

FantasyCraft

#1

REALITY BLURS'

OLD SCHOOL FANTASY



A KEG FOR DRAGON

BY SEAN PRESTON

A Keg for Dragon

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A Keg for Dragon



Northpoint is a remote village with no particular claim to fame other than its location in the foothills of the Ridgeline Mountains, home to an ancient dwarven kingdom known for its potent whiskey. Our heroes are traveling there to visit an old friend, an acquaintance, or to follow up on some rumor of your choosing when they are drawn into the village's dilemma. The Iron Legion, a vicious tribe of imperialistic orcs, has recently begun to threaten the villagers, and have already cut off most travel along the North Road. Their intent is clear—the conquest of Northpoint. For some reason, the Compact of Clipwing has not been honored. The question is, why?

The Compact, dating back seventy-five years, is an agreement struck between the villagers and the dragon, Clipwing, which provides protection for the Dragon Pass in exchange for a regular tribute of one triple-size dwarven keg of Ridgeline Whiskey every three months. Yes. The whiskey is that good.

The most recent tribute, however, was never properly delivered, so Clipwing refuses to honor his part of the agreement. Such is the way with dragons.

What happened to the keg? Chapel, the local errand boy, owed a gambling debt to Gristle, a gruff soldier of fortune, and as a result, the lad substituted inferior whiskey instead, figuring the dragon wouldn't be able to tell the difference. Clipwing knew at just a sniff. He has kept Chapel as punishment and now refuses to stop the orc attacks.

The heroes need to first find the missing boy, discover the dragon didn't get the proper tribute, locate the keg, and return it to him – all the while dealing with the threat of orc and goblin attacks.

Be certain to be generous with clues and offer a nudge or bit of direction if they seem to be at an impasse. Other than that, let them proceed at their own pace,

Introduction

You may find the name a bit of a curiosity, but please allow me to explain. The name hearkens back to a simpler time of roleplaying adventure where you picked a race and a class (sometimes the two were the same thing), and you jumped into the scenario with little knowledge of what you or your hero were doing. Games evolve, and so do the players, but we all have to admit that it is awfully fun to delve into dungeons, clear the forests of bandits, find the treasure, and rescue the princess from time to time. Isn't it? Hopefully, you'll find the adventures in this series evoke the same sense of excitement, intrigue, and fun for you that they do for us.

Enjoy!

Sean Preston

only ramping up the attacks and whatnot if you find them moving too leisurely for your liking.

Scene One: Highwaymen of Sorts

The heroes are ambushed by goblins lying in wait. After dispatching or driving them off, the heroes discover Peddler Thomas left for dead in the bushes, his pack scattered about. He explains to them the troubles in the area, offers them a discount on goods, and tells them to try The Shattered Sword in Northpoint just up the road for a warm fire, cold whiskey, and recent gossip.

Scene Two: The Lay of the Land

A pall seems to hang over the sleepy town of Northpoint. It borders the Jagged Reaches which can be seen just beyond the Ridgeline Mountains to the north. People go about their lackluster lives with little real drive or purpose.

Scene Three: An Offer Over Whiskey

The heroes make their way into The Shattered Sword and encounter a most intriguing scoundrel therein. An opportunity arises and negotiations ensue.

Scene Four: A Talk with Templeton

The heroes meet with Templeton, who comes across as shady as he seems, but if accused of harming the boy, he reveals another side to his personality.

Scene Five: Sage Advice

Eliana the Apothecary has taken note of the heroes' interest in things, and will invite them to her place for refreshment. She lives just above her shop, and her assistant, Mary Anne, takes care of the business when she is out. Over tea, she tells them to look beyond the surface, and helps them sort out the deeper meaning of events.

Scene Six: Private Sanctuary

The heroes encounter the elusive Gristle, inspect Chapel's bolt-hole, and are no further along than they were, except they find the Ward's Map. An orc attack convinces Gristle to throw in with the heroes and offer a bit more insight.

Scene Seven: Within the Forest Depths

The heroes make their way through the forest, and encounter an orc encampment. If they let it go unchecked, the town could be in trouble, regardless of whether they make amends with the dragon or not. The question is: do they strike?

Scene Eight: Clipwing's Lair

Clipwing is in the cave with Chapel as his prisoner. He wants the keg returned to him, and is surprised that no one has already come to make amends. It is learned that Sebastian was a Dragon's Ward in his youth and knew of the cave's location. The heroes put two and two together, return to town, and confront him at The Shattered Sword.

Scene Nine: Showdown with Sebastian

Sebastian is fearful of being discovered and if confronted, he'll reveal the whiskey's location and beg for mercy. He then causes the stuffed owl-bear to come to life while he attempts to make his escape with the distraction.

Scene Ten: Endgame

After they deliver the keg and return with Chapel, the heroes are given a hero's welcome for averting disaster. Clipwing uses his dragon ways to reassert his superiority over The Iron Legion, and all is well.

If Sebastian is killed during his final confrontation, the heroes are paid and thanked for their service. However, if mercy is shown, the magistrate gives the heroes an additional reward: the deed to The Shattered Sword. Gristle agrees to run it in their stead, and he's certain Chapel will be willing to work off his debt as well.

Menace

A Keg for Dragon assumes a Menace of I (Trifling) or II (Routine), though you can easily adjust that if you like. Keep in mind that a higher or lower Menace will adjust the number of Dramatic scenes.

Sliding DCs

To allow for play at any Threat Level, this adventure features sliding DCs (see Fantasy Craft, page 370).

Dramatis Personae

Chapel: A youth of sixteen, Chapel is already an inveterate gambler. He ran away from debts he accrued in the city and has been living in Northpoint for several months. He works odd jobs, but has strange fits that drive him compulsively to the woods, where he seeks shelter in his cave. Some say he is a werewolf. Others say he is insane. The truth of the matter is simply that Chapel likes to be alone and has discovered that his “fits” enable him to live a very private life. He has grown to care for the town and most of its people, and is secretly in love with Ana.

Eliana, the Elder: Orphaned in the Ridgeline Mountains when a winter storm took the lives of her family, Eliana spent her first twenty years working in the dwarven cities, apprenticed to the Lichen Growers and learning the secrets of plants. She eventually was forced to leave when the damp air caused her to become deathly ill. She misses her home among the dark dwellers, but has flourished in the light, although she has not wandered far from her roots by living in Northpoint, the closest topside settlement to her dwarven “family”.

Gristle: Gristle was a miner until a mine collapse caused him to become claustrophobic. Shortly thereafter he became a surface mercenary, and only last year has started his own business as a freelancer. He subsidizes this by taking wagers from the local gamblers, and being an intermediary with the Ridgeline folks. He also runs an illegal fighting ring in the southern cities, and had brought Chapel to Northpoint to train for some upcoming bouts.

Hiram Mirth: Hiram Mirth was a popular litigator in the cities who moved to this little town after a political indiscretion nearly thirty years ago. Now he serves as the voice of calm and reason for the populace. Perhaps he spends a bit too much time in his cups, but he is generally friendly and well-liked, and has the town’s best interests at heart.

Sebastian Shaw: Sebastian runs the family business, and he runs it well, turning a tidy profit. He’s not averse to taking a bit of an advantage over travelers, but treats his regulars well. He had a falling-out with Oliver Templeton when he discovered Templeton was conducting business deals in his commons room without giving him a percentage. Ever since, Templeton relegates all such talk to his own shop, but Sebastian still feels that his old friend got one over on him. The Iron Legion learned from one of their informers that Sebastian would betray his people if the coin were right, and contacted him to purchase the keg. To that end, he stole the Ridgeline Whiskey from Chapel, anticipating a tidy profit. Now, he’s a bit nervous over the whole shady business. The Iron Legion never had any intention of buying the whiskey; they just wanted the covenant with the dragon broken.

Oliver Templeton: Born into poverty, Templeton spent many nights longing for steak and potatoes or even another grain of rice. He vowed he would amass such wealth that he would never go hungry again. A lifetime later, he lives well on his successes, which he judges by the quality of the food and wines he shoves down his gullet. He is an active member of the Thieves’ Guild, and his shop gives him a perfect front for fencing goods and running black market operations in the area.

Peddler Thomas: Peddler Thomas was once a greedy merchant in the big city who did not even spare the coin to save his daughter’s life. Since then he’s seen the light, given away all his worldly possessions save for the heavy backpack, and now lives a life of simple austerity.

