

Old Frog and Toad

Trade caravans are being attacked on the main road. Usually this just means more guards are needed, and that is a call any young band of adventurers will respond to. Keep an eye out as there is more than one band of trouble-makers out there.

A 2-hour adventure for 2nd level characters
For the 5th edition of the world's most popular role playing game

by G Christopher Dyson



Old Frog and Toad

Level of play

This module is designed for a group of 4-6 first or second level characters in a balanced party.

It could be adapted for a stronger or weaker group. Suggested modifications are in margins.

It is best to do the first encounter as listed and modify following encounters based on the results of that fight,

Adaptability

If played as a League of Rats game, this module would be set outside the [Golden Kingdom](#) town of Vollenchia. A mostly human city on the southern coast with a long stretch of elven lands to the north west, dwarven hills to the north and gnoll pride lands to the south.

It is a fairly dry city, so long periods of rain are unusual.



The module could be adapted to be set in any location such as a city near deep water in realms that have been forgotten.

It could also be placed in any large city in a world of your own device.

Tip:

Locations can be pretty vague. Some gamers love the detail of fully developed worlds with vast published histories; these can be great, but they come with a big disadvantage: Despite all the ideas they present, they limit creativity for player characters, so when building a world, leave lots of it unexplained.

Background

There has been an unusually long period of rain around Vollenchia with less trade caravans on the roads. This has led to less pickings for the local banditry.

Meanwhile Tippitz, a frogfolk shaman has had a vision and taken leadership of a part of his tribe. He has led a number of misguided warriors to an old temple which he aims to unlock through sacrificing halflings. To this end, the band has been attacking caravans and kidnapping halflings. They have taken a gnome as well, by mistake.

Far to the west of Vollenchia, trouble is stirring in the form of an orc military force. This is still unknown in the east, but a shipment of their weapons has been captured by bandits who are still on the hunt for more treasure.

Outline

The module begins with the party being hired to guard a caravan and find out who has been attacking them.

In part 1 of the module, characters will get the job and learn some background

Part 2 is also the first part of the Sound of Drums storyline. It should fit seamlessly here as nothing more than a red herring or random encounter.

In Part 3, the characters will find clues to the location of their quarry and track them to Frog Hollow.

In Part 4, the characters will be in position to attack the froglings' camp and rescue the prisoners. This takes place under an old ziggurat in a place called Frog Hollow.

Part 1 Anyone will do

Read Aloud:

The Old Crow tavern sits not far from the west gate of the city. There is a large square used by travelers and merchants to assemble their wagon trains. This has always been a good source of business for the Crow. It also means the Crow is a good place to come looking for work.

On this particular rainy day, a Halfling trader has come to the tavern looking for help. After asking around for a few minutes, he makes his way to your table.

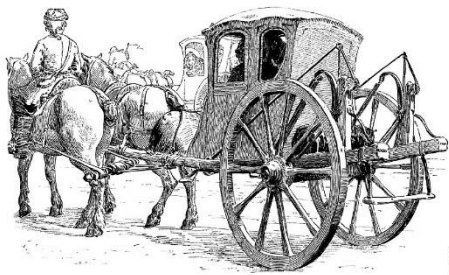
“Good morning. I’m told you may be in the market for some work. There has been some trouble on the road; we’ve had a few wagons attacked. Now I could just hire more guards and hope that helps, but I’d rather pay a bit more and get the job done right. That means rooting the problem out.

The Halfling is named Jondath Footfall. He manages a group of wagons used to do deliveries around Vollenchia. He usually employs caravan guards for a pittance. Sometimes they do the job, sometimes they don’t. Usually they will defend the wagon but not pursue the problem.

Right now, he is concerned about some shipments that were attacked. The last one was an empty wagon returning to town. He has lost three Halfling drivers and a gnome in the last two days.

Jondath is offering 50gp as a reward for stopping the attacks – specifically the attacks in which halflings are being targeted. If pushed, he will increase the offer to 60gp (he won’t even consider the 50gp each the players ask for – just ignore that.)

