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THE FATE OF CAMP 15

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING* *FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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Your travels have brought you to the pearl-trading city of Ankhapur, near the Lake of Steam. You have been asked to visit a nearby outpost and pick up a shipment of pearls. It seems like easy money. Unfortunately, something has killed off most of the divers and nearly shut down the operation. Now you must discover the source of this camp's troubles before you share its fate. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set near the Lake of Steam for characters levels 1-4.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. 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 to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience 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. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 1 - 4. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give**

out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In this adventure, the PCs are hired by Horizon Imports, a trading coster that operates out of Ankhapur. (See page 145 in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.) Horizon Imports is one of many companies that farm the pearl beds and other abundant natural resources in and around the Lake of Steam. In order to secure its

claim to a particular location, a company will typically establish a small, semi-permanent camp. These camps are mostly self-sufficient, with the company sending a representative around every few months to pick up the raw pearls, pay the workers at the camp, and drop off any needed supplies. The PCs' initial job is simply to escort Daav, a representative of Horizon Imports, as he makes his rounds to a series of camps.

Horizon Imports isn't particularly creative, and the camps don't appear on any map, so their names are simply "Camp 1," "Camp 2," and so forth. The first part of the PCs' trip is uneventful, but Camp 15 has fallen on hard times. A local tribe of lizardfolk has recently begun raiding the camp, killing a number of the pearl divers and destroying or damaging many of the buildings. Those few who are not either dead or fled live in constant fear for their lives and have barricaded themselves inside their ramshackle huts. Productive activity at the camp has come to a complete halt. The workers attempted to send a runner for help about ten days ago, and then again about five days ago, but neither man returned and the company has shown no signs that it is aware of the camp's plight (because, in fact, it isn't).

What the workers at Camp 15 don't realize is that their problems are not random. A rival trading company called Featherlight Mercantile, owned by a criminally-inclined clan of halflings, has recently set up operations in the area. Thomis Featherlight, one of the younger sons of the clan, has been given the opportunity to prove himself. Thomis went undercover and got himself a job at Horizon Imports for a while, which allowed him to study Horizon's operations and pick a good site to steal. Camp 15 has the right combination of quality output, a remote location, and proximity to threats that offer a credible excuse as to why the camp is being overrun.

Horizon is much more well-established in the area than Featherlight is, so Thomis doesn't want a direct confrontation. Instead, he lured a local lizardfolk tribe into attacking Camp 15, tricking the lizardfolk to do the dirty work of driving out Horizon's people. He did this by having his men poison the lizardfolk's home hunting area and planting obvious evidence and a trail leading back to Camp 15. Thomis's mercenaries have also been watching the trails leading away from Camp 15, and they are the ones who killed the runners that were sent back to Ankhapur for help. Once the lizardfolk have destroyed the camp, Thomis can take over, and by the time Horizon Imports figures out what happened, he expects to be able to afford the muscle needed to keep the location under his control.

The closest thing to an authority figure left at Camp 15 is the local wainwright, Erich, who has managed to keep his cool and suspects there is more going on than

just a random attack. Erich is a good person, wanting what's best for the workers involved. There are only about 10 men left in the camp now, and food is running low. The PCs will need to deal with the lizardfolk, figure out the truth about Featherlight Mercantile's involvement, and drive the halfling Thomis and his mercenaries out of the area. If they fail, then Camp 15's fate is sealed.

DM's INTRODUCTION

The Fate of Camp 15 is designed to be a very free-form adventure. We've presented the encounters in one likely order, but the PCs have lots of choices. Let the players drive the direction of the story as much as possible. For example, the PCs might immediately suspect that there is a third party behind the lizardfolk attacks, which could lead directly into the skill challenge and from there to the Featherlight camp, with the "mop-up" of the lizardfolk only occurring after the halflings have been dealt with. It's also possible that the PCs will decide to switch sides and join Featherlight in taking control of Camp 15. Several encounters have various options presented, but you might need to improvise a few things depending on exactly what the PCs decide to do about the situation. Don't be afraid to make up a new encounter area or an additional scene if you need one.

About the only option that won't work for the PCs is trying to leave the area and come back with reinforcements. Daav and Erich plead with the PCs to stay if they seem inclined to pursue this course of action. By the time the PCs get back to Ankhapur (or to any other city) and then return, the lizardfolk have completely overrun Camp 15 and Featherlight is firmly in control. However, if the PCs decide to take an extended rest during the adventure, that's okay. The timeline doesn't assume that everything happens in a single day. The PCs face a tougher challenge if they don't take an extended rest, which is usually a good thing, but ultimately it's up to the players.

If you are running this adventure in a time-constrained environment, such as a convention, you can shorten the introduction. An abbreviated Player's Introduction is provided in this section, which assumes the PCs have already been hired by Horizon Imports and are just arriving at Camp 15. However, if at all possible, start with the extended roleplaying introduction in the city of Ankhapur.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION (SHORT)

The following text summarizes the most important facts and deposits the PCs directly at Camp 15. If you have time, consider running the full-blown introduction starting in Ankhapur (beginning on the next page) instead of this version.

Read or paraphrase the following:

About a week ago, you found yourselves looking for work in the city of Ankhapur. Fortunately, a trading coster called Horizon Imports was seeking people for a tenday's work as guards. Horizon operates a number of small pearl-fishing camps around the Lake of Steam. Every few months, they send a representative to pick up the raw pearls, pay the workers, and drop off any needed supplies.

You accepted a contract to safeguard a man named Daav as he visits about two dozen different camps. Because the pearls you're picking up are intrinsically valuable, to lessen the risk of theft the company doesn't offer payment in advance. The only way to collect your gold is to return Daav safely back to Ankhapur with his strongbox intact.

You left Ankhapur a few days ago. The job's been simple so far and nothing has gone wrong. The camps are spaced such that you can usually visit two or three in a day, traveling along a barely-visible trail through the marshes at the edge of the lake. At least you get a roof over your heads most nights, although there's precious little entertainment to be had and the hardtack is nothing but dried fish strips. Daav is a decent enough fellow, but he obviously sees himself as an up-and-comer in the management ranks at Horizon. He's not completely insufferable, but he makes it quite clear that he's in charge. For the most part, you've had four days on the road with little to do except ignore or appease Daav as he calls out random instructions.

It's getting late on day five as your small convoy approaches the next outpost, Camp 15, about a mile from the northeastern corner of the Lake of Steam. You can tell right away that something isn't right here. Among the half-dozen ramshackle buildings you can see several that have suffered damage. Several more have been completely destroyed. Instead of the usual bustle of activity and shouts of greeting that accompany your arrival at a new camp, the muddy street here is silent and empty. A row of freshly-dug graves adds to the sense of despair. Camp 15 is clearly in trouble.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION (LONG)

Ankhapur is a city of nearly 30,000 people, located just north of the Lake of Steam. The city serves as a regional hub for trade and transportation of goods from the Lake and its environs. The surrounding countryside is off the established trade routes, but rich in valuable natural resources. This results in a vibrant community of frontiersmen, willing to brave the risks of the area in exchange for the lure of profit.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Ankhapur seems a great city if you have the gold for it - taverns abound and opportunities are plentiful, but nothing is risk-free. It's a great place for newly-minted adventurers to start building a reputation and filling their coffers, especially for those who can get a job with one of the established trade houses.

The PCs have come here for reasons of their own devising. There is often work to be found among the various trading costers of the city, with caravans coming and going to destinations across the continent. The beautiful and unique pearls found in the Lake of Steam command attention in all the major trading centers.

Outside the city limits, the countryside quickly gets dangerous. Small farms dot the immediate area, but past that, it's largely wilderness. People take considerable risks when leaving the established roads, and those are few and far between. To the south, the Border Kingdoms are barely civilized, with small freeholds established by adventurers and other would-be rulers appearing and disappearing on a regular basis.

One thing that the PCs cannot help but notice is that the two largest industries in Ankhapur are fishing and pearling. The smell of fish covers most of the town, and vendors hawk all sorts of pearl jewelry, raw pearls, cultured pearls, crushed pearls as ritual components, you name it. The Lake of Steam is filled with strange minerals that produce pearls of unusual color and size, which are prized all over Faerun.

The other major industry in town is helping the fishermen, pearl divers, caravan guards, and other people who work in the camps and convoys around the Lake of Steam to spend their hard-earned pay. Thus, Ankhapur has more than its fair share of seedy taverns, rambunctious brothels, and so forth. The various merchant houses have ownership stakes in most of these enterprises, which is an excellent way to recycle the pay they give their employees. The merchants also fund a city watch. This keeps any major unrest from erupting, but overall, the city is rather rough-and-tumble.

The combination of isolation and industry has resulted in a place rich in custom and intrigue. The fastest way to get anything done is by hiring out one of the many willing drifters in the area, and this is where the PCs find themselves - in the pool of willing workers. It doesn't take long for them to find a good lead.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Luckily for you, news has come that Horizon Imports, one of the oldest and most influential costers, is looking for swords. This might be the perfect opportunity to make some money and maybe even see a little action. Banditry and other troubles abound in the wilderness between the city and the Lake of Steam, so these kinds of trips can be very good for the well-prepared adventuring company.

The merchant companies have a great deal of clout within Ankhapur, and Horizon Imports is one of the older houses operating here. Working for Horizon is considered a prestigious contract by the various day laborers in town. The only problem is that success has bred a degree of contempt, and Horizon has gained a bit of a reputation for their poor treatment of low-level employees. It's tolerated because of the extensive network of business connections they can leverage, and the (comparatively) lucrative pay they offer, but even so, many an employee has walked away from a Horizon job with their money wondering if it was worth the hassle.

Feel free to allow the players to explore a bit of Ankhapur and investigate the reputation of Horizon Imports or ask the locals about the dangers to be found near the Lake of Steam. (You can find some basic information on page 145 of the FRCG.) The general idea is that working for Horizon would be an excellent way to break into the market here in town, and that Horizon is a good company to have on your side, though sometimes they don't treat their employees as well as they should. Horizon has a lot of competition, but none of the other trading houses seem to hiring at just this moment.

If there is any basic adventuring equipment that the PCs wish to buy, either before or after their meeting at Horizon Imports, they can find any nonmagical gear listed in the *Player's Handbook* or *Adventurer's Vault* at the standard prices.

HORIZON IMPORTS

When the PCs proceed to their meeting at Horizon Imports (either individually or as a group), read the following:

The main office of Horizon Imports is located in the city's bustling warehouse district. Upon arriving, you are directed to a large waiting room, filled with other applicants. You are soon introduced to a gentleman named Daav, who is organizing the next trip out to the company's many pearling camps.

Daav asks each of the PCs to introduce him or herself and explain his or her qualifications. Allow each player to briefly describe his or her character and make a short pitch for why he or she should be hired. Daav isn't expecting trouble, so for this mission he will accept pretty much anybody who doesn't make it sound like their main ambition in life is to rob a guy carrying a box full of raw pearls.

Daav can impart the following information:

- Every few months, the company sends Daav (or someone like him) around to visit all the camps, pick up the harvested pearls, and drop off the workers' pay along with any supplies they might have requested.
- For the most part, the camps are expected to be self-sufficient in terms of their day-to-day needs, but the company owns the camp itself and is therefore responsible for sending over building materials, tools, and other major items.
- A typical camp is occupied by a few dozen people, mostly pearl divers and fishermen, but also a couple of guards, a handyman who takes care of repairs and other labor, and a foreman or overseer who settles disputes and maintains order in the camp. They're all employees of the company, but the harvesters are only paid on the basis of what they bring in, so they have an incentive to work hard.
- The pearl beds in the Lake of Steam are quite rich and produce pearls of unusual colors and sizes. Competition for the best locations is fierce, with the various merchant companies always scouting out each other's camps to see if there's an opportunity to steal away a prime spot or a particularly skilled diver. Open conflict is rare, however, because it wouldn't be in any of the companies' best interest to go around destroying each other's camps.
- The area around the Lake of Steam is pretty much untamed wilderness, which is the main reason for having a guard or two stationed at each camp. The workers are tough and mostly able to take care of themselves, but when the occasional monster or band of thieves wanders through, it's best to have someone ready with a few feet of sharpened steel.
- Daav's current route will take him along the northeastern and eastern edges of the Lake of Steam. There are several dozen camps, and the convoy will hit about three a day before turning around and coming back to Ankhapur. The total number of camps varies, since underperforming locations are closed down and new camps open when promising pearl beds are discovered.
- The PCs' job is to guard Daav. Daav is a middle-aged human male, in good health and good shape, but not particularly useful when it comes to fighting. Although the trading costers have an understanding amongst themselves, sometimes unaffiliated bandits try to steal the pearl shipments. There are also plenty of monsters and other hazards in the wilderness.
- To help mitigate the risk that the guards themselves might decide to steal the shipment, Horizon Imports does not offer payment in advance. The PCs will be paid 30 / 40 gp each (which works out to 3 / 4 gp per day) for their services. The job entails about ten days of traveling in total, beginning and ending in Ankhapur. They don't get paid extra if they have to fight; the base pay assumes hazardous duty, even though most of the trips are uneventful.
- The PCs aren't responsible if the harvest has been lousy, but whatever pearls are available to be collected had better make it back to the city. Basically, if Daav comes back alive with his strongbox full of pearls, the PCs get paid. If either Daav or the pearls don't make it back, the PCs don't get paid (and Horizon will make sure they never work in Ankhapur again).

