

A COLLECTION OF SHORT ENCOUNTERS

FIFTH EDITION FANTASY #7

FANTASTIC ENCOUNTERS



BY BOB BRINKMAN, MICHAEL CURTIS,
CHRIS DOYLE, AND JAMES FLOYD KELLY



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FANTASTIC ENCOUNTERS

THE RUSTING PIT

By Chris Doyle

This set piece can be dropped into any underground setting, or a castle, and is suitable for 2nd- to 3rd-level characters. The encounter works best to guard another chamber, or an entrance to a lair or stronghold. When the characters open the door to this chamber, read the following text:

The door opens to reveal a plain stone chamber that is 30 feet long by 20 feet wide. Centered on the opposite wall of this chamber is another stout wooden door reinforced with iron bands.

This room is a trap, designed to capture creatures and remove most of their mundane metal objects. The walls and floor are smooth stone. The ceiling is 15 feet high, and the opposite door is locked (DC 18 Dexterity check to pick).

Trapped Floor. There is a 20-foot-by-20-foot **mechanical pit trap** concealed on the floor. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to locate the trap. Only then, by using thieves' tools, can the trap be disarmed with a DC 22 Dexterity check. Otherwise, placing 25 or more pounds of weight on the pit cover activates the trap. The pit is 40 feet deep, and causes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage, and the target lands prone. On the following round, the trapdoor closes. The lower part of the pit is shaped like a funnel and reduces the landing area to 10-foot-by-10-foot chamber. At the bottom of the pit is a *glyph of warding* that releases a *hold person* spell if landed on. If triggered, up to two creatures must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or be paralyzed for 1 minute. An affected creature can attempt a new saving throw each additional turn, ending the spell with a success.

One wall of the pit landing is riddled with dozens of small holes, each about 2 inches in diameter. On the

opposite side of the wall is a holding pen inhabited by a **rust beast**. The rust beast can sense (and hear) when creatures arrive on the pit floor. On the following round, it attacks through the small holes with its 10-foot-long frilled antennae, reaching targets anywhere at the bottom of the pit. A rust beast has two antennae, and if targeted (AC 11) with a weapon, each can be severed with 2 points of slashing damage.

The rust beast chamber is a 15-foot-by-15-foot room, with a single door locked from the outside on the opposite wall. There is no treasure in the pen. A beast tender (of a type appropriate to the setting the GM has chosen for this encounter) resides nearby, regularly feeding and cleaning the beast's pen.



RUST BEAST

Large monstrosity, unaligned

AC: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: -

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Iron Scent: A rust beast can pinpoint, by scent, the location of ferrous metal within 30 feet of it.

Rust Metal: Any nonmagical weapon of metal that hits the rust beast corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -2 penalty to damage rolls. If the penalty drops to -6, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical metal ammunition that hits a rust beast is destroyed after dealing damage.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Antennae: The rust beast corrodes a nonmagical metal object within 10 feet of it. If the object isn't being worn or carried, the touch destroys 1 cubic foot of metal. If the object is worn or carried, the creature holding it can make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the rust effect.

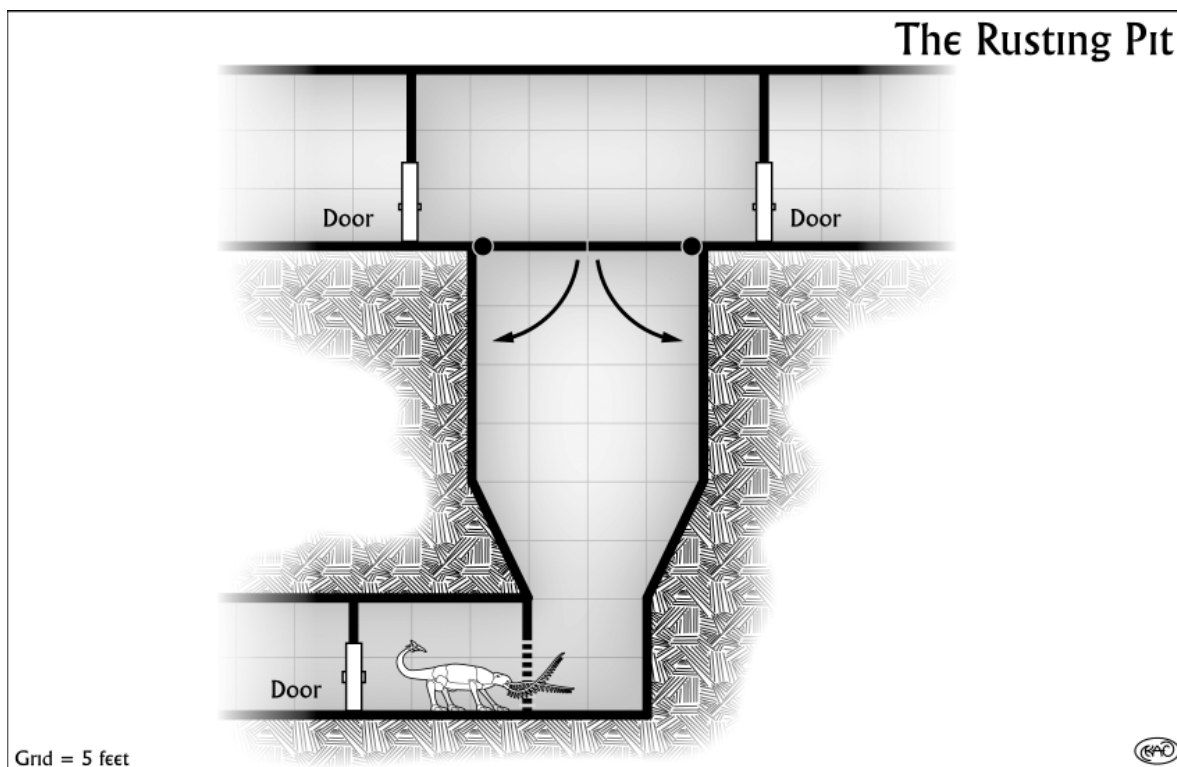
If the object touched or worn is either nonmagical metal armor or a nonmagical metal shield, it takes a permanent -2 penalty to AC. Armor reduced to AC 10, or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus, is destroyed. If the object touched is a held weapon, it rusts as described in the Rust Metal trait.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

To challenge higher level parties, increase the depth of the pit to 80 feet (or more), add another rust beast (or increase its hit dice and statistics), and consider converting its Rust Metal trait to affect magical metal.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 300 XP between the characters if they discover and avoid or disable the trap. Divide 100 XP between the characters if they trigger the trap, and 200 XP if they defeat the rust beast.



DEADFALL

By Michael Curtis

This set piece is suitable for four 4th- to 5th-level characters and can be inserted into any forested area, preferably one where elves formerly dwelled. Fantastical “haunted woods” also make a suitable setting for this brief encounter. At the party travels the forest, they come across the following:

The trees ahead of you are stripped bare and broken, victims to some recent windstorm or whirlwind. The forest before you is a mass of topped trees with spiky, broken branches intertwined. Unfortunately, the lay of the land here prevents simply passing around the colossal deadfall, but, with caution, you should be able to traverse the obstacle.

Some of the trees buried in the massive deadfall are ancient **sentinel trees** awoken by the magic of a vanished elven community. The animated guardians still carry out their oath to defend the woods from interlopers, attacking any non-elf they encounter.

The trees will pause their attack if any of the party identifies himself as a druid, ranger, or a paladin who has sworn the Oath of the Ancients. The sentinel trees are initially hostile, but if made neutral or friendly through social interaction, they allow the party to pass unharmed. For the purpose of resolving any social interaction with the party, the sentinel trees are considered to have the following characteristics:

Ideal: Nature. The forest must persevere at all costs. My demise is without consequence, for even my destruction merely nourishes the waiting seed.

Bond: I shall defend these woods from any non-elf who enters without the permission of my creators.

Flaw: I miss the company of those who respect the forest now that my creators are gone from these woods. In my loneliness, I might overlook my duties.

The Charisma check to convince the sentinel trees to stand down is DC 20. The applicable skill (Persuasion, Deception, or Intimidation) depends on the manner in which PCs converse with the sentinel trees as determined by the GM. If the check fails, the trees re-

sume their attack and the Charisma check cannot be attempted again.



SENTINEL TREE (2)

Huge plant, unaligned

AC: 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 59 (7d12 + 14)

Speed: 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills: Perception +2, Stealth +5

Damage Vulnerabilities: fire

Damage Resistances: bludgeoning, piercing

Senses: passive Perception 12

Languages: Elvish

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

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

Forest's Stride: The sentinel tree can pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or similar hazards.

ACTIONS

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

Sentinel trees are animated trees given life by magic and used to defend elven lands, strongholds, and other places of profound cultural significance.

