



LUNCH BREAK HEROES
PRESENTS

THE HUNGER

5E
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THE HUNGER

INTRODUCTION

In this adventure, characters find themselves in a remote mining town where they've heard rumors of villagers going missing. The missing villagers are almost exclusively mine workers, and talk is circulating about a monster deep within the mines.

Characters may follow up on various leads and clues throughout the village, and will eventually discover that the disappearances are attributed to not only a monster within the mines, but also the local butchery, which is operated by a pack of werewolves who are selling humanoid meat back to the unsuspecting villagers.

The monster in the mines is a gigantic spider that is being fed by the captain of the guard who treats it as a pet, of sorts. This spider is also the source of another of the village's woes: a plague of tiny flesh-eating spiders that has forced some residents to abandon their homes.

This adventure is suitable for 3-5 characters of 5th level.

BACKGROUND

The dismal, small village of Dawnvale is situated at the base of the Aleswood Mountains, hidden from view by a thick forest and reachable only by a single winding path that connects to the trade road.

Six months ago, two things occurred in Dawnvale: Vila Whitesbane and her clan of werewolves moved in and set up a butcher shop, and Captain Ransley of the local guard was gifted a large egg by a mysterious hooded stranger.

The butcher shop quickly gained popularity, with Vila and her clan passing as humans without a hint of suspicion. Once their reputation was secure, they began hunting down villagers and passing travelers to serve alongside the normal meat in their shop. Their actions have turned almost all of Dawnvale into unwitting cannibals.

Captain Ransley, meanwhile, was enraptured by the egg that he had been gifted. Always having had a fascination for spiders and insects, he dutifully went about the business of finding a safe place for the egg to hatch. He settled on an abandoned part of the village's mine. When the egg hatched, he was greeted by a large spider that he named Arak.

Much to the captain's dismay, Arak proved to have a taste for flesh. Being a dutiful pet owner, he provided for his eight-legged charge by kidnapping and feeding one of the miners to the spider. As Arak grew, the captain had to enlist the help of other guards to kidnap and transport locals to the mine to feed his pet. Now, Arak is almost constantly craving flesh, and it has created a brood of flesh-eating spiders that have begun to infest the village.



WELCOME TO DAWNVALE

When the characters first approach the village, read:

The gloom of the forest parts, revealing a glimmer of torchlight far beyond the fog. Tall shadows of once-dense trees shift as the haze fades, assuming the shape of wooden gates, flanked on either side by tall palisades. The faint clang of metal-on-metal rings through the eerie silence, revealing a small pocket of life lying beyond the dirt-strewn, bloodied walls.

Hooded figures move to and fro through the dense fog lying within the village, carrying lanterns to light their way. The streets are paved with a mixture of mud and hay, which squelches underfoot. Dense forest surrounds the village's wooden walls, and the shadow of a great mountain range looms overhead, its peak shrouded in mist.

A town hall, created from the ruins of an old church, stands tall in the center of the village, its windows barred or broken. Stacked housing lines the streets, each door adorned with various trinkets to ward away evil, and every other wall equipped with a makeshift rain-catcher. The clanging is coming from Brandaal's smithy.

A conglomeration of dwarves and humans can be seen working tirelessly at the structure's only forge, their efforts mirrored by halfling working in the building's attached fletchers and tailor.

A tavern and general goods store line a dingy street to the west of the town hall, divided by more ramshackle housing. The bray of livestock and cackle of poultry can be heard from behind the tavern, which backs onto a thin offering of farmland to the north growing root vegetables.

A road leads northwest out of the village via a wrought iron gate, leading to the mine about a quarter mile away. The gate is accompanied by a guard barracks and watchtower.

SPIDERS

Dawnvale struggles with flesh-eating spider infestations, which the locals believe come from the mine. These infestations have led to various houses being abandoned or burned down in an attempt to curb the creature's spread. If a character explores an abandoned house or leaves the safety of the village at night, there is a 50 percent chance for them to be attacked by a **swarm of flesh-eating spiders**. The spiders are averse to open flames, kept at bay from the interior of the village via strategically placed torches which are lit every night. If the swarm kills a creature, it devours the body in less than a minute if left unchallenged.

