

The Village on the Border of Despair

A Four Against Darkness Fan Supplement for 1st or 2nd level characters

Background:

The forces of evil have been advancing on the realms of peace and order. Your party has traveled to a village on the border of this chaos. Nearby are the Caves of Despair, from which evil forces threaten the village.

Use the enclosed tables in place of the ones in the 4AD book. When rolling a room “12”, Dragon’s Lair, you have found the cult leader’s inner sanctum! The room contains an altar (see special features table) and the Cultist High Priest (from the boss table).

Quest Mode (optional):

To lend more of a story to your adventure, you may adopt a quest, or play them in order:

Rescue the enslaved villagers. The mayor tells you that during the night, a raiding party from the Caves of Despair captured several of the villagers. He asks you to rescue them.

Whenever you battle a group of Minions, roll a d6. For every two previous Minion encounters, add +1 to the die. If you roll 7+, these Minions are the ones with the villagers. If you win the battle, you have rescued them. However, mere Minions could not have orchestrated such a raid. When exiting the Caves, encounter the Boss who was the mastermind (roll on the Boss table). Because your party is distracted with caring for the villagers, the Boss gains surprise (goes first).

Investigate the evil cult: Gain three clues while exploring the caves. After defeating a monster with “cult” in the title, make a free clue roll with success on 5-6. After gaining the third clue (you may not spend them), the next room contains an altar of evil despair (see the special features table) and the cultist cleric (see the Boss table). Boost the cleric per the “final boss” rules.

Eliminate the evil cult: The local cleric tells you there is an evil cult that has taken up residence in the Caves of Despair. He asks you to eliminate this threat.

When you encounter the final boss, it will be the Cult Supreme Leader. Use the Cultist High Priest from the Boss table, but level 6, life 6, 2 attacks (do not further use the “end Boss” boosts). He has a personal bodyguard of d6+3 Skeletons (see the Minions table). Allocate your party between the two groups. Earn 2 XP rolls for finishing this quest.

Before leaving for the Caves of Despair, and upon returning, roll 2d6:

Village Encounters (2d6)

2-4	You are approached by a member of the thieves' guild. <i>Rogue in the party:</i> You may join the guild for 2 gp. If this encounter occurs again, you are given 5 gp as your split of the guild profits. <i>No rogue in the party:</i> A random party member must make a save 4 versus assassination or take one wound. Halflings add +1 due to their lucky nature.
5-6	A pick-pocket sneaks up on the party. A random party member rolls a save 4. If a rogue is in the party, add ½ the rogue's level (round up) regardless of who is selected for the pickpocket. Failure, lose 3 gold or 1 wound if you have no gold.
7	The temple sends an acolyte to consecrate the party. For 2 gold, select one party member – they automatically make their next save attempt. Only one party member may be consecrated at any one time. <i>Cleric in the party:</i> the consecration is free.
8	The temple sends a healer to the party. Gain one bandage. <i>Cleric in the party:</i> may buy one scroll of blessing for 75 gold.
9	A street urchin calls out to the party. Offers to sell them a "valuable" gem for 5 gold. If the party purchases it, roll a d6: 1-2 – the gem is worthless. 3-4 – worth 6 gold. 5-6 – worth 10 gold. <i>Dwarf in the party:</i> roll the value before purchasing (do not apply the dwarf gem value bonus).
10	The local baker prepares bread for the party. Roll a d6: 1-4 – normal bread, no effect. 5-6 – elven bread, restores 1 life point when eaten. <i>Elf in the party:</i> add +1 to the roll.
11-12	A monster raiding party attempts to breach the village's defenses. Roll d6: 1-4: the party is caught unaware. One random member losses 1 life point in the scuffle. 5-6: the raiding monsters are detected and easily defeated. <i>Barbarian in the party:</i> The barbarian senses something is wrong. Add +1 to the roll.

Vermin Table (d6)

1 **2d6 Pesky Spiders.** Level 2. No treasure. Any character rolling a 1 for defense has been coated in the sticking webbing and has a -1 attack modifier for the rest of the battle (not accumulative).

Reaction (d6): 1-3 flee, 4-6 fight.

2 **2d6 Diseased Rats.** Level 2. Treasure -1. Any character wounded must make a save 3 vs poison; failure results in one additional wound.

Reaction (d6): 1-2 flee, 3-6 fight.

