you don't count *Caves & Caverns*, this is the third instalment in Raging Swan's *Random Encounters* line of GM'S RESOURCES. Since I started this line, I've used several of the encounters from *Random Woodland Encounters* and *Random Woodland Encounters II* in my own campaign. I've used them to introduce allies to the PCs, enliven otherwise boring journeys and even (accidentally) as the start of an adventure I didn't know I was going to run (it turns out PCs can do unpredictable stuff sometimes!)

In *Random Marsh Encounters*, David Posener has done a great job of coming up with distinctive encounters that your PCs are sure to remember (and that the average time-crunched GM would not have time to create). After all, who else would think of giving a hydra levels of wizard after one of its heads got tangled up in a *headband of vast intellect*? I certainly wouldn't!

We are also trying something new in this instalment in that some of the encounters herein are linked. While the GM can run

the encounters on their own – as nothing more than unrelated events – running them as their own "mini adventure" enables him to add a cool subplot into any adventure taking place in a swamp. I'd love to know what you think of this feature and if you'd like to see similar "mini adventures" in upcoming *Random Encounters*. Personally, I'm planning to use the encounters herein when I run *Dark Oak* for my players; the cool subplot should confuse things nicely!

As always, I hope that you enjoy this supplement and that it improves your game. If you've got some cool stories about the encounters herein, I'd love to hear them – you can drop me a line at creighton@ragingswan.com

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The PCs encounter a sombre cadre of lizardfolk shamans passing through the swamp on a religious pilgrimage. The lizardfolk carry with them their divine patron, a three-inch-long speckled frog, on a bed of soft moss decorated with gold trinkets.

A group of four lizardfolk march in single file on the path ahead, heads bowed reverently. The third in line carries a pile of soft green moss with the exaggerated care normally associated with the transport of a religious relic. A small frog sits atop the moss in resplendent comfort surrounded by golden baubles.

The frog is the bone devil Chanamas, who came out second best after a brief battle with Hassani (Resolute Crone [page 14]) during which the tengu witch used *baleful polymorph* to transform the fiend into a simple frog.

The devil lurked in his amphibious form for six weeks before discovering the Skanakuss tribe of lizardfolk. At first, he communicating telepathically with tribe proclaiming himself a god, and then less diplomatically...by encasing any dissenters to his divinity inside a hemispherical *wall of ice*.

The four Skanakuss lizardfolk adepts who bear Chanamas believe fully that the frog is an all-powerful deity and, under direction from the bone devil, seek to spread their faith to the other lizardfolk and boggard tribes in the swamps.

TACTICS

The lizardfolk do not attack immediately when confronted by the PCs, instead negotiating for safe passage. If pressed about their business, the lizardfolk proclaim the frog as their messiah. Chanamas, for his part, pretends to be nothing more than a simple frog.

If hostilities erupt, three of the cultists immolate the PCs with *burning hands* while the fourth shields Chanamas. On the second and subsequent rounds, the cultists use their claws and bites augmented with *bless*, seeking to engage enemies in melee combat.

Chanamas casts quickened *invisibility* at the instigation of hostilities and takes to the air before encasing enemies in hemispherical *walls of ice*. Chanamas casts *major image* against the final PC not trapped by *walls of ice*, creating an illusion of a giant alligator. Chanamas does not use his *summon* ability while



in frog form, terrified of the damage his fiendish reputation would suffer in the Hells should his fellows learn of his fate.

The lizardfolk fight to the death, but Chanamas flees using *greater teleport* if reduced to less than 20 hit points or if all of his worshippers are slain.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Causeway: A 10-foot high, steeply-sloped causeway provides a path through the swamp. The causeway is built from a pile of stone, each roughly a foot in diameter, overgrown with coarse marsh-grass. Climbing or descending the causeway does not require a Climb check, but is considered difficult terrain (it costs 2 squares of movement to enter each square). The top of the causeway is 10 feet wide, and allows free movement. Creatures at the top of the causeway gain the benefit of higher ground (+1 on attack rolls) against creatures on the causeway's slopes.

Bogs: Bogs stretch for a mile each side of the causeway. It costs 2 squares of movement to

enter a square with a shallow bog; the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

$C\,\text{hanamas}$

Chanamas' malevolent nature has been concentrated by his reduction in stature.

Background: The devil entered the Material Plane through a lost *gate* submerged in a flooded cult temple after it was inadvertently activated by an unfortunate boggard hunter.

LIZARDFOLK CULTISTS (4)

This lizardfolk's body is tattooed with disturbing angular yellow markings which seem to writhe unnaturally. Its claws and teeth are stained black, and its reptilian eyes are glazed. Male lizardfolk adept 2

CR 2 (XP 400)

LE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +3 (+5 with familiar in arm's length), Sense Motive +3 (+5 with familiar in arm's length)

Speed 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +2, Climb +5, Swim +10

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; CMD 14

(+5 natural) Fort +4, Ref +0 (improved evasion), Will +4

hp 22 (4 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +4

Melee claw +4 (1d4+2) and

bite +4 (1d4+2)

Ranged spear (range 20 ft.) +2 (1d8+2/x3)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +7 [+11 casting defensively or grappling]; share spells)

1st-bless, burning hands (DC 12)

0-create water, light, touch of fatigue (DC 11)

Combat Gear spear (3)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ hold breath
Feats Alertness^B, Combat Casting
Skills as above plus Knowledge (planes) +4
Languages Draconic

Gear as above plus spell component pouch, 1d6 sp

LIZARD FAMILIAR

N Tiny magical beast Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +1, Sense Motive +1 Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +10 (+6 jumping), Climb +10, Stealth +14 AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; CMD 7 (+2 Dex, +2 size) Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4 hp 6 (2 HD) Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +1; CMB -5 Melee bite +5 (1d4-4) Abilities Str 3, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 2 Feats Weapon Finesse Languages empathic link Chanamas soon came into conflict with Hassani the witch after catching and torturing one of her adopted children. During the conflict, the tengu crone transformed Chanamas into a frog.

Personality: Chanamas enjoys turning his own worshippers on each other, encouraging murder and violence in his name. Because of the subsequent gradual whittling down of the population, Chanamas requires constant expansion of his sphere of influence.

Mannerisms: The frog form Chanamas inhabits occasionally twitches unconsciously. Chanamas still has not come to terms with his new form and walks unnaturally rather than hops.

Distinguishing Features: In his *polymorphed* form, Chanamas appears as an innocuous white-spotted green frog. Even so, the devil cannot hide his imperious nature.

Development: If the PCs allow Chanamas to expand his influence over the marsh's tribes, he soon becomes undisputed ruler of the area, driving the tribes towards violence and depravity.

CR 5 (XP 1,200)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes: EL 6 (XP 1,600): Remove two lizardfolk cultists. EL 8 (XP 3,200): Add two lizardfolk cultists

CHANAMAS

This tiny, white-speckled frog sits regally atop a bed of moss. Baleful polymorphed bone devil (frog) LE Diminutive outsider (devil. evil. extraplanar. lawful) Init +9; Senses low-light vision, scent, see in darkness; Perception +15, Sense Motive +15 Speed 5 ft., swim 5 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +13 (+5 jumping), Fly +28, Stealth +38, Swim +17 AC 35, touch 23, flat-footed 26; CMD 26 (+9 Dex, +12 natural, +4 size) Immune fire, poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10 Fort +11, Ref +16, Will +7; SR 20 hp 95 (10 HD); DR good/10 Space 1 ft.; Base Atk +10; CMB +7 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +14) Constant—fly At will-dimensional anchor, greater teleport (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), invisibility (self only), major image (DC 17), wall of ice 3/day-quickened invisibility (self only) 1/day—summon (level 4, 1 bone devil, 35%) Abilities Str 13, Dex 29, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 18 SQ baleful polymorphed (CL 9th) Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (invisibility) Skills as above plus Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +16, Spellcraft +16 Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear 1,000 gp worth of gold jewellery

The vicious, warlike kobolds of the Gharndral tribe seek to expand their holdings into the swamplands. These raiders stalks through the mire, plotting to attack the nearest settlement.

