

הַאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת הֵיאֵךְ הַאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת הַאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת הַאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת

SHATTERED SKIES

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CASUAL CONFRONTATIONS #1



THE FESTER LIONS DEN

BY ROBERT GRESHAM



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THE FESTER LIONS DEN

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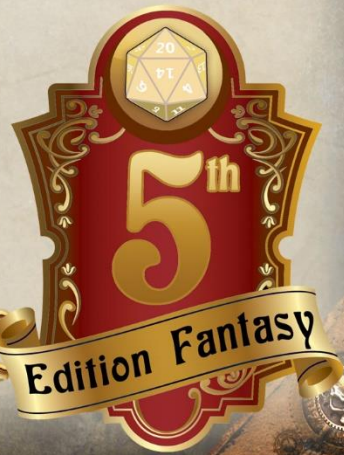
NEW MONSTER

FESTER LION6

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PUBLISHING



Welcome to Casual Confrontations! This product is for dungeon masters who would like to use a more detailed encounter in place of a random encounter when the time calls for one. This series aims to showcase classic and rare creatures in a challenging and memorable encounter that your players are sure to enjoy.

The following casual confrontation, The Fester Lion's Den is for 4-5, 5th level characters, and uses the 5th edition of the Dungeons and Dragons Roleplaying Game Ruleset. It also introduces the fester lion, a magical beast that preys on mindless undead that it creates!

ENCOUNTER BACKGROUND

Over the past 50 years, a fester lion has been preying on hunters and adventurers traveling through this stretch of the forest. It has been hoarding it's favored food-zombies that it creates-in a secluded cave. The PC's might come across this encounter in the following ways:

- **Random.** Casual Confrontations are designed to be used as random encounters whenever travel, environment, or a published adventure scenario calls for a roll on a random encounter chart. Instead of rolling, substitute the following encounter for the random result.
- **Desperate Spouse.** A worried villager in town approaches the PC's upon learning they are preparing to travel in the forest. Her spouse has gone missing in the region they are about to explore, and she presses the PC's to search for him along the way. She informs the characters that her husband was a local cleric and that the church will surely reward them for their help.
- **Intentional.** As the PC's are traveling through the woods, they find the remains of a rotted corpse. Investigating the body reveals that it has been partially devoured. Nearby tracks, and the bite wounds suggest that a large creature was the culprit, and that the body did not die where it lays. PC's can then follow the tracks to the fester lion's den.

THE FESTER LION'S DEN

When the party approaches the encounter site, read or paraphrase the following.

"Ahead you see a series of low, rocky cliffs. An opening in the rock leads into a darkened cave. Broken bones, bleached-white, litter the grass and dirt before the entrance."

PC's who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine that the bones are at least 30 years old, and were gnawed on by a large, fanged creature.

Cave Features: No light. Unless otherwise described, the cave walls are solid stone and the interior ceilings are 15' high. The ground is also stone, but pale, sickly grass grows in sporadic patches.

I. ENTRANCE

"This wide, rocky chamber is littered with large, pungent scat droppings, assorted bones, and fractured skulls. To the left, an ample passage branches towards two smaller alcoves. To the right, a pool of still water sits in the front corner of the cave. Further ahead, a narrower tunnel leads deeper within."

Creatures: Four zombies occupy this chamber. They have been commanded by the fester lion to remain here and attack anyone, including the fester lion, should they enter this chamber. The big cat enjoys playing with these undead, playfully batting them around his lair, before eating one each day.

If the characters have come from the nearby town, via the **Desperate Spouse** hook, they see that one of the zombies fits the description of the missing cleric. Either way, the PC's can see that one zombie carries a scroll case on his side, and a silver holy symbol around his neck. **Note:** the zombies are created as part of the fester lion's special abilities, and their CR contributes to his overall CR.



ZOMBIE (4)

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHR
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands common, but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



Treasure: The zombie with the gear has a scroll of *lesser restoration* and a silver holy symbol worth 25 gp. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, reveals two fist-sized gems, worth 75 gp each, among the scattered piles of bones.

2. STILL POOL

"Viscous scum dots the surface of this shallow pool of stale, stagnant water. Stalactites encircle it like jagged teeth. Foul smelling vapor creeps up from it, stinging your nostrils, and dark shapes clutter its murky bottom."

The pool was once home to an undead ooze, and was the creature that initially lured the fester lion to this cave. Since devouring the ooze, the fester lion uses the pool for refreshment, drinking and occasionally bathing in it. Characters drinking from the pool must make a successful DC 16 Fortitude Saving Throw or become *poisoned*.



