



THE RIVER RUNS RED

The Golden Paragon Trading Company has been working for months to secure a long-term trade deal with the Seven Suns Trading Coster, but efforts to deliver the final agreements to Calaunt have each ended with dead envoys and missing documents. The latest delegation recently departed Elmwood, traveling south down the River Lis. The Golden Paragon seeks experienced individuals to follow their representatives and ensure they reach their destination safely. Can the adventurers catch them before another tragedy occurs?

A Two-Hour Adventure for 11th–16th Level Characters



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The River Runs Red*, part one of a D&D adventure that is part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 11th-16th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 13th-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms. During play, the characters travel down the River Lis to aid a besieged trade delegation. The characters come upon the scene of an apparent ambush. There they find signs of survivors and clues that indicate those remaining fled southeast into the Flooded Forest. Can the characters find and rescue what is left of the trade delegation before it meets an untimely end in the dangerous forest?

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare:

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the

irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 13th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters.
- Divide the total by the number of characters.
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the average party level (APL) for the adventure. To figure out the party strength for the adventure, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.
- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services
- Training

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with or add lifestyle expenses.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds (1st level)</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request one spell per day from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or are killed. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the *D&D Basic Rules*).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

ADVENTURE LOGSHEET

Record each session of play below. Express Downtime in daily increments. Record certified and non-certified permanent magic items (all magic items except for potions, scrolls, and some wand items).

Halapi Fasketell		Wizard 4		Harper	
CHARACTER NAME		CLASSES AND LEVELS		FACTION	
Tom S.		854-789-2386		1	
PLAYER NAME		DIO #		SHEET #	
Lost Mine of Phandelver		Part 1: Goblin Arrows		Rick L. (349-213-9905)	
Adventure Name	Session #	Date	DM Name and DCI #		
0	1	08/13/2014	0	0	
Starting XP	Starting Gold	Starting Downtime	Starting Reason	Starting # of Magic Items	
350	+20	+10	1	0	
XP Earned	Downtime x/1	Downtime x/2	Reason Earned	Magic Items x/1	
350	20	10	1	0	
XP Total	Gold Total	Downtime Total	Reason Total	Magic Items Total	
Adventure Notes/Downtime Activity					
Lost Mine of Phandelver		Part 2: Phandalin		Rick L. (349-213-9905)	
Adventure Name	Session #	Date	DM Name and DCI #		
350	125	10	1	0	
Starting XP	Starting Gold	Starting Downtime	Starting Reason	Starting # of Magic Items	
675	+275	+10	1	0	
XP Earned	Downtime x/1	Downtime x/2	Reason Earned	Magic Items x/1	
1,025	400	20	2	0	
XP Total	Gold Total	Downtime Total	Reason Total	Magic Items Total	
Adventure Notes/Downtime Activity					
Lost Mine of Phandelver		Part 3: The Spider's Web		Rick L. (349-213-9905)	
Adventure Name	Session #	Date	DM Name and DCI #		
1,025	400	20	2	0	
Starting XP	Starting Gold	Starting Downtime	Starting Reason	Starting # of Magic Items	
2,475	+380	+10	1	+1	
XP Earned	Downtime x/1	Downtime x/2	Reason Earned	Magic Items x/1	
3,500	780	30	3	1	
XP Total	Gold Total	Downtime Total	Reason Total	Magic Items Total	
Adventure Notes/Downtime Activity					
Found a ring of protection.					

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DEATH

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

Additional Credits

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THE RIVER RUNS RED

A fool and his money are soon parted.

— *Furjur the Flippant*

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Golden Paragon Trading Company out of Hillsfar has been working for months to secure a long-term trade deal with the Seven Suns Trading Coster of Calaunt. The lucrative agreement sets payment and delivery terms for high-quality marble mined near Hillsfar and timber taken from Cormanthor, both of which will be shipped down the River Lis and into the Dragon Reach, eventually reaching Calaunt.

Unfortunately, a recurring problem has occurred getting the contract fully executed. Two previous small trade delegations representing the Golden Paragon and the Seven Suns were attacked. In both cases, the envoys and their bodyguards were killed while traveling down the River Lis, and their negotiated contracts were destroyed. (The contracts exist in triplicate, with a copy signed by one side heading for the other side for countersigning. The second signer keeps a copy, one copy goes to a temple of Waukeen for recordkeeping, and one copy returns by envoy to the original signers.)