He suggests you talk to the survivors of the last attack and then choose one of his wagons to ride with on its next trip.



Tip:

When hiring PCs for anything, they will always ask for at least twice the offered sum. If you offer a lump sum, they will ask for that each. Sometimes they will forget to ask for money altogether, but they will never accept what is offered.

If they want more, do not be afraid to call their bluff. The employer can turn and walk away and then you sit they looking blankly at them saying “so now what do you do?” Stay silent for a minute and then ask if they are having fun. Eventually they will get the message.

Do not give them an adventure until they accept that the job offer is a hook and that the adventure itself is the reward. It does not work the other way around.

Accepting the hook is their responsibility, not the DM’s.

Jondath directs the characters to meet with the crew who just returned to town.

There are only two of them: Leroy and Harskin: a human and a tiefling. They will tell a story with the following points.

- Their wagon was attacked on the north road by the river while heading back to town.
- They had no cargo, just the gold they were carrying
- A band of frogmen charged the wagon and leapt up to attack the driver, Badra Whistlepond. They knocked her off the wagon and then turned on the gnome, Orulen, knocking him off the wagon too.
- The attackers then turned on Leroy and Haskin but left them both beaten.
- When they woke, Orulen and Badra were gone, but the wagon was in tact, as was their gold.
- The horse was gone, but Leroy was able to track it down. By the time they had it back, they had no idea where the others were and so returned to town.

If the characters make insight rolls, they will feel that these two are telling the truth.

Jondath will tell the party that both Badra and Orulen were well liked. He wants them back if they are still alive as well as any others of his staff.

Jondath can let them know that previous shipments were attacked while loaded, there have been deaths, but every time it is Halfling drivers that go missing. Sometimes goods and gold go missing but not always.

What he wants is for the characters to join a wagon out of town to go by the river as bait; set a trap for the frog folk, flush them out and make sure they pose no further threat.

To this end, he sets the party up with a wagon loaded with fruit and grain bound for Andoora. It will be driven by two Halflings named Keggsy and Syrronia.

Should Keggsy become involved in any battles he is a commoner.
Syrronia is a sorcerer.

Stats for both are in the back of the module.

Part 2: The road to trouble

Part two of this module also serves as part 1 of the Sound of Drums story arc.

Read Aloud:

On the second day out of town, the wagon is on the road a few hundred yards from the river. Syrronia is keeping an eye out in that direction, though the view is often obscured by trees.

The road runs by the side of a hill which has been cut to a cliff to build the road. Clumps of trees are scattered about on the right. Keggsy looks a little nervous and with good reason as this would make a good place for an ambush. The water in the distance seems calm though.

Suddenly there is movement from one of the trees and two men leap down from them. Two archers appear on the slope to the left and a black scaled dragonborn steps out on the road in front.

"We'll be taking your goods!" the dragonborn spits.

The party is under attack from 5 bandits.

During the first round, the leader will breath acid on the driver of the wagon (and anyone else in the same line). This should reduce him to zero hit points. He will be unconscious and will need to make death saving throws each round as though he were a PC.

Be careful with the NPCs. Either kill them both or make sure Syrronia looks powerful in battle. This will matter later.

Tip:

Don't roleplay with yourself!

In this scenario, you control 5 bandits and 2 NPCs. The players have one character each, so you'll be very busy and you will spend time hitting yourself.

This is hard work for you and boring for everyone else.

Take Keggsy out in the first round and don't roll for Syrronia's attacks, just describe her spells.

The bandits each have leather armour and a scimitar. The archers have a light crossbow each. They each carry 5gp, the dragonborn has 10gp.

The dragonborn is wielding a silver scimitar of orcish manufacture. Make sure the players hear that the blade is not common in this region.

Adjusting the module:

If the party win this battle too quickly, you should consider increasing the difficulty of later encounters, which will have an option for stronger parties.

If taken alive, the bandits will talk. They know nothing about frogfolk attacks. They don't work for anyone except Toranthus, the dragonborn leading the group. Torranthus got his scimitar by trading with another group of bandits in the hills to the west.

