



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

CHAINS OF DESPERATION

A 2-HOUR ADVENTURE FOR TIER 1 CHARACTERS



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CHAINS OF DESPERATION



A Two-Hour Adventure for 1st-4th Level Characters

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An injured scout comes to you after her companions are captured near the Moonsea's eastern coast. Can you save her friends before they disappear forever, or will you find yourself captives instead?

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CHAINS OF DESPERATION

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.

-Abraham Lincoln

BACKGROUND

Much to the dismay of many of Faerûn's factions (the Harpers and the Order of the Gauntlet in particular), slavery is still practiced in various parts of the Realms. Bolstering the slave trade are groups of independent slavers made up of vile individuals with no compunction for how they obtain stock to sell at the slave markets that exist throughout the lands.

One such group is called **HARTLOW'S HUNTERS**, a collection of men, women, and ogres who travel all of Faerûn looking for easy prey. For the past season, they have been working their way through the Moonsea, abducting homeless people from cities like Phlan, Hillsfar, and Mulmaster and funneling them through the slave market in Melvaunt.

With fall drawing to a close and the winter snows just weeks away, the leader of the slavers, a broad-shouldered, rough-looking man with no morals named **HARTLOW TRELL** has taken up residence in the underground remains of an old Zhentarim stronghold near the Dragonspine Mountains. From this base, he has been snatching travelers along the Tesh Trail, a little used road that follows the River Tesh from Teshwave to the eastern coast of the Moonsea. To obtain his stock, he employs the aid of a half-elven scout named **VERNA GILLARD**, whom he uses to draw travelers to the stronghold for capture.

EPISODES

This adventure is spread over three episodes that take approximately two hours to play. The episodes are initially introduced by a Call to Action episode.

Episode 1: Rickton's Riverside Roost. The adventure opens with the characters having spent the night at a small inn near the bank of the River Tesh. As they break their morning fast, Verna Gillard, a half-elven scout, approaches them and asks for aid in rescuing her companions, who were abducted along the Tesh Trail the night before. This is the **Call to Action**.

Episode 2: Over the River (optional). Verna leads the characters to the site of the abduction, where she picks up the trail of her missing companions. As the party travels into the foothills of the Dragonspine Mountains, a group of crag cats attacks them, hoping for an easy meal.

Episode 3: The Ruined Stronghold. When the party reaches the ruined Zhentarim stronghold and enters, they discover Verna's plea for help is nothing more than a ruse to lure able-bodied adventurers to the site for capture. After defeating the initial encounter, the characters can explore the stronghold and attempt to overthrow the slavers, or they can simply flee. If taken captive, the characters find themselves as prisoners waiting to be sold into slavery.

EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, and play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately two hours to play.

HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 hours.

Main Story Objective. To complete the adventure's main objective, the characters must participate in Episodes 1 and 3.

VERNA GILLARD



EPISODE 1: RICKTON'S RIVERSIDE ROOST

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

The adventure opens with the party having spent the previous night at Rickton's Riverside Roost, a small inn situated on a high bluff overlooking the southern bank of the River Tesh. It is early morning, and the common room of the inn is only thinly populated with caravan guards and a few merchants hoping to get an early start.

COMING TOGETHER

For speed of play and simplicity, *Chains of Desperation* assumes the characters have been traveling together or have met at Rickton's Riverside Roost prior to the start of the adventure. Instead of attempting to tell the characters why they have arrived, have the players introduce their characters and let them tell you how or why they have come together.

As the characters take their morning meal and discuss future plans, the door to the inn opens, and a woman dressed in brown leathers and a torn green cloak enters. Her hair is drawn back and tied with woven cord, and a partially bloody bandage encircles her head, making the slightly pointed tips of her ears are easy to spot. She exchanges quick words with a balding, heavysset man behind the bar, who motions toward the characters before returning to his work. The woman then approaches the characters' table and introduces herself as **VERNA GILLARD** (a spy). She appears desperate and apologizes for intruding on their morning meal.

A CALL TO ACTION

Verna explains that last night near dusk, she and her companions were attacked by half a dozen men and three ogres on the Tesh Trail several hours west of the River Tesh's confluence with the Moonsea. At first they assumed their attackers were brigands, but their assailants quickly showed more interest in capturing them than killing or looting.