3. COLUMNED CHAMBER

"The walls in this almost crescent-shaped room appear smoother to the touch than the previous chamber. Two stone columns support the cave here, their surface coated in what look-like thin webs. Sitting at the base of the far column is a headless skeleton in rotted, partially devoured leather armor."

The columns are covered with tiny carvings depicting humanoid creatures made of grass worshipping a great tree, and then later fighting a devastating battle against fire-breathing goblins. There are thousands of the tiny pictograms, detailing clan sizes, and marriages, but the ones of the battle are the oldest and most detailed. No readable words exist on the columns, but the overall collection of carvings suggest it is a record of a clan of forest creatures, family histories, and of their destruction.

The carvings can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and characters with *stonecunning* automatically determines the battle carvings are the oldest. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) also reveals this knowledge. A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check suggests that the grass creatures are Thorns; a small fey race, and their foes are the goblinoid Belchers.

The skeleton is of a dwarf. A backpack with the body is partially concealed under it, but easily spotted with a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. Inside the pack are: 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds* and a scroll of *lesser restoration*.

4. INTO THE LIONS DEN

"The ceiling in this part of the cave vaults to a height of thirty feet. The rest of the chamber is expansive. Piles of bones lie scattered along the dirty floor among bent and broken weapons."



This is the lair of the fester lion. The intelligent, large cat may become alerted to the presence of the PC's before they enter this chamber. As the zombies and the characters are engaged in combat, if the fester lion succeeds at a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, he hears the fight. He prepares to charge the first viable character, using his *deadly leap* ability. It focuses on a single target at a time, hoping to kill and animate these intruders later to devour.

Fester Lion (see page 6).

Treasure: If the PC's succeed on a DC 17 Perception Skill check, they find a +1 battle ax among the scattered bones, and a sack containing 80 cp, 700 sp, 210 gp, and 15 pp in assorted coins.

Development: If the characters sought out the cave as a result of the desperate spouse hook, and return with the news of his death, the widow nods, as if expecting the news. She is grateful to at least know of his fate and rewards the PC's with a scroll of *lesser restoration*.



FESTER LION

FESTER LION

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 50)

Speed 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHR
19 (+4)	11 (+1)	21 (+5)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 16

Languages -

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Animate Dead. As an action the fester lion can animate any dead creature within 60 feet that was damaged by its tentacle's necrotic damage within the last 24 hours. Creatures animated by the fester lion rise as zombies.

A fester lion can animate a number of Hit Dice of creatures equal to its own Hit Dice. Any attempt to animate a creature whose HD would cause this limit to be exceeded automatically fails.

Drain Unlife. Any time the fester lion damages an undead creature with one of its tentacle attacks, it heals a number of hit points equal to the damage dealt.

Innate Spellcasting. The fester lion's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). The fester lion can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components: *At will- detect undead*

Keen Smell. The fester lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Standing Leap. The fester lion's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fester lion makes four attacks: two with its claws, one with its tentacles and one with its bite.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1 d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage + 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage

taken, and the fester lion regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Deadly Leap. If the fester lion jumps at least 15 feet as part of its movement, it can then use this action to land on its feet in a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 19 (4d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 19 (4d6 + 5) slashing damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet out of the fester lion's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the fester lion's space.

Fester Lions crave the taste of undead flesh, gaining sustenance from the consumption of the foul energies that animate the undead. Despite hunting and consuming undead, the fester lion remains a menace to the living. Although a fester lion prefers to destroy and consume existing undead, it gains greater pleasure and more fulfilling sustenance from killing living creatures, animating them as undead thralls, and then feasting on their necromantic energy.

A fester lion looks like an oily-furred lion with long, cancerous tentacles sprouting from its mane. They have muscular bodies, and powerful hind legs which they use to leap onto their prey. They stand just over 6 feet and weigh about 750 pounds. Fester lion's often clutch hunks of carrion or decaying prey with their grotesque tentacles, savoring their meals for days.

When a fester lion touches a living creature with one of its cancerous tentacles, it drains some of the creature's health and vitality away. At the same time, it transfers some of the necromantic energy that suffuses its own body into its victim. Should a creature struck by the tentacle die within 24 hours, the fester lion can animate it as an undead creature. Although they eventually consume any creature that they animate, fester lions enjoy toying with their undead creations as a cat would a mouse.

SHATTERED SKIES

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