DAWNVALE VILLAGERS

Villagers in Dawnvale are hardworking, industrious folk who are exceptionally wary of outsiders. Many are farmers, woodcutters, or miners, working away tirelessly to keep the village running. Adventurers who enter Dawnvale are greeted with cold stares and given a wide berth by many who see them.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

- Rumors abound of a mysterious monster that is said to lurk within the mine, though none have ever seen it. Many point to the swarms of flesh eating spiders in the forest as evidence of the monster's existence.
- The village is governed by Lord Dresden Wymark, an absentee landlord. Instead of attending to village business himself, Wymark issues decrees through Captain Ransley.
- It is not uncommon for miners to go missing while in the mine, however such disappearances are becoming more frequent as the weeks go on.
- Food and water in Dawnvale are scarce, with the best cuts of meat going to the Wymark estate. Many have found the meat to be of questionable taste, and thus vegetables are a common staple. (Unknown to the villagers, the majority of meat sold from the Dawnvale Butchery are the remains of missing citizens, which explains the terrible taste.)
- The tieflings of Hope's Fire Apothecary are untrusted by the locals and believed to dabble in witchcraft. While valued healers, they are shunned by the majority of the community for their practices.

AREAS OF DAWNVALE

The following sections detail the areas of Dawnvale that the characters may explore, and the NPCs they will find therein.

THE BLIGHTED TAVERN INN

A warm, soft light emanates from within this bruised and battered looking establishment. Muttered conversation can be heard amidst the sound of crackling fires, scraping stools and occasional clinking of glasses. A hand painted sign crafted from a piece of fungus-strewn oak sits over the entrance, which reads "The Blighted Tavern Inn".

The Blighted Tavern is a large two-story building with an attached Inn, run by owners Elliot and Vanyrs Bell (NG male and female half-elf **commoners**). The Bells have good relations with most of the residents of Dawnvale, and do their best to ensure their tavern provides a safe and warm repose from the horrors of the outside world.

The tavern features a long bar that is perpetually stained by frequent use. The upper floor contains seven tables situated near windows overlooking the village. The lower floor contains four tables, and a moth-eaten pair of armchairs by a large fireplace. A mastiff lies in front of the fire, growling menacingly at any who get too close. The attached Inn has four double rooms, each available for rent at a cost of 1 sp a night.

ROLEPLAYING ELLIOT AND VANYRS

Elliot is a middle aged man who has a love of cooking and alcohol. He is often found sitting next to the fire with a glass of whiskey in hand and his large **mastiff** Wenly by his side. Elliot is bright and intelligent, with an eye for fine detail. His wife Vanyrs is of similar age, and shares

Elliot's passion for cooking. She is a fine host and the one primarily responsible for the tavern's peaceful atmosphere. At the price of 5 sp, they are happy to provide information or rumors on other villagers.

Upon first meeting the characters in the tavern, Elliot invites the characters to join him by the fire, eventually asking for their aid in locating his missing cow Gertie, and offering them a sum of 5 sp for their help. If they agree, Elliot explains, Vanyrs claims to have spied a humanoid figure lurking near their small cattle pen around a week ago, and last night they found Gertie was missing, suggesting that someone - or something - had taken her. Vanyrs suggests the characters begin their search in the cattle pen outside whenever they have time (see *The Missing Cow*).

If the characters question Elliot about the wounds Treason sustained (see *Hope's Fire Apothecary*), Elliot truthfully claims that Wenly didn't attack her, and that he knows nothing of the tiefling's issues.

ROLEPLAYING THE OTHER NPCs

Use the following information to roleplay the other NPCs in the tavern.

Sorian Bleakwater. A middle-aged hunter (NG male dark elf **scout**) named Sorian sits alone at a table on the second floor of the tavern, taking sips from a nearby glass of whiskey and counting through various assorted coins.