Verna managed to escape, taking a wound to her head in the process. Knowing the inn was the closest sign of civilization, she pushed on through the night, only stopping to bandage her wound and take a brief rest in a thick copse of trees near the trail.

She doesn't know what the attackers have planned for her friends, but she knows she needs to find them before something terrible happens. Her companions are a halfling wizard named Reena Fiddlefingers who loves bright, showy magic, a devout gnome cleric of Garl Glittergold named Squilven Blankentrot, and a kindhearted Uthgardt barbarian from the north named Kurn Staghorn.

ROLEPLAYING VERNA GILLARD

Verna is a female half elf of roughly fifty years with green eyes and long brown hair. She has spent the past five of those years in service to a slave trader named Hartlow Trell.

Originally from the Lurkwood in the northern Sword Coast, Verna traveled for several seasons with a band of five adventurers known as Kurn's Fist, but she never really fit in with the group. When Hartlow and his men captured the party, Verna quickly offered the slaver her services as a scout in exchange for avoiding slavery. Over the years, she has come to begrudgingly respect Hartlow's Hunters and their ability to survive while doing a dangerous job. She has even been known to share Hartlow's bed from time to time.

While quiet and reserved, Verna is also an experienced liar. She prefers to weave partial truths into her deceptions and utilizes subtle misdirection as opposed to outright deceptions, which makes her very good at deception.

Quote: "All we really have in this world is each other."

Verna has little to offer the characters as a reward, except for the boots on her feet, which are actually *boots of false tracks* (see **Appendix 2: Player Handouts** for more information).

She explains that the site of the attack is about six hours east of the inn on the Tesh Trail. Verna asks the characters to accompany her there so she can locate her friends' trail and mount a rescue mission. For their help, she is willing to give them her magical boots (after her friends are rescued, as she has no other footwear) and what little coin she has. If the characters agree, she insists they leave immediately, since the longer they wait, the greater the chance that something terrible could befall her companions.

Much of the information Verna relays is a lie. In truth, she staged the scene of the attack along the trail with the help of her fellow slavers. She even gashed her own head to make her story more convincing. In reality, she hopes to lead the characters to an old stronghold near the base of the mountains and capture them to sell as slaves.

While a deception, much of Verna's story is true. It closely mimics what happened to her and her former companions when she originally crossed paths with Hartlow's Hunters years earlier. Because of this, and because she has told the same lie so often over the years, detecting the deception requires a successful DC 22 Wisdom (Insight) check. Even then, a character only learns that she isn't being completely honest, not that she is outright lying. If pressured about the validity of her story, Verna sticks to it, claiming she must simply be shook up by the attack.

If the characters refuse to assist her, she departs the inn, leaving an obvious trail for the party with the hope they follow her back to the stronghold.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

To proceed to **Episode 2: Over the River** to continue the adventure.

EPISODE 2: OVER THE RIVER (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

The characters find travel along the Tesh Trail east of the inn easy, and by mid afternoon, they reach the site where Verna and her companions were attacked. Numerous booted footprints and the larger tracks of bare ogre feet make following the attackers easy, and within an hour, the party arrives at a small ford in the River Tesh and crosses into the rolling foothills of the Dragonspine Mountains.

When the sun finally begins to set, the late autumn air starts to turn from cool to cold. While searching the stony terrain for a suitable campsite, screams of terror erupt all around the characters, and four large, gray **crag cats** appear among the rocks with fangs bared and attack.

Important: Only use the encounter below if you wish to extend the length of the adventure. If you need to keep the length at two hours, instead proceed to **Episode 3: The Ruined Stronghold**.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Light. Dim light from the setting sun.

Terrain. The surrounding rocks make the area difficult terrain for Medium or smaller creatures. A Medium or smaller creature may move through the area as normal by succeeding a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A character failing the check falls prone and losses the rest of their movement.

TACTICS

The cats attack in groups of two. Each pair targets the same opponent to take it down quickly. They fight until reduced to one quarter or less of their hit points before fleeing into the surrounding foothills.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **crag cats**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **crag cat**.
- **Strong party:** Each **crag cat** has 52 hit points.
- **Very strong party:** Add one **crag cat**. Each **crag cat** has 52 hit points.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

To proceed to **Episode 3: The Ruined Stronghold** to continue the adventure.