The amount of payment isn't negotiable, nor is the lack of up-front money. There are plenty of other fresh-faced adventurers who'd love to take the job if the PCs think they're too good for guard duty. Assuming they accept, Daav has them sign a contract detailing the terms described above, which Horizon keeps on file in case of any disputes. The convoy is scheduled to depart the next morning, giving the PCs the opportunity to enjoy a night on the town in Ankhapur if they are so inclined. Of course, they haven't been paid yet, so their funds for celebrating might be a bit scant.

THE JOURNEY

The convoy departs the next morning, heading east out of Ankhapur. Daav drives a small wagon filled with various mundane supplies. The wagon also holds a large

iron box with multiple thick locks. This contains the payroll, which Daav distributes at each camp, and is also where he puts the pearls he collects.

The first few days of the journey are uneventful. There's no need to spend a lot of time describing each and every camp the PCs visit. They spend their days slogging along a marshy trail, while Daav tries to read the map and figure out if they're still on course to reach the next camp or not. (Fortunately, the camps are all within a mile of the edge of the Lake of Steam, so just following the contours of the lake is generally sufficient.) Daav also fancies himself an important manager, or at least someone who is on his way to being an important manager, so he constantly gives the PCs unnecessary directions about where they should stand and what watches to set and all sorts of other matters about which he clearly doesn't know much. The PCs are free to heed or disregard his instructions as they see fit, but it's probably in their best interest to humor him at least a little bit, since he will be the one making the final report to Horizon Imports about their overall performance.

The first fourteen camp visits are completely, boringly uneventful. Horizon is not particularly imaginative, and none of the merchant companies put their camps on any public map for fear of drawing unwanted attention. So, the first camp is called "Camp 1," the second camp is called "Camp 2," and so forth. Every camp has a distinctive wooden sign marking it as a holding of Horizon Imports. There are a half-dozen or so simple wooden buildings, mostly bunkhouses for the workers. The camps are not large enough to support inns, taverns, or shops. The camps aren't built directly on the shore, because that would give away the location of the best pearl beds. Each camp is sited no more than a mile away from its preferred fishing and pearling areas.

As they travel from camp to camp, the PCs see no bandits or monsters, none of the camps report any major problems, and Daav collects the pearls and pays the workers at each camp entirely without incident. Horizon Imports doesn't provide the PCs with horses, so unless they have their own, their days consist of slogging through the marsh, periodically digging Daav's wagon out of the muck, tending to the horses, swatting flies, listening to frogs croak and birds chirp, eating dried fish strips, ignoring Daav's endless trivial instructions to do this or that, and drinking whatever potent potables they might have been wise enough to bring along. (Daav is a teetotaler and disapproves of the PCs drinking on the job, even at camp, so they'll have to be surreptitious about it if they wish to imbibe. The camp workers, of course, are under no such restrictions.)

The schedule is constructed so that convoy should be at or near a camp when each night falls. Staying on

schedule is very important to Daav, who has no desire to spend even one night sleeping under the stars. The PCs can chat with the workers and fishermen and otherwise try to amuse themselves, but the reality is that life in the camps is boring. The workers complain about the long hours and low pay, but they admit that Horizon pays better than most of the other merchant companies, although it's quick to fire people if they aren't meeting its standards. The PCs should get the impression that Horizon, although successful, is fairly indifferent towards its workers. (It's important for Horizon not to be a completely squeaky-clean operation, to give the PCs at least some excuse to consider Thomis Featherlight's eventual offer for them to switch sides.)

ARRIVAL AT CAMP 15

Finally, near the end of their fifth day of travel, the PCs reach Camp 15. Camp 15 is not like the other camps they have been visiting thus far. Read the following:

It's getting late on the fifth day of your journey as your small convoy approaches the next outpost, Camp 15, which lies about a mile from the northeastern coast of the Lake of Steam. You can tell right away that something isn't right here. Among the half-dozen ramshackle buildings are several that have suffered obvious battle damage. Several more have been completely destroyed. Instead of the usual bustle of activity and shouts of greeting that accompany your arrival at a new camp, the muddy street here is silent and empty. A row of freshly-dug graves adds to the sense of despair. Camp 15 is clearly in trouble. Even the sign marking the camp as an outpost belonging to Horizon Imports has had a crude spear driven straight through it.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive no XP for this encounter and it does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter; just the promise of payment upon successful completion of the assignment.

Should the PCs decide to steal the strongbox from Daav and thereby end the adventure, they end up netting 30 / 40 gold pieces each, which is exactly what they would have earned from Horizon Imports anyway. They also earn Horizon's enmity and ruin their good names. But hey, if that's what they want to do...

ENCOUNTER 1: CAMP 15

SETUP

Important NPCs: Erich, Camp 15 Wainwright (Diplomacy +7, Insight +7); Daav, Horizon Imports Representative (Intimidate +6, Streetwise +6)

When the convoy rolls into Camp 15, it appears to be deserted at first glance. The PCs will presumably call out (if they don't, Daav does). Read the following:

A human male in his early thirties steps out of one of the damaged buildings. He is dressed plainly, wearing a leather apron, with a large hammer in hand. He hails you with a tired but relieved smile: "You're just in time. As you can probably tell, we could use some help."

Erich has been expecting the convoy for a few days. He is pleased to see them, but not exactly hopeful that the company will do a whole lot to help. His interactions with the PCs will be entirely aimed at getting them to help the camp get rid of the lizardfolk. When the PCs ask what help Erich needs, he replies:

"For the last couple of weeks we've been fending off attacks by a group of lizardfolk who nobody's ever seen in this area before. They've taken over the fisheries and the pearling beds and even hit the camp itself a few times. We've lost a lot of good men, and most of the ones who weren't killed have already fled. I'm really hoping that you lot are here to do something about it - if not, we might as well just all pack up and leave with you, because this camp is finished."

Investigating the camp and talking with the various residents, the PCs can learn the following information:

- **Camp 15.** The evidence at the camp supports Erich's story. All signs indicate lizardfolk as the aggressors, including tracks outside the camp, broken spears among the wrecked buildings, and the descriptions provided by Erich and the other surviving workers. The workers warn the PCs that some of the lizardfolk seem to use poison on their weapons; several of the dead bodies bear evidence of this if the PCs look in the shallow, hastily-dug graves.
- **Fishermen and Pearl Divers.** There are less than 10 workers left in the camp, all unwilling to face the lizardfolk. They don't know anything more than Erich, and they look to the wainwright as their leader and spokesman. They have little use for Daav, and he is clearly unimpressed by them as well. Daav makes a few comments about how

he can't believe they weren't able to fight off a couple of overgrown scaly lizards, but he quickly shuts up when Erich gives him a very icy glare.

- **Erich.** The wainwright has lost his faith in Horizon Imports. The camp sent several runners for help, but nobody came. (The runners were intercepted by agents of Featherlight Mercantile, but Erich has no way of knowing that.) Erich is only concerned about either getting rid of the lizardfolk invaders or at least getting his few remaining men to safety.
- The lizardfolk first attacked the fishing and pearling area. (This is because they were hungry, having lost their own hunting area when it was poisoned by the halflings working for Thomis Featherlight.) The workers and divers weren't able to put up much of a fight against the lizardfolk, since they go out "armed" with nothing more than simple oyster knives and nets.
- That early success must have emboldened the lizardfolk, since they quickly graduated to raiding the camp itself. They've destroyed a few buildings, killed the guards, and made off with most of the stockpiled food. The last direct attack was a couple of days ago, and Erich is sure that the lizardfolk will be back at any moment. If nothing else, he imagines they'll probably want to steal the dead bodies and eat those, too.
- Erich doesn't know what caused the creatures to attack the camp, nor does he particularly care - he just wants them gone. He insists that another attack on the camp is imminent, but he's also confident that the PCs could encounter the lizardfolk by going to the fishery or pearl beds.
- **Daav** will simply assume that the PCs are going to investigate, since that's what they're being paid for. If they hesitate or look to him for leadership, Daav will direct them to get to the bottom of the disruption while he "keeps an eye on the wagon." Daav is of no real help in this situation: he's just an authoritarian manager who wants everyone to jump when he says so. However, he also doesn't want to have to report back to his superiors that one of the company's best camps was wiped out on his watch. (If nothing else, the lizardfolk will probably eat all the oysters.)
- Daav further fails to endear himself to the surviving workers when he demands that Erich give him whatever the camp's output has been since the company's last official visit. Erich pretends that he has no pearls to give to Daav, saying that the lizardfolk took everything. This is not entirely true. If the PCs appear reluctant to help, Erich will offer the camp's last remaining

raw pearl as a reward for ridding the area of the lizardfolk. He makes every effort to do this without Daav finding out about it.

- The workers don't know where the lizardfolk came from. They haven't had any trouble with monsters before now, except for the occasional stray critter that the guards were able to dispatch easily. The workers also don't know where the lizardfolk have established their lair. They don't know what provoked the lizards to start attacking Camp 15.
- A character who is trained in Nature can surmise that the actions of the lizardfolk are not unusual; they are tribal and savage, and often fight for good hunting grounds and territory. However, the Lake of Steam is huge, and there must be plenty of places where a tribe could live comfortably without having to interact with humans at all, so it's a bit strange that they have become so aggressive towards Camp 15 all of a sudden.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs arrive at Camp 15 in the early evening, so by the time they finish talking with Erich, inspecting the damage to the buildings, and so forth, it will be dark. The residents of the camp agree that the lizardfolk attacks have always occurred during the daylight hours. Daav will still insist on having the PCs stand watches all night, of course. The rest of the adventure assumes that the PCs head out during the daytime, but if they decide to go out at night, the only thing that really needs to change is that the encounter areas won't have sunlight, and the various monsters might be sleeping (they set watches and have guards throughout the night, of course). Improvise as needed.

If the PCs balk at even trying to deal with the lizardfolk, Daav points out that they are under contract with Horizon Imports and that this falls under their agreement, since Daav is in danger as long as there are monsters in the area. If they want to get paid, they will investigate the issue. If necessary Erich will also secretly offer up the camp's last pearl as a further inducement.

If the PCs start searching for tracks in the immediate vicinity of Camp 15, they are easily able to locate the trail of a group of lizardfolk. The tracks lead in the direction of the camp's pearl bed and fishing area. Proceed to Encounter 2A if the PCs decide to investigate the fishery.

As another option, given the fact that the camp is about one more attack away from being wiped out, the PCs might decide to stay here, guard the surviving workers, and wait for the next lizardfolk incursion. They won't have long to wait. Proceed to Encounter 2B if the

PCs decide to fortify Camp 15 and wait for the next attack.

A third alternative is that the PCs might decide to skip directly to trying to find the lizardfolk tribe's lair, in which case it's fine to go ahead and run Encounter 4. You can have the PCs encounter the lizardfolk from Encounters 2A/2B as a patrol in the swamp, before continuing with Encounter 3 or Encounter 5.

TAKING AN EXTENDED REST

During the adventure, if the PCs find themselves in need of an extended rest, they can use Camp 15 as their base of operations. It's dangerous, but as long as the PCs have made at least some progress towards dealing with the lizardfolk, Erich and the surviving fishermen and pearl divers will do their best to watch over the PCs while they rest. Daav will make a few snide comments about how real adventurers wouldn't need to get their beauty sleep in between battles. The adventure does not change if the PCs decide to take an extended rest at some point. If the PCs have not yet encountered any lizardfolk, or if they don't seem inclined to leave Camp 15 for several days, then you can cause something to happen simply by running Encounter 2B. The lizardfolk do not have low-light vision or darkvision so they only attack during the daylight hours.

