



# THE BLACK ROAD

Caravans are having a difficult time getting through to Parnast via the Black Road. Organized attacks by orcs and other monstrous humanoids working in concert with one another have folks baffled. Little do they know that an unusually intelligent hill giant, going by the name of Bad Fruul is to blame. SEER has sent her emissary Hsing, to task your group to accompany a caravan with a very special cargo destined for the Shrine of Axes in Parnast, and to figure out who is responsible.

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



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Black Road*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Storm King's Thunder*™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 3rd-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. A player with an ineligible character can create a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character.

The adventure is set in the Anauroch Desert of the Forgotten Realms and concludes in the town of Parnast.

## THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

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 will continue their story.

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](http://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.)

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 (if they have one). 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 or see the need to do so, 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. These adjustments are not required, nor are you bound to the suggestions made by the

adventure—they are recommendations provided for guidance and convenience.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five <MID>-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.** You get to make decisions about how the group interacts with the NPCs and

environment within this adventure. It is okay to make considerable changes or engage in improvisation, so long as you maintain the original spirit of what's written. Remember, you are the **final** arbiter of the game's rules.

**Challenge Your Players.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience level 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. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

**Mind the Time.** 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.

**Keep the Adventure Moving.** When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. The Dungeon Master's Guide has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

## 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.

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</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	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
<i>Resurrection*</i>	3,000 gp
<i>True Resurrection*</i>	50,000 gp

\*These spells require an additional expenditure of downtime days (150 for *resurrection* and 350 for *true resurrection*). This cost can be reduced by 50 days for each faction rank above 1 that the character possesses. This downtime is spent in community service for the church that provided the spell in question. The Acolyte Background feature does NOT reduce the gp or downtime cost for either of these spells.

### 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.

Acolytes can call upon spellcasting services in and around the three towns as follows:

**Parnast (Tier 1).** Mielikki

**Stagwick (Tier 2).** Chauntea

**Beregost (Tier 3).** Lathander, Waukeen

## DEATH AND RECOVERY

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

### 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.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Parnast, a small town in the Greypeak Mountains, was the site of infiltration by the Cult of the Dragon a year ago. Since a group of cunning adventurers freed the town from the grip of the Cult of the Dragon, the town has grappled with its identity and townsfolk have often turned against one another under suspicion that the Cult never left. Seeking to stabilize the area, the Shrine of Axes put out the word that they were looking for a new statue of Angharradh, also known as the Triune Goddess. She is a three-fold deity and in the context of the deities represented at the shrine, represents Spring.

That word reached an artisan who had gone into exile in the Anauroch Desert. A tenday after the rumors hit the outpost of Vuerthyl in the Anauroch, the statue appeared outside one of the larger tents. The caravan master Azam, an agent of the Lords Alliance, saw this as an opportunity to increase his favor with the nobility. He reached out through channels and oddly, a pseudodragon agent of the powerful spymaster SEER was sent personally. Not only does the pseudodragon Hsing oversee the planning of the transport, but also in hiring a specific group of adventurers.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure has three parts; an introduction, various encounters on the road, and a conclusion.

See the **DM Appendix: Adventure Flowchart** for an overview.

**Part 1: Anywhere But Here.** The characters are introduced in the small caravan stop of Vuerthyl in the Anauroch desert. They have been brought together by Hsing and Azam to carry a statue to Parnast.

**Part 2: Into the Desert.** The characters are attacked by goblins, run into other caravans, and are subsumed in a sandstorm from the wake of a cloud giant castle passing by overhead. As they leave the desert, they must choose to either fight hobgoblins that have set up a tollbooth, pay the toll, or to try to find a way around the waystation. Along the way, they may be ambushed by well-informed and well-organized bugbears.

**Conclusion: Welcome to Parnast.** The caravan travels the last few days through the winding mountain passes to Parnast without incident. When they arrive, if they still have the statue, they are welcomed by the faithful of the Shrine of Axes.

#### ADVENTURE TIMING

The adventure is designed for **2 hours of play**. Use the table below to budget your time, adjusting the pace as necessary to keep on schedule. In a large public event, you'll need to keep an eye on the clock.

- **Part 1.** 15 minutes
- **Part 2.** 90 – 120 minutes
- **Part 3.** 5 minutes

## ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters can be in the area for any number of reasons. They may be en route to the Sword Coast from the Moonsea region of Faerûn, or simply wandering the wilder places of the world in search of adventure.

Below are a few suggestions that might provide some reasons why the characters might find themselves in a blistering desert. These have associated handouts. If the number of handouts seems like too much for your players, you are not required to use them, and can summarize them as you see fit.

**Personally Invited (No Faction).** The characters have been personally invited by means of a fine scroll sealed with a blob of wax bearing the sigil of a crane. The scroll offers them employment in the trade outpost of Vuerthyl in the Anauroch Desert. The letter promises future employment for a job well done. Give the players **Player Handout 1A**.

**Lords' Alliance.** Members of the Lords' Alliance receive a note from a trusted comrade within the

Lords' Alliance. The note instructs them that SEER and HSING are working with the Lords' Alliance and that the characters are to render whatever aid they need. The note further cautions them that they are to find out what is organizing the goblin tribes of the western Anauroch desert. Give the players **Player Handout 1B**.

**Order of the Gauntlet.** At one of the last major conclaves of the Order of the Gauntlet, news came that a sizeable caravan of pilgrims headed from the Moonsea towards Waterdeep was attacked by goblins. Few of the pilgrims survived and requested aid from the Order. Members of the Order of the Gauntlet are encouraged to join caravans out of Vuerthyl and go teach the goblin tribes a lesson so that they fear the symbol of the sword and fist. Give the players **Player Handout 1C**.

**Zhentarim.** Zhentarim characters become aware of a rumor on the streets that goblins are setting up tolls on the Black Road (a road that ostensibly belongs to the Zhentarim). Characters are encouraged to join caravans out of Vuerthyl and go teach the goblins otherwise. Give the players **Player Handout 1D**.

**Harpers.** Harper characters find a blue origami crane among their belongings with a note instructing them to look for employment in Vuerthyl and keep watch for trouble because both giants and the Lords' Alliance are on the move. Give the players **Player Handout 1E**.

**Emerald Enclave.** Emerald Enclave characters are the recipient of an *animal messenger*. The message encourages the players to go to Vuerthyl to meet Azam and Hsing and take the statue of Angharradh to Parnast, and watch out for goblins. Give the players **Player Handout 1F**.



## PART 1. ANYWHERE BUT HERE

Read or paraphrase the following after the characters join with the caravan:

There's nothing like the desert to make people feel small and insignificant. In every direction, huge dunes roll across the landscape, and an even bigger sky looms above. The oasis of Vuerthyl is a motley collection of sun-bleached tents in the vast Anauroch desert.

Through various means, it has been arranged that you would meet Azam the caravaneer in the large, Calimshan-styled tent that passes for a tavern here. A pair of tieflings, who seem to be unaffected by the heat, eye approaching visitors warily. The dim interior of the tent is a relief from the bright light and wind, though it's as hot here as anywhere else. The gentle sounds of a stringed instrument fill the air, and the people inside are hunched over food, drink, and conversation. A dragonborn with rust-colored scales greets you, and guides you to a private table. There are a few other adventurers here.

Allow the players a moment to introduce their characters as they arrive before proceeding:

The dragonborn delivers water as well as dates, olives and bread. Before long, you are joined by a lean, half-elven man with a long, craggy face and the dark skin and hair that shows his Rashemi ancestry. He has an impressive mustache. He's clad in practical desert gear. His most striking feature is a golden-scaled pseudodragon that lays draped around his shoulders. The pseudodragon stirs, blinking with milky irises, and sniffing the air. It gives the man a nod before shifting its wings and settling back down to snooze.

"Hsing, my patron," the man gestures to the snoozing dragon, as if it was a perfectly normal thing, "is most pleased you have come. We have business to discuss, and hopefully you are ready for a long journey. I am Azam, and we would like you to deliver a statue to Parnast."

### ROLEPLAYING Hsing

Hsing has been around a long, long time. However, while he seeks those who are insightful and direct, Hsing is distracted and speaks in vague, cryptic riddles. He is also quite lazy and his preferred place is curled up around someone's shoulders. Although he is blind, he has very well developed hearing and an acute sense of smell to help him navigate. A gift from to himself, Hsing's blindness is incurable.

**Quote:** "Zzzzzzzzz..."

### ROLEPLAYING AZAM

Azam has been travelling the Black Road for decades and knows what makes a good caravan guard. He's been paid well to work with Hsing (and the dragon's mistress), but it isn't enough for him to throw his life away. He'll seek to question and evaluate Hsing's choices in companions until he's satisfied.

**Quote:** "You've fought orcs before and lived to tell? Good, good. You should be able to deal with the goblins I've heard are on the route..."

Hsing has been sent to ensure that both the characters and the statue arrive in Parnast. He procured Azam's services with instructions that he hire the characters on as guards. The statue is bound to Parnast to replace one damaged by the Cult of the Dragon at the Shrine of Axes.

Azam presents the characters with **Player Handout: 1G** and the following information as part of his bid to hire them. Hsing has every appearance of snoozing peacefully during the discussion, and says nothing--even if directly asked.

Characters with a passive Insight score of 14 or more detects truth in the Rashemi half-elf's words:

- "There have been a number of caravans who have not completed the journey, and stories of goblins on the road have spread. I'm hoping that you can serve as insurance against that."
- "My caravan carries a number of goods in addition to the statue that are of value, both to me and to the people of Parnast."
- "I've heard that Parnast has gone from one trouble to another, specifically the Cult of the Dragon to something involving giants, but I don't know the particulars."
- "The statue for the Shrine of Axes was made in the Anauroch desert by artisans here. It's not small and it's not light. I don't know if it is magical or not, but I don't really care. I've been paid to transport it securely and that's what I plan to do."
- The characters are to take a statue of an elven goddess to Parnast, which is a tenday's travel along the Black Road from Vuerthyl, and protect the caravan from attacks on the way.
- If the characters ask to see the statue, Azam gives Hsing a questioning glance, and the little dragon nods his head in a regal gesture of assent. Azam takes the characters to a worn wagon where a stout looking half-orc woman is carefully wrapping the statue in canvas for its journey. Give the players **Player Handout 2**.
- Hazards on the road may include sinkholes, sand storms, heat waves, nomads, feral creatures,

goblins, blue dragons of all sizes, as well as the occasional fire or air elemental. The goblins have been a particular nuisance lately and even the Zhents can't stamp them all out.

- Chandra Stol, a priestess in Parnast, has offered whomever delivers the statue 50 gp, payable upon arrival in Parnast.
- Hsing's patron may have more work for the characters in Parnast. That's none of his concern though. Azam knows only that Hsing's patron is very mysterious and influential.
- Azam suggests that the characters purchase desert survival gear to help protect them against the heat. Of course tieflings and others that are resistant to fire are unlikely to need it.
- The caravan leaves in four hours. Azam is anxious to get on the road soon.