Should the characters offer him drinks or wait long enough for Sorian to get drunk, he laments to them about his hunting difficulties, revealing there seems to be no wildlife available to catch, yet Vila Whitesbane of the Dawnvale Butchery always seems to have meat for sale. If the characters listen to his complaints and offer a sympathetic ear, Sorian also reveals he lost his home to an infestation of spiders over a month ago, and is trying to raise funds to have the guards remove them. If the characters offer to help kill

the spiders, Sorian thanks them profusely and drunkenly leads them to an abandoned house (See *Infestation for Three*). Alternatively, the characters can pay the guards 150 gp to clear out the infestation for them (see *Guard Barracks*).

KROLVAN'S GENERAL GOODS

Unlike other establishments, this small building appears well-maintained. Clean windows display odd trinkets, some of which twinkle from light cast by flickering lanterns. Above the door, wrought-iron lettering, nailed into the weathered brickwork, reads "Krolvan's General Goods."

Krolvan's General Goods is a reputable establishment run by a miserable man known as Celvekh (LN male dark elf **commoner**). It measures 35 feet wide and 50 feet long. The store is filled with trinkets and well-organized adventuring equipment. Brass lanterns hang from the ceiling, giving the store a bright-but-moody glow that compliments the various items adorning the walls and shelves.

The structure itself is situated farthest on its street from the town hall, a few minute's walk from *The Blighted Tavern Inn*, and crammed between a set of occupied housing on its left and an abandoned structure to its right (see *Infestation for Three*).

Celvekh sells all items from the *Adventuring Gear* table in the *Player's Handbook*, but only ever has a total of 2d6 *potions of healing* available for sale, and any *holy water* he claims to have for sale is fake. Celvekh sells all his items for five times the price listed, but offers a permanent discount if the characters put an end to the spiders assailing the village (see *Exploring The Mine* in *The Hunger of the Pack* quest).

ROLEPLAYING CELVEKH

Celvekh is a moody individual that offers no sanctuary or aid to outsiders other than to part them of their hard-earned gold. He can offer the following tidbits of information at a cost of 3 gp each, all of which offer different plot hooks to begin the Hunger of the Pack quest line:

Good Meat. Celvekh overheard one of the hunters from the Dawnvale Butchery commenting on Elliot's cows a few days before one went missing, saying that it had been a good while since they had any good meat to sell.

A Guard's Duty. Celvekh noticed the guards have been purchasing additional lanterns and oils recently, likely to fend off the spiders that the village faces. While happy for the additional coin, he admits he's wary of what the guards might be up to, given the rumors of monsters lurking within the mine that he'd rather they not antagonize.

Mysterious Bites. Celvekh spotted a tiefling nursing a nasty dog bite, theorizing it was probably from Elliot's mastiff, Wenly. While not a fan of the tiefling trio that runs the apothecary (See Hope's Fire Apothecary), he finds it surprising that Elliot hasn't apologised for the incident, given the tieflings are the only ones with the knowledge to heal the village's ailments - besides his limited selection of potions, of course.

HOPE'S FIRE APOTHECARY

This small hut sports various magical markings etched into its stone walls, barely noticeable by the naked eye. A wooden porch surrounds the hut, upon which sit dozens of pots of various sizes, each thick with herbs and other Borcan flora. A waterlogged wooden sign, nailed to one of the porch's many support beams, spells out the words "Hope's Fire Apothecary".

Hope's Fire Apothecary is a small stone hut that appears sinister at first glance, due to the copious amounts of belladonna, foxglove, caldura rose, henbane, and wolf's bane spreading from the many plant pots covering the porch. The interior is filled with a variety of hanging trinkets from the Player's Handbook.

The apothecary is run by Treason (LG female tiefling **acolyte**), Aid (CG non-binary tiefling **mage**), and Hope (NG female tiefling **druid**). A shrine to Odur is hidden behind a fake wall in the bedroom, which the tieflings unearth and worship each morning and night.

ROLEPLAYING TREASON, AID AND HOPE

The three tieflings are as inseparable as family, and just as close. Should any one of them be threatened, another is always there to jump to their defense. One tiefling always stands watch at the hut to prevent Captain Ransley (see Guard Barracks) from snooping around.

