

A PASSAGE INTO MYSTERY

EXAMPLE

ADVENTURE THEME

The evil cult of the elemental eye has been discovered and routed out of town. The last remnants of the cult were seen racing toward a cavern complex in the wilderness. Retreating to a place of security, the cult survives and the people are in need of heroes to root them out and end the evil once and for all.

ADVENTURE READ-ALOUD START

The evil cult of the elemental eye has been discovered and it's destruction begun. The last vestiges of the cult retreated to a complex of caves in the wilderness outside of town. Who knows what evil desperate acts they are capable of; they must be stopped before they can finish the insanity already begun. Many townsfolk were found to be missing or in league with the cult and are suspected to be with them in the caves, against their will or under some insane geas driving them to acts of chaos. You have been tasked with routing them out and destroying their stronghold and rescuing as many of the townsfolk as you can, an endeavor not for the meek.

ENCOUNTER 1 EXAMPLE

ADDITIONAL READ-ALOUD TEXT

At the very edge of hearing, strange chanting in an ancient and corrupt tongue can be heard drifting from the entrance. Is it the noise of the waterfall playing with your imagination or the beginnings of an evil ritual of unknown purpose? If those are human voices, there must be dozens of chanting cultists within the caves.

Once the characters climb the cliff read the following.

When you finish climbing to the top of the cliff, Minotaurs come charging out of the darkness chanting in an insane alien language and you begin to hear evil strange chanting from within your own mind. In the darkness you barely make out a hulking, mutated, skinless and bloody humanoid with long muscled arms.

During the combat read the following when the players enter the back of the cavern.

The chanting eerily echoes from the depths of the pit below deeper within the cavern. The walls of the cavern are crudely painted in hateful and twisted scenes of horror and despair. The symbol of the elemental eye plays a prominent part in all of the depictions.

MONSTER SETUP

1 Foulspawn Hulk in the back of the cavern in front of the pit to the second level.

2 Minotaur Thugs just inside the dimly lit cavern behind the pit of bodies.

The above is an average encounter, for a hard encounter add a scarecrow stalker and change the dimly lit back caverns to normal brightness.

MONSTER TACTICS

The 2 Minotaur Thugs immediately charge and try and push the PCs off the cliff. If the PCs get past the cliff and the Scarecrow Stalker is included they will try to push the characters into range for the Scarecrow Stalkers Frightening Gaze attack. If the cavern is dimly lit then the Foulspawn Hulk will try to lure the characters into the darkness to attack, note that with his reach of two he can attack into the lighted caverns from the dimly lit. The Minotaur Thugs could assist the Foulspawn Hulk and push characters into or toward the darkness.

ENCOUNTER 2 EXAMPLE

ADDITIONAL READ-ALoud TEXT

Along the walls of the cavern stand purple robed cultists holding torches that blaze to light once you set foot in the cavern. The cultists seem tranced and sway slightly as they chant in an evil alien tongue. One of the cultists steps out from the wall and says “Welcome! Your deaths will be the capstone to our ritual in honor to Tharizdun the destroyer!” and cackles maddeningly. Other purple robed figures step forward and reveal themselves—mad savage horned beasts snarling and stamping the ground; a four armed mutated humanoid in a blood soaked robe brandishing knives of bone; another a scarecrow of twigs and leaves, stuffed with straw with a pumpkin for a head and an evil grimace full of sharp teeth. Again, the chanting intrudes upon your very mind.

If you include the Hoard Scarab Larva Swarm also read the following.

Among what must be the mutilated possessions of the sacrificed townsfolk, you see hundreds of gold coins seemingly grow insect legs and wings and swarm into the air.

MONSTER SETUP

- 1 Doomdreamer along the wall away from the characters across the water.
 - 1 Foulspawn Mangler along the wall closer to the PC's but across the water.
 - 1 Scarecrow Stalker along the wall close to the PC's.
 - 2 Minotaur Thugs along the walls with enough room to charge the PC's.
- For a harder encounter consider adding 1 Hoard Scarab Larva Swarm.

MONSTER TACTICS

The Minotaur Thugs start off by trying to push the players into the pit. Barring that, they will try to push characters into the area affect of the Scarecrow Stalker or the Hoard Scarab Larva Swarm if it's included. Also, they will try to get combat advantage with the Foulspawn Mangler so that the monster can get its extra damage. The Foulspawn Mangler will try for a ranged attack before closing with the PC's to get into combat advantage, note that it can do this only twice if it wants to have all four hands still armed with daggers. The stalker will get close to the PC's and wait for the Minotaurs to move away before unleashing Frightening Gaze. While the others keep the PC's at bay the Doomdreamer will attack with Chilling Ray until it can get several PC's in a group with Maddening Howl. If the Doomdreamer is threatened it will use Touch of Insanity to drive off the threat or rush into melee and use it as a last resort.

The other cultists remain chanting and holding torches. They are NPCs that are townsfolk under a geas and if attacked are automatically dispatched.