Whiteshroud: Orphaned in his youth, Whiteshroud was taken in by the Church, where he was schooled in the healing arts. Today, he is a quiet soul, keeping to himself and offering his services as he is able, asking nothing in return.

Clipwing: A dragon with coppery-green scales and a crippled right wing with a long war wound running down its length, Clipwing has hypnotic eyes that shift colors like leaves in the changing seasons. Clipwing likes to talk a lot, especially when he’s in his cups. He enjoys regaling his audience about past battles. He selects wards from the town, but hopes to one day re-form the Dragon’s Guard and unite the Broken Lands.

Scene 1: Highwaymen of Sorts



Somewhere along the North Road

Objectives

- The heroes want to defeat the forest goblins resoundingly, and rescue the peddler with no more than a few scrapes and bruises.

Challenges

- Defeat the forest goblins while keeping the peddler alive.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: The GM wants the heroes to feel they are leaving their mundane lives behind as they step into a world of adventure. They should suspect that danger is afoot, and the best way to deal with it is a turn of phrase, and perhaps, a turn of the blade. The players should be curious about what problems await in Northpoint and how they can help.

Gear: The heroes are traveling along the North Road with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

The North Road winds its way into the Southlands. The foliage along the route is light for the most part, but has thickened up with pine and oak, and shadows grow deep and the way more treacherous as nature reclaims the path.

Ambiance: The air smells of pine and oak from the mixed evergreen and deciduous forest, with lengthening shadows as the day advances.

Terrain: Forest

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

As your party is walking casually down North Road, minding their own business, the brush by the road ahead of them rustles ominously. Two green-skinned, diminutive figures leap from the brush, wielding crossbows and short swords and menacing the party.

“Give us your coin, humans, or prepare for death!” one of the creatures cries in a crackly, lisping voice.

Two forest goblins step out onto the path and demand the heroes hand over their coin or suffer the consequences.... In total there are enough goblins for one per hero, including these two holding crossbows and the remainder hiding in the bushes.

All heroes may make an Awareness check opposed by the goblins’ Stealth (team check, adding in +2 for cover) to determine if they see any additional goblins hiding in the bushes.

Should the peddler be killed, the heroes each lose an Action Dice immediately (it’s bad fortune to kill a merchant). However, they may rummage through his goods and find the treasure listed under his NPC stat block.

Peddler Thomas was left for dead in the bushes, lying unconscious in a pool of his own blood with his



pack scattered about. If things are going badly for the heroes, the merchant rouses himself and scares off the remaining goblins with flash bombs (page 181 of *Fantasy Craft*). He'll claim he was taken by surprise to begin with or they never would've gotten him.

Peddler Thomas thanks the heroes for their aid and offers them elixirs in thanks for their good work. Each is a potion of Healing elixir (page 163 of *Fantasy Craft*). He gives one elixir per hero and tells them about the troubles in Northpoint. If he is killed, well, he can't offer

much aid then, can he? The injured man then relates how local travel has become treacherous in the past month, and that goblins aren't the worst of it. There have been rumors of orcs coming from the Jagged Reaches to raid the local town of Northpoint. He just left the village the day before and intends to return to safer, more civilized lands to the south. He also hopes that Northpoint sorts out its problems before his next trip up this way.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Why are we here?

A: You're adventurers, do you care? Seriously, you are just traveling through the countryside in between adventures and stumble upon a bit of trouble.

Q: Have any of us heard of troubles from bandits on the road?

A: No. You are new to the area and have not heard of any particular troubles yet in this area.

Q: What time is it?

A: Late afternoon. The sun is just starting to set.

Cast

Forest Goblin (Standard NPCs, Adversaries)

"Diiiiieee!"

Description: Fond of wearing very dark colored clothes to blend into their forest surroundings, these creatures have a somewhat grotesque appearance: their brow is fully covered with thick hair and their mouth is filled with yellowed, crooked teeth. Typically, they speak in a coarse raspy sounding and slightly high-pitched voice.

Motivations: Forest goblins are opportunists and are not afraid to take what they want.

Forest Goblin (Small Folk Walker — 42 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ S (1x1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init V; Atk IV; Def III; Res III; Health V; Comp II; Skills: Intimidate VI, Blend V, Tactics IV; Qualities: Menacing threat, tricky (Cheap Shot), darkvision I, feat (Ambush Basics), light-sensitive

Attacks/Weapons: Short sword (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: keen 4), light crossbow + 10 standard bolts (dmg 1d4 lethal; threat 19–20; range 50 ft. x 6; qualities: AP 2, load 5, poisonous)

Gear: Partial leather armor (DR 1; Resist Fire 3; DP –1; ACP –0; Spd —; Disguise +0)

Treasure: 1C, 1G, 1L

Peddler Thomas (Standard NPC)

"I'm sure I have just what you're looking for..." , "I'm sorry. No credit." , "Always remember change, however unlikely, is possible."

Description: Peddler Thomas is a gnarled old human man, leathery, tan and tough. He has a kind smile and surprisingly soft hands. He was once a greedy merchant in the big city who did not even spare the coin to save his daughter's life. Since then he's seen the light, given away all his worldly possessions save for the heavy backpack, and now lives a life of simple austerity.

Motivations: Thomas is friendly, but talking to him for any length of time reveals a heaviness in his heart. He believes in goodness and in redemption.

Peddler Thomas (Medium Folk Walker — 33 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1x1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init II; Atk I; Def II; Res I; Health IV; Comp III; Skills: Bluff IV, Haggle X, Crafting IV, Sense Motive IV; Qualities: Expertise (Haggle)

Attacks/Weapons: Walking stick (dmg 1d8 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: double, trip), flash bombs (dmg 3d6 flash; threat –; range 10 ft. x 3; qualities: blast 1)

Gear: Backpack with much bric-a-brac, potions of Healing (1 per hero)

Treasure: 2C, 2G, 1L, 1M

Next Steps

Having dispatched the threat of the forest goblins and assisted Peddler Thomas, the party is likely interested in trying to discover the trouble at Northpoint (see Scene 2). Peddler Thomas can give them directions to the village. Should the characters decide not to visit Northpoint, feel free to hint that there is the likelihood of a reward for anyone who assists the townsfolk with their problems!

Scene 2: The Lay of the Land



Inside the town of Northpoint

Objectives

- The characters want to ingratiate themselves with the locals, and find out what they can do to help.

Challenges

- Defeat the forest goblins while keeping the peddler alive.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: The GM wants the players to feel the town is alive, in danger, and worth protecting.

Gear: The heroes are traveling into Northpoint with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

A pall seems to hang over the sleepy town of Northpoint. It borders the Ridgeline Mountains beyond which can be seen the Jagged Reaches to the north. People go about their lackluster lives with little real drive or purpose. An aging wooden sign next to a small fountain in the village square points to the major points of interest in town: The Shattered Sword to the northwest, Templeton's General Goods due north on the road out of town, and Ana's Apothecary to the east.

Ambiance: Bustling townsfolk scurry hither and yon upon their daily errands. The village appears as a

typical farming village, full of activity and its share of interesting characters.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

While the heroes are trying to decide what to do, they witness a pair of haphazard militiamen storming out of The Shattered Sword, but calm down as they see the heroes. One introduces himself as Samuel Wright and welcomes them to the town. His twin brother, Elijah, asks if they are heroes.

If the heroes are nice to Samuel and Elijah, the militiamen escort them to The Shattered Sword. "You wanted us to get results? Well, how's this? We found a whole lot of heroes for you to sort things out!" They then turn on their heels and leave.

If the heroes are not so nice, the militiamen tell them, "You may be mean. You may be able to take us, but we're certain you're motivated by common decency. Come with us." Again, they are escorted to the tavern.

The heroes may attempt to Persuade (DC 10) the militiamen. If the heroes are successful, they tell the heroes of the missing boy and the increasing threat of attacks on the town by goblins and orcs.

Should the heroes enter into a scuffle with the twins, the townsfolk come outside to witness the commotion. Whiteshroud will drift over to try to calm things down.

Should the heroes treat the militiamen well, the Attitude of the pair shifts from Neutral to Friendly and

they pledge to aid them in any heroic endeavors in and about the town.