The principals of the Golden Paragon suspect a rival trading cabal, House Nanther of Melvaunt, is behind this violent interference, but they have no solid proof. If the agreement between the Golden Paragon and the Seven Suns goes through, it would immediately cut House Nanther out of much of the area's marble and timber trade. Such a deal would likely result in the near ruin or even collapse of House Nanther's business, while the Golden Paragon would rise and become the most powerful Moonsea trading cabal.

The Golden Paragon (the first signer of the contract) plans to make a third attempt, and this time they are preparing for trouble. To ensure success, they have hired a well-armed adventuring band to escort the trade delegation downriver. As an extra precaution, the characters are hired to follow the delegation and come to their aid, if needed.

The adventure begins with the characters already having agreed to the work and received a third of their payment (the other two-thirds will be paid out after their work is complete). The action picks up as a meeting takes place between the characters and their contact, the jovial, eccentric merchant named Furjur the Flippant. Furjur has been retained by the Golden Paragon Trading Company to oversee the procurement of any "necessary swordwork" they might need. The Golden Paragon and the Seven Suns

know he is a Harper agent, but their motivations are purely financial, and they hired Furjur for his trustworthiness, not his faction connections.

Note: Characters who previously played *CCC-GHC-1 Tharaera Lost* or *CCC-GHC-3 Facing the Dark* may know Furjur is a Harper agent. However, aside from the fact that the Harpers think House Nanther is too powerful, Those Who Harp play no direct part in this adventure.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The River Runs Red consists of three parts.

Part 1: Furjur the Flippant. The characters finish their meeting with Furjur and learn the full details of their mission.

Part 2: Ambush. The characters arrive at the scene of a slaughter. They do not find the leader of the trade delegation, the adventurers hired to protect them, or the trade agreement documents. They do find signs of an ambush and indications survivors may have fled down a side channel of the River Lis that flows southeast into the Flooded Forest. As they prepare to follow, a mated pair of hydras attack, and two giant crocodiles join the assault, drawn to the locale by the recent killing.

Part 3: Into the Swamp. The characters follow the tracks from the ambush site down the side channel, possibly encountering a mercenary ambush. Shortly thereafter, they spy nearby ruins containing a campfire. As they make their way toward the ruins, they stumble upon a pack of trolls and a trap the dimwitted creatures use to capture animals for food.

Trade Agreement

>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Senean commode ligula eget dolor. Senean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium quis sem. Nulla consequat massa quis enim. Donec pede justo, fringilla vel, aliquet nec, vulputate eget, arcu. In enim justo, rheneus ut imperdiet a, venenatis vitae justo. Nullam dictum felis eu pede mollis pretium. Integer tincidunt. Cras dapibus. Vivamus elementum semper nisi. Senean vulputate eleifend tellus. Senean leo ligula, porttitor eu, consequat vitae, eleifend ac, enim. Aliquam lorem ante, dapibus in, viverra quis, freguat a, tellus. Phasellus viverra nulla ut metus varius laoreet. Quisque rutrum. Senean imperdiet. Etiam ultricies nisi vel augue. Curabitur ullamcorper ultricies nisi. Nam eget dui. Etiam rheneus. Maecenas tempus, tellus eget condimentum rheneus sem quam, semper libero, sit amet adipiscing sem, neque sed ipsum. Nam quam nunc, blandit vel, luctus pulvinar, hendrerit id, lorem. Maecenas nec odio et ante tincidunt tempus. Donec vitae sapien ut libero venenatis faucibus. Nullam quis ante. Etiam sit amet orci eget eros faucibus tincidunt. Duis leo. Sed fringilla mauris sit amet nibh. Donec sedates sagittis magna. Sed consequat, leo eget bibendum sedates augue, velit cursus nunc. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Senean commode ligula eget dolor. Senean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium quis sem. Nulla consequat massa quis enim. Donec pede justo, fringilla vel, aliquet nec, vulputate eget, arcu. In enim justo, rheneus ut imperdiet a, venenatis vitae justo. Nullam dictum felis eu pede mollis pretium. Integer tincidunt. Cras dapibus. Vivamus elementum semper nisi. Senean vulputate eleifend tellus. Senean leo ligula, porttitor eu, consequat vitae, eleifend ac, enim. Aliquam lorem ante, dapibus in, viverra quis, freguat a, tellus. Phasellus viverra nulla ut metus varius laoreet. Quisque rutrum. Senean imperdiet. Etiam ultricies nisi vel augue. Curabitur ullamcorper ultricies nisi. Nam eget dui. Etiam rheneus. Maecenas tempus, tellus eget condimentum rheneus sem quam, semper libero, sit amet adipiscing sem, neque sed ipsum. Nam quam nunc, blandit vel, luctus pulvinar, hendrerit id, lorem. Maecenas nec odio et ante tincidunt tempus. Donec vitae sapien ut libero venenatis faucibus. Nullam quis ante. Etiam sit amet orci eget eros faucibus tincidunt. Duis leo. Sed fringilla mauris sit amet nibh. Donec sedates sagittis magna. Sed consequat, leo eget bibendum sedates augue, velit cursus nunc.