The deadfall is difficult terrain and dangerous to traverse. Any creature lacking the Land's Stride or Forest's Stride feature who enters the deadfall must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 3 (1d6) piercing damage from broken branches. These creatures must also make the same saving throw whenever struck by an attack in combat or moved against their will through the deadfall.

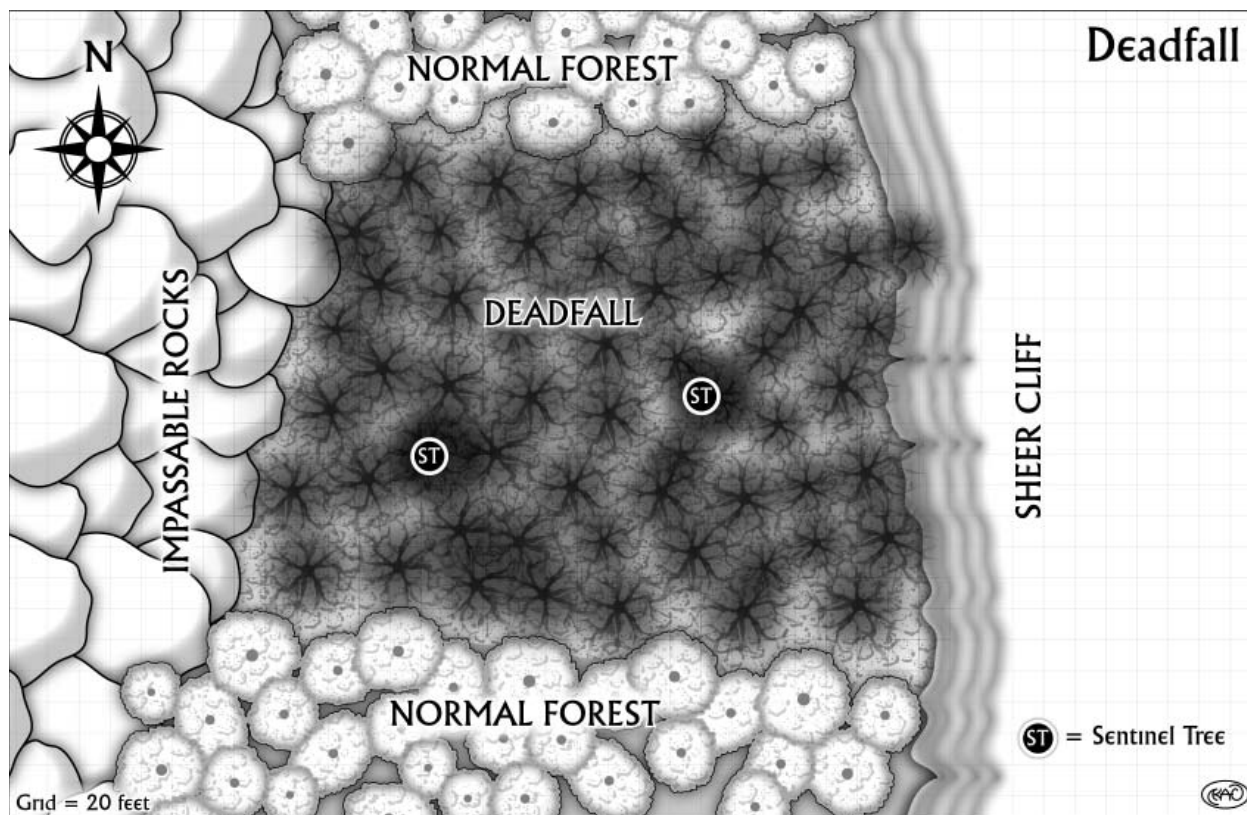
The deadfall is comprised of dried and highly flammable dead wood. Any magical fire created within the deadfall automatically sets it alight. All creatures within the burning mass take 7 (2d6) fire damage each round until they escape the deadfall.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter is a hard encounter for four 4th-level PCs. The GM can reduce the difficulty of the encounter by removing one of the sentinel trees and increase it by adding an additional one. If the GM truly wants to make the encounter dangerous or challenge a higher level party, he may add the restless **specter(s)** (see *Monster Manual* p. 279) of previous victims of the sentinel trees. A specter or specters lurk in the deadfall, attacking the party while they are engaged in battle with the sentinel trees.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

This encounter as presented is worth 1,800 XP due to the difficulties imposed by the deadfall environment. If the PCs succeed in conversing with the sentinel trees and cross the deadfall without engaging in a prolonged battle, award them full experience as if they defeated the sentinel trees in combat.



TO FIDDLER'S GREEN

By Bob Brinkman

This encounter is designed to challenge 3rd- or 4th-level characters and is set along a seaside locale. While easily dropped anywhere in sight of the coast, placing it near a village or town is ideal. This piece is meant to play on the shoot first, ask questions later mentality of many adventurers in search of gold and glory. When the characters come upon this encounter, read the following text:

A commotion near the shore catches your attention. Down by the waterside a fisherman's funeral service is taking place and, at first, you confuse the noise for an over-enthusiastic wailing and gnashing of teeth over the passing of the deceased. Striding from out of the surf is a sea-borne monstrosity with tremendous crab claws and the wide mouth of a large shark. Its squamous form is clad in bits of netting and covered in seaweed, and it strides purposefully towards the shore, emitting a high-pitched clicking, directly towards the funeral. Hardened though they are by a life on the sea, the dozen fisherman fall back at the monster's approach, looking around for weapons.

Born of the union between men and sea spirits, the **waterborn** are not, despite their appearance, inherently evil. The individual encountered here, having learned of the passing of his father, has come to the ceremony to personally escort him to fisherman's paradise, Fiddler's Green. Characters succeeding in a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check are observant enough to notice that the deceased bears a tattoo that matches a piece of slender jewelry that dangles from the creature's claw.

As an oceanic being with no ties to land, the creature does not speak Common or any of the other traditional land-based languages. Instead, he is attempting to speak to the gathering in Aquan. If not attacked, the waterborn attempts to convey his wishes to the characters and can easily be understood through the use of *comprehend languages*. If allowed, the waterborn will simply carry his father back to the waves (which will require convincing an angry mob of funeral-goers).

WATERBORN

Large humanoid, neutral

AC: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 68 (8d10 + 24)

Speed: 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Aquan, Sahuagin

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious: The waterborn can breathe air and water.

Blood Frenzy: The waterborn has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Oceanic Curse: Those who slay a waterborn are cursed to rough ocean voyages. All crews on sailing vessels that carry those so cursed are at disadvantage for all checks involving sailing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The waterborn makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Claws: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage.

After arming themselves with cudgels and rough clubs, the **fishermen** are ready for violence. Should the characters attack, the fishermen will immediately join the general melee. If the characters do not attack, the fishermen will still require convincing (a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check or, if the party is visibly communicating with the waterborn, DC 10) to prevent them from cursing the cowardly adventurers and rushing in to do the job themselves.

FISHERMAN (12)

Medium humanoid, neutral

AC: 11

Hit Points: 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed: 30 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses: passive Perception 11

Languages: Common

Challenge: 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Cudgel: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

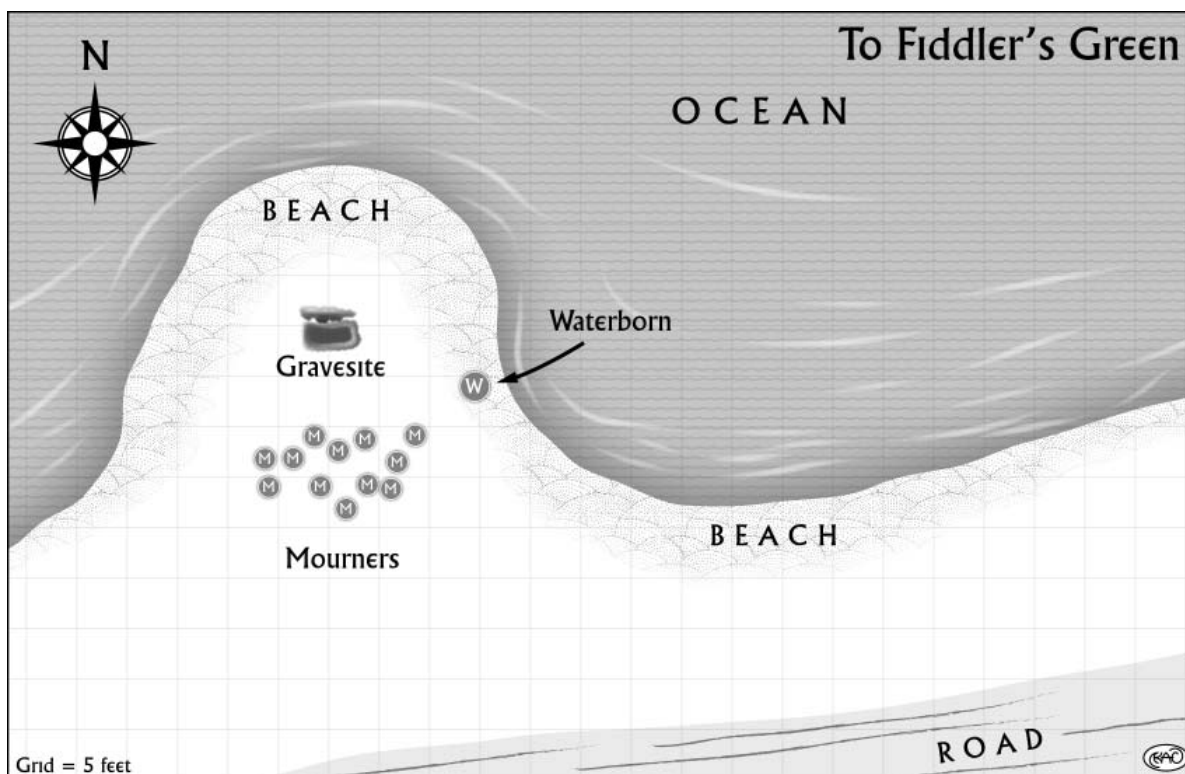
ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

