



Wretches

Accused of impersonation and kidnapping, a pair of old sisters have found refuge in Abermoor. In their wake, they have left a trail of blood, and are pursued by a bounty hunter. Hired for their expertise, the adventurers have joined the pursuit.

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



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Introduction

Welcome to *Wretches*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system, and part of the *Tomb of Annihilation*™ storyline season.

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.

This adventure takes place in and around the village of Abermoor, a day north of Hulburg, on the Winterspear River.

Adjusting This Adventure

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate 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

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Before Play at the Table

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. Familiarize 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.)

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—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.

Adventure Primer

Where hast thou been sister?

-Shakespeare

Adventure Background

Thirteen years ago, a pair of hag siblings named Nelly and Peg Longarms kidnapped Jaina Ringer. The eldest sister, Nelly, stole the babe from her bassinet while her parents were busy fishing in the nearby Winterspear river. Back in their hut, Nelly consumed the child. A week later she gave birth to what was, by all appearances, an unharmed Jaina Ringer.

Nelly disguised herself as a villager, and hid the child in an old shack near the village. Her sister, the mute Peg, planted evidence framing a local barren couple for the abduction. Acting on an anonymous tip, the village constable found the child, and returned her to her parents. The village banished the framed couple from Abermoor.

Hags can only procreate by consuming human children, who are reborn, and turn into hags like their “adoptive” mothers on their 13th birthday. After covertly returning Jaina to her parents, the sisters left Abermoor for parts unknown. They have recently returned for Jaina’s 13th birthday; with three hags in the family, they will finally have their own coven.

Nelly and Peg are posing as Rashemi *wychlaran* (wise women). They dispense charms, cures, and advice to the residents of Abermoor, and the few who brave the Highfells to seek out their aid. Nelly has taken up the identity of Immara Yanova, and Peg, that of Tatyana Yanova.

Oksana Dyergoba, a Rashemi bounty hunter, has been tracking the sisters for six months. While in Rashemen, Nelly and Peg were caught kidnapping a child, and impersonating *wychlaran*. They escaped before their date with the hangman.

The Witches of Rashemen sent Oksana and her brother Ramelvik to fetch them back. After losing them for a time in Damara, Oksana and Ramelvik caught wind of them in Hulburg.

Oksana and her brother heard rumors of a pair of “wise sisters” in the village of Abermoor, north of Hulburg. The sisters’ henchmen ambushed the pair on the road. Ramelvik was killed, and Oksana grievously wounded.

Back in Hulburg, Oksana has resigned herself to hiring adventurers to bring the sisters to justice.

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Abermoor. This village lies some 40 miles north of Hulburg, along the Winterspear River.

Constable Montieth. What passes for the law in Abermoor.

Crespo Thero. Crespo runs the only inn in Abermoor. He acts as a spy for the Longarms, and engages in other nefarious activities.

Immara Yanova. Nelly’s alter-ego.

Jaina Ringer. Once a human girl, she will turn into a hag on her thirteenth birthday and join her mother and auntie.

Jonar and Theara Ringer. The miller and his wife are Jaina’s original parents.

Nelly Longarms. A hag who delights in the misery of others, Nelly has grand plans to form a coven with her sister and daughter.

Oksana Dyergoba. Rashemi bounty hunter.

Paige Parva. Paige is an herb grower, aspiring to be an herbalist. She is a bright spot in the decidedly dim village of Abermoor.

Peg Longarms. A mute hag who defers to her sister in most things. She enjoys creating new side-effects to add to her potions.

Tatyana Yanova. Peg’s alter-ego.

The Highfells. An area of steep glens, west of Abermoor, butting up against the lands of Thar.

Adventure Overview

This section provides the DM a bulleted overview of how the adventure is most likely to play out.

This adventure has three parts:

Part 1. Oksana Dyergoba hires the adventurers to assist her in capturing the “Yanova” sisters. Oksana tells the adventurers of the bounty on the sisters, and of their crimes in Rashemen. On the road to Abermoor, the adventurers interrupt a robbery. Paige Parva, a villager who is returning to the village from gathering herbs, is set upon by bandits. Paige can provide some information to the adventurers about the local environment and its inhabitants.

Part 2. When the adventurers arrive at the village of Abermoor, it seems as if most of the town has crowded into the only inn. A villager found Jonar Ringer, at his mill, slashed to death, apparently by his daughter. No one can find his wife Theara. Tracks lead from the mill into the Highfells, in the direction of the sisters’ camp.

Part 3. The trail leads the adventurers deep into the Highfells. When they reach the sisters’ hut, Jaina’s mother, Theara, is outside with a small group of villagers, and bids the adventurers to leave

Abermoor. Hag-Jaina emerges from the hut, and orders her mother to “run off these outsiders.”

Adventure Hooks

Wretches begins with the adventurers meeting a bounty hunter in Hulburg. Oksana Dyerghoba (a human **guard**) has hired them to act as bodyguards and extra sets of hands. She is a Rashemi bounty hunter, charged with returning the “Yanova” sisters to Rashemen.

Roleplaying Oksana

Oksana is on the far side of twenty. She stands a hand over 5 feet tall, and has a short shock of dark, unruly hair. Oksana chooses her words carefully, and speaks in short, clipped sentences.

She is understandably upset about the killing of her brother, but remains committed to bring the “Yanova” sisters back to Rashemen to face justice. Though she would prefer to do this on her own, Oksana is pragmatic, and won’t let her pride get in way of her task.

