



THE RAVEN

The Bloodhand orcs have a prisoner that may hold the answers to the strange goings on and the key to stopping the enemy. What can you do to convince them to hand the prisoner over?

Part Twelve of Misty Fortunes and Absent Hearts.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



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Introduction

Welcome to *The Raven*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Curse of Strahd*™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for 5th through 10th-level characters, and is optimized for five 7th-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure takes place in the barony of Barovia, in the Ravenloft campaign setting. A majority of the adventure takes place in lands that have been recently added to the barony and where originally part of the Forgotten Realms. As such, the locals' knowledge is somewhat unreliable and they are not familiar with some of the creatures now wandering their land.

The D&D Adventurers League

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

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

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

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the

D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

Preparing the Adventure

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

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

Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

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

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

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

conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

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

Adjusting the Adventure

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

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

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 7th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

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

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

Determining Party Strength

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

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

Running the Adventure

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

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

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

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide™* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

Downtime and Lifestyle

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the D&D basic rules or the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for more information):

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

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

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

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Help From Who!?

For the current storyline season, *Curse of Strahd*, the rules for spellcasting services are changed for characters adventuring in Barovia. In Strahd's bleak domain, there simply aren't any settlements where spellcasters can accommodate such needs, and those places of worship that might otherwise provide spellcasting services are overrun with monsters. As such, unless otherwise detailed in an adventure, the only individual able to provide spellcasting services is **Jeny Greenteeth**. This will no doubt lead to some uncomfortable situations and unforeseen consequences.

Refer to Page 7 of the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details.

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

Spellcasting Services

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

Acolyte Background

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

However, no religions have established places of worship here of sufficient size to provide spellcasting services. Because of this, characters with the Acolyte background gain no benefit from this trait.

Character Disease, Death, and Recovery

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

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

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

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

Death

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

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

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

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

spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

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

Resurrection Madness

In Barovia, the souls of the dead are as trapped as the souls of the living. They become caught in the mists and can't travel to the afterlife. When a humanoid who has been dead for at least 24 hours returns to life, either by way of a spell or some supernatural means, it gains a random form of indefinite madness brought on by the realization that its spirit is trapped in Barovia, likely forever. To determine how this madness is expressed, roll on the Indefinite Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Vampirism and Lycanthropy

Vampires and lycanthropes are not included in the allowed rules for character creation or advancement (see the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide*). These conditions grant characters powers and abilities that are not suitable for organized play, and typically impose a restricted or prohibited alignment. As such, characters afflicted with vampirism or lycanthropy must have the affliction cured before the start of their next episode or adventure.

Afflicted characters have the following options:

- Lycanthropes can be cured with a *remove curse* spell. This spell is available as a spellcasting service for 90 gp (though Jeny Greenteeth might have additional requirements; see "Spellcasting Services" earlier in this guide).
- Vampires can be cured by a *wish* spell cast by a fellow player character (*wish* is not available as a spellcasting service). Alternatively, a vampire character can be slain and returned to life with *raise dead*, at the normal cost of 1,250 gp. If a character chooses to end a vampiric curse in this manner, the Dark Powers (see Page 8, *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) **do not** offer a free *raise dead*, though Jeny Greenteeth might be willing to make a deal (see "Spellcasting Services" earlier in this guide).

An afflicted character who does not end his or her curse is retired from play until able to do so by one of the means above, or through the application of DM rewards to the character.

The Demiplane of Dread

This adventure is set within the *Ravenloft* campaign setting, in the lands of Barovia which exists in the Demiplane of Dread. There are several atmospheric and thematic elements to keep in mind at all times while running your game:

The Land is Bleak

By the will of the Dark Powers, the sun never fully shines in the lands of Barovia. Even during the day, the sky is dimmed by fog or storm clouds, or the light is strangely muted. Barovian daylight is bright light, yet it isn't considered sunlight for the purpose of effects and vulnerabilities, such as a vampire's, tied to sunlight. Nevertheless, Strahd and his vampire spawn tend to stay indoors most of the day and venture out at night, and they are subject to sunlight created by magic.

Winter in Barovia

The winters are cold, wet, and stormy here. The natives of the Demiplane are prepared—well, as prepared as they can hope to be.

The characters, however, are unfamiliar with the realm. Thankfully, the region they came from was experiencing the worst winter in living memory, and are likely to possess winter clothing. If they are not, then, preparations are in order. The village has a single shop called The Hare & Hair where they are able to procure such supplies if they wish.

A dark sentience infuses the very soil, twisting and contorting everything within. In places where you would normally expect wildlife such as deer, rabbits, or squirrels, you instead find wolves, rats, and mangy dogs. Vegetation is rotted and dead, and forests are filled mostly with gnarled, thick trees with bare branches. Colorful, vivacious things simply do not exist.

The Denizens of Oraşnou

Most Oraşnou residents are mundane laborers, farmers, fletchers and other folk who fall under common professions. They typically have gaunt features, as crops often fail to take root, and creatures of the night frequently kill and devour their livestock.

Most are sullen, and often filled with fear, be it from the lands themselves, what lies within them, Lord Strahd, or their own tyrant of a Burgomaster; Ivan Randovich and his cronies.

Be sure to play to the mindsets of these people who live threadbare existences, constantly on the precipice of horror during your roleplaying encounters.

As is the case with most of the denizens of Barovia, most of the people that reside in the village don't possess a soul. These people are empty shells created by Strahd's consciousness to populate his domain. However, about one in every ten people in Barovia are actually possessing of a soul—the souls of the original denizens of Barovia before its transition into the Demiplane. When a being with a soul dies in Barovia, its soul remains trapped until it is reincarnated later. Souls tend to wear clothing with a splash of color or have other features that demonstrate even a small bit of individuality.

Alterations to Magic

The land of Barovia resides in its own demiplane, isolated from all other planes, including the Material Plane. No spell—not even *wish*—allows one to escape from Strahd's domain. *Astral projection*, *teleport*, *plane shift*, and similar spells cast for the purpose of leaving Barovia simply fail, as do effects that banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artifacts that have properties that transport or banish creatures to other planes. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal, such as the *etherealness* spell and the Etherealness feature of incorporeal undead, is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from Strahd's domain is pulled back into Barovia upon leaving that plane.

For the purpose of spells whose effects change across or are blocked by planar boundaries (such as *sending*), Strahd's domain is considered its own plane. Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes functions normally in Barovia, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such an extra-dimensional space (such as that created by *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*) are subject to the same restrictions as magic cast in Barovia.

