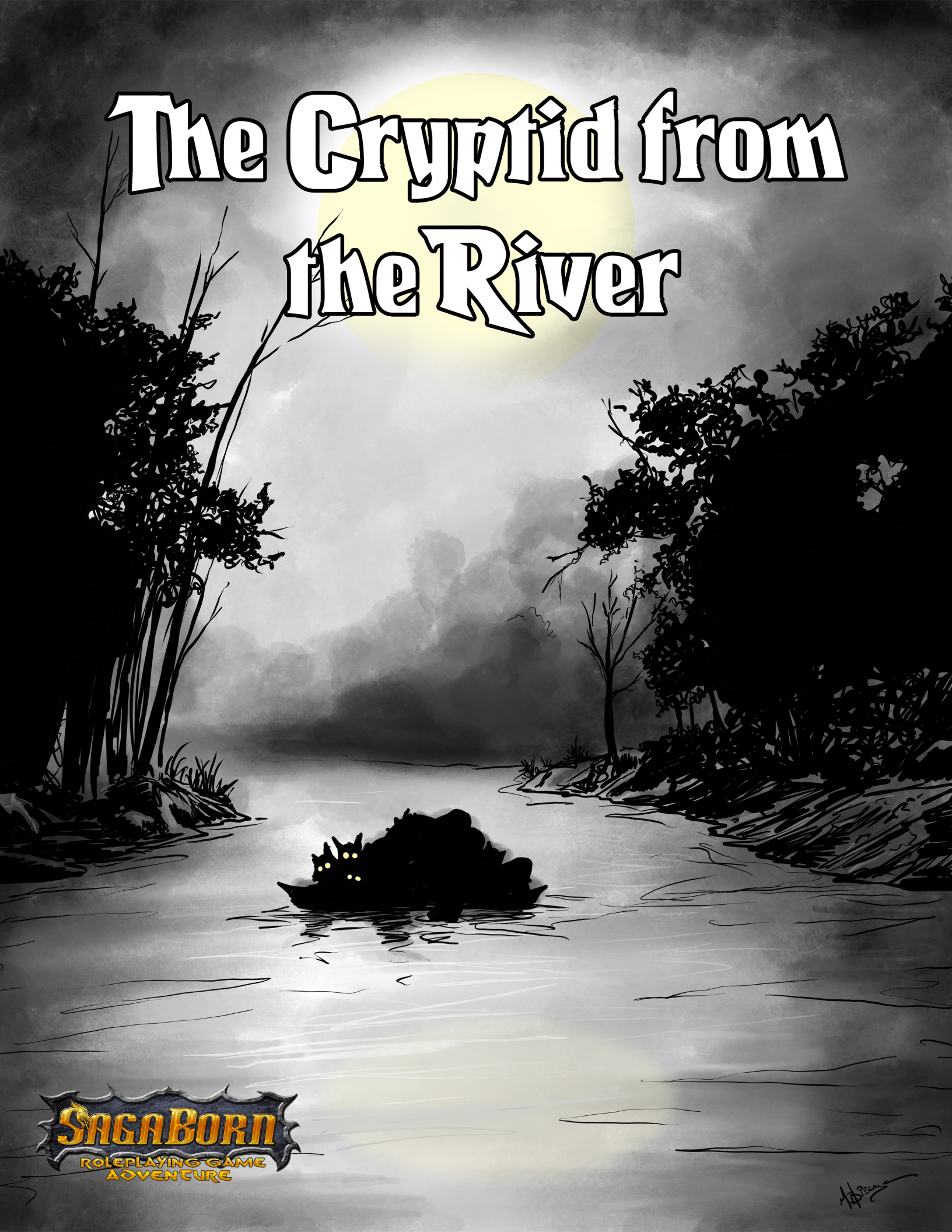


The Cryptid from the River



SAGABORN
ROLEPLAYING GAME
ADVENTURE

Handwritten signature

The Cryptid from the River

a Dark Return, SagaBorn 1.5 Compatible adventure module
by Michael Bielaczyc

Edited by Dane Clark Collins
Cover by Michael Bielaczyc
Interior Art and Maps by Michael Bielaczyc

Sagaborn Roleplaying System is published by Lone Wanderer Entertainment under the Open Game License version 1.0a Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and under license from Lone Wanderer Entertainment. Lone Wanderer Entertainment and the Lone Wanderer Entertainment logo are trademarks of Lone Wanderer Entertainment. © 2023 Lone Wanderer Entertainment.