Part 1. The High Road to Abermoor

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

The adventure begins as the characters accept jobs as bounty hunters, then proceeds to a trudge through the mud on the Abermoor Road.

General Features

The road following the Winterspear river has the following general features:

Terrain. The Abermoor road is slightly uphill all the way from Hulburg, as it follows the Winterspear River toward its headwaters. The road is muddy and rutted. On foot, better time can be made on the shoulders. The road counts as difficult terrain for anyone who is unmounted.

Weather. Rain is persistent, though only heavy at times. The sky is overcast, and looks on the verge of storming.

Light. Despite the rain and cloud cover, during the day, vision is unimpeded.

Smells and Sounds. Steady rain and churned up mud, with something more odious mixed in the mud.

The Assignment

The characters meet with Oksana Dyergoba in the Sleeping Dragon tavern.

The inside of the Sleeping Dragon is warm, smoke-filled, and dry, a welcome relief from the incessant drizzle in Hulburg.

Across the table from you sits your prospective employer. She appears road weary, and is nursing recent wounds.

"I am in pursuit of two criminals. Two, how you say, runners from justice. Fugitives, yes that is the word. Two fugitives.

They must be brought back to face *wychlaran* justice.

"I will pay you 35 gold when we apprehend these two sisters, plus 10 gold per week. Is deal? We leave tomorrow morning."

Initially, she is very tight-lipped about the purpose of her trip. She states that she is "bringing back criminals to face *wychlaran* justice." She will share the following information, (in addition to the above,) if asked:

Who are we going after?

"Immara and Tatyana Yanova, sisters, and criminals. One would be bad enough, but trouble never comes alone."

What did they do?

"They impersonated the *wychlaran*!"

What is a *wychlaran*?

"They are guides of my people, the wise women."

Anything else?

"They kidnapped at least one Rahshemi girl-child. We got her back a few days later."

Is that 35 gold each?

"Yes."

Other things Oksana knows and may tell the adventurers:

- Oksana has been tracking the sisters for six months.
- Oksana lost them for a time in Damara, but caught wind of them in Hulburg a couple months ago.
- She and her brother heard rumors of a pair of "wise sisters" in the village of Abermoor, north of Hulburg.
- Immara and Tatyana have been dispensing charms, cures, and advice to the residents of Abermoor, and the few who brave the Highfells to seek out their aid.
- Oksana suspects that the sisters hired strongarms to ambush her and Ramelvik on the road.

After answering the character's questions, Oksana excuses herself, reminding them of their departure the following morning.

Faction Assignment

After Oksana leaves The Sleeping Dragon, the adventurers are approached by a faction agent. Oksana has not been gone more than a few minutes before one of the other patrons approaches, and lays a folded piece of parchment on the table, before pulling up a chair and sitting down.

"I was asked to give this to you. Please give it a read, and if you agree, I will report back to my masters that the job has been accepted. If not, no worries, plenty of strong-arms in Hulburg."

Lords Alliance/Zhentarim Faction Assignment

Your faction has assigned you to retrieve a sensitive document from Crespo Thero. The journal in question details an extramarital affair that elements of the Lords Alliance would like never to see the light of day.

Crespo runs the Crown and Thistle, Abermoor's only inn. Only faction members can earn extra renown, but neither the Lords Alliance or the Zhentarim are picky about who recovers the journal. (Give players **Player Handout 1.**)

Part 1. On the Road

The flyer said “Need sword arms to apprehend criminals. 35 gold coin for success. Plus 10 gold coin per week.”

This Oksana is a no-nonsense employer. She is definitely getting her money’s worth. Up at dawn, and on the road within the hour. Ride until the horses tire, then walk the horses until they can be ridden again. On the road until dusk, always moving! Caravan guarding is easy by comparison.

Only two days out of Hulburg, and already you are questioning your decision to go after the bounty on these two. The rain, down to a steady drizzle now, has been relentless. Water has worked its way under your cloak, down the back or your neck, through the seams of your boots, and by the gods even up your sleeves. And the mud! You don’t know what they put in the dirt to make it so clingy, but you swear that your boots are five pounds heavier now.

Late in the afternoon, as your mind starts to drift toward thoughts of hot soup, and mulled wine, it snaps back to reality. You hear a panicked scream coming from around the bend of the road in front of you!

Ahead, the adventurers can see a cloaked human, hands raised in the air, standing next to a horse-drawn cart. Surrounding her are **bandits**, half with scimitars drawn, the other half brandishing light crossbows.

The bandits are demanding that the cart driver hand over all her gold and cargo. Characters approaching within 60’ must succeed a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid detection. At 30’, the bandits gain advantage on their perception checks. Once the bandits detect the characters, they fire their crossbows. See **Map 1**.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

Very weak/Weak:	6 bandits
Average:	5 bandits, 1 bandit captain
Strong/Very strong:	4 bandits, 2 bandit captains

Tactics

Bandits: The half equipped with light crossbows concentrate fire on the least armored party members. The half with scimitars out gang up whoever looks toughest.

Bandit Captain: Joins the scimitar armed bandits in melee.

All Bandits: If half or more of their number are defeated, the remaining bandits will flee.

Oksana: the bounty hunter will hang back, allowing her employees to earn their pay.

Treasure

The bandits have 15 gp worth of various coins. One of the bandits, (or a captain if present,) has a book of poetry titled *Ode to a Willow*, by Danthar Hodek. The rare book is worth 10 gp.