Upon entering the apothecary, Treason can be seen nursing a nasty looking wound on her leg. If asked about it, Treason reveals she was savaged by a large wolf-like creature that was lurking beyond the view of the village walls. If the charac-



ters offer to slay the beast, Treason accepts their help, but explains she doesn't have anything to offer the characters in return other than her aid in battle once her leg is healed, should they need it.

If the characters mention Gertie, Aid explains they haven't heard much about Elliot's cow, but suspect it is likely to be connected to the miner's disappearance somehow (especially if the characters mention a figure was seen by Vanyrs prior to the cow's departure), requesting the characters head to the mines and see what they can find out (This can begin or continue the Hunger of the Pack quest line from Miner's Lament or Exploring the mine). Treason also mentions that Captain Ransley has been snooping around the hut ever since the disappearances began, and believes he is looking to pin the blame on them for a quick open-and-shut case. She advises the characters to be wary of the guards, as they are employed by the estate and thus have no real interest in serving the community beyond the bare minimum they're paid for.

Uncovering the Tracks of a Killer. If the characters inform the tieflings of Vila's belt buckle, Aid offers to follow Vila on her next hunting trip to see what she is up to, which takes 4 hours. If she does this, roll a d4. On an odd result, Aid is discovered and killed by the werewolves. On an even result, she returns to report that she saw Vila traveling with two werewolves, each carrying a large leather sack over their shoulders.

BANDAAL'S SMITHY AND FLETCHERS

The sounds of clanging metal and bubbling water echo down the squalid street, interposed by grumbled shouts and the scent of burning wood. A large roaring fire bathes the ground in a warm orange glow, in front of which stands a group of stout dwarven blacksmiths, working away on a single anvil. Two other structures are attached to either side of the forge; one a dismal looking leatherworker, and the other a ramshackle fletcher.

This conglomeration of structures makes up Bandaal's Smithy and Fletchers, responsible for providing weapons, tools, shoes, armor, and clothing for the whole of Dawnvale. It is run by three dwarves named Bandaal, Tangraal, and Feymare (NG male and female dwarf **commoners**), and a halfling couple called Terrier and Quim (NG male halfling **commoners**). These five overworked, exhausted individuals are long past their prime, yet work away the hours on their craft to provide for the village all the same.

SMITHY SERVICES

The smithy sells all weapons, ammunition, and leather armor available in the Player's Handbook, at double its normal price. Terrier and Quim can repair broken clothing and shoes, including common magical items, at a cost of 5 sp per piece.

ROLEPLAYING FEYMARE

Feymare is a cautious dwarf who doesn't speak with outsiders in anything more than a grunt and the occasional nod or shake of his head.

If the characters present the silvered dagger (see The Miner's Lament), he admits it was forged by him for a dwarven miner claiming to be being

stalked by a large dog-like creature when working late shifts in the mine. The dwarf paid Feymare handsomely for his discretion of the matter and thus he asked few questions. If pressed for more information, Feymare mentions the dwarf seemed exceptionally wary of Vila Whitesbane, though he doesn't know why.

If characters present him with the belt buckle (see *The Missing Cow*), Feymare reveals the buckle belongs to Vila, and was designed to be removed and used as a small dagger for self-defense.

GUARD BARRACKS

A large wooden guard tower stands watch over this area, its guards gazing lazily out into the fog-strewn forests beyond Dawnvale's walls. A stone structure stands at its base, large and imposing, with spiked iron railings around its perimeter. Vast gates twice the height of a man stands a few feet away from the structure, locked with iron shackles. An imposing figure clad in full plate can be seen leaning against it chewing on a leg of meat, a vicious broadsword stabbed into the ground at their side.

The imposing figure is that of Captain Ransley (NE male human **veteran** in *plate armor*), head of the security for the village and its mine. He watches the characters with interest upon their initial approach, but doesn't offer any interaction unless they attempt to stir up trouble.