PART 1: FURJUR THE FLIPPANT

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

When the adventure opens, the characters are about to meet with the extravagant Furjur the Flippant at a teahouse in the southern Moonsea city of Elmwood. They have already agreed to take the mission outlined in the Adventure Background and have received partial payment.

Saronder's Slake is a tall, narrow, ramshackle teahouse that's leaning into the alleyway beside it. It's none too new and none too clean, but seems busy, bustling with cheerful folk and sporting a bright awning. Inside, the scents of aromatic teas (notably orange, rosehip and what smells like watermelon) are strong in the air, and there's much chatter around the many small tables. No one takes the slightest interest in the arrival of armed adventurers except a demure young half-elven server, who comes forward to wave you to a table with her apron--and a jovial, large-moustachioed and fiercely sideburned, plump middle-aged man who adroitly intercepts her and hails you, "My guests! Please, sit with me! We have things to discuss!"

You recognize this loudly welcoming merchant: Furjur the Flippant, the man who paid you yesterday for this mission (one third, that is; the rest will be yours when the work is done: 500 gp now, the remaining 1,000 upon completion), and requested you attend him here for a final briefing. He seems in some haste.

Roleplaying Furjur the Flippant

"Furjur the Flippant" was a legendary merchant who thrived in the 1340s and 1350s DR. He was known for his vibrant and jovial personality, but he also had a sly and prankish streak. The man who now claims the merchant's moniker is actually a Harper agent working in the southern reaches of the Moonsea. Furjur's real name is unknown to all but a few of the Harper's highest-ranking agents.

While the large man can be serious when necessary, he prefers to maintain his jolly personality in public, as it helps him appear non-threatening. He dresses as a wealthy merchant, wearing long coats and expensive leather riding boots. During conversation, he pauses often to laugh loudly or pat a character on the back and chuckle.

Under the façade, Furjur is an intelligent, thoughtful man who genuinely has the best interests of the Moonsea at heart. He travels and works tirelessly to help the Harpers accomplish their goals.

Furjur does his best to answer the characters' questions, but he is in a hurry and repeatedly tells the party they must leave immediately if they hope to catch the delegation. In the course of his hurried conversation, he indicates that if the characters see any casualties or missing delegates, they should

demand to examine all three copies of the trade agreement. The trade delegates and their escorts have been instructed to let the party see them, providing they give the right code-phrase: *A fool and his money are soon parted*. He also states they should search for and recover any of the missing documents.

He informs the party that the mission is the third attempt to consummate the trade agreement between the Golden Paragon and the Seven Suns Trading Coster. The first delegation was ambushed in the Cormanathor and completely destroyed. The second was another overland attempt. It was better supported by armed guards, but it unfortunately met with the same fate as the first. The trade documents were spirited away and the delegation was slaughtered. There was some weaponry found at the scene that seemed to indicate yuan-ti involvement.

Furjur also states that the Golden Paragon then decided to hire the characters, a group of very powerful adventurers, to act as backup due to these previous failed attempts and the possibility of yuan-ti involvement. He shows them (by means of a spell cast on a wall earlier by someone else) the faces of the trade delegates and the leader of the hired adventurers. Furjur describes the leader of the delegation as a human named Bellamin Pegason who travels with two human sub-envoys named Lauril and Elamros. He finishes by adding that the leader of the adventurers hired to escort the trio of delegates is a human named Xavtin Darkeyes.