A band of four black-scaled, armoured kobolds slink through the mire, escorting a tailless kobold. The disfigured kobold carries a heavy sack, slick with a dark, wet patch, slung over his shoulder.

The tailless leader of the band is Scartail Whort, a siege engineer and woodsman experienced in executing raids on unsuspecting towns. Scartail's modus operandi is a devious form of biological warfare. Assisted by cunning traps, the Gharndral capture trolls indigenous to their lands and slowly dismember them until all that remains is a still-regenerating head. Scartail carries a Small light catapult ensorcelled with *shrink item*, and plans to launch the troll heads into the village during the dead of night. Once inside, the enraged trolls regenerate before slaughtering the unprepared townsfolk.

To prevent the trolls prematurely regenerating, Scartail used Vermin Heart to collect a swarm of tiny, biting spiders, which now share the sack with the heads.

KOBOLD GUARDS (4) CR 1/2 (XP 200)

This fierce, black-scaled kobold warrior is bedecked in ornate armour and carries a large shield marked with harsh draconic runes.

Male kobold fighter 1

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3, Sense Motive +1
 Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; ACP -4; Acrobatics -1 (-5 jumping), Stealth +7

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 20; CMD 13; shield wall

- (+6 armour [mwk breastplate], +3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 shield [large wooden], +1 size)
- **Shield Wall (Ex)** Whenever the kobold is wielding a large shield and is adjacent to an ally using a shield who has this feat, the kobold's shield bonus increases by +2.

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7

Light Sensitivity (Ex) When in an area of bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell the kobold is dazzled (-1 penalty on attack rolls and sight-based Perception checks). hp 11 (1 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +1; CMB +0 Melee short sword +5 (1d4/19-20) Ranged light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +5 (1d6/19-20) Combat Gear bolts (10) Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8 SQ crafty Feats Shield Wall, Weapon Finesse

Skills as above plus Profession (siege engineer) +4

Languages Common, Draconic

Gear as above plus 3d6 gp

TACTICS

Kobolds: The kobold guards form a shieldwall, taking advantage of their Shield Wall teamwork feat. Panicked, Scartail inadvertently drops the sack containing the three troll heads.

Scartail and the kobold raiders flee when they lose three of their number, or if one of the trolls regains its body.

Troll Heads: Each of the troll heads ends up somewhere different when Scartail drops his sack.

- The first head falls into a deep bog. The swamp water extinguishes fires and dilutes acid, so the PCs must retrieve the submerged troll head before they can safety dispatch it.
 Finding the head in the murky water requires a DC 10 Swim check followed by a DC 20 Perception check.
- The second spills free of the sack, but only travels 15 feet before coming to rest in the coarse swamp grass. The head gurgles and spasms while it regenerates on the ground behind the wall of kobold fighters.

SCARTAIL WHORT

This spindly kobold is almost five feet tall and is missing most of its tail. He holds a bulbous burlap sack over his shoulder.

CR 1 (XP 600)

Male kobold ranger 2

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8 (+10 vs. humans), Sense Motive +1 (+3 vs. humans)

Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Stealth +11

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; CMD 11 (+2 armour [leather armour], +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

- Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1
- Light Sensitivity (Ex) When in an area of bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell Scartail is dazzled (-1 penalty on attack rolls and sight-based Perception checks). hp 17 (2 HD)
- Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB -1
 Melee dagger +1 (1d3-2/19-20)
 Ranged light crossbow (range 80 ft.; Far Shot) +5 (1d6/19-20)
 Atk Options favoured enemy (humans [+2])
 Combat Gear bolts (10), sack of three troll heads filled with a spider swarm
 Abilities Str 6, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 8
 SQ crafty, track (+1), wild empathy (+1, -3 vs. magical beasts)
 Feats Far Shot^B, Skill Focus (Profession [siege engineer]), Vermin Heart

Skills as above plus Bluff -1 (+1 vs. humans), Disable Device +4, Escape Artist +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +4, Knowledge (local) +4 (+6 vs. humans), Profession (siege engineer) +10, Survival +6 (+7 tracking, +9 tracking humans)

Languages Common, Draconic

Gear as above plus Small light catapult (under the effects of *shrink item*), 40 gp

The final head remains in the sack along with the writhing, agitated spider swarm. The spider swarm escapes the sack when the PCs investigate it, leaving the third troll head to regenerate while the PCs deal with the swarm.

Free of the biting spiders, the first two heads begin regenerating, and become full trolls when their hit points reach 0. The heads are still conscious (thanks to Diehard), and bite at anything entering their square. If any of the trolls regain their bodies, they randomly attack the nearest creature, be it PC or kobold.

TROLL HEADS (3)

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

This troll's head is severed at the neck and covered in thousands of welts. It wrenches out a gurgling roar of pain.

Male troll

CE Small humanoid (giant)

Init -4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +5, Sense Motive -1

Speed 0 ft.; ACP 0

AC 12, touch 7, flat-footed 12; CMD 14 (+1 size, -4 Dex, +5 natural) Fort +11, Ref -2, Will +3

hp -30 (max 63) (6 HD); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +8

Melee bite (reach 0 ft.) +10 (1d8+5)

Abilities Str 21, Dex 2, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6 Feats Diehard, Endurance, Iron Will Skills as above Languages Giant

If a troll head regenerates to 0 or more hit points, use the stat block below:

TROLLS (3) CR 5 (XP 1,600) This tall creature has rough, green hide. Its hands end in claws and its bestial face has a hideous, tusked under-bite.

CE Large humanoid (giant) Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +8, Sense Motive -1 Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Stealth -2 AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; CMD 22 (+2 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size) Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3 hp 63 (6 HD); regeneration 5 (acid or fire) Space 10 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +10 Melee bite (reach 10 ft.) +8 (1d8+5) plus 2 claws (reach 10 ft.) +8 (1d6+5) Atk Options rend (2 claws 1d6+7)

Rake (Ex) When a troll grapples an opponent it gains two additional claw attacks against the grappled foe. It must begin its turn already grappling to use rake.

Abilities Str 21, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6

Feats Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception) Skills as above plus Intimidate +9

Languages Giant

The trolls and the swarms fight to the death.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Trail: A 10 ft. wide trail wends through the swamp. On the trail, movement is without penalty.

Bogs: Bogs stretch for a mile each side of the trail. It costs 2 squares of movement to move into a square with a shallow bog; the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Deep Bogs: A square that is part of a deep bog has roughly 4 feet of standing water. It costs Medium or larger creatures 4 squares of movement to enter a square with a deep bog, or must swim (DC 10 Swim check). Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a deep bog. Tumbling is impossible in a deep bog.

The water in a deep bog provides cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves)for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 AC, +4 Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a -10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't underwater. Deep bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 4 (XP 1,200): Remove one kobold guard and the first (submerged) troll head from the encounter.

EL 6 (XP 2,400): The troll heads begin the encounter with -15 hp, rather than -30 hp.