Other Locations In Northpoint

Ana's Apothecary

This quaint shop is over seventy-five years old and contains nearly anything a burgeoning herbalist could hope for – items for concocting healing poultices, poison antidotes, and even a limited supply of herbs that, if properly mixed, can bolster the user's strength and stamina. The ceiling has large windows to let in a huge supply of light.

Chapel's Bolt-Hole

This rustic retreat was the place where Chapel spent the bulk of his free time training. No one in the town knows about its location, save for Eliana, whom Chapel invited to visit when Gristle had business to attend to in the city. It is clean, as far as caves go, and well ordered, with a training dummy, various practice weapons, and shields.

Clipwing's Cave

This cave is particularly dry and smells faintly of dandelions. No bones litter the floor, and the entrance is fastidiously free of debris. Naturally enough, the dragon, Clipwing, is to be found here.

The Shattered Sword

Northpoint's only place to whet your whistle, this tavern boasts a variety of ale, foodstuffs, and a bit of gossip from time to time.

Templeton's General Goods

This store offers all the basic sundries any adventurer could ask for, along with a handful of basic arms and armor from those who have either died in their heroic pursuits, retired, or thought better of such insanities altogether.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Why do the twin militiamen appear upset?

A: The militiamen have been listening to the town argue over Clipwing and the boy, Chapel. They have been tasked with finding answers.

Q: Why have the militiamen not found the answers?

A: They are not professional soldiers, unlike the heroes. They have families to think about. There is not enough money for them to take on a mad dragon.

Q: What sort of trouble is the town in?

A: They would not call it trouble, exactly . . . more like a misunderstanding due to misplacement of some, uh, property.

Cast

Samuel and Elijah Wright (Standard NPCs)

"United, we stand." , "Can we be of any help?"

Description: Identical twins, the two humans are of slender build, with black hair and green eyes. Elijah has a slight scar under his left eye. The men have served the town as its standing militia for over ten years. They have the best of intentions, but have little more than basic combat skills.

Motivations: These two characters are rather inept individuals, but know which end of a sword to hold and have driven off the occasional rabid raccoon or wild possum. They are simultaneously awed by and jealous of any honest-to-goodness adventurers they may encounter, their moods shifting with the wind.

Simon and Elijah Wright (Medium Folk Walker — 37 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init V; Atk II; Def II; Res III; Health III; Comp II; Skills: Investigate V, Notice V, Search V; Qualities: Feat (Basic Skill Mastery (Investigator), Combat Instincts), improved sense (hearing)

Attacks/Weapons: Throwing spear (dmg 1d8 lethal; threat 19-20; qualities: hurl, reach +1), dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19-20; qualities: bleed, hurl)

Gear: Partial hardened leather armor (DR 3; Resist Fire 3; DP -1; ACP -1; Spd -5 ft.; Disguise -2), hooded lantern, manacles, whistle

Treasure: 1C

Whiteshroud (Standard NPC)

"If you didn't fight, you wouldn't get hurt." , "Of course, I can tend to that." , "You insult the gods, undoing my work."

Description: An emaciated man in dirty, white robes, Whiteshroud carries his worldly possessions on his person: a cup, a plate, and a fork, all dangling

like talismans from a crude leather necklace. Orphaned in his youth, Whiteshroud was taken in by the Church, where he was schooled in the healing arts. Today, he is a quiet soul, keeping to himself and offering his services as he is able, asking nothing in return.

Motivations: The town healer, Whiteshroud is a bit of a recluse. He often wanders the streets by day, but hangs out in a corner of The Shattered Sword in the evenings.

Whiteshroud (Medium Folk Walker — 56 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init I; Atk I; Def IV; Res III; Health III; Comp III; Skills: Crafting IV, Medicine VI, Resolve IV, Spellcasting V; Spells: Cure Wounds I, Feather Fall, Identify I, Knock, Read Magic; Qualities: Class ability (Mage: arcane wellspring I), expertise (Medicine), feat (Alchemy Basics, Bandage, Basic Skill Mastery (Healer)), spell defense II

Attacks/Weapons: None

Gear: Plain robes, sandals, cup, plate, fork

Treasure: 1G, 1M

Next Steps

The heroes make their way into The Shattered Sword and encounter a most intriguing scoundrel therein. An opportunity arises and negotiations ensue (see Scene 3).



Scene 3: An Offer Over Whiskey



Inside the Shattered Sword

Objectives

- The characters will want to negotiate the best deal they can and learn the circumstances of Chapel's disappearance.

Challenges

- Negotiation with a very savvy Hiram Mirth.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: The heroes learn of the missing boy and the dangers of dealing with dragons. Ultimately, they should be drawn into saving the town. They are heroes after all. Aren't they?

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

The Shattered Sword is the hub of Northpoint. It is a traditional tavern that has been in the Shaw family for seven generations. Just inside the doorway is a stuffed owl-bear that is used as a coat rack, while over the mantle hangs the head of a wild hyena from the Southlands. Some townsfolk are currently arguing over tankards of ale when the party enters.

Ambiance: The Shattered Sword is a warm, friendly place, and many deals have been struck before its roaring fireplace.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

The magistrate, Hiram Mirth, is arguing with several of the locals about what to do about the boy and the dragon. When the party is introduced, everyone falls silent as Mirth sizes them up.

"Well met, strangers. You're probably passing through on your way to the Jagged Reaches in your quest for real adventure. Granted, Northpoint is usually a sleepy little town – and we like it that way – but lately... well, lately there has been a great deal of trouble. Chapel is missing, the dragon is dead or mad or worse, but what's worse than dead, really? And we've seen black wolves in the forest of late. Shamans of the Red Hand use wolves as forward scouts, it's been said. Will you help us?"

Mirth is willing to scrape together sufficient funds to pay the heroes 100 silver coin for their efforts, plus free accommodations in town along with a twenty percent discount on all goods.

The negotiation is a simple one. Mirth can offer, at most, 120 coins per hero. This is accomplished by an opposed Bargain check, where the heroes are the treated as the seller and Mirth is the buyer. The best result the heroes can get is 120% of the asking price of 100 silver (see Table 2.11: Bargaining in Fantasy Craft), for a total

of 120 silver. If he's treated well, Mirth will also offer up the militiamen to escort them about as needed.

Once the room clears out, Sebastian returns to the bar, mumbling to himself. If questioned, he'll tell them that he thinks everything could be connected – the missing boy, the derelict dragon, and the random attacks on the town. The heroes should make a team Sense Motive check opposed by Templeton's Bluff. The heroes suffer a -15 penalty (-4 for believable lie and -11 for Unfriendly Disposition). If successful, they can tell he is not telling them the whole truth, but cannot determine what else he may be hiding. He'll point them toward Oliver Templeton, after relaying the following:

"I was taking a break from the bar to get some fresh ginger in the woods, when I came across Chapel and Gristle arguing in a clearing. Chapel owed Gristle money, and promised to pay him. I think Gristle was about to rough the boy up when he heard me. I took off running, and didn't look back. Maybe Templeton knows more. That's who Chapel worked for. Gristle, he keeps to himself for the most part, and we don't usually see him around town until after dark."

With a successful Canvass check (Average population, with a result of up to 15), the heroes can determine that Chapel owed Gristle over 200 coins. With a Canvass check result greater than 15, they also learn that Gristle has been living in Chapel's bolt-hole for the past few days.

A critical failure on the Canvass roll indicates that one of Gristle's informers gets the message that the party is asking questions around town. Gristle will hide out in Templeton's basement while waiting for nightfall and a trip out of town aboard a "passing caravan".

The militia men may be enlisted to carry out any sundry tasks the party puts to them, such as keeping an eye out for people going into or out of Northpoint.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Who is Gristle and why is he only around after dark?

A: Gristle was a Dwarven miner until a mine collapse caused him to become claustrophobic. He recently started his own business as a freelance mercenary and is an intermediary with the Ridgeline folks. He prefers working after dark, a holdover from his mining days.

The Clipwing Compact

Over seventy-five years ago, the dragon, Clipwing, saved the town from the dark dragon, Nemesis. The dragon of light was sorely injured in the process, and his wing never properly healed. He was never to fly for great distances again. Our hunters encountered him groaning in pain, and we worked out a deal with him. We supply him with Ridgeline Whiskey from the dwarven cities, and he keeps us free from The Iron Legion and other threats to the west. We have grown complacent, and soft. None of us realized how dependent we have become on Clipwing until now. We hope that he and the boy are all right.