While in Barovia, characters who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so. In addition, spells that allow contact with beings from other planes function normally—with one provision: Strahd can sense when someone in his domain is casting such a spell and can choose to make himself the spell's recipient, so that he becomes the one who is contacted.

Cosmetic Spell Modifications

At your discretion, a spell can be modified cosmetically to enhance the horrific atmosphere of Ravenloft. A few examples are presented below:

Alarm. Instead of hearing a mental ping when the alarm is triggered, the caster hears a scream.

Bigby's Hand. The conjured hand is skeletal.

Find Familiar. The familiar is undead instead of being a celestial, a fey, or a fiend, and is immune to features that turn undead.

Find Steed. The summoned steed is undead instead of being a celestial, a fey, or a fiend, and is immune to features that turn undead.

Find the Path. A child's spirit appears and guides the caster to the desired location. The spirit can't be harmed and doesn't communicate.

Fog Cloud. Misty, harmless claws form in the fog.

Gust of Wind. A ghostly moan accompanies the summoned wind.

Mage Hand. The summoned hand is skeletal.

Maze. The surfaces of the demiplane's maze are made of mortared skulls and bones.

Phantom Steed. The steed resembles a skeletal horse.

Rary's Telepathic Bond. Characters linked together by the spell can't shake the feeling that something vile is telepathically eavesdropping on them.

Revivify. A creature restored to life by a *revivify* spell screams upon regaining consciousness, as though waking from some horrible nightmare.

Spirit Guardians. The spirits appear as ghostly, skeletal warriors.

Wall of Stone. A wall created by the spell has ghostly faces sculpted into it, as though tortured spirits were somehow trapped within the stone.

Count Strahd von Zarovich

Lord Strahd is the Darklord of Barovia. He rules his domain from Castle Ravenloft as Strahd IX; a descendent of Strahd I. In actuality, Strahd I and Strahd IX are the one and the same--a vampire. As a mortal, Strahd fell in love with Tatyana Federovna; the bride of his younger brother Sergei. In his jealousy, Strahd murdered his brother and became the Darklord of Barovia; which was swept away into the Demiplane along with its ruler. Since then, Strahd is cursed to seek incarnations of Tatyana for eternity. NOTE: Strahd is not present in this adventure.

Not Without Humor

The bleak and oppressive landscape must give way now and then to some moments of respite, not only does this break up the taxing mindset that Ravenloft can evoke, but it also provides good chances for horror to sneak back up on players just as they least expect it.

Adventure Background

The village of Oraşnou is somewhat remote, perched in the Barovian hills in the Svalich Woods. Situated at the base of a cliff to protect it from the harsh northeasterly winds, its picturesque location would normally grant a scenic view, however no living person can recall a day that would make such a sight possible. Regardless, the ominous castle Ravenloft is almost always visible. With only narrow roads that climb into the hills, it's common for the small village to become cut off from the rest of the valley during the winter months.

The Bloodhand orcs are a tribe led by the orog Larga Bloodhand (DDEX1-12 *Raiders of the Twilight Marsh*). After the raids that resulted in the one third of their tribe being captured and taken to the swamp, Larga led a rescue attempt. Unfortunately for them this attempt went badly and then their relocation to the Demiplane of Dread occurred. The orcs see this as punishment for their inability to rescue their tribe-mates from the yuan-ti in the Glumpen Swamp. During the relocation the tribe was scattered somewhat and it has taken a while for the three remaining shamans to gather most of them together. In their travels the orcs came across Sybil, who offered to do a reading for one of the Shamans. The accuracy and helpfulness of the reading was such that the orcs took her prisoner, thinking she could be of continued use to them in this strange land. The events of DDAL04-11 *The Donjon* deal with rescuing Larga.

The tribe's unity and morale deteriorated while Larga was in captivity. One of the tribe's Shamans decided that the reason they were cursed to be in this land (Barovia) was that they had offended Gruumsh and a blood sacrifice was needed. Larga's safe return did not stop the argument among the shamans. Angered by the lack of support for his plan, Gagg Shinbreaker stabbed one of the other shamans in the back. For this offence, the cowardly killing of a priest, who was also her friend, Larga banished him.

He still thinks he is right so he, along with some followers, snuck into camp and stole the prisoners for his sacrifice. Larga assumes this sacrifice is to occur on the rise of the new moon. However, Strahd has been answering Gagg's divination spells, so when she informs them that they have two nights before the sacrifice (48 hours) they only have 32 hours.

Adventure Overview

The Raven is divided into three parts:

Part 1: The Bargain. Outside the village of Oraşnou, the adventurers meet with the orc leader Larga Bloodhand, who offers them an exchange: if they help hunt down a renegade shaman and his followers, she will turn over a high-ranking Cult of the Dragon prisoner who may have valuable information and a strange woman who reads fortunes.

Part 2: The Road. The journey to the place of sacrifice is plagued by a relentless wolf pack.

Part 3: The Sacrifice. Ascending to the summit of the cliff known as Rookscrag, the adventurers confront the terrified orcs who are about to sacrifice their prisoner in a desperate attempt to escape the Demiplane of Dread.

Adventure Hook

If the characters begin this adventure from within the *Forgotten Realms* or a setting other than *Ravenloft*, have them be transported to the Demiplane of Dread just outside Oraşnou via an unnaturally thick fog or mist, while traveling overland, preferably at night. Proceed to “Welcome to Barovia” (see Part 1, below).

One More Request. If the characters participated in DDAL04-10 *The Donjon* immediately before this adventure, they may still be traveling with Larga Bloodhand. If so, she sends an emissary to Oraşnou no more than a week later indicating that she has an important task that she would like the characters to undertake.

A Strange Visitor. The villagers of Oraşnou are nervous. A creature that they describe as a Caliban that has been seen outside of town. The villagers, all too afraid to go, have asked the characters to meet with the creature at a camp outside the village.

Caliban

Calibans are twisted humans that were exposed to curses while still in the womb. The birth of a Caliban is typically viewed as an ill-portent; the presence of a witch or hag, or some other evil supernatural force. They are seen as brutish and savage; they are spurned by society and usually live their lives in solitude.

Calibans are misshapen humanoids and while no two of them look exactly alike, they usually have features such as rough skin, coarse hair, tusk-like teeth, etc.

