

Birds of a Feather

A Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure
For Low-Level Gameplay

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Using This Book

This module is intended for use by a Game Master to direct low-level players through a short wilderness adventure. For any encounter used within, the creatures and numbers encountered should only be used as a rough guide and can be adjusted based on the level or make-up of the party to scale the difficulty up or down. The same rules should apply to treasures, rewards, and difficulty checks – use whatever feels reasonable for the group or to reflect any edits made to the content.

There are a few sections of read aloud text that can be used by the Game Master as a narrative aid, but feel free to skip these or paraphrase for yourself. Some alternative and optional rules have been included for use as environmental hazards to add a bit of extra flair to the game if desired.

Reward for this adventure will be left at the discretion of the Game Master. If using an experience point system, players can be granted points based on the monsters encountered throughout. Optionally, you can add or subtract points based on how the players performed (keeping the eagles and their eggs safe). An appropriate monetary reward should also be granted as the players are also being hired for their work.

Starting The Adventure

This adventure is most easily started in a city of moderate size, although with some creativity the hook can be added in other ways to fit the situation. This module assumes that there are mountains nearby, however that is not strictly required if some of the assumptions of travel time are adjusted.

After arriving in the city, the party may be actively looking for work and inquiring around town or be more passive. This quest is bestowed by the head of the town guard (optionally the mayor if the town is smaller or doesn't have a town guard), so if the party is actively seeking employment they can be directed here for hire. Alternatively, if the party is more passive the quest hook could be dropped through town gossip in the tavern or more directly through a protest taking place to raise awareness of the eagles' plight.

No matter how it occurs, the quest bestower will question the party's credentials and look to hire them for the ranger's replacements. At your discretion, they may be skeptical and require a test or other proof of their capabilities, although this should be fairly small to not distract from the main story line. In this case, social skills can also come into play to negotiate wages or bypass any test.



Adventure Introduction

Giant eagles soaring over the mountain tops were once a common sight and one to behold. As the population of the nearby areas grew, so did the desire for exotic hunting trophies and young-lings bred to be loyal steeds for the wealthiest individuals. Slowly the populations of these majestic birds dwindled until higher powers stepped in. Stricter regulations and conservation efforts have staved off the demise of the beast and the population is back on the rise towards what it once was.

Rangers have been hired to stand guard over the nesting grounds and ensure the survival during the nesting season when the young are vulnerable to predators and poachers looking to steal an unattended egg. Unfortunately, the rangers have been delayed on return from their assignment and have missed the beginning of the nesting season. The town guard would normally be called upon to step in and help, however they are not nearly knowledgeable enough to last in the wilderness until the rangers return.

The guard captain will gladly enlist help to tend watch over the nesting grounds until the rangers are able to take up their post.

The Ranger's Station

Read Aloud Text:

Travelling east you follow the shore through rolling plains towards the foot of the mountains. As the forest begins to thicken and the hills rise you see the majestic eagles soaring over the peaks high above in search of a meal. The path towards the ranger post is well marked and it is not long before you reach your destination overlooking the nesting cliffs and hunker down for your watch. Shortly thereafter, you hear voices below and see some small green figures emerging cautiously from the forest. With their eyes scanning the sky above, the figures quickly attempt to scamper up the cliffs towards the eagle's nest.

The nesting grounds for the eagles lie on the steep mountain slopes sheltered by wooded areas. The rangers have established a small lookout in a massive tree close to the cliffs, south of the main nesting areas. From here they stand guard and keep watch from a distance so as to not disturb the natural habits of the birds, yet close enough to intervene when needed. The forest in this area is quite dense and made up of old hardwoods and softwoods. Nearing the base of the cliffs the trees are much younger and less tightly



packed. Old hiking trails run through this area and up into the range along its base, although as part of the conservation efforts these trails are monitored and off-limits at certain times of the year.

As the party takes up residence in the lookout it is not too long before they notice activity at the base of the slopes. Shortly after the roosting eagles leave to secure a meal, a few small figures (4 Goblins) and a mangy Wolf can be seen approaching from the West and starting up the slopes. Keeping close to the steep rock faces for cover, they make their way up keeping to the twisting path towards the nest. These goblins are headed up to the nest to steal an egg for their leader as they make for an excellent meal. If the party approaches without notice, they can be heard muttering curses in goblin towards their leader, obviously not enthused to be sent on such a risky task for a mere snack.