ROLEPLAYING VERNA GILLARD

If Verna is with the characters, she fights with genuine tenacity against the cats. She even helps injured or fallen party members whenever possible. Her reasons for doing so are twofold. First, she does not want to see the characters seriously injured, because it will reduce the price that Hartlow can fetch for each of them at the slave auction. Second, she sees the attack as an opportunity to endear herself to the characters, allaying any doubts they may have about her intentions. As the DM, feel free to play this up. Have her refer to the characters as “friends”, and let her come to their aid during the fight. It will make her betrayal in Episode 3 that much more poignant.

Quote: “Get away from my friends, you overgrown house cats!”

ABOUT CRAG CATS

This large cat is a sure-footed predator that can be found anywhere except deep forest, preferring ledges and cliffs in the mountains. Its cry resembles a human scream of terror. It often elicits such sounds from its victims, for it prefers human flesh to all other prey.

Crag cats blend in with natural surroundings. During the winter, their fur turns white to blend in with the snow. At other times of the year, their fur is gray, enabling them to hide among the rocks more easily. The crag cat knows its territory and often attacks when its prey is asleep, exhausted, or otherwise weakened.



EPISODE 3:

THE RUINED STRONGHOLD

Expected Duration: 90 minutes

Hartlow's Hunters have taken over a ruined Zhentarim stronghold as their base of operations. The main level of the structure rests atop a small limestone cliff, but it has collapsed into rubble over the centuries, leaving only a few natural caves and a dungeon of worked stone below. Under normal conditions, the party should reach the stronghold at around noon the day after departing the inn.

When the characters arrive at the site, they easily notice the tracks they have been following lead to a cave opening at the base of the cliff (area 1).

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Light. With the exception of room 10, which is unused, torches burn in all of the dungeon areas. The natural caves are dark.

Dungeon areas. The dungeon rooms and connecting passages are made of hewn limestone. The hallways are built with 10-foot-high ceilings, while the ceilings in the rooms are 15 feet tall. The doors throughout the complex are of new construction and made of wood banded with iron. Unless otherwise noted, a door can be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, or its lock may be picked by making a successful DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.

Natural cave areas. The ceilings of the natural limestone caves vary from 10 to 20 feet in height.

ABOUT THE MAP

The map of the stronghold's lower level contains a scale of 5 feet to one square. The map is designed to show the layout of the areas and their approximate sizes. Feel free to increase the size of any area you feel might be too cramped. This can be particularly helpful in area 1 when the characters are fighting multiple Large creatures.

I: ENTRANCE

Two entrances provide access to the stronghold's lower level. To the north, a 10-foot-wide-by-10-foot-tall opening leads to large natural cave with an uneven 10-foot-tall ceiling. The eastern portion of the cave features a steep ridge that drops 10 feet to the floor below. Climbing the ridge requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Three **ogres** in Hartlow's employ stand guard here, preferring the openness of the cave to the cramped

hallways and rooms of the dungeon. They are aware **VERNA GILLARD** (a **spy**) might be returning soon with slaves. If they hear anyone enter the cave, they quickly climb to the area above to surprise their foes.

A smaller 5-foot-wide-by-7-foot-tall entry passage leads north to the main cave and east to a short flight of steps, which descends to a pair of barred doors (see area 10 for more information).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **ogres**. The remaining **ogre** has 91 hit points.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **ogre**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **ogre**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **ogres**.

TACTICS

Verna does her best to convince the party they should enter via the large cave, knowing the ogres are there. If the party insists on using the smaller entrance, she sticks with them, following until they reach the main cavern. Once there, she waits until the ogres notice party before making her betrayal known. When combat begins, she climbs down the ridge and makes her way to the door that leads to area 9. If the fight seems to be going poorly, she pulls an iron key from a hidden fold of her armor and unlocks and opens the door, yelling to alert Hartlow in area 8 and the rest of the slavers in area 9. If this happens, consider staging the combat in waves so you do not overwhelm the party and make the fight unwinnable.

The ogres focus their attacks on a single target and attempt to incapacitate it quickly. They do not use lethal force.

DEVELOPMENT

If the ogres manage to incapacitate the entire party, they strip them of their gear and lock them in area 6, placing their belongings in area 7.