To challenge higher level parties, one may increase the difficulty by adding amphibious sea creatures to aid in combat should it occur, or by having more waterborn come ashore.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 450 XP between the characters if they defeat the waterborn and an additional 25 XP for each fisher-

man alive at the end of the encounter. Divide 200 XP between the characters if they attempt to communicate with the waterborn. Divide 200 XP if they manage to resolve the encounter without killing the waterborn and divide 600 XP between the characters if they resolve the encounter without violence.



IDOL OF THE FIRE DRAKE

By Bob Brinkman

This encounter is suitable for 1st- or 2nd-level characters and may be dropped into virtually any indoor locale and is for the greedy and unwary. When the characters enter this chamber, read the following text:

The door opens up into a 40-foot-square stone chamber awash in a hellish red glow. In the center of the room is a short pedestal, 2 feet high, upon which rests a 4-foot-tall stone statue of a dragon. The decoration is finely crafted, carved from what appears to be a single, giant fire opal. The highly detailed black statue is flecked with mineral fire that weaves through and over its scaled form. Held between the open jaws of the draconic likeness is a large red pearl that radiates a glow of deep crimson. Centered on the other three walls of this chamber are wooden doors with heavy iron locking mechanisms.

The walls and floor are finely worked stone, as is the pedestal upon which the “statue” sits. The ceiling extends to 20 feet high, and the other doors beyond are actually false although any can be made to be real doors to fit into your location. The locks, however, are quite real (DC 15 Dexterity check to pick).

Trapped “Pearl”. The glowing gemstone is actually a pair of *fire bolt* cantrips held in stasis. When the pearl is touched, it immediately shatters and the pair of spells discharge (treat as +5 ranged attacks doing 5 (1d10) fire damage each). The first *fire bolt* lances out at the offending character, and the second fires at a different, random, character. The release of the two spells cracks the thin stone veneer that encases the **fire drake**, also in stasis. After resolving the cantrips, have the characters check for surprise (DC 15 passive Perception check) before continuing on to read the following:

As the glow of the magical trap flashes through the room, it is joined by a soft sound: the cracking of stone. You realize that the stone of the statue is cracking and falling away, revealing scales of brilliant red beneath. Muscles flex and the thin gemstone explodes outwards, fully revealing the small draconic guardian. With a hiss, it attacks.

The fire drake will immediately attack the character touching the pearl, with its Fire Breath. Should the drake win initiative, targets in the area of effect make saves at disadvantage.

The shattered fragments of black opal have some small value. If the entirety is collected there are 10 salvageable fragments, each with a raw gem value of 10 gp. The hollow shell of black opal is simply too fragile to be reassembled.



FIRE DRAKE

Medium dragon, unaligned

AC: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed: 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages: -

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Burning Blood: A fire drake's blood burns upon exposure to air. A creature that touches the drake's blood or hits the creature with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) fire damage.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6): The drake releases a

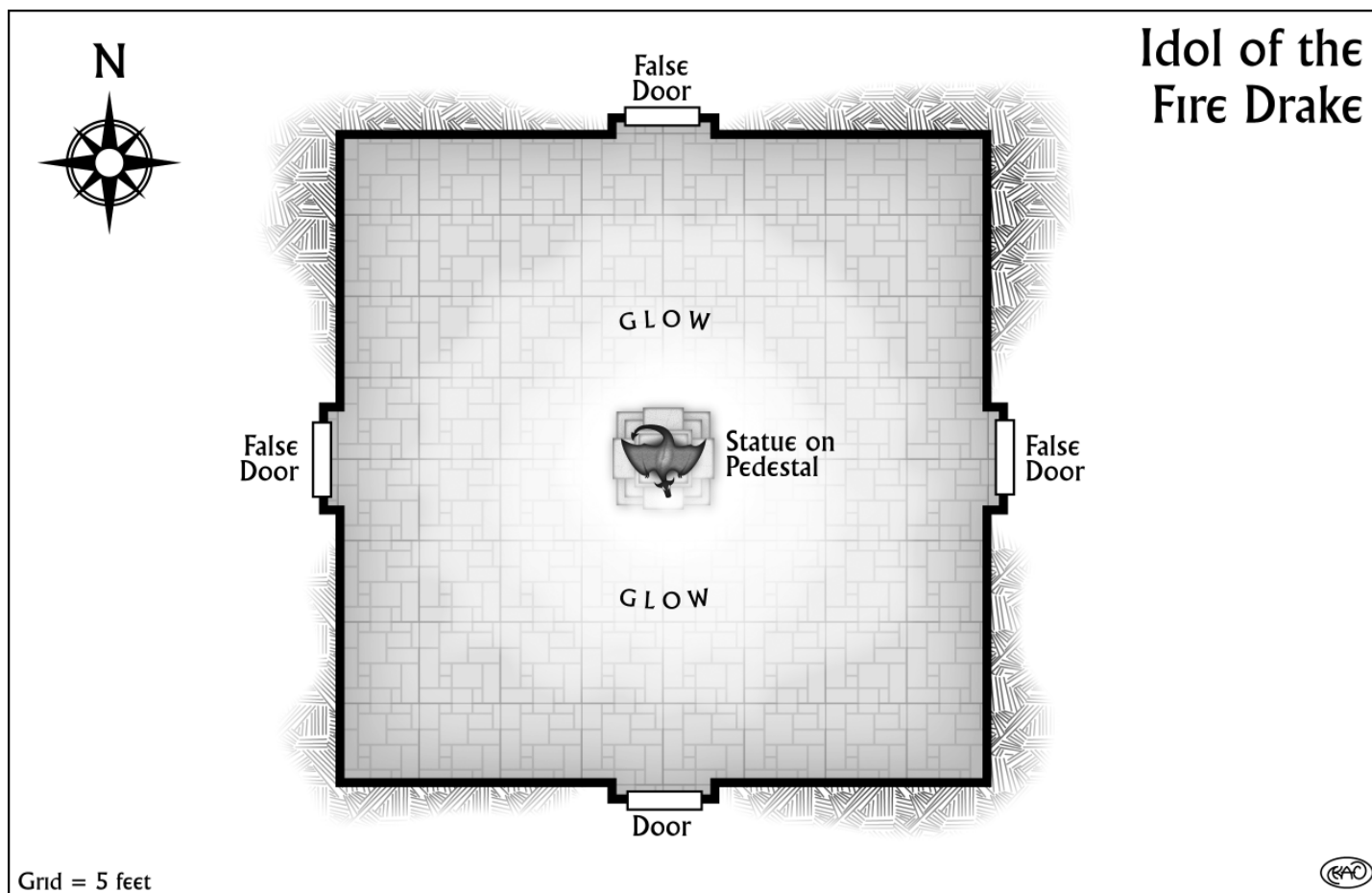
spray of its own flaming blood in a 10-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. In addition creatures failing their save catch fire; until an action is taken to douse the fire, the creature takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of its turn.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

To challenge higher level parties, simply change the fire drake into a **red dragon wyrmling** (see MM p. 98) and scale upwards as needed. In addition, the spell in stasis may be upgraded to a *fireball* or further upwards to a *fire storm*.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 200 XP between the characters if they avoid the trap. Divide 100 XP between the characters if they survive the trap, and 200 XP if they defeat the fire drake.