SPIDER SWARM	CR 1 (XP 400)
A veritable carpet of tiny black spiders swarms	s toward you.
N Diminutive vermin (swarm)	
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense	30 ft.; Perception
+4, Sense Motive +0	
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatic	s +3 (-1 jumping),
Climb +11, Stealth +15	
AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; CMD –	
(+3 Dex, +4 size)	
Immune critical hits, flanking, mind-affecting	g effects, weapon
damage; Weakness vulnerable to spells of	or effects with an
area (+50% damage)	
Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0	
hp 9 (2 HD)	
Space 10 ft.; Base Atk +1; CMB –	
Melee swarm (reach 0 ft.) (1d6 plus poison	<pre>I [DC 11 {1 save};</pre>
frequency 1 round for 2 rounds; effe	ct 1d2 Str] plus
distraction [nauseated {1 round}; DC 11 ne	egates])
Abilities Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, C	ha 2

FORLORN MOTHER (EL 7; XP 2,400)

In this encounter, the PCs come across a distraught mother weeping over the abduction of her newborn child by the hideous crone, Hassani. Her husband, Tranek, has already left to track down Hassani.

A small wooden cottage, its chimney smoking idly, nestles ahead on a small rise above the swamp's waters. The air is pierced by wracking sobs of agony and grief.

The sobbing emanates from the new mother Griselda, a blackhearted green hag, who lies helplessly in the cottage having delivered a monstrous child only a few minutes before. Griselda is under the effects of *alter self* and appears as a human woman in her late twenties, exhausted and overwhelmed by her ordeal.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

During childbirth, Hassani the witch surprised the couple, cast *sleep* on Tranek (a psychopathic cannibal and the child's father), and abducted the newborn.

Griselda, honestly distraught at the loss of her child, begins the encounter unfriendly to the PCs, but the PCs can use Diplomacy to improve her attitude. The notes below list the information revealed by Griselda and the DC to further improve her mood. If the PCs render Griselda hostile (by failing the check to move her from unfriendly to indifferent by 5 or more) she attacks.

- Unfriendly (DC 23): Griselda continues to scream in horror at the loss of her baby and demands the PCs leave.
- Indifferent (DC 18): Griselda shrieks "The witch stole by baby! Get her back! Get her back! Oh, my sweet child."
- Friendly (DC 13): Griselda groans at the PCs "Hassani took her. Please help us." She then explains that Hassani is an evil witch living deep in the swamps who steals children. She also explains that her husband, Tranek, has already plunged into the swamp to retrieve their child.
- Helpful (DC 3): Griselda fully explains their version of events to the PCs, imploring them to search out Hassani and to bring back her little baby girl.

Any attempt to intimidate Griselda automatically fails and renders her hostile. Sense Motive is of little help here, as Griselda is honest in her grief. The PCs may make a Perception check against Griselda's enhanced Disguise modifier of +29 to reveal her true nature.

TACTICS

Griselda alternates her turns between using *invisibility* and clawing her enemies, targeting spellcasters first. If forewarned of battle, she applies her poison and casts *invisibility* and waits in ambush. Griselda uses Greater Dirty Trick to blind enemies.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Cottage: The couple's cottage consists of two rooms:

- Outer Room (Kitchen/Living Area): This room has a wooden table and two chairs, and is heated by a spluttering fire, on which sits a cauldron of boiling water.
 - Inner Room (Bedroom/Bathroom): This room has a bed and a newly constructed wooden cot, complete with tiny sets of unworn clothes.

A DC 25 Perception check reveals a shallow bone-pit filled with humanoid bones just outside the bedroom window – the gnawed remains of Griselda's and Tranek's many victims.

Bogs: Shallow bogs surround the cottage in a ring 50 feet away from the building. It costs 2 squares of movement to move into a square with a shallow bog; the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

GRISELDA

Griselda is a ravening monster, snatching and eating travellers

which pass by her cottage. The only exception is her cannibalistic husband Tranek, who has formed an unnatural love for the green hag, which is very much requited, as evidenced by her subsequent pregnancy.

LINKED ENCOUNTERS

This encounter is linked with several other encounters presented in *Random Marsh Encounters*.

- Gnawing Father (page 10): The PCs encounter Tranek, Griselda's husband.
- Resolute Crone (page 14): The PCs discover Hassai's lair.

Background: Griselda has spent her life wandering the swamps, luring and dragging travellers to their dooms. It was lust at first sight when she met a bloody-mouthed Tranek hunkered over the fresh corpse of a halfling traveller.

Personality: The green hag is merciless and cruel, enjoying the suffering of her victims like a well-aired goblet of fine wine. She has quite enjoyed having someone to share her grisly plans and more with. Griselda honestly loves her newborn child and will look after it lovingly if it is returned to her. This, however, entails teaching it to be just like her parents.

Mannerisms: Griselda unconsciously licks her lips when talking to delicious-looking humanoid morsels.

Distinguishing Features: Among other numerous blights, the green hag's natural form is covered head-to-toe with thumbsized yellow pustules.

Development: Griselda is exhausted when the PCs first encounter her. She recovers normally from her ordeal (fatigued

GRISELDA CR 7 (XP 2,400) This human woman is sweating profusely and writhing in discomfort. Her plain features are flushed with the exertions of recent child-birth.

Female green hag rogue (poisoner) 4

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

- Init +3; Senses darkvision 90 ft.; Perception +16, Sense Motive +16
- Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; ACP 0; Escape Artist +10, Stealth +19, Swim +31
- AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; CMD 32; uncanny dodge (+3 Dex, +8 natural)
- Fort +8, Ref +13 (evasion), Will +7; SR 16

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +12; CMB +19 (+23 dirty trick)

- Melee 2 claws +2 (1d4+7 plus weakness plus 1d6 rend plus Large scorpion venom [DC 17; freq. 1/rnd. for 6 rnds. {1 save}; 1d2 Str damage]) or
- Melee touch +19 (greater weakness [2d6 Strength damage {DC 17 Fortitude negates}])
- Atk Options Combat Expertise, Greater Dirty Trick, poison use (swift poison), sneak attack (+2d6 or powerful sneak [-2 attack, +2d8 damage]), rend (+1d6)
- Eldritch Claws (Ex) Griselda's claws are considered magic and silver for overcoming damage reduction.
- Greater Dirty Trick (Ex) Griselda does not provoke attacks of opportunity when performing a dirty trick. Whenever Griselda succeeds on a dirty trick, the penalty lasts for 1d4 rounds plus 1 round for every 5 by which her attack exceeds the target's CMD.
- Poison Use (Ex [move]) Griselda cannot accidentally poison herself when applying poison.
- Weakness (Su) Griselda's claws sap strength from those she strikes. Each time Griselda hits a foe with her claw attack, the victim takes 2 points of Strength damage (DC 17 Fortitude resists). Alternatively, Griselda can attempt to inflict even greater weakness on a foe by making a touch

after one hour; rested after eight hours) if the PCs leave the cottage and subsequently return. If the PCs return her child, she is overjoyed - a state which lasts about a minute before she considers whether to make them her next meal. Ultimately, however, she bestows her mercy upon them. If returned, the child is safe in her hands, but almost certainly grows up to be a monster in her own right.

If the PCs refuse to help her recover her baby, she flies into a boiling rage and attacks.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Note that the DC of this encounter assumes the PCs fight Griselda when she is rested.

EL 6 (XP 1,600): Use Griselda's exhausted stat block.