The characters regain consciousness an hour later.

TREASURE

Verna carries various coins and gemstones. She also wears *boots of false tracks* (see **Appendix 2: Player Handouts**). A thorough search of her body and a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals an iron key hidden in its folds of her leather armor. This key opens all of the door in the dungeon except the door to area 8, which is Hartlow's personal quarters.

STRONGHOLD DUNGEON

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



2. STATUES

Two unidentifiable, crumbled statues occupy this natural cavern. Anyone searching their remains finds an inscription at the base of each that reads, "Family is power." A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check reveals it as an old Zhentarim saying. Any character who is a member of the Zhentarim automatically recognizes the inscription.

3. STIRGE LAIR

A wide ledge wraps around a small pool in this cavern, gradually descending 15 feet to a locked door in its southeast corner. A second, smaller pool

lies 5 feet below the eastern ledge. Both pools collect dripping water from above and are shallow, varying from 1 to 2 feet in depth.

Twelve **striges** lair in this cavern, often resting upon a large rock in the easternmost pool. They attack any creature that approaches the ledge between the two pools.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Remove four **striges**.
- **Weak party:** Remove two **striges**.
- **Strong party:** Add four **striges**.
- **Very strong party:** Add eight **striges**.

KEEPING TIME

Battles with lots of combatants can often take a considerable amount of time, even when the opponents are not particularly dangerous. If you feel you may not complete the adventure in the allotted time, consider dropping the encounter above or halving the number of stirges to keep things moving.

4. SLAVE CELL I.

This locked cell holds a pair of twin female elves named **EVNA** and **ELDA LEAFWARDEN** (treat as **commoners**). While dressed in rags, they do not appear malnourished or even mistreated. They beg for the characters to help them escape.

If released, they inform the party that they were abducted north of Teshwave while hunting in the foothills. They were brought to the stronghold unconscious and have no knowledge of its layout, but so far, they have seen at least five different slavers and three ogres wandering about.

They have no desire to help the characters fight the slavers, but they can find their own way to safety if pointed in the right direction.

5. SLAVE CELL II.

This locked cell holds three human males with sacks over their heads (treat as **guards** without weapons or armor). The men are named **BRANDT**, **MIKUS**, and **HILLARD**. They are the most recent additions to the stronghold. They were guarding a caravan for a spice merchant traveling the Iron Route to Phlan when they were attacked and taken prisoner. Since they were brought in hooded, they know nothing beyond the obvious concerning their captors or the stronghold's layout. A successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to convince them to help fight the slavers, but success is only possible if the characters can provide them with weapons that deal 1d6 or greater damage.

6. SLAVE CELL III

This large cell is currently empty. If the characters are taken captive at any time during the adventure, they are stripped of their gear (which is placed in area 7) and locked in this room. Hartlow's slavers check on them every four hours and bring them food twice a day.

Note. There is no set script for the sequence of events that occurs if the party is captured. If this happens, be prepared to think on your feet. The characters should have a chance to escape and retrieve their gear from area 7, but doing so should not be easy.

7. STORAGE

The slavers use this room for storage, and both of its doors are locked at all times. It contains crates of rations and other mercantile goods. A cluster of barrels in the northeast corner holds water, pickled fish, and ale. In the southeast corner are two large chests that contain three chain shirts, three shields, three spears, two suits of leather armor, two longbows, two shortswords, and forty arrows.

Special. If the characters are taken captive at any time during the adventure, their gear can be found here in the chests described above.

8. HARTLOW'S QUARTERS

This room serves as Hartlow Trell's personal quarters. Its door is solid steel. Forcing it open requires a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check, and picking its lock requires a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Inside, a sturdy bed occupies the northwest corner of the room. Next to it is a simple wooden wardrobe containing common clothes and boots. A desk and chair on the southern wall holds an inkpot, pen, and several papers. Any player that investigates the desk finds a folder note that reads as follows:

Hartlow,

While the quantity of the stock you are supplying cannot be denied, we also require quality if we are to move the product. Elves are of particular popularity as playthings, as are humans. Do not bother with dwarves, there is currently no market for them.