Developments

After defeating the bandits, the cart driver introduces herself as Paige Parva, resident of Abermoor and herb gardener. Paige looks to be in her early twenties, and is dressed in a heavily patched traveler’s cloak. She has shoulder length dark hair, dark eyes, and slightly turned up nose. She smiles often, revealing her tobacco-stained teeth, Paige is talkative, answering all but the most personal questions put to her. If the party is hesitant to ask questions, Paige will ramble on, revealing the information below.

Who are you?

“Paige Parva, herbalist extraordinaire, at your service. Well, more of an herb grower that is. Can I interest you in some pig-weed, or sailor’s tobacco?”

What are you doing here?

“I’m on my way back from collecting herbs for the sisters. They fixed up a couple doses of medicine for my brother. Falling sickness. The medicine keeps the episodes down to one a week or so. I trade them herbs for it, thank Chauntea, for I have little coin these days. Are you headed to Abermoor?”

Why do you have little coin?

“Well, no one is well-to-do in Abermoor, ‘cept maybe Crespo, but things have been leaner of late. Last year, I saw all my lavender taken with the blight. I used most of my savings that year, and haven’t been able to build it back up.

Three weeks ago, Ratchley’s sheep got the fever, lost half the flock. The sisters sold him some tonic for the rest, used some of my yarrow they did for that batch! Saved half the herd! The remaining ones are still sickly though, and don’t think he’ll get much wool off ‘em.”

Who is Crespo?

“He runs the only inn in town. Inn in. That’s kind of funny. Anyway, he’s the only one in town with any fat left on him, he must have money, right?”

Who are the sisters?

“Immara and Tatyana Yanovav. Yakov? Yanovich? Yanakovich? I can’t remember their last name. Yano-something-or-other. Definitely a Rashemi name.”

Tell me about the sisters.

"Old they are, and that's the truth. Tatyana, she don't say much. Immara does all the talking. Drives a hard bargain does she, but fair. I think they like me better than most, owing as to how I trade herbs with them. They like Jaina too, always asking after her. I bet they got her a nice birthday present!!"

Where are the sisters?

"Up in the Highfells."

Where are the Highfells?

"The Highfells are east of here. Rumor has it that they're haunted, but I don't put much stock in that. Still, why take chances, eh?"

Who is Jaina?

"Oh, she's the miller's daughter. It's her thirteenth birthday today! Got kidnapped when she was almost one. Bad business that. Saïen Lader, the cooper's wife, took little Jaina from up on the bank while her parents were fishing in the Winterspear.

Saïen used to take in every stray dog and cat in the village, desperate to nurture something. Maybe we should have seen it coming. Anyway, I can't remember all the details, I was just a kid then. Someone saw Saïen with the baby, and informed the city council. They ended up banishing the Laders. They headed south. We never saw them again."

The other things Paige knows.

- The sisters have only been in Abermoor for a few months.
- The sisters visit town every few days selling tonic
- It is difficult to travel in the Highfells. Much of it is muddy and overgrown with vines and brush.

The sun is low on the horizon as Paige offers to lead the party the rest of the way to Abermoor.

If the players decide to skip going to Abermoor, and strike out for the Highfells, proceed to section 3, "Choices."

Part 2. An Unexpected Murder

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

The adventurers arrive in Abermoor.

General Features

Terrain. Abermoor is a small village of about 200 people, mostly human, though with a smattering of the other common races. Its streets are muddy and rutted.

Weather. Rain is persistent, though only heavy at times. The sky is overcast, and looks on the verge of storming.

Light. Despite the rain and cloud cover, during the day, vision is unimpeded.

Smells and Sounds. Steady rain and churned up mud, with something more odious mixed in the mud. The only sounds of levity come from The Crown and Thistle.

When the party arrives in Abermoor, the sun is well below the horizon, and Paige urges them to go to The Crown and Thistle, Abermoor's only inn. She says they have rooms, the food is hot, and the beer is cheap.

The Crown and Thistle

The Crown and Thistle is the largest building in the town. Light shines from its windows, and the sounds of heated argument can be heard from within.



As you approach The Crown and Thistle, you can hear a loud buzz of conversation leaking from the cracks in the front doors. The crowd inside doesn't notice you come in. A large man appears to be backed up against the fireplace of the common room, and is making placating gestures to the crowd, to little effect. You begin to pick up some of the conversation.

"But what could have torn him apart like that? I can't believe it was Jaina!"

"There was so much blood."

"Poor Jonar!"

"Has anyone seen Theara?"

Eventually, the large man is able to quiet the crowd enough to be heard. "I know you are all upset, I am as well. We all liked, or at least respected Jonar. What we have to do now is focus on finding Jaina and Theara. We can't do anything more tonight. We'll meet tomorrow in the square an hour after first light, and form a search party."

The crowd breaks up into smaller groups, murmuring among themselves, huddled around tables. You hear a bright voice behind you say, "Welcome travelers!"

You turn to find an overweight man, tray tucked under his arm, hair combed back over what looks to be a bald spot, and sporting a well-manicured mustache. "I'm Crespo, and this here's my place!" he beams. "What can I do for you this wet, miserable, and loud evening?"

Crespo Thero is a **spy**, and despite his friendly appearance, is a very bad man. Being relegated to this tiny town rankles Crespo. However, he's a wanted man in his native Melvaunt, and is frankly scared to be in a place as populated as Hulburg. Though on the run from the authorities in Melvaunt, he is still a resourceful man, and has many irons in the fire.