FERRY TALE

By Bob Brinkman

This encounter is designed for a group of 5th- to 6th-level characters. There is added danger here, from the environment itself. A deep river is especially dangerous to those in heavy armor. The attack takes place as the characters are traveling, taking a rope-pulled ferry to cross the water. As the characters are crossing, read the following text:

The trip across the river has been a slow one. You joined a mixed group of travelers in boarding the cable ferry over 30 minutes ago. Now you are nearing the three-quarter mark of your voyage. The river around you runs fast and the skies above are cloudy, casting the water into a wine-like murk. The ferryman and his crew work the cranks that pull the ferry along the cable. It is laborious work, but the only way to safely make this crossing. Without warning, the wooden ferry shudders as if striking submerged debris. When the ferry lifts a few inches as if being struck from underneath, that is when the peasants panic. The water behind the ferry begins to roil with wormlike forms—eels the size of hounds—and then, before you, rises a massive eel, breaching from the water and crashing down upon the edge of the ferry.

There is a great deal of danger here for the unwary, and many opportunities to be the hero. Including the crew, there are 20 people aboard the ferry other than the characters. As the **giant eel** crashes its fore-section onto the raft the characters must make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or stagger over the side, and 1d4 of the other passengers will also be swept over the rope railing. Victims entering the water while wearing medium or heavy armor will immediately begin to sink and drown. Those knocked over the side will immediately be attacked by the eel's young, the **elvers**. Melee attacks made while in the water, without an aid to swimming, are made at disadvantage.

Every fourth round the eel will rise and smash down upon the raft in place of its regular attack, trying to knock prey into the water. Forewarned and prepared, the characters must make an easier (DC 10) Dexterity (Acrobatics) check on subsequent attacks, although

this is made at disadvantage if the individual is engaged in melee. In addition, another 1d4 of the peasantry will be swept over the side each time this happens. If there is no prey in the water, the elvers will begin to flop aboard the ferry, gradually engaging those there.

The other passengers of the ferry are not capable fighters. Of those floundering in the water and panicking, two peasants will be slain and devoured by the elvers each round. Should the giant eel be slain, the elvers will flee.

GIANT EEL

Huge beast, unaligned

AC: 12

Hit Points: 68 (8d12 + 16)

Speed: 10 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills: Athletics +6, Perception +2

Senses: passive Perception 10

Languages: -

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious: The giant eel can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the eel can't bite another target.

Swallow: The eel 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 eel, and takes 9 (2d8) acid damage at the start of each of the eel's turns. The eel can only have one

swallowed target at a time.

If the eel dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

ELVER (10)

Medium beast, unaligned

AC: 10

Hit Points: 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed: 5 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses: passive Perception 10

Languages: -

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious: The elver can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

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

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

To increase the challenge for higher level parties, double the number of giant eels and convert the elvers to a pair of Huge swarms. The second giant eel will concentrate on sinking the ferry itself.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

For each ferry passenger saved, divide 10 XP amongst the characters in addition to distributing the combat experience (450 XP for slaying the giant eel and 100 XP for each slain elver).



A BAKER'S DOZEN

By Bob Brinkman

This encounter is designed for characters of 3rd to 4th level. There are times when a perfectly ordinary morning can turn out to be anything but. Mornings when a quest for coffee can become a life or death fight for survival. Not every threat is obvious, not every foe should be slain. Such is the case this morning as the characters encounter the unwilling subjects of an illicit experiment that is being tested out in the market square. When the party comes upon this encounter, read the following text:

The sounds of the morning market are as familiar to you as those of your own voice. The heady smell of fresh baked goods, the cries of the hawkers, the bright colors of the tents, all are a part of a familiar sight in any town. This morning though, there is something off, an undercurrent of fear that explodes in panic as a muscular man lifts a merchant over his head and throws him into the throngs of morning shoppers. Tossing aside a half-eaten pastry, he scours the crowd with rage-infused eyes and gives a mad-dened howl of challenge!

The man transmogrified into a rage-fueled beast of destruction is the unwitting victim of an experimental potion created by an alchemist of ill repute. The alchemist, disguised as a baker, moves around the market distributing his free “samples” that contain a dangerous alchemical concoction. Each round a new victim will transform until the baker’s dozen of samples are all consumed. The roar of the transformed will certainly catch the attention of the characters, and any with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher will notice the pastry falling from the **rageborne’s** hand, while those specifically looking for clues should be allowed a normal DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Characters specifically looking for the source of the baked goods will easily spot the alchemist if he is still handing out his wares and, if confronted, he will immediately surrender to his accusers. However, should he finish his field test and give out all 13 samples, without being noticed, he will quietly slip away amongst the fleeing crowd.

It is vital that the party have a chance to understand that their foes are simply innocent victims before they unknowingly slaughter 13 villagers. Thus, should one of the rageborne be slain, read them the following:

With a final gasp, the hate-fueled target staggers and falls to the ground. As the light fades from their eyes, their look of rage turns to one of profound confusion. Their breathing falters and stops. As death takes them, their features begin to change, softening and shrinking before your eyes. Now, lying on the ground, is an elderly man; a man you recognize as a seller of meat pies and pasties from here in the marketplace. Someone must be responsible...

Armed with the knowledge that the party knew their attacker (at least in passing), the group should be given another opportunity to catch a glimpse of the truth behind the unfolding events. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will allow party members to catch sight of the baker and realize that they do not recognize him as one of the regular sellers in the market.



RAGEBORNE (13)

Medium humanoid, neutral

AC: 12

Hit Points: 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances: bludgeoning from nonmagical weapons

Skills: Intimidation +0

Senses: passive Perception 10

Languages: Common

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

Aggressive: As a bonus action, the rageborne can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Fury: The rageborne has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.

Unarmored Defense: While the rageborne is wearing no armor wielding no shield, its AC includes its Constitution modifier.

ACTIONS

Fist: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

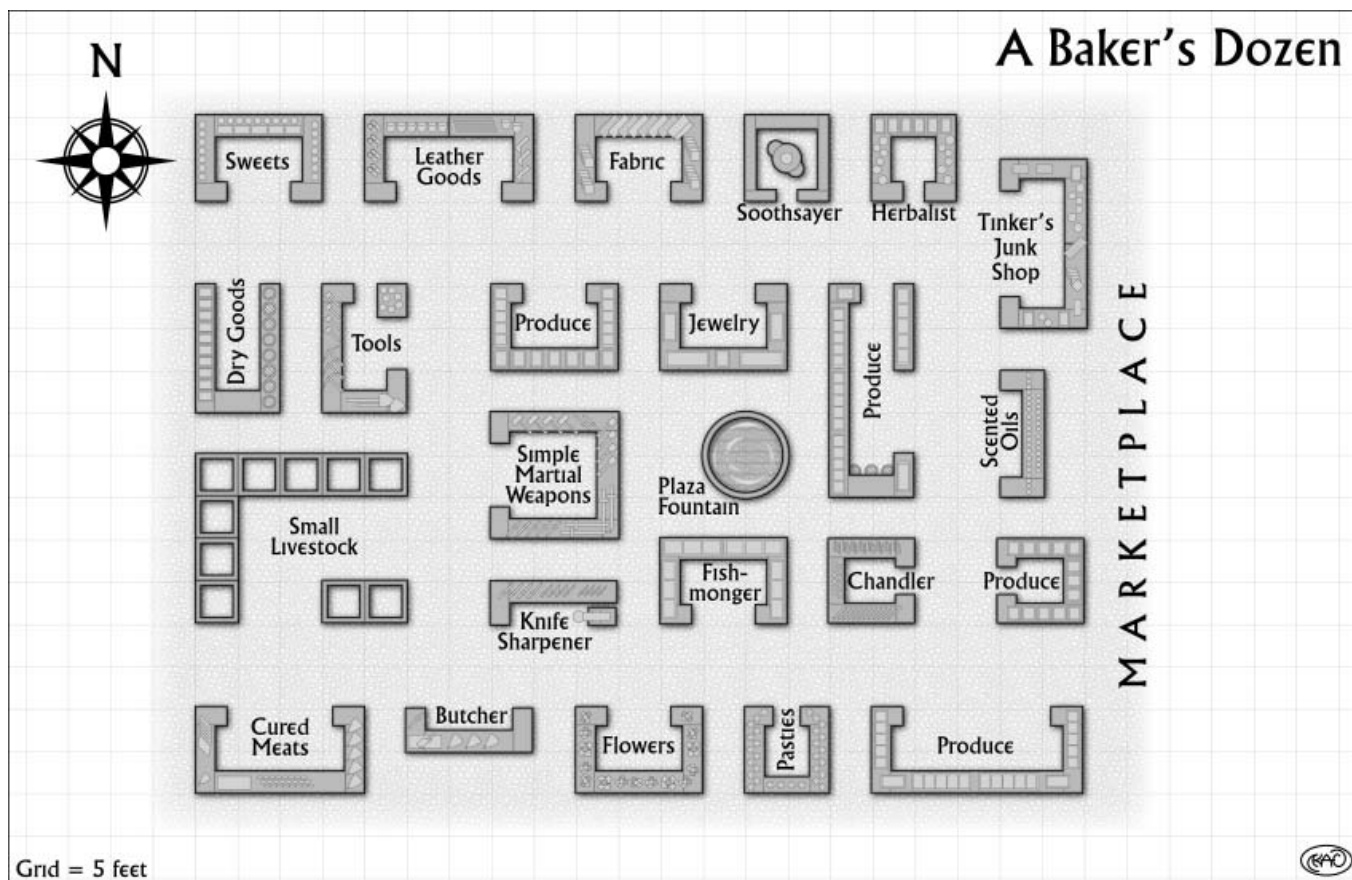
Improvised Mace: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

To increase the challenge for higher level parties, add the city watch (treat as **guards**; see MM p. 347) to the fray. The watch, believing that this is a commonplace brawl, will attempt to subdue and arrest all participants in the battle. Once again, the party will need to focus on not killing their opponents if at all possible.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

If all 13 rageborne are encountered and defeated divide 650 XP amongst the party. For each person saved from the fate of being slain as a rageborne (13 minus the number of rageborne slain) divide 100 XP amongst the party. If the baker is captured divide an extra 200 XP.