Welcome to Barovia

Some characters may be arriving from Faerûn for the first time. For those characters describe a heavy fog bank rolling through their travel path while they are in the Quivering Forest, and when it eventually clears, they are on the outskirts of a small mountain village. It's heavy-handed, but such is the way of the Demiplane.

Any character that participates in this adventure earns **The Demiplane of Dread** story award if they do not have it already. They should be made aware that until this story award is removed, they may not participate in any adventure that does not take place in Barovia.

NOTE: This adventure may touch on some morally dark moments. Please be careful to gauge your player's comfort with such things, and remember that the goal of a *Dungeons & Dragons* game is for everyone to have fun!

Curse of Strahd Adventures

The adventures for the Curse of Strahd Season of Dungeons and Dragons Adventurers League deliver the most impactful experience when played in numeric order (i.e.: 04-01, then 04-02, and so on) but this is not required. Please carefully read the following pages and be prepared to adjust encounters, especially where key NPCs are concerned! Although DM tips may be found in the adventure, they are unlikely to cover every table or situation.

For a *Ravenloft* game, the world itself should be treated with great respect—it is a character unto itself, and the Dark Powers rarely respond positively to hand-waving and outright dismissal...

Any character afflicted with lycanthropy must receive the benefits of a *remove curse* at the end of this adventure in order to be rid of this horrible affliction. Characters that choose to remain afflicted or cannot afford this spell, become NPCs and are no longer playable in D&D Adventurers League games.

Currently, the only entities able to provide spellcasting services is the hag, Jeny Greenteeth and the elven mage, Aya Glenmiir. For the time being, Jeny happily accepts gold as payment for these services. In time, however, the hag may demand more...abstract...forms of compensation. An upcoming article on www.dndadventurersleague.org will provide additional information on Jeny Greenteeth.

Part 1. The Bargain

Estimated Duration: 15 Minutes

The adventurers meet with the orog chieftain, Larga Bloodhand who has a proposition for their mutual benefit. Her camp is a half-hour's journey outside of Oraşnou.

A rough camp has been set up, the men standing on either side of the door of a round tent might be taken for simple travelers at a distance, but the solid stances and flattened jawlines reveal to you their true nature: orcs. Their hands flash instinctively towards their hilts as they spot you, until one of the guards steps forward, laughing to the other orcs. "It is them; they still worry for miserable village."

He grins as he steps back and gestures for you to enter the tent, his small, yellow eyes tracking your every move.

A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the orcs are nervous, but pose no immediate threat to the party. If the characters participated in DDAL04-11 *The Donjon*, the speaking orc is known to them as Gmurk, the orc found in the Spider Woods. He is Larga's most trusted lieutenant.

The rough, hide walls of the tent have been lined with scraps of rugs and similar material to help hold off the chill in the air—to only mild degrees of success. Rough-cut log seats are arranged in a circle around a pile of hot stones, valiantly attempting to compensate for the tent's failings.

Larga Bloodhand silently appraises you for a moment before nodding. "Good you come. Good for you, good for me." She smiles at you through broken teeth and a latticework of facial scars. "Now, sit. Time for us to deal."

Roleplaying Larga Bloodhand

Larga is a seasoned warrior, accustomed to giving orders. Though she is surprisingly intelligent, Larga speaks in clipped phrases and short words – always ready to take advantage of those who underestimate her. Larga is still suffering from wounds from her captivity and escape, though she does what she can to hide her infirmity lest it threaten her position in her clan.

The deal is simple enough: if the party aids her by hunting down the rogue shaman, Gagg Shinbreaker and his followers, Larga is willing to trade them a prisoner who she believes possesses valuable powers. Wasting no time before getting down to business, Larga relates the following:

- As the leader of the Bloodhand Orc tribe, she is responsible for those who follow her. But, during her captivity, Gagg, one of her three shamans assumed control of her tribe.
- Gagg determined that the only way for the orcs to be returned to our lands was through a sacrifice to Gruumsh and convinced many of her orcs of this.
- Larga's tribe has two prisoners—one found before arriving here and the other after.
- The prisoner they found before coming to Barovia calls herself a Wearer of Purple. Her name is Ixusaxa Terrorsong (DDEX1-10 *Tyranny in Phlan* and DDEX1-13 *Pool of Radiance Resurgent*). She says she is a powerful mage who may know how to escape this place. She wears a collar blessed by Gruumsh that keeps her "locked away from the world".
- The collar prevents her from using her magic, and can be removed only by a magic phrase, which only Larga knows.
- The other is an old woman called Sybil. She has the power of sight and sees the future in cards.
- Gagg plans to sacrifice one of them. Some of the other orcs disagreed and in the fighting that followed, one of Larga's other shamans was killed.
- Upon returning, Larga banished Gagg, but late last night he and some of his followers snuck into our camp and stole the prisoners.
- It is likely that he is going to take them to a cliff top known as Rookscrag in the Vanishing Hills, which can be found by following the Trank River road.
- Larga wants the party to go there and stop him.
- One of her shamans, Kilgo Bonegrinder, remains loyal to her. He wants to keep Sybil because of ability to see the future—an opinion that Larga shares.
- In exchange for slaying Gagg, and retrieving Ixusaxa and Sybil, Larga offers the characters the mage as a reward.

Larga is a shrewd negotiator, and adopts a confident posture. A character succeeding at a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes while Larga is being honest, she is desperate. If the party doesn't help her, she doesn't believe that she will be able to hold the tribe together. The entirety of the tribe is likely to defect to Gagg's banner.

Those who succeed and press their advantage convince Larga to share the magical command word ("*os-yas-agral*") with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the characters want to bargain for Sybil's release as well, Larga refuses.

When the party has agreed to a deal:

“Good, good,” Larga grunts approvingly. “Go now. You need to get there before the new moon! And who knows what secrets your new slave will share, eh?” Her laugh is loud, but humorless, and it does not reassure you that the bargain you have struck is a good one.

Outside, distant thunder rumbles, and rain begins to fall.

The first night of the new moon is two days from now, but it is at least a day’s journey from here to the location. It is about forty-eight miles to the valley; two days’s travel at a normal pace or just over a day and a half’s travel at a fast pace.

Larga informs them before they leave that she expects her ailing tribe members to have improved enough to travel in a day or so. Too late to stop the ritual, but soon enough to be close by when the characters achieve their goal. In other words, the characters can’t expect to get away without talking to Larga after they complete the mission.