EL 8 (XP 3,200): Apply the advanced creature template to Griselda (+2 on all rolls [including damage]; +4 DC for special abilities; AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 22; CMD 30; hp 119).

attack-this variant requires a standard action, and cannot be attempted in the same round she makes claw attacks. The opponent touched must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 2d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Special Actions mimicry

Mimicry (Ex) Griselda can imitate the sounds of almost any animal found near her lair.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

Constant—pass without trace, tongues, water breathing

At will-alter self, dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 13), invisibility, pyrotechnics (DC 15), tree shape, whispering wind

Combat Gear Large scorpion venom (6)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16

- SQ master poisoner, rogue talents (powerful sneak, swift poison)
- Feats Combat Expertise, Eldritch Claws, Greater Dirty Trick, Great Fortitude, Improved Dirty Trick, Rending Claws, Weapon Focus (claws)
- Skills as above plus Bluff +19, Disguise +19, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Spellcraft +8

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant

When exhausted, Griselda has the following statistics:

CR 6 (XP 1,600) Init +0 Escape Artist +7, Stealth +16, Swim +28 AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; CMD 28 (+8 natural) **Ref** +10 CMB +16 (+20 dirty trick) Melee 2 claws +20 (1d4+4 plus weakness plus 1d6 rend plus poison) or Melee touch +16 (greater weakness)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 10

hp 93 (13 HD)

Tranek can be used as the doting, murderous husband of Griselda the hag (Forlorn Mother [page 8]) searching for his abducted baby, or as a stand-alone encounter in which case he is simply searching for prey.

When the PCs encounter Tranek, read:

Here, a bare-chested human man is swiftly hewing down a twisted mangrove with a shining axe. Each heavy blow retorts like a peal of thunder before echoing like a ghost in the mists.

Tranek is not a fool, and is reluctant to attack a small band of well-armed adventurers. He hails the party when he spots them, and offers them a share of his meagre supplies.

TACTICS

During the encounter, Tranek attempts to lure single PCs out of sight of the rest of the group so that he can murder them quietly and then feast on their flesh. He asks one of the group to help him fetch water for a meal, tells a scholar of a rare herb he has discovered nearby, or other such falsity.

If a PC is lured away by Tranek, hand the isolated PC the following note, and proceed to describe the ensuing battle to the group as a "crocodile attack" to match Tranek's cover story (if he returns without the PC).

Once you are out of earshot of your companions, Tranek, growling like a ravenous animal, swings at you with his wicked axe. Please refer to your target as "the crocodile" to match his cover story should he defeat you.

In battle Tranek uses his ranger's focus ability on the first two enemies he engages, hoping to quickly finish them off. He uses Power Attack every round, as he takes no penalty to attack rolls due to Furious Focus. If alone, Tranek stabilises a dying opponent for later enjoyment.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Bogs: The battlefield is composed of viscous, sticky mud covered with brackish water. It costs 2 squares of movement to

LINKED ENCOUNTERS

This encounter is linked with several other encounters presented in *Random Marsh Encounters*.

- Forlorn Mother (page 8): The PCs encounter Tranek's wife, Griselda, a green hag rogue.
- Resolute Crone (page 14): The PCs discover Hassai's lair.

enter a square with a shallow bog; the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Heavy Undergrowth: Dense thorn bushes and other tangled growths make movement through these areas difficult. It costs 4 squares of movement to enter such a square. It is impossible to run and charge through heavy undergrowth. Characters in heavy undergrowth gain concealment (30% miss chance) and a +5 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks.

Light Mist: A light mist blankets the swamp. Creatures 20 feet away have concealment (20% miss chance).

TRANEK

CR 3 (XP 600)

This man is covered in sweat and grime from a day of labour. His calloused hands swing a well-worn axe.

Male human ranger (guide) 4

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2 (+4 in swamps); Senses Perception +8 (+10 in swamps), Sense Motive +1

Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Stealth +9 (+11 in swamps), Swim +11

- AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; CMD 20 (+4 armour [mage armour], +2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge])
- Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2

hp 30 (4 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +8

Melee +1 greataxe (Furious Focus, Power Attack [-0/+6]) +9 (1d12+7/x3)

Ranged throwing axe (range 10 ft.) +6 (1d6+4)

Atk Options Cleave, Furious Focus, ranger's focus

- **Furious Focus (Ex)** Each turn when using Power Attack, Tranek does not suffer the -2 penalty on his first attack when wielding his greataxe (included above).
- **Ranger's Focus (Ex [swift; 2/day])** Tranek focuses on a single enemy until it is reduced to 0 hp or surrenders or until he designates a new target. He gains +2 on attack and damage rolls against this target.

Special Actions terrain bond (swamp)

- **Terrain Bond (Swamp; Ex)** While in a swamp, Tranek grants allies that can see and hear him a +2 bonus on initiative checks and Perception, Stealth and Survival skill checks. Additionally, when travelling with him, his allies leave no trail.
- **Combat Gear** potions of mage armour (2), potions of cure light wounds (2), throwing axes (4)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

SQ favoured terrain (swamp), track (+2), weapon style (twohanded), wild empathy (+3, -1 vs. magical beasts)

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Endurance^B, Furious Focus, Power Attack^B

Skills as above plus Bluff +3, Craft (woodworking) +7, Survival +8 (+10 tracking or in swamps)

Languages Common

Gear as above plus 25 sp, miscellaneous traveller's gear

TRANEK

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Tranek is a psychopathic cannibal, driven from civil society into the depths of the swamp. He is deeply in love with the green hag Griselda, and plans to raise their monstrous children to share their degenerate appetites.

Background: Tranek fled the squalid city of his birth soon after his first taste of human flesh at the age of twelve. He has subsisted in the swamps ever since.

Personality: Tranek is surly, violent and unrepentantly malevolent. He, however, loves Griselda and his child unconditionally.

Mannerisms: Tranek has a perpetually furrowed brow and a lop-sided sneer.

Distinguishing Features: Tranek is missing three teeth from his lower-left jaw.

DEVELOPMENT

When the PCs first encounter, Tranek he is indifferent toward them, although very angry because of his child's abduction. The PCs can try and alter his attitude with Diplomacy. PCs offering to help him rescue his child gain a +4 circumstance bonus on all such checks.

Hostile (DC 24): Tranek decides the PCs are in league with Hassai. He attacks, screaming at them to return his child.

Unfriendly (DC 19): Tranek believes the PCs are secretly laughing at him. He becomes very belligerent.

Indifferent (DC 14): Tranek explains the situation and warns the PCs to stay out of his way.

Friendly (DC 9): Tranek asks the PCs to help him retrieve his child. He can offer nothing but his thanks.

Helpful (DC -1): As friendly, but Tranek also shares some useful information about the surrounding area (as determined by the GM and the adventure at hand).

If the PCs accompany Tranek to Hassai's lair (page 14) and aid him in retrieving his child, he manages to keep his psychopathic, cannibalistic urges under control. He allows the PCs to leave and returns to his wife. If, however, the PCs work out what is really going on, he flies into a rage and attacks in a desperate attempt to save his child.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 2 (XP 400): Apply the young creature template to Tranek (+2 on all Dex-based rolls, -2 on all other rolls; hp 22).

EL 4 (XP 800): Apply the advanced creature template to Tranek (+2 on all rolls [including damage], AC 21, touch 7, flat-footed 18; CMD 24; hp 38). The PCs discover an old battlefield, strewn with the rusting detritus of the fallen.

A sprawl of rusting weapons and armour mixes with a tangle of shattered bones, like a twisted carrion-bird's nest built of broken valour. Mist wreaths the area.

Two creatures, the invisible stalker Aelethafel and the will-o'wisp Malegar, live here and prey on travellers and looters. When the pair become aware of intruders, they put their clever deception into action.

As you survey the ancient carnage, a hint of movement in a deep, boggy area catches your eye. With surprising swift, but jerky, movement an empty suit of ornate, rusting scale mail and great helm rises from the mire.