Part 3: Finding the ambush

The party must continue on, possibly without a driver.

They should be able to travel safely for the rest of the day.

Early on the third day, the party will come closer to the river in an area where the last wagon has attacked.

Read Aloud:

During the morning of the third day, you are in the area where the last wagon was attacked. The road runs closer to the river and the ground is boggy. Rain is falling on and off which has turn the trail to mud which slows the wagon down.

Up ahead you see another wagon abandoned by the side of the road. It has no hose or ox tethered to it, nor does it have a driver.

If the party investigates they will find some of the load has been knocked off the wagon. A barrel of fish is open and the smell is quite prominent. The rest of the load contains fish and wine. The markings on the wagon identify it as belonging to the "Rapid Ride" company.

A DC 10 Survival roll will reveal footprints that appear to be from webbed footed humanoids.

If they achieve a 15 or higher, signs of a scuffle can be seen and it looks like tracks lead away from the wagon, possibly caused by frogfolk dragging a captive.

Tracks of an ox lead west, away from the river.

Based on the quality of the tracks and the smell of the fish, this happened several hours ago.

Due to the deep prints in the wet ground, it will require only a DC 10 survival roll to follow, but with more rain coming, the party will need to move quickly. The tracks do leave the road. If Syrronia and Keggsy are both dead, the party will need to abandon the wagon. If either live, they will be left unprotected, so the party may choose to split. Although this is a wise thing to do, it will make the rest of the adventure difficult.

If the unclaimed barrels of fish and wine are offered to the halflings, they will take them.



Tip:

Splitting the party is bad. One half has more fun than the other and I am always in the other side.

The other problem is that the encounters are scaled for a full party, so splitting often leads to death.

Always find a way to council against this.

In this case, the solution is to have Syrronia seem quite powerful during the earlier fight. If the party trusts her to do her job, they will do theirs.

Read Aloud:

The trail leads along the river for a while with the tracks getting harder to follow all the time. Eventually they lead towards the river where they stop.

About fifty feet off the shore is a well wooded island. It is hard to tell from this distance, but some kind of building seems to be there amid the trees.

The water is not deep and can be waded or swam quite easily. The other bank is muddy, but there is a lot of vegetation on the island.

Read Aloud:

Trudging out of the river, you find the island to be well vegetated. There is a lot of ground cover holding the surface together and quite a few large trees. Birds chitter about, but mostly use the branches to shelter themselves from the rain.

The island is quite large, maybe several hundred feet across and from where you are trees obscure the other side.

There is a stone building half way across the island. Again, it is hard to make out due to trees obscuring your view.

There is no path leading to the structure, but there are no tracks either. The ground here is less muddy and with the rain the trail has gone cold.

You are about to pick a direction when one of the bushes lashes out at you with a wiry branch.

The party is being attacked by 4 animated shrubs. One of them gets a surprise round. These shrubs are indistinguishable from other shrubs so the number of enemies cannot be gauged until the attack in round 1.

All 4 shrubs attack during the first round. In the 2nd round an awakened tree moves in and attacks as well.



Adjusting the encounter.

If the party is strong, add two more awakened shrubs. This should not be necessary as the tree is quite a challenge and the party may not be willing to rest after the fight.

It can be better to control the danger by allowing more or less short rests. If the party struggles here, let them have an uninterrupted short rest. If they are strong, don't let them rest. Have a giant toad attack them if they stop when they don't need to.

The players will be shocked to learn that the plants have [no treasure](#), however there is a body nearby belonging to a previous victim wearing breastplate of acid resistance.

Part 4: Frog Hollow

With the landing dealt with, the party can head inland to the place called Frog Hollow. In the center of the island is an old small ziggurat (kind of like a short step pyramid) The base is only fifty foot by fifty foot, but most of it is underground.

Read Aloud:

Pushing through the foliage, you gradually get a better view of the old stone structure. It is a small ziggurat, its base is a square fifty feet on a side and the top no more than thirty feet high.