A Fine Feathered Friend

A character might have the story award **A Find Feathered Friend** from DDAL04-01 *Suits of the Mists*. Esselios is not fond of orcs, though he knows a lot about them. If present during the meeting he is moody and mutters to himself throughout.

Esselios, besides being knowledgeable about orc history and culture, he is actually originally from the nests at Rookscrag. Things he can tell them **after** the meeting:

- “Wizards come! Taking raven friends from nests in the hills!” (Esselios believes wizards go to Rookscrag to steal ravens to serve as familiars.)
- “Rookscrag! Rookscrag! Many ravens nest there!” (The mountains are full of raven roosts.)
- “Water! Frolic and bathe!” (There is a pool there that the ravens play and bathe in.)
- “Birds of a feather flock together! My clutchmates!” (Esselios is originally from the roosts at Rookscrag.)
- “Rookscrag! Rookscrag! Take you there! Let’s go!” (Esselios has been in the area before and grants advantage on any Wisdom checks for navigating their way to Rookscrag.)

Part 2. The Road

Estimated Duration: 30 Minutes

The journey from Oraşnou to the site of the sacrifice at Rookscrag requires traveling to the Trank River and following it deeper into the part of the Vanishing Hills that has been transported to Barovia.

The first half of the journey is a snowy slog under overcast skies and over hilly terrain. But freezing rain turns what would be an eight-hour trip into a sixteen-hour ordeal. From the end of the meeting the characters have thirty-two hours before the ritual starts.

In good weather the trip should take a day of hard travel. The freezing rain that alternates from sleet pounding down on you to simply drizzling enough to be miserable is less than ideal. The rain creates an icy coating on everything, including yourselves. At this rate, getting there in time, has changed from a “sure thing” to a “we should be able to do this”.

The Scent of Prey

The river road is partially flooded and in terrible disrepair, making travel deeply unpleasant.

General Features

The general features of the area surrounding the Trank River and the Vanishing Hills are as follows:

Terrain. The sodden earth and icy patches makes footing treacherous. The ground is considered difficult terrain, and creatures fighting have disadvantage on saving throws to avoid being knocked prone.

Rain. The freezing rain is a murky brown and tastes of ash. It muffles sound and makes conversation difficult. The weather imposes disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely upon hearing and sight. Any character not suitably equipped for the cold weather must succeed at a DC 11 Constitution saving throw each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. These levels of exhaustion can only be removed by taking a long rest someplace warm and dry.

Moonlight. At night the moon occasionally slinks out from behind the black cloud cover, but these brief moments are not enough to provide real illumination. The land remains in darkness at night.

The Hunters and the Hunted

As the party journeys towards Rookscrag, it soon becomes clear that they are being tracked by an unusually sophisticated (and relentless) wolf pack.

If the adventurers attempt to elude their pursuers, the chase plays out over the course of several hours. The wolves are canny hunters, more than capable of running their prey into exhaustion before finally circling in for the kill.

The wolves are smart enough to know that they fare best against frightened and fatigued prey, and employ a series of hit-and-run skirmishes against adventurers too eager to stand and fight.

Though it is not the main focus of this adventure, this section can be expanded if more than two hours are available for play. Be sure to reward creativity in evading the wolves, but always remind players of the looming threat: a moving shadow in the mist, the glint of a yellow eye, or answered howls echoing in the night can go a long way towards establishing a sense of tension.

Read:

Incessant rain has swollen the Trank River high in her bed, and the thick mud sucks at your boots with every plodding footstep. Shifting shadows within the mist make navigation strange and unsettling, but with the river on your right hand you should still be able to find your way to Rookscrag in time.

Characters that succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check recognize that the river's flooding is highly unusual for the winter season.

At the end of the third day of travel, the party finds itself within the territory of a pack of dire wolves.

As you prepare camp for a wet and merciless night you hear an eerie keening echoing through the rain. A howl...then another! Wolves!

The drumming rain makes gauging their distance difficult, but the echoing howls now sounding from all around you seem to be getting distinctly closer.

The characters are being tracked by a pack of winter wolves (see No Escape!, below). The immediate choice before the heroes is whether to fortify their position and face the wolves directly, or to try to outrun them in the misty night:

Stand and Fight! Drawing the wolves into combat is easier said than done; they are sapient, and are cunning hunters; they have no reason to attack a fortified position of ready adventurers. Instead, they circle the camp, yipping and howling (with an occasional insult in growling, broken Common

thrown in for good measure), and occasionally darting inward to harry sentries. Sleep in this situation is impossible, and the wolves are more than capable of keeping this tactic up all night long. Unless the characters find some way to sleep, each character gains one level of exhaustion. If any of the characters gain two levels of exhaustion, proceed to No Escape!, below.

Run For It! The wolves's territory extends for eight miles around the site where the party made their camp (if they made camp, that is). If they are able to escape the hunting grounds, the wolves turn their attentions to easier meals. To cover this distance at the end of a long day on the road, consult the Travel Pace table, below.

For each additional hour of travel beyond 8 hours, each character must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of the hour or gain a level of exhaustion. The DC is 10 + 1 for each hour past 8 hours. Treat the party as having traveled for 8 hours prior to their making camp for purposes of determining the DC of the hourly Constitution saving throws.

At the end of the hour in which any character suffers their second level of exhaustion, proceed to No Escape!, below. Otherwise, proceed to Waking from a Nightmare, below after the characters have traveled 8 miles.

No Escape!

A great shaggy beast with burning red eyes leaps at you through the fog! The smell of wet fur and hot breath are everywhere as the pack swarms you for the kill.

The pack of six **winter wolves** springs out of the mist, snarling and snapping their fangs. They employ hit-and-run tactics, withdrawing into the concealing mist between attacks. They focus their attacks on any adventurer that they manage to knock prone.

Treasure. After the battle, the adventurers have the opportunity to claim the skins of the wolves they killed, which are valuable in Oraşnou. Adequately skinning each wolf, character requires a successful DC 11 Dexterity (Survival) check. For each success, characters are able to skin a pelt worth 50 gp. Otherwise, that particular wolf pelt is ruined.

Adjusting the Encounter

An average party should find the wolf pack to be a hard combat encounter. Here are recommendations for adjusting it to suit the group at your table. These are not cumulative:

- **Very weak party:** Remove two dire wolves
- **Weak party:** Remove a winter wolf
- **Strong party:** Increase *cold breath* DC to 13, and now deals 27 cold damage
- **Very strong party:** Add a winter wolf; increase *cold breath* DC to 13, and now deals 27 cold damage

Waking from a Nightmare

If the party is able to keep its stamina up and its nerves strong, they are able to make it through the night and escape the wolves' hunting grounds.