Alternatively, the PCs might decide to make camp out in the wilderness, either because they don't trust Daav or the other people at Camp 15, because they've formed an alliance with Thomis Featherlight, or because they're deliberately trying to draw an attack by the lizardfolk away from the camp. If the players come up with a plan of this sort, don't hesitate to rearrange or restructure the remaining encounters to accommodate them. It's far more important to keep things moving and let the players drive the story than it is to run the encounters in any particular order.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive no XP for this encounter and it does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

As noted in Erich's description, the wainwright will offer up the camp's last pearl to the PCs as payment if needed. He will do so away from Daav if he can help it. Once it becomes clear that the situation is dangerous, Daav will reluctantly agree to advance the PCs their salary (30 / 40 gp each) from the funds in his strongbox. (The PCs' total treasure doesn't change regardless of whether they get the pearl or not; it's just symbolic.)

ENCOUNTER 2A: THE FISHERY

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 2/4 (625/875 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 Greenscale Marsh Mystic (Level 2) (M)
- 1 Greenscale Hunter (Level 2) (H)
- 1 Blackscale Bruiser (Level 2) (B)
- 2 Poisonscale Slitherers (S)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 Greenscale Marsh Mystic (Level 4) (M)
- 1 Greenscale Hunter (H)
- 1 Blackscale Bruiser (Level 4) (B)
- 2 Poisonscale Slitherers (Level 4) (S)

The PCs approach one of the pearling and fishing areas that has been taken over by the lizardfolk. The area is marshy and wet as they get closer to the shore of the Lake of Steam.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

You follow a well-worn trail through the overgrowth near Camp 15 towards the shore of the Lake of Steam. The lack of a breeze combines with the climbing sun to make the day uncomfortably warm. After a hard slog through marshy ground, the path opens up into a small work site, somewhat shaded by spreading swamp trees.

The work site is a shambles. Overturned tables that were once used for shucking oysters and cleaning fish have been torn to pieces. A few broken chests and barrels that once held supplies dot the area as well.

A large, burly, black-scaled lizard-man is digging through the detritus, sniffing and swallowing anything that seems even vaguely edible. Several more lizardfolk stand in the shallows at the edge of the lake, occasionally stabbing their spears into the water. A green-scaled lizardman with a spear and shield stands watch. An older-looking lizardman wearing a bone breastplate appears to be in charge.

If the PCs have someone scouting ahead, or if they are even minimally stealthy, it's quite possible that they might surprise the lizardfolk, who aren't expecting any opposition. Resolve this with opposed Perception and Stealth checks, but the two poisonscale slitherers are focused on their spear-fishing, and the blackscale bruiser is distracted by his efforts to find something tasty

in the wreckage of the work tables, so all three of those monsters suffer a -5 penalty on their Perception checks to notice the PCs approaching. The greenscale hunter and the marsh mystic are alert.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Although the entire area along the coast of the Lake of Steam is marshy, only those squares specifically called out as difficult terrain should be treated as such.

Illumination: If the encounter occurs during the day, the area is brightly illuminated by the sun. If it occurs at night, there is dim illumination thanks to moonlight and the eerie phosphorescent mists that float off the Lake of Steam.

Boxes and Crates: These squares are treated as difficult terrain. They are filled with debris, including oyster shells, fish skeletons, driftwood, and so forth.

Mud: The areas on the map that look like ravines are actually patches of thick mud. These squares are considered difficult terrain, costing 1 extra square of movement to enter. The lizardfolk have swamp walk, so they can ignore this difficult terrain.

Water: The entire northern edge of the map represents the Lake of Steam. The water is quite warm, and strange colored vapors drift from its surface. The water near the shoreline is not deep enough to require swimming, but these squares are treated as difficult terrain.

TACTICS

The blackscale bruiser is happy to see the PCs. They look much tastier than the scraps he's been clawing through. He charges the nearest PC and attacks with his greatclub. If a character wearing heavy armor moves adjacent to him, then he tries his *tail slap* to knock that character prone; against characters who look more nimble, he probably won't bother.

The slitherers start by throwing their javelins, in hope of poisoning their targets. They then draw their spears and move into melee. They try to remain adjacent to at least one ally at all times so they can take advantage of their *slitherer bravery* bonus.

The greenscale hunter looks to move around the outside of the battle, hoping to engage a spellcaster or other lightly-armored PC. He can use the muddy terrain (which is not difficult for the lizardfolk thanks to their swamp walk ability) combined with *sidestep attack* to make attacks while making it difficult for the PCs to remain next to him. (He can use his standard action to *sidestep attack*, then use his move action to shift away; if he does this in an area of mud, then most PCs won't be

able to shift to get back next to him, they'll have to move and thereby possibly provoke opportunity attacks.)

The marsh mystic uses *swamp's grasp* to both hinder the PCs and create another area of difficult terrain that the lizardfolk can ignore, but the PCs probably can't. He makes every effort to avoid melee and uses *bog cloud* every time it recharges. If *bog cloud* hasn't recharged, the marsh mystic will spend his turn moving away from the PCs rather than getting into melee, unless he has absolutely no other choice.

These lizardfolk are overconfident because up until now they have had an extremely easy time dealing with the denizens of Camp 15. The blackscale bruiser and the poisonscale slitherers fight to the death. The greenscale hunter and the marsh mystic are more inclined to run away once they are bloodied, particularly if the blackscale bruiser has already been killed.

CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

The lizardfolk only speak Draconic. If the PCs try to initiate a negotiation at any point, they must do so in Draconic, and the lizardfolk simply laugh and hiss insults until it becomes clear that the PCs have the upper hand. They try to frighten the PCs by claiming that the rest of the tribe numbers hundreds of lizardfolk and it is only a matter of time before the tribe wipes the pink-skins out completely. However, PCs who are able to spend some time studying these creatures (alive or dead, Nature DC 15) can tell that they seem a bit malnourished and weak. Perhaps Camp 15 is not the only group in the area having problems.

If the marsh mystic and the hunter are the last two lizardfolk on the board, the PCs can get them to surrender with successful Intimidate checks (as detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, page 186). These lizardfolk are not high-ranking enough within the tribe to be able to negotiate with Camp 15, but they can provide directions to the location where the rest of the tribe is located. If asked why they are attacking the camp, the lizardfolk say that the pink-skins destroyed their usual hunting grounds, killing all the fish, and the tribe had to leave their home. They came here because the pink-skins had fish and also to get revenge. They say nothing more.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one of the poisonscale slitherers.

Six PCs: Add another greenscale hunter.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After defeating the lizardfolk, the PCs can continue their investigations in a number of ways. They might have taken some prisoners, or they might have intimidated the lizards into surrendering or fleeing. Tracking this group back to the tribe's main lair is not a difficult task (Perception DC 15). This leads to Encounter 3.

On the other hand, the PCs might want to spend more time trying to understand what drove the lizardfolk to come here in the first place. If they got the information that the lizardfolk had to leave their old hunting grounds, and if they've taken a prisoner or otherwise managed to establish communication, they can get directions to the tribe's old hunting grounds, which are a few miles away. This leads to Encounter 4.

Another option is that the PCs might want to go back to Camp 15, report their success, and wait to see if the lizardfolk launch a counter-attack against the camp. In this case, you can improvise an encounter using the map from Encounter 2B and the stat blocks from Encounter 3, or you can simply have the lizardfolk fail to appear, in which case the PCs will probably decide to go track them down, leading to either Encounter 3 or Encounter 4, as you prefer.

To be clear, there is absolutely no need to run both this encounter and Encounter 2B (they are exactly the same fight on different maps). They are merely two possible paths to the same outcome. The PCs can only earn XP for one of the two paths.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 125 / 175 XP each for defeating the lizardfolk.

TREASURE

The lizardfolk carry no gold, but the blackscale bruiser wears a *badge of the berserker* +1. See the New Rules section for details on this item.

ENCOUNTER 2A AND 2B STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Greenscale Marsh Mystic (Level 2)	Level 2 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +5
Marsh Blessing (Healing) aura 5; allies that start their turns within the aura regain 3 hit points.	
HP 38; Bloodied 19	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 10, Will 15	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+3 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
A Swamp's Grasp (standard; encounter) ♦ Zone	
Area burst 2 within 10; +5 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is difficult swamp terrain until the end of the encounter.	
A Bog Cloud (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Poison	
Area burst 2 within 10; +5 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 2 poison damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the marsh mystic's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +8, Nature +10	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 13 (+2) Wis 19 (+5)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment spear, bone breastplate	

Greenscale Hunter (Level 2)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +7
HP 38; Bloodied 19	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 12, Will 11	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
M Sidestep Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
The lizardfolk shifts and makes a melee basic attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +9, Nature +7	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment light shield, spear	

Blackscale Bruiser (Level 2)	Level 2 Brute
Large natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +7
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
AC 14; Fortitude 15, Reflex 12, Will 10	
Speed 8 (swamp walk)	
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +5 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
M Tail Slap (standard; at-will)	
+3 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +12	
Str 22 (+7)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 5 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)
Equipment greatclub	

Poisonscale Slitherer	Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +7
HP 36; Bloodied 18	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	
Speed 5 (swamp walk)	
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.	
R Javelin (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the poisonscale slitherer makes a secondary attack against the same target.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +4 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 poison damage.	
Slitherer Bravery	
A poisonscale slitherer gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls while it is adjacent to at least one ally.	
Slitherer Stability	
A poisonscale slitherer cannot be knocked prone and ignores forced movement.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +9	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment spear, 2 javelins	

ENCOUNTER 2A AND 2B STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Greenscale Marsh Mystic (Level 4)	Level 4 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +6	
Marsh Blessing (Healing) aura 5; allies that start their turns within the aura regain 3 hit points.	
HP 54; Bloodied 27	
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 12, Will 17	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage.	
A Swamp's Grasp (standard; encounter) ♦ Zone	
Area burst 2 within 10; +7 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is difficult swamp terrain until the end of the encounter.	
A Bog Cloud (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Poison	
Area burst 2 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 3 poison damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the marsh mystic's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +9, Nature +11	
Str 15 (+4)	Dex 13 (+3) Wis 19 (+6)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment spear, bone breastplate	

Greenscale Hunter	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +8	
HP 54; Bloodied 27	
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 13	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
M Sidestep Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
The lizardfolk shifts and makes a melee basic attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +10, Nature +8	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 15 (+4) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 8 (+1) Cha 8 (+1)
Equipment light shield, spear	

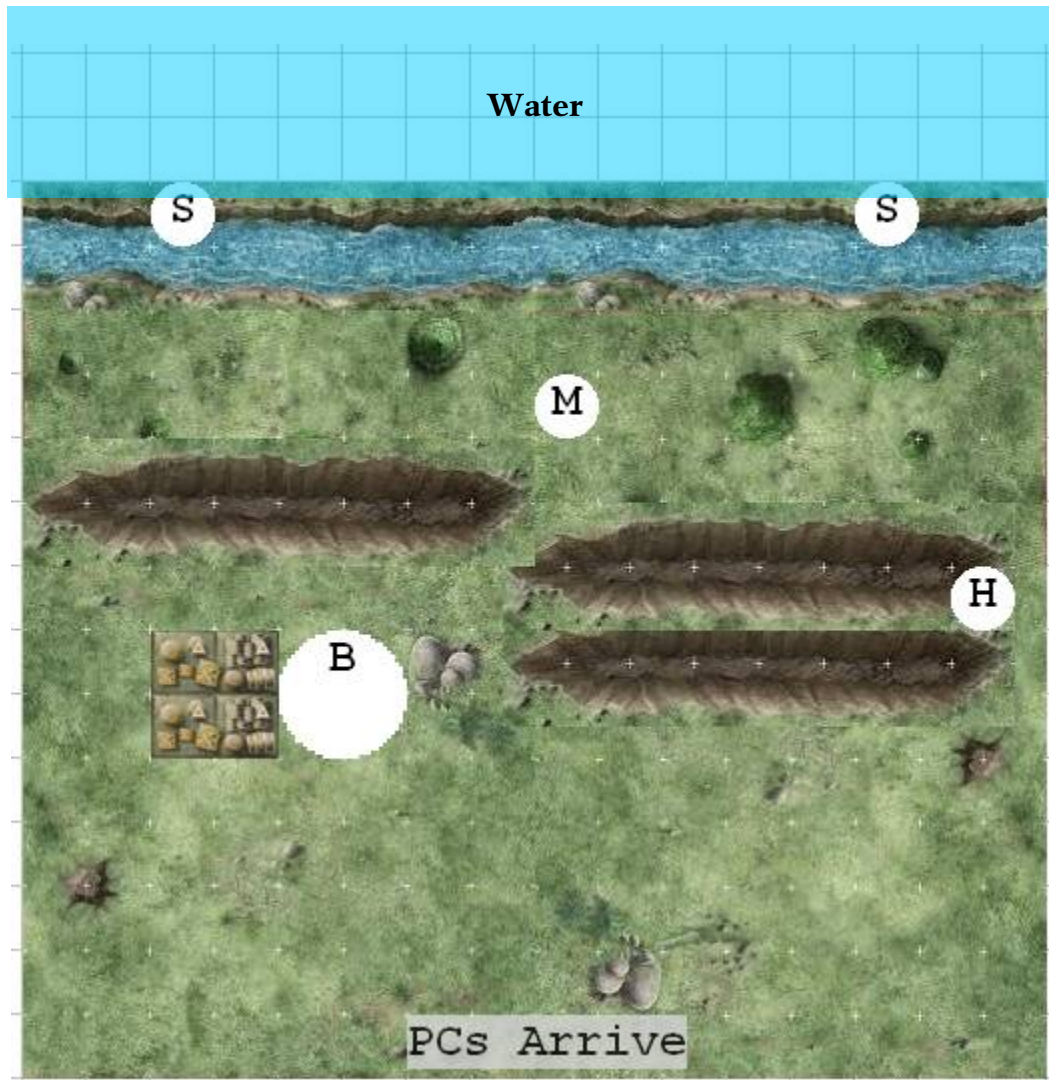
Blackscale Bruiser (Level 4)	Level 4 Brute
Large natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +8	
HP 66; Bloodied 33	
AC 16; Fortitude 17, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 8 (swamp walk)	
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
M Tail Slap (standard; at-will)	
+5 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +13	
Str 22 (+8)	Dex 16 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 5 (-1) Cha 6 (+0)
Equipment greatclub	