—Darnon of House Nanther

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check reveals that House Nanther is a prominent power in the city of Melvaunt. While the house enjoys a respectable reputation, there have been rumors as of late that corruption and greed are pushing House Nanther into dangerous areas. If any characters in the party are members of the Harpers, Lords' Alliance, or Order of the Gauntlet, providing this information to their faction earns them a *potion of healing* as a reward at the adventure's end.

ENCOUNTERING HARTLOW

If the characters manage to enter the dungeon complex without detection, they encounter **HARTLOW TRELL** (a **bandit captain**) in his quarters, and he immediately attacks, yelling loudly for help. A fight here draws Hartlow's slavers from area 9, and they arrive on the following round.

TREASURE

A small, iron-banded chest rests near the angled southwest wall of the room. It is locked and protected by a poison gas trap. Spotting the tiny holes that emit the trap's gas requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Disarming the trap requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Failing the check by five or more triggers the trap.

If a character triggers the trap, gas spews from the chest, instantly filling the entire room with a poisonous green cloud. All creatures that start their turn in the cloud must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. A creature suffers 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. The gas dissipates in three rounds.

Hartlow carries a brass key that opens the chest and disarms the trap (it also unlocks the door to the room). Locking the chest rearms the trap. Unlocking the chest without the key requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Forcing the chest open requires a successful DC 15 Strength check. Unlocking or forcing open the chest without disarming the trap causes it to trigger.

The chest holds coins and gems, a *potion of greater healing*, a *potion of fire breath*, and a *folding boat* that Hartlow uses when navigating the Tesh River.

9. BUNKROOM

Hartlow Trell employs a handful of ruffians, murders, and thieves to help him capture slaves. These slavers, who are surprisingly loyal to Hartlow, use this area as a bunkroom. Cots line the east and west walls at the northern end of the room, which is supported by six stone pillars. Here, five **slavers** (treat as **scouts**) wait for Hartlow to give them their next job.

TACTICS

Two slavers move to engage enemies in melee. The rest attack from a distance using their longbows. They fight to the death, more fearful of Hartlow's wrath than what might lie beyond the grave.

DEVELOPMENT

The slavers attack anyone they do not recognize and yell loudly, alerting Hartlow in area 9, who arrives on the following round. Any attempts at deception automatically fail, as the slavers know each other and Hartlow far too well to be deceived.

TREASURE

The slavers have no items of value, but each one carries an iron key that opens all of the doors in the dungeon, except the door to area 8, which is Hartlow's personal quarters.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **slavers**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **slaver**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **slaver**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **slavers**.

10. INFIRMARY

A stairwell leading to the stronghold's upper level once existed in the southwest portion of this odd-shaped room, but over time, it collapsed to rubble. The space is currently unused by Hartlow and his slavers. They have barred and nailed shut the western doors, making it impossible to enter the dungeon from that direction. In spite of the fact that it holds nothing of value, all of the doors on the room's north wall remain locked.

The only item of interest is a small, semi-circular fountain of stagnant water in the southeast corner. Anyone who examines the fountain finds an inscription written in Damaran at its base. Characters that speak or read Damaran can decipher the inscription, which reads:

*drenched in fire of the vein
we call on him to take our pain
then wash ourselves to cleanse the stain
and by his will our strength regain*

In ages past, the room was used by Banite priests to tend Zhentarim soldiers wounded in battle. Characters that succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check while peering into the water notice the faint outline of a hand in the fountain's sediment-covered bottom. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion or History) check reveals it as a holy symbol of the deity Bane.

The fountain is magical. If examined with a *detect magic* spell, it emits an aura of evocation. Any creature that speaks Bane's name and washes their hands in the fountain gains the benefits of a short rest (including the ability to use hit dice for healing). This benefit can only be used by a creature once every tenday. Water removed from the fountain contains no magical benefit.

CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the characters have successfully cleared out the stronghold's dungeon. If they opt to take any of the slavers alive, they may deliver them to Phlan for justice.

ADVENTURE REWARDS

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for completing each of the story objectives below:

- **Story Objective A:** Reach the ruined stronghold and encounter the ogres in area 1.
- **Story Objective B:** Free the slaves in areas 4 and 5 of the stronghold's dungeon and defeat Hartlow.



PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn downtime and renown as outlined in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for completing the adventure and any bonus objectives.