The barracks is a well-fortified stone structure measuring roughly 70 feet wide and 100 feet deep. It has two floors and a basement jail, large enough to house up to ten Medium creatures. Captain Ransley and his ten mercenary guards live in rooms on the upper floor. Two guards are always in the watchtower, and one guard patrols

the village at all times. Two other guards are stationed outside the mines, leaving Captain Ransley and five others to watch the barracks. The guards rotate shifts every six hours.

The guards are unhelpful and uninterested in whatever the characters have to say, but are easily distracted with the promise of gambling or earning a quick coin.

ROLEPLAYING CAPTAIN RANSLEY

Ransley is a tight lipped individual with a love of money and many-legged creatures. He has a hatred of magic, and thus is suspicious of the tieflings residing in Hope's Fire Apothecary, believing them to bring bad fortune.

Ransley is responsible for nearly half of the reported disappearances, as he kidnaps miners and feeds them to Arak. He is unaware of why other villagers are disappearing, and is both concerned and nervous about the coincidence.

If Ransley learns the characters are investigating the disappearances, he does all he can to divert their attention to other members of the village. Should they cause trouble or poke around where he doesn't want them, he puts them in jail and dumps them outside the walls on the following night for the flesh-eating spiders to deal with.

If the characters return alive, Ransley denies any knowledge of the incident, insisting they were released without charge that evening. If he jails them a second time, he orders them to be arrested and delivered to the mines to be food for Arak instead.

Lieutenant Halvord. Captain Ransley has roped his lieutenant into helping kidnap miners to feed Arak. Halvord (CN male human **veteran**) reluctantly goes along because the pay is good, but his misgivings grow with every miner he helps take. Characters who pay him 500 gp or who succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check may convince him to give up information on Captain Ransley's wrongdoings.

THE DAWNVALE BUTCHERY

The sound of heavy metal striking meat and wood rattles the dusty windows of this dimly lit establishment. A hastily made sign leans against the wall nearest the front door, which reads "Dawnvale Butchery". The dull scent of death and raw flesh assails the senses each time the door swings open, briefly revealing an interior filled with hanging cuts of fresh meat.

The Dawnvale Butchery is ran by Vila Whitesbane and staffed by Hannes Silvertooth, Juune Frosthhammer, Fila Brighteye, and Noi Fletch (LE male and female **werewolves**). The butchery is roughly 30 feet wide and 30 feet deep, and has two floors and a storeroom, which hides a secondary room that can be spotted with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. The room contains the sliced-up remains of missing villagers stored in salted barrels.

At the end of each week, the butchery delivers all but the smallest cuts of meat (including the remains of the villagers) to the Wymark estate. The remaining offcuts are sold to passing travelers in rations packs at a cost of 5sp per pack, or to the Blighted Tavern.

ROLEPLAYING VILA WHITESBANE

Vila is a cunning foe, extremely observant and attuned to danger. Upon the character's arrival in the village, she takes note of them immediately, making sure to avoid them as best she can. She nurses a small cut on her palm, tightly bound in thin rags, which was caused by a swipe from a miner wielding a silver dagger (see Hunger of the Pack).

If Vila knows a character is aware she is a werewolf, she attempts to kill them the first

opportunity she gets, usually by luring them into the forest to be ambushed by her pack, attacking them in their sleep, or when they are alone at night.

The Belt Buckle. If the characters present Vila's belt buckle to her (see The Missing Cow), she reveals she lost it in the cattle pen when spying on the guards, who she claims stole the cow and took it beyond the north gate.

Sorian's Complaints. If asked about Sorian's claims of bad fortune, Vila explains he is just not a good hunter, and it is only thanks to her hunters in the butchery that she is capable of providing the cuts of meat that she does.

The Dead Miner. If the characters mention the dead miner (see The Miner's Lament), Vila shrugs, explaining that it happens all the time in the mines given the spider problem the village has, but commends the party on their handling of the situation - choosing one member in particular to butter up with compliments in order to establish a friendly rapport.

ROLEPLAYING THE OTHER NPCs

The other staff are amicable but don't know any more than other villagers know, and are equally as distrustful of outsiders.