Poisonscale Slitherer (Level 4)	Level 4 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +8	
HP 52; Bloodied 26	
AC 19; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Speed 5 (swamp walk)	
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.	
R Javelin (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the poisonscale slitherer makes a secondary attack against the same target.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 poison damage.	
Slitherer Bravery	
A poisonscale slitherer gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls while it is adjacent to at least one ally.	
Slitherer Stability	
A poisonscale slitherer cannot be knocked prone and ignores forced movement.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +10	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 17 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 8 (+1) Cha 8 (+1)
Equipment spear, 2 javelins	

ENCOUNTER 2A: “THE FISHERY” MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x2, *Halls of the Giant King* x1 (boxes/crates only)



ENCOUNTER 2B: DEFEND THE CAMP

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 2 / 4 (625 / 875 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 Greenscale Marsh Mystic (Level 2) (M)
- 1 Greenscale Hunter (Level 2) (H)
- 1 Blackscale Bruiser (Level 2) (B)
- 2 Poisonscale Slitherers (S)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 Greenscale Marsh Mystic (Level 4) (M)
- 1 Greenscale Hunter (H)
- 1 Blackscale Bruiser (Level 4) (B)
- 2 Poisonscale Slitherers (Level 4) (S)

This is an alternate version of Encounter 2A, using all the same stat blocks. Only run this encounter if the PCs wait at Camp 15 for the next attack. The attack comes a few hours after dawn on the day after the PCs arrive. The PCs have some time to establish a defensive position or modify the terrain if they wish to do so. There are not many raw materials in the area to use, given that most of the camp's supplies and tools have either already been stolen by the lizardfolk or used by Erich to make what repairs he could. Nevertheless, if the PCs come up with a reasonable approach (such as chopping down some trees to build a crude palisade wall) and you think it will work, let them make a few appropriate skill checks and go for it.

The lizardfolk approach from the direction indicated on the map. They expect no significant defense, so they do not try to use stealth. The PCs cannot be surprised, because they are obviously expecting the attack, but if they are particularly clever in the way they set up their defenses and hide themselves around the camp, they might be able to surprise the lizardfolk. Roll Perception checks for the lizardfolk against the PCs' Stealth checks and proceed accordingly.

As the lizardfolk enter the area, read:

Waiting in the camp, the air is quiet and still. Humidity and heat make the atmosphere uncomfortable, and the faint but constant smell of sulfur from the lake renders each breath a small exercise in discomfort. Finally, the

sound of movement comes from the edge of the camp near the dirt road. Hissing their sibilant war cries, a group of lizardfolk burst from the trees and attack.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The lizardfolk do not attack after nightfall, so the area is brightly illuminated by the sun.

Trees and Shrubs: Areas of obvious foliage on the map provide cover, but are not considered difficult terrain. Tree trunks are considered blocking terrain. The PCs might also choose to station someone in a tree (Athletics DC 10 to climb at half speed, to a maximum height of 20 feet).

Buildings: The buildings are badly damaged. The walls are still standing up, but very weak. A DC 15 Strength check made as a standard action allows a creature to break down a door or smash a hole in a wall large enough for a Medium creature to move through. Each five-foot section of wall is AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, Will immune, and has 20 hit points. Trying to climb on the roof of these buildings would be a very bad idea, and Erich will say so if he sees the PCs attempting this.

Wagon, Graves: The squares containing the destroyed wagon and the muddy graves are considered difficult terrain.

TACTICS

The blackscale bruiser charges the nearest PC and attacks with his greatclub. If a character wearing heavy armor moves adjacent to him, then he tries his *tail slap* to knock that character prone; against characters who look more nimble, he probably won't bother.

The poisonscale slitherers start by throwing their javelins, in hope of poisoning their targets. They then draw their spears and move into melee. They try to remain adjacent to at least one ally at all times so they can take advantage of their *slitherer bravery* bonus.

The marsh mystic uses *swamp's grasp* to both hinder the PCs and create an area of difficult terrain that the lizardfolk can ignore, but the PCs probably can't. He makes every effort to avoid melee and uses *bog cloud* every time it recharges. If *bog cloud* hasn't recharged, the marsh mystic will spend his turn moving away from the PCs rather than getting into melee, unless he has absolutely no other choice.

The greenscale hunter looks to move around the outside of the battle, hoping to engage a spellcaster or other lightly-armored PC. Once the marsh mystic has created an area of mud using *swamp's grasp*, the hunter can use his *sidestep* attack to take advantage of this area, attacking and then shifting away to make it harder for

the PCs to reach him without getting bogged down in the mud.

The lizardfolk are overconfident because up until now they have had an extremely easy time dealing with the denizens of Camp 15. The blackscale bruiser and the poisonscale slitherers fight to the death. The greenscale hunter and the marsh mystic are more inclined to run away once they are bloodied, particularly if the blackscale bruiser has already been killed.

There are about a dozen civilians in the camp, but they have no desire to further risk their lives. Some of the fishermen and pearl divers hide in the woods, while others hide in the buildings. Daav hides under his wagon and shouts (useless) tactical orders at the PCs during the battle. You could make this scene more interesting by having the lizardfolk set fire to a building or chase after Daav, which would force the PCs to choose between fighting the lizardfolk and trying to ensure the safety of the noncombatants. (Remember, if they let Daav get killed, they don't get paid, so don't kill Daav unless the PCs go out of their way to deliberately let it happen.) Alternatively, if things go really badly for the PCs, Erich will rally the workers and they will try to do what they can to rescue the PCs, stabilize their wounds, throw rocks at the lizardfolk, and so forth. They are terrified, but in the end, they would rather go down fighting than be murdered cowering under their beds.

CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

The lizardfolk only speak Draconic. If the PCs try to initiate a negotiation at any point, they must do so in Draconic, and the lizardfolk simply laugh and hiss insults until it becomes clear that the PCs have the upper hand. They try to frighten the PCs by claiming that the rest of the tribe numbers hundreds of lizardfolk and it is only a matter of time before the tribe wipes the pink-skins out completely. However, PCs who are able to spend some time studying these creatures (alive or dead, Nature DC 15) can tell that they seem a bit malnourished and weak. Perhaps Camp 15 is not the only group in the area having problems.

If the marsh mystic and the hunter are the last two lizardfolk on the board, the PCs can get them to surrender with successful Intimidate checks (as detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, page 186). These lizardfolk are not high-ranking enough within the tribe to be able to negotiate with Camp 15, but they can provide directions to the location where the rest of the tribe is located. If asked why they are attacking the camp, the lizardfolk say that the pink-skins destroyed their usual hunting grounds, killing all the fish, and the tribe had to leave their home. They came here because the pink-skins had

fish and also to get revenge. They say nothing more. (If Erich is told of this accusation, he denies it completely. None of the humans speak Draconic, so they cannot talk to the lizardfolk unless a PC is able to serve as interpreter.)

The humans, including Erich and Daav, are not at all inclined to negotiate with the lizardfolk. Too many lives have been lost and the humans refuse to believe that the lizardfolk are anything other than murdering savages. If the PCs want to try and negotiate with the tribe, they won't be able to do it at Camp 15. Furthermore, if anyone else in the camp gets killed, it greatly affects the mood of Daav and (especially) Erich, who will be deeply disappointed in the PCs for failing to protect the workers.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one of the poisonscale slitherers.

Six PCs: Add another greenscale hunter.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After defeating the lizardfolk, the PCs are hailed as heroes and may bask in the cheers and thanks of the residents of the camp. However, Erich warns them that this was not the entire tribe, only a raiding party. The rest of the lizardfolk are still out there and still pose a threat to the survival of Camp 15.

The PCs can continue their investigations in a number of ways. Tracking the raiding party back to the tribe's main lair is not a difficult task (Perception DC 15). This leads to Encounter 3.

On the other hand, the PCs might want to spend more time trying to understand what drove the lizardfolk to come here in the first place. If they got the information that the lizardfolk had to leave their old hunting grounds, and if they've taken a prisoner or otherwise managed to establish communication, they can get directions to the tribe's old hunting grounds, which are a few miles away. This leads to Encounter 4.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 125 / 175 XP each for defeating the lizardfolk.

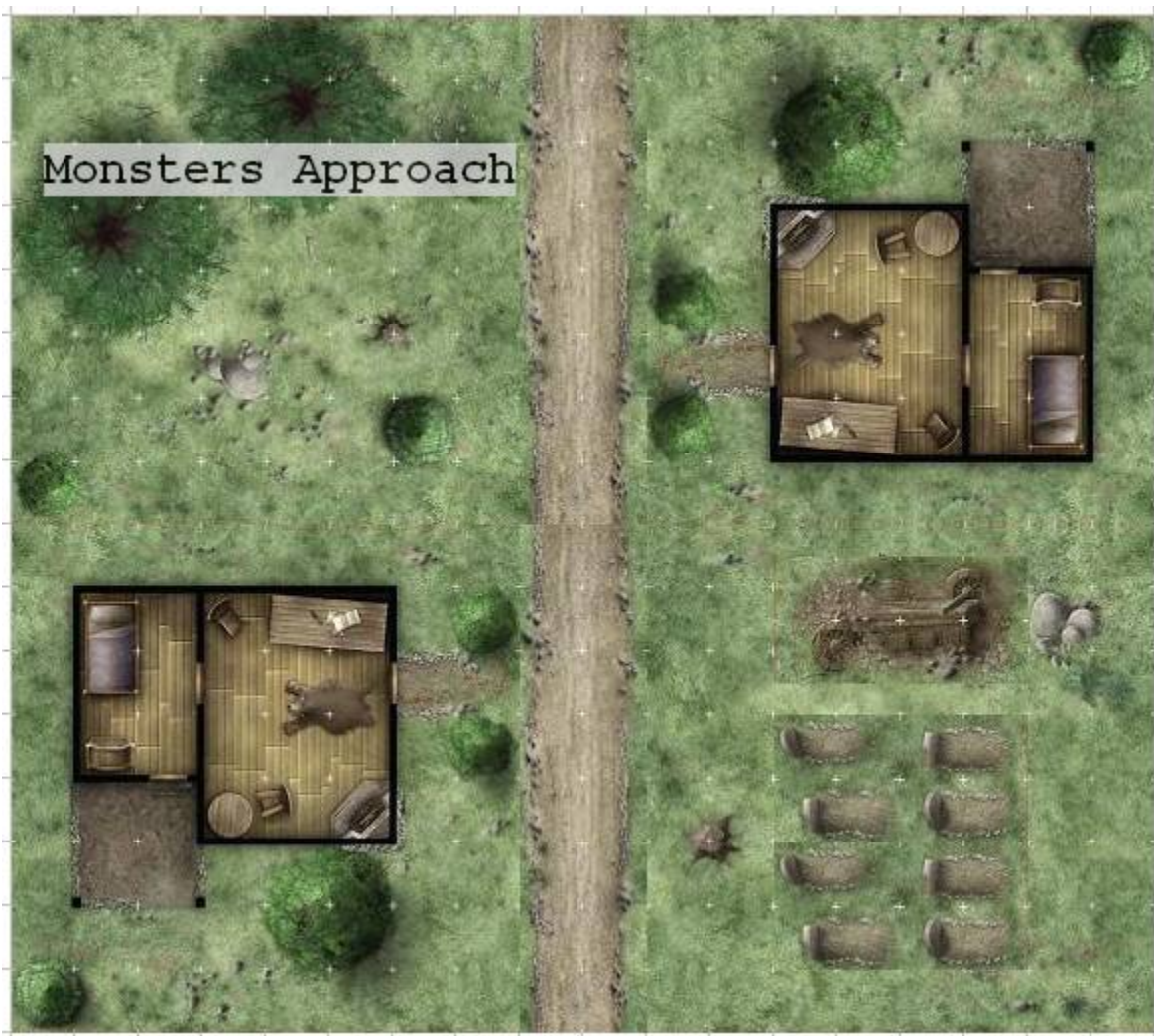
TREASURE

The lizardfolk carry no gold, but the blackscale bruiser wears a *badge of the berserker* +1. See the New Rules section for details on this item.