Sensing prey, the two creatures attack immediately.

TACTICS

Aelethafel and Malegardwell invisibly lurk within the suit of armour that rises out of the swamp waters. It is possible the PCs believe the disembodied armour to be a construct or undead creature at first sight. This appearance is exacerbated when Malegar flies off independently of Aelethafel wearing the armour's apparently empty helm. Note that neither creature benefits from its natural invisibility while so clad.

Malegar attacks using Combat Expertise, feinting in combat as often as possible to deny enemies their Dexterity bonus from both his and Aelethafel's attacks.

Aelethafel hammers enemies with his slam attacks until Malegar is injured. Aelethafel then inflicts non-lethal damage with slam attacks to trigger his Enforcer ability to demoralise his enemies, which allows Malegar to feed on their fear. When either creature is reduced to less than half hit points, it retreats to sheds its armour, relying on its natural invisibility to throw off pursuit. The two creatures regroup and redouble their attacks under the aegis of invisibility once their enemies think the danger has passed.

The two creatures flee the area permanently if either is reduced to less than 10 hit points.

NATURAL INVISIBILITY

Aeletafel's and Malegar's natural invisibility gives them a great advantage in battle. This has the following effects:

- +2 bonus on attack rolls against sighted opponents.
- Ignores sighted opponent's Dexterity bonus to AC.
- Opponents have a 50% miss chance.
- To attack either opponent, a PC must first pinpoint their location; see "Invisibility" in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook for more information.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Bogs: The battlefield is composed of viscous, sticky mud covered with brackish water. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square containing shallow bog, and the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Deep Bogs: The battlefield features wide channels of deep bogs. A square that is part of a deep bog has roughly 4 feet of standing water. It costs Medium or larger creatures 4 squares of movement to move into a square with a deep bog, or characters

> can swim (DC 10 Swim check). Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a deep bog.

Tumbling is impossible in a deep bog.

The water in a deep bog provides cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves) for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 AC, +4 Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain improved cover. Creatures with improved cover take a -10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't underwater. Deep bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Foreboding Mists: Thick fog blankets the swamp. The fog obscures all sight beyond 5 feet, including darkvision. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment (20% miss chance).

Field of Slaughter: The remains of over two hundred knights and retainers lie submerged in the swamp. A DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) or Knowledge (history) check identifies this as the site of the Battle of Cindermoor, a vicious skirmish in which two rival human princes fell in bloody slaughter.

Treasure: The PCs can search the site; each Perception check takes one hour:

AELETHAFEL

This empty suit of ornate patinated armour walks of its own accord, filthy brackish water cascading back into the swamp as it strides forward.

CR 7 (XP 2,400)

Male invisible stalker

- N Medium outsider (air, elemental, extraplanar)
- Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12, Sense Motive +12
- Speed 20 ft.; fly 20 ft. (perfect); ACP -3; Fly +18, Stealth +10 (+30 moving, +50 motionless; natural invisibility)
- Natural Invisibility (Ex) This ability is constant—Aelethafel remains invisible at all times, even when attacking. As this ability is inherent, it is not subject to *invisibility purge*. Against foes that cannot pinpoint him, Aelethafel gains a +20 bonus on Stealth checks when moving, or +40 when standing still—these bonuses are included above.

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22; CMD 25

(+6 armour [+1 scale mail], +3 Dex, +6 natural)

Immune paralysis, poison, *sleep*, stunning, critical hits, flanking, precision-based damage

Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +4

hp 87 (7 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +7; CMB +12

Melee 2 slams +12 (2d6+5)

Atk Options Enforcer

Enforcer (Ex) If Aelethafel deals nonlethal damage he can make an Intimidate check (+16) to demoralize his target as a free action. A successful check renders the target shaken for a number of rounds equal to the damage dealt. If the attack was a critical hit, the target is frightened for a round and then shaken as for a normal hit.

Abilities Str 20, Dex 17, Con 24, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 11

- Feats Armour Proficiency (light), Armour Proficiency (medium), Enforcer, Intimidating Prowess
- Skills as above plus Intimidate +16, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Survival +12 (improved tracking)

Improved Tracking (Ex) Aelethafel takes no penalty to Survival checks when tracking and moving at any speed.

Languages Auran, Common

DC	Result	
0-15	Hundreds of sets of human bones and rusted armour	
	clog the field.	
16-20	Muddied gold and tarnished silver trinkets to the value	
	of 300 gp are recovered from the remains.	
21-25	A great banner of rampant manticore, woven with	
	cloth of gold and silk, bearing the heraldic device of	
	Prince Miroslav lies submerged in the mud. The	
	banner, if cleaned and restored, is worth 500 gp	
26+	Prince Thalosamer's blade, Biting Tongue (a +2	
	adamantine bastard sword with a haft and pommel	
	shaped like an open-mouthed viper), lies here clasped	
	in the skeletal hand of its royal owner.	

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 7 (XP 3,200): Remove Malegar from the encounter.

EL 9 (XP 6,400): Add a second will-o'-wisp equal to Malegar.

MALEGAR

CR 6 (XP 2,400)

This hollow sallet hovers silently. The briefest flicker of timid light illuminates the helm, leaving a faint, ghostly skullshaped silhouette.

Will-o'-wisp

CE Small aberration (air)

- Init +10; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14, Sense Motive +2
- Speed fly 50 ft. (perfect; Flyby Attack); ACP 0; Acrobatics +22, Escape Artist +22, Fly +32, Stealth +26 (+36 motionless; natural invisibility)
- **Natural Invisibility (Ex)** Malegar has the ability to extinguish his natural glow as a move action, effectively becoming invisible, as the spell.

AC 27, touch 26, flat-footed 17; CMD 21

(+1 armour [helm], +5 deflection, +10 Dex, +1 size) Immune magic

- **Immunity to Magic (Ex)** Malegar is immune to all spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, except *magic missile* and *maze*.
- Fort +4, Ref +13, Will +8

hp 49 (9 HD); feed on fear

Feed on Fear (Su) Any time Malegar is within 15 feet of a dying creature or creature subject to a fear effect, he gains fast healing 5.

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +6; CMB +1

Melee Touch shock +17 (2d8 electricity)

- Atk Options Combat Expertise (-2 attack, +2 AC), Flyby Attack, Greater Feint
- Abilities Str1, Dex 31, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12

Feats Combat Expertise, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills as above plus Bluff +13

Languages Aklo, Common

Hunkered in the twisted mangroves of the swamp, a sprawling camp of diverse children grow up under the watchful eye of Hassani the tengu witch. Hassani slew and reincarnated these children, all born of evil monsters, into races without genetic predispositions towards evil and works to bring them up free of their dark heritages.

A cluster of wooden lean-tos huddles in this small stand of mangroves. Small, grubby children of all races bawl and play within the camp.

There are 4d6 children in the camp at any time, ranging between newborns (such as the hag child stolen from Griselda [Forlorn Mother, page 8]) and mature adolescents. The children are a random assortment of creatures from the *reincarnate* list.

If the PCs are following Hassani from Griselda's cottage, she is preparing to kill the hag-child, and the PCs encounter her with kukri poised above the infant. Otherwise she intercepts the PCs as they enter the camp.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

Hassani begins the encounter indifferent to the PCs, but the PCs can use Diplomacy to improve her attitude.

If interrupted mid-ritual, she understands what the PCs are likely to infer from the situation, and the DC of the below Diplomacy checks are reduced by 5 as she seeks to explain her motives. If Tranek accompanies the PCs, his presence inflicts a -5 on any Diplomacy checks.