Clipwing selects a ward who serves until the dragon deems otherwise. Delivering the whiskey is an important task, and being the ward is a great honor, as this service has always been rewarded in the past. Chapel had just become the new ward, and this was his first delivery of the tribute.

Q: Why have the townsfolk not sent someone to find out what happened?

A: They are but simple townsfolk and do not have the means to mount a sufficient search and, if need be, rescue expedition. They are not prepared to deal with a dragon.

Q: Where does the dragon, Clipwing, make his home?

A: Clipwing's cave is located a few miles outside of town. The closeness of the dragon's cave is a source of discomfort for many residents.

Cast

Hiram Mirth (Standard NPC)

“Words and swords are only separated by an ‘s.’ Please, don’t be an ‘s.’”, “Call me Mirth, if you will.”

Description: A human man in his late sixties, Hiram Mirth has shoulder-length hair dyed a deep black, soft features, and a smattering of beard that is greyish-white. Hiram Mirth was a popular litigator in the cities who moved to this little town after a political indiscretion nearly thirty years ago. Now he serves as the voice of calm and reason for the populace. Perhaps he spends a bit too much time in his cups, but he is generally friendly and well-liked, and has the town’s best interests at heart.

Motivations: Mirth can be a resourceful ally, especially in a long-term campaign. He maintains strong connections in the cities and knows where the bodies are buried.

Hiram Mirth (Medium Folk Walker — 37 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init III; Atk II; Def IV; Res III; Health III; Comp IV; Skills: Haggle VII, Sense Motive VI; Qualities: Class ability (Courtier: with a word), honorable

Attacks/Weapons: Sword cane (dmg 1d8 lethal; threat 20; qualities: AP 2, finesse)

Gear: Common ink, sheaf of paper, signet ring, small chest with combination lock

Treasure: 1A, 3C

Sebastian Shaw (Special NPC, Adversary, Villain)

“A whiskey to your health.”, “I run the best tavern in town.”, “What do you need to know?”

Description: An athletic human man in his mid-forties, Sebastian Shaw stands about six feet tall, with ash-colored hair that falls to his shoulders. He

dresses in simple attire. Sebastian runs the family business, and he runs it well, turning a tidy profit. He’s not averse to taking a bit of an advantage over travelers, but treats his regulars well. He had a falling-out with Oliver Templeton when he discovered Templeton was conducting business deals in his commons room without giving him a percentage. Ever since, Templeton relegates all such talk to his own shop, but Sebastian still feels that his old friend got one over on him. The Iron Legion learned from one of their informers that Sebastian would betray his people if the coin were right, and contacted him to purchase the keg. To that end, he stole the Ridgeline Whiskey from Chapel, anticipating a tidy profit. Now, he’s a bit nervous over the whole shady business. The Iron Legion never had any intention of buying the whiskey; they just wanted the covenant with the dragon broken.

Motivations: Sebastian is friendly enough with the characters to avoid suspicion. Whenever he feels that the heroes are getting close, he points them to another suspect.

Sebastian Shaw (Medium Folk Walker — 35 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init II; Atk IV; Def III; Res IV; Health III; Comp I; Skills: Resolve III, Sleight of Hand III, Spellcasting VII; Spells: Feather Fall, Identify I, Levitate, Mirror Images, Nature’s Ally IV, Read Magic; Qualities: Grappler, class ability (Mage: arcane wellspring I), spell defense II

Attacks/Weapons: Club (dmg 1d8 subdual; threat 20)

Gear: Booze (6 uses), Spirits (3 uses)

Treasure: 2C

Next Steps

The heroes make their way to visit Templeton, based on the information provided by Sebastian Shaw (see Scene 4).

Scene 4: A Talk with Templeton



Templeton's General Goods and vicinity

Objectives

- The heroes want to find out what Templeton is up to.

Challenges

- Determining the presence of Chapel's bolt-hole.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: The GM should reveal information leading the characters to Chapel's bolt-hole.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

Templeton's General Goods is a small shop stocked with the usual sundry merchandise as well as specialty adventurer's goods ranging from arrows, bolts, and poultices all the way up to swords and maces, with a bit of light armor as well. Most of the wares are used, in fair to middling condition.

Ambiance: A semi-organized and somewhat clean shop, full of a variety of smells ranging from spices to oil to cedar. The items are visibly of average quality, although there are a few items of obviously a higher grade.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

Oliver Templeton is repairing a knife-wound over the breast of a leather vest when the characters come in. He sets it down as they arrive and greets them. He is has a Neutral Disposition (+0) to begin with, but can be persuaded (using Persuade, Influence, or similar appropriate check vs. Templeton's Sense Motive) to release some information about Chapel.

"I know the kid owed Gristle some money. Gristle came around here a LOT. Always to see Chapel. I finally asked the kid what the story was, and the kid said he'd figure it out, and asked to run extra errands, but there is only so much work to be had in a little town like this. I had him straightening up the stock room---" His face pales for a moment. "You don't think the kid would've gone so far as to steal from me, would you?"

He jangles some keys, runs whatever customers are in the store out, and leads them around back to the warehouse, where he opens it up and starts taking inventory. After a moment he stops, and confesses he's three kegs short.

The characters make a successful Notice check (DC 15) to detect the cart grooves outside of the warehouse. A successful Track check (DC 15) leads them off into the woods (and toward the bolt-hole). An additional Track check (DC 15) is required to navigate the forest to the bolt-hole proper.

If the characters fail either of the Track checks, Templeton mentions that Eliana was quite friendly with Chapel, and most likely knows the location of his secret hideaway.

Depending upon the time of day, the heroes wander around Templeton's General Goods and the woods, they may need torches or other illumination. Wandering into the woods at night is dangerous. If they do so, the characters encounter a pack of black wolves (number of wolves = one mob equal to the number of heroes) near the bolt-hole's entrance.

The militiamen will discourage the characters from setting off into the woods at night, but insist on going along if the party is not dissuaded to wait until morning.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Does Templeton know about Chapel's bolt-hole?

A: Yes, although he does not know the location.

Q: How did Chapel come to work for Templeton?

A: Chapel is known for doing the odd job around town and Templeton uses him to run errands for him, unknowingly supporting Templeton's illicit dealings.

Q: How does Templeton obtain all the many and varied goods in his shop?

A: Templeton explains he has always had a talent for working the art of the deal and is constantly "pestering" traveling merchant caravans for new goods to re-stock his shelves. He does not hint at his illegal activities.

Cast

Oliver Templeton (Standard NPC)

"I traffic in objects of interest, both mundane and obscure.", "Tell me a story of you, and I may be persuaded to offer a preferred rate.", "A pleasure to meet you, I am certain."

Description: Oliver Templeton is known as the fattest man in all of Northpoint. He trundles when he walks, and wears petitioner's robes and sandals rather than typical merchant attire. His thick fingers are adorned with gaudy rings, and he wears silk ribbons in his curly, shoulder-length hair. A small, gilded dagger is worn on his belt. Born into poverty, Templeton spent many nights longing for steak and potatoes or even another grain of rice. He vowed he would amass such wealth that he would never go hungry again. A lifetime later, he lives well on his successes, which he judges by the quality of the food and wines he shoves down his gullet. He is an active member of the Thieves' Guild, and his shop gives him a perfect front for fencing goods and running black market operations in the area.

Motivations: Despite his obvious shortcomings, Templeton is not an evil man, just misunderstood. It is greed that has driven him to do many bad things. He can offer the party goods they cannot otherwise obtain, as well as treasure maps that he "has on good authority are possibly real". He's useful as a gossip-monger and adventure starter.

Oliver Templeton (Medium Folk Walker — 50 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init II; Atk II; Def IV; Res II; Health II; Comp IV; Skills: Haggle VIII, Impress V, Intimidate V; Qualities: Class ability (Assassin: offer they can't refuse; Courtier: never outdone; Sage: best of the best I), condition immunity (Baffled), Banned action (Jump)

Attacks/Weapons: Dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: bleed, hurl)

Treasure: 2C, 2L

Black Wolves (Standard NPCs, Adversaries)

"Grrrr."