Finally, Furjur explains that the trade documents cannot be teleported or moved in a similar fashion for a couple of reasons. First, the city of Calaunt seems to be under the effect of a *weirdstone*. The *weirdstone* prohibits all phasing, ethereal states, translocational magic (such as teleport, dimension door, etc.), scrying and divination magic, and astral travelers from occurring within, entering into, or looking into the city and its surrounding environs. Beyond that, Furjur informs the characters that the main principle of the Golden Paragon does not trust magical transport due to a misadventure years earlier that nearly took her life. For these reasons, the documents cannot simply be teleported there and back. As a result, the Golden Paragon has gone through the significant expense of placing a magic seal on the documents that acts as a dimensional anchor, preventing any sort of translocation magic.

Furjur does not answer any additional questions. Other matters demand his attention, and he sends the characters on their way, urging haste and stating that the trade delegation has already begun its journey. He reiterates the need to catch them before they meet with trouble, fearing an encounter in the dark could lead to a tragedy of mistaken identity or that the characters might fail to catch up with the trade delegation altogether.

PART 2: AMBUSH

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

Part 2 begins with the party already on the water and paddling down the River Lis. They travel in standard 16-foot canoes with two or three characters occupying each boat.

It's late afternoon with the sun lowering, and you have been in your boats for a couple of hours. Despite not being expert canoers, you have had a pleasant trip, and the current has carried you along at a sedate pace. The River Lis is shallow, tree lined, slow moving, and sandbar-ridden. As you turn a particular bend in the river, you come upon a horrific scene. Freshly slain humans lie half-submerged on sandbars or sprawled dead in their own blood along the riverbank.

Before the Characters Arrived

House Nanther is indeed the culprit behind the earlier attacks, and they have a mole inside the Golden Paragon, allowing them to know when the trade delegations are on the move. They hired a mercenary force to set up the river ambush. House Nanther's bullyblades duly pounced on the third delegation, but they were surprised by the ferocity of the trade envoys' outnumbered adventurer bodyguards, who fought them off. In the end, only a handful of wounded mercenaries survived. They fled down the main channel of the Lis in the boat that had brought them, leaving behind one of their number (the bullyblade corpse on the banks of the side channel).

Four of the party carrying the contracts survived, and they fled on foot along the banks of the side channel into the Flooded Forest. The remaining bullyblade tried to seize the contracts from them as they escaped. In this last fray, the two sub-envoys collapsed and died of their wounds along the banks, and the last of the adventurer escort, Xavtin Darkeyes, killed the final bullyblade.

Knowing the rest of the surviving mercenaries had taken the main channel of the Lis south, and fearing another attack if they continued downriver, Xavtin led the only remaining trade envoy, Bellamin Pegason, along the banks of the side channel into the dubious protection of the Flooded Forest. By the time the characters arrive, Xavtin and Bellamin (who now bears all three copies of the precious trade agreement) are out of sight and well down the banks of the side channel.

The characters quickly discover the third trade delegation has been attacked. A fierce battle obviously ensued, and there do not seem to be any survivors. When the characters start searching the bodies, they find some expected faces absent, including the primary Golden Paragon trade envoy, Bellamin Pegason, his two sub-envoys, Lauril and Elamros, and the leader of the adventurer bodyguard, Xavtin Darkeyes. The trade documents are also missing.