INTRODUCTION

The Setting

Pacov is a small village along the Weron River, northeast of the large city of Kowal and southeast of the small city of Fort Utliest. It is far enough away to be mostly left alone by officials from both places, leaving its residents to solve most of their own problems.

Overall, it is a lawful settlement, and thanks to the owner of the local tavern and her library, a rather well-educated village. They are not fond of magic, though they are not outright violent against those caught practicing. They are a superstitious lot, but no wonder, seeing that these days, people can pull fire from mid-air or a “demon” may wander in from the black depths of Lesh Forest.

You should present Pacov like the villages featured in many old vampire and werewolf films, though the citizens are more educated and capable than the villagers in those old movies.

STORYGUIDE SYNOPSIS

This adventure is about a local “cryptid” and a group of bandits pinning their crimes on the legend. Paddy (see more below) is not actually a cryptid but an ogre accompanied by a band of droggas. The ogre is smarter than most average ogres. He usually lays low because he doesn’t want to be hunted down by locals and pushed out of his comfortable den. He and his little droggas will attack the occasional traveling merchant, but they try to keep their raids rare. Their lair is across the river in the wetlands, so they spend most of their time gathering resources there or deeper in the Lesh forest.

About two months ago, a group of bandits took residence in an abandoned hunting lodge. They hatched a plan to impersonate Paddy and conduct raids on the eastern road and local farms.

This worked for a while...until Paddy found out. The ogre and his minions attacked the bandits as they attacked a merchant! In the chaos, the merchant escaped back to Pacov, claiming there were two monsters on the eastern road!

The people of Pacov feel it is time for someone to investigate and handle this problem.

WHO SHOULD PLAY?

This is a SagaBorn Roleplaying Game compatible adventure for 4-6 characters of 2nd to 4th level.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

This adventure, some friends, the SagaBorn Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook (free PDF and SRD at <https://www.sagaborn.com/games/sagaborn-rpg/>), some refreshments, and you are ready to go. Some dice may help, too.

WHAT CAMPAIGN SETTING IS APPROPRIATE?

Though intended to be set in the Dark Return setting, this adventure can easily be adapted to fit in any fantasy RPG setting, though will fit most readily in a “low fantasy” setting or remote region of a world, where the inhabitants have not had much exposure to magic or non-human NPCs. An experienced Gamemaster (called a StoryGuide in SagaBorn) should have no difficulty converting the module for play in another campaign world or alternate TTRPG system.



The Adventure

HISTORY (PLAYER KNOWLEDGE)

Stories from the Road

For a while now, strange stories have been told of a monster on the eastern road along the Weron River. Claims are sometimes made of a monster attacking travelers, but the threat has always seemed distant until recently.

Paddy is the name the locals have given the cryptid. They say he lives in the river, floating to the top and paddling along the water with his long arms. He has multiple heads and many little, round eyes. He doesn't bother any locals who leave out offerings for him, but every so often, he will waylay a traveling merchant.

Lately, there have been more stories of raids on local farm stockpiles, and more and more merchants are going missing.

A DARK NIGHT IN THE PEWTER POT

Adventure Hooks:

- The adventurers could be in the tavern when the merchant bursts in.
- The adventurers could be called to the tavern by the innkeeper to help.