3 **D6 + 3 Giant Centipedes.** Level 3. No treasure.

Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-3 flee if outnumbered, 4-6 fight.

4 **2d6 Driver Ants.** Level 2. No treasure.

Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-4 fight, 5-6 fight to the death.

5 **D6 + 3 Shrieker Fungus.** Level 3. No Treasure.
Alarm: The denizens of the caves use the shriekers as an alarm. Each round, roll d6. On 1-3, Minions appear (roll on the Minion table). This will happen only once per encounter. Split your party between the shriekers and the Minions.

Reaction (d6): fight to death.

6 **2d6 Kobold Green Recruits.** Level 2. Treasure normal.

Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-3 flee if outnumbered, 4-6 fight.

Minion Table (d6)

1	D6+3 Zombies of the Cult. Level 3 Undead. No treasure. <i>Protection from Good:</i> clerics do not add their level to attacks (they receive their normal 1/2L bonus). Reaction (d6): fight to the death, no morale roll
2	D6+3 Skeletons of the Cult. Level 3 Undead. No treasure. <i>Protection from Good:</i> clerics do not add their level to attacks (they receive their normal 1/2L bonus). Slashing weapons attack at -1. Reaction (d6): fight to the death, no morale roll
3	D6 +3 Acolytes of the Cult. Level 4. Treasure normal. <i>Cause Harm Spell:</i> The acolytes attack through touch spells. Armor provides no bonus (shields provide a barrier and maintain their +1 bonus). Reaction (d6): fanatics: fight to the death, no morale roll
4	D3+1 Adepts of the Cult. Level 4. Treasure normal. <i>Curse spell:</i> Before battle, each party member must save versus magic level 3 <u>per adept encountered</u>. Failure results in -1 to attack and defense (cumulative) during the battle. The curse may be removed by a Blessing spell cast on that adventurer (caster skips their attack turn). Reaction (d6): fanatics: fight to the death, no morale roll
5	2d6 Hobgoblins. Level 3. Treasure normal. <i>Rally cry:</i> Roll a d6 on each monster turn. On 1-3, add 1 hobgoblin. Reaction (d6): 1-2 flee, 3-6 fight
6	2d6 Orcs. Level 3. Treasure normal. Reaction (d6): 1-2 flee, 3-6 fight

Defeating 10 minions gives 1 XP roll at -1

Boss Table (d6)

1	Cultist Cleric. Level 5. Life 5. Treasure normal. 2 Attacks. <i>Cure Wounds:</i> Roll a d6 each boss turn. 1-2: cultist cleric heals one life. The cleric does not forfeit his attacks with this ability. Reaction (d6): Fanatic: fight to the death.
2	Cultist High Priest. Level 5. Life 5. Treasure normal. <i>Curse spell:</i> Before battle, each party member must save versus magic level 5. Failure results in -2 to attack and defense during the battle. The curse may be removed on an adventurer by a Blessing spell (caster skips their attack) Reaction (d6): Fanatic: fight to the death.
3	Hobgoblin Leader. Level 4. Life 5. Armed with 2 maces: 2 Attacks. Treasure normal. <i>Cry Havoc!</i> Roll a d6 each leader turn. On 1-2, 1d6 hobgoblins from the Minions table join the fight. Allocate your party between the leader and any hobgoblins (as a group). Reaction (d6): 1-2 bribe (100 gold), 3-6 fight
4	Orc Leader. Level 5. Life 6. Treasure +1. <i>Huge Battleaxe:</i> Orc leader causes 2 wounds when he hits. Reaction (d6): 1-2 bribe (one magic item or scroll), 3-5 fight, 6 fight to the death
5	Gnoll. Level 5. Life 4. Treasure -1. <i>Tough skin:</i> After scoring a wound on the gnoll, roll a d6. 1-2: wound is negated. Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-6 fight
6	Kobold Chieftain. Level 4. Life 6. 2 Attacks. Treasure normal. <i>Berserk:</i> If the chieftain downs a party member, he gains +2 to his level for the rest of the battle. Reaction (d6): 1-2 flee, 3-5 fight, 6 fight to death

Defeating a Boss gives 1 XP roll.

Weird Monster (d6)

1 **Blink Beast.** Level 4. Life 6. 2 Attacks. Treasure normal.
Blink: When attacking the Blink Beast, roll 2d6 per attack and use the worst result. Barbarians, due to their keen senses, are immune to this effect.
Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-4 fight, 5-6 fight to the death.