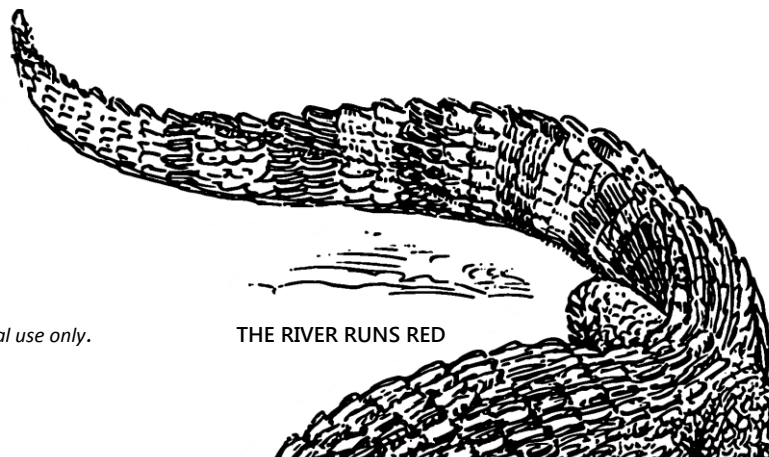
If the party searches further, (or if they decide to ignore their orders and paddle on past) they easily find an old, thick rope clumsily camouflaged with forest bushes and clumps of riverweed. It has been stretched across the river in an obvious attempt to stop any passing boats. The bodies of several slain bullyblades are caught on the rope, and blood flows freely from the deep sword gashes that ended their lives, staining the River Lis red for some distance. The characters also find that just downstream of the battlefield, the Lis splits. Its main channel continues south, and a side channel flows southeast into the Flooded Forest. The bodies of an unfamiliar armed bullyblade and the two sub-envoys, Lauril and Elamros, lie strewn along the banks of the side channel, suggesting that at least some of the combatants went that way.

If the characters search the ambush site, they find nothing other than common gear and bodies bearing numerous wounds from slashing weapons. If they search the corpses on the southern bank of side channel that heads southeast, they recognize the faces of Lauril and Elamros from Furjur's earlier instruction. In addition, each corpse prominently displays the device of the Golden Paragon Trading Company. The dead ambusher is a human wearing studded leather armor. A scimitar lies nearby, but his body does not contain any further clues as to who he was or for whom he worked.

Finally, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals tracks heading down the bank of the side channel. If the check is made by 5 or more, the searcher also learns that the tracks contain two distinct sets of footprints.

However, before the characters can complete their search, a trio of **hydras** interrupts them, attracted by the scent of blood. The hydras live in a fen directly to the east. Upon emerging from the forest, they immediately attack anyone they see. They each fight until reduced to 40 or less hit points before attempting to flee back to the east.

At the start of the third round of combat, two **giant crocodiles** emerge from the river, hoping to grab an easy meal. They attempt to bite characters near the water and drag them into the river. The crocodiles fight until reduced to 20 or less hit points before slinking back into the water and swimming away in search of an easier meal.



THE RIVER RUNS RED

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are the recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one **giant crocodile**. The remaining **giant crocodile** flees when reduced to half or less of its hit points.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **giant crocodile**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **giant crocodile**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **giant crocodiles**.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Light. Dim light.

River Bank. There is approximately 15 feet of open ground on the riverbank between the river and the trees.

TREASURE

The hydras do not have any treasure, but the belt pouch on the dead ambusher contains 100 gp and a silver ring with a small garnet set in it worth 100 gp.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters ignore all of the physical evidence indicating the survivors fled down the side channel to the southeast and instead continue down the main channel of the Lis, they run the risk of losing the trade delegation's trail. If this happens, read the text below to get them back on track.

It has been two hours since you encountered the grisly scene on the bank of the River Lis, and the continued journey downstream has been uneventful. Your search of the river's banks has been thorough, but you have come to accept that those you pursue did not flee in the same direction. It appears you will either need to paddle back upriver to the scene of the attack and search for more clues, or abandon your mission altogether.

While the River Lis is slow moving, paddling against its current is still difficult. To return to the scene of the attack, each character must make two successful DC 10 Constitution saving throws. A character gains a level of exhaustion for each failure, as the continued effort of paddling takes a toll their fortitude.

In the unlikely event that the characters opt to abandon their mission, the adventure ends, and they receive no XP, downtime, or renown.

PART 3: INTO THE SWAMP

Expected Duration: 45 minutes

If the characters follow the side channel of the River Lis into the Flooded Forest, they find an old trail that runs along the riverbank. If the party had an easy time with the hydras, and at least a full hour remains of your 2-hour slot, consider adding the **No Loose Ends** optional encounter below. If you do not have time, proceed to the **Fire in the Night** encounter. If you end up running the optional encounter, the **Fire in the Night** encounter takes place a few hundred yards down the trail from it.