The notes below list the information revealed by Hassani and the DC to further improve her mood.

- Hostile (DC 26): Hassani gives the PCs one more chance to leave. If they do not, she attacks.
- Unfriendly (DC 21): Hassani makes dire threats and tells the PCs they do not understand the situation. She commands them to leave.
- Indifferent (DC 16): Hassani warbles at the PCs, interrogating them as to what they are doing in her camp.
- Friendly (DC 11): Hassani explains that she is "bettering" the children here, caring for them after their parents proved themselves unsuitable.
- Helpful (DC 1): Hassani explains her reincarnation ritual to the PCs, including the act of killing the infants to allow their "rebirth."

Intimidation works normally on Hassani to force her to answer questions. A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check identifies the races of the children as those created with *reincarnate*.

HASSANI

Kind but crabby, Hassani is an ancient tengu matron who believes that all children should have the opportunity to grow up as good creatures without the biological urge towards malevolence and evil.

Background: Hassani has lived her entire seventy-six years in the swamp, ranging about and protecting children from predators and, in recent years, from themselves and the cruelty of their parents.

Personality: Hassani has little time for adults these days, and can be abrupt. She treats her foster children kindly, often warbling nursery rhymes and pulling ridiculous faces to make them smile. She hugs incessantly, and if the PCs assist her in any way they can be assured a plush, feathery embrace.

Mannerisms: Hassani's head is constantly cocking to one side and snapping to focus on new things in her line of sight. In conversation, she often fills pauses with a musical warble (in the same manner as a human might use "ummm" or "errr"), which sounds like a high then low pitched "wallawa, wallawa."

Distinguishing Features: Rather than the usual jet black tengu plumage, Hassani has splashes of white around her face and neck, markings reminiscent of a magpie. Her long beak is hooked wickedly at the point.

Development: If left unchecked, Hassani slays and reincarnate Griselda's hag-child as a halfling and raise the infant as another of her foster children. Hassani does not let the PCs return the hag-child to her murderous parents without a fight, and explains Griselda's true nature to the PCs in defence of her arcane eugenics program.

TACTICS

Hassani has no desire to confront the PCs in combat, and uses spells such as *charm monster, deep slumber, hold person* and *suggestion* to stop the PCs attacking. She does not flee as long as she has children in her care, but casts *fly* to avoid melee as long as possible.

The children flee any battle, rushing to hide in the nearest hovel.

LINKED ENCOUNTERS

This encounter is linked with several other encounters presented in *Random Marsh Encounters*.

- Forlorn Mother (page 8): The PCs encounter Tranek's wife, Griselda, a green hag rogue.
- Gnawing Father (page 10): The PCs encounter Tranek, Griselda's husband.

AREA FEATURES

HASSANI CR 8 (XP 3,200)

This old, shawl-clad woman has the black-and-white head and plumage of a magpie.

Female old tengu witch (wisdom) 9

NG Medium humanoid (tengu)

- Init +5; Senses child-scent, low-light vision; Perception +14 (+16 if Brushtail within arm's reach), Sense Motive +14 (+16 if Brushtail within arm's reach)
- **Child-Scent (Ex)** Hassani gains the scent ability, but only with respect to humanoid children and immature animals. Thus, she could sniff out a child's hiding place or a den of wolf pups, but not the child's parents or the den mother.

Speed 30 ft., swamp hag; ACP 0

Swamp Hag (Sp) While travelling through swamps, mires, bogs and similar terrain, Hassani leaves no trail and cannot be tracked, as the trackless step druid ability. Hassani can walk through mud and even quicksand without impediment.

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; CMD 13

(+4 armour [*mage armour*], +1 deflection [*ring of protection* +1], +1 Dex)

Fort +5 , Ref +6, Will +11

hp 34 (48 with *false life*) (9 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +1

Melee mwk kukri +6 (1d4-3/18-20) and

bite +0 (1d3-3)

- Witch Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +13; share spells) 5th—reincarnate
- 4th—arcane eye, charm monster (DC 20), enervation
- 3rd—deep slumber (DC 19), fly, stinking cloud (DC 17), suggestion (DC 19)
- 2nd—cure moderate wounds, false life, gentle repose, hold person (DC 18), see invisibility
- 1st—charm person (DC 17), command (DC 17), cure light wounds, mage armour, shield of faith
- 0-dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, mending

Combat Gear wand of cure light wounds (19 charges)

Abilities Str 5, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12

- **SQ** familiar (Brushtail), gifted linguist, hexes (child-scent, feral speech, healing, swamp hag, ward), swordtrained
- Feats Alertness^B, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Finesse
- Skills as above plus Heal +15, Linguistics +20, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perform (sing) +5, Spellcraft +16

Languages All except Druidic; empathic link, feral speech

Feral Speech (Su) This hex grants Hassani the ability to speak with and understand the response of any animal as if using *speak with animals*, though each time she uses the hex, she must decide to communicate with either amphibians, birds, fish, mammals or reptiles, and can only speak to and understand animals of that type. The witch can make herself understood as far as her voice carries. This hex does not predispose the animal toward the witch in any way.

Gear as above plus cloak of resistance +2, 30 gp, 232 sp

The area has several features of note:

Screeching Children: The continual riot of children playing increases the DC of sound-based Perception checks by 3 per 10 ft., not 1.

Bogs: Shallow bog surrounds the camp. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square with a shallow bog, and the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Barricade of Fallen Trees: Hassani has surrounded the camp with a barricade of felled trees. Weeds and other noisome grows grow within the barricade.

It costs four squares of movement to enter a barricade square. Alternatively, characters can leap over the barricade (DC 10 Acrobatics check) or clamber over it (DC 10 Climb check). The barricade provides cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves). Characters in the barricade gain concealment (30% miss chance).

Massive Mangroves: These huge trees (AC 3, hardness 5, hp 600; DC 15 Climb check) fill an entire square. They provide cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves).

Hovels: A creature inside a hovel (AC 4, hardness 2, hp 40) gains full concealment (50% miss chance). Each hovel contains the very bare essentials of life – odds and ends of spare clothing, heaps of bracken and other soft vegetation serving as beds, a few pitiful, crude toys and so on.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 7 (XP 2,400): Hassani has expended all her 4th- and 5thlevel spells stealing the child from Griselda.

EL 9 (XP 4,800): Apply the advanced creature template to Hassani (+2 on all rolls [including damage]; AC 20, touch 16, flatfooted 18; CMD 17; hp 52 [66 with *false life*]).

BRUSHTAIL (MONKEY FAMILIAR) CR -	
N Tiny magical beast	
Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +10, Sense Motiv	e
+10	
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +10, Climb +10),
Stealth +10	
AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; CMD 10	
(+2 Dex, +2 size)	
Fort +3, Ref +5 (improved evasion), Will +7	
hp 17 (9 HD)	_
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB -2	
Melee bite (reach 0 ft.) +8 (1d4-4)	
Atk Options deliver touch spells	
Abilities Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5	
Feats Weapon Finesse	
Languages empathic link, speak with animals, speak wit master	h

In this encounter, the PCs come across the hydra wizard, Chalos. Chalos can either serve simply as an (unusual) enemy or as a dangerous font of information.

A battered wooden sign stands proudly here, staked into the squelching mud. Messily daubed in bright white chalk are the words "Chalos the Sage". All around, stones and trees bear mysterious spiralling symbols.

When not out hunting for food, Chalos waits in his shallow swamp-home approximately 400 feet from the sign. Chalos prefers to talk to visitors for a while (his other heads are not exactly conversationalists) before sizing them up for a meal. Chalos' swamp consists of a large, roughly circular deep bog measuring 200 ft. across.