The characters have a few hours to purchase any supplies they might need in Vuerthyl. The Zhentarim trading post sells everything from the *Player's Handbook*, but for 25% more for anyone not a member of the Zhentarim.

Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check know that both the heat and sandstorms can be very dangerous, and being ill-equipped can spell doom for any caravan. Additionally, creatures wearing heavy or metal armor will likely have a hard time with the heat. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage are generally not bothered by the heat (though obviously the blowing sand from a sandstorm can be problematic!)

While the characters converse with Azam, Hsing flies off in an uncharacteristic fit of activity. Though he doesn't reveal as much, he is reporting back to SEER.

#### DESERT CLOTHING

Before leaving the oasis, the characters can buy supplies. In addition to the normal items for sale in the *Player's Handbook*, inform the characters that desert clothing is available for 4 gp each (twice the cost of normal traveler's clothing). Members of the Zhentarim are charged only 2 gp.

These garments consist of loose layers of light cloth, a wood-and-cloth mask, and a small canister of pitch to rub beneath the eyes so as to reduce the sun's wicked glare.

## PART 2. INTO THE DESERT

This part concerns the travels in the desert, most notably Encounters A through C.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud after the characters have concluded their business in Vuerthyl:

Travel in the Anauroch desert is slow, hot, and full of blistering sun. There are no clouds, no promise of water anywhere. Azam likes to start moving well before sunrise, when the moon's full glory makes the dunes look like mountains of diamonds. The sunrise is a gorgeous spill of pink and gold across the horizon, but the baking sun is soon pounding on everyone like a hammer in a forge. Vultures occasionally soar overhead, hoping that something has died in the heat.

Here is more information about the caravan and travel that the characters should know:

- Four wagons, each pulled by two foul-tempered camels.
- One wagon carries the caravan's food
- One wagon carries the caravan's water and a shipment of medicinal herbs
- One wagon carries a shipment of weapons.
- One wagon carries the statue of Angharradh.
- The caravan travels and sleeps in two shifts every day. Travel from predawn until noon, sleep from noon until late afternoon in the shade, travel from late afternoon until after dinnertime. Sleep from after dinnertime until predawn.

### ENCOUNTER A. THIEVES IN THE NIGHT

Have the characters decide on watches for the night. During the midnight watch, a group of goblins sneak up on the caravans. Compare the passive Perception score of any character that is awake to the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) check made by the goblins. Any character whose passive Perception score is lower is surprised.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following general features:

**Lighting.** With the nearly full moon above, and the reflective sands all around, the dunes are bathed in pale, dim light.

**Terrain.** Near the road the sand is more or less stable. Once characters get more than 20 feet off the road, the steep dunes and shifting sands mean that

characters must climb in difficult terrain. Doing so costs two extra feet of movement per foot moved.

**Caravans.** The caravan wagons can be crawled under or climbed over for half movement. Standing behind one offers three-quarters cover.

#### PSH...IT'S ONLY A FEW GOBLINS!

This encounter is designed to show the characters what goblins are like under normal circumstances. This fight should be quick, and you may decide to use "theater of the mind" rather than a tactical map.

##### • *If the Goblins are detected:*

The drivers and Azam bed down for some sleep, leaving the caravan guards to do their duty. The night-time desert is bitterly cold and dry. Camel spiders, sand scorpions, snakes, and large-eared hopping mice come out at night to casually murder each other. They also try to get into the tents.

You see a flicker of movement that resolves into furtive, small, humanoid shapes sneaking towards the wagons. The moonlight glints off the steel of the goblins' weapons.

##### • *If the Goblins are not detected:*

The drivers and Azam bed down for some sleep, leaving the caravan guards to do their duty. Camel spiders, sand scorpions, snakes, and large-eared hopping mice come out at night to casually murder each other. They also try to get into the tents. The night-time desert is bitterly cold and dry.

You hear a strangled exhalation, and an ugly tearing noise. Small, furtive, humanoids have snuck up into the wagons and killed one of the drivers. You see the blood dripping from the blade of a goblin's dagger, as black as the night sky in the moonlight. A cry of alarm goes up from the camp.

Emerging from the sandy wastes are an undisciplined group of goblin raiders. This band consists of five **goblins**, and one **goblin boss** mounted atop a **worg**.

The goblins rush the caravans, and try to remove items from the caravans. The caravan drivers (**commoners**) attack any goblins that get close enough.

The goblins have been pushed out of their normal hunting ground by Bad Fruul's more organized goblins, and are desperate. They fight to the death without regard to tactics, and seek to steal whatever they can. After two-thirds of the goblins and the goblin boss have been wiped out, the rest attempt to flee.



## ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** Remove **goblin boss** and a **goblin**.
- **Weak:** Remove a **goblin**.
- **Strong:** Add a **goblin boss**, a **goblin**, and a **worg**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **goblin bosses** and two **worgs**; Remove one **goblin**.

## TREASURE

The goblins have a single gp worth of various coins between them. Roll twice on the trinket table (*Player's Handbook*, pages 160-161) as the characters find some items with no particular monetary value among the goblins.

Additionally, the characters find a messenger bag filled with what appears to be curved strips of pale, foul-smelling wood. A successful DC 8 Intelligence (Nature) or Intelligence (Medicine) check identifies these as the clippings of giant toenails, the smallest of which is a perfect crescent ten inches across. A character succeeding at a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check knows that these are potentially valuable ingredients for making *potions of giant strength*, and are worth 100 gp to the right buyer.

## DEVELOPMENTS

Any goblins the characters capture reveal that the goblins to the west have a new chief. The new chief is smart and strong and leads them well. Bugbears and hobgoblins and others as well serve this chief. These goblins stole the wooden box (with the “wood strips”) from goblins to the west, but don’t know what they are or whether they’re valuable.

The rest of the night goes on quietly. If the characters successfully detected the ambush, the drivers and Azam are thankful and friendly in the morning. If the characters did not detect the ambush, a driver has been killed, and the mood is somber in the morning as her body is buried in the desert. One of the characters needs to take her place as a driver.

## ENCOUNTER B. BLACK RIDERS ON THE BLACK ROAD (OPTIONAL)

If you are limited to a two-hour time frame for this adventure, consider skipping this encounter so that you have ample time for the rest of the adventure. If you have more than two hours, this encounter can add interesting roleplaying to the adventure.

As the journey continues, read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead of you, a few days later, you see a black spot of movement on the horizon. As you travel, it gets larger and larger. Azam looks worried. “Another caravan – likely Zhents. Normally I’d suggest that we camp with them – safety in numbers. What do you think?”

The Zhentarim mercenaries are proud members of the black network, and while they aren’t looking for a fight, aren’t willing to take trouble from the characters. There are six members of the mercenary group in total (a **priest** of Waukeen and four **guards** of various species), and they are led by Fzoul Slovis (a **veteran**).

It’s up to the characters to decide if they would indeed prefer to camp together with the Zhents or not.

## ROLEPLAYING FZOUL SLOVIS

Fzoul, named after an old leader of the Zhentarim, is a human in his thirties. He is well tanned, with balding blonde hair cut short, and has a scar on his face from a close call with a blade. He is well-disciplined and outgoing, and looks after the men in his command. He’s wary of adventurers, as they’re often unpredictable, but is willing to work together to get through the night.

**Quote:** “Let’s all calm down. If you don’t start a fight, there won’t be a fight.”

If the characters choose to interact, they can make Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) checks as appropriate to learn information and with advantage if the characters offer to share food or supplies. Zhentarim faction members make these checks with advantage. If you have time, this makes an excellent opportunity for Fzoul to ask the characters about what is going on around the Moonsea from their previous adventures.

Here’s what Fzoul Slovis knows:

- **DC 8.** The goblins up and down the Black Road have been a problem for the past few months. Usually the Zhents buy them off or turn them against one another, but they’ve been disinterested in either of those methods lately. And the problem with stamping them out is there are always more goblins.
- **DC 10.** There’s been a toll station set up a couple of days’ travel from here, leading into the edge of the Anauroch desert. It’s manned by hobgoblins; decently armed and armored ones at that. Combine that with a defensible position and it

would have been a pretty hard fight. The merchants in Fzoul's party opted to pay the 15 gp toll. Azam looks askance at this as if he cannot believe it.

- **DC 13.** There have been bugbears, goblins and gnolls stirring up trouble along the Black Road and up toward the Greypeaks. If the caravan is planning on heading up that direction to Parnast and beyond, Fzoul recommends giving it a wide berth. He says they're oddly well-organized and using cunning traps.

## ENCOUNTER C. SKY CASTLES AND SANDSTORMS

One afternoon, after the mid-day stop, you notice a faint respite from the oppressive heat. A slight breeze ruffles the tassels on the camels' tack, and the drivers' robes. It is a relief in the still hot air. Someone points to the south, and you see a cloud on the horizon – and you haven't seen a cloud in days. It seems to be moving directly towards you, and fast!

As you look at it closer, you see blocky shapes on top of the clouds that resolve quickly into buildings and towers. Pennants snap in the wind of its passage. And the cloud isn't the only thing coming toward you--behind the cloud is a speeding, whirling storm of sand and dust kicked up from the desert.

You are in deep black shadow for a moment as the speeding cloud palace passes over you. There are the sounds of horns from above, and the cloud castle turns slightly northeast with a delicate, ponderous turn toward the Greypeak Mountains. As it turns, the wall of roiling clouds continues in its wake, and you have moments to protect yourself and the caravan from the oncoming sandstorm before it consumes you!

The cloud castle moves 360 feet per round (roughly 40 miles per hour), and is about a thousand feet up. If a character flies up to try to approach it, the pressure wave in front of the castle knocks them aside. Characters are unable to get into the castle.

If the characters want to apply their skills to the strange sighting of the cloud, the following would be applicable skills:

- **Intelligence (Arcana):**

**DC 10.** You've read about things like this before in passing, a rare phenomenon known as a cloud palace. They're made by cloud giants. Cloud palaces are supposed to house luxurious castles and gardens filled with magical fruit and silver fountains.

**DC 13.** Supposedly the whole thing is kept aloft by a magical rune that takes a year to inscribe.

- **Intelligence (History)**

**DC 10.** Legends say that the first cloud palace was built by the god Stronmaus, but that the father of the cloud giants, Nicias, won the palace in a bet.

**DC 13.** There are rumors among the dwarves that a cloud giant castle crashed some 200 miles south of Mulmaster before the rule of man. Other rumors among the desert tribes say that there is a crashed cloud palace lost in the desert.

**DC 15.** There are even whispers that a cloud palace was seen somewhere to the west of the desert in the Greypeak mountains sometime last year, and that it was associated with the Cult of the Dragon.