One of these irons is his relationship with the "Yanova" sisters. He acts as their eyes and ears in the village. Crespo keeps them apprised of the goings on in the village, the news that trickles north from Hulburg, and of any visitors of note. Crespo keeps pigeons that he uses to get messages to the sisters. He knows nothing of their true identities, thinking them Rashemi charlatans, out to separate fools from their money.

The adventurers definitely rate as "visitors of note" in Crespo's book. He engages them in conversation, asking many questions, trying to figure out why they have come to Abermoor. He goes so far as to give them a complimentary round of drinks, hoping it will loosen their tongues. Once he is satisfied that he has extracted as much information as possible from the

adventurers, he heads back to the kitchen to draft up a message. He then ducks out to his pigeon coop to get a bird winging its way to the Yanova/Longarms sisters post haste.

The Crown and Thistle offers food, drink, and lodging at double the price on page 158 of the Player's Handbook.

Developments

Oksana asks the characters to mingle, and see if they can determine the whereabouts of the sisters. Asking around the common room will reveal the following:

DC 5 Charisma (Persuasion/Deception):

- The large man speaking to the crowd is Constable Montieth.
- The man who was "slashed apart" is Jonar Ringer, the village miller.
- Jaina Ringer, his daughter, is missing.
- Jonar was found in his mill, late this afternoon, by Master Crabtree, one of the village elders.
- The Yanova sisters were in town today, selling a health tonic.

DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion/Deception):

- Master Crabtree swears that he saw Jaina standing over the body. When she saw him, she fled east into the woods.
- No one has seen Theara Ringer today.
- No one can remember the sisters leaving town today.
- Jaina was kidnapped as a baby. Since she was returned, she's been very lucky.
- The Yanova sisters live in the Highfells.
- The Highfells are haunted.

DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion/Deception):

- No one can remember Tatyana speaking, ever.
- The Highfells are due east of the village.
- Immara is always wearing a patchwork cloak.

DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion/Deception):

- Immara seems particularly interested in Jaina Ringer. She has asked about her history, health, activities, etc.

Crespo shuts the common room down at 11, and ushers his lodgers, (including the adventurers,) upstairs to their rooms.

A Thief in the Night

Well after midnight, Merga Donal (**thug**), another of the sisters' spies, attempts to sneak into one of the

adventurers' rooms. His plan is to snip the hair from one of the sleeping characters and bring it to the sisters so they can use it to scry on them. If the party strength is strong or very strong, Merga will bring his brother Thon (also a **thug**) with him.

Merga has a key to their room, supplied by Crespo. He will wait until he thinks all of the adventurers are sleeping. After securing a lock of hair, he will attempt to sneak out and make his way to the sisters' cottage in the Highfells.

If discovered, Merga will attempt to flee. If an adventurer is on guard, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, made with advantage, will reveal Merga as he enters the room. If the party is asleep, the DC is 12, made with disadvantage. If captured, a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check will compel Merga to answer all. Merga doesn't carry any coin. Merga says the following if interrogated:

Who sent you?

"Immara did."

Who's Immara?

"She's the wise woman she is. And sister Tatanya. Can't forget her now."

What do you/they want?

"Youse is strangers. The sisters like to keep an eye on the village, 'specially when strangers is about."

Where are the sisters?

"They have a little hut in the Highfells they do. A proper little hut."

Why were you cutting my hair?

"The sisters is magic now, aren't they? They use their magic to keep an eye on things. Having a little bit of that that needs watching makes it easier."

What were you supposed to do with the hair?

"Put it in a little bag, and leave it hanging on a nail out in the woodshed. Check back in a few days does I, and find some coin in the bag."

Merga is convinced that the sisters watch out for the village, and won't believe a word to the contrary.

Crespo's Little Red Book

Crespo keeps his instrument of blackmail in the inn's strongbox, located under the butcher block in the kitchen. To find the box will require 10 minutes of searching and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check.

If found, it requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open the lock. This search is impossible while the inn is open to the public as a cook and her helper are in the kitchen at all times.

Should the players resort to strong-arming Crespo, he reveals the book's location after a successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check. Crespo begs for his life, and for his gold, promising never to speak of what has happened.

If the characters relieve Crespo of his gold and he survives, each adventurer earns the **Story Award, Crespo's Ire (Player Handout 3)**.

Treasure

Crespo's strong box also contains 85 gold pieces worth of various coins.

Part 3. Choices

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes
Into the Highfells!

General Features

Terrain. The Highfells are steep and barren, save for brush, with deep valleys between the highlands.

Weather. Rain is persistent, though only heavy at times. The sky is overcast, and looks on the verge of storming.

Light. It is full dark, and if there is a moon, it is hidden behind clouds. Absent darkvision, the party will need a light source.

Smells and Sounds. Steady rain and churned up mud, with something more odious mixed in the mud.

Players Gonna Play

The adventurers may decide to head for the Highfells in search of the sisters at some earlier point in Part 2. That is fine, and warrant some adjustments to Part 3.

- The adventurers will need to find the trail in the dark.
- They have already been on the road for close to 8 hours. More travel risks levels of exhaustion.
- The sisters have watchers in the Highfells, alert for intruders. They may attack the adventurers in the night.

In the Village

The next morning, the adventurers find the large man from the night before, Constable Monteith, standing in the village square, with only one other villager. Montieth suggests that the search begin at Jonar's mill.