The mists thin somewhat in the first pale light of dawn, revealing the muddy ground churned by your own frantic boot prints...but not a single paw print or any other sign of pursuit. Were the wolves real, or a nightmare?

XP Award. For eluding the winter wolves, award each character 250 XP.

They Get There When?

There should be time enough for the characters to get there and take a long rest somewhere along the way. Four hours travel at the normal pace, then sixteen hours at the "slowed" normal pace. If they were chased by wolves and opted to use 1 mile per hour pace, then they might need to travel at harder pace after thy rest.

That said, don't get bogged down in the numbers. They are there to help you adjudicate what players try to do.

Part 3. The Sacrifice

Estimated Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

Lord Gruumsh, turn your Eye upon me. Drink the blood of my knife and grant my prayer. Lord Gruumsh, turn your Eye upon me...

—Gruumsh sacrificial rite

A. The Valley

After a harrowing journey the characters arrive in small valley that includes a box canyon. The face of the cliff has numerous caves both at the base and higher up. There is also a visible, but very worn path that appears to travel back and forth up the cliff to top. There is a map in the appendix.

The valley floor is mostly bare rock, a large pool of water smells of sulfur and bubbles in places not far from the cliff side. A couple of tents stand near the entrance of a box canyon. But the most notable aspect is the large number of ravens roosting all over the cliff side. They flit about cawing raucously, their cries sounding almost like speech from time to time.

Raven Familiars

It is possible that a character that played in *DDAL 4-01 Suits of the Mists* has Esselios, or just happens to have a raven familiar. Let that familiar shine here then. The local ravens are a naturally curious lot and seeing one of their own with the party might entice one or two to come closer. Any attempt to persuade the ravens to help them is made with advantage.

Some the ravens flit down and circle the characters. It has been some e since they have seen so many outsiders.

An Unkindness of Ravens

Hundreds of small caves dot the cliffs above, home to an uncountable host of ravens. Brief snippets of cackling speech are scattered among the birds' maddening chatter.

Roleplaying the Ravens

It shouldn't be immediately obvious to the party, but the ravens are a potential source of great information, as they are aware of nearly everything that goes on in the area of the camp and capable of rudimentary human speech.

Most of what the birds say is nonsense (or, at least, indecipherable to the players), but there are bits of wisdom available to those who take the time to listen and learn.

As the heroes move through the valley, sprinkle in some commentary from the birds, and stress that no matter how stealthy the party may be, the ravens are always watching.

Some examples:

- *Outsiders in the mist! Ke-kaw! Lost forever! Kekekekek!*
- *Fire and freedom, darkness and death. Bre-kaak!*
- *No escape, no escape! Kekekekek!*
- *From blood, the curse! From curse, the blood! Ke-kaw!*
- *Silver on the cliff is richer than gold. Kreeek!*
- *One-Eye shan't listen. Bre-kaak! The mists stop his ears.*
- *True love never dies! Kreeek! True death never loves!*
- *Two by two by tooth and claw. Ke-kaw!*
- *Brothers in skin and fur. Ke-kaw*
- *Know only rage now Ke-kaw*
- *Stars and Glyphs! Ke-kaw! Coins and swords! Ke-kaw!*
- *Empty hearts are full of fear! Kekekekek!*
- *Always seeking! Never finding! My love my love my love!*
- *Without wings, she flew from the walls! Kekekekek!*
- *Secrets locked in amber! Kreeek! There let them lie!*

The ravens do not respond to direct questioning, only repeating these and other similarly portentous phrases. If the heroes have the ability to speak to the birds in their natural language, the ravens discuss anything that they've witnessed in or around Rookscrag, but offer no additional details about any of the above.

1. The Cliffside Path

A steep, narrow path is cut into the face of the cliff. Worn smooth by the years of frequent rainwater sluicing through its channel, the footing looks treacherous, but viable. From your vantage, the path appears to switchback as it rises towards the distant summit.

The Cliffside path is unsheltered, making any who climb it easily observable from both above and below. Raven nooks line the cliff walls, and rainwater trickling over the smooth stone makes climbing the cliff face dangerous.

If the party ascends Rookscrag via this route, proceed to Encounter B1. The Cliffside Path, below.

The Tunnels

Two guard tents sit at the entrance to a narrow box canyon. As you look at the cliff side to the left of the tents is cave. The path towards the tunnel slopes distinctly upwards, suggesting that there may be an interior route to the top of Rookscrag.

The tunnels provide the party's best chances of reaching the summit undetected by Gagg and his followers, but there's no way of knowing what lurks inside. A successful Wisdom (Perception) DC 15 notices orc footprints; at least some of the orcs went this way.

If the party somehow gets here early (Took less than thirty-two hours to get here by not taking long rest, use of magic or forcing the pace) there are two in the tents putting two bowls wrapped a blanket into a carry sack (remove the two orcs from the combat on the top of the cliff). Note that in this case the wereboars attack when the party gets back down on ground.

If the party ascends Rookscrag via this route, proceed to Encounter B2. The Tunnels, below.

Treasure. Checking the tents, they find a silvered short sword and a *potion of greater healing*.

B. The Ascent

Estimated Duration: 45 Minutes

The two paths up Rookscrag are very different. The Cliffside Path is nominally safer, but exposes the party to observation as they approach the summit. The Tunnels are more dangerous, but provide an opportunity for the heroes to take Gagg and his bodyguards unawares.

See the appropriate section below based upon which route the party chose to ascend Rookscrag.

1. The Cliffside Path

The path is not without its dangers; the recent icy rain has left it very slick. It also brings the party straight through a nest of ravens; disturbing the birds alerts Gagg on the summit above.

Your feet threaten to slip from under you with every step as you force your way up the glass-smooth stones of the path.

As you round one of the many twists of the climb, you see a sizable raven nest a short distance ahead, directly in the path. A dozen or so of the birds eye you warily.

Up until now the trek had been difficult, but this is a problem. The ravens might attack and fending them off could cause a fall. Anything that feels threatening to the birds—including approaching the nest where their eggs lay—causes them to make tremendous noise, and fly up trying to buffet the nearest character with their wings. The **ground is slippery** enough to require a DC12 Dexterity check to keep balanced and o fall off the edge. On successful check

the character falls prone, on a failure drops 15 feet before landing on a ledge (1d6 bludgeoning).