THE CHANDLER'S SHOP

By Bob Brinkman

This encounter is designed for a seasoned party of 5th to 6th level. An evening out on the town always seems to end at the tavern, but here there is adventure to be found as the weary adventurers make their way back to an inn for the night. When the party comes upon this encounter, read the following text:

As you carefully pick your way through the darkened streets the sound of a commotion catches your attention. From inside the darkened chandlery come the sounds of a man's screams, cut too short, too swiftly, for the sounds to have issued from a throat still living.

Give the characters time to gather their thoughts and quickly investigate. While there is no strict timetable of events, the DM should instill a sense of urgency appropriate to the situation. The spell *detect magic* will pick up the mystic energies seeping through the walls of the shop. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check will remind the party that the chandler, Ferguson, is reputed to be experimenting with channeling magic into his candles. When the party enters the shop, continue with the following:

The small shop is a blazing sea of lit candles and their haze of acrid smoke assails your lungs and stings your eyes. Lying on the floor amidst a scattered circle of protection is the still form of the old chandler, his face fixed in a rictus of fear. The heavy smoke snakes about the room as if alive and swirls about the room, propelled by an unseen air current until it begins to coalesce into the form of a large smoky being with dog-like features. It flexes its arms once and a number of the blazing candles in the shop pulse brighter for just a moment. It rises into the air, hovering above the corpse of the chandler and stares at the party with baleful red eyes.

The creature is a **hinn**, a lesser member of the genie family. Drawn here by Ferguson's magical candles and trapped through the chandler's art, the hinn is mad with its desire to escape. Unable to flee the confines of the shop the hinn will attack immediately. Having drawn its energy from the 10 enchanted candles within the shop, those candles also act as his weakness.

Snuffing the candles begins to scatter the hinn's form and snuffing all of them will destroy him. Remembering which candles faintly pulsed requires Perception checks. The DC for the first candle is 10, and the difficulty increases by 1 for each candle thereafter (to a peak of 19).

HINN

Large elemental, neutral

AC: 15

Hit Points: 90 (12d10 + 24)

Speed: 0 ft., fly 90 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities: cold

Damage Resistances: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities: fire, poison

Condition Immunities: exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Auran

Challenge: 5 (1,800 XP)

Elemental Demise: If the hinn dies, its body disintegrates into a cloud of smoke that spreads out, thins, and vanishes, leaving behind only what equipment the hinn may have been carrying.

Innate Spellcasting: The hinn can cast two spells per day requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 9).

• 2/day: *scorching ray*

Smoke Form: The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Candle-Bound: For each of its 10 candles snuffed out, the hinn takes 9 cold damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The hinn makes two slam attacks.

Slam: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Cinder Breath (Recharge 5-6): The hinn exhales a 15-foot cone of smoke and ash. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage and be blinded until the end of the hinn's next turn on a failed save, or half damage and no blindness on a successful one.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

To reduce the challenge for lower level parties, one may substitute a **smoke mephit** (see MM p. 217) for the hinn.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 1,800 XP between the characters if they defeat the hinn and an additional 250 XP if they do so by snuffing all of its candles rather than fighting a long, protracted battle.



THE LONELY PIER

By James Floyd Kelly

Characters often find themselves in seaside towns where this nighttime drop-in encounter is best used. However, with some small modifications, the encounter can easily be repurposed for use on any lake or river where empty piers wouldn't be out of place. The following scenario is intended for 2nd- to 4th-level characters. Read the following text when characters are within 75 to 100 feet of the piers:

The moonlight twinkles on the small waves that lap the shore near the docks. A trio of piers reaches out into the deeper channel, their boards warped and rotting from the combination of salt water and sun. A small dinghy is tied off near the end of one pier, and two fishing poles lean against the port side of the small craft. Scattered across the pier's end, the glitter of gold coins catches your eye.

The dinghy is a **briny mimic**, an aquatic creature capable of changing its form and using a variety of colors and textures found in aquatic surroundings. Briny mimics prefer the brackish waters of rivers that flow into the ocean, but can survive in both saltwater and freshwater.

Dinghy. In this encounter, the briny mimic takes on the appearance of a weathered 15-foot dinghy. The rope holding the briny mimic to the pier is part of the creature. When a character moves to within 20 feet of the dinghy, a small pile of mixed coins and jewels is visible on the thwart (seat) that spans the two sides. Any character stepping down into the dinghy is attacked by one of the “fishing poles” that are actually the briny mimic's two stingers. The other stinger attempts to grapple any character within 10 feet of the dinghy. If the briny mimic is reduced to half of its hit points and has a character grappled, it releases its hold on the pier and moves away from the group to try and finish off its meal.

Treasure. A total of 32 gp can be collected from the end of the pier. On the bench of the “dinghy” are 23 gp and eight jewels, each worth 2d8 gp. This treasure consists of gems and metals that the briny mimic is unable to digest and that it spits out to attract prey.



BRINY MIMIC

Large monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned

AC: 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 82 (11d10 + 22)

Speed: 5 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills: Stealth +3

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: -

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

Shapechanger: The briny mimic can morph into any object it has encountered in the water—this includes small vessels (rowboats, rafts, etc.), barrels (2d6 for quantity that appears), and crates (1d8 for quantity and size: 1-4 two medium crates, 5-8 one large crate). The creature changes back to its jelly-

fish-like form when traveling beneath the water and when it dies. Changing form requires two consecutive actions and a successful attack by a character interrupts a form change.

Water Lurk: The briny mimic has advantage on all Stealth checks in the water when in its true form.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Stinger Weapons: The briny mimic possesses two stingers, each 10 feet in length (typically camouflaged as fishing poles, ripped nets, spears, or even small anchors). The stingers are able to deliver one of the following attacks per turn:

Grapple: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the victim is grappled (escape DC 13). The briny mimic has advantage on all attack rolls against any creature grappled.

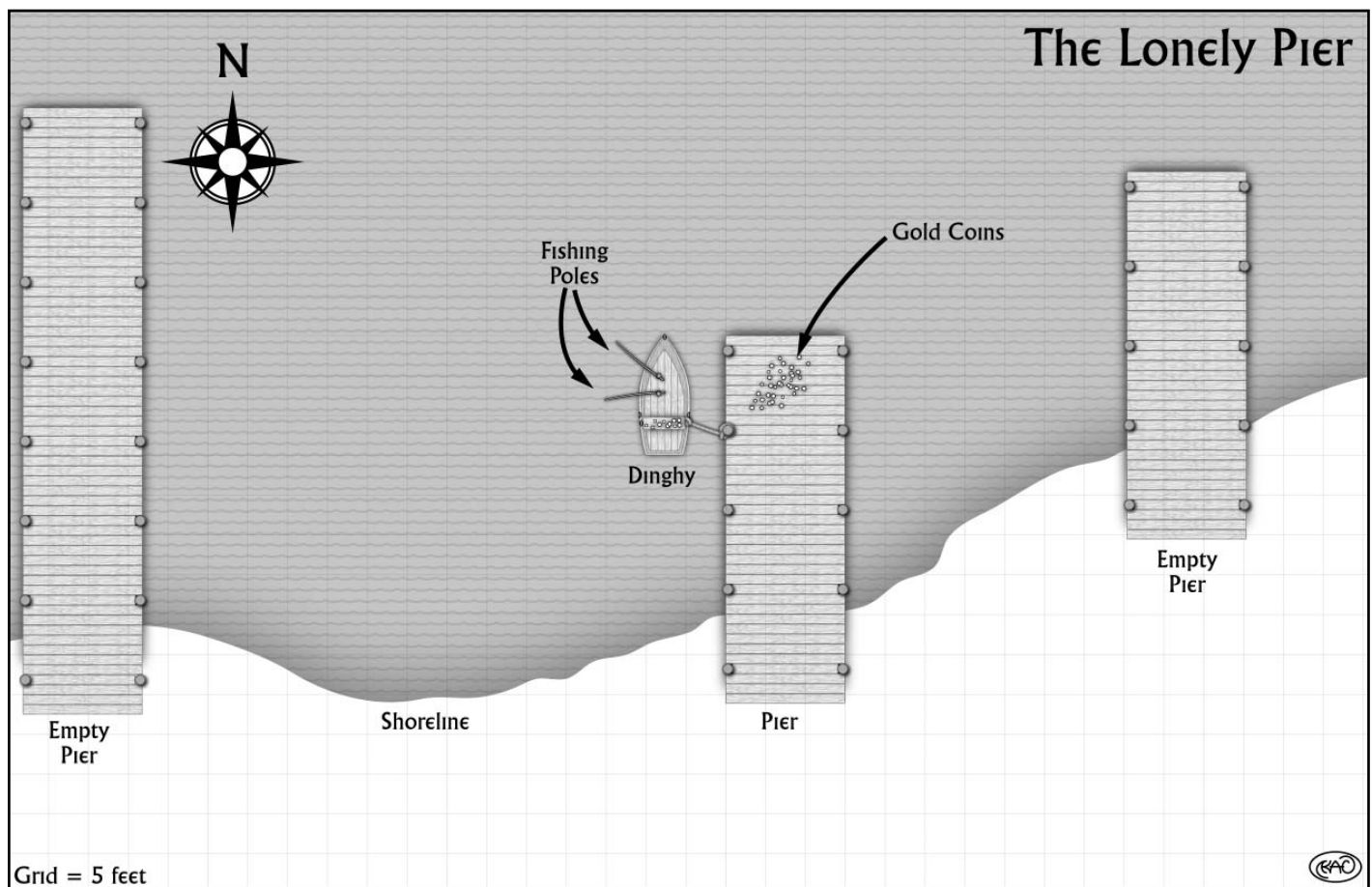
Poison: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) poison damage (DC 15 Constitution saving throw to take half damage).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