ENCOUNTER 2B: “DEFEND THE CAMP” MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x2



ENCOUNTER 3: A MARSHY HOMECOMING

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3/4 (675/875 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 Visejaw Crocodile (Level 2) (V)
- 2 Poisonscale Collectors (C)
- 1 Poisonscale Magus (M)
- 1 Poisonscale Savage (S)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 Visejaw Crocodile (V)
- 2 Poisonscale Collectors (Level 4) (C)
- 1 Poisonscale Magus (Level 4) (M)
- 1 Poisonscale Savage (Level 4) (S)

There are a variety of ways for the PCs to locate the main lair of the lizardfolk tribe. Most likely they tracked the lizardfolk raiders from either the pearl beds or Camp 15.

The tribe's numbers are low; many of them died from eating the poisoned fish at their old hunting grounds. Those lizardfolk who are still able to fight are the ones here and those the PCs encounter in either 2A or 2B. There are some additional noncombatant members of the tribe, as well as a few eggs.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

As you follow the tracks of the lizardfolk raiders, you trudge through the hot, sticky marsh for about a mile. The lizardfolk tribe has begun to establish its own village on the shore of the Lake of Steam. A small collection of crude huts stand in varying stages of construction. A number of weaker-looking lizardfolk are toiling away, making thatch, tending to their eggs, gathering supplies, and so forth. Several of the stronger-looking lizardmen heft weapons and hiss menacingly in Draconic as you approach.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The entire area is marshy, but only squares specifically called out as being difficult terrain should be treated as such (the fight will go very slowly if the PCs have to move at half speed the entire time).

Fire Pit: Lizardfolk generally prefer their food raw. The fire pit shown on the map is a pile of fish guts, oyster

shells, and other debris. It is considered difficult terrain but there is no actual fire.

Mud: Several patches of thick mud are shown on the map. These squares are difficult terrain. The lizardfolk have swamp walk and can ignore this terrain.

Rocks and Stumps: These terrain features are shown in various squares on the map. These squares are considered difficult terrain.

Tents: The "tents" shown on the map are really unfinished lizardfolk huts. A creature inside one of these structures has cover against attacks originating from outside, but due to gaps in the walls, can still be seen and targeted.

Trees: Creatures may use the areas of foliage indicated on the map to gain cover. These squares are not considered difficult terrain except for the squares containing tree trunks.

Water: In the upper right-hand corner of the map is an area bounded by a small pond and two streams. This represents the area where the Lake of Steam and the marshlands meet. The water is only a few feet deep at the edge of the lake. All water squares are considered difficult terrain, but a creature with a swim speed can move through these squares using that speed. Creatures without a swim speed must make Athletics checks (DC 10) to swim at half their land speed.

TACTICS

The crocodile is hiding beneath the surface of the muddy water. If none of the PCs approach within the first two rounds, the crocodile emerges and attacks. It tries to grab a creature with its bite and then uses *clamping jaws* each round it is able to maintain the grab. Once the target falls unconscious, the crocodile starts dragging it towards the water for a tasty meal.

The poisonscale magus opens with *poison barrage*. This has a huge area of effect and offers the possibility of making some or all of the PCs vulnerable to poison damage, increasing the efficacy of many of the monsters' other attacks. The magus tries to stay out of melee, using *poison blood* each round to try and poison a PC and then, if *poison blood* hits, using *corrupt poison* as a minor action to slide that PC to a less-advantageous position. The magus can help set the collectors or the crocodile up by sliding PCs around in this fashion.

The poisonscale savage throws its javelin at a PC who is affected by the magus's *poison barrage* ability (if possible) and then wades into melee. It uses its *poison tail* each round there is a target within reach who isn't already taking ongoing poison damage. (Remember that multiple sources of ongoing damage of the same type do

not stack.) The savage's *aura of poison* makes it more difficult for PCs to save against ongoing poison damage.

The poisonscale collectors try to maneuver their way around the edge of combat. They are most effective when they can isolate a single PC for a one-on-one or two-on-one fight.

Special Note: The poisonscale lizardfolk (which appear in *Monster Manual 2*) have a lot of abilities built around poison damage. This makes the fight interesting from a tactical standpoint, but it can also get out of hand, especially if the lizardfolk win initiative and get to stack all their nastiest effects on the PCs before the PCs have a chance to do anything. Gauge the capabilities of your party carefully, especially at the low tier. For example, a single PC who gets hit with both *poison barrage* and any ongoing poison attack in the same round will immediately be taking ongoing 10 poison damage, which can drop a low-level character very quickly.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one of the poisonscale collectors.

Six PCs: Add another poisonscale savage.

CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

The poisonscale magus is the chief of the tribe. All the other lizardfolk defer to him. If he thinks that his tribe is on the verge of complete extinction, he will at least try to surrender. He knows a few words of pidgin Common, which you can roleplay to let him get his message across. If anyone in the party speaks Draconic and the PCs give the lizardfolk a chance to talk, the lizardfolk will protest that the humans poisoned their fishing grounds, and their attacks on the camp are completely justified self-defense. They can provide evidence in the form of empty poison bottles marked with the emblem of Horizon Imports (see Encounter 4 for details).

If your party strongly prefers roleplaying and wants to negotiate right from the beginning, you could replace some or all of this encounter with a negotiation skill challenge. The moderate DCs are 10/11 and the hard DCs are 15/16. The primary skills are social (Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate) and Nature, with Insight a logical secondary skill. Other skills may be used as you see fit.

One example of a well-negotiated outcome would be for the PCs to first, apologize on behalf of the humans of Camp 15 (even if the camp isn't really at fault, the lizardfolk need to have their pride appeased); second, promise to find out who really poisoned the tribe's old

hunting ground and either kill that person or bring him to the tribe for them to deal with him as they see fit; and third, find the lizardfolk a new, even better hunting ground that is far enough away from Camp 15 to ensure that the two groups no longer need to fight for resources. The social skill checks represent the various aspects of the parley, while the Nature skill checks represent some of the PCs seeking out a suitable new home for the lizardfolk tribe.

To replace an entire combat encounter requires a Complexity 5 skill challenge (12 successes before 3 failures). Try to weave the skill checks into the roleplaying so that it doesn't just reduce to "roll a bunch of identical skill checks and call the combat over." Only allow the skill challenge option if the players are really serious about roleplaying this negotiation. Even then, you might want to intersperse the social skill challenge with the combat encounter, allowing the PCs to try and negotiate some basic terms while the fight rages; in this case, a much lower Complexity can be used (6 successes or even 4 successes before 3 failures, but overall success is not possible until all of the lizardfolk are bloodied or at least half of them have been defeated).

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The most obvious solution for the PCs to simply beat the lizardfolk into submission and force them out of the area. This can be done by killing them all, or by defeating them (knocking them unconscious) and then ordering them to leave. The lizardfolk will fight to the last scale if they believe that their eggs and young are in danger, but they aren't suicidal. If the PCs are obviously superior combatants, the tribe will reluctantly pack up and leave the area.

If the PCs agree to investigate the lizardfolk tribe's claims that the humans poisoned their old hunting grounds, then this leads to Encounter 4. If the PCs return to Camp 15 and ask Erich and his fellow workers if the tribe's claims are true, they deny everything (honestly). The PCs really ought to be smelling something ... well, fishy ... by this point.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 135 / 175 experience points each for defeating the lizardfolk.

TREASURE

The poisonscale magus wears an *amulet of elegy* +1. The lizardfolk will offer this treasure as tribute to the PCs if the PCs beat them into submission or as a gesture of thanks if the PCs negotiate a peaceful settlement between the tribe and the residents of Camp 15.

ENCOUNTER 3: “A MARSHY HOMECOMING” STATISTICS (LOW TIER)

Vicejaw Crocodile (Level 2)	Level 2 Soldier
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 42; Bloodied 21	
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 12, Will 13	
Speed 6, swim 8	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The visejaw crocodile cannot make bite attacks while grabbing a creature, but it can use <i>clamping jaws</i> .	
M Clamping Jaws (standard; at-will)	
If a visejaw crocodile begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +10 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage. <i>Miss</i> : Half damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Stealth +7	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 12 (+2) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 2 (-3) Cha 7 (-1)

Poisonscale Collector	Level 3 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 150
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +8	
HP 36; Bloodied 18	
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
M Blinding Poison (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
M End Strike (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature that cannot see the poisonscale collector; +8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.	
Poison Strike	
A poisonscale collector gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls against any enemy taking ongoing poison damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +7, Stealth +9	
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment dagger	

Poisonscale Magus	Level 2 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +8	
HP 32; Bloodied 16	
AC 14; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 16	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
R Poison Blood (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
R Corrupt Poison (minor; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Ranged 10/20; targets a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +7 vs. Fortitude; the poisonscale magus slides the target 3 squares, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
A Poison Barrage (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison	
Area burst 3 within 10; +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 poison damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 poison (save ends). <i>Miss</i> : Half damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 poison until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Arcana +9, Athletics +7	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 12 (+2) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 15 (+3) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment dagger	

Poisonscale Savage	Level 2 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +2	
Aura of Poison aura 1; each enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against ongoing poison damage.	
HP 45; Bloodied 22	
AC 13; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.	
m Poison Tail (minor; at-will) ♦ Poison	
+4 vs. AC; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
R Javelin (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +9	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment greatclub, javelin	

ENCOUNTER 3: “A MARSHY HOMECOMING” STATISTICS (HIGH TIER)

Vicejaw Crocodile	Level 4 Soldier
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +3; low-light vision	
HP 58; Bloodied 29	
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 14, Will 15	
Speed 6, swim 8	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The visejaw crocodile cannot make bite attacks while grabbing a creature, but it can use <i>clamping jaws</i> .	
M Clamping Jaws (standard; at-will)	
If a visejaw crocodile begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +10 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage. <i>Miss</i> : Half damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 18 (+6) Dex 12 (+3) Wis 13 (+3)	
Con 18 (+6) Int 2 (-2) Cha 7 (+0)	

Poisonscale Collector (Level 4)	Level 4 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +9	
HP 42; Bloodied 21	
AC 19; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 16	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
M Blinding Poison (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
M End Strike (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature that cannot see the poisonscale collector; +9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.	
Poison Strike	
A poisonscale collector gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls against any enemy taking ongoing poison damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +10	
Str 13 (+3) Dex 17 (+5) Wis 14 (+4)	
Con 12 (+3) Int 10 (+2) Cha 8 (+1)	
Equipment dagger	