The height of these cliffs can be left to your discretion. Taller cliffs should result in steeper paths up that are harder to climb while shorter cliffs would be a simple effort. With proper gear the rock faces can also be scaled if the party decides to take this route which could cut the travel time up the mountainside. Use the Cliffside Map for this encounter. The players will start on the South side of the map while the monsters will start at the base of the path up the mountain on the Western side

Optional Movement Rules: Depending on the steepness of the path, you may choose to enforce optional movement rules for anyone on the slopes. Some possible options could be restricting the dash action due to treacherous footing, requiring an appropriate check to maintain footing after moving, or deeming sections to be treated as difficult terrain.

Special Location Rules: During play in this area, there is the possibility that any loud noise or exposed character will be noticed by one of the two eagles (Giant Eagle) nesting here. At the end of any turn in which a character could be seen or heard by the eagles (this should be done at your discretion) there is a 25% chance per eagle that they will take notice and return. If the eagle successfully spots an intruder, they will return to the nest at the bottom of the initiative order and defend their nest by attacking whomever is closest to their nest. These eagles will chase off any intruders but remain defending their nest, so will not stray far. Any hostile act towards, or the death of these eagles should warrant a penalty to the party as it is their duty to keep them safe!

The Cave Hideout

Read Aloud Text:

West of the nesting grounds tucked into a small canyon lies the entrance to a cave. A trail of dark black smoke flows out of the natural entrance in the stone leading into the under-dark below the range. You see no signs of the inhabitants, but you are sure that whatever it is inside the cave is at home.



This hideout can be used as an extension to the encounter at the nesting grounds. There are a few ways the party may find the location of it: using skills to track the goblins movements from the cliffs, through interrogation, or by following them if inaction allows the goblins to steal an eagle's egg.

The hideout is located to the west of the nesting grounds in a natural cave at the base of the mountains. At the rear of the cave, a stone doorway stands and opens into a small but well crafted fortress. The walls are 8' high and made from slabs of stone with floors of stone tiles. Although there are many torch sconces built into the structure, they contain no torches and there are no other light sources beyond the small natural cave. Throughout this area, water drips from the natural and uneven stone roof and the air is thick with stone dust and the smell of smoke.

Room Descriptions

1) Crude banners are hung along poles marking the entrance into the goblin's lair. Shortly after entering the caves, the natural stone walls give way to a man-made structure. The entry room is 20'x20' with two empty torch sconces on either side of the room. On the far wall, there is a metal gate with no obvious mechanism to open it.

The controls for opening the gate lie in the next room, around the corner and out of sight. Although there are no creatures to be seen or heard in the room, there are goblins in other rooms not far off. If the party makes enough racket, these goblins will be alerted and come investigating the noise.

The door may also be forced open with a DC 14 Strength check or broken down (AC 15, 10 HP), causing an appropriately loud noise to accompany it.

2) This room is quite large and contains a few crates and barrels of provisions in one corner. A few dirty carpets and pieces of cloth cover the central area of the floor and an empty mine cart lies in a corner to the south. Upon entering, the party may hear faint conversations coming from a room to the west through another metal gate (DC 10 Perception check). A very wary adventurer or an attempt at listening in will identify the speakers as goblins (DC 14 Perception check). Next to this gate there is a mechanism to open it, along with another mechanism to open the entry gate near to the mine cart.

On the northern wall, there is a solid stone door that is shut but not locked. Crude goblin carvings of a mean looking face surrounded by flames cover the door.

3) The eastern room of the hideout serves as the sleeping quarters for some of the goblin soldiers living here. There are three goblins sitting on dirty carpets amidst their bedding area eating a light meal and arguing over the remaining scraps of food. The room is quite dirty and poorly kept with broken dishes and remains of old meals strewn about. In an alcove to the north, there are two mine carts, one which is full of rocks and dirt.



Within the room can also be seen four iron cages. Two of these are empty, however the smaller two cages each contains a dwarf that has been imprisoned by the goblins. These cages are both locked and the goblins in this room do not have the key to unlock them. The locks are rather basic however, and can be picked at DC 12.

If questioned, the dwarves have been imprisoned and are being used to mine the rear section of the caves for the goblins. A crude forge has been established within the mines where the dwarves are forced to create weapons and armor for the goblin's war party.