Hannes Silvertooth Hannes is a talented fighter and skilled hunter, experienced in hunting almost all of Borca's most dangerous fauna to some degree. He is easily identified in his werewolf form by a deep scar across his chest which extends over his right shoulder. This scar also appears in his humanoid form, though he does well to hide it beneath layers of clothing, and often only the scar on his shoulder is visible. If asked about it, Hannes claims it was caused by fighting a large bear, which he eventually slayed.

THE MINE

A chilling wind emanates from within this large mine, accompanied by the distant clinks of pickaxe-on-stone. Fleks of webbing hang from the tunnel's interior, bathed in an orange glow from the few hanging lanterns still active and wafting lazily to and fro as if feeling for something to grasp. Branching tunnels, some covered in wooden barricades, can be seen leading deeper into the mines, quickly swallowed by the encroaching darkness.

The mine is situated to the northwest of Dawnvale, atop a small hill at the base of the mountain range - the mountain itself forming a natural defensive wall from which the rest of the village extends. A branching, well-traveled path leads from the mine's entrance, one fork leading north across the farmlands towards the guard barracks, and a second leading south towards the village hall.

The mine is populated by fifty or so workers during the day, and plagued with swarms of spiders at night, prompting only the bravest or most desperate of individuals to continue working past sundown.

The mine stretches deep into the bowels of the mountain, eventually culminating in various barricaded tunnels that lead to the lair of Arak.

ARAK'S LAIR

Arak is a colossal spider that lurks in the deepest point of the mine, and is kept from attacking Dawnvale by the offerings of villager remains. The lair is covered in thick webbing, which stretches from floor to ceiling. Cocoons containing the partially digested bodies of 30 villagers line the walls, all of whom went missing from Dawnvale within the last few months, as well as 3d6 egg sacs, each containing a swarm of spiders.

If characters engage in combat with Arak, Captain Ransley is sure to either come to the aid of his "pet" or avenge its death.

If Arak is defeated, the swarms assailing Dawnvale, and the egg sacs, vanish over the course of 1d4 days.



DAWNVALE QUESTS

HUNGER OF THE PACK

A pack of werewolves, led by Vila Whitesbane, have taken up residence in Dawnvale, using the Dawnvale Butchery as a front for their actions.

At the same time, Captain Ransley and his guards have been kidnapping miners and feeding them to Ransley's "pet" spider within the mines.

Through investigation and exploration, the characters must uncover the truth behind the disappearances and put a stop to the werewolves and the guards before nothing is left of Dawnvale.

BEGINNING THE QUEST

This is the primary quest in Dawnvale, and can be started by following one of the many plot hooks seeded in the area. Each of these plot hooks points to a particular starting point, offering multiple avenues of investigation for the characters to explore:

The Missing Cow. Upon exploring the cattle pen at the rear of the property, the characters notice a set of two tracks in the mud, hastily covered by hay. The tracks lead north, past Hope's Fire Apothecary, and out towards the Guard Barracks and the North Gate. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival or Perception) check also reveals an iron belt buckle squashed into the mud (see Bandaal's Smithy).

Following the tracks out of the village leads the characters to the carcass of Gertie, who appears to have been savaged by a large dog. Investigating the body reveals sections of its flesh have been removed with a sharp blade. A DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine or Animal Handling) check reveals the cuts to belong to a butcher's knife.

Upon returning to Elliot, he is dismayed at the loss of Gertie, but thanks the adventurers for their help and pays them their agreed sum. If the

characters tell Elliot about the cuts of meat that were removed, he suggests they investigate the Dawnvale Butchery or Hope's Fire Apothecary, suggesting either might be behind the killing.

The Miner's Lament. Upon investigating the mines, characters see a dwarf miner (commoner) trying to fight off a swarm of spiders. The swarm quickly kills the miner and spreads out to attack other commoners nearby, targeting the characters if they are the closest creatures to it. If the characters defeat the spiders, they can investigate the miner's body to find it clutching a silvered dagger. The dagger is branded with the symbol of a clenched fist with three fingers, barely perceptible on its hilt.