Immediately past the nest an *alarm* spell is set (mental ping version) on the path. There are signs that the nest has actually been moved recently, detectable by passive Perception of 18 (also active Wisdom Investigation.) That is why the ravens are so worried.

The default for checks to get past the nest is DC 13, but reward particularly creative efforts by adjusting as necessary. Note that someone making a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check understands that the eggs would not normally be laid in this weather but the move to the demiplane threw some of the birds off. Offering the birds something they can used to increase the warmth of the nest or insulate it may grant that character the ability to pass by without setting off an alarm.

If two or more of the adventurers fail, the birds's ruckus attracts the attention of orogs upon the summit who push rocks down on the party. Each adventurer must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a success. There are only enough loose rocks for the orogs to do this twice.

In either event, some portion of the party's ascent gives them away, and Gagg and his orogs are ready for them upon the summit.

Then there are those who simply want to climb the cliff. They may have skills, equipment or spells to do so. Don't let it take too long, but the Strength (Athletics) checks should be DC 13 to 15. They still have to avoid nests.

2. The Tunnels

The tunnels beneath Rookscrag are home to a nest of phase spiders that must be passed in order to reach the summit.

The tunnel is narrow in places and the stones slick, the air heavy with the smell of mold and damp earth. Strange sounds skitter at the corners of your senses as the path climbs steeply upward.

Pulling yourself up onto a rocky shelf, you see that the tunnel ahead is half filled with web. Broken-open egg sacs littering the ground suggest that spiders hatch here in great numbers.

This 40-foot long section of tunnel is 10 feet in diameter and partially filled with thick, strong spider webs. The webs are 5 feet deep and count as difficult terrain.

Each creature that starts its turn in the webs or that enters them during its turn must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained as long as it remains in the webs or until it breaks free. A creature restrained by the webs can use its action to make a DC 13 Strength check. If it succeeds, it bursts free and is no longer restrained.

The webs are flammable. Any 5-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, dealing 7 (2d6) fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the burning webs.

When the party either has made it 20 feet into the tunnel section, or if one of the heroes is restrained by webbing; two **phase spiders** and two **swarms of spiders** emerge from hidden holes within the rock to attack.

The phase spiders *ethereal jaunt* as often as possible. The spiders focus their attacks on any adventurer trapped within the webbing.

Adjusting the Encounter

An average party should find the wolf pack to be a hard combat encounter. Here are recommendations for adjusting it to suit the group at your table. These are not cumulative:

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove a **phase spider**
- **Strong party:** Add a **phase spider**
- **Very strong party:** Add two phase spiders and a **spider swarm**

2. Rookscrag Summit

The state of events upon the summit of Rookscrag is largely determined by whether or not Gagg knew the adventurers were coming and if they somehow got to the valley early.

If they got to the valley at least two hours early and did not dawdle on the way up, then the orcs are still setting up but are all present.

General Features

The general features of Rookscrag Summit are as follows:

Loose Rock. The summit is comprised of gravel that has come loose in the rain. Footing within 10 feet of the edges is difficult terrain.

The Fall. The cliff face is steep but not sheer; creatures forced over the edge can make a DC 14 Strength saving throw to catch themselves, falling 1d10 x 10 feet if they fail and taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they fall.

The Altar. A low stone altar carved with symbols honoring Gruumsh rests near the edge of the cliff.

As you reach the summit of Rookscrag, the sky rumbles with thunder and ravens *skraaw!* in the distance. The exposed precipice streams water over a dizzying drop of a hundred feet or more, and the loose rocks shift perilously beneath your feet. You spot a low stone altar sitting near the edge of the abyss as a flash of lightning briefly illuminates the scene before you.

Choose the most appropriate circumstance from the options presented below.

1. The Cliffside Path (Good Pace)

Choose this situation if the heroes pursued Gagg and Ixusaxa with haste and made reasonable time up the Cliffside Path. However, the orcs have seen the characters coming and lay in wait.

Approximately eighty feet away, you see the unmistakable shape of a woman in chains slumped over the altar, her robes heavy with rainwater. Several large rock formations dot the ledge, but nothing moves on the jagged cliff. Slumped near her is another woman, also in chains and blindfolded.

The orcs saw the characters coming up the path and lay in wait among the rocks. Due to the rocks, the orcs are not visible until the characters pass by their hiding spot. However, any character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices them hiding among the rocks and are not surprised when the orcs come leaping and screaming at the characters.

Proceed to Payment in Blood, below.

2. The Tunnels (Good Pace)

Choose this situation if the adventurers climbed through the spider tunnels and did not pause to rest before reaching the summit.

The tunnel emerges onto a narrow cliffside shelf that hangs perilously over a long fall. A loose slope leads upwards to the summit. Through the sounds of wind and rain, you hear harsh voices above muttering what sounds like an Orcish prayer.

At the top of the slope, Gagg is preparing to sacrifice Ixusaxa Terrorsong and Sybil Rasia—both of whom lie unconscious and bound with rough ropes upon a crude stone altar.

If the characters are moving stealthily, they may be able to surprise the orcs. Any character that

succeeds on a Dexterity (Stealth) check surprises the orcs.

Proceed to Payment in Blood, below.

3. Either Route (Slow Pace)

Choose this situation if the party took a long rest after reaching the valley as well as having taken one during their journey.

You arrive at the summit of Rookscrag as lightning illuminates the dark sky. You see an orc shaman, his arms thrown back in triumph as he stands over the prone form of two women bound to a stone altar (their heads are in the center of the altar). Heavily armed bodyguards stand to either side. The women are bleeding out slowly from ritual wounds and the blood is being gathered in a bowl held by an orc at each end of the altar.

Due to the heroes' delay the ritual has already begun. All of the orcs are affected by *bleed*—a gift from Gruumsh! The spell lasts for 1 minute after combat begins. Neither side is surprised.

However, Ixusaxa and Sybil will each die within three rounds if not tended to.

Proceed to Payment in Blood, below.

Payment in Blood

Gagg, an **orc blood shaman**, and five **orogs** (two of which are actually **wereboars**) are here. Any character that within 10 feet of the altar notices a bone-handled silver dagger resting upon it.