- **Wisdom (Survival):**

**DC 10.** This storm looks to be the violent wake of the passing cloud castle but the castle above is either completely unaware of or doesn't care about the problems of the little people below (or both!)

**DC 13.** You've got to do something to protect yourself, and to protect the wagons. With winds like these coming, the sands will tear them apart! (Characters who make this check are spurred to action and enjoy Advantage on their first check to save the wagons).

The characters have a turn to protect themselves, the goods, the drivers, or the camels before the storm hits. The caravan drivers are surprised by the sight of the Cloud Giant sky palace and lose their opportunity to act. Azam is surprised, but not so much that he doesn't act. He moves himself and his two camels to safety.

Give the characters relative latitude to protect either a wagon, two camels, or a driver before the storm hits (if you think a skill check is necessary then use a DC of 13). Characters may also use magic as appropriate, which may not require rolls or be able to protect multiple things--reward clever thinking over the roll of a die here. There are 10 things to save:

- Wagon 1 (Food)
- Wagon 2 (Water & Medicine)
- Wagon 3 (Weapons)
- Wagon 4 (The statue of Angharradh)
- Three pairs of camels that pull each wagon (eight total, but Azam saves two of them)
- Each wagon's driver (three not including Azam, who is able to save himself. Might be less than

three if one wagon driver died in the earlier encounter with the goblins)

Some things the characters might do to save the wagons, camels, or drivers include the following. Let your players come up with their own creative uses of skills, magic, or tools and encourage them to roleplay.

- Use a Strength (Athletics) check to lift the statue out of the wagon and move it so it is not buried in the sand and lost.
- Use an Intelligence (Arcana) check to realize that the bow wave of the castle indicates that the best way to angle into the storm is to the southwest, and move a wagon just so it can survive the winds.
- Use an Intelligence (History) check to recall a report from some of the first explorers of the Anauroch desert that indicated that dumping the items out of the wagon, and turning the wagon over on top of them will save them.
- Use a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to keep the camels moving so they do not drown in the sand pouring down on them.
- Use a Wisdom (Medicine) check to realize that putting a water-soaked cloak over the camel's faces enables them to survive the storm.
- Use a Wisdom (Survival) check to find small wadi for you and a driver to take cover in.
- Use a Charisma (Intimidation) check to shock one driver to action and get her to move to safety.
- Use the *Animal Friendship* spell to cause the camels to move to safety.
- Use *charm person* or *command* to cause a driver to move to safety.
- Use *create water* to make soaked cloth to keep camels or a driver from suffocating.

The characters do not have enough time to save everything before the storm hits.

Once the characters have decided their actions before the storm hits, read the following and adjust accordingly (if the characters protected all of the wagons, do not read the damage done to them, for instance):

Searing air and stinging sand overwhelms the caravan—sand whipping through the air, tearing and ripping at exposed skin, and rending the hems and sleeves of your clothes to tatters.

Somewhere in the blinding storm, you hear a man scream and the unearthly terrifying noise of a camel facing its end. Somewhere out in the hell of flying sand you hear the ripping of the heavy canvas wagon covers under the onslaught. The wind howls louder until it drowns out all other noise and the storm threatens to overwhelm you!

In the middle of the sandstorm, the characters must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw as they are enveloped by the sandstorm. Characters wearing desert survival garb enjoy advantage on this check. Characters wearing heavy armor have disadvantage on this check. Characters who fail this check suffer a level of exhaustion.

Additionally, the sandstorm deals 7 (2d6) points of bludgeoning damage to everything and everyone not protected from the storm. This isn't enough to kill a camel, but it is enough to drive it mad with pain and fear, and cause it to flee into the desert.

Continue with:

Just as the storm feels like it will pull you from the sands and carry you away, it passes. The sand falls out of the air and sunlight once again illuminates the land. However, everything looks different – the dunes and hills of sand have been completely rearranged. In only a few minutes, the terrifying force of the giants' passage has reshaped the desert.

At this point, anything the characters didn't save has been blown away, buried by sand in an unknown location, or ripped apart by the winds. Azam and his two camels have survived. He quickly mourns for his friends but knows that only by pressing on will he survive the journey. If the characters want to take a long rest, Azam cautions them against it since he feels fate has been acting against them in the travel and they could be ambushed as they rest. Better to rest once they get to the Greypeaks. If the characters insist, he relents.

It normally takes two camels to pull a wagon, but the caravan can continue with only one camel per wagon, albeit slowly. The characters must take stock of what's left and keep moving. If the characters elected not to save the statue, that is entirely their prerogative.

#### UH-OH, SMALL TABLE?

If there are only three characters, you're going to save fewer things than if there were seven characters, or you could combine the goods into fewer wagons.

The good news is that fewer characters get paid more to deliver the goods, so it balances out.

## ENCOUNTER D. THE TOLL

Azam doesn't want to take a long rest at this point but relents if the adventurers press. He knows that Parnast is only two days away and resting once out of the desert is much safer. This means that the characters who have a level of exhaustion from the sandstorm still have the level of exhaustion. Given the losses so far, the desert is too dangerous and what's left of the caravan is too vulnerable to spend any time in the wild that it doesn't absolutely have to.

### GENERAL FEATURES

The ramparts have the following general features:

**Height.** The ramparts are 15-feet tall and 30-feet long, with natural stone on each side. There are crenellations along the wall which grant creatures on top of the wall half-cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws).

**Construction.** The ramparts are of quick, shoddy construction but capable of easy defense. Each 5-foot section of rampart wall has an AC of 16 and 30 hp, is immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Gate.** The gate is of weaker construction than the rest of the ramparts, and the wood of it has been damaged by the storm. Each 5-foot section of gate has an AC of 13 and 10 hp, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

**Straw Hobgoblins.** In combat, it becomes obvious that many of the hobgoblins simply aren't moving. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices sand and sticks poking out of the armor. Any character can tell they aren't combatants without a check if they move within 15 feet of one.

### THE RAMPARTS

After the characters gather up any supplies they have left, they push on and within an hour arrive upon the following:

You've been watching the mountains come into view for days, but today they're close enough for the caravan to head up into the far more forgiving environment. You see trees on the mountains, and clouds above them. As you get closer, you see that the foothills form desolate badlands, and the Black Road twists through them.

After travelling for hours toward the mountains through the badlands, the Black Road goes through a steep-sided canyon. Ahead, the road is blocked by a crude stone wall and an iron gate. A few broad-shouldered, ill-featured, armored humanoids move back and forth along the top of the wall. With this defensive structure, they own the road and the passage to the west. You see a faded, tattered banner with a leering skull of some loathsome tusked creature flying over the battlements.

Of course, you could take your chances by turning around the battered and weakened caravan and going back out into the desert to try to find another route...

The banner is depicted in **Player Handout 3**.

Azam is astonished that anyone would dare to block the Black Road—surely the Zhentarim wouldn't tolerate these creatures. (Even if the caravan had run into the Zhentarim and heard the rumors, he scarcely believed they were true!) Azam cannot pay the toll – he has no gold, and was hoping to sell the goods in Parnast. Azam also doesn't want to go back out into the desert. There are no good choices and it's dangerous to look vulnerable here.

Characters who wish to scout the toll area may do so; the hobgoblins at the ramparts don't fire on the characters unless they attack (or try to bypass the ramparts). Those characters that succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check note that there are perhaps a dozen well-armored hobgoblins at the post, and while the ramparts aren't of the best construction, they look defensible. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check tells another story, though: many of the hobgoblins stationed there don't appear to be moving. Either they're incredibly well-disciplined or they're not all real hobgoblins.

Depending on how the characters want to deal with this challenge, proceed to Encounter D1 to pay the toll, Encounter D2 to fight the hobgoblins, or Encounter D3 to sneak around the toll station. See the **DM Appendix: Adventure Flowchart** for more details.

Even if the characters agree to pay the toll, the hobgoblins send word to Bad Fruul's vanguard and bugbear ambushers try to take the caravan (Encounter D3).

### ENCOUNTER D1. PAY THE TOLL

As the characters approach with the caravan, read the following aloud:

As you get nearer the wall that blocks the canyon, you can see that the sandstorm that was so costly to your group also did damage to this area. Tattered banners hang from poles that have been knocked aside, and some of the crudely-applied armored plates of the ramparts have been torn away. There are a dozen armored hobgoblins in position along the ramparts, unmoving as the caravan approaches. Off to the side, you see vultures feasting on something that died in the sandstorm earlier.

Once you get about sixty feet away, a short, broad-shouldered, armored humanoid rises to the edge of the ramparts behind a crenellation. The humanoid has dark orange skin, vicious yellow eyes, and a surly expression—definitely a hobgoblin.

“You are entering Bad Fruul’s domain, and must pay the toll!” He shouts at you, “Only by gold or blood will we open the gates!”

If the characters talk to the hobgoblins, this is what they are willing to say:

- The toll plaza has been in place for several tendays.
- They work for “Bad Fruul”. He’s a clever, brutal, and exceptionally strong hill giant.
- The banner on the toll plaza is Bad Fruul’s banner.
- The toll is 15 gold pieces or two camels (one camel if the party only has two camels)

It is strongly encouraged that if playing with a battle mat and miniatures, the DM should place miniatures on the board to represent the straw hobgoblins.

The **hobgoblin captain** is wearing *bracers of archery* and deals 2 extra points of damage with ranged attacks. The hobgoblin captain puts on a fierce show, but the sandstorm swept away most of his hobgoblin soldiers, leaving him with only three **hobgoblins** to guard the post until reinforcements arrive. In order to not be seen as weak, the captain has had his troops use leftover armor to set up seven **straw hobgoblins** to make the ramparts look fully defended. The captain is greedy despite likely being outmatched, and allows the caravan to pass for the price of either two camels (or one if there are only two remaining) or 15 gp.

If the characters agree to pay the toll, he comes down the ramparts to take the payment through the gate before he and the other combatants open up the gate and allow them through. If the characters pay the toll, read the following and proceed to Encounter

D3. Remember, it takes at least one camel to pull a wagon.

The hobgoblin sneers at you in satisfaction for making you pay, and climbs back up the ramps to the armored ramparts. Soon after, the gate rises, allowing you passage. In the distance, you can see the green that promises the end of this harrowing desert journey.

If the characters do not agree, he lets them turn back without issue but mocks them and tells them one way or another, Bad Fruul will have his due tribute.

Proceed to Encounter D3, as elements of Bad Fruul’s horde follow the caravan with intent to ambush it.

### ENCOUNTER D2. FIGHT THE HOBGOBLINS

If it comes down to a fight, the hobgoblins give into their bloodlust and rush through the gates. They fight to the death and revel in glorious battle after being stuck on this defensive position.