After the combat, Captain Ransley arrives with three guards. He begins clearing up the remains and dispersing a gathering crowd. They dispose of the remains later the following night outside Arak's lair (see Exploring The Mine).

Characters looking at the crowd notice Treason limping away, occasionally looking over her shoulder before entering Hope's Fire Apothecary. A successful DC 17 passive Wisdom (Perception) check reveals Vila Whitesbane also watching Treason leave from the crowd. If spotted, she quickly leaves for the Dawnvale Butchery.

EXPLORING DAWNVALE

After completing either The Missing Cow or The Miner's Lament, characters are encouraged to explore the rest of Dawnvale and investigate at their own leisure. Eventually, the investigation should lead to one of two outcomes: exploring the mine, or exploring Dawnvale Forest.

Exploring either of these locations is prohibited by Captain Ransley and his ten guards, who patrol the perimeter of the village and inside the mines diligently during the day. At night, two guards oversee the forest from the barracks watchtower, and two guards patrol the entrance to the mines. Should the guards discover the

characters trespassing, they arrest them and take them back to the guard barracks. Later that night, the guards take away the characters' weapons and dump them in the forest to be dealt with by the spiders.

Exploring The Mine. Characters exploring the mine find it to be a dark and puzzling affair which leads the characters to a barricaded tunnel covered in a mat of thick webbing. Interacting in the webbing or remaining around the abandoned tunnel for more than ten minutes attracts Arak, who attacks relentlessly until the characters flee, or one is knocked unconscious, at which point Arak drags them away to its lair to eat later.

When arriving at night, the characters spot two guards carrying the remains of a dwarf into the mines. The figures leave the body at the barricaded tunnel for Arak, then quickly leave.

If the characters wait, Hannes Silvertooth in his werewolf form sneaks out of the shadows, transforms back into his humanoid form, and scavenges the body using an iron butcher's knife. He flees if Arak appears.

If combat ensues with Arak before the guard's arrival, the guards drop the corpse and report the conflict to Captain Ransley. Hannes then arrives in his werewolf form and steals the corpse while Arak is distracted.

Exploring Dawnvale Forest. Characters exploring Dawnvale Forest find it to be a fog-drenched woodland, covered in moss, webbing and dense foliage.

If the characters explore the forest during the day, they come across the dead body of Gertie (see The Missing Cow), but find no other details of interest. On their way back to the village, they are ambushed by the four swarms of flesh-eating spiders.

If the characters explore the forest at night, they encounter Fila and Juune in their werewolf forms, pulling apart the carcass of a villager and storing their harvest into a leather sack. If the

werewolves detect the characters, they attack, but flee if reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, or if their true forms are revealed. If they collect their harvest undetected, they return to the Dawnvale Butchery, assuming their humanoid forms when approaching the village to avoid detection.

SEARCHING FOR THE CULPRITS

Once the characters have discovered the werewolf presence in Dawnvale, they can decide for themselves how to approach their removal, but it is advised they seek aid from the villagers before taking action. If the characters don't know the identity of the werewolves by this point, it is recommended to have them speak to Sorian Bleakwater to cast suspicion on Vila Whitesbane, or to speak with Celvekh at Krolvan's General Goods to cast suspicion on the Dawnvale Butchery.

The villagers have their own opinions on how to approach the encounter. Consider which NPCs the characters have formed attachments to over the course of the adventure and refer to their section below:

Treason, Aid and Hope. The tieflings suggest they first investigate the Dawnvale Butchery for proof of their accusations, explaining that if they are to accuse Vila and her staff of lycanthropy, they must have evidence to be able to present to gain the village's trust and backing, and to ensure the guard's help.

Elliot and Vanyrs. If the characters tell Elliot or Vanyrs of their discovery, Elliot demands they find proof of the accusation, refusing to believe that werewolves could have infiltrated Dawnvale so easily. Vanyrs offers to distract Vila and her staff by requesting they come and value her cattle, so the characters can infiltrate the Dawnvale Butchery undetected and find the evidence Elliot needs.