A clearly vexed Constable Montieth is pacing the square as you descend the stairs of the Crown and Thistle. Seeing you, his face brightens, and he hustles over to you.

"Thank the Gods. I thought no one but Grinnell here would be joining me. Everyone got sick overnight, or is plain hiding from me!"

Montieth calls out to the village that the search party is leaving, but no one else comes to the square.

Roleplaying Constable Montieth

Montieth is a middle-age human with heavy sideburns, and a large paunch. He blusters, and gives the impression that he'd much rather be sitting inside by a fire than be outdoors, whatever the reason.

He seems sincere in his desire to find the missing villagers, and in his thanks to the adventurers for their aid.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals the tracks of a humanoid leading east. The tracks are

on the small side, and could be from an adolescent human. This check is made with advantage for adventurers with the outlander background, rangers with swamp as a favored terrain, or druids who are Circle of the Swamp. Oksana will prompt them to look for tracks if no one thinks of it.



Into the Highfells

The trail leads the adventurers to the eastern edge of the village, where the trackers note that a half-dozen or so other tracks join the single set, and all continue east, climbing into the Highfells.

The trail leads you deep into the Highfells. The going is slow, as much of the area is thick with vines and brush. The trail you follow is little more than shoulder-wide, with many low hanging branches. You begin to get the unshakable feeling that you are being watched, but try as you might, you cannot see any watchers.

Eventually, the trail leads to an open space on the top of a fell, barren save for a few moss-covered rocks, and surrounded by brush. A faint mist covers the ground, obscuring the trail, but ahead, you can see a squat stone hut, smoke rising faintly from its chimney. In front of the hut are what appears to be some villagers, each with an axe-handle on his shoulder.

As you approach, the door of the hut opens a grey-haired human woman emerges. As she is about to shut the door, she leans back inside, and you can hear her say something like "yes, I'll tell them. Please just wait." She then turns from the door and addresses you with a trembling voice.

"Go, please. Go now. Head back to Hulburg, or to wherever you came from. We don't need outsiders meddling in our affairs.

At this, the male villagers drop their clubs from their shoulders down to their hands, and spread out to either side of her.

The Hag's Setup

Constable Montieh identifies the grey-haired woman is Theara Ringer, mother of Jaina, and wife to the late Jonar.

She has followed the tracks of her daughter up into the fells. With her are a couple of her cousins, and friends of her late husband.

See **Map 2**. Inside the hut are the sisters, Nelly and Peg Longarms, and Nelly's new daughter Jaina. They have spent most of the night welcoming Jaina to the family. They were interrupted by Theara early in the morning, two hours before the adventurers arrive. The three hags used their illusory appearance ability to appear as Immara, Tatyana, and Theara's daughter Jaina, all normal humans.

Jaina lay on a bed, faking sleep, while Nelly/Immara spun a story to Theara: Jaina arrived late last night, covered in blood, and rambling incoherently. Nelly/Immara and Peg/Tatyana got her calmed down, but determined that she was afflicted by foul spirits and are treating her for the affliction. They bade Theara wait outside.

Nelly/Immara was alerted to the adventurers approach via her scrying magic. *Pass without trace* won't shield them from Immara's scrying, though *nondetection* (or something similar) will. If Nelly was aided by a lock of hair or another scrying aid, she has been watching the adventurers all the way from the village. If not, she has only observed them over the last mile.

Nelly/Immara called Theara back inside, telling her that meddlers were approaching, and to run them off. Nelly/Immara promised Theara that she can save Jaina, but can't be bothered now with outsiders. The hag sisters are anxious to form their coven, and don't want to be interrupted.

If the characters don't turn around and leave, Theara will appeal to Monieth to take himself and his "help" back to the village. If this doesn't work, she orders her companions to attack with their clubs. The hags will join the melee after one round.

If the conversation lasts more than a couple of minutes, Nelly/Immara will storm out of the hut and attack, grumbling about "doing it yourself if you want it done right!"

Adjusting the Encounter

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

Very weak: 6 rounds to complete coven. 5 **commoners**, **Nelly**

Longarms (27 hit points), **Peg Longarms** (27 hit points), **Jaina Ringer** (27 hit points)

Weak: 5 rounds to complete coven. 6 **commoners**, **Nelly Longarms** (42 hit points), **Peg Longarms** (27 hit points), **Jaina Ringer** (27 hit points)

Average: 4 rounds to complete coven. 7 **commoners**, **Nelly Longarms**, **Peg Longarms** (27 hit points), **Jaina Ringer** (27 hit points)

Strong: 3 rounds to complete coven. 5 **bandits**, **Nelly Longarms** (**green hag**), **Peg Longarms** (**sea hag**), **Jaina Ringer** (**sea hag**)

Very strong: 2 rounds to complete coven. 6 **bandits**, **Nelly Longarms** (**green hag**), **Peg Longarms** (**sea hag**), **Jaina Ringer** (**sea hag**, 64 hit points)

Plaid: The hags have already formed a coven. 8 **bandits**, **Nelly Longarms** (**green hag**), **Peg Longarms** (**sea hag**), **Jaina Ringer** (**sea hag**, 64 hit points). Use coven spell slots.

Tactics

Peg/Tatyana: Uses a bonus action to drop her Illusory Appearance, exposing the party to her Horrific Appearance. Then she moves to attack Oksana. She continues to attack Oksana until one of them is dead.