The stone is old, crumbling and moss covered. It is hard to tell the age but the weather here has not treated it well. The door is flanked by two large standing stones.

There is only one way into the structure. The front door sits behind two large standing stone. Trees grow right up to the walls which makes approaching from any other direction difficult.

Location 1:

Behind the standing stones there is a frogfolk and a giant toad on sentry duty. The large stone door to the ziggurat is closed and sound does not travel well through it. Should the frogfolk call for help, it will not be answered.



Once inside, there is very little lighting. Some light comes from glowing fungus and through cracks in the structure but mostly it is dark. Characters will need some kind of light source.

Location 2:

Descending down below the ziggurat the characters find a large empty entrance hall. It is dusty and dark. The air smells foul and several large mushrooms are growing by the back door.

The mushrooms are violet fungus. They will attack if the party stops at the back door (to listen, check for traps etc) The frogs usually move straight through the door without stopping so the funguses ignore them.

Location 3:

The wing of the entrance hall is a barracks for the frogfolk warriors. There is bedding for eight, but two frogfolk are sleeping there (unless woken by sounds from elsewhere)

If captured and questioned, they will reveal their numbers, but more likely they will call for help.

Location 4:

This room is the day room used by the frogfolk. Five frogfolk are in the room which also contains rotten goods stolen from wagons that proved to be of no use to the frogs.

Anyone other than a frogfolk entering here will be attacked.

If any are captured and questioned, they will reveal that Tippitz resides in the back room and that they have all sworn to follow him and his visions.

Tip:

Lengthy descriptions of rooms serve very little purpose other than atmosphere. When moving through a dungeon, players are usually eager to face the next encounter, so descriptive text should be kept to a minimum. If something is critical to the plot, it can very easily get missed as the players are paying less attention to that kind of detail.

Dungeon crawls should be run with a higher pace than an investigation.

Location 5:

This is the frog stables. Currently it contains 1 giant toad tied up.

There is also feed and bedding for two giant toads.

Close inspection will reveal the remains of a gnome (Orulen) have been eaten by the toad

Location 6:

The door to this chamber is locked. Inside are two Halfling prisoners. Both are in poor health. One of them is Badra Whistlepond.

Location 7:

The Froglings store their good food and drink in here as well as cooking supplies. There are salvageable and marketable goods here worth 120gp to the characters.

Location 8:

Further underground, this large chamber is the dwelling of Tippitz, a frogfolk shaman. He has an altar set up for sacrifices.

Location 9:

Hidden behind Tippitz's sanctuary is an excavated chamber with ancient runes carved on the walls. The runes speak of a dark god promising power to those who slay his enemies, who are identified as halflings. Tippitz believes that sacrificing halflings will reveal more of the god's power to him.

A successful religion roll will reveal that the god he is worshiping either does not exist or is so old as to be forgotten.

Wrapping up

With Tippitz' defeat, Jondath will happily pay the reward. The trade route is safer now as the threat to halflings has been resolved, but there is no denying that other bandits are about.

Rewards

Treasure

The party should have collected the following treasure that can be split between the characters.

Reward from Jondath	60gp
Carried by bandits	30gp
Goods from the froglings	120gp

Special/magic items

Silvered scimitar (Bandit leader)
Breastplate armour of acid resistance (found on island)

Aside note

The players may assume the silver weapon is there so they can fight a were-rat in a later game. It isn't. It is there so they start to learn about the orcish military presence approaching Vollenchia. That it leads meta-gamers to assume there are lycanthropes coming up, is just a bit of misdirection.

The acid resistant armour is another matter. It will come in handy in a later module.

Experience Points

The following XP can be earned and should be divided by the number of players.:

Bandit	25XP
Giant Toad	200XP
Awakened shrub	10XP
Awakened Tree	450XP
Violet Fungus	50XP
Frogling	25XP
Frogling Shaman	200XP

Additional XP

The following are XP bonus rewards:

Keeping Keggsy alive	100XP each
Keeping Syrronia alive	100XP each
Defeating all froglings	100XP each
Finding the orcish blade	50XP each
Rescuing Badra	50XP each
Returning Orulen's remains	50XP each

Downtime

All characters receive 10 days of downtime for completing this module.