Description: These large, black wolves are larger and more cunning than standard pack wolves. Most bear the scars of fighting and surviving in their wilderness conditions.

Motivations: The wolves have no significant motivations other than self-preservation and their natural instinct to hunt.

Black Wolf (Medium Animal Walker — 45 XP): Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground (Run 180 ft.); Init III; Atk IV; Def IV; Res III; Health IV; Comp —; Skills: Search III, Survival V, Tactics III; Qualities: Feat (Wolf Pack Basics, Wolf Pack Mastery), improved sense (scent), superior runner II, superior traveler I

Attacks/Weapons: Bite I (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 18–20; upgrades: trip)

Treasure: 1T

Next Steps

The heroes will likely proceed in one of two directions, based on their interactions with Oliver Templeton. If they didn't find Chapel's bolt-hole, the heroes will make their way to visit Eliana, based on the information provided by Oliver Templeton (see Scene 5). If they searched the woods successfully, then they find the bolt-hole and meet up with Gristle (see Scene 6).

Scene 5: Sage Advice



Ana's Apothecary and vicinity

Objectives

- The heroes may either take her advice or leave it, but they should certainly invest the time in making Eliana an ally at the very least.

Challenges

- Determining the presence of Chapel's bolt-hole.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: Eliana the Apothecary has taken note of the characters' interest in things, and will invite them to her place for refreshment. She lives just above her shop, and her assistant, Mary Anne, takes care of the business when she is out. Over tea, she tells them to look beyond the surface, and helps them sort out the deeper meaning of events. Eliana offers aid to the characters in one or more ways: with healing salves, emotional support, or assistance in cutting to the heart of the mystery, should the players be having difficulty determining what to do next.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

This quaint shop is over seventy-five years old and contains nearly anything a burgeoning herbalist could hope for – items for concocting healing poultices, poison antidotes, and even a limited supply of herbs

that, if properly mixed, can bolster the user's strength and stamina. The ceiling has large windows to let in a huge supply of light.

Ambiance: A well-organized and immaculate shop, odors of ointments, some pungent and some sweet, waft through the air. The items are located in a variety of containers and jars on the shelves of the shop. The feel of this shop is cozy and quaint.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

Eliana smiles and asks the heroes what they have discovered. After a bit more smiling and nodding, she speaks:

"You seek a boy who has gone missing and a dragon that, it seems, is absent as well. Perhaps the two are linked and not mere coincidence? It seems the common connection is the keg. Perhaps it is missing too, or did the dragon get it and decide to shirk his responsibilities? If so, then why now? It seems just too many things to be chance. Go to Chapel's bolt-hole. I've been there before; it's not hard to find. He is very kind and misunderstood. It is not surprising. He has a very old soul."

If the heroes either speak kindly of Chapel or Persuade (DC 15) her successfully for help, she'll give them each a Healing elixir (page 163 of Fantasy Craft).

If the heroes speak ill of Chapel, her prices double and she will not grant them the Healing elixir.

If need be, she can guide them to Chapel's bolt-hole. She is the only one who freely admits to knowing where it is and how to get there.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: How does Eliana know about Chapel's secret bolt-hole?

A: Chapel, infatuated with Eliana, confided in her some months back about his secret hideaway, hoping to impress her with his resourcefulness.

Q: Eliana seems to know more about Chapel than she is telling—is she hiding something?

A: No, she is genuinely a wise and good Elf.

Q: Why is Eliana so friendly with Chapel?

A: Eliana senses a measure of innocence in Chapel and favors him with her advice and counsel.

Cast

Eliana (Standard NPC)

“To see without, one must look within.” “The loudest whisper is softer than the smallest scream.” “Why, yes, my child, I am older than the oaks of the forest...”, “Please, call me Ana.”

Description: A slender wood elf, Eliana is both beautiful and graceful, with captivating green eyes and soft, tawny hair that cascades down her shoulders.

Orphaned in the Ridgeline Mountains when a winter storm took the lives of her family, Eliana spent her first twenty years working in the dwarven cities,

apprenticed to the Lichen Growers and learning the secrets of plants. She eventually was forced to leave when the damp air caused her to become deathly ill. She misses her home among the dark dwellers, but has flourished in the light, although she has not wandered far from her roots by living in Northpoint, the closest topside settlement to her dwarven “family”.

Motivations: Eliana is fully aware of her allure, but does not play upon it. She is the voice of wisdom who will provide unbiased information as best she can, as well as a sympathetic ear for the characters.

Eliana the Elder (Medium Fey Walker — 39 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10; SZ M 1×1, Reach 1); Spd 40 ft. ground; Init I; Atk I; Def IV; Res III; Health III; Comp III; Skills: Crafting IV, Medicine VI, Resolve IV; Qualities: Expertise (Medicine), feat (Alchemy Basics, Bandage, Basic Skill Mastery (Healer)), attractive I, burden of ages, improved sense (hearing, sight), light sleeper

Attacks/Weapons: Staff (dmg 1d8 subdual; threat 20; qualities: double, trip),

Gear: Healing poultices

Treasure: 1G, 1M

Next Steps

The heroes will likely proceed to Chapel's bolt-hole (see Scene 6), based on the assistance from Eliana.

Scene 6: Private Sanctuary



Chapel's bolt—hole and vicinity

Objectives

- The characters, on the other hand, should make an ally of Gristle, or at the very least get all the information they can from him about Chapel and Clipwing, and procure the Dragon's Ward's map of the caves.

Challenges

- Determining the presence of Chapel's bolt-hole.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: The heroes encounter the elusive Gristle, inspect Chapel's bolt-hole, and are no further along than they were, except they find the Dragon's Ward's Map. An orc attack convinces Gristle to throw in with the heroes and offer a bit more insight. As the adventure moves toward its conclusion, it's essential that the GM use the combination of Gristle and the orc attack to direct the characters toward Clipwing's cave.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

The cave system is pretty deep. The bolt-hole, however, is only on the outer periphery of an elaborate subterranean system. It consists of one large chamber and two smaller ones that branch off of the main passage. The smallest chamber has a natural hot spring in it. The other area contains some hay, furs, and rough bedding, along with a small campfire. The large chamber's floor is covered with a layer of sand that is marked with a circle.

Ambiance: It is clean, as far as caves go, and well ordered, with a training dummy, various practice weapons, and shields.

Terrain: Forest

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

Gristle is training when the characters enter the large room. He is shirtless and sweaty, covered with a dozen scars and twice as many tattoos. Gristle demands to know what the party is doing here.

"We've nothing to discuss. Northpoint is not my town. You are not my battle brothers."

Just as their brief exchange ends, orcs rush in and attack (number of orc warriors = one mob equal to the number of heroes).

"There is no escape for you," one orc warrior seethes. "The town will be ours."

Gristle draws his war hammer, and fights with the heroes. After the battle, Gristle grins for the first time.

"All right. Anyone who can kill an orc like that can't be all bad. I'll tell you what you want to know, and then some. Maybe one day we'll be battle brothers."

He'll lighten up and explain to them he has a contract with Chapel, and pat his pocket. He'll tell them that Chapel is one of his fighters, and he's been hiding him out here for the past six months practicing. The boy wanted to quit him, saying he'd lost the drive to fight anymore, and Gristle wanted him to settle his debts, after which he'd clear out. Templeton provided his cover story for a fee, and Gristle paid for all the kid's room and board. He'd been gone a few weeks, and upon his return had learned the boy had become the Dragon's Ward. Gristle knew word of that would spread

The Map of the Caves

Chapel's bolt-hole was one of a dozen caves available to a Dragon's Ward, but Chapel selected it because it provided him room to practice and recover from his injuries in the healing waters of the hot springs. The map notates the cave entrances, but does not reveal the deep tunnels. Venturing into the tunnels is a dangerous proposition for someone who is not the Dragon's Ward, but certainly provides adventure opportunities for the GM to expand upon at a later time.

fast, and make the chance for him to profit off the boy's anonymity remote at best. He was done with Chapel. When Chapel disappeared, he waited for him in the cave, but the boy hadn't returned. Not to him. Not to the town. Not anywhere. There was only one place the kid could be, and Gristle didn't plan on going there. He'll reveal the map he found.

"You see, this map is a copy. I recognize Chapel's handwriting. Someone had to give it to him. Someone else in town had to know where the caves were. Don't ya think?"