NO LOOSE ENDS

Four mercenary **half-red dragon veterans** and their human **champion** leader were hired by House Nanther. They are part of the "make sure" follow-up team. However, they arrived too late for the ambush. They found the same signs and tracks the party did and started down the southeastern side channel. While following the trail mentioned above, they noticed the characters closing on them from behind, so they turned and set an ambush.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Light. Darkness.

Trail. Dense forest lines the trail, providing half cover.

TREASURE

Each mercenary carries 50 gp on them.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are the recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **half-red dragon veterans**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **half-red dragon veteran**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **half-red dragon veteran**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **half-red dragon veterans**.



FIRE IN THE NIGHT

The old, overgrown trail the survivors apparently took leads into an oppressive, insect-infested swamp filled with standing dead trees and inky, evil-smelling water. As you follow the tracks, night begins to draw down, and you hear many eerie calls in the swiftly deepening darkness. You have left the placid river hours behind you, and you are now deep within the Flooded Forest.

As the characters follow this path, they are unfortunately walking into a trap. Ahead, a pit trap lies beneath the path's surface, disguised by an odd clustering of leaves and small branches. Characters with a passive Perception score of 17 or higher spot the trap, as do those actively searching who succeed a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. Any weight placed on the trap causes it to activate. Those who trigger the trap fall twenty feet into the pit and land prone. They suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall and 2d6 piercing damage from the spikes cruelly inserted in the bottom. In addition, the spikes are coated with wyvern poison. Any character pierced by them must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer 7d6 poison damage. A successful save halves the poison damage.

The snare is one of several old traps in the area dug by long-vanished hunters. A **green hag** and her band of six **trolls** found the pit and covered it with old brush and vines. They now use it to capture any large prey following the trail. The moment the characters either discover or trigger the trap, the trolls spring into action, rushing from hiding to see what they have caught and to unleash their decoy: a beholder! The beholder is actually a long-dead husk. It is just a desiccated corpse and poses no real threat. The trolls keep it in the trees above the trail, just beyond the pit trap, suspended with vines.

When the fight begins, the green hag lets the corpse drop as far as the vines allow, and it descends to block the trail. Other vines allow the hag to tug at

the beholder's dead eyestalks, causing them to move. The corpse is simply a distraction for the characters to focus their spells on while the trolls attack from either side of the trail. The green hag operating the beholder is invisible and remains so until she attacks or casts a spell. If the hag is spotted, she abandons its puppetry once the party realizes it is a ruse and joins the battle.

The trolls gang up two to one on characters, hoping to take them down quickly. They rely on their numbers and their Regeneration to win the fight and are not smart enough to flee, even if things go poorly.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are the recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **trolls**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **troll**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **troll**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **trolls**.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Light. Darkness.

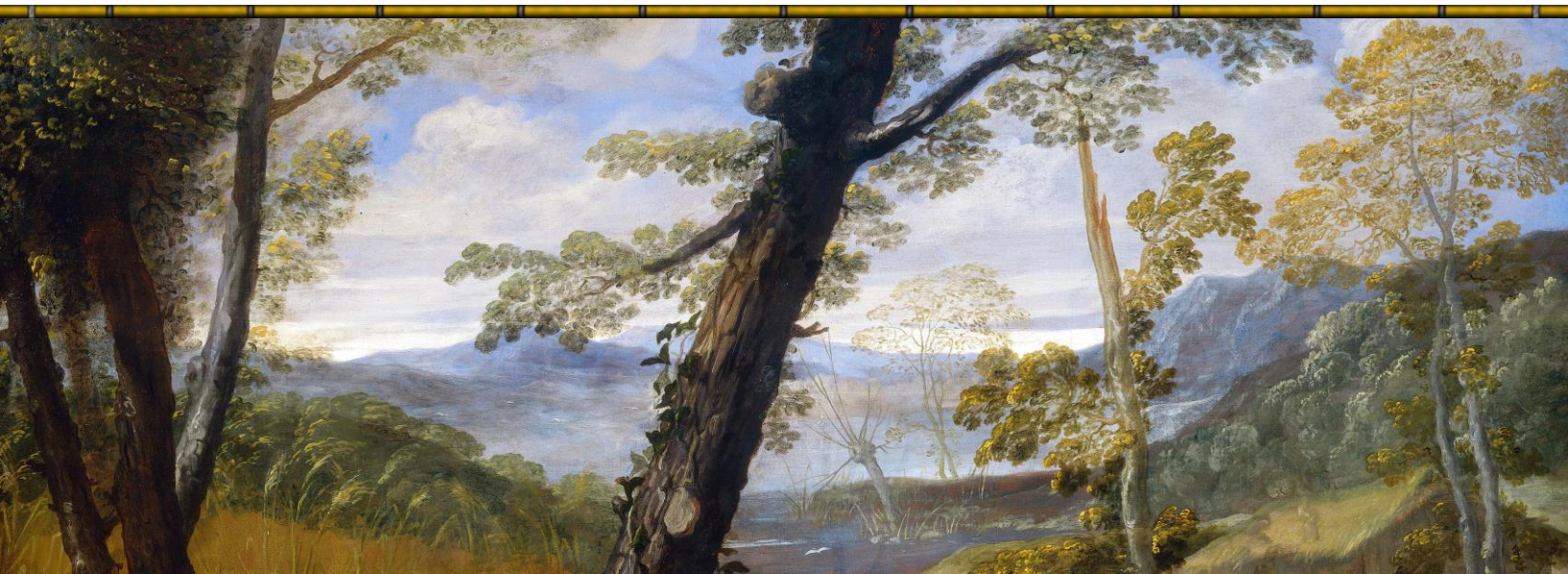
Trail. The trees around the trail provide half cover.