**Treasure.** If the characters defeat the hobgoblins, they find 49 gp in small coins in the hobgoblins’ toll revenue in the gate house. They also find a small aerie with no birds, but scribe’s tools. The ashes of previous messages are in a small unlit brazier in the room. It also has a bloodstained suit of ring mail emblazoned with the fist and sword of the Order of the Gauntlet (this is ordinary armor worth 30 gp). They also find a pair of *bracers of archery* and an intricately carved shortbow of wood-elf make (this is an ordinary bow worth 25 gp)—prize trophies of one of the captains (note that characters cannot fight both the hobgoblins at the toll station and the bugbears, so the *bracers of archery* and other treasure are found only once).

**Development.** If the characters defeated the hobgoblins, they can rest in the gate house and press on. Continue to the conclusion.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak:** remove the **hobgoblin captain** and two **hobgoblins**. Add three **goblins**.
- **Weak:** remove **hobgoblins**, add a **goblin**.
- **Strong:** add two **hobgoblins**.
- **Very Strong:** add a **hobgoblin captain**, remove a **hobgoblin**.

### ENCOUNTER D3. PAY UP OR SNEAK AROUND

If the characters prefer to navigate the canyon, they may do so. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check can guide the characters through the winding canyons and out the other side after a couple hours.



If the characters cannot make the check, they get the wagon stuck in loose sand and must spend another night on the road. Unless the characters saved the wagon with the water, or can make water by magic, the caravan runs out of water. The characters must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. Characters wearing heavy armor make this check with disadvantage, while those with desert gear or fire resistance make the check with advantage. If completely out of water, the caravan continues at normal speed as the camels can push on without water, though any drivers that have survived will suffer.

If the characters pay the toll, they pass the toll station without harassment, but the hobgoblins send a sneaky **goblin** to follow the wagon with the intent to ambush it. As the characters travel, characters with a passive Perception of 14 or higher notices some light glinting off of the top of one of the nearby cliff walls.

The light is from the crude spyglass (worthless other than as per a trinket for adventurers) of a goblin who is lying prone at the top of the cliff watching for those who avoid the toll at the ramparts, or following caravans who did pay the toll to set up an ambush. The goblin flees if spotted and hides in the canyon.

If characters chase after the goblin, it's a difficult DC 15 Strength (Athletics) climb up 65 feet of canyon wall to reach the goblin's position. For most characters, this will be two rounds of full climbing, which is more than enough time for the goblin to make her escape.

Read or paraphrase the following if the scout escapes:

Clear of the crags of the badlands, you welcome the feel of moisture in the air and the sight of green plants. For the first time in days, there's even a bird overhead that isn't a vulture!

The bird, a **blood hawk**, carries a message from hobgoblins paid off in Encounter D1. The hawk is flying 50 feet above the characters.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that it is a blood hawk; creatures often tamed to attack or send messages. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check determines that the hawk does, indeed have a message tied to its leg. If the characters want to try and shoot down the hawk, they may, but after the first attack, it uses its action to Dodge as it flies away.

If the characters intercept the blood hawk's message, the bugbears in the following combat are not prepared for the characters and are easily surprised. If the characters seek out the downed hawk, they find **Player Handout 4** attached to its leg.

As the characters proceed along the Black Road, they find themselves facing the foothills of the Greypeak Mountains and another more traditional challenge. Read the following aloud:

The path you're on winds through lightly wooded areas, but starts to climb into the hills. The path narrows, and cuts through a steep sided ravine of crumbly gray moss-covered rock. At the top of the hill, you can see an ocean of trees and thick brush. A few outcroppings of gray weathered rock jut out from the grassy earth beside the road.

• ***Blood Hawk's Message Intercepted:***

This looks remarkably like the area described in the note on the hawk. You pause for a moment and at the top of the hill, a burly bugbear crosses the path and then you hear the sound of wood chopping. It appears you've found your ambushers unaware.

At this point, the characters can counter-ambush the unprepared ambushers if they wish. If that is the case, the bugbears are not in position, and there are only two tree trunks cut to go down the path.

• ***Blood Hawk's Message Not Intercepted:***

As you start up the narrow path up the hill, a bugbear bursts from the trees. "We'll be takin' your caravan for Bad Fruul, and burn your blood for Hruggek!" He roars and lets out a mighty kick, and with a loud SNAP, a huge log starts to roll down the narrow path!

At the top of hill is a **bugbear chief**, who delights in crushing her foes with the logs or smashing them if they make it up to the top. In the woods around the top, there is a **bugbear** and a **worg** who attempt to hide from the characters among the foliage (which lightly obscures them). The bugbear captain is equipped with *bracers of archery*, and deals 2 extra points of damage with ranged attacks.

There is a 20-foot wide and 70-foot long trail up the hill with wagon furrows on the sides, which makes it an excellent location to roll tree trunks at people. Given the steepness of the path, it is difficult

terrain (two feet cost per one foot of movement) to walk up it.

Off the path, there are overgrown grasses and loose rocks that are difficult terrain to move through. Because of the difficult terrain, and the fact one must climb up the steep mountainside, each foot a character climbs costs three feet of movement. The plants lightly obscure any prone Small or Medium creatures.

At the top of the hill are a number of trees that provide half-cover. The bugbears take cover behind these if attacked from range.

The bugbears roll a **spiked tree trunk** down the path once a character climbs halfway up on one of the bugbear's initiative counts. The tree trunk rolls all the way down the path on its turn and crashes at the bottom of the hill making a 5-foot-by-10-foot area of difficult terrain (creating a larger and larger area of difficult terrain at the bottom of the hill. Any character in its path must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw as it passes by. Those that fail take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. Those that succeed on the saving throw take only half damage and are not knocked prone. The camels make poor beasts for avoiding the spiked tree trunks, and if the adventurers approach with the wagons and camels, Azam will guide them away from the combat.

### TREASURE

The goblin scout drops and breaks the crude spyglass, rendering it worthless. If the characters defeat the bugbears, they find their most recent spoils hidden in their nearby encampment, a total of 49 gp, mostly in copper and silver. There are also elaborate plans for other traps to stop travelers in the area that show the bugbears are following orders of an intelligent and cunning leader.

The characters find a set of elaborate ring mail that was once quite fine, but the gilding on it has been chipped away and the jewels have been pried out. The crown-and-circle symbol of the Lords' Alliance is still visible on the pauldrons. The ringmail serves as functional armor (this is an ordinary set of armor worth 30 gp). On the body of one of the bugbears, they also find a fine shortbow with gnomish sights (this is an mundane shortbow worth 25 gp) and a set of *bracers of archery* (note that characters cannot fight both the hobgoblins at the toll station and these bugbears, so the *bracers of archery* and other treasure are found only once).

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove the **bugbear chief**.
- **Weak Party:** Remove the **bugbear chief**, remove the **worg**, add a **goblin**.
- **Strong Party:** Add a **bugbear**.
- **Very Strong Party:** Remove add a **bugbear chief**, remove the **worg**.

## CONCLUSION. WELCOME TO PARNAST

Read or paraphrase the following:

Your journey continues and soon you find yourself passing through the foothills of the Greypeaks. You camp one last night before you reach Parnast the next day, keenly aware of what you've lost with fewer wagons and companions than when you started.

Around noon the next day, you reach the small town of Parnast but find that few townspeople that come to greet your ragged caravan.

The people of Parnast are distrusting, at least until the characters deliver the statue to the Shrine of Axes. If the characters push on to do so, Azam will guide the wagon with the statue to the small wooden building that serves to house the shrine. As the characters near the shrine, the scent of freshly baked bread wafts through the air, which may make any particularly famished characters's stomachs growl for something more than rations gritty with sand.

### THE STATUE IS DELIVERED

At the Shrine of Axes, they are greeted by Chandra Stol, a female half-elf follower of Mielikki.

If the characters saved the statue and delivered it, she thanks them in her quiet way, and once they have installed the new statue, pays the characters 50 gp and offers to feed them and let them stay at the shrine for the night.

The half elven cleric, Chandra, thanks you quietly. "We're so grateful that you braved the Black Road to bring the statue of our goddess to us. We could have used the rest of the goods that were lost in the storm as well, but we now have Her guidance, at least." She gives you a kind, gentle smile. "Please, take your payment with our gratitude," she says, pressing a small black velvet bag of coins into your hands. "And let us get you baths drawn. We would have you stay for a meal and we can offer you a safe place to stay the night. Lodgings can be difficult to find in town."

As you look around, it's apparent from the reactions of the bystanders that this long speech from the cleric is the most words she's contributed to a conversation in years.

#### ROLEPLAYING CHANDRA STOL

Chandra, a female half-elf, has only been in Parnast for half a year, but has lived just outside of the village for decades. Until very recently, she occasionally came into the village to

leave small offerings to Mielikki (gifts of bread, berries, and small sacrifices), but avoided being seen due to the presence of the Cult of the Dragon. With their defeat, however, she has taken up permanent residence in the shrine. She is very quiet; she rarely speaks and is more likely to shrug in response to a question than give an answer other than "yes" or "no".

**Quote:** "Yes."

### THE STATUE ISN'T DELIVERED

If the characters elected not to save the statue, Chandra Stol greets them politely, but does not pay them.

"We were hoping you would deliver the statue of the Goddess to us. I understand that the perils of the Black Road are quite severe. Parnast is grateful for what goods you did bring us. I hope your future travels are much safer."

If the characters brought food, medicine, or weapons to Parnast, Ragnar Redtooth takes up a collection from the townsfolk for the characters.

After the priestess departs, a large, scarred man with rough features and a long mane of brown-blond hair sidles up to your group.

"You're the adventurers that brought the goods to town. The folks can't thank you enough. We took up a small collection for you." He presses a rough burlap pouch with coins in it into your hands.

"I'm Ragnar Redtooth, owner of the Golden Tankard. I got no room to put you up in, other than the stables, but come have a round on the house and tell your stories of the road to the folks in town."

#### ROLEPLAYING RAGGNAR REDTOOTH

During the cult's occupation of Parnast, Ragnar accepted bribes from the cult's leadership to conceal their activity and keep them abreast of any unusual activity within Parnast. Though he was outed for his conduct, he has managed to convince most of the townsfolk that he did what he did to ensure Parnast's well-being.

Ragnar is a tall, heavysset man with enormous mutton chop sideburns who seems friendly enough.

**Quote:** "What can I get you travelers? I will send the pot boy out to you in a moment with the finest available in my humble tavern."

### AZAM'S FAREWELL

Azam parts ways with the characters and says that they will always have a friend on the Black Road.

Azam looks over your group with a shrewd glance. “You did modestly well out there.” He gives you a wry, lopsided smile, and smooths down his noble mustache. “I’d travel with you again. You’ve got a friend on the Black Road. I’m going to stay here a while until we have enough goods for a new caravan out. Will be nice to get away from the sand for a while. Just... you watch yourselves here. Between everything we’ve seen and heard, I believe you’ll have larger problems soon.”