The Hot Spring

A successful Knowledge check (DC 15) reveals the water of the hot spring to be a Holy Mana Pool. The pool is magical and acts as the Cure Wounds I or Heal spell (hero's choice), using the appropriate number of spell points from the hot spring's spell point reserve. The hot spring can also cure critical injuries as per the Regenerate spell, but these injuries must be less than 30 days old. The hot spring only has 15 spell points per day.

After that, it is exhausted, and recovers 1 spell point per hour. It also may restore all spell points for any person who soaks in its waters (at the person's discretion), but using this choice drains all spell points from the hot spring immediately and it must recover as normal.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Does Gristle know about the healing properties of the hot spring?

A: No.

Q: Will Gristle go with the heroes to find Chapel if asked?

A: Yes, he will make it a point to accompany the heroes. Despite his rough exterior, he has a soft spot for Chapel.

Q: What more does Chapel know about The Iron Legion?

A: Not too much, other than they have been more active of late and the raids and trouble they cause, especially in more outlying areas, is not insubstantial.

Cast

Gristle (Standard NPC)

"You mind yers, and I'll mind mine.", "Eyes off me, bucko."

Description: A stocky and muscular dwarf, Gristle is tattooed from head to toe. He wears three earrings in his left ear, and sports a bandolier of daggers, with a war hammer on his belt. Scars zigzag across his neck and chest, and it appears as though he's escaped the stocks and gallows on more than one occasion. Gristle was a miner until a mine collapse caused him to become claustrophobic. Shortly thereafter he became a surface mercenary, and only last year has started his own business as a freelancer. He subsidizes this by taking wagers from the local gamblers, and being an intermediary with the Ridgeline folks. He also runs an illegal fighting ring in the southern cities, and had brought Chapel to Northpoint to train for some upcoming bouts.

Motivations: Gristle is a rough and tumble fellow, but he's good in a scrap and not as dumb as he looks. He's a great resource for the party.

Gristle (Medium Folk Walker — 54 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 20 ft. ground; Init IV; Atk IV; Def V; Res II; Health V; Comp II; Skills: Athletics III, Hagggle V, Intimidate V, Tactics III; Qualities: Always ready, class ability (Scout: sneak attack I), tricky (Called Shot), banned action (Jump, Swim), damage reduction 2, darkvision I, improved stability

Attacks/Weapons: Dagger × 4 (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: bleed, hurl), war hammer (dmg 1d12 subdual; threat 20; qualities: AP 2)

Gear: Partial chainmail with light fittings (DR 3, Resist Edged 2; DP –1; ACP –1; Spd –5 ft.; Disguise –8)

Treasure: 2C

Orc Warriors (Standard NPCs, Adversaries)

“All Hail the Iron Legion!”

Description: The Iron Legion warrior is the backbone of his clan, and is terrifyingly ferocious in battle.

Motivations: Treated as the finest of all orcs, the warrior is fearless, but neither is he a fool. He knows the dragon can break his back, but lusts to expand the greatness of the Iron Legion.

Orc Warrior (Medium Folk Walker — 40 XP): Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init IV; Atk IV; Def III; Res II; Health IV; Comp I; Skills: Athletics III, Intimidate III, Notice III, Tactics III; Qualities: Class ability (Soldier: rugged weapons), feat (All-Out Attack, Combat Instincts), always ready, banned action (Calm, Influence), grueling combatant, and light-sensitive

Attacks/Weapons: Short sword (dmg 1d8+1 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: keen 4), short bow + 20 standard arrows (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; range 20 ft. × 6; qualities: AP 2, cavalry, poisonous)

Gear: Partial chainmail with light fittings (DR 3, Resist Edged 2; DP –1; ACP –1; Spd –5 ft.; Disguise –8)

Treasure: 1C

Next Steps

While making their way through the forest to Clipwing's cave, the characters encounter an orc encampment (see Scene 7). If they let it go unchecked, the town could be in trouble, regardless of whether they make amends with the dragon or not. The question is: do they strike?

Scene 7: Within the Forest Depths



Deep in the forest . . .

Objectives

- The heroes have to choose whether to press onward or to dispatch the present force encroaching upon the town.

Challenges

- The heroes must determine whether to fight or evade the advance orc guard.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Dramatic

GM Briefing: There is an advance guard of The Iron Legion camped deeper in the woods. It's a detachment of half a dozen warriors (including two orc archers), with two black wolves and a shaman. This scene should convey a momentary ethical dilemma coupled with a sense of urgency.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

The forest area surrounding Clipwing's cave is thick and full of places to hide.

Ambiance: The ground is bare dirt outside the cave, and although the forest has begun to reclaim the path leading here, the canopy is thick enough leading up to the cleared cave entrance that the cave continues to be well-hidden and somewhat difficult to find.

Terrain: Forest

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

The orc camp is spare – it looks as though they have been traveling hard and fast, and just camped recently. However, they will quickly catch their second wind and be prepared for battle.

Gristle is in favor of charging right in and clearing out the scum. Should the characters succeed in a successful group Stealth check vs. the orc warriors' group Notice check, they can sneak past the orcs without being noticed, or move in closely enough to gain a surprise round. A failure on the Stealth check puts the orcs on high alert, enabling them to immediately rise and draw their weapons, so there is no surprise round and combat ensues.

Should the orcs be successfully evaded, then the heroes will encounter them when they leave Clipwing's lair – they will have trailed the heroes to the dragon's cave and will send back one of their goblin scouts to notify the army that Clipwing's lair has been located. This could pose future problems in the development of a campaign.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Can the orcs be persuaded to leave the heroes alone and let them continue their search?

A: No, they are intent upon raiding and will not give any consideration to the heroes' desires.

Q: Is it possible to obtain a black wolf and re-train it to serve someone other than the orcs?

A: While probably possible with a newly-born cub, these wolves are too old and set in their ways to be retrained.

Q: Will word of the heroes' deeds against The Iron Legion get back to the orcs in the main army?

A: Yes, yes indeed . . .

Cast

Orc Warriors (Standard NPCs, Adversaries)

"All Hail the Iron Legion!"

Description: The Iron Legion warrior is the backbone of his clan, and is terrifyingly ferocious in battle.

Motivations: Treated as the finest of all orcs, the warrior is fearless, but neither is he a fool. He knows the dragon can break his back, but lusts to expand the greatness of the Iron Legion.

Orc Warrior (Medium Folk Walker — 40 XP): Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init IV; Atk IV; Def III; Res II; Health IV; Comp I; Skills: Athletics III, Intimidate III, Notice III, Tactics III; Qualities: Class ability (Soldier: rugged weapons), feat (All-Out Attack, Combat Instincts), always ready, banned action (Calm, Influence), grueling combatant, and light-sensitive

Attacks/Weapons: Short sword (dmg 1d8+1 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: keen 4), short bow + 20 standard arrows (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; range 20 ft. × 6; qualities: AP 2, cavalry, poisonous)

Gear: Partial chainmail with light fittings (DR 3, Resist Edged 2; DP -1; ACP -1; Spd -5 ft.; Disguise -8)

Treasure: 1C

Orc Archers (Standard NPCs, Adversaries)

"All Hail the Iron Legion!"

Description: The Iron Legion archer is disciplined and deadly accurate with his bow.

Motivations: The Iron Legion archers do not speak, nor back down. Their tongues have been plucked from their mouths to separate them from the other (vastly superior) warrior castes.

Orc Archer (Medium Folk Walker — 36 XP): Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init IV; Atk V; Def II; Res II; Health II; Comp I; Skills: Ride III, Search V, Sneak III; Qualities: Feat (Bow Basics, Bow Mastery), improved sense (sight), always ready, banned action (Calm, Influence), grueling combatant, light-sensitive

Attacks/Weapons: Short bow + 40 standard arrows (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; range 20 ft. × 6; qualities: AP 2, cavalry, poisonous)

Gear: Partial leather armor (DR 1; Resist Fire 3; DP -1; ACP -0; Spd —; Disguise +0)

Treasure: 1C

Orc Shaman (Special NPC, Adversary)

"All Hail the Iron Legion!"

Description: The shaman is educated in the art of lore: the glory of past battles passed down to him in a fine oral tradition. This knowledge coupled with the divine power granted to him by the wild gods make him a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield.

Motivations: The finest of the fine, the shaman is the spiritual leader of his people, and leads them into battle.