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing **story objective b** unlock this magic item.

Folding Boat. A full description of this item can be found in **Appendix 2: Player Handouts**.

COMMON MAGIC ITEMS

Common magic items are treated like a potion or scroll and can only be claimed by one character in an adventuring party. During this adventure, the characters may find the following common magic items:

Boots of False Tracks. A full description of this item can be found in **Appendix 2: Player Handouts**.

CONSUMABLES

During this adventure, the characters may find the following consumable items:

Potion of Fire Breath. A full description of this item can be found in **Appendix 2: Player Handouts**.

Potion of Greater Healing. A full description of this item can be found in **Appendix 2: Player Handouts**.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information about DM Quests.

APPENDIX I.

MONSTERS/NPCs

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (wood elf), chaotic good

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

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

BANDIT CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Crag Cat

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 34 (4d10 + 12)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Nondetection. The cat can't be targeted or detected by any divination magic or perceived through magical scrying sensors.

Pounce. If the cat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the cat can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Spell Turning. The cat has advantage on saving throws against any spell that targets only the cat (not an area). If the cat's saving throw succeeds and the spell is of 7th level or lower, the spell has no effect on the cat and instead targets the caster.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

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

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

OGRE

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (hide armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (–1)	16 (+3)	5 (–3)	7 (–2)	7 (–2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

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

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SPY

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

STIRGE

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (–3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (–4)	8 (–1)	6 (–2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the stirge attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the stirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

The stirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

APPENDIX 2:

PLAYER HANDOUTS

During the course of the adventure, the characters may unlock or acquire the rewards below. If you are distributing these to your players, print and cut out as many as you need to ensure all eligible characters receive a copy. Alternatively, allow each player to take a picture of the information with their mobile device.

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCKS

FOLDING BOAT

Wondrous item, rare, table C

This object appears as a wooden box that measures 12 inches long, 6 inches wide, and 6 inches deep. It weighs 4 pounds and floats. It can be opened to store items inside. This item also has three command words, each requiring you to use an action to speak.

One command word causes the box to unfold into a boat 10 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. The boat has one pair of oars, an anchor, a mast, and a lateen sail. The boat can hold up to four Medium creatures comfortably.

The second command word causes the box to unfold into a ship 24 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 6 feet deep. The ship has a deck, rowing seats, five sets of oars, a steering oar, an anchor, a deck cabin, and a mast with a square sail. The ship can hold fifteen Medium creatures comfortably.

When the box becomes a vessel, its weight becomes that of a normal vessel its size, and anything stored in the box remains in the boat.

The third command word causes the folding boat to fold back into a box, provided that no creatures are aboard. Any objects in the vessel that can't fit inside the box remain outside the box as it folds. Any objects in the vessel that can fit inside the box do so.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

COMMON MAGIC ITEMS

BOOTS OF FALSE TRACKS

Wondrous item, common

Only humanoids can wear these boots. While wearing the boots, you can choose to have them leave tracks like those of another kind of humanoid of your size.

This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

Note. Common magic items are treated like a potion or scroll and can only be claimed by one character in an adventuring party.

CONSUMABLES

POTION OF FIRE BREATH

Potion, uncommon

After drinking this potion, you can use a bonus action to exhale fire at a target within 30 feet of you. The target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The effect ends after you exhale the fire three times or when 1 hour has passed.

This potion's orange liquid flickers, and smoke fills the top of the container and wafts out whenever it is opened.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

POTION OF GREATER HEALING

Potion, uncommon

You regain 4d4 + 4 hit points when you drink this potion.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX 3:

DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Welcome to the D&D Adventurers League! [You can learn more about this global organized play campaign on our website.](#)

NEW TO BEING THE DUNGEON MASTER?

A plethora of great Dungeon Master advice can be found all across the internet. New DMs are urged to purchase a copy of the Dungeon Master's Guide and join our Facebook ([player group](#) and [DM group](#)) and [Twitter discussions](#).

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure's level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can't return** to the first one if they're outside its level range.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of 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. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your

name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated 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 Players 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, or 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 THIS ADVENTURE

When combat is a possibility, the adventure provides a sidebar to help you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide characters with to create an appropriate challenge. You are not bound to these adjustments. They are presented for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (**APL**). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

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