## TREASURE

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The characters receive 50 gp for successfully bringing the statue to Parnast OR they receive 50 gp for delivering supplies to Parnast (not both).

Lastly, a merchant in town offers to buy the box of giant toenails for 100 gp for the entire box (the adventurers can’t use them to *craft a potion of giant strength*).

## 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
Goblin Raider	50
Goblin Boss	200
Worg	100
Veteran	700
Priest	450
Guard	25
Hobgoblin Captain	700
Hobgoblin	100
Bugbear Chief	700
Bugbear	200

### Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Escorting the statue	150

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **450 experience** points.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **600 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. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

### Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Goblin Raider Treasure	1
Hobgoblin OR Bugbear Treasure	49
Ring Mail	30
Well-made Shortbow	25
Payment for Statue	50
OR	
Payment for goods	50
Toenails	100

### 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 items 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.

### BRACERS OF ARCHERY

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

These bracers are bulky with hexagon designs along them that do not match any common racial or family styling.

In addition, the hexagons turn blue in the cold or a warm orange in heat. The bearer suffers no harm in temperatures as cold as -20 degrees Fahrenheit or as warm as 120 degrees Fahrenheit. A description of this item can be found in **Player Handout 5**.

## DOWNTIME

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

## RENOWN

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



## STORY AWARDS

---

The following favor is available during the course of this adventure.

***Friend on the Black Road.*** You aided the caravan master Azam on a perilous journey along the Black Road. If you find yourself needing to travel the Black Road or transport something discretely, Azam will provide it safely once for free.

## DM REWARDS

---

You receive **150 XP, 75 gp**, and **five downtime days** for running this session.

## DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

**Azam (Ah-ZHAM).** A merchant, caravan master, and member of the Lords' Alliance. Azam travels with the characters throughout the adventure.

**Hsing (SING).** A pseudodragon that serves as the ally of a Lords' Alliance spymaster. He appears to make sure the right adventurers join Azam to end up in Parnast, where they are needed for future movements against the threat of the giants.

**Fzoul Slovis (Fah-ZOOL SLOW-vis).** A Zhentarim mercenary company leader, he offers to work with the characters to defend Azam and their employer's caravan for a night. In exchange for pleasant conversation, he can give the characters warnings of dangers ahead.

**Chandra Stol (CHAN-druh Stole).** A quiet female half elf follower of Mielikki, Chandra pays the characters for arriving with the statue and offers them sanctuary in the Shrine of Axes for the night at the conclusion of the journey.

**Ragnar Redtooth (Rag-NAR Red-Tooth).** A heavyset human man native to Parnast, Ragnar pays the characters for the goods that were delivered to Parnast if the statue didn't survive the journey.

# APPENDIX: MONSTERS/ NPC STATISTICS

## BLOOD HAWK

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)	14 (+2)	5 (−3)

---

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Keen Sight.** The hawk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

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

## ACTIONS

---

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## BUGBEAR

*Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (hide armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (−1)	11 (+0)	9 (−1)

---

**Skills** Stealth +6, Survival +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Brute.** A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

**Surprise Attack.** If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

## ACTIONS

---

**Morningstar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage at range. Note the bugbear is wearing the *bracers of archery*.

## BUGBEAR CHIEF

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 17 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidation +2, Stealth +6, Survival +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Brute.** A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

**Heart of Hruggiek.** The bugbear has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned, or put to sleep.

**Surprise Attack.** If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bugbear makes two melee attacks.

**Morningstar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage in melee or 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage at range.

## CAMEL

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 9

**Hit Points** 15 (2d10+4)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

## COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

## GOBLIN

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)	8 (–1)

---

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Nimble Escape.** The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

### ACTIONS

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

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

## GOBLIN BOSS

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 21 (6d6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)	10 (0)

---

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Nimble Escape.** The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The goblin makes two attacks with its scimitar. The second attack has disadvantage.

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

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Redirect Attack.** When a creature the goblin can see targets it with an attack, the goblin chooses another goblin within 5 feet of it. The two goblins swap places, and the chosen goblin becomes the target instead.

## GUARD

*Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

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



## HOBGOBLIN

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 18 (chain mail, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Martial Advantage.** Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage, or 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

If the party is weak or very weak, then there are no hobgoblin captains, and the hobgoblin will be using the *bracers of archery*, so add +2 damage to their attacks.

## HOBGOBLIN CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 17 (half plate)

**Hit Points** 55 (6d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Martial Advantage.** Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hobgoblin makes two greatsword attacks.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage. Note the hobgoblin captain is wearing the *bracers of archery*.

**Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, the hobgoblin can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the hobgoblin. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin is incapacitated.

## PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** any two languages

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Divine Eminence.** As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*  
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*  
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*  
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

## ACTIONS

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

## VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

## WORG

*Large monstrosity, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4)

**Speed** 50 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	7 (–2)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)

---

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Goblin, Worg

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

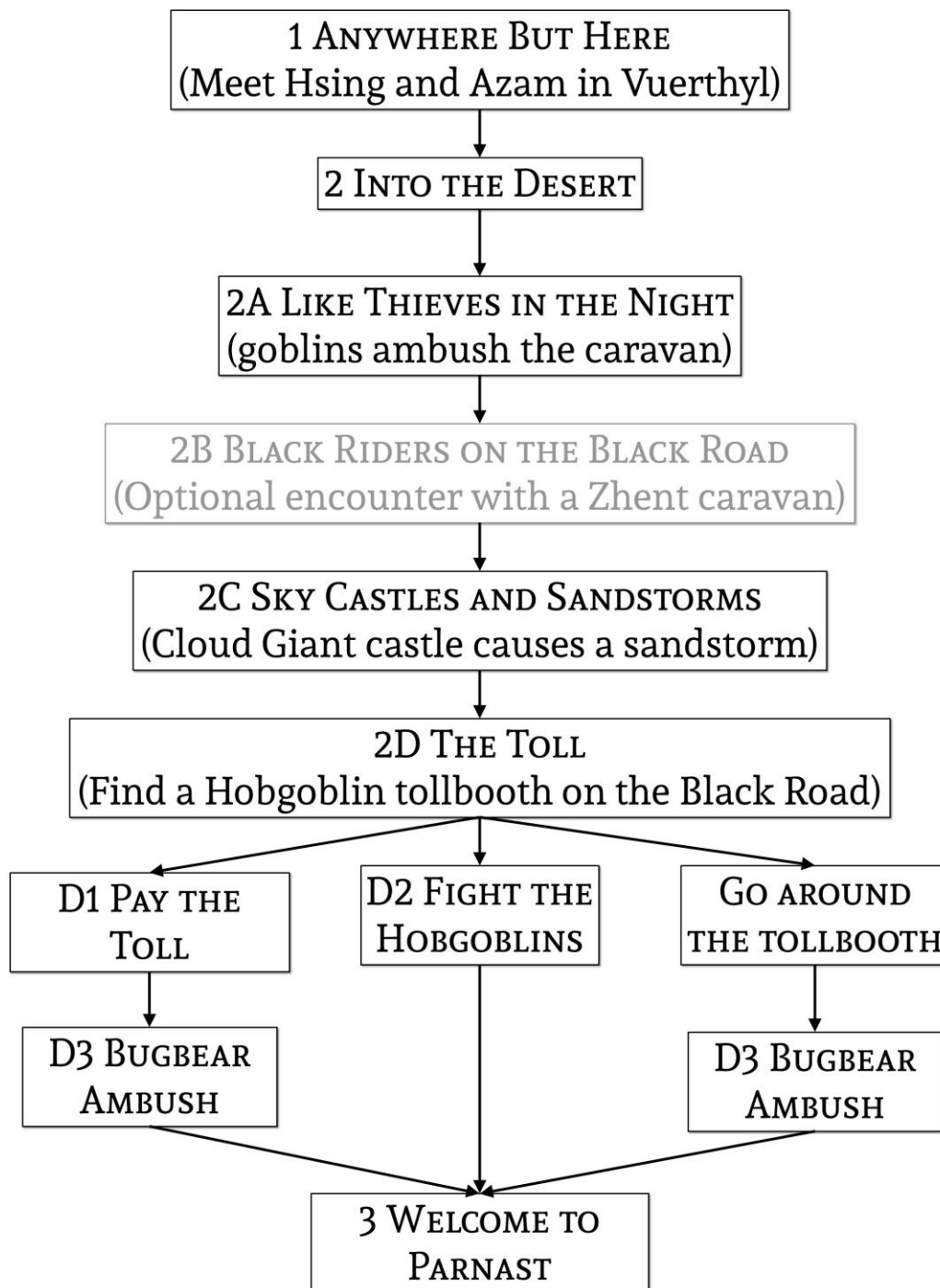
**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The worg has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

## ACTIONS

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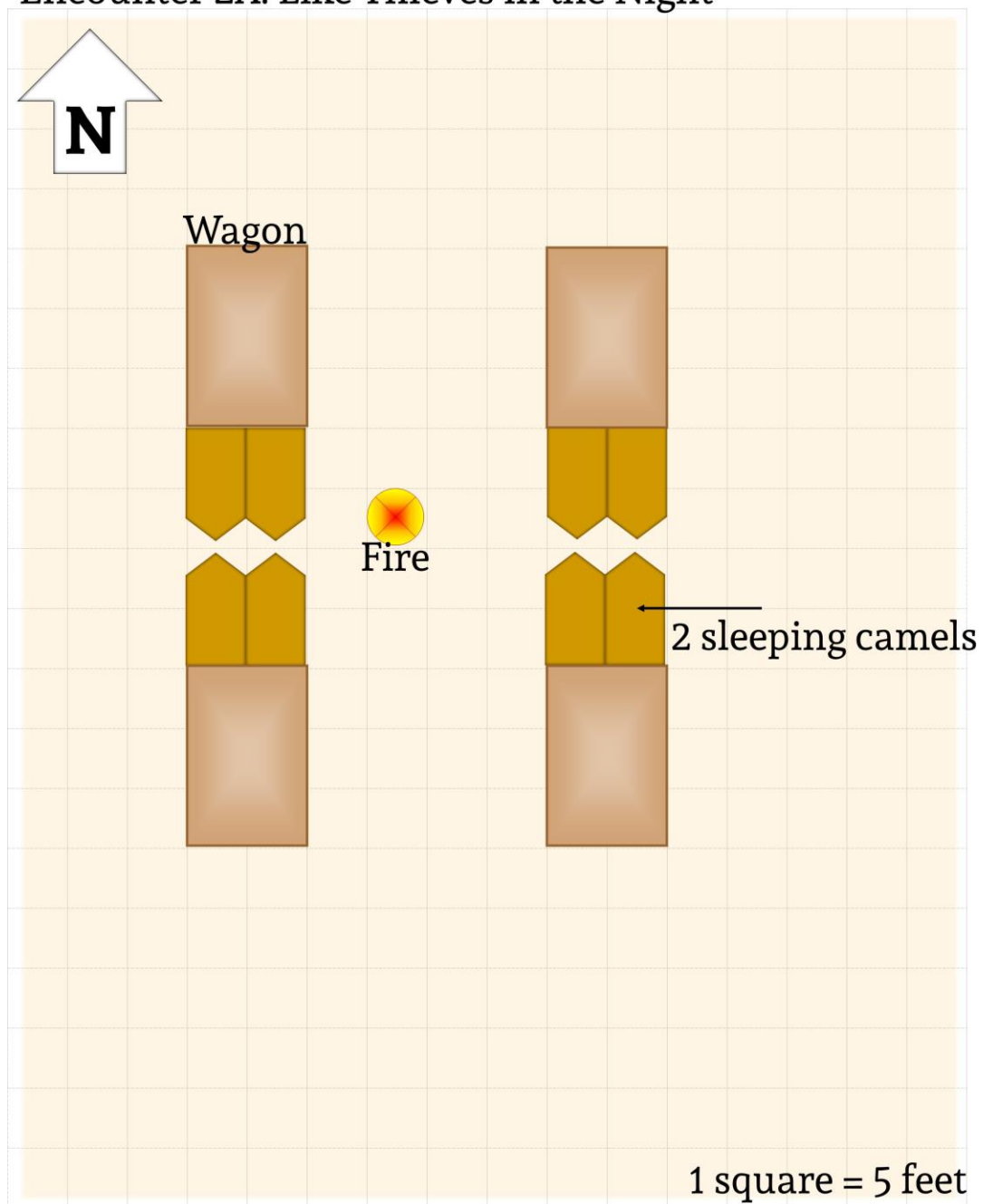
**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## DM APPENDIX: ADVENTURE FLOWCHART