Sorian Bleakwater. If the characters tell Sorian about the werewolf presence, he immediately accuses Vila of being involved, and storms off to find her in the Dawnvale Butchery, visiting Feymare first to ask him for his help. If characters let him go alone, he is killed by Vila and her pack and hidden in a salted storage barrel.

FACING VILA WHITESBANE

Once the characters have made their preparations, the adventure brings them into conflict with Vila Whitesbane and her pack. During combat, Vila remains at the rear of the fighting, using any information she has gathered about the party to target their most vulnerable members first. Hannes, June, Fila and Noi move in pairs. Each pair targets a separate character, only changing targets when their previous one is reduced to 0 hit points or knocked unconscious. The pack flees Dawnvale after three of its five members are killed, or all members are reduced to 15 hit points or less. If Vila is killed first, the pack instead fights to the death.

COMPLETING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is completed after Vila Whitesbane and her pack are killed or flee Dawnvale. If the combat took place in view of the villagers, they warm to the characters, thanking them for their aid and offering them a small abandoned two-story townhouse near the center of the village as a reward. The house is populated by 2 swarms of spiders, but is otherwise undamaged.

Villagers continue to disappear, however, unless Arak is slain within the mines, or captain Ransley is killed.

INFESTATION FOR THREE

Sorian Bleakwater requests the characters help him defeat the swarms of spiders occupying his house. This is an optional side quest that characters may undertake while in Dawnvale.

BEGINNING THE QUEST

Sorian leads the characters to an abandoned house next to Krolvan's General Goods. The house is heavily fortified, with each of its windows and its door boarded up with planks. Sorian explains he accidentally uncovered an old cave network when expanding his cellar, which drew the spiders to his home. A group of 4 swarms of spiders populate the inside of the house, which attack any creatures who enter. The cave leads to a boarded up tunnel in the mine (see Exploring The Mine).

After the spiders are defeated, Sorian offers his services in thanks for the group's help, and allows them to use his home as a base of operations for the duration of their stay in Dawnvale.



STAT BLOCKS

The following pages detail the stat blocks of all creatures your players are likely to face within this adventure. Other creatures that are referenced, but not included here, may be found in the Dungeons & Dragons Basic Rules.

ARAK

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR 16 (+3)	DEX 16 (+3)	CON 15 (+2)
INT 3 (-4)	WIS 16 (+3)	CHA 4 (-3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +5

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +9

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened

Senses Tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). When Arak fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

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

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

Web Walker. Arak ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 2d6 + 3 piercing damage, and if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking

7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 4-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 60/90 ft., one target. The target is restrained by webbing. If the target is a creature, it can use its action to make a DC 14 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Conjure Brood (Recharge 5 - 6). Arak summons forth a swarm of spiders which appear in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of it. The swarm is friendly to Arak and its allies, and hostile to all other creatures. The swarm acts on its own initiative, and follows Arak's mental commands to the best of its ability (no action required by Arak). Arak can have up to 5 swarms summoned at a time. When Arak dies, any swarms it has summoned die over the course of 1d4 days.

Legendary Actions

Arak can take one legendary action, choosing from the list below. Arak's legendary action can only be used at the end of another creature's turn, and it can't use the same legendary action twice in a row. Arak regains spent legendary actions at the beginning of its following turn.

Sudden Strike. Arak makes a Bite attack.

Evasive. Arak moves up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Harden. Arak hardens its outer carapace, gaining a +2 bonus to AC until the start of its next turn.

SWARM OF FLESH-EATING SPIDERS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 24 (6d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

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

Damage Vulnerabilities Fire

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

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

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

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

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

Actions

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

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (Splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

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:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

WEREWOLF

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 In Humanoid Form, 12 In Wolf Or Hybrid Form

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft., 40 ft. in wolf form

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

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Silvered

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Common (can't speak in wolf form)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). The werewolf makes two attacks: two with its spear (humanoid form) or one with its bite and one with its claws (hybrid form).

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

Claws. (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

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



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