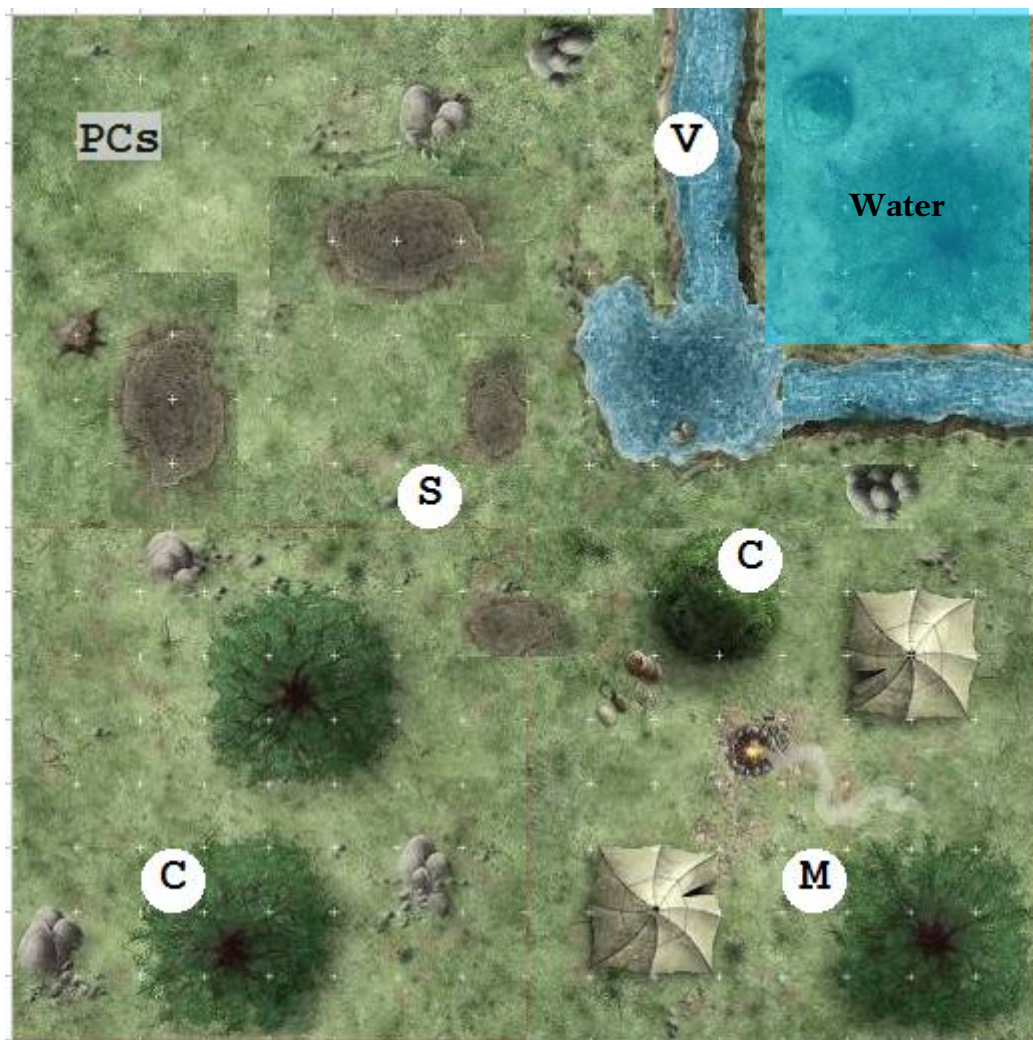
Poisonscale Magus (Level 4)	Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +9	
HP 44; Bloodied 22	
AC 16; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 18	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
R Poison Blood (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
R Corrupt Poison (minor; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Ranged 10/20; targets a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +9 vs. Fortitude; the poisonscale magus slides the target 3 squares, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
A Poison Barrage (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison	
Area burst 3 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 poison damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 poison (save ends). <i>Miss</i> : Half damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 poison until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Arcana +10, Athletics +8	
Str 12 (+3) Dex 12 (+3) Wis 14 (+4)	
Con 14 (+4) Int 15 (+4) Cha 8 (+1)	
Equipment dagger	

Poisonscale Savage (Level 4)	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +3	
Aura of Poison aura 1; each enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against ongoing poison damage.	
HP 65; Bloodied 32	
AC 15; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 16	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.	
m Poison Tail (minor; at-will) ♦ Poison	
+6 vs. AC; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
R Javelin (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +10	
Str 17 (+5) Dex 14 (+4) Wis 12 (+3)	
Con 15 (+4) Int 8 (+1) Cha 8 (+1)	
Equipment greatclub, javelin	

ENCOUNTER 3: "A MARSHY HOMECOMING" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x2



ENCOUNTER 4: TRACKING THE REAL THREAT

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 1 / 3, COMPLEXITY 1 (100 / 150 XP)

SETUP

Run this encounter at whatever point the PCs decide to search for the reason why the lizardfolk tribe started attacking Camp 15 in the first place. If the PCs succeed at this skill challenge, they discover the location of the Featherlight Mercantile camp, enabling them to reach Encounter 5.

The following read-aloud text assumes that the PCs know exactly where to find the site of the tribe's former hunting grounds, having been given clear directions by the lizardfolk. If that isn't the case, you can improvise some additional skill checks (such as Nature or Perception checks to backtrack the tribe from its lair) or simply run this skill challenge any time the PCs decide to go exploring the wilderness in search of clues.

Several miles away from both Camp 15 and the lizardfolk tribe's new lair, the natural smells of decay and rotting vegetation that permeate the marsh give way to the much stronger, unmistakable stench of unnatural death. This area seems to have suffered a terrible calamity. Rotting fish float on the surface of the water. The trees and marsh plants are shriveled and dry. No birds chirp, no frogs croak. This place is truly lifeless. What could have happened here?

The full history of what happened here and why is found in the Adventure Background, but the key point is that this area was poisoned by agents of Featherlight Mercantile. They wanted to drive the local lizardfolk tribe out of its normal hunting area and directly into the path of the unsuspecting people at Camp 15. To do this, the halflings used several tricks. First, they poisoned everything and scattered vials bearing the mark of Horizon Imports. The lizardfolk can't read Common, but each camp has a sign giving its name, and on that sign is the company's sigil. The lizardfolk are smart enough to put two and two together. Just in case that was a bit too subtle, the halflings also laid some very clear (and very false) trails to guide the lizardfolk in the direction of not only Camp 15 itself, but also the camp's best fishing and pearling areas. The lizardfolk fell for the ruse and have been attacking Camp 15 ever since.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Goal: The PCs attempt to discover what happened here, and get an idea of who's responsible.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures; the PCs must also complete Perception #3 even if they earn 4 successes before they unlock Perception #3)

Primary Skills: Nature, Perception

Other Skills: Arcana, Endurance, Insight, Streetwise

Victory: The PCs discover that the "clues" left for the lizardfolk to guide them to Camp 15 are false, and that someone has made an effort to conceal who really planted the evidence. This leads them to the headquarters of Featherlight Mercantile.

Defeat: The PCs fail to discover some or all of the evidence. They do not find Thomis Featherlight's base of operations.

Each success the PCs earn in this skill challenge should reveal another clue or useful piece of information. You don't absolutely have to present these clues in the order given here, and you don't have to limit the PCs to just the specific listed skills. Any skill that you decide is clearly relevant should be rolled against a moderate DC. Skills that you consider less appropriate should use a hard DC. The moderate DCs for this skill challenge are 10/11, and the hard DCs are 15/16.

If the players seem stumped by how to approach this situation, then go ahead and suggest the really obvious course of action: searching for clues (i.e. have the party make a Perception check with one person designated to make the actual check while everyone else tries to Aid Another to grant that character a +2 bonus).

Note that the PCs do not have to be trained in a primary skill to use it, and that any of the primary skill checks may be retried as long as the PCs have not yet reached 3 total failures for the skill challenge. (In other words, if they fail their very first Perception or Nature check, they can try again; don't make it impossible for them to succeed at the overall challenge by denying them the use of the primary skills.)

Please don't just say "okay, this is a skill challenge, so roll me two Nature checks and three Perception checks and we'll see if you win or lose." Ask the players how they want to go about solving the mystery. Work the sequence of die rolls into your narration and their reactions, with each step revealing a bit more information, leading naturally to the next step.

Arcana DC 10/11 (not a success or failure)

This skill may be used at any time after either Nature #1 or Perception #1 has been completed. The PC uses alchemical knowledge to isolate a sample of the

poison. On a success, the PC feels confident that he or she will be able to identify a match if another sample of the same poison turns up somewhere else. On a failure, the PC is not able to state with confidence whether or not other samples can be matched to this one.

A fun skill that you could allow instead of Arcana would be Endurance. The PC deliberately exposes himself by ingesting a small amount of the poison and then defines its "signature" by noting its distinctive taste (or the horrible effects it has on his body). In the future, he can taste any other poison samples to see if they exhibit the same characteristics. Deliberately tasting a known deadly poison is, of course, dangerous; the PC loses 1 healing surge on a failed Endurance check.

Insight or Streetwise DC 10/11 (not a success or failure)

This skill may be used after either Nature #2 or Perception #2 have been completed. From everything that they have learned, the PCs can conclude that someone deliberately manipulated the lizardfolk tribe into attacking Camp 15. The surviving tribe members would be furious and determined to fight back against whoever they thought had done this to them. But if Horizon Imports really wanted to poison the lizardfolk, why wouldn't they use unmarked vials? Also, the trails leading in the direction of Camp 15 are just too obvious. Either the people from Horizon Imports are the worst saboteurs ever, or someone is trying to frame them.

This directly unlocks Perception #3 if it is not already unlocked.

Nature #1 DC 10/11 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PC studies the dead plants and animals and concludes that they were killed by a highly toxic poison. Given enough time, it would be possible for this area to return to normal if no more poison is introduced, but the process by which nature cleanses itself will take many years. This unlocks Arcana and Nature #2. (It doesn't matter if the PCs complete Nature #2 before Nature #1, so feel free to present the clues in the opposite order if that fits better with what the players say they want to do.)

Nature #2 DC 10/11 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PC spends some time studying the area and sees evidence that a tribe of lizardfolk was living here until very recently. Given the quantity of dead fish and plants, the area could have supported a large number of lizardfolk quite comfortably. Many lizardfolk would have been killed from eating the tainted plants and fish, which probably explains why there are comparatively few attacking Camp 15. This unlocks Insight/Streetwise

and also suggests Perception as a good skill to try if the PCs have not already tried it.

Perception #1 DC 10/11 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PC searches the area for clues and, on a success, discovers a number of empty vials clearly marked with the symbol of Horizon Imports. These vials contain small amounts of a black, oily residue. This unlocks Arcana and Perception #2, and suggests Nature.

Perception #2 DC 10/11 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PC spots an obvious trail leading away from this area toward Camp 15. Following the trail a short distance is enough to convince the PC that someone wanted to leave a very clear path that would point the lizardfolk towards the camp itself, as well as towards the pearling and fishing grounds. The lizardfolk would have had no difficulty finding and following this trail. This unlocks Insight/Streetwise and Perception #3.

Perception #3 DC 15/16 (1 success; no maximum)

Ignoring the obvious trail, the PCs attempt to find any hidden tracks that could belong to the real poisoners. Fortunately for the PCs, the agents of Featherlight have been returning here every few days to make sure the lizardfolk aren't thinking about coming back home, so there is always a trail that is reasonably fresh (but concealed, which is why the DCs are higher).

On a success, the PCs find tracks that lead them to the Featherlight Mercantile outpost a few miles from here. On a failure, the PCs are not able to find the tracks, or are not able to follow them all the way. Once unlocked, this check may be repeated until the PCs reach 4 total successes or 3 total failures for the overall skill challenge.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the PCs either succeed or fail at the overall skill challenge.

Success: The PCs can follow the tracks to the Featherlight Mercantile base. This leads to Encounter 5.

Failure: The PCs are unable to find or unable to follow the Featherlight agents' trail. (See the Troubleshooting section of Encounter 5 for suggestions about how to keep this from ending the adventure.)

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 20 / 30 XP each for successfully completing the skill challenge.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 5: FEATHERLIGHT MERCANTILE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 2 / 4 (600 / 900
XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier.

Thomis Featherlight, Halfling Prowler (Level 3) (T)

1 Halfling Slinger (Level 3) (X1)

1 Human Mercenary (G1)

6 Halfling Stouts (Level 1) (H1 - H6)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier.

Thomis Featherlight, Halfling Prowler (Level 5) (T)

2 Halfling Slingers (Level 3) (X1, X2)

2 Human Mercenaries (G1, G2)

4 Halfling Stouts (Level 1) (H1 - H4)

The PCs have discovered the true culprit behind the attacks on Camp 15. Of course, that doesn't necessarily mean they need to do anything about it.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Following the trail from the lizardfolk tribe's poisoned hunting grounds, you plunge deeper into the woods and away from the marshy areas closest to the Lake of Steam. The going is slow, as the trail isn't much more than a series of subtle markers left in the underbrush. Finally, after a trek of several miles, you hear the sound of activity. Through the trees, you see a bustling camp filled with lots of halflings and a few humans. Tacked to one of the trees is a placard reading "Featherlight Mercantile." One of the halflings clearly seems to be in charge, issuing orders and angrily stamping his feet when his lackeys don't seem to be moving fast enough. Kind of reminds you of Daav, actually.

The way this encounter unfolds depends on how the PCs decide to make their approach. If they launch an immediate all-out assault, then it's not likely that they will be willing to hear Thomis's offer of employment, and you can proceed to roll initiative.

