

Campaign/Game: Return to the Keep on the Borderlands: D&D 5e **Date:** August 12th, 2021
Episode 2: Bandit Ambush
Campaign Date: Hallow 17th - 19th 931 (Fall)

Characters

Azakai Brightwood, Half-Elf Warlock - 1 (Ryan)

Daspot, Dwarf Rogue - 1 (Colin)

Kieran Raelthorne, Human Bard - 1 (Dennis)

Micah, Gnome Ranger - 1 (Tyler)

Mira Greycastle, Human Ranger - 1 (Regina)

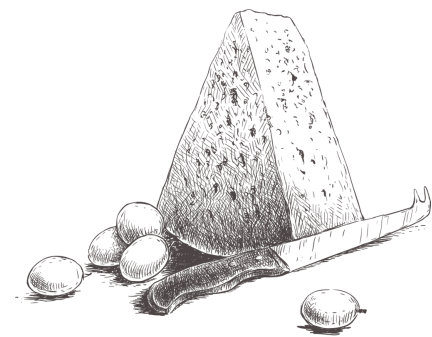
Rhogar, Dwarf Fighter - 1 (Peter)

Brother Martin, Human Sage - 1 (NPC)

DM: Andrew

Log:

It has been a week since The Lucky Ones have returned from their first foray to the Caves of Chaos. During that time much has happened. Kieran made some friends at Restwell Keep. He learned that Mother Aran knows a lot about the citizens of the keep and could suggest a hireling or two if The Lucky Ones might want a healer or a mage. Also, although Moseley the Quartermaster and Rafe the Smith don't have much, Sabine the gatekeeper, Mouse the tinker, Peta the guildler, and Ronnik the tax collector all have a variety of magic items to sell.



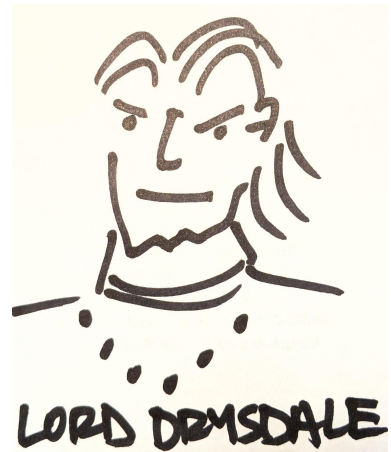
Mira took the time to brew two healing potions along with Opal the cheesemonger's help. The following week of downtime, Mira hopes to brew another healing potion as well as a potion of fire resistance over the next week of downtime.

Daspot has realized that raising Bacon the dragon is a full-time job. The dragon is fed chicken eggs each and every hour by him and Tella the stablehand. She makes for a capable and loving sitter when Bacon isn't asleep in Daspot's hood.

Micah has led the party's campaign to try and catch the bandits that have plagued the keep. Unfortunately, over the past week the adventurers' sweeps have been unsuccessful. Micah is certain there is a bandit spy in the keep somewhere. If the bandits are stopped, the guild will offer the party a 210 gold reward to go with Master Ronnik's 120 gold bounty.

Rhogar's keen military mind has calculated that the keep has under a dozen full-time guards. He reasonably estimates that without Lord Drysdale's help, the keep would easily fall to any sort of concentrated attack.

Lord Drysdale addresses the assembled population of the keep in the marketplace. The marketplace includes several farmer's market stalls as well as a small fountain featuring a one-armed nymph playing the pan pipes. The paladin of Erathis announces that there will be new taxes for non-citizens of the keep including an entrance tax and a tax on the sale of loot taken from the nearby Caves of Chaos. Lord Drysdale continues, introducing his lieutenants Pierre and Champlain as well as the new chaplain of the keep's chapel, Officer Banal. Finally, Lord Drysdale threatens to send anyone to the stocks he hears repeating slurs on his character such as calling him "Lord Dickface" or gossiping that he hates children or puppies. Without taking any questions, the new castilian flees the press of the common folk to return to the inner bailey.



The group does some shopping and hiring. Azakai manages to recruit Brother Martin, taking him from his lackluster performance as the keep's lone baker.