## DM APPENDIX: LIKE THIEVES IN THE NIGHT MAP

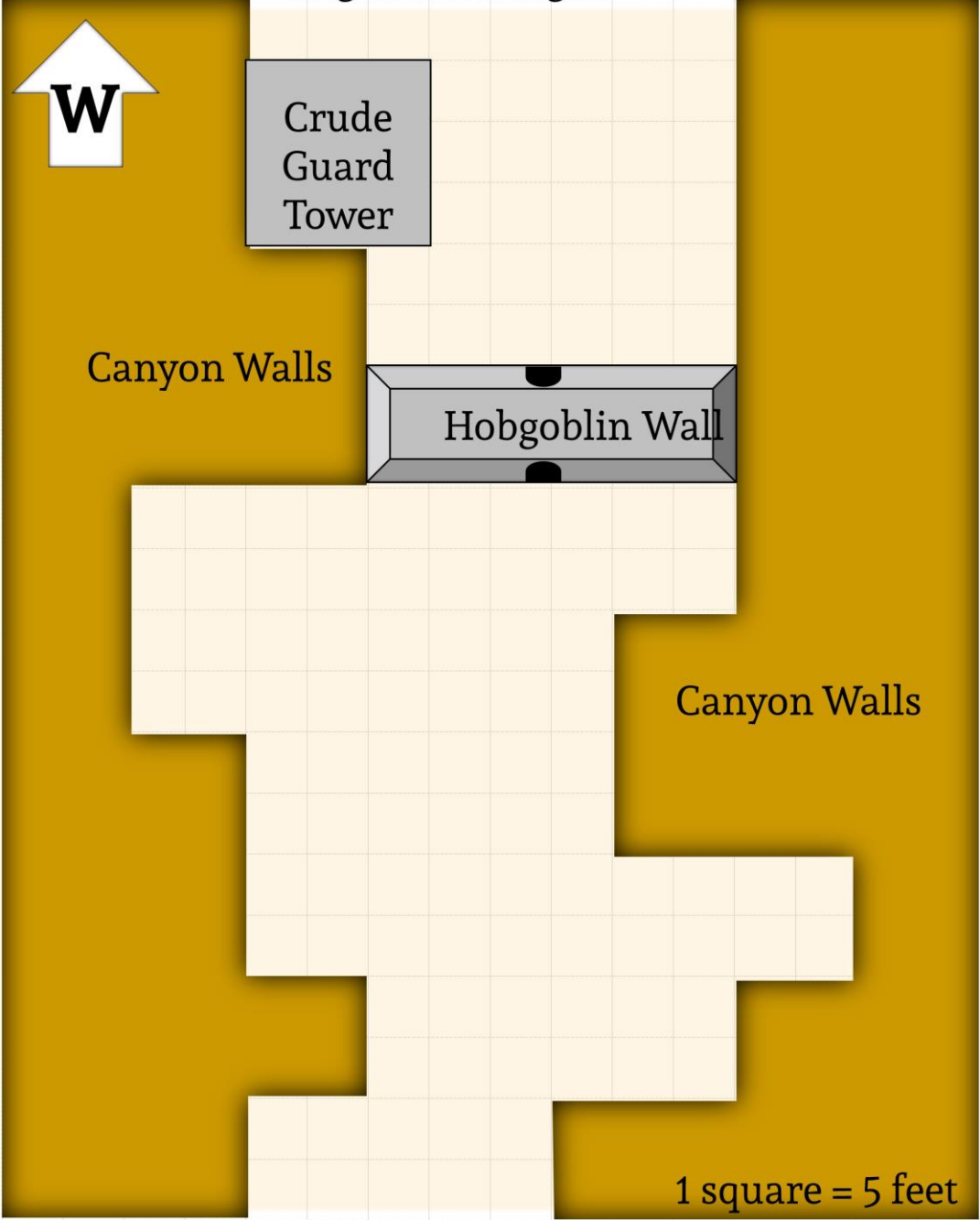
### Encounter 2A: Like Thieves in the Night





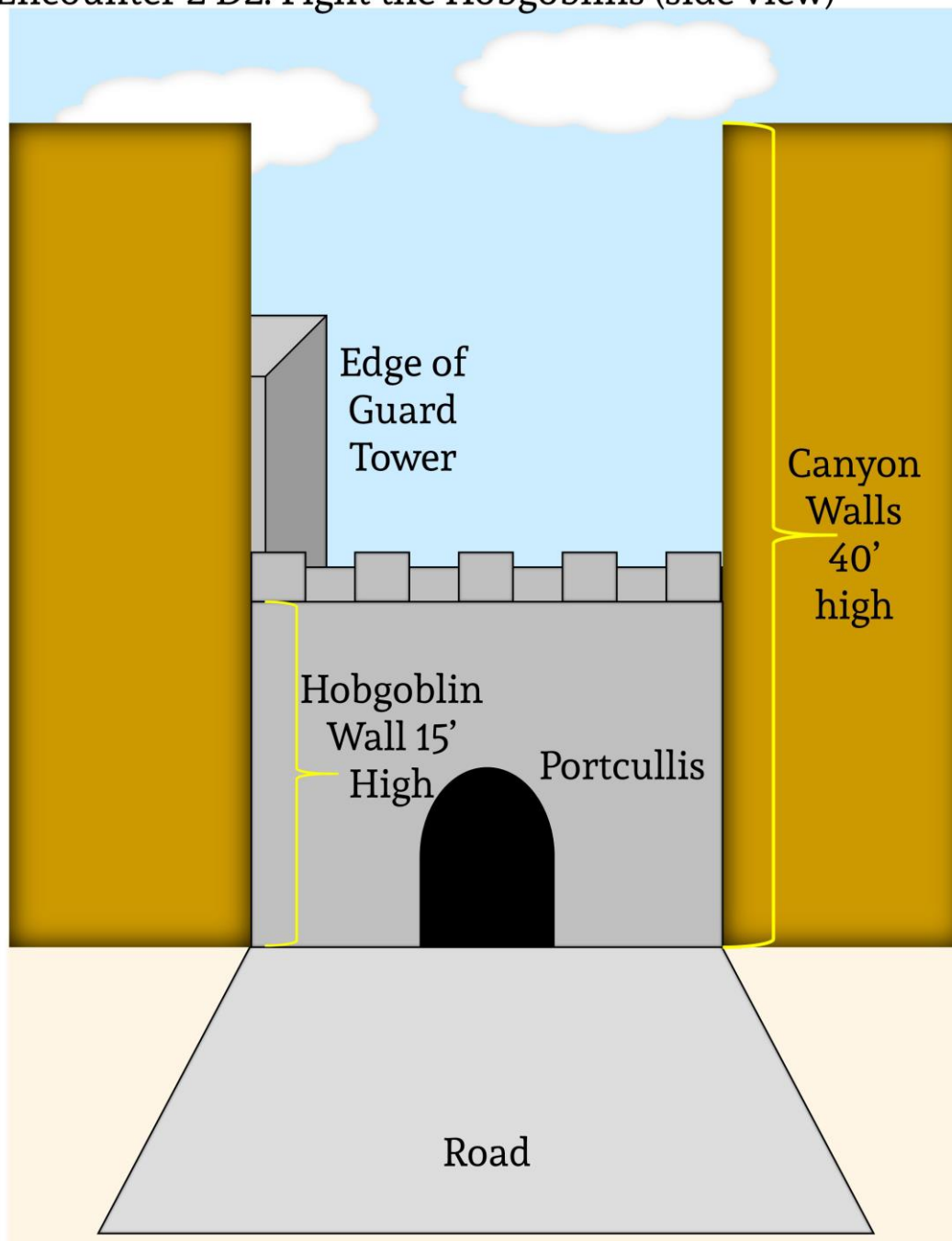
DM APPENDIX: THE RAMPARTS MAP (TOP VIEW)