3S) Along the southern wall of the room lies an empty stone basin with a small hole at the bottom, fixed at about three feet off the floor. Just above the basin lies a carved stone head with its mouth open.

This basin is a mechanism to open a secret door that the goblins have never been able to notice and have ignored throughout their time residing here. By pouring water into the basin, the sounds of gears turning can be heard. When enough water is poured into the basin, the wall behind the basin will slide open to reveal a secret chamber that is heavily covered in spider webs. This chamber is now home to a Giant Spider that conceals itself in webs along the ceiling. It will remain hidden until the party approaches the altar, at which point it will spring from the webs and attack.

Along the southern wall of this room stands two stone sarcophagi flanking an altar topped with old dusty candles burned almost entirely to puddles of wax. In each corner to the south rests a small stone platform with a stone bowl sitting atop it. It appears as if there was once water in these bowls that has dried up long ago. In spots, the roof of this chamber has begun to collapse and rubble and cobwebs dominate the rest of the room, obscuring a small wooden chest.

Although it is in shambles, the room is easy enough to navigate and move around without difficulty. This secret chamber looks to be a shrine to a long forgotten couple without clues as to who they were in life. Although the lids of the sarcophagi can be opened without too much trouble, there is nothing of value inside of either and neither corpse gives any further information about this couple. The chest is unlocked and contains a few old letters within envelopes and a pouch of gold coins (40 GP). The letters are extremely old and have a 50% chance of falling apart to dust if the envelopes are opened. If they maintain their integrity, the letters are found to be love letters from Amylin to Tya and it is reasonable to infer that this is the identity of the couple interred within this chamber. On closer inspection of the chest (DC 14), a keen eye will find that it has a false bottom that conceals an ornamented dagger (+1 Dagger).

4) This large room now serves as a makeshift throne room for Zur'lung a portly and mean Hobgoblin squawking orders at his nearby servants (3 Goblins) who are bustling about serving him a poorly cooked meal. Crates and barrels storing more provisions line the wall on either side of a rickety wooden throne with a small cooking fire on the western side. Three weapon racks containing crudely manufactured weapons are scattered about the room. Centrally, dirty carpets and a ragged bear pelt topped with dirty cushions act as a



bed for Zur'lung. Next to his throne, there is a small, unlocked chest that contains Zur'lung's "treasure" that amounts to nothing more than a few random trinkets made of metal, wood, or bone, scraps of fur or paper, and a broken animal horn (nothing of any monetary value but they are sentimental to him for some reason).

With the door across the room from where he sits, Zur'lung will be alerted once the door is opened, bellowing an order loudly in Goblin ("Attack" for anyone fluent) before picking up his weapon and advancing. All remaining Goblins in the lair will beckon their master's call and join in the battle.

A turn after the Goblins from the mine section have joined the battle, the dwarven captives in that area will show at the entrance of the mine. They will remain hesitant at first, but if rallied to fight, they will wield their picks and hammers as improvised weapons and join the battle.

5) In the rear section of the hideout, the goblins have forced the captive dwarves into mining into the mountainside in search of ores and other valuable minerals. A crude forge is stationed in one area where ore is smelted and fashioned into weapons. Throughout the mines, glowing crystals can also be found protruding from the rocky walls. In spite of their magical appearance, these crystals are fairly ordinary minerals without much practical use. They are a favourite item of grifters that abuse their appearance to con the unwary into purchasing trinkets thinking they hold magical prowess. Because of this, there is a small market for the crystals and often small quantities can be sold for decent profit, however there is no large market for them.

Within these tunnels there are three dwarves working the rocks with another working at the forging station. Admist these dwarves, five Goblins are patrolling and serving as guards, keeping their workers inline and on task. They are close enough to Zur'lung's throne room that they can hear his call to battle and will arrive in the room at the start of the next round. If the call is not made, there is a small chance (30%) that any loud noise or combat will alert them as well.

Finishing The Adventure

The main adventure can be finished whenever the rangers appear at the lookout site. Other than the goblins attempted raid on the nest, the few days at the nesting site go by uneventfully. Once the rangers appear, the party can return to town or investigate the goblin hideout if they have not already done so. After returning to town, the guard captain will pay the party fair wages for their efforts and thank them for their service. A job well done can open up other possible employment opportunities in the future, but poor work will more than likely sour this working relationship and may even turn some of the townsfolk concerned with conservation against the party.