Orc Shaman (Medium Folk Walker — 55 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init V; Atk VI; Def III; Res III; Health IV; Comp IV; Skills: Ride III, Search V, Sneak III; Qualities: Class ability (Priest: devout), feat (black cat), devoted (Curses II), fearless II, always ready, banned action (Calm, Influence), grueling combatant, light-sensitive

Attacks/Weapons: Short sword (dmg 1d8 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: keen 4)

Gear: Partial leather armor (DR 1; Resist Fire 3; DP -1; ACP -0; Spd —; Disguise +0)

Treasure: 1C, 1 L



STORN

Black Wolves (Standard NPCs, Adversaries)

“Grrrr.”

Description: These large, black wolves are larger and more cunning than standard pack wolves. Most bear the scars of fighting and surviving in their wilderness conditions.

Motivations: The wolves have no significant motivations other than self-preservation and their natural instinct to hunt.

Black Wolf (Medium Animal Walker — 45 XP): Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground (Run 180 ft.); Init III; Atk

IV; Def IV; Res III; Health IV; Comp —; Skills: Search III, Survival V, Tactics III; Qualities: Feat (Wolf Pack Basics, Wolf Pack Mastery), improved sense (scent), superior runner II, superior traveler I

Attacks/Weapons: Bite I (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 18–20; upgrades: trip)

Treasure: 1T

Next Steps

After defeating or evading The Iron Legion advance guard, the party finishes their search for Clipwing’s cave, where much is revealed (see Scene 8).

Scene 8: Clipwing's Lair



Clipwing's cave

Objectives

- The heroes want to secure the safety of both Chapel and the town, and learn where the Ridgeline Whiskey must be. Also, they don't want the dragon to eat them.

Challenges

- Convincing Clipwing of their sincerity.
- Not getting eaten by the dragon!

Synopsis

Scene Type: Dramatic

GM Briefing: Clipwing is in the cave with Chapel as his prisoner. He wants the keg returned to him, and is surprised that no one has already come to make amends. It is learned that Sebastian was a Dragon's Ward in his youth and knew of the cave's location. The heroes put two and two together, return to town, and confront him at The Shattered Sword.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

The great coppery-green dragon rests in the cave upon a small pile of gold, his head resting on an empty dwarven keg, which is the size of a large cask. His heavy-lidded eyes keep a careful watch on the door. His right wing is slightly bent, as though it healed poorly from a bad break, and he has an old war wound running down the length of the same wing.

Ambiance: This cave is particularly dry and smells faintly of dandelions. No bones litter the floor, and the entrance is fastidiously free of debris.

Terrain: Cave/Subterranean

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

Clipwing is in great pain, but handles it with grace and aplomb. He is ancient, and the bumbling of youth amuses him. He is at turns dangerous and arrogant, but never malicious. He just wants his due, and talks frequently of the old days when dragons were properly feared and respected. Ultimately, he is helpful, and is able to get an accounting of the people the heroes have encountered. By this means he can identify Sebastian to the party, and they know who to go after. If the heroes were successful in their Sense Motive check vs. Sebastian in Scene 3, they remember his hiding something and figure out that he is the culprit. Otherwise, have the heroes make a Decipher check (DC 15) to have the GM determine some little quirk the heroes picked up from Sebastian that would indicate he is the guilty party.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Is it possible to cure Clipwing's ailment?

A: No, it has been too many years since the original injury occurred.

Q: Will Clipwing give up any of his treasure for the return of the whiskey?

A: Not likely, not without some large concession from the heroes such as assistance in restoring the Dragon's Guard and uniting the Broken Lands.

Q: Can Clipwing be talked into granting someone in the party his gift of magic, the dragon's tear??

A: No, this is not possible this year, as he has already expended its use. Perhaps next year . . . if the heroes agree to assist him in his endeavors.

Cast

Clipwing (Special NPC)

"Do you wish to hear of the great Battle of Frostforge? Now there was a clash of which the bards still sing! There I was, flying above the great clash of armies below . . ."

Description: A dragon with coppery-green scales and a crippled right wing with a long war wound running down its length, Clipwing has hypnotic eyes that shift colors like leaves in the changing seasons.

Motivations: Clipwing likes to talk a lot, especially when he's in his cups. He enjoys regaling his audience about past battles. He selects Dragon's Wards from the town, but hopes to one day re-form the Dragon's Guard and unite the Broken Lands.

Clipwing (Huge Beast Flyer/Walker — 243 XP): Str 22, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14; SZ H (3×5, Reach 2); Spd 140 ft. winged flight; 40 ft. ground; Init III; Atk VI; Def III; Res VI; Health VI; Comp IV; Skills: Athletics X, Haggle V, Intimidate X, Notice V, Resolve V; Qualities: Achilles heel (cold), damage immunity (fire, heat), damage reduction 7, darkvision I, dramatic entrance, fearsome, ferocity, improved sense (sight), light sleeper, menacing threat, monstrous defense II, never outnumbered, tough II, treacherous, veteran II

Attacks/Weapons: Fiery Breath (fire damage attack IV: 50 ft. cone; dmg 1d10 fire per 2 TL, Ref Save DC 25 for 1/2 damage), Bite IV (dmg 2d12+6 lethal; threat 16–20; upgrades: reach +1), Talon II × 2 (dmg 1d10+6 lethal; threat 19–20), Tail Slap II (dmg 1d12+6 lethal; threat 19–20; upgrades: reach +1, trip), Trample III (dmg 2d12+6 lethal; threat 19–20; notes: Medium and smaller only, Fort (DC equal to damage) or become sprawled), Wing Slam × 2 (Slam I: dmg 1d10+6 lethal; threat 20)

Treasure: 3A, 3C

Chapel (Standard NPC)

"Wanna bet on it?"

Description: A fair-haired young boy, Chapel wears simple attire, befitting someone of the labor caste.

Motivations: A youth of sixteen, Chapel is already an inveterate gambler. He ran away from debts he

Tears of Blood & Magic

Though Clipwing never uses magic, being a magical creature, his blood holds the very essence of it. Should he so desire, once a year, he can bestow the gift of magic by shedding a dragon's tear, a tear formed of pure blood and magic. He who drinks the dragon's tear gains the age class ability subtle and quick to anger immediately. If they already have this ability, they gain an additional 2 spell points at once, permanently.

accrued in the city and has been living in Northpoint for several months. He works odd jobs, but has strange fits that drive him compulsively to the woods, where he seeks shelter in his cave. Some say he is a werewolf. Others say he is insane. The truth of the matter is simply that Chapel likes to be alone and has discovered that his "fits" enable him to live a very private life. He has grown to care for the town and most of its people, and is secretly in love with Ana. Chapel is a cunning youth, but respectful of power and authority. Play him as a rebellious teenager who'll toe the line if addressed firmly.

Chapel (Medium Folk Walker — 24 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init III; Atk II; Def IV; Res IV; Health III; Comp II; Skills: Crafting IV; Qualities: Feat (Crafting Basics)

Attacks/Weapons: Dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: bleed, hurl)

Gear: Crafting kit

Treasure: 1G

Next Steps

After speaking with Clipwing in his cave, the party likely figures out that Sebastian Shaw is responsible for the theft of the keg and leave to confront him (see Scene 9).

Scene 9: Showdown with Sebastian



Inside the Shattered Sword

Objectives

- To capture Sebastian alive and have him reveal where the whiskey is hidden.

Challenges

- Decision on whether to spare Sebastian's life.

Synopsis

Scene Type: Dramatic

GM Briefing: Give the heroes an exciting confrontation with Sebastian. Sebastian is fearful of being discovered and if confronted, he'll reveal the whiskey's location and beg for mercy. He then causes the stuffed owl-bear to come to life (using a variation of nature's ally IV) while he attempts to make his escape with the distraction. Sebastian acquired dragon magic while in Clipwing's company, and he will not give up without a fight. His magic requires gestures, so if he is tied up he cannot cast it.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

Location

The Shattered Sword is the hub of Northpoint. It is a traditional tavern that has been in the Shaw family

for seven generations. Just inside the doorway is a stuffed owl-bear that is used as a coat rack, while over the mantle hangs the head of a wild hyena from the Southlands. Sebastian is inside his tavern when the characters enter, and agrees to go with them quietly, but he lies. With a wave of his hand the stuffed owl-bear comes to life while he attempts to make his escape.