THE MERCHANT IN PACOV

A merchant and his caravan were attacked on the side of the road heading east. The monster had many heads and arms ending in blades. As his guards fought it back, a second monster came crashing out of the woods. The merchant saw an opening and ran into the woods. He made his way back to Pacov as quickly as he could.

THE MERCHANT: GALVENT

"There's two of em!" he rants for the third time.

History

Galvent has been plying the road between Uthgard and Tiren since he was twenty. In his twenty-three years on the road, he has seen a lot, but this has rattled him.

His trades are mainly cloth and spices.



What he wants

Galvent had a load of heavy Uthgard wools he was excited to trade. All he wants is to finally gather enough coin to retire to a small house in Tiren.

His knowledge

- He and his crew were setting up camp when the multi-headed monster burst from the woods and started attacking.
- It was a horrible furry slug creature with many sword-tipped arms and heads with giant eyes.
- It was overwhelming his guards, and then the second monster burst from the forest. That's when Galvent ran, leaving his crew behind.

THE FISHERMAN: TIBAUT

History

Tibaut is a fisherman along the Weron River. He normally sells his excess fish to the Pewter Pot. He is known to enjoy his wine and often tells tall tales his pa used to tell him.

He has often talked about Paddy, as he has seen him on two occasions, but most think it's another of his tall tales.

What They Want

Tibaut is content to not get involved in most things, but when he hears a party is going after the monster, he grows excited. He wants to help because he wants to prove he's been telling the truth.

Knowledge

- “I ain’t never heard no one say that Paddy had swords for arms. Not sayin’ it ain’t true, but that seems a little much for me.”
- Paddy normally attacks at night, scaring the merchants or trapping them in a net woven of reeds. “He don’ normally hurt ‘em much, jus’ takes their stuff and heads back into the river.”
- “I seen ‘im, twice now. Out on the river late at night, it’s jus’ paddlin’ across with its giant long arms. Floatin’ like a massive log. I’d think it jus’ one of those alligators they talk about from the south, but it always turns its eyes on me. All those little round eyes. Well, I ain’t stickin’ around much when I see those! I turn tail and paddle back the way I came!”



Tibaut

THE INNKEEPER: ESTERA PRAKS

History

Estera is well studied and was going to become a Librarian in Kowal until she met her husband Krasmir. She settled down in Pacov as he took over as mayor. She has maintained her love for books, and her inn, the Pewter Pot, contains a substantial personal library.

She owns a copy of the Creature Compendium by Etahn Belbane and Delgon that she studies regularly. She has learned a great deal about the lore of local monsters, and she does not believe in Paddy.



Estera

What They Want

Estera wants her village to be safe but also distrusts superstitions. She believes in things when they are documented and studied.

Knowledge

- “None of the books I’ve read speak of a creature like this Paddy. I am not saying it isn’t real, but it’s odd that it seems to just come and go.”
- “Someone should investigate, but they should study up before they go.”

On The Hunt

The obvious place to start is east along the road. About half a day's hike from Pacov, the adventurers find a scene of carnage.

DEAD BANDITS

The merchant's camp lies in ruins. The wagon is overturned, the tent torn, and the two guards slain. A strange blob lies off to the side of the camp. On closer inspection, it is many cowhides stitched together and covered in muck and moss. A few arms still poke out of it, clutching rusted short swords. Under it lay the corpses of the bandits, showing signs of both crushing blows and small cuts.

A DC 15 Survival or Awareness check shows that something dragged itself from under the hide costume and away from the scene. The same check will also show multiple footprints, including a very large set, moving back to the river. If the roll is 20 or more, they'll know that the large footprints are that of an ogre or troll.



Delincie

THE BANDIT: DELINCIE

History

Delincie is from Kowal, but being down on her luck, she went on the road to find fame and fortune. She

found neither, but four months ago, she met this lot. She helped hatch the plan to frame the ogre for their crimes.

What They Want

She wanted coin, but now she just wants to live. She was horrified by the attack from Paddy and just wants to go back to the city.