Nelly/Immara: Tears the 2 mastiff patch from her *robe of useful items*, and orders the dogs to attack the nearest non-hag. The next round, she uses her invisible passage ability, and moves to attack the adventurer wearing the least armor.

Jaina: Uses a bonus action to drop her Illusory Appearance, exposing the party to her Horrific Appearance. Then she attacks her mother, grappling her, and lovingly describes how she tore Jonar apart. If one of the adventurers has killed or otherwise neutralized Theara, Jaina throws herself at that character in a reckless melee frenzy. If attacked, she will release Theara and retaliate.

Commoners/Bandits: If/when the hags reveal themselves as fey creatures, all of the villagers flee. Otherwise, they attack the adventurers with their clubs. Change damage type to bludgeoning. They flee if reduced to half HP, or if half their number go down.

Oksana: Hangs back, urging the players to subdue the sisters, not kill them. She will defend herself, and come to the aid of fallen characters.

Peg and/or Jaina: will flee if brought to half hit points or less, or if any other hag is killed outright.

Nelly/Immara: will fight to the death. She has vested so much time and effort into this scheme that it has blinded her to the long view.

If the coven is completed, Nelly and Jaina have access to the coven spells below, preferring *hold person* and *ray of sickness*. Peg, being mute, is relegated to casting *counterspell*.

Shared Spellcasting

After the coven is formed, and while the sisters are within 30 feet of one another, they can cast the following spells from

the wizard's spell list, but must share slots among themselves:

1st level (4 slots): *identify*, *ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *locate object*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *counterspell*

4th level (3 slots): *phantasmal killer*, *polymorph*

Developments

If any of the Longarms sisters are captured, Oksana will finally crack a smile. "We do well today!"

Surviving villagers are shocked to learn the true nature of the "Yanova" sisters.

Inside the hut, the adventurers find the journal of Nelly/Immara, chronicling her quest to create a coven. She and her sister have been traveling the Realms for more than a dozen years, seeding village after village with eventual haglings. Jaina represented their second such effort. The first, a girl in Damara, died in an accident a few years before her 13th birthday. Perhaps the adventurers will someday encounter the progeny of Nelly Longarms!

If the characters can avoid permanently harming or slaying the villagers while removing them from the fight, they will earn 25 experience points per commoner/bandit spared.

Treasure

In the hut, the characters find assorted gems worth 320 gp. Nelly/Immara is wearing a *robe of useful items*. They also find a *spell scroll of knock*, and a *potion of fire breathing*.

Conclusion

Oksana thanks the adventurers for their aid, and pays them their wages. She has made arrangements in Hulburg for an escort to take her and any prisoners back to Rashemen.

There is no hero's welcome for the characters back in Abermoor. The close-knit community is in mourning, and anxious to see the backs of any non-residents. If the adventurers accomplished their faction assignment and left Crespo alive, he is long gone when they return to the village.

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 (Min: 450/Max: 600 Each)

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.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Bandit	25
Bandit Captain	450
Commoner	0
Jaina Ringer (Weak)	450
Jaina Ringer	700
Mastiff	25
Nelly Longarms	700
Peg Longarms	450
Spy	200
Thug	100

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Saving villagers	25/villager saved
Stopping the coven formation	150

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Bandit Gold	15
Poetry Book	10
Crespo's Coins	85
Oksana's Payroll	45 each
Longarms' Treasure	320

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 detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Robe of Useful Items

Wondrous item, uncommon

This robe has cloth patches of various shapes and colors covering it. While wearing the robe, you can use an action to detach one of the patches, causing it to become the object or creature it represents. Once the last patch is removed, the robe becomes an ordinary garment.

The robes patches can be found on **Player Handout 2**, with boxes to tick off as they are used.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Potion of Fire Breath

Potion, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Scroll of Knock

Spell scroll, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Story Awards

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Crespo's Ire. You have stolen from Crespo Thero, and you left him alive. He will be on the lookout for you! More information can be found in **Player Handout 3**.

Renown

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Zhentarim and Lords Alliance members earn an additional **one renown**, for successful completion of their faction assignment.

DM Reward

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

Appendix. Monster/NPC Statistics

Bandit

Medium humanoid (any race) any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

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

Bandit Captain

Medium humanoid (any race) any non-lawful 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 two languages

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.

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race) any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 11 (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 any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Actions

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

Commoners include peasants, serfs, slaves, servants, pilgrims, merchants, artisans, and hermits.

Jaina Ringer, Sea Hag

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8+21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Aquan, Common, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. Jaina can breathe underwater.

Horrific Appearance. Any humanoid that starts its turn within 30 feet of Jaina and can see her true form must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Jaina is within line of sight, ending the effect on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Jaina's Horrific Appearance for the next 24 hours.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

Death Glare. Jaina targets one frightened creature she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the hag, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or drop to 0 hit points.

Illusory Appearance. Jaina 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 Jaina is disguised.

Mastiff

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 5 (1d8+1)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages -

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Mastiffs are impressive hounds prized by humanoids for their loyalty and keen senses. Mastiffs can be trained as guard dogs, hunting dogs, and war dogs. Halflings and other Small humanoids ride them as mounts.

Nelly Longarms/ Immara, 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. Nelly can breathe underwater.

Innate Spellcasting. Nelly'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. Nelly 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. Nelly 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 Nelly is disguised.

Invisible Passage. Nelly 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 equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.