If, however, they decide to confirm their suspicions before attacking, then they'll need to make themselves known to the camp somehow. When that happens, Thomis will tell his men to be on guard, but will allow the PCs to approach at least to the edge (the area

indicated on the map). He doesn't let them come too close to him unless they have agreed to work for him. If the PCs try to sneak into the camp, use the normal rules for opposed Perception and Stealth checks.

Thomis Featherlight is a young adult halfling. He's eager to prove himself to his clan. He's close to achieving his goals; the lizardfolk have nearly wiped out Camp 15, and it's only a matter of time before Featherlight Mercantile will be able to move in, finish off the depleted lizardfolk, and claim the rich pearl beds and other natural resources in this area. The PCs, of course, represent a clear and present danger to that plan. So, Thomis does the natural thing: he offers to pay them to switch sides.

Here are some sample questions and answers that might come up if the PCs have a conversation with Thomis. He is a bald-faced liar (Insight DC 13/14 to see through his falsehoods) but he keeps a straight face the entire time.

Who are you? *"My name is Thomis Featherlight, merchant extraordinaire and general manager of this branch of the Featherlight Mercantile trading company. I'm sure you've heard of us. My family has extensive operations in Amn and around the Sea of Fallen Stars."* (True regarding the details of the Featherlight clan's holdings.)

What are you doing here? *"As you've no doubt noticed, there are many valuable natural resources here in the vicinity of the Lake of Steam. Featherlight Mercantile has recently established this camp to explore the potential opportunities in this area. We have as much right as any company to operate here."* (True as far as it goes, but of course it omits all the important details.)

So you have nothing to do with Camp 15 or Horizon Imports? *"Well, of course I am familiar with Horizon Imports, they are a fine company and a worthy competitor. But I certainly have no desire to interfere with their activities. The Lake of Steam is a big place. Besides, I used to work for Horizon. I have lots of fond memories of my time there."* (He's telling the truth about having worked at Horizon, but everything else is a lie.)

What do you have to say about these vials of poison we found in the nearby swamp? *"Hmm, that's quite interesting. Poison, you say? Dreadful business, poison. Our own scouts recently discovered the area you're talking about. Someone certainly seems to have gone to a lot of expense to murder all those fish. But wait, isn't this the seal of Horizon Imports on the vial? Frankly, I'm not surprised they'd stoop to such things. I've always had my questions about their business ethics. That's why I had to stop working for them. They're*

ruthless. I wouldn't put it past them to try and eliminate any possible threats to their camp sites, like, say, by poisoning a tribe of lizardfolk living in the area."

We know you were responsible for the poisoning. *"Really? That's a very serious accusation. Do you, perchance, have any evidence to back up these outrageous claims? I should warn you that my family and I take it very seriously when people cast aspersions on our honor. Very seriously."*

Basically, Thomis denies every accusation the PCs might care to make. He keeps referring to the fact that all the evidence points to Horizon Imports as being the ones behind the poisoning of the lizardfolk. Of course, all he's doing here is trying to buy time. He doesn't really expect the PCs to believe him. At some point in the conversation, preferably before combat breaks out, Thomis offers the PCs the chance to switch sides, break their contract with Horizon Imports, and come to work for him instead. He says: *"Look, look, I'm sure there is some sort of terrible misunderstanding here. But it doesn't really matter. What does matter is that you're obviously very capable individuals. Exactly the sort of folks who we prefer to work with here at Featherlight Mercantile. Why would you sully your good names by associating with a company like Horizon, anyway? I'll tell you what. Come and work for me, and whatever they're paying you, I'll do better. Much better."*

This is a legitimate offer, albeit not one that Lawful Good or Good characters are very likely to consider. Regardless, if the PCs do decide to switch sides, there is one simple task they must perform to prove their loyalty to Featherlight Mercantile: eliminate what remains of the competition. In other words, they have to finish the job the lizardfolk started, by destroying Camp 15.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: If the encounter occurs during the day, the area is brightly lit by the sun. At night, the halflings keep a few fires lit, so there is dim illumination within 5 squares of the fires shown on the map, with no natural illumination elsewhere (unless the PCs bring some).

Trees and Shrubs: Squares including foliage can provide cover. Tree trunks are blocking terrain (Athletics DC 10 to climb a tree at half speed, up to 20 feet high). The halfling stouts marked H4 and H6 begin the encounter already up in the indicated trees, from which they use their slings to make ranged attacks.

Stream: A small stream runs alongside the camp. It's not deep, but the stream squares are considered challenging terrain, costing 1 extra square of movement and requiring an Athletics check (DC 10) to move through without slipping and falling prone. A character

could also jump over the stream with an appropriate Athletics check (PH page 182). The log bridge shown on the map provides a way to cross the stream at normal speed with no Athletics check required.

Tents: Creatures can go in or out of the tents using the flaps shown on the map. The tents are treated as blocking terrain, providing cover. They are not sturdy enough to support someone trying to climb on them.

Wagon: The wagon is filled with boxes of supplies stacked six feet high. It is considered blocking terrain.

Fire Pits: The halflings keep fires going in these pits at all times. These squares are hindering terrain. A creature that enters a fire pit square takes 1d6 + 3 fire damage and ongoing 3 fire damage (save ends).

TACTICS

The halfling stouts run into melee or stay back and use their slings, as appropriate.

The human mercenaries prefer melee combat. Each picks a single foe and tries to keep that foe marked and dazed (via *press the advantage*) as much as possible.

The halfling slingers stay out of melee. They use *stone rain* at the beginning of the fight and generally use it again immediately every time it recharges. A dazed creature grants combat advantage, which lets the halfling slingers deal bonus damage, so they will always switch to a dazed target if one is available.

Thomis prefers to avoid melee, using his hand crossbow to fire poisoned crossbow bolts. However, he likes having one or two creatures (whether enemies or allies) next to him, because that allows him to take advantage of his *crowd shield* ability. If that requires him to get down and dirty with his short sword, then so be it. Thomis is not interested in laying down his life for the cause, so he tries to flee once he's bloodied, leaving his men to fend for themselves.

Remember that all the halflings, even the minions, have the *second chance* ability.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: At the low tier, remove four of the halfling stouts. At the high tier, remove one of the halfling slingers.

Six PCs: At the low tier, add a second halfling slinger (X2). At the high tier, add a third human mercenary.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter can end in a variety of different ways.

If the PCs defeat the Featherlight mercenaries, they must decide what to do with Thomis (unless he managed to escape). They could turn him over to the authorities in Ankhapur (in which case his family quickly bails him out), they could hand him over to Horizon Imports (in which case he probably gets ransomed back to his clan in exchange for some significant trade concession), they could turn him over to the lizardfolk (in which case he's dinner), or they could do just about anything else they want with him. Regardless, if the PCs take down the Featherlight operation, saving Camp 15, they earn the *Respect of Horizon Imports* story object and cannot earn the *Featherlight Ally* story object. Thomis's fate is also one of the adventure questions.

If the PCs side with Thomis, then you can either simply let the players describe how they wipe out Camp 15 (and what they do with Erich, Daav, and the other people at the camp) or you can actually play out the battle. The humans are battered and beaten, but they find a way to rise to the occasion and challenge the betrayer PCs rather than just lying down and dying. Use the map from Encounter 2B, but use the stat blocks from this encounter. Change all the halflings to humans (which doesn't alter their stat blocks dramatically; remove *second chance* and *nimble reaction*, and give them +1 to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will to make up for it). Erich becomes the prowler, and Daav is probably one of the minions. If the PCs successfully destroy Camp 15 and report back to Thomis, they earn the *Featherlight Ally* story object, and they cannot earn the *Respect of Horizon Imports* story object regardless of what they might have done earlier in the adventure.

If the PCs are defeated in this encounter, either by the Featherlight halflings or by the defenders of Camp 15, then their bodies end up floating in the Lake of Steam. Eventually they are recovered by a fisherman and dumped back at Ankhapur where they can choose from among the various campaign options for returning from the dead.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 120 / 180 experience points each for defeating the Featherlight operatives, or for destroying Camp 15.

TREASURE

Among the supplies in the wagon, the PCs discover engraving tools, a copy of the Horizon Imports logo, and blank vials filled with the same poison that they found in Encounter 4. (If a PC was able to successfully identify a sample of the poison during the skill challenge, that character can confirm that this is an exact match.)

Thomis keeps his operating funds in the treasure chest at the back of the camp. It is locked (Thievery DC 20) but not trapped. The chest contains 45 / 60 gp per PC. This is the same reward that Thomis offers the PCs if they switch sides and help him eliminate Camp 15, so they should get this treasure either way, unless they are defeated.

Thomis carries a *quicksilver blade* +1. One of the halfling slingers wields a *rebounding weapon* +1. One of the human mercenaries wears *executioner's bracers* (high-level only). See the New Rules section for details on these magic items. If the PCs side with Featherlight instead of Horizon, Thomis gives these items to the PCs, but only after they have destroyed Camp 15.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The main thing that can go wrong is if the PCs fail the skill challenge in Encounter 4. If this happens, they do not discover the location of Featherlight Mercantile's base of operations. There are several ways you can get around this problem. If the PCs have negotiated a peaceful settlement with the lizardfolk, then some of the lizardfolk trackers might discover the hidden trail and tell the PCs about the "short pink-skin tribe" they found. Alternatively, Thomis might get sick of waiting for the lizardfolk to finish off Camp 15, and decide to do the job himself, bringing his forces from Encounter 5 to bear in a direct assault. This would work like Encounter 2B but using the stat blocks from Encounter 5. Or, you can just give the PCs another crack at the skill challenge, perhaps after a few more days have passed.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure isn't over until the PCs have dealt with both the lizardfolk situation and resolved the conflict between Horizon Imports and Featherlight Mercantile. Once the fate of Camp 15 has been determined, the PCs can either continue to the conclusion of their convoy job with Daav (if they're still working for Horizon) or head off to their next adventure in the employ of Thomis Featherlight (if they switched sides).

The PCs' final employer (regardless of whether it is Horizon Imports or Featherlight Mercantile) makes a few additional magic items available to the PCs if they have completed their assignment successfully. The items are an *aftershock weapon* +1, an *amulet of double fortune* +1 and a suit of *armor of sudden recovery* +1 (high-level only). See the New Rules appendix for details. If for some reason the PCs do not end up either rescuing or destroying Camp 15, perhaps because they are all defeated in combat, then they do not gain access to these treasure bundles.

ENCOUNTER 5: "FEATHERLIGHT MERCANTILE" STATISTICS (LOW TIER)

Halfling Prowler (Level 3)	Level 3 Lurker
Small natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +6	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects	
Speed 6	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦Poison, Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the halfling prowler makes a secondary attack.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +5 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 3 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
R Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the halfling prowler makes a secondary attack.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +5 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 3 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
Catfall	
If the halfling prowler falls, reduce the distance it falls by 20 feet when determining how much damage it takes.	
Crowd Shield	
The halfling prowler gains a +2 bonus to its AC and Reflex defense if it has one creature adjacent to it, or a +4 bonus if two or more creatures are adjacent to it.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling prowler forces the attacker to reroll the attack roll and take the new result.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +7, Stealth +10, Streetwise +8, Thievery +12	
Str 12 (+2) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 10 (+1)	
Con 10 (+1) Int 10 (+1) Cha 15 (+3)	
Equipment leather armor, thieves' tools, crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, short sword	

Halfling Stout (Level 1)	Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid	XP 25
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +4	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 13	
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects	
Speed 6	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
r Sling (standard; at-will) ✦Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling stout forces the attacker to reroll the attack roll and take the new result.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Thievery +9	
Str 11 (+0) Dex 15 (+2) Wis 9 (-1)	
Con 10 (+0) Int 10 (+0) Cha 14 (+2)	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, sling	

Halfling Slinger (Level 3)	Level 3 Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +6	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects	
Speed 6	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
r Sling (standard; at-will) ✦Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.	
R Stone Rain (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦Weapon	
The halfling slinger makes three sling attacks, each with a -2 penalty to the attack roll.	
Combat Advantage	
The halfling slinger deals an extra 1d6 damage on ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling slinger forces the attacker to reroll the attack roll and take the new result.	
Sniper	
A hidden halfling slinger that misses with a ranged attack remains hidden.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +10, Thievery +12	
Str 12 (+2) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 11 (+1)	
Con 10 (+1) Int 10 (+1) Cha 14 (+3)	
Equipment leather armor, dagger, sling	

Human Mercenary	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +6	
HP 47; Bloodied 23	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Speed 5	
m Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage and the target is marked until the end of the human mercenary's next turn.	
M Press the Advantage (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦Weapon	
Requires longsword; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and dazed (save ends).	
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common	
Skills Streetwise +7	
Str 16 (+4) Dex 14 (+3) Wis 11 (+1)	
Con 15 (+3) Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)	
Equipment chainmail, crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, longsword	