The heroes learn that two merchants have arrived at the keep recently. One named Uthgar the Trader was traveling south from the northern city of Thumlin to Bizancio on the inner sea. The heroes learn that he has been robbed. His guard was slain and his no-good brother ran in fear. He describes the bandits as being identified by the mark of a skull on the inside of their wrists. The other Mendel the Merchant travelling in the other direction is much more welcoming than Uthgar. He welcomes a single extra guard, plies drinks, and offers all kinds of hospitality to any who wish to converse. He offers five gold for the recovered body of any bandits, which The Lucky Ones find suspicious.

The party breaks up that evening, hoping to rendez-vous at the previously described ambush point where the north road is washed out. Micah and Rhogar easily climb out the window of a tower and sneak into the morning wilderness. Kieran and Azakai join Mendel the Merchant, offering to help guard the caravan. As they leave, Mira and Daspot follow behind.

As the merchant wagon passes into the ambush spot, a bandit steps out and demands the merchants give up all their valuables or be slain. The Lucky Ones spring into action. Rhogar locks the visible bandit up in combat while Azakai and Daspot confront several who have appeared behind the caravan. Micah and Mira climb a nearby rock formation to sling arrows at the bandits, killing several before they can even reach them. Kieran climbs the wagon only to be cornered by two bandits. By using his clever magic he is able to survive with only an arrow wound.



Meanwhile, as Mendel and his consorts cower his two guards team up to slay one of the dirty bandits. As the battle swings against the villains, their leader, a red-haired warrior with a battle axe and death-themed iconography on his half-plate armor, calls for a retreat. Most of the bandits manage to slip away north into the forest with the exception of one who had threatened Mendel. The Luckies question him, and learn that the bandits are all holed up in “Cave B” of the Caves of Chaos. They take his outfit and all his belongings and send him off to the south to live or die on his own.

Mendel thanks the heroes, and pays them for the bodies of the slain bandits. He continues north, promising to burn and bury the bodies at the impromptu graveyard ahead. Several of the party members accompany the caravan well past the Caves of Chaos and Kieran even leaves behind an illusionary version of himself to keep the merchant honest.

The Lucky Ones case the cavern. They see a few bandits come and go, alerting them to their existence. The entrance is strewn with a series of skulls. Skinless orc craniums are mounted alongside human, halfling and dried-out meaty goblin heads. Daspot enters by climbing in like a spider on the ceiling. He witnesses the four guards less interested in guarding and more tuned into their card game. As night falls, they locate a small chimney and send Micah down it to recon even further. The gnome overhears a conversation about how the bandits are not quite sure about what their leader Orm “The Worm” is up to when he leaves every so often at night.

The party attacks! Rhogar charges in, throwing axes and scattering the bandits with mighty blows. Kieran finds the loot room and finds two bandits hidden within, perhaps relaxing. Brother Martin’s usually relaxed attitude quickly changes to that of a zealous killing machine and he and the bard use magic and steel to murder the opposition. Micah supports Rhogar with several well-placed shortbow attacks. Mira marks the stragglers for death, feathering them with crossbow bolts to hearts and heads.

The attack is quick and precise. The party witnesses “The Worm” escaping deeper into the caves, but don’t decide to give chase. Instead, they press the remaining bandits into service carrying out as much loot as they can. When the Luckies return later, they find the remaining rooms of the caves cleared of bandits and valuables. Only a room with some sturdy child-sized furniture and a large four-poster bed remain.

The heroes search through “Cave C,” realizing that it is empty of all orcs as well. Long ago, these passages were the site of some sort of a massacre, leaving only grim reminders of a battle the orcs were never able to win. No bodies were left, but sprays of black blood, dropped items and the absence of any sort of treasure tells the tale.