For 4th- to 6th-level characters, the complexity of the encounter can be increased by having the characters perform DC 16 Dexterity checks to avoid snapping a number of rotten boards at the midpoint and falling into the 6-foot-deep waters. A second briny mimic could also be lurking in the waters beneath the pier and lash out and attack any characters that fall into the water.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 150 XP between the characters if they discover the true nature of the dinghy. Divide 450 XP between the characters if they defeat the briny mimic. If the briny mimic escapes, divide 100 XP if the creature is reduced to at least half of its hit points.



THE CURIOUS TOME

By James Floyd Kelly

Low-level characters (such as 1st- and 2nd-level characters for this drop-in encounter) are always looking for new armor and weapons, but this small supply shop encounter is likely to make them a bit more cautious in the future when they find a great bargain. Optionally, the special buckler can easily be discovered in any treasure hoard. Share the following description with them the next time they find themselves browsing for armor and weapons in a small shop:

Scattered throughout the small shop is an assortment of armor and weapons, most of it not in the best of shape. It's a tight squeeze in the shop for you and your fellow adventurers, and as you weave your way through the stacks of equipment a worn, grimy buckler is bumped and falls from where it hangs on the wall.

If the characters take even a cursory look, have a fighter or any dwarf or gnome spot a wooden buckler with some peculiar design elements that indicate exquisite craftsmanship. A DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will allow any player holding or examining the buckler to notice a bit of leather backing that is slightly peeled away. Pulling on the leather will reveal a thin leather-bound tome with rounded cover and pages hidden inside the shield. If the merchant becomes aware of the discovery, he will demand to see the tome but a successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check by any character can scare him off.

Buckler. The neglected buckler can be purchased for 4 gp (although the merchant can be haggled down to 3 gp); it is in need of repair, and 2 gp to any decent blacksmith will restore its original durability. The buckler (repaired or not) is itself a treasure; created by Deedloh, a celebrated gnome armorer of lore, the shield can fetch a handsome price among gnome collectors of such items. Its value as an art piece will be placed at 185 gp if examined in a large city by a weapon or armor historian.

Hidden Book. The book is a *tome of entrapment* (see sidebar) and consists of only two pages; the first page is blank and the second page has a single statement

written in flaky black ink: “Release Shirrba the Wish Giver.” Its original purpose was to guard a private library from thieves. The book was open and displayed prominently on a small desk with the phrase visible. If a gullible thief read the phrase, the creature would be released and immediately attack. Being portable, smart adventurers might find it useful for slowing down pursuers who find the “dropped” book and read the phrase.

The Current Resident. When 1st- to 2nd-level characters first encounter this tome of entrapment, the trapped creature will be an (extremely angry) **orc mercenary**.



ORC MERCENARY

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

AC: 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points: 60 (9d8 + 20)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills: Intimidation +2

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Common, Orc

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Cheap Shot: When the orc mercenary's hit points have been reduced to half or less, the orc may make a bonus action at -1 to hit.

ACTIONS

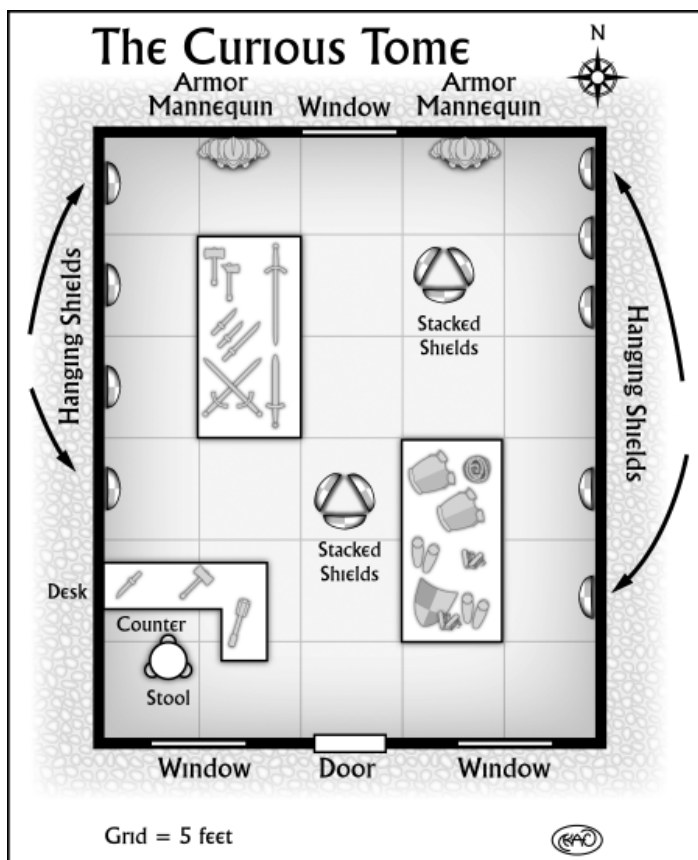
Greataxe: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

For 3rd- to 4th-level characters, the trapped creature will be a **minotaur** (see MM p. 223). For 5th- to 6th-level characters, the trapped creature will be a **medusa** (see MM p. 214).

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 100 XP between the characters if they discover the hidden magical item. Award appropriate XP if the characters defeat the trapped creature.



TOME OF ENTRAPMENT

Wondrous item, rare

This thin, circular, leather-bound book can be used by the holder to trap a single creature inside its pages. When the book is empty (no creature trapped), an incantation appears on the first page. If the holder reads the incantation while pointing at a creature, the creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be trapped. A trapped creature does not require food, water, or air while held by the book. The incantation is not a spell and can be read by anyone holding the book. A trapped creature must be released before the book can be used again.

Once a creature is trapped, the incantation disappears from the first page and the phrase "Release Shirrba the Wish Giver" appears on the second page. The phrase always appears in the primary language of the book's current holder. Any character holding the book and speaking the phrase aloud will release any trapped creature inside the book.

ADVENTURER'S BEST FRIEND

By James Floyd Kelly

Traveling from town to town can be dangerous for many reasons, not the least of them bandits and roadside marauders. Sometimes characters need a reminder that traveling alone is risky. This encounter takes place on a stretch of dirt road winding through a wooded forest, but it can be modified to fit into a dungeon crawl or other locale where dangers wait for unwary travelers. Read the following to 1st- and 2nd-level characters to get the encounter started:

Approximately 120 feet off the well-traveled path your fellow adventurers are following, a ghostly canine sits in the shade between two small trees, wagging its tail and panting heavily. Behind the animal, you spot a figure lying in the dirt, a shield still held in one hand and a sword in the other. This road has a history of highwaymen exacting a toll from travelers, and it appears this poor soul lacked sufficient funds to guarantee safe passage. After watching the dog for a few minutes, the only movement seen is the wagging tail and the slight movement of its head as it follows your actions.

This lone adventurer and his two canine companions were chased and attacked by bandits only a few days earlier. The man died first, and his two dogs fought to the last to defend their master before finally succumbing to their own injuries. The bodies of the dogs were taken by the bandits for their pelts.