Ambiance: The Shattered Sword is a warm, friendly place, and many deals have been struck before its roaring fireplace.

Terrain: Indoors/Settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

Action

Sebastian is strong willed and will not reveal where he hid the Ridgeline Whiskey easily. The characters must either succeed with Browbeat, Coerce, or Persuade checks to successfully get him to spill the goods. The heroes suffer a -11 penalty on their checks due to Sebastian's Unfriendly Disposition, although they can reduce the penalty to -6 if they have found out about his connection to The Iron Legion and threaten to give him over to them when they are done.

If Sebastian falls in battle, the characters will have to spend d6 hours going through all of his things to locate the whiskey. At the GM's discretion, this may allow enough time for another Iron Legion force to amass before the tribute is properly returned to Clipwing.

Direction

Here are some questions you might be asked, and answers for you to offer.

Q: Can the heroes reduce the angst of The Iron Legion against them if they hand over Sebastian?

A: Not likely, these are not the types of orcs who forgive . . . or forget.

Q: Can the heroes detect anything unusual about the owl-bear hangar?

A: There is nothing inherently magical about the owl-bear.

Q: Is it possible to talk Sebastian down from a fight?

A: It is possible, but unlikely, given the fears he has about The Iron Legion and what they might do to him.

Cast

Sebastian Shaw (Special NPC, Adversary, Villain)

“A whiskey to your health.”, “I run the best tavern in town.”, “What do you need to know?”

Description: An athletic human man in his mid-forties, Sebastian Shaw stands about six feet tall, with ash-colored hair that falls to his shoulders. He dresses in simple attire. Sebastian runs the family business, and he runs it well, turning a tidy profit. He’s not averse to taking a bit of an advantage over travelers, but treats his regulars well. He had a falling-out with Oliver Templeton when he discovered Templeton was conducting business deals in his commons room without giving him a percentage. Ever since, Templeton relegates all such talk to his own shop, but Sebastian still feels that his old friend got one over on him. The Iron Legion learned from one of their informers that Sebastian would betray his people if the coin were right, and contacted him to purchase the keg. To that end, he stole the Ridgeline Whiskey from Chapel, anticipating a tidy profit. Now, he’s a bit nervous over the whole shady business. The Iron Legion never had any intention of buying the whiskey; they just wanted the covenant with the dragon broken.

Motivations: Sebastian is friendly enough with the characters to avoid suspicion. Whenever he feels that the heroes are getting close, he points them to another suspect.

Sebastian Shaw (Medium Folk Walker — 35 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init II; Atk IV; Def III; Res IV; Health III; Comp I; Skills: Resolve III, Sleight of Hand III, Spellcasting VII; Spells: Feather Fall, Identify I, Levitate, Mirror Images, Nature’s Ally IV, Read Magic; Qualities: Grappler, class ability (Mage: arcane wellspring I), spell defense II

Attacks/Weapons: Club (dmg 1d8 subdual; threat 20)

Gear: Booze (6 uses), Spirits (3 uses)

Treasure: 2C

Owl-Bear (Standard NPC, Adversary)

“Rrrrrroooooaaarrrr!”

Description: A wizard’s experiment gone awry, an owl-bear has the body and vitality of a bear coupled with the head of an owl. It is an unholy mish-mash of fur and feathers. It breeds in the wild and possesses a horrible disposition, attacking humans unrelentingly on sight.

Motivations: The owl-bear attacks what it deems the greatest threat first, and never retreats from combat.

Owlbear (Large Animal Walker — 79 XP): Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ L (2×2, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft.; Init III; Atk VII; Def IV; Res V; Health V; Comp —; Skills: Athletics V, Notice IV, Survival IV; Qualities: Damage reduction 2, fearless I, grappler, improved sense (sight), rend

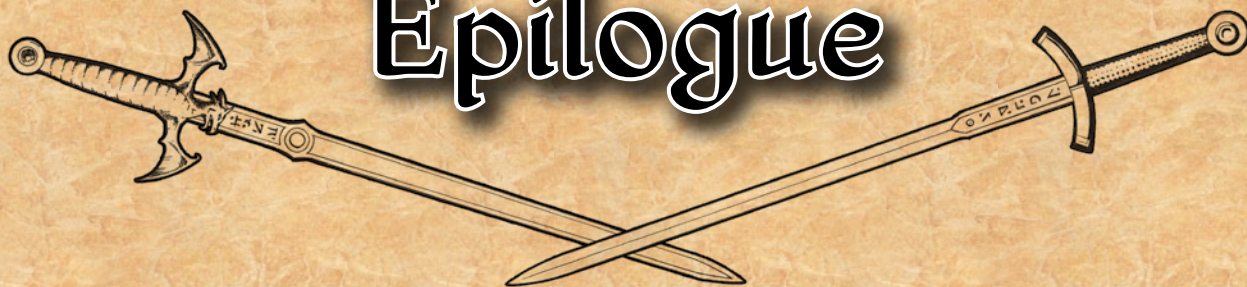
Attacks/Weapons: Bite III (dmg 2d10+2 lethal; threat 17–20; qualities: armor-piercing 2), Talon II × 2 (dmg 1d8+2 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: grab)

Treasure: 2T

Next Steps

The heroes have either captured or killed Sebastian and his duplicity has been brought to light. If captured, he is turned over to the authorities for his crime. The heroes can rest easy for a bit, until the next adventure calls.

Scene 10: Epilogue



Aftermath

After they deliver the whiskey and return with Chapel, the characters are given a hero's welcome for averting disaster. Clipwing uses his dragon ways to reassert his superiority over The Iron Legion, and all is well.

If Sebastian is killed during his final confrontation, the heroes are paid and thanked for their service. However, if mercy is shown, the magistrate gives the characters an additional reward: the deed to The Shattered Sword. Gristle agrees to run it in their stead, and he's certain Chapel will be willing to work off his debt as well.

Adventure Hooks

The Lost Caves of Clipwing may be a source of great treasure and future adventure. What lies within the caves below?

What of The Iron Legion? Will they strike at Clipwing in the hope of controlling the Dragon Pass once and for all?

Will Sebastian have his revenge?

What of the adventures that await beyond the Ridgeline Mountains in the Jagged Reaches?

Rewards and Penalties

Don't forget to add XP for adversaries (listed in their stat blocks).

Scene 1: Highwaymen of Sorts

- Noticing the additional Goblins waiting in ambush25 XP
- Save Peddler Thomas50 XP

Scene 2: The Lay of the Land

- The heroes treat the militiamen well and gain their respect.25 XP

Scene 3: An Offer Over Whiskey

- Successful negotiation with Hiram Mirth for the basic fee25 XP
- Successful negotiation with Hiram Mirth for an increased fee.50 XP
- Successful Canvas check to determine Gristle and Chapel's history25 XP
- Critical Success on the Canvas check.50 XP

Scene 4: A Talk with Templeton

- Successfully finding the tracks leading to the woods surrounding the bolt hole25 XP
- Successfully tracking through the woods to find the bolt-hole50 XP

Scene 5: Sage Advice

- Successfully convincing Eliana to reveal the location of the bolt-hole.25 XP

Scene 6: Sage Advice

- Successfully convincing Gristle of their sincerity to help.25 XP
- Successfully finding the hot spring and determining its magical properties25 XP

Scene 7: Within the Forest Depths

- Deciding to rid the village of the threat of the orcs without being forced25 XP

Scene 8: Clipwing's Lair

- Successfully convincing Clipwing to release Chapel25 XP
- Successfully finding out that Sebastian is the culprit.25 XP

Scene 9: Showdown with Sebastian

- Successfully convincing Sebastian to give himself up without a fight.....50 XP
- Successfully defeating Sebastian without killing him75 XP

Prizes

Here is one of the Prizes the party may earn in this adventure. This is, of course, just a limited example, as heroes with enough Charisma and the right abilities might earn the trust of Clipwing, or call upon him later for favors, just as they might Hiram Mirth. Particularly ambitious heroes might lobby Clipwing to claim a portion of his cave as a Holding — with the caveat that the party assist in restoration of the Dragon's Guard and uniting the Broken Lands.

Holding: The Shattered Sword

Scale: 3

Reputation Cost: 3

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