Oksana Dyergoba, Guard

Medium human, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages 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, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Guards include members of a city watch, sentries in a citadel or fortified town, and the bodyguards of merchants and nobles.

Peg Longarms/Tatyana, Sea Hag

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8+21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Aquan, Common, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. Peg can breathe underwater.

Horrific Appearance. Any humanoid that starts its turn within 30 feet of Peg and can see her true form must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Peg is within line of sight, ending the effect on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Peg's Horrific Appearance for the next 24 hours.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

Death Glare. Peg targets one frightened creature she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the hag, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or drop to 0 hit points.

Illusory Appearance. Peg 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 Peg is disguised.

Spy

Medium humanoid (any race) any alignment

Armor Class 12 (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 +4, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

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.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Rulers, nobles, merchants, guildmasters, and other wealthy individuals use **spies** to gain the upper hand in a world of cutthroat politics. A spy is trained to secretly gather information. Loyal spies would rather die than divulge information that could compromise them or their employers.

Thug

Medium humanoid (any race) any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature, and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

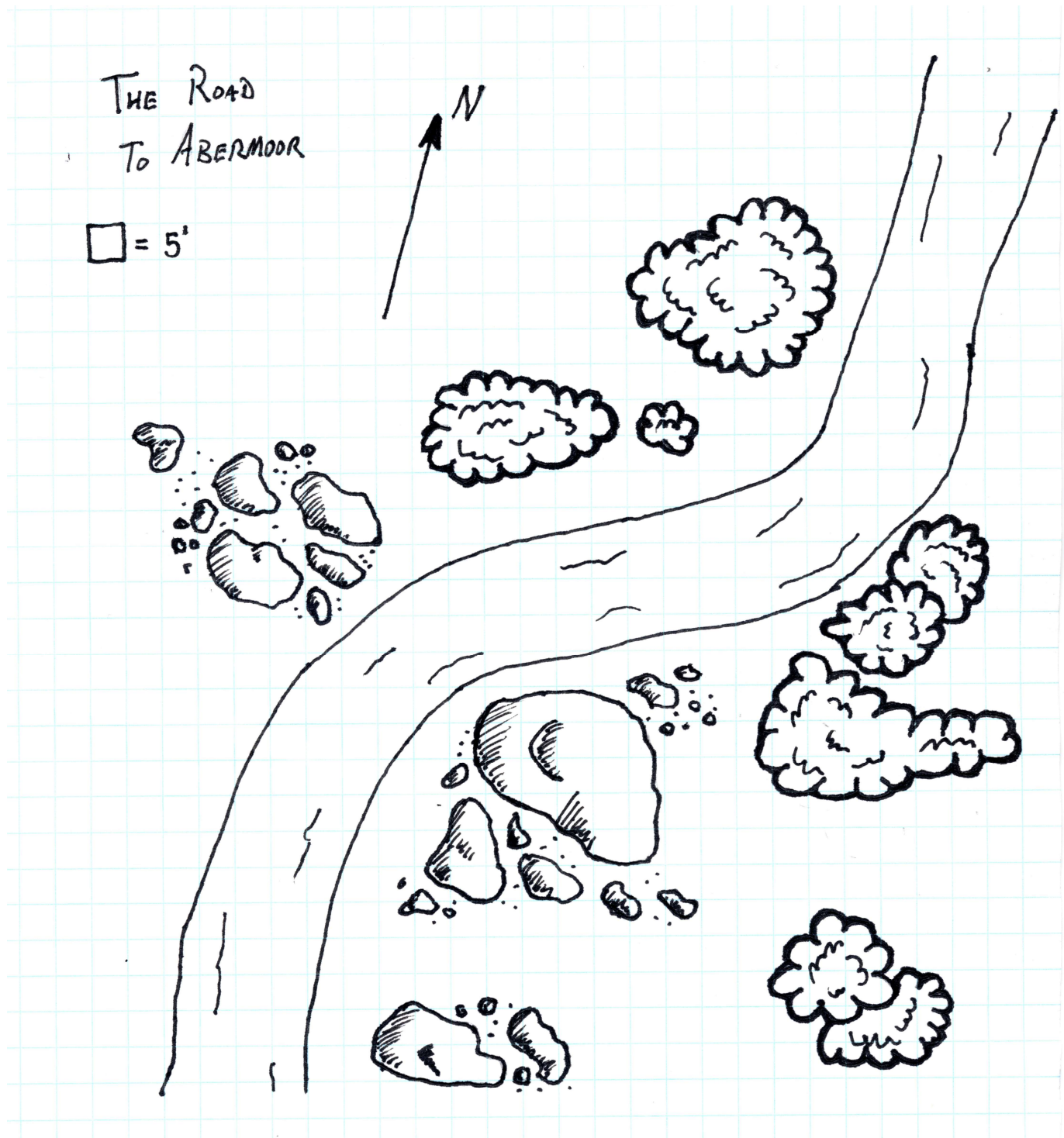
Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