Spectral Companions. Raised by the young man from pups, these two full-grown dogs have a bond with their master that transcends death. One dog is guarding the dead adventurer and will attack if a character attempts to search the body or remove any items (leather armor, shield, or sword). If any character begins to dig a grave, the dog guarding the body will wag its tail faster and move to the head of the grave and appear interested in the digging. Once a grave is dug, the dog will allow a character to move the body into the grave but will immediately attack if any attempt to remove items or search the body is made. Once buried, the ghostly dog will disappear.

If a cleric performs any blessing or ritual over the grave, the second dog will appear approximately 180 feet away from the characters and begin barking. If the characters investigate this location, the second dog will disappear and a search of the area will reveal the hidden calfskin bag.

Adventurer. This young fighter had spotted the bandits following his travels through the forest and had the foresight to hide his valuables under a nearby fallen tree when he realized a confrontation was inevitable. Inside a small calfskin bag are two rubies (valued at 20 gp each), 14 gp, and a small hand-carved wooden trinket in the shape of a canoe (value 2 gp). The man is wearing leather armor and is holding a shortsword and small shield. Any attempt to remove the items or search the body will cause the **spectral companion** guarding the body to attack.

SPECTRAL COMPANION (2)

Medium undead, neutral good

AC: 12

Hit Points: 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed: 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)

Skills: Perception +2, Stealth +2

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages: -

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Silent Movement: The spectral companion moves through difficult terrain and solid objects as if it were normal terrain. The creature takes 4 (1d8) damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

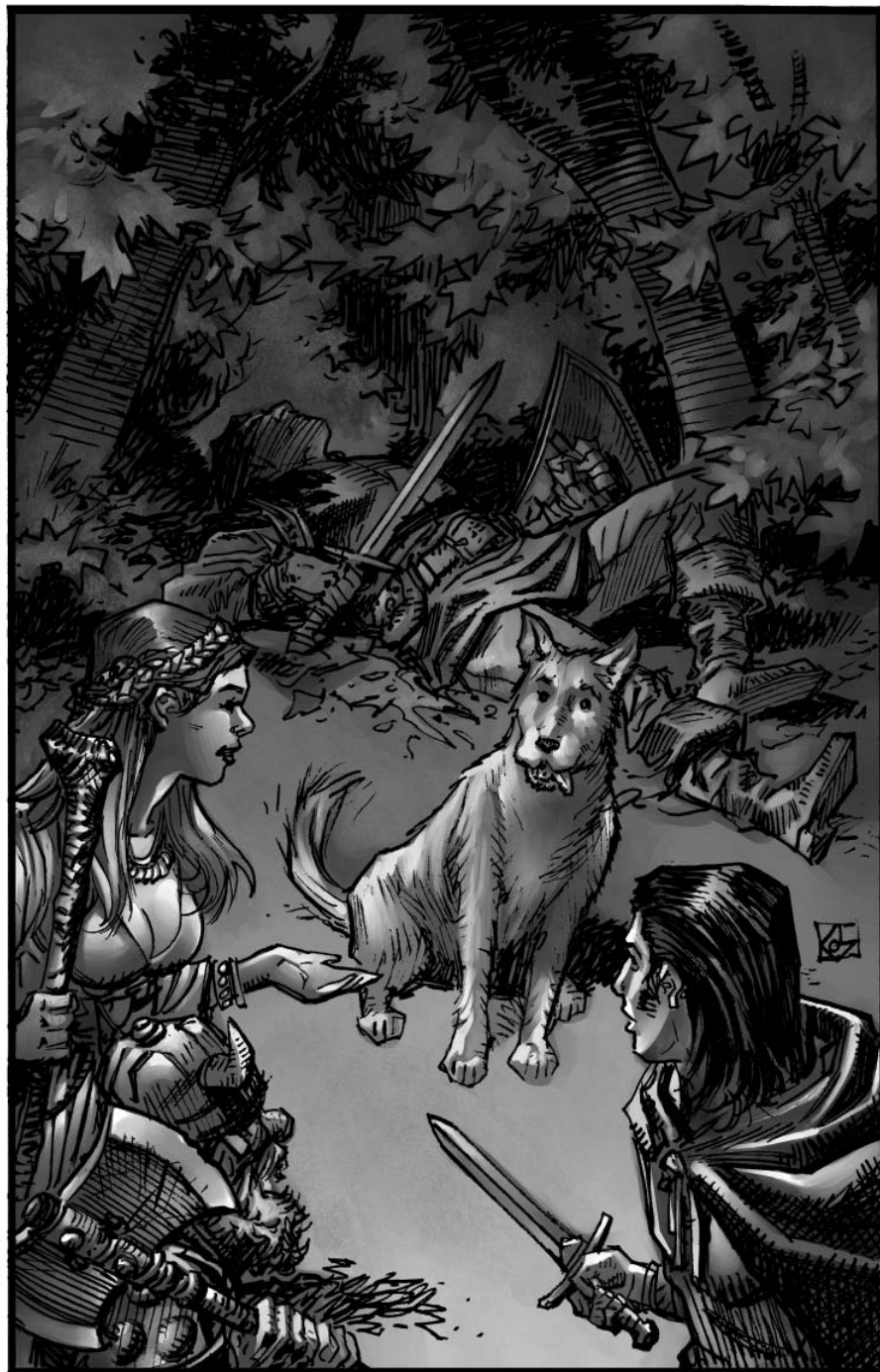
Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

For 3rd- through 5th-level characters, increase the difficulty of the encounter by adding a number of **bandits** (see MM p. 343) equal to double the number of characters. The spectral companion will attack any characters or bandits that move within 5 feet of the dead adventurer. If the bandits are defeated, the dog will remain guarding the body until the characters leave or a grave is dug and its master buried.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 200 XP between the characters for each spectral companion defeated in combat. If the spectral companions are not killed, divide 400 XP if the dead adventurer is buried and divide 100 XP if the adventurer's valuables are recovered.



A BROKEN WINDOW

By James Floyd Kelly



ometimes a traditional weapon just isn't the solution. After the 3rd- to 4th-level characters find themselves seeking shelter from a severe lightning storm inside a tiny abandoned church in a dark forest, only the most observant of the group will discover a secret to defeating evil. Read the following when the characters have entered the church:

The lightning strikes have increased over the last half-hour, and the wind howls even louder outside the ancient stone walls of the church. Surprisingly, the walls and roof appear well-made, and the structure holds. A rotting wooden pulpit leans on a dirt floor beneath a surprisingly intact stained glass window.

Have each character make a DC 13 passive Perception check. There are three observations to make from the window before it shatters, and each successful check will allow one of the following discoveries to be made:

- The scene shows a lone cleric fighting a shadowy figure in hand-to-hand combat.
- In the cleric's right hand is a lengthy shard of glass.
- In the background, the church's construction is almost finished but the stained glass window is missing.
- Two dusty vials of holy water can be found beneath the rotten pulpit.

After the characters have had a chance to explore and determine the church is empty, continue reading:

While the stained glass window has remained undamaged despite the lashing of a few tree limbs and the pounding from the thunder, it is no match for a bolt of lightning that strikes its surface and sends shards of various sizes falling to the ground. A dark shadow flails momentarily where the window existed and then falls to the ground along with the pieces of glass.

Window. The window was created when the church was attacked long ago by a **cursed shade**. The cleric's only weapons were an assortment of glass pieces. The faithful cleric called out for assistance, and his deity responded by creating the stained glass window that trapped the cursed shade.

Cursed Shade. Wandering forever in search of holy ground to terrorize, a cursed shade will seek out churches, temples, and even graveyards to spread its evil intent. A cursed shade is often mistaken for a shadow (see MM p. 269), with adventurers striking out with fire and light only to discover the cursed shade is immune to those attacks.

Blessed Glass. The glass has retained its *blessed* nature, and will deliver extra damage when used to attack a cursed shade. Six small shards of the shattered window may be used as daggers (1d4 + bonuses) and three large shards (1d8 + bonuses) can be used in place of larger single-handed weapons. All shards deal radiant damage to the cursed shade. If a character does not wrap the shards with cloth or leather before using, 1d4 slashing damage will be taken by that character at the beginning of each attack.



CURSED SHADE

Medium undead, chaotic evil

AC: 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed: 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills: Stealth +5 (+6 in low light or darkness)

Damage Vulnerabilities: radiant

Damage Resistances: bludgeoning, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities: charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: -

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Amorphous: The cursed shade moves easily through narrow gaps and small spaces.

Glass Weakness: When struck by a piece of *blessed* glass, the cursed shade takes double damage and has disadvantage on its next attack roll or saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The cursed shade makes one Shadow Whip attack and one Necrotic Touch attack per turn.

Shadow Whip: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 11 (2d6 + 4) necrotic damage.