Knowledge

- Their hideout is in an abandoned hunting shack to the North. Most of their stolen goods are there.
- Paddy rose up out of the water, taller than most men, and began beating everyone into the ground with a stone-topped club. Then small demons (the droggas) swarmed from under the monster and started slashing at everyone's ankles!
- That creature killed all my friends, I laid down and pretended to be dead until it lumbered off.
- When it was all done, they became one shadow on the water and slowly paddled into the darkness across the river.

PADDY AND THE LAIR

To find Paddy's lair, the adventurers must make it over the river and then explore the nearby wetlands. A Skill Challenge will resolve how they discover the lair.

5 Skill checks, DC 15

- 5 successes:** The lair is found with no issues, the adventurers gain surprise against the inhabitants, and they observe the inhabitants undetected, gaining some useful knowledge.
- 4:** The lair is found with no issues, and the adventurers gain surprise against the inhabitants.
- 3:** The lair is found with no issues.
- 2:** The lair is found, but the adventurers run across a drogga trap (see traps below).
- 0-1:** The lair is found, but the adventurers run across 2 traps, one of them alerting the inhabitants.

Observation

If the adventurers get to observe, they see that Paddy and the droggas have a pretty normal schedule. They wake up and eat together. The droggas then hunt and fish in the swamps, and the night is ended with a bit of drink and a few bawdy songs.

Traps

The traps are CR 2, and if the players rolled poorly on the Skill Challenge, the final trap will have a bell that rings no matter what.

Example CR 2 Traps

Arrow Trap: CR 2, DC20 (Awareness, Thievery to disarm), Arrow +12 (2d6)

Pit Trap: CR 2, DC20 (Awareness, Thievery to disarm), 15' fall (2d6)

PADDY'S LAIR

An old silver mine, its original owner long lost or deceased, is carved into a small hill in the swamp. It still has many deep veins of silver ore ready to be mined.

1. ENTRANCE

A large hole is easily visible on the northern side of the hill. Tracks of both the ogre and droggas go in and out of the entrance.

2. TRAPPED HALL

Droggas love their traps. There are two traps here. One is a simple trip wire to a bell. The second is a rusty spear trap with a pressure plate (see below).

Trap 1: Alarm: CR1/2, DC12 (Awareness, Thievery to disarm)

Trap 2: Spear Trap: CR 2, DC20 (Awareness, Thievery to disarm), Spear +12 (2d6)

3. THE MOLDY ROOM

A silver ore vein ends here in a musty smelling room. It is covered in a brown mold from edge to edge.

Brown Fungus CR1

When tread upon, Brown Fungus explodes all over the character who disturbed it and any others within a 15' radius. It causes blindness and choking. Any character coming in contact with the spores must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to resist. If the adventurers carry any consumables, they will become infected with the spores. After 1d4 days, their food will become infected with Brown Fungus. Food is rendered

inedible, and other organic material must be washed with a detergent or bleach, or it will continue to fester the fungus.

4. THE BLOOD SUCKERS

This damp room is home to a small group of pyrgs, large mosquito-like creatures. Paddy and the droggas avoid them by smearing a minty herb from the hilltop, which the pyrgs find unpleasant and avoid.

(4) Pyrg

See Creature Compendium or www.darkreturn.com/encyclopedia/creature-compendium/

5. THE SWAMP HOME

This large room has been made as comfortable as possible for an ogre and his tiny minions. Paddy sleeps in a large bed, and the droggas in small bedrolls at his feet. Their treasure is hidden in oilskin-lined crates under the giant bed.

PADDY

The ogre's name is actually Kulgil, but he is aware of his nickname and will respond to it.

History

Kulgil moved here from the northern lands to avoid the harsh winters. He found this abandoned silver mine and made it home. He is not openly hostile to others and will be open to conversation. If he or his little companions are threatened, he has no issue resolving the conflict with violence.