Chalos begins the encounter friendly and the PCs can use Diplomacy to improve his attitude. The notes below list the DC to alter his mood.

For every minute the PCs converse with Chalos, the Diplomacy DC increases by 5 as his appetite wars against his desire for conversation. However, if the PCs render him helpful, he does not attack them while the conversation continues.

- Hostile (DC 28): Chalos attacks the PCs, and tries to eat them. His main head continually urges its instinctive brethren to attack.
- Unfriendly (DC 23): Chalos hisses at the PCs, and his heads lash forward menacingly. Chalos will not answer questions and commands the PCs to leave.
- Indifferent (DC 18): Chalos begins to tire of talking to the PCs and demands payment of 100 gp for his trouble. Failure to pay inflicts a -5 penalty on future checks.
- Friendly (DC 13): Chalos happily converses with the PCs and provides free information in his fields of expertise. If he doesn't know an answer, he lies and makes one up (Bluff +3).
- Helpful (DC 3): As friendly, except Chalos doesn't lie when he doesn't know an answer. PCs joking at his lack of knowledge, immediately render him indifferent.

Intimidation works normally on Chalos to force him to answer questions. Chalos is a proud creature, and if the PCs correct Chalos on a point of fact, his attitude immediately falls one step. If the PCs render him helpful (before leaving) and subsequently return, he remembers them. They gain a +5 circumstance bonus on subsequent Diplomacy checks until his attitude becomes indifferent (or worse) toward them.

CHALOS

Chalos sees himself as an all-knowing oracle of knowledge.

Background: Two years ago, Chalos was an ordinary hydra, stalking the swamp in search of food. During one such foray, he came upon and defeated an adventuring band, The Lonely Skulls, and promptly devoured their remains. During the feast, the magical headband of Narkba Thol, the group's wizard, tangled around Chalo's central head and activated, granting the hydra sentience.

From that moment on, he became obsessed with magic and vigorously studied the dead wizard's spellbook eventually becoming a wizard.

Personality: Chalos is an insufferable know-it-all who enjoys pontificating to "lesser" intellects. Fascinated by how things works, he enjoys studying and taking things apart (messily, with his teeth). His other heads often frustrate him, making it difficult to concentrate – something that irritates him immensely.

Chalos suffers from a perverse bombastic verbosity, mimicking a faux erudite nature. Chalos is really only the central head of the hydra; the remaining heads retaining their animallike instincts, much to Chalo's chagrin.

Although he appears as a hydra, he is not intrinsically evil – although those speaking with him may assume otherwise. While he enjoys the fear his appearance often conjures, he finds it annoying as it is hard to prove yourself intellectually superior while your conversation partner is fleeing for its life!

Mannerisms: Chalo's four other heads snake menacingly around their leader, occasionally moving to bite anyone engaging in conversation with the hydra. Chalos frequently has to momentarily suspend conversations to nip and shout at these unruly heads to keep them in line.

Distinguishing Features: Chalos is covered in dark scales ranging from deep green at his heads to a sickly purple on his flanks. He is never without his *headband of intellect* – an ornate golden band (normally worn at a rakish angle).

TACTICS

In battle, Chalos is a straightforward foe, pouncing on the closest enemy and tearing them to pieces. If reduced to less than 10 hp, he casts *obscuring mist* and retreats into the deepest part of the swamp to allow his fast healing to take effect. Once healed, Chalos returns to the fray.

If Chalo's central head is severed, he loses his enhanced intelligence, plunging his Int score back to 2. At this point, Chalos may not cast spells and fights to the death.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Bogs: It costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square with a shallow bog, and the DC of Acrobatics checks in such a square increases by 2. Bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Deep Bogs: A square that is part of a deep bog has roughly 4 feet of standing water. It costs Medium or larger creatures 4 squares of movement to move into a square with a deep bog, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a deep bog. Tumbling is impossible in a deep bog.

The water in a deep bog provides cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex save) for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 AC, +4 Reflex save). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a -10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't underwater. Deep bogs increase the DC of Stealth checks by 2.

Arcane Markings: A successful DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check reveals that the spiral markings on the area's tree and rocks have no arcane significance. These are actually just Chalos' talon-carved doodles from his frequent bouts of boredom, inspired by some of the arcane writings in Narkba Thol's spellbook.

Treasure: Chalos conceals his spellbook in a dry hollow masked by a fallen tree. A DC 20 Perception check reveals the hollow which also contains 243 gp in a muddy sack.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 5 (XP 1,200): Chalos has permanently lost two heads in the battle with Narkba Thol and The Lonely Skulls. Remove two of Chalos' bite attacks. He has charred stumps where these heads once grew.

EL 7 (XP 1,600): Apply the giant creature template to Chalos (+2 on all Str- and Con-based rolls, -1 on all Dex-based rolls; hp 84.)

CHALOS

CR 6 (XP 1,600)

This massive five-headed serpent wears an ornate golden band around its central head.

Male advanced hydra wizard (diviner) 2

N Huge magical beast

- Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +11
- Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; ACP 0; Swim +22
- AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 20; CMD 28 (can't be tripped) (+4 armour [mage armour], +4 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)
- Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +7
- hp 70 (7 HD); fast healing 5; hydra traits, regenerate head
- **Fast Healing** Chalos' fast healing is equal to his current number of heads. His fast healing only affects damage inflicted on his body.
- **Hydra Traits (Ex)** Chalos can be killed by severing all of his heads or slaying his body. Any attack that is not an attempt to sever a head affects the body, including area attacks or attacks that cause piercing or bludgeoning damage. To sever a head, an opponent must make a sunder attempt with a slashing weapon targeting a head. A head is considered a separate weapon with hardness 0 and 7 hit points. To sever a head, an opponent must inflict enough damage to reduce the head's hit points to 0 or less. Severing a head deals 7 points of damage to the hydra's body. Chalos can't attack with a severed head, but takes no other penalties.
- Regenerate Head (Ex) When a head is destroyed, two heads regrow in 1d4 rounds. Chalos cannot have more than twice his original number of heads at any one time. To prevent new heads from growing, at least 5 points of acid or fire

damage must be dealt to the stump (a touch attack to hit) before they appear. Acid or fire damage from area attacks can affect stumps and the body simultaneously. Chalos doesn't die from losing his heads until all are cut off and the stumps seared by acid or fire.

Space 15 ft.; Base Atk +6; CMB +12

Melee 5 bites (reach 10 ft.) +13 (1d8+8)

Atk Options Arcane Strike, Combat Reflexes, pounce

- Pounce (Ex [full-round]) When Chalos charges, he can make a full attack.
- Special Actions diviner's fortune
- Diviner's Fortune (Sp [standard; 5/day]) Chalos can give a touched creature a +1 insight bonus on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks and saving throws for 1 round.

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

1st—comprehend languages, jump, mage armour, obscuring mist

0—detect magic, detect poison, ghost sound, prestidigitation, read magic

Abilities Str 23, Dex 18, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 17

SQ arcane bond (*amulet of mighty fists*)

- **Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Reflexes, Eschew Materials, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll^B
- Skills as above plus Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Spellcraft +11

Languages Common, Draconic

- **Gear** as above plus amulet of mighty fists +1, headband of vast intellect +4
- Spellbook (opposition schools enchantment and evocation) 2nd—acid arrow, detect thoughts, scorching ray; 1st comprehend languages, feather fall, jump, mage armour, obscuring mist; 0—all

WANDERER (EL 2; XP 600)

In this encounter, the PCs meet Bral, a warden of the marshlands. Bral often wanders the marsh, keeping it (and its denizens) safe from encroaching influences. The PCs can encounter Bral as he keeps his vigil or he can come to their aid (rushing to investigate sounds of

battle) if their need is great. Initially, Bral is indifferent to the PCs;

they can use Bluff, Intimidate or Diplomacy to modify his attitude.