ENCOUNTER 5: "FEATHERLIGHT MERCANTILE" STATISTICS (HIGH TIER)

Halfling Prowler (Level 5)	Level 5 Lurker
Small natural humanoid	XP 200
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +7	
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 14	
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects	
Speed 6	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the halfling prowler makes a secondary attack.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +7 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 3 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
R Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the halfling prowler makes a secondary attack.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +7 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 3 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
Catfall	
If the halfling prowler falls, reduce the distance it falls by 20 feet when determining how much damage it takes.	
Crowd Shield	
The halfling prowler gains a +2 bonus to its AC and Reflex defense if it has one creature adjacent to it, or a +4 bonus if two or more creatures are adjacent to it.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling prowler forces the attacker to reroll the attack roll and take the new result.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +8, Stealth +11, Streetwise +9, Thievery +13	
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 10 (+2)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 15 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, thieves' tools, crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, short sword	

Halfling Stout (Level 1)	Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid	XP 25
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +4	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 13	
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects	
Speed 6	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
r Sling (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling stout forces the attacker to reroll the attack roll and take the new result.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Thievery +9	
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 15 (+2) Wis 9 (-1)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 10 (+0) Cha 14 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, sling	

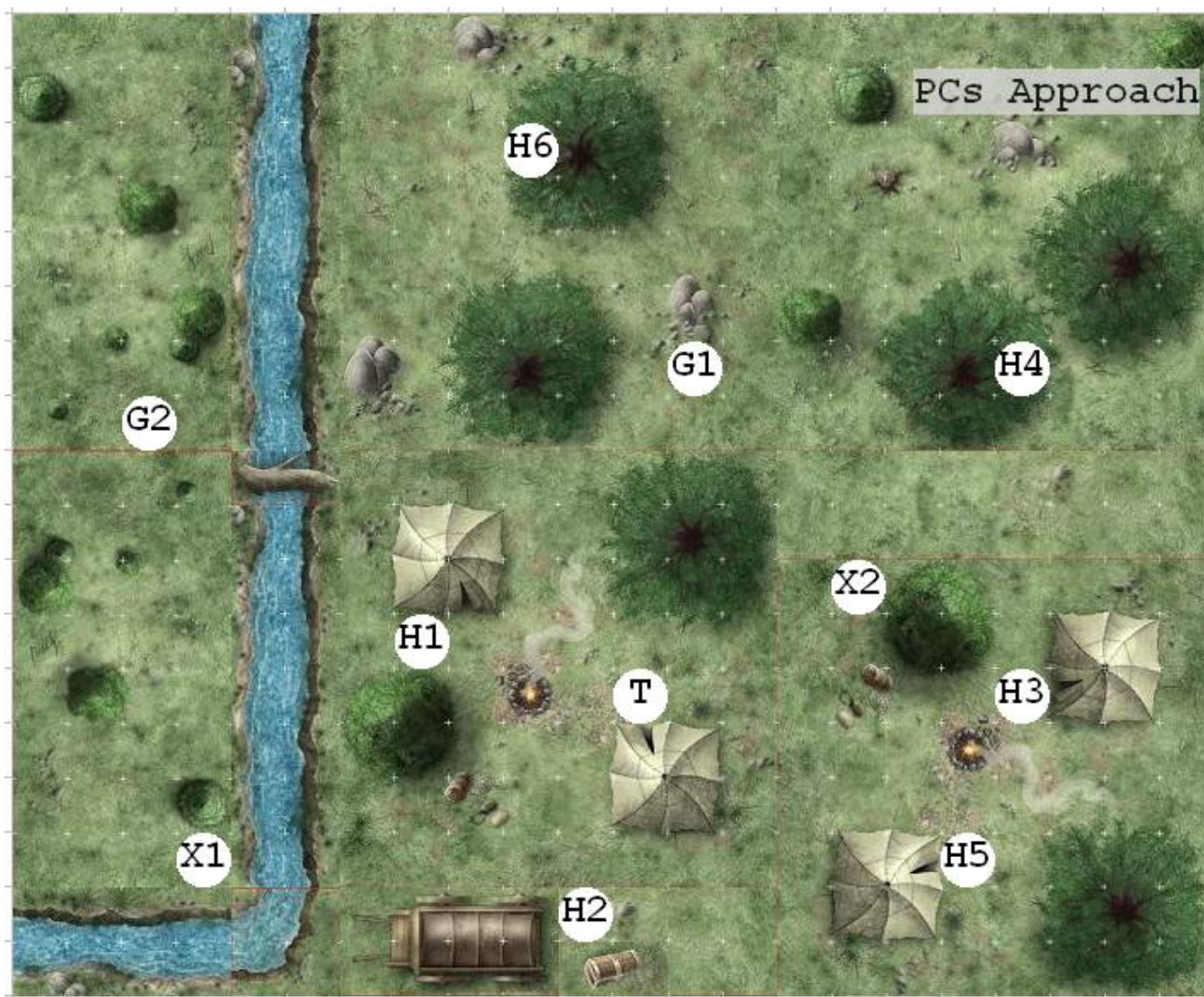
Halfling Slinger (Level 3)	Level 3 Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +6	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects	
Speed 6	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
r Sling (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 10/20; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.	
R Stone Rain (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Weapon	
The halfling slinger makes three sling attacks, each with a -2 penalty to the attack roll.	
Combat Advantage	
The halfling slinger deals an extra 1d6 damage on ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling slinger forces the attacker to reroll the attack roll and take the new result.	
Sniper	
A hidden halfling slinger that misses with a ranged attack remains hidden.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +10, Thievery +12	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 14 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, dagger, sling	

Human Mercenary	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +6	
HP 47; Bloodied 23	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Speed 5	
m Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage and the target is marked until the end of the human mercenary's next turn.	
M Press the Advantage (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Weapon	
Requires longsword; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and dazed (save ends).	
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common	
Skills Streetwise +7	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, longsword	

ENCOUNTER 5: "FEATHERLIGHT MERCANTILE" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x2



REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 2A: The Fishery OR

Encounter 2B: Defend the Camp

125 / 175 XP

Encounter 3: A Marshy Homecoming

135 / 175 XP

Encounter 4: Tracking the Real Threat

20 / 30 XP

Encounter 5: Featherlight Mercantile

120 / 180 XP

Total Possible Experience

400 / 560 XP

Gold per PC

75 / 100 gp

(Encounter 1: 30 / 40 gp, Encounter 5: 45 / 60 gp)

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *aftershock weapon +1* (2nd level, AV2)

Found in the Conclusion

Bundle B: *quicksilver blade +1* (2nd level, AV2)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle C: *rebounding weapon +1* (2nd level, AV2)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle D: *amulet of double fortune +1* (2nd level, AV2)

Found in the Conclusion

Bundle E: *amulet of elegy +1* (2nd level, AV2)

Found in Encounter 3

Bundle F: *badge of the berserker +1* (2nd level, AV2)

Found in Encounter 2A or 2B

Bundle G: *armor of sudden recovery +1* (3rd level, AV2) (high-level only)

Found in the Conclusion

Bundle H: *executioner's bracers* (3rd level, AV2) (high-level only)

Found in Encounter 5

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of healing* plus 0 / 25 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose

to add 50 / 75 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards.

Note that the two story awards in this adventure are mutually exclusive. It is possible for the PCs to earn zero awards (if they betray Horizon Imports and also do not complete their mission for Featherlight Mercantile), but it is not possible for them to earn both awards.

CORE26 Respect of Horizon Imports

You fulfilled the terms of your contract, and even went above and beyond the call of duty. This has earned you the respect of Horizon Imports, a trading coster based in the city of Ankhapur. Should ever find yourself in need of future employment, Horizon Imports would be more than happy to have you work for them again. They also have factors stationed in the major trade hubs of Athkatla, Baldur's Gate, Westgate, and Waterdeep, who might be able to assist you (DM's discretion) with gathering information, finding unusual items, or other tasks relating to commerce and trade.

You have also earned the enmity of Featherlight Mercantile, one of Horizon's rivals. The halflings of the Featherlight clan may someday seek revenge upon you for your actions.

CORE27 Featherlight Ally

You aided Thomis Featherlight, self-described halfling merchant extraordinaire, with his efforts to secure a supply of pearls from the area near the Lake of Steam. The Featherlight halfling clan is grateful to you. They have contacts in the large halfling communities within the nation of Amn and all along the Sea of Fallen Stars who might be able to assist you in various ways (DM's discretion) if you approach them properly. Featherlight Mercantile tends to be quite ruthless in its approach to commerce, which is a reflection of the sometimes unsavory nature of the Featherlight clan itself. Thus, their assistance will tend towards those types of things that you might not necessarily want the local authorities to know about.

You have also earned the enmity of Horizon Imports, one of Featherlight's rivals. The members of Horizon Imports may someday seek revenge upon you for your actions.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

1. With whom did the PCs side in this adventure?

- a. Horizon Imports.
- b. Featherlight Mercantile.
- c. Neither; the PCs did not advance the agenda of either trading coster.

2. What was the fate of Camp 15?

- a. The lizardfolk destroyed the camp.
- b. The PCs destroyed the camp, acting as agents of Featherlight Mercantile.
- c. The PCs defended the camp successfully.

3. What was the fate of the halfling Thomis Featherlight?

- a. Thomis became the PCs' new employer.
- b. The PCs captured Thomis and turned him over to the authorities in Ankhapur.
- c. The PCs captured Thomis and turned him over to Horizon Imports.
- d. The PCs killed Thomis.
- e. Thomis escaped during the battle and his whereabouts are currently unknown.

4. What was the fate of the lizardfolk tribe?

- a. The PCs wiped the lizardfolk out to the last egg.
- b. The PCs killed some of the lizardfolk but ultimately negotiated a truce.
- c. The PCs went out of their way to avoid killing lizardfolk and were able to secure a peaceful settlement between the tribe and Camp 15.
- d. Some other outcome not described by the other options (such as the PCs finding the lizardfolk a new hunting ground far away from the area).

NEW RULES

All of the new magic items in this adventure come from the *Adventurer's Vault 2* sourcebook.

Aftershock Weapon +1

Level 2

This weapon sends ripples of force toward nearby foes.

Lvl 2 +1 (520 gp)

Weapon: Any

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, and each enemy adjacent to the target of the critical hit is knocked prone.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 15.

Amulet of Double Fortune +1

Level 2

Good luck begets even better luck when you wear this amulet.

Lvl 2 +1 (520 gp)

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: When you score a critical hit, you make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end. You gain an item bonus to that saving throw equal to the amulet's enhancement bonus.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 63.

Amulet of Elegy +1

Level 2

This amulet allows you to infuse your voice with a sadness that grips the hearts of your foes.

Lvl 2 +1 (520 gp)

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a power to produce an effect that a save can end. *Effect:* Each target of the power takes a penalty to its first saving throw against the effect equal to the amulet's enhancement bonus.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 63.

Armor of Sudden Recovery +1

Level 3

You shrug off deadly conditions easily in this supple armor.

Lvl 3 +1 (680 gp)

A armor: Cloth, leather

Enhancement: AC

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to saving throws against ongoing damage.

Power (Daily, Healing): Minor Action. You can use this power when you're taking ongoing damage. The ongoing damage ends, and you gain regeneration equal to the amount of the ongoing damage until the end of the encounter.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 6.

Badge of the Berserker +1

Level 2

This fearsome badge, crafted from bits of bone and leathery flesh, is favored by those who savor taking the fight to the enemy.

Lvl 2 +1 (520 gp)

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: When you charge, your movement made as part of the charge doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 64.

Executioner's Bracers

Level 3

These ornamental gold bracers help you to hit harder.

Lvl 3 (680 gp)

Item Slot: Arms

Property: When you score a critical hit, the attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 54.

Quicksilver Blade +1

Level 2

This weapon seems to move too quickly to be seen, and it imparts that ability to you.

Lvl 2 +1 (520 gp)

Weapon: Light blade

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Property: You gain an item bonus to initiative checks equal to the blade's enhancement bonus.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit with this weapon. *Effect:* You gain a move action that you must use before the end of your turn.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 21.

Rebounding Weapon +1

Level 2

You meant to do that. No, really.

Lvl 2 +1 (520 gp)

Weapon: Any ranged

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Power (Encounter): Free Action. *Trigger:* You attack an enemy with this weapon and miss. *Effect:* You make a ranged basic attack against a different enemy within 5 squares of that enemy.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 21.