What They Want

Kulgil enjoys this home and will, if pressured by the adventurers, begrudgingly agree to not attack any more caravans. He and his droggas enjoy some of the finer things they have gotten from merchants. Offering him future trade deals with goods such as wine or foods will make him more likely to make a deal.

If anything seems threatening, he will quickly anger. He is a strong and cunning foe, gaining +1 to attacks and initiative while at home.

Ogre (CR3): Paddy / Kulgil

Paddy has a higher Intelligence (+1) than most ogres, but otherwise, he is a typical ogre.

See Creature Compendium or www.darkreturn.com/encyclopedia/creature-compendium/

(5) Droggas (CR 1/4)

See Creature Compendium or www.darkreturn.com/encyclopedia/creature-compendium/

Treasure

28 gp

513 sp

1 set of masterwork chainmail

2 masterwork longswords

2 masterwork shields

1 tritium shield

10 healing salves

Spyglass

1 keg of vodka

15 bolts of Uthgard wool

2 barrels of Tiren wine

Detailed map of Tiren

Detailed map of Uthgard

CONCLUSION

After Paddy is dealt with or a deal has been struck, returning to Pacov with the story makes for happy citizens. If the adventurers return Galvent's wool to him, he will reward them with 100 GP. If the StoryGuide wishes, this would also be a good time to award Renown or an Expertise point.





1. The Entrance
2. Trapped Hall
3. The Moldy Room
4. The Blood Suckers
5. The Swamp Home

Character Gallery

DELENCIE: ROGUE 3

Class/Level: 3

Challenge Rating: 2

Size: M

Initiative: +4

Defense

Hit Points: 19 (3d8+3)

Armor Class: 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 DEX, +3 Armor, Shield +1)

Offense

Speed: 30 ft

Base Attack: +3

Melee: Short Sword +8 (1d6+3); or Dagger +7 (1d4+2);

Ranged: Dagger +7 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack (+2d6)

Statistics

Abilities: STR +2, DEX +4, CON +1, INT -1, WIS +1, CHA +0

Skills: Acrobatics +5, Athletics +2, Awareness +4, Endurance +1, Knowledge +0, Persuasion +2, Spellcraft +0, Survival +4, Thievery +8 (+10 Hide, Sneak, Move Silently)

Talents: 3 points or recommended: Stealthy, Weapon Specialty (Short Sword), and Weapon Dexterity

Special Qualities: Evasion, Artful Dodger, Trapfinding, Incredible Dodge

Equipment:

Standard, Studded Leather armor, Buckler Shield, Short Sword, Dagger, Thief's Picks, Piton, Vial of Acid, Lantern Hooded, Silk Rope (100'), Grappling hook

ESTERA: COMMONER

Challenge Rating: 1/3

Size: M

Initiative: 0

Defense

Hit Points: 3 (1d4)

Armor Class: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (+0)

Offense

Speed: 30 ft.

Base Attack: +0

Melee: Club +0 (1d6-2)

Ranged:

Special Attacks:

Statistics

Abilities: STR -2, DEX 0, CON +1, INT +2, WIS +1, CHA 0

Skills: Acrobatics (Reflex) 0, Athletics -2, Awareness +2, Endurance (Fortitude) +2, Knowledge +3, Persuasion 0, Spellcraft -, Survival (Will) +2, Thievery 0

GALVENT: COMMONER

Challenge Rating: 1/3

Size: M

Initiative: 0

Defense

Hit Points: 3 (1d4)

Armor Class: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (+0)

Offense

Speed: 30 ft.