- Hostile (DC 33): Bral decides they are a threat. He harries them over the next few days, firing the occasional arrow into their campsite (and so on).
- Unfriendly (DC 28): Bral leaves the group as quickly as possible and does not aid them again.
- Indifferent (DC 23): Bral leaves as quickly as possible, but aids the PCs again, if necessary.
- Friendly (DC 18): He warns them about the hydra/diviner Chalos (page 16) and his unpredictable behaviour.
- Helpful (DC 13): Bral warns them that dangers lurk at the site of the Battle of Cindermoor (page 12). He doesn't know exactly what dwells there, but he tells the PCs several groups of travellers have not returned from searching the battlefield.

Bral

CR 2 (XP 600)

This half-orc male looks like he has been dragged through a hedge backwards. Twigs and leaves are caught in his hair and his clothes and armour are filthy.

Male half-orc ranger (warden) 3

N medium humanoid (human, orc)

- Init +6 (+8 in water, +10 in swamps); Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5 (+7 in water, +9 in swamps), Sense Motive +1
- Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +8, Stealth +13 (+15 in water, +17 in swamps), Swim +6

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; CMD 17

(+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +2 Dex)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

hp 30 (3 HD); orc ferocity

Orc Ferocity (Ex) Once per day, when brought below 0 hit points, Bral can fight on for one more round as if disabled. At the end of his next turn, unless brought above 0 hit points, he falls unconscious and begins to die.

Bral

This half-orc is unused to company.

Background: Bral is a 20-year-old, second-generation half-orc. He has never travelled to anything bigger than a village and still dwells with his parents (a pair of elderly druids) living deep in the swamp.

> Personality: Bral loves his own company and the beauty of the marshlands. Nevertheless, he aids those in trouble, although once the danger has past he is a near-mute. In truth, he is intensely shy and introverted. He loves animals and would have made a good druid, but his orcish heritage led him to become a ranger. He takes any danger to his beloved marshlands very seriously.

> Mannerisms: When excited or fighting, Bral dribbles uncontrollably. Distinguishing Features: Bral's ears are unusually pointed for a half-orc – perhaps hinting at some elven heritage in his muddled family tree. He smells terrible.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 5 (XP 1,200): Apply the young creature template to Bral (+2 on all Dex-based rolls, -2 on all other rolls; hp 24).

EL 7 (XP 1,600): Apply the advanced creature template to Bral (+2 on all rolls [including damage]; AC 19, touch 16, flatfooted 17; CMD 21; hp 36).

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +5
Melee mwk spear +6 (1d8+3/x3)
Ranged mwk light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +6 (1d8/19-20)
Combat Gear bolts (20), potion of cure moderate wounds
Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ favoured terrain (swamp [+4], water [+2]), track (+1),

weapon familiarity, wild empathy (+3, -1 vs. magical beasts)

Feats Endurance^B, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth)

- Skills as above plus Intimidate +2, Knowledge (geography) -1 (+1 in water, +3 in swamps), Survival +9 (+10 tracking, +12 tracking in water, +14 tracking in swamps; plus live in comfort)
- Live in Comfort (Ex) Bral can take 10 on any Survival check involving his favoured terrains, even when in danger or distracted. If he is not in danger or distracted, he can take 20 even if the check has a penalty for failure.

Languages Common, Orc

Gear as above plus bedroll, backpack, rations (3 days), water flask, 12 gp

Random Marsh Encounters includes all necessary stat blocks; these notes explain how to read them. Unless otherwise noted, all listed scores include all the creature's normal modifiers. Stat blocks appear in four sections: basic, defensive, offensive and supplemental.

BASIC

- Name, CR and XP: The monster's name appears first followed by its CR and how many experience points it is worth. If more than one creature is encountered, a bracketed number lists how many appear.
- **Appearance**: The GM can read aloud or paraphrase this section. If a picture depicts the creature, this section may be omitted.
- Sex, Race, Class and Level: If the monster has class levels these appear here along with its race and sex. The first noted class is the creature's favoured class.
- Alignment and Type: The creature's abbreviated alignment and its type (including applicable subtypes).
- **Init and Senses**: This creature's initiative modifier appears before any special senses (such as scent or darkvision) and the creature's Perception and Sense Motive scores. If the creature has special Perception-based abilities, such as trapfinding or stonecunning, these appear here.
- **Speed**: The creature's modified land speed appears first along with any other relevant speeds (such as climb or fly). If the creature's base land speed is different to its modified speed this is also listed.
- ACP and Movement Skills: ACP presents the creature's normal armour check penalty modifier. If the creature's Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Stealth or Swim modifier differs from the relevant ability modifier minus its armour check penalty, these skills appear here.

DEFENSIVE

- **AC**: The creature's normal, touch and flat-footed AC along with its CMD; additionally this section lists any defensive powers or abilities that affects the creature's AC.
- **Immune, Resist and Weaknesses:** If the creature has immunity, resistance or a vulnerability to an effect or condition it appears here.
- Fort, Ref and Will: The creature's saving throw modifiers along with any conditional modifiers and defensive powers (such as evasion) and spell resistance appear here.
- HP: The creature's full, normal hit points along with the number of hit dice it possesses. A bracketed hit point total indicates that the creature is injured. If the creature has damage reduction or hardness it appears here.

OFFENSIVE

- Space, Base Atk and CMB: The creature's space, base attack bonus and CMB.
- **Melee**: This section lists a creature's melee attacks. If the attack has a reach that is not 5 ft. it is listed here. This line also lists any specific feats a creature can use with the attack (for

example Power Attack), but the effects of these feats are not included in the attack's statistics. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.

- **Ranged**: This section lists the creature's ranged attacks. It always includes the attack's range. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. This line also lists any specific feats a creature can use with the attack (for example Point Blank Shot), but the effects of these feats are not included in the attack's statistics. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.
- Atk Options: This section lists any abilities or feats that can affect more than one of the creature's attacks, unless it has already been presented with the creature's specific attacks. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in depth.
- **Special Actions:** This section lists any useful abilities that a creature could use in battle. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in more depth.
- **Spells and Spell-Like Abilities**: The creature's caster level, along with its concentration modifier and domains appears in brackets before the main spell listing. If one or more of the creature's spells require a touch attack, the relevant attack bonus is included. Spells available appear in reverse order from highest to lowest level. Spells denoted ^D are domain spells. If applicable, a spell's DC is also provided.
- **Combat Gear**: This section lists any combat-related equipment the creature possesses.

SUPPLEMENTAL

- Abilities and Special Qualities: These sections list the creature's ability scores and any special qualities that do not appear anywhere else in its stat block.
- Feats: An alphabetical listing of all the creature's feats.
- Skills and Languages: These sections list any skills the creature possesses that have not already appeared in the stat block and all languages spoken or understood. Any language-based special abilities also appear here.
- **Gear**: This section lists any gear not already listed in the creature's stat block. This section hardly ever contains weapons or armour as they usually appear in the relevant sections above.
- **Spellbook**: The contents of the creature's spellbook and its opposition schools.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities appear in the section to which they are best suited. Thus, offensive abilities appear with a creature's attacks while defensive ones appear with its other defences. Full writeups of irrelevant powers (such as those that could not affect combat) are omitted. The effects of abilities that factor into a creature's normal attacks or defences have already been included in the relevant calculations.

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