2 **Rust Armadillo.** Level 5. Life 5. Treasure normal.
Rusted!: After the battle, roll for each non-ranged weapon that was used. On a 1-2, the weapon is now useless (discard from inventory).
Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-4 fight, 5-6 fight to the death.

3 **Wight.** Undead, immune to sleep. Level 5. Life 4. 2 Attacks. Treasure normal.
Icy Touch: Any character hit by a Wight must save vs Level 3 paralysis. On a failed save, the character is paralyzed until the end of battle. A Blessing spell removes paralysis from one character.
Reaction (d6): fight to the death.

4 **Minotaur.** Level 5. Life 6. Double bladed axe: 2 attacks. Treasure +1.
Lost in a Maze!: After the battle, roll a d6 and move the party that many rooms in the direction they came. Roll for wandering monsters per room.
Reaction (d6): 1 flee, 2-6 fight to the death

5 **Harpy.** Level 4. Life 5. Claws: 2 attacks. Treasure normal.
Charm: A character rolling a 1 on an attack or defense roll loses his concentration and is charmed by the harpy. They can take no further actions during this battle. A Blessing spell will remove this condition. Halflings, due to their lucky nature, are immune to this effect.
Reaction (d6): 1-2 flee, 3-6 fight

6 **Acid Jelly.** Level 5. Life 4. Treasure -1 (no magic items).
Acid: Hits cause 2 damage.
Reaction (d6): fight to the death.

Defeating a weird monster gives 1 XP roll.

Special Events (d6)

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| 1 | Cult Ceremony. Roll a d6. 1-2 – you have disrupted the ceremony and the cultists flee. 3-5 – Minions are summoned (roll on that table). 6 – a Weird Monster is summoned (roll on that table). |
| 2 | Mad Mage. Roll a d6. 1-2 a gem worth 5 or more gold. 3-4 a bandage 5-6 a light hand weapon. If the party has the item rolled, they may give it to the mage in return for a random scroll. |
| 3 | Massacred Party. Another adventuring party met a grim fate. The party may gain one weapon of their choice. |
| 4 | Knight Errant. The Knight asks the party to perform a quest (roll on that table from the 4AD book). The party may refuse. This event can happen only once. |
| 5 | Teleport Trap. A rogue in the front of the party may detect this trap – level 5 check. If failed, roll a d6. Move the party in a random direction that many rooms. Roll for wandering monsters in the room selected. |
| 6 | Escaped Healer. A previously abducted village healer has escaped from the cult. He will heal one party member 1 life and then run away, intent on escaping. This encounter can happen only once. |

Special Features (d6)

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| 1 | Boulder Filled Passage. Select one door if a room, or one passage if a corridor (not the way you just came). That door or corridor is not passable. |
| 2 | Hobgoblin Toll Bridge. This room contains a large chasm. There is a rickety bridge that crosses it, guarded by a troop of hobgoblins. They demand the party pay 5 gold to cross. The party can pay, go back the way they came, or attack the hobgoblins (see the Minions table). The monsters have erected defensible positions and the party does not get to attack first if they choose to fight. If the party pays or slays the hobgoblins, this room is now considered normal. |
| 3 | Altar of Evil Despair. This room is dedicated to the evil cult. One random party member is cursed (-1 to attack and defense) until it is removed. A Blessing spell will remove this curse. |
| 4 | Hall of Tapestries. Roll a d6. 1-2 – the party finds a valuable tapestry worth 2d6 X 5 gold. 3-6 – the party is ambushed by Minions hiding in a secret alcove hidden behind a tapestry. Roll on the Minions table – they have surprise. |
| 5 | Slave Pens. 1d6+1 villagers are held prisoner here. The party must fight a group of Minions (roll on that table). If the party is victorious, they free the prisoners. Upon returning to town, gain 2 gold per villager. |
| 6 | Puzzle Door. This room contains a door that is opened through solving a level 6 puzzle - draw a door at any location in this room. Multiple attempts may be made unless a 1 is rolled, in which case the puzzle is too damaged to continue. Attempts are optional. Wizards add their level to the roll, rogues add ½ their level round down. Success: behind the door is a secret passage to another part of the cave (not the entry room). Failure: lose 1 life. |