Base Attack: +0

Melee: Club +0 (1d6-2)

Ranged:

Special Attacks:

Statistics

Abilities: STR 0, DEX 0, CON +1, INT 0, WIS +1, CHA +2

Skills: Acrobatics (Reflex) 0, Athletics -2, Awareness +2, Endurance (Fortitude) +2, Knowledge 1, Persuasion +2, Spellcraft -, Survival (Will) +2, Thievery 0

TIBAUT: COMMONER

Challenge Rating: 1/3
Size: M

Initiative: 0

Defense

Hit Points: 3 (1d4)
Armor Class: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (+0)

Offense

Speed: 30 ft.
Base Attack: +0
Melee: Club +0 (1d6)
Ranged:
Special Attacks:

Statistics

Abilities: STR 0, DEX +1, CON +1, INT -1, WIS +1, CHA 0

Skills: Acrobatics (Reflex) 0, Athletics 0, Awareness +2, Endurance (Fortitude) +2, Knowledge +1, Persuasion 0, Spellcraft -, Survival (Will) +2, Thievery 0

Creature Compendium

OGRE

Challenge Rating: 3

Size: Large

Type: Humanoid (Giant)

Initiative: -1

DEFENSE

Hit Points: 30 (4HD: 4d8+12)

Armor Class: 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (+3 hide armor, -1 DEX, +5 natural, -1 size)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +3

Weaknesses: —

OFFENSE

Speed: 40 ft.

Base Attack: +3

Melee: Greatclub +7 melee (2d8+7)

Ranged: Javelin +1 ranged (1d8+5)

Special Attacks: —

Horror Effects: —

STATISTICS

Abilities: STR +5, DEX -1, CON +3, INT -2, WIS +0, CHA -2

Skills: Acrobatics +0, Athletics +5, Awareness +2, Endurance +3, Knowledge -2, Persuasion -2, Spellcraft +0, Survival +0, Thievery -1

Talents: 1 point or recommended: Take a Hit

Special Qualities: DR/1, Darkvision 60 ft., Low-Light Vision

ECOLOGY

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Gang 3-8

Treasure: Standard

DROGGA

Challenge Rating: 1/4

Size: Small

Type: Navirite (Fey)

Initiative: +1

DEFENSE

Hit Points: 5 (1HD: 1d10)

Armor Class: 16 touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+1 DEX, +3 Natural, +1 size, +1 Dodge)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1

Weaknesses: Cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed: 20 ft.

Base Attack: +1

Melee: 2 claws +2 (1d3) or Rusty Dagger +2 (1d4)

Ranged: Sling +3 (1d3)

Special Attacks:

STATISTICS

Abilities: STR +0, DEX +1, CON +0, INT -1, WIS -1, CHA -2

Skills: Acrobatics +1, Athletics +0, Awareness -1, Endurance +0, Knowledge -1, Persuasion -2, Spellcraft -1, Survival -1, Thievery +1

Talents: 1 point or recommended: Dodge

Special Qualities: Darkvision 80 ft., Light Sensitivity

ECOLOGY

Environment: Underground, forest.

Organization: Single Scout, Hunting Party 2-6, Tribe 6-18

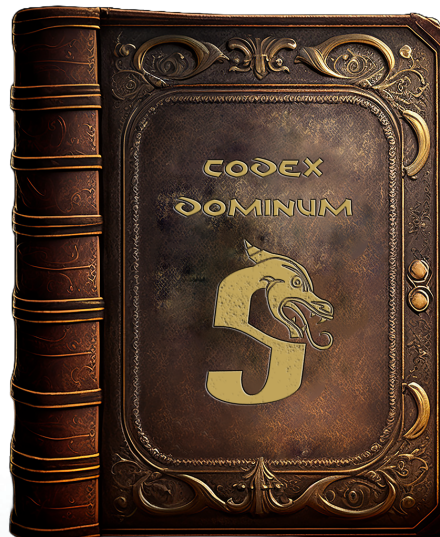
Treasure: Personal gear, shiny objects.

GET MORE FROM YOUR GAME

The Codex Dominum, Master Book of Stories, contains all the knowledge needed for a Gamemaster to run the best tabletop games for their players.

A free resource at:

SAGABORN.COM





JOIN THE ADVENTURE

**EXPLORE THE WORLD OF SAGA BORN AT
DARKRETURN.COM**