Character Directory

Badra Whistlepond: Female Halfling wagon driver, taken only a day earlier.

Jondath Footfall: Owner and manager of Footfall wagoners.

Keggsy: A Halfling driver working for Jondath

Leroy: A human working as a laborer for Jondath.

Harsking: A Tiefling hired as security for Jondath.

Orulen: A gnome working as security for Jondath.

Syrronia: A Halfling sorcerer working for Jondath. Her job is to keep an eye on the party.

Torranthus: A dragonborn bandit.

NPC / Monster Stats

Awakened Shrub *Small plant unaligned*

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 10

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances piercing

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages druidic

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

False Appearance. While the shrub remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal shrub.

Actions

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

Awakened Tree *Huge plant, unaligned*

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 59

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Druidic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

False Appearance. While the tree remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Bandit *Medium humanoid (any race),*

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

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

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

Breath weapon: The dragonborn sorcerer uses a breath weapon, a 30' line of acid doing 7(2d6) and half damage on a successful DC 12 dexterity save.

Commoner *Medium humanoid*

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Frogfolk Small humanoid (frogfolk), Neutral evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 5 (2d6 – 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	15 (+2)	9 (–1)	8 (–1)	7 (–2)	8 (–1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Common,
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)
Amphibious. The Frogfolk can breathe air and water.
Standing Leap. The Frogfolk's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.
Actions
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.
Sling. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Frogfolk Shaman Small humanoid (frogfolk), Lawful evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 32
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Common,
Challenge 1 (200 XP)
Amphibious. The Frogfolk can breathe air and water.
Standing Leap. The Frogfolk's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.
Actions
Shillelagh. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.
Spells
Cantrips: Shillelagh, Produce Fire
1st Level: Beast Bond, Cure Wounds, Thunderwave
2nd Level: Moonbeam, Melf's Acid Arrow

Giant Toad Large beast, unaligned
Armor Class 11
Hit Points 39
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)
Amphibious. The toad can breathe air and water.
Standing Leap. The toad's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.
Actions
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the toad can't bite another target.
Swallow. The toad makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the toad dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Sorcerer *Medium humanoid*

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 6

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Actions

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

Magic Missile: 2 slots: Does 9 (3d4+3) force damage

Fire Bolt: +4 to hit, 1d10 fire damage

Violet Fungus *Medium plant, unaligned*

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 18

Speed 5 ft.

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

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

False Appearance. While the violet fungus remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary fungus.

Actions

Multiattack. The fungus makes 1d4 Rotting Touch attacks.

Rotting Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.



Coming Soon

Rats in the Rain Part 2: Beneath the Storm

Release Date 15/Apr/2016

Continuing the Rats in the Rain trilogy, Beneath the Storm takes the party back to the sewers on missions for Jasper Grain and Kendra the Mouse. Far beneath the city is an ancient tomb that protects a powerful secret. The challenge is finding it before agents of the Black Rainbow take possession of it.