TREASURE

The bottom of the pit trap contains the remains of several unfortunate adventurers. A quick search reveals 500 gp in coins, 1,000 gp in various jewelry, a *potion of invisibility*, and a *ring of the ram*.

Now that the battle with the foul trolls and their green hag leader has ended, you pause and take stock of your surroundings. As you move further up the trail, the dark bulk of what looks like an overgrown fortress appears in the distance along the shallow channel, and you recognize the glow of a fire at its heart!

Here ends *The River Runs Red*.



REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

Combat Awards

Name of foe	XP per foe
Champion	5,000
Giant Crocodile	1,800
Green Hag	700
Half-Red Dragon Veteran	1,800
Hydra	3,900
Troll	1,800

Non-Combat Awards

Task or accomplishment	XP per character
Discover the pit trap	1,000

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **6000 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **8000 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Ambusher's gold and ring	200
Mercenary gold	50 (per mercenary)
Pit trap coins and jewelry	1500
Furjur's down payment	500 (per character)

RING OF THE RAM

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This ring has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing the ring, you can use an action to expend 1 to 3 of its charges to attack one creature you can see within 60 feet of you. The ring produces a spectral ram's head and makes its attack roll with a +7 bonus. On a hit, for each charge you spend, the target takes 2d10 force damage and is pushed 5 feet away from you.

Alternatively, you can expend 1 to 3 of the ring's charges as an action to try to break an object you can see within 60 feet of you that isn't being worn or carried. The ring makes a Strength check with a +5 bonus for each charge you spend.

POTION OF INVISIBILITY

Potion, very rare

This potion's container looks empty but feels as though it holds liquid. When you drink it, you become invisible for 1 hour. Anything you wear or carry is invisible with you. The effect ends early if you attack or cast a spell.

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's log sheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

RENOWN

All faction members earn one renown point for participating in this adventure.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **1,675 XP, 837 gp, 5 sp, and five downtime days** for running this adventure.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

GIANT CROCODILE

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



GREEN HAG

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The hag can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

Mimicry. The hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Illusory Appearance. The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies.

The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.

Invisible Passage. The hag magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any items she wears or carries are invisible with her.

HALF-RED DRAGON VETERAN

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). The veteran exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

REACTIONS

Parry. The veteran adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the veteran must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

HYDRA

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Hold Breath. The hydra can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Multiple Heads. The hydra has five heads. While it has more than one head, the hydra has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious. Whenever the hydra takes 25 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, the hydra dies. At the end of its turn, it grows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn, unless it has taken fire damage since its last turn. The hydra regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Reactive Heads. For each head the hydra has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that can be used only for opportunity attacks.

Wakeful. While the hydra sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hydra makes as many bite attacks as it has heads.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

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