Adjusting the Encounter

An average party should find the battle upon the summit to be a deadly combat encounter. Here are recommendations for adjusting it to suit the group at your table. These are not cumulative:

- **Very weak party:** Reduce **orc blood shaman's** hit points to 78.
- **Weak party:** Remove two **orogs**
- **Strong party:** Replace an **orog** with an **orc blood shaman**
- **Very strong party:** Replace two **orogs** with two **orc blood shamans**

Treasure:

Gagg has gems and jewel worth 600 gp, scroll of alarm and a silvered dagger. The orogs carry a combined treasure of 200 gp.

Conclusion

The women's breathing is shallow, their pulse faint, but they are still alive. Torn and dirty purple robes soaked with rainwater cling to one of them, while a ragged colorful skirt and heavy jacket covers the other woman's form. A heavy magical mist swirls about the women in purple, seeming to originate from the ornate chains which bind her wrists. The other woman is blindfolded.

You have rescued Ixusaxa Terrorsong of the Cult of the Dragon and Sybil Rasia and soon, you hope the duo will be able to give you the clues you need to flee this cursed place once and for all.

Who Leaves With Who?

Larga arrives shortly after the battle is resolved. Upon arriving, she is prepared to hand over Ixusaxa to the characters. She allows the characters to speak with Sybil Rasia, but until the shackles are removed from Ixusaxa, the mage can't communicate (see Players Handout 1, below).

If the characters want Larga to free Sybil as well, they'll need to convince Larga to do so; she is very keen on keeping her. A successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required in order to sway the orog. If the characters are willing to pay the orog, they gain a +1 bonus to the check for each 100 gp that they give Larga. If the characters managed to successfully skin all of the winter wolves (see No Escape, above), she accepts them in lieu of gold (each one granting a +1 bonus) and the characters make the check with advantage. Whether or not the characters succeed in obtaining Sybil, the orogs still relinquish Ixusaxa—they're too wary of her to keep her.

Ixusaxa Terrorsong

Many characters may be skeptical of or even hostile to Ixusaxa, but she is no threat. She has neither her spellbook nor her spell components. The only spells she can possibly cast are cantrips.

Ixusaxa is still shackled when Larga and the orcs hand her over; if they have the command phrase for the *bonds of fear (dimensional shackles)* that bind her, the characters may use it now. Otherwise, Larga discloses the phrase.

Learning what Ixusaxa Terrorsong knows of the Demiplane of Dread is outside of the scope of this adventure, but the heroes have acquired a potentially valuable source of information—and

perhaps even an unlikely ally—by rescuing her here today.

Sybil Rasia

She had been seeking a solution to the problems facing them all when she encountered the orcs. But this, she tells the characters, was fortunate, for she believes Ixusaxa has the knowledge needed to free them all from the Mists. Sybil is thankful for the rescue.

If the characters plan to free Sybil, then they must do so now as Larga and her tribe are keen to leave Rookscrag as soon as possible.

Treasure

Finally, the characters are given the *bonds of fear (dimensional shackles)* that formerly (or currently) bound Ixusaxa. Large also gives the characters a heavy satchel containing 5,000 sp of Faerûnian mint.

Rewards

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

Experience

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

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Winter Wolf	700
Orc	100
Orog	450
Phase spider	700
Swarm of spiders	100
Orc Blood Shaman	1,100
Wereboar	1,100

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Escaped the wolves	250
Climbed the cliffside path	200
Rescued Ixusaxa Terrorsong	300
Rescued Sybil	300

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **1,875 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **2,500 experience points**.

Treasure

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

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

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system set forth in the sidebar.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Winter wolf pelt	50 each
Silvered dagger	51
Silvered shortsword	55
Gagg's gems	600
Orog's treasure	200
From Larga	500

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

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

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

Bonds of Fear (Dimensional Shackles)

Wondrous item, rare

These chains are etched with twisted screaming faces and clouds of fog. When placed upon a victim, they are enveloped in mist an inch thick that dampens hearing and vision passing through it. The victim is only peripherally aware of the world around them and even their loudest screams can be heard only as the softest of whispers. Occasionally shadowy forms can be seen moving through the mist, as if the victim were not alone. A description of this item can be found in the **Player Handout 1**.

Potion of Greater Healing

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Spell Scroll of Alarm

Scroll, common

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Renown

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

Downtime

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

Downtime Uses

Characters who wish to spend more time studying the ravens of Rookscrag have special downtime activities available for this adventure only. Each character can perform only one of these downtime activities, and then only once. Record this as a story award on the character's logsheet.

Bird's Eye View. Time spent upon the heights of Rookscrag give you a new perspective on the surrounding countryside. If you spend 10 downtime days meditating upon the summit, you may later spend an action to gain the one-time effects of a *commune with nature* spell. Remove this story award from your logsheet once it's been used.

Friends in High Places. The ravens of Rookscrag share many secrets with those able to tease out their meaning. If you spend 10 downtime days listening to the cackling of ravens, you may later spend an action to gain the one-time effects of a *legend lore* spell. Remove this story award from your logsheet once it's been used.

Story Awards

Characters who do not already have it earn the following story award during this adventure.

The Demiplane of Dread. You have traversed the mists and now find yourself in the Demiplane of Dread and, until this story award is removed, you are unable to leave. So long as you are trapped, you cannot participate in any adventure or event that takes place outside of Barovia. Tread carefully during your time here, the Dark Powers are watching.

DM Rewards

You receive **625 XP**, **312 gp**, and **five downtime days** for running this session.

Appendix. Monster/NPC Statistics

Phase Spider

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	6 (–2)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ethereal Jaunt. As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Orc

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (–2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Actions

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Orc Blood Shaman (Orc War Chief)

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6, Wis +2

Skills Intimidation +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the shaman can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Gruumsh's Fury. The shaman deals an extra 4 (1d8) damage when it hits with a weapon attack (included in the attack).

Spellcasting. The shaman is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The shaman has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at-will): *guidance, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, command*

2nd level (2 slots): *augury, spiritual weapon* (spear)

Actions

Multiattack. The shaman makes two spear attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6 + 4 plus 1d8) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Battle Cry (1/Day). Each creature of the shaman's choice that is within 30 feet of it, can hear it, and not already affected by Battle Cry gain advantage on attack rolls until the start of the shaman's next turn. The shaman can then make one attack as a bonus action.

Orog

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 42 (5d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +5, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orog can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Actions

Multiattack. The orog makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Swarm of Spiders

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the swarm knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half its hit points or fewer.