Encounter 2 D2: Fight the Hobgoblins



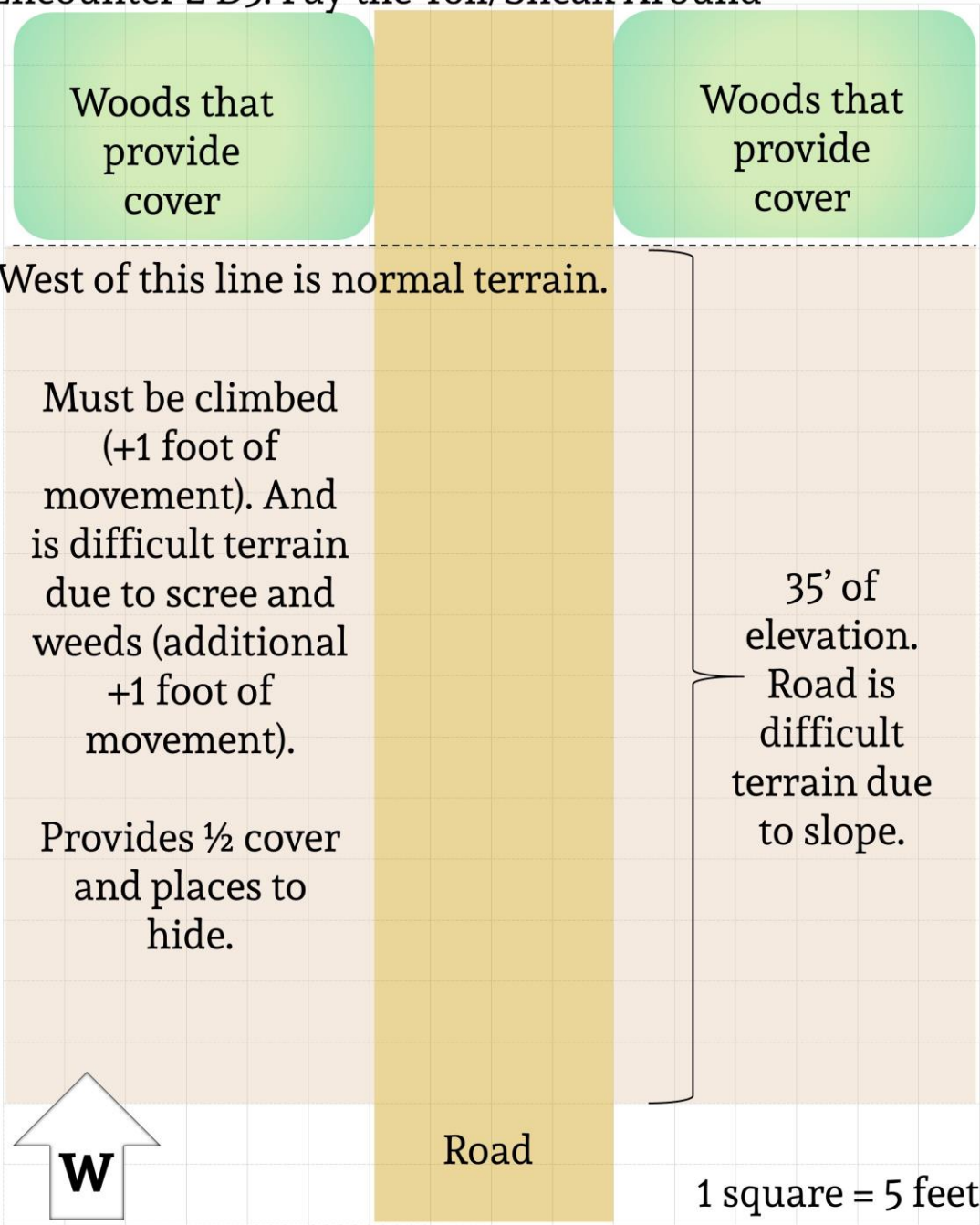
## DM APPENDIX: THE RAMPARTS (FRONT VIEW)

### Encounter 2 D2: Fight the Hobgoblins (side view)



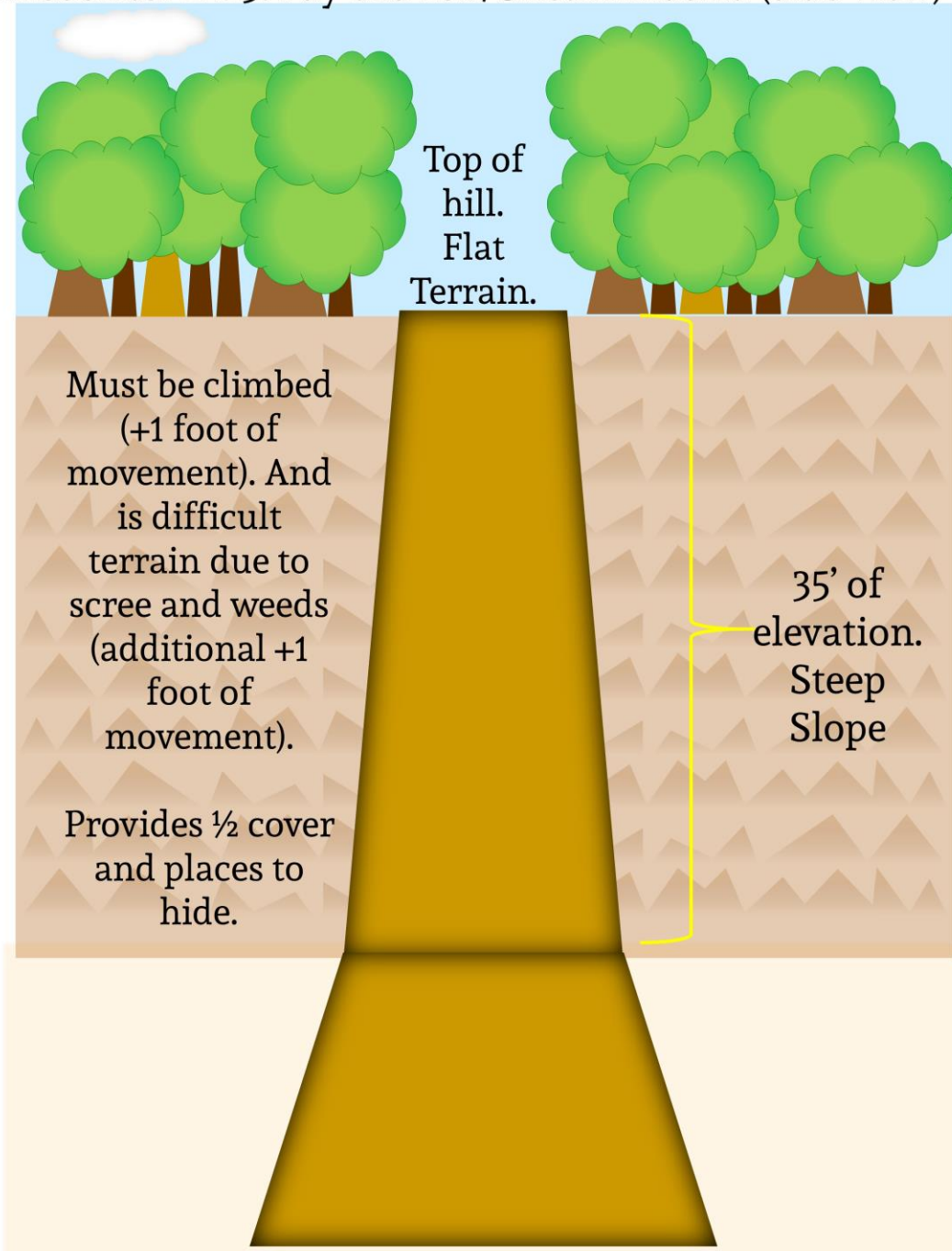
DM APPENDIX: BUGBEAR AMBUSH MAP  
(TOP VIEW)

Encounter 2 D3: Pay the Toll/Sneak Around



## DM APPENDIX: BUGBEAR AMBUSH (FRONT VIEW)

### Encounter 2 D3: Pay the Toll/Sneak Around (side view)



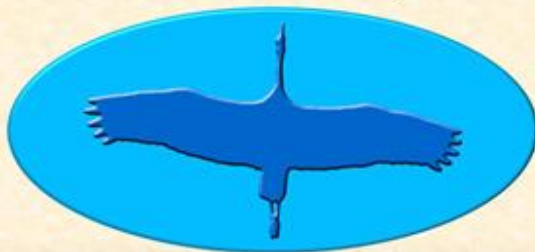
## PLAYER HANDOUT 1A: THE SCROLL

A fine scroll sealed with a crane sigil was delivered to you. You have been personally invited by a mysterious seer to go to the Zhentarim trade outpost of Vuerthyl in the Anauroch Desert.

Brave Adventurer,

You are needed to make a small delivery, and you will be paid handsomely for the task. Meet Azam, the caravaner, in the oasis of Vuerthyl on The Black Road, western Anauroch desert. My servant, Hsing, will meet you there. Should this task go well, there will be more work and more treasure for you.

This is the first step on a much larger journey.





## PLAYER HANDOUT 1B: LORDS' ALLIANCE

Members of the Lords' Alliance faction are sent a sealed note.

*Calling all Cloaks, Redknives, Stingblades, Wardukes, and Lioncrowns – loyal members of the Lords' Alliance:*

*One of our most important assets, the Seer known as Yi Lao, and her emissary, the dragon Hsing, have important intelligence on a threat to the mutual security and prosperity of the Sword Coast. Meet Hsing in Vuerthyl (in the western Anauroch desert on the Black Road), and undertake whatever task he or his agents sets you to. Be on the lookout for any intelligence regarding the forces or persons organizing goblin tribes in the western Anauroch.*

## PLAYER HANDOUT 1C: ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

Members of the Order of the Gauntlet learn some sad news.



*At one of the last major conclaves of the faithful of the Order of the Gauntlet, there was news that goblins in the Anauroch desert had destroyed a caravan of pilgrims headed toward Waterdeep.*

*Members of the Order of the Gauntlet have been instructed to look for work in the western Anauroch desert as caravan guards. Any goblins encountered are to be cleansed with righteous fire so that the monsters will not dare to trouble pilgrims bearing our banner again.*



## PLAYER HANDOUT 1D: ZHENTARIM

Members of the Zhentarim get wind of a rumor.

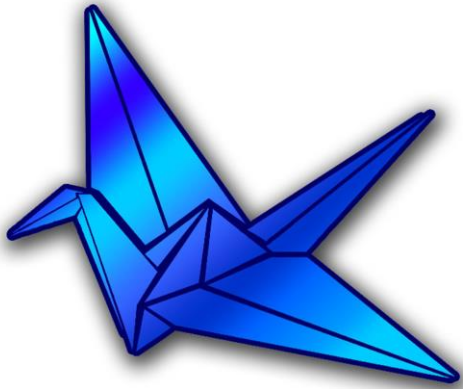
Word on the street is that a bunch of smelly goblins are setting up tolls on the Black Road. The Black Road! For the few of you who don't know our proud history, the Black Road runs from Zhentil Keep, through the desert, all the way to Waterdeep. And WE are the only people that collect tolls — it's OUR road! Anyway, travel with merchants. Vuerthyl is a good place to start. Discover what you can about these tolls and then wreck these idiots.

Show 'em that we got what it takes  
to take what they got.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 1E: HARPERS

Harpers find a blue origami crane among their belongings.

You find a Harper-blue origami crane among your belongings. When you unfold it, it has a note written inside.