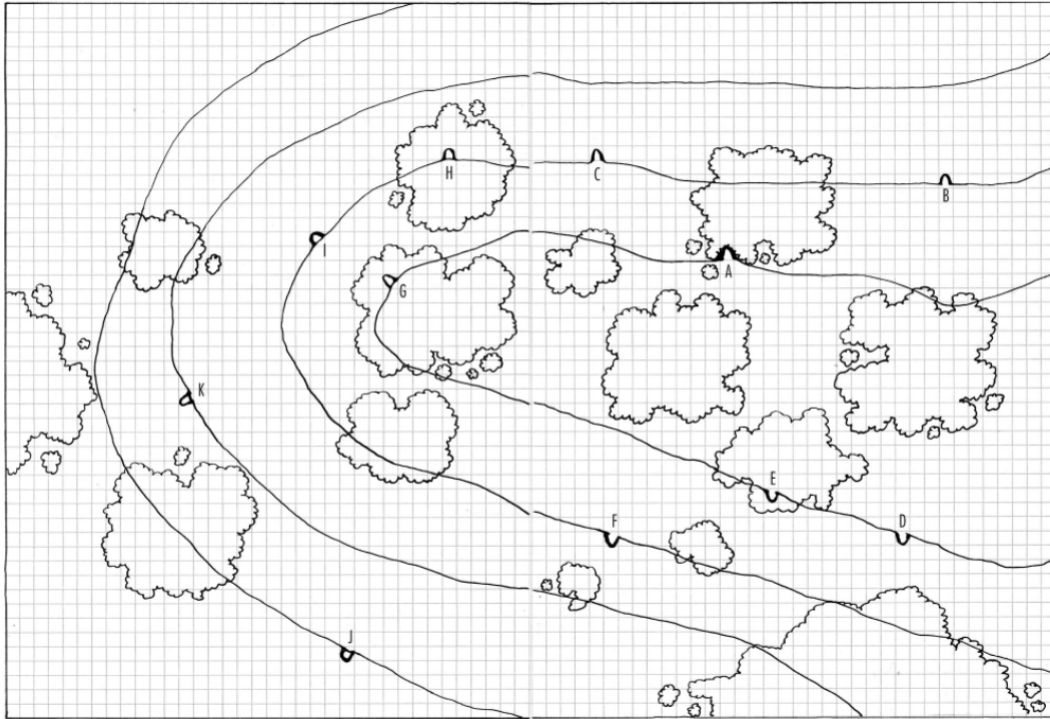
Once the adventurers' return from their foray to loot the remaining bandits, they investigate getting some heavy transport of their own. A wagon and a mule to pull it would cost 45 gold and allow you to transport up to 400lbs of people, equipment, or loot. The party could rent the wagon and mule for a week's time for 12 gold, with a refundable 15 gold "security deposit." Micah could borrow one of the guild wagons while only paying the refundable deposit as collateral. Azakai purchases a mule and wagon along with a few chests from the guild house. That way, it would be that easier to return back to the keep following future raids on the Caves of Chaos. The heroes decide to target "Cave D" in a week's time, hoping to catch the goblins who live there off-guard.



The Adventure Diary:

This section includes all the pages of the adventure diary the party started the adventure with.

THE CAVES OF CHAOS, PLAYERS MAP



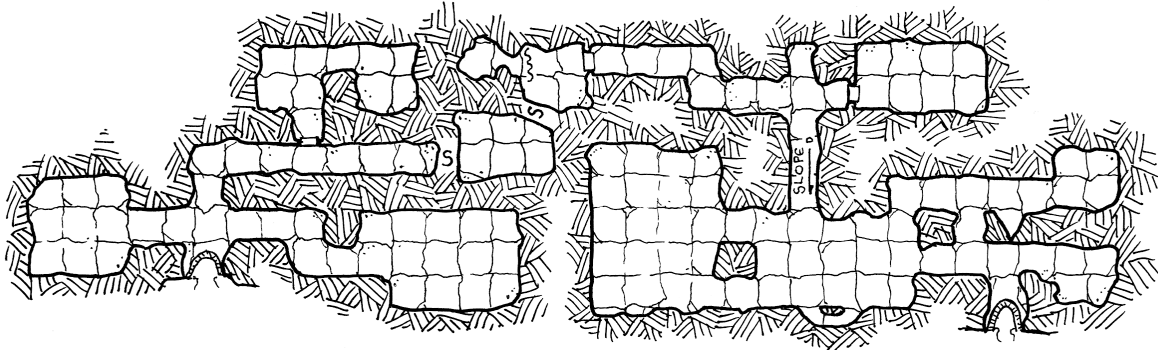
AFTER A SHORT JOURNEY EAST FROM THE KEEP, WE ENCOUNTERED AN UGLY SCAR ON THE COUNTRYSIDE - A SERIES OF CAVES CHEWED INTO THE LANDSCAPE ITSELF WHERE THE LAND FALLS AWAY AT LEAST A HUNDRED FEET FROM THE FOREST ABOVE. WERE THESE CAVES CREATED NATURALLY?

FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, EACH CAVE HAS DIFFERENT INHABITANTS. THE LESS THREATENING MONSTERS ARE TO THE EAST AND DOWNHILL. THE MORE POWERFUL ARE TO THE WEST.

STAY CLEAR OF CAVE E UNLESS YOU HAVE SOME COIN! THE OGREZ THERE ARE WILLING TO HELP, BUT THEY ARE STUPID AND ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN GOLD.

WE POKED OUR HEADS INTO CAVE I. THE ALIEN GEOMETRY OF THESE PARTICULAR CAVERNS WERE DIZZYING. EVEN THOUGH WE DIDN'T TRAVEL DEEP INTO THEM, WE IMMEDIATELY FELT OURSELVES GETTING LOST IN THE LABYRINTH. WE MANAGED TO FIND OUR WAY OUT JUST AS WE HEARD SNORTS AND HOOVED FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.

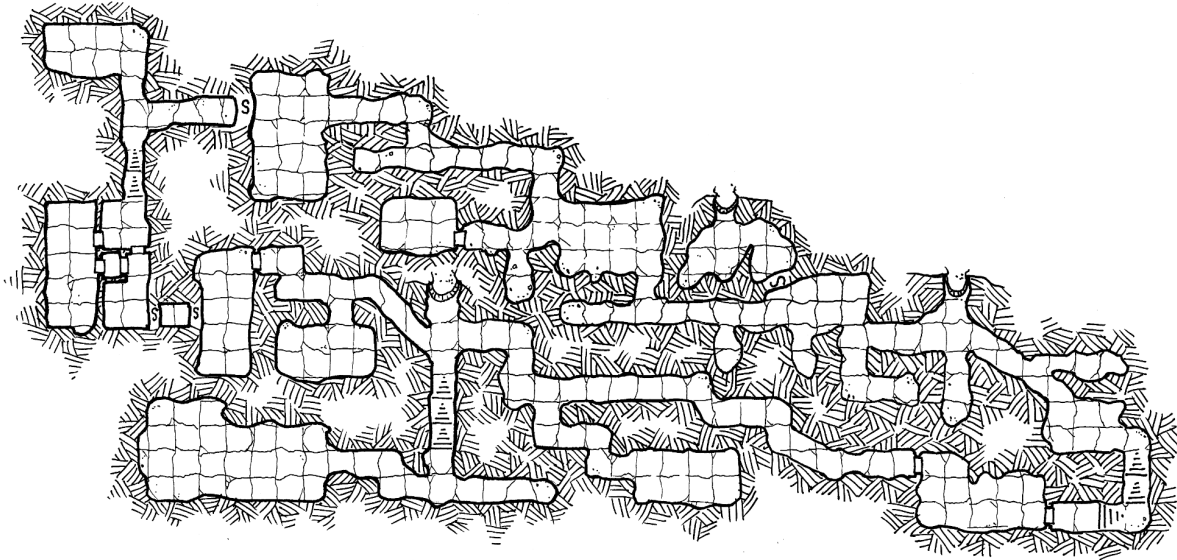
Orc Lairs (Caves B & C)



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TODAY, WE EXPLORED IN AND AROUND CAVES B AND C - BOTH ORC LAIRS. CAVE B HAS A SECRET LOOKOUT, WHILE C IS TRAPPED WITH A GIANT NET TRIGGERED ON HIDDEN PULLEYS TO CAPTURE INVADERS. OUR ROGUE PAID WITH HIS LIFE FOR US TO LEARN THAT.

Southern Goblinoid Complex (Caves D, E, & F)



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GOBLINS OF ALL TYPES INFEST CAVES D, E, & F. THE WEAKEST IN D ARE ALLIED WITH THE MERCENARY OGREES OF CAVE E. THE MILITANT, CANNIBAL HOBGOBLINS OF F ARE TOUGH BUT LAZY. WE FLED HEAVY CROSSBOW FIRE AFTER STEALING THEIR GOLD RIGHT FROM UNDER THEIR NOSES.