The Sound of Drums

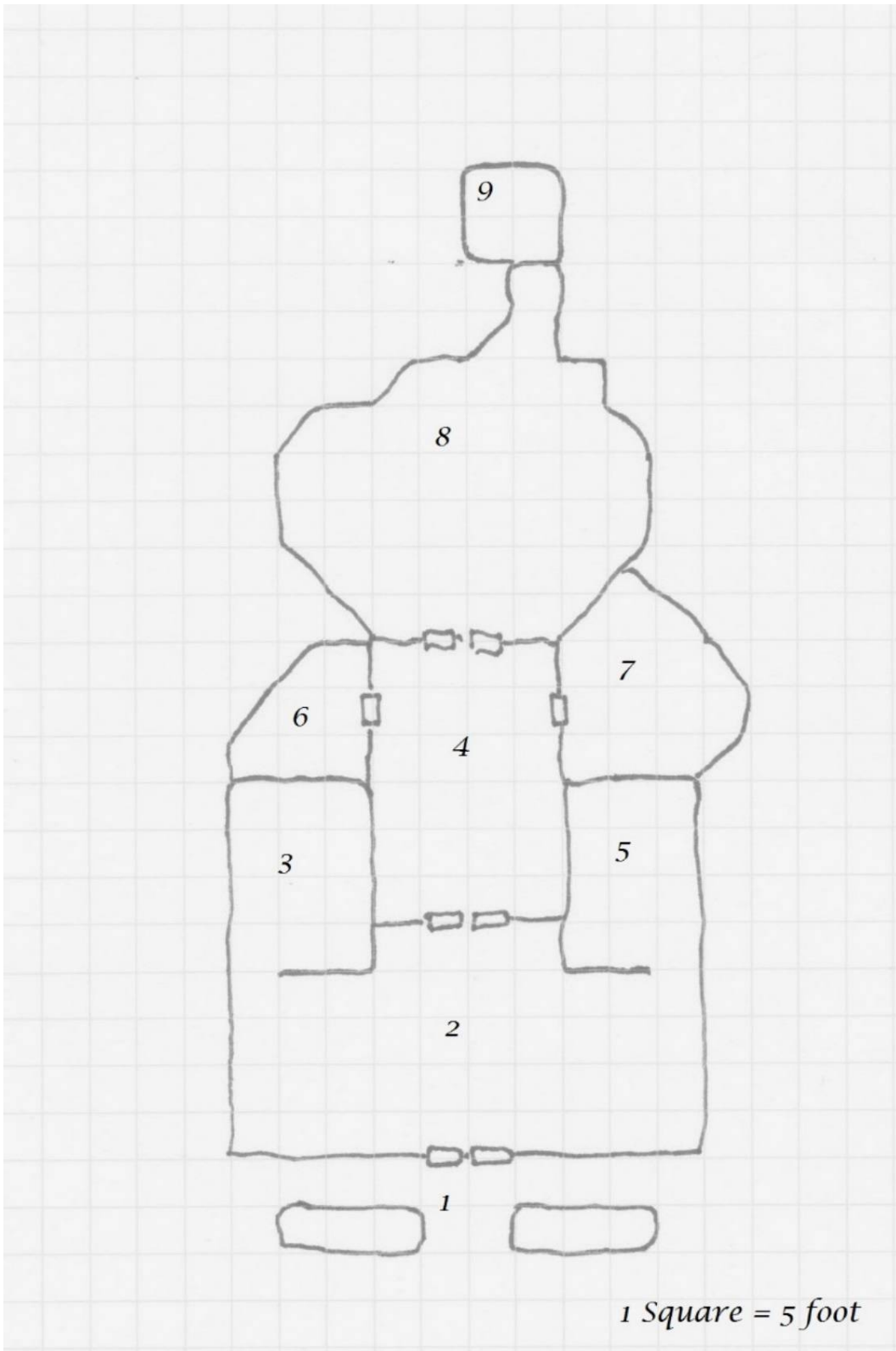
Release Date 29/Apr/2016

Not so much an adventure in its own right, the Sound of Drums is a building story arc in which a number of small scenarios spaced out over time allow the players to feel the rising threat of a coming foe.



Maps and Handouts

The lair at Frog Hollow



New Rules

Frogfolk *Small humanoid (frogfolk), Neutral evil*

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 5 (2d6 – 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	15 (+2)	9 (–1)	8 (–1)	7 (–2)	8 (–1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Amphibious. The toad can breathe air and water.

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

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Tip:

To add a little mystery or to make an enemy seem unknown or exotic, all you need to do is build a new monster, which is really easy.

Just take an existing monster and give it a new name and description. Everything else can stay the same.

Players won't know what to expect and that adds to the fun.

The kobold is listed in the SRD and its stats can be used for any small humanoid race such as the froglings. If you have the full core rules, you could use a Bullywug.

Acknowledgements

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