THINGS ARE HAPPENING ON THE SWORD COAST. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR TROUBLE ON THE BLACK ROAD IN THE ANAUROCH DESERT. LOOK FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE OASIS OF VUERTHYL. KEEP A WATCH OUT FOR GIANTS AND ALL THAT DO THEIR BIDDING. WE'RE STILL LOOKING INTO VERADDA STOOR'S DEATH, AND RUMORS HAVE COME BACK FROM THE PEOPLE WHO PICKED UP HER RESEARCH THAT GIANTS ARE INVOLVED. KEEP A WATCH OUT FOR ANYTHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH BLUE CRANES, TOO. THE LORDS' ALLIANCE IS ON THE MOVE AS WELL.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 1F: EMERALD ENCLAVE

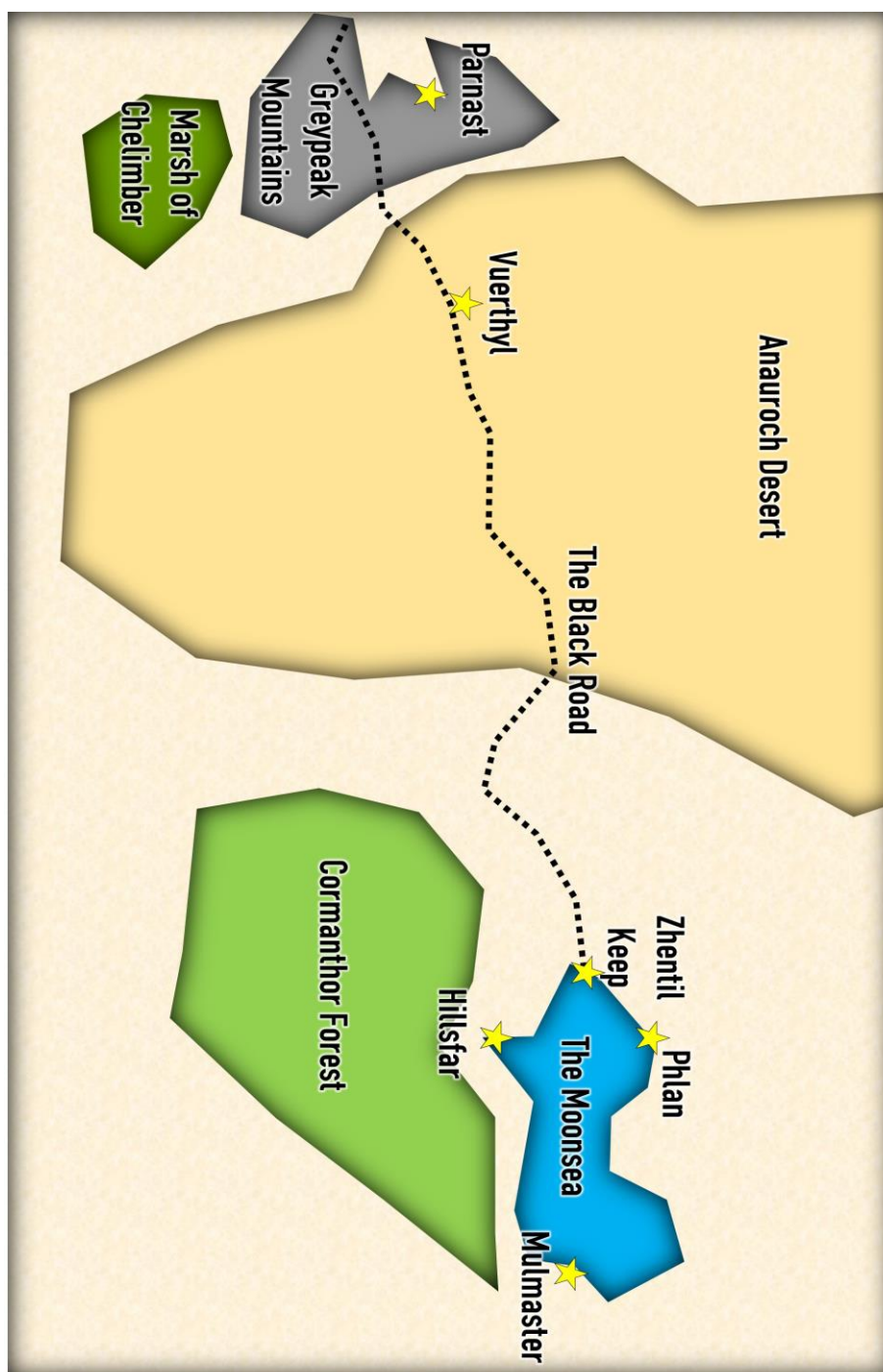


A large-eared desert fox trots up to you, seemingly unafraid. It opens its mouth and perfectly replicates human speech.

*“Vuerthyl Oasis. Merchant named Azam and dragon named Hsing. Statue of Angharradh delivered to Parnast. What is organizing the goblins? Five words left... Good luck!”*

The fox shakes her head bemusedly, and runs off into the underbrush.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 1G: MAP FROM THE MOONSEA TO PARNAST



## PLAYER HANDOUT 2. THE STATUE

The statue is of a complicated piece of woodwork by an artisan who has exiled himself to the Anauroch desert. It is five feet tall and four feet wide, and is of a significant weight (requiring creatures with a combined strength of 20 to lift and carry it).

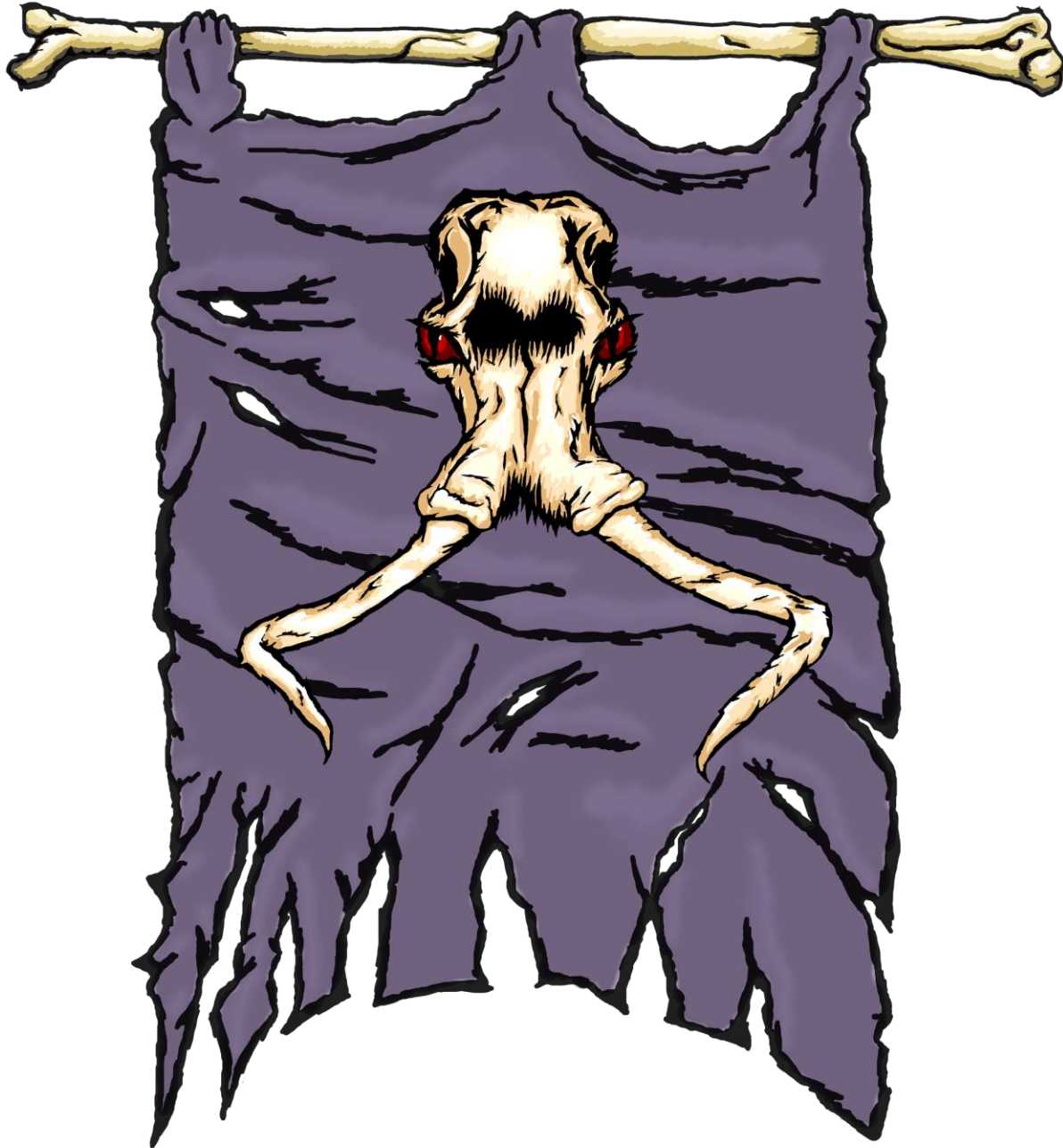
The statue depicts the Triune Queen, the three-fold deity Angharradh.

Inscribed into the base of the statue is "Unity and diversity bring strength. Be ever vigilant against She Who Was Banished and work together in defending the lands of the Fair Folk from those who would work evil. Celebrate the One and the Three for their collective purpose and individual expressions of life. Through the melding of widely different skills and interests, creativity, life, and artistry are nurtured and new ideas are discovered." Those knowledgeable in religion may recognize this as the wisdom of Angharradh.

Elves, half-elves, and the faithful of any of the three feel a calming presence when near the statue.

The statue has been carefully packed for the journey, and is padded and in a large, heavy crate.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 3: BANNER ON THE TOLL PLAZA





## PLAYER HANDOUT 4. A BLOODY MESSAGE

Tied to the leg of the blood hawk is a message written in a rough script:

Caravan headed up the Black Road.  
Best for you to catch it before it  
reaches Parnast – soon the town will  
fall to us and be another victory for  
Bad Fruul. Stop them at foothills in  
the narrow pass, and we'll sacrifice  
them to Hruggek!

Long live Fruul,  
Baddest of the Bad!

PS: He said something about a box of toenails going missing. He's real angry. You know anything about that? What does a giant want with more giant toenails anyway? Rumor says they were going to sell them. Who buys giant toenails? And for that kind of money?

## PLAYER HANDOUT 5. BRACERS OF ARCHERY

The following magic item may be awarded during this adventure

### BRACERS OF ARCHERY

---

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

While wearing these bracers, you have proficiency with the longbow and shortbow, and you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls on ranged attacks made with such weapons. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

These bracers are bulky with hexagon designs along them that do not match any common racial or family styling.

In addition, the hexagons turn blue in the cold or a warm orange in heat. The bearer suffers no harm in temperatures as cold as -20 degrees Fahrenheit or as warm as 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 6. STORY AWARDS

The following favor is available during the course of this adventure.

### FRIEND ON THE BLACK ROAD

---

You aided the caravan master Azam on a perilous journey along the Black Road. If you find yourself needing to travel the Black Road or transport something discretely, Azam will provide it safely once for free.

## RESULTS CODE: SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of September - October 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](http://dndadventurersleague.org/results) to enter their results.