Wereboar

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 10 in humanoid form, 11 (natural armor) in bear and hybrid form

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in boar form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Orc (can't speak in bear form)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shapechanger. The wereboar can use its action to polymorph into a boar-humanoid hybrid or into a boar, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size and AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Charge (Boar or Hybrid Form Only). If the wereboar moves at least 15 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with its tusks on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the wereboar takes 14 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The wereboar makes two attacks, only one of which can be with its tusks.

Maul (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee*

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

Tusks (Boar or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon*

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

Greataxe (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee*

Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wereboar lycanthropy.

Winter Wolf

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	7 (–2)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant, Winter Wolf

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

Snow Camouflage. The wolf has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Cold Breath. The wolf exhales a blast of freezing wind in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 4d8)

cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Appendix. NPC Summary

The following NPCs appear in this adventure:

Larga Bloodhand (LARR-guh). Displaced leader of the Bloodhand orc tribe.

Gagg Shinbreaker (GAYG). Orc shaman who claimed Larga's place after her disappearance.

Kilgo Bonegrinder (KILL-go). Orc shaman who remained loyal to Larga and opposed Gagg's claim.

Ixusaxa Terrorsong (ICKS-oo-SAH-shuh). Cult of the Dragon Wearer of Purple captured by the Bloodhand tribe and restrained by magical bonds. She may know the secret to escaping the Demiplane of Dread.

Sybil Rasia (Si-buhl RAH-see-uh). Female Vistani fortune teller. First introduced in *DDAL 5-1 Suits of the Mists* and from the *Forgotten Realms*

Player Handout. Bonds of Fear (Dimensional Shackles)

Bonds of Fear (Dimensional Shackles)

Wondrous item, rare

You can use an action to place these shackles on an incapacitated creature. The shackles adjust to fit a creature of Small to Large size. In addition to serving as mundane manacles, the shackles prevent a creature bound by them from using any method of extradimensional movement, including teleportation or travel to a different plane of existence. They don't prevent the creature from passing-through an interdimensional portal.

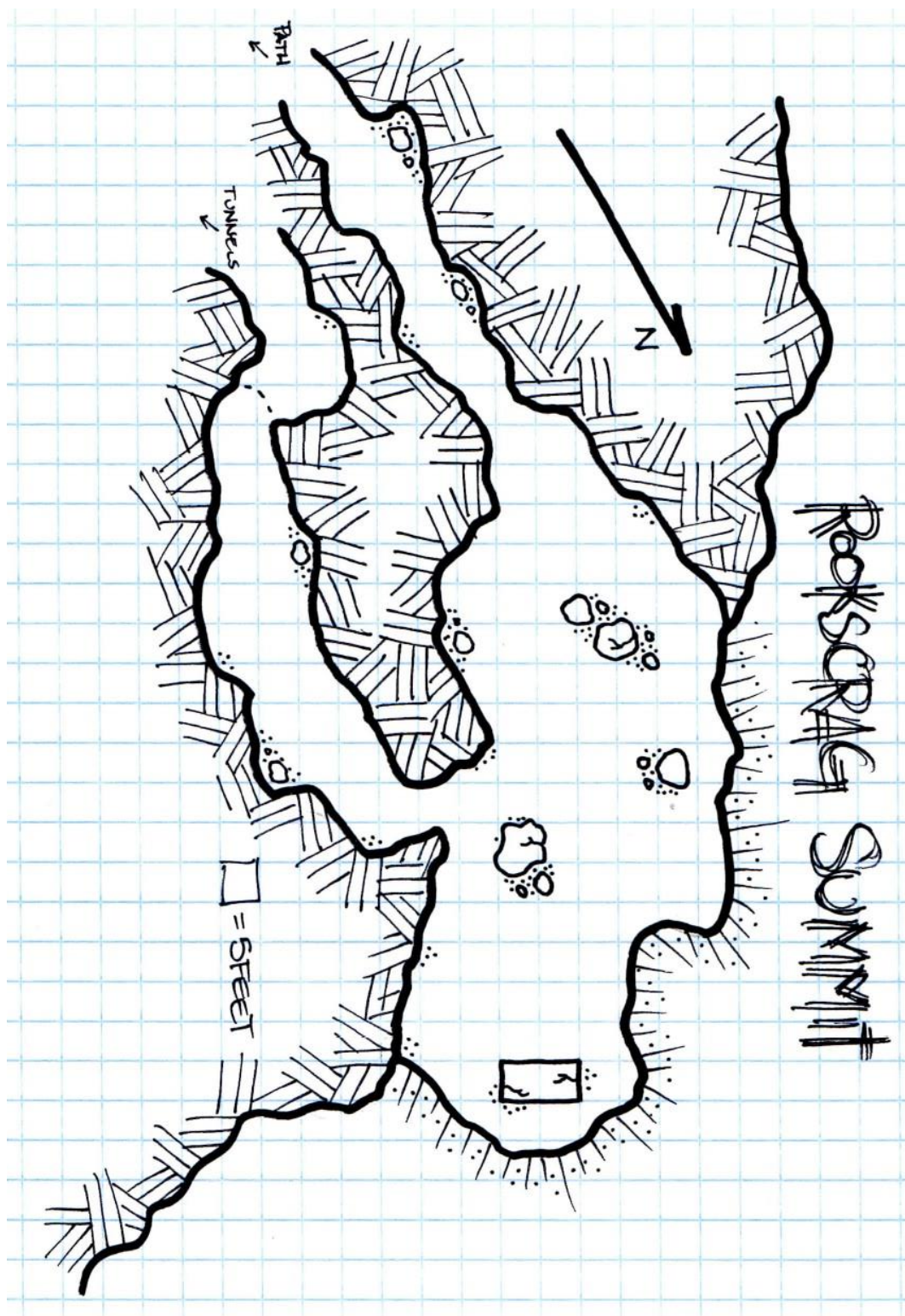
You and any creature you designate when you use the shackles can use an action to remove them. Once every 30 days, the bound creature can make a DC 30 Strength Athletics) check. On a success, the creature breaks free and destroys the shackles. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

These chains are etched with twisted screaming faces and clouds of fog. When placed upon a victim, they are enveloped in mist an inch thick that dampens hearing and vision passing through it. The victim is only peripherally aware of the world around them and even their loudest screams can be heard only as the softest of whispers. Occasionally shadowy forms can be seen moving through the mist, as if the victim were not alone.

Appendix: The Valley Map



Appendix: Rookscrag Map



Results Code: June - August 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of June - August 2016, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.