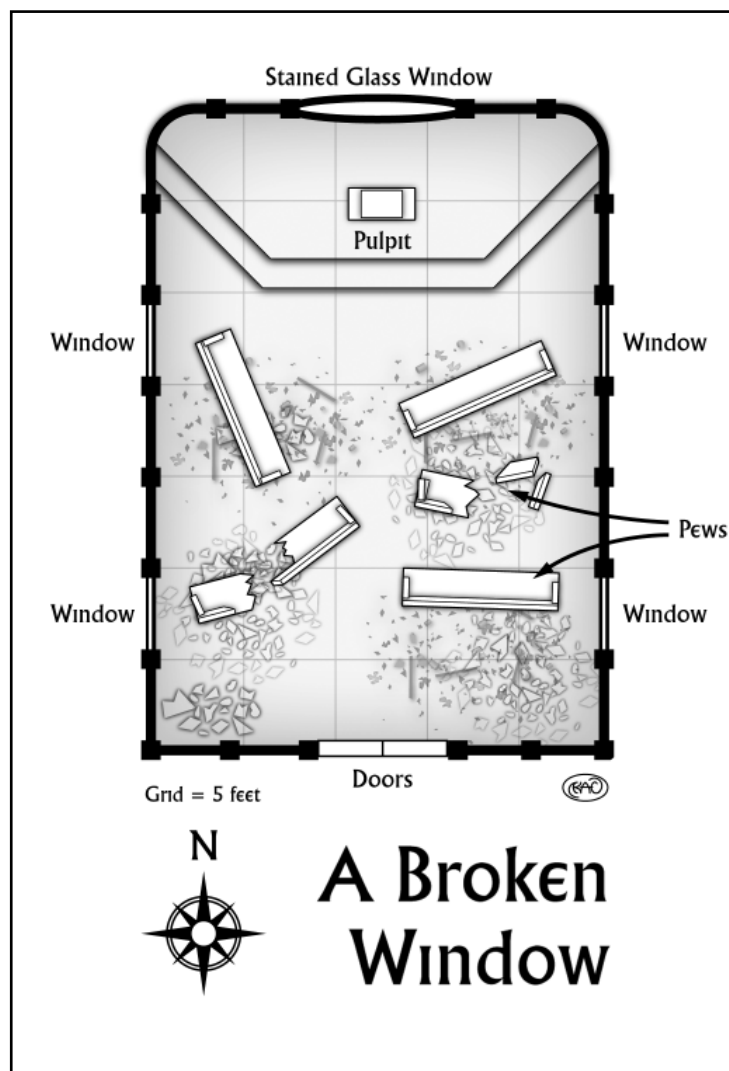
Necrotic Touch: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) necrotic damage, and reduces the target's hit point maximum by the amount of necrotic damage taken. The target dies when its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. A short or long rest is required for full recovery.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

For level 5 to 8 characters, two cursed shades are released when the window shatters, and one gigantic shard is also available for attack (1d10 + bonuses, requires Dexterity 16 to wield or first use will break it into two large shards).

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 700 XP when cursed shade is defeated. If characters discover the cursed shade's weakness to *blessed* glass divide an additional 100 XP. If the stained glass window is repaired using the *mending* spell, divide an additional 100 XP and award the character casting the spell a Blessing of Protection (+1 AC and saving throws) from the pleased deity.



THE COMPASS LIES

By James Floyd Kelly

Adventurers know the value of a good map. Getting lost in a city or town is one thing, but losing your bearing in the depths of a dungeon crawl can mean the difference between life and death. If your 2nd- and 3rd-level adventurers start getting lackadaisical with taking notes and stop documenting their wanderings, this little encounter should remind them of the value of paying attention to direction of travel. Drop a 25-foot-by-25-foot room with a door in each wall into any dungeon or castle exploration and read the following:

Four simple stone walls, each with a closed wooden door, reach to a height of 20 feet in this square room. To the left and right of each door stand wooden training dummies, complete with wooden swords and shields. A 2-foot-diameter stone cylinder rises waist-high in the center of the room. A compass needle spins continuously on a cork in a small water-filled bowl that rests on the top of the cylinder.

This room is designed for one purpose: to hold any intruders who enter the space and who do not know the secret of using the compass to exit. An **animated training dummy** is designed to attack in certain situations. Observant characters should be able to discern clues about the compass' behavior.

Doors. The room has four doors, one on each wall. All doors must be closed in order to reset the compass. Above each door is a single glyph that represents north, east, west, and south. Only one door can be opened at a time; any character who attempts to open a second door will find that door magically locked (DC 25 Strength check to open). A single animated training dummy will also attack for each attempt at destroying a door or the cylinder and compass. When a room door is opened, a second door will be seen at the end of a 5-foot-wide-by-10-foot-long hallway. This new door cannot be opened until one or more characters enter the hallway and close the room door. Once the room door is closed, characters may open the door at the end of the hallway.

Compass. When the compass is first encountered, it

will be spinning clockwise continuously. When all four doors are closed and a character touches the cylinder, the compass will stop spinning and point in the direction of one of the four doors. If the characters open the corresponding door, close it, and then proceed through the door at the end of the hallway, they will re-enter the compass room. The compass will point in a second direction. If the characters move through that door (and the one beyond), they will once again re-enter the compass room. A third (and final) door will be indicated by the compass. When the characters move through that door (and the one beyond it), they will re-enter the compass room for the third time. The compass will start spinning continuously again until the cylinder is touched, restarting the three-point process.



The Trick. The compass always points in the opposite direction of where the characters should move. If the compass points north, for example, the characters should open and proceed through the south door. A rogue who examines the compass and makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will discover the compass has been tampered with and the indicator will be off target by at least 90 degrees (reducing the possible directions to take to three). Any sorcerer, warlock, or wizard who examines the compass and makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will detect traces of magic that will force the compass to be off target by 180 degrees (and revealing the proper direction to take). After three movements that are opposite to the direction indicated by the compass, the characters escape the compass room.

ANIMATED TRAINING DUMMY (8)

Medium construct, unaligned

AC: 13 (shield)

Hit Points: 40 (9d8)

Speed: 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses: passive Perception 10

Languages: -

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The animated attack dummy makes two attacks: one with its shortsword and one with its shield slam.

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

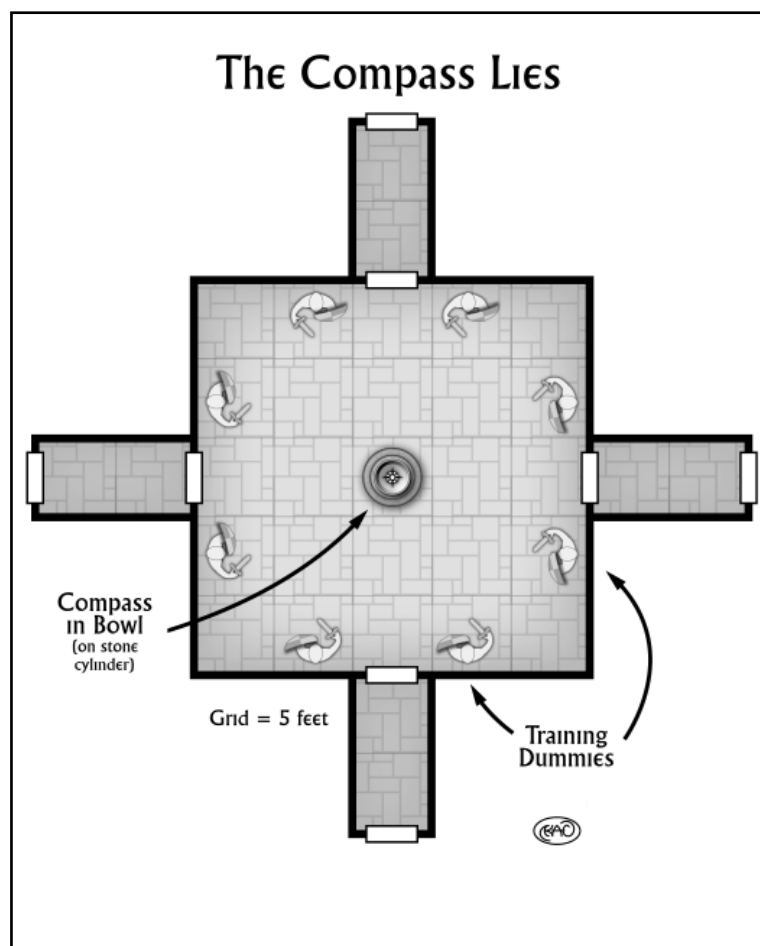
Shield Slam: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

For 4th- to 6th-level characters, the animated training dummies will be wearing studded leather (AC 15) and two animated training dummies will attack each time a door is opened that does not correspond to where the compass is pointing. The two dummies share an initiative roll and will perform coordinated attacks on a single target.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Divide 400 XP when characters successfully exit the compass room. Award 50 XP for each defeated animated training dummy.



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