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

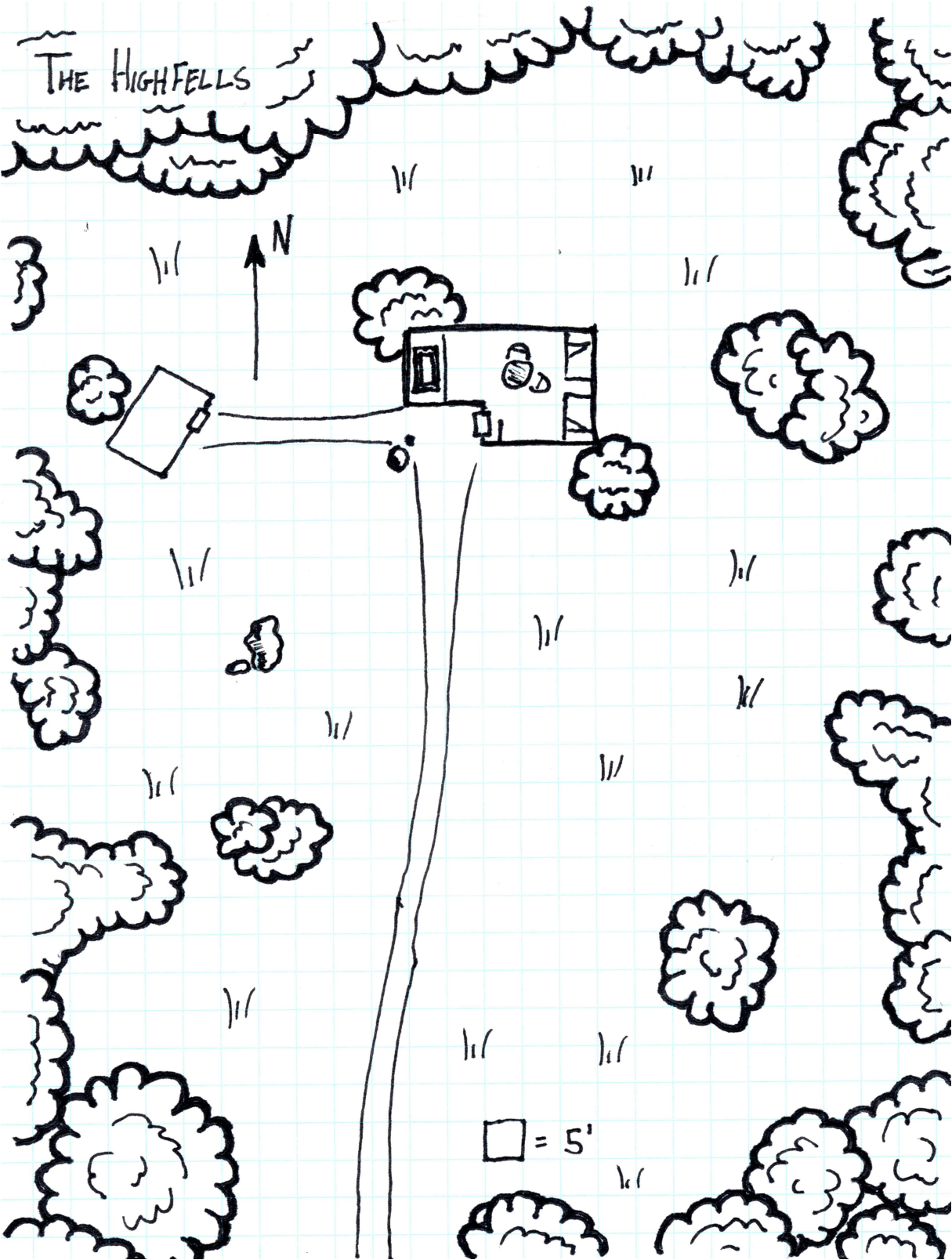
Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Thugs are ruthless enforcers skilled at intimidation and violence. They work for money and have few scruples.

Map 1.



Map 2.



Player Handout 1. Faction Assignment

URGENT!!!

Crespo Thero, proprietor of The Crown and Thistle in Abermoor, is in possession of a journal that our factions must recover at all costs.

Crespo is using the journal to blackmail a member of the Lord's Alliance into silence on a matter about which we wish our comrade to be able to speak.

The journal is red leather, with a large "W" in brass, riveted to the cover. You are to recover it from Crespo, by fair means or foul. The less attention you can draw to this recovery effort, the better. Ideally, Crespo would not know it is missing until our member refuses the next payment, the journal safe kept by them.

Once you have the journal, proceed to the Tent City in Hulburg. In a tavern known as the Suckling Pup, you will find one of our agents, Mayer Schall, probably playing cards. Turn the journal over to him.

It should go without saying, but we are collectively relying on your discretion.

-DEACON

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It should go without saying, but we are collectively relying on your discretion.

-DEACON

Player Handout 2. Robe of Useful Items

Patches:

- ☐ Dagger
- ☐ Dagger
- ☐ Bullseye lantern (filled and lit)
- ☐ Bullseye lantern (filled and lit)
- ☐ Steel mirror
- ☐ Steel mirror
- ☐ 10-foot pole
- ☐ 10-foot pole
- ☐ Hempen rope (50 feet, coiled)
- ☐ Hempen rope (50 feet, coiled)
- ☐ Sack
- ☐ Sack
- ☐ Pit
- ☐ 2 **mastiffs** (see the *Monster Manual* for statistics)
- ☐ Pit
- ☐ Rowboat (12 feet long)
- ☐ Wooden ladder
- ☐ Silver Coffers
- ☐ Portable ram
- ☐ 4 potions of healing
- ☐ A **riding horse** with saddle bags (see the *Monster Manual* for statistics)

Player Handout 3.

Story Award: Crespo's Ire

You have made an enemy of Crespo Thero. Though his memory is longer than his reach, it will behoove you to keep an eye over your shoulder if you plan on staying near the Moonsea.