

ISSUE 213 | APRIL 2013

DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement





Owlbear Run

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 4-6

By Christopher Perkins and Steve Townshend

Illustration by Jason Juta

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

“Owlbear Run” takes place on the trails of a forested mountain between the towns of Telvorn and Milvorn, either or both of which can be renamed to suit the needs of your campaign.

BACKGROUND

Every summer, Duke Hightower holds a competition quite different from the traditional jousting and archery tournaments held by similar lords of his station. The rules of his tournament change from year to year, and, to oversee the games, the duke has appointed two wizard brothers who help choose the setting and create the rules and challenges of the competition.

This year the competition is called the “Owlbear Run,” an overland race that requires each participating team to escort a live owlbear from the town of Telvorn to the town of Milvorn. The teams will face a variety of challenges; some are devised by the wizards, others by the competing teams or their sponsors, and some occur entirely at random. All of these

TM & © 2013 Wizards of the Coast LLC. All rights reserved.

tests are in addition to the challenges inherent in motivating a temperamental owlbear.

Fortune and fame await the first team to cross the finish line, and the local lords sponsoring the race are eager to enlist skilled champions for their causes.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

During their travels, the adventurers come to a crossroads with a signpost advertising the competition.

Assuming the characters decide to take the challenge, they proceed to the town of Telvorn, where they submit their names as contestants. The wizards Dirk and Delzar explain the rules of the competition, and then the characters select their owlbear and vie for sponsorship among the local lords.

The race is set on a wooded mountainside crisscrossed by old mining trails. The characters face a number of challenges (including encounters with other teams) on their way from Telvorn to Milvorn, all of which they must face accompanied by their owlbear.

The key to the characters' success lies in choosing the right sponsor or the right owlbear, learning how to motivate the owlbear they choose, and dealing with the other teams whose paths they cross.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

"Owlbear Run" is a nonstandard 4th Edition adventure. In the first part of the adventure, the characters roleplay and make choices that will influence the second part of the adventure, the race itself. Before you begin the adventure, be sure to familiarize yourself with the personalities and goals of the nonplayer character (NPC) team leaders, the NPC sponsors, and the owlbears. Read the sections "Running the Race" and "Dealing with Owlbears" carefully.

The race portion of "Owlbear Run" is made up of random encounters. The adventure will run

differently depending on whom the adventurers choose for their sponsor, which owlbear they choose, which teams they cross paths with, the course the party plots through the woods, and the encounters you roll or selects.

Encounter 1: The Signpost

Roleplaying Encounter

The adventure begins as the adventurers make a mundane trip from one place to another. Along the way, the characters arrive at a crossroads where they learn of the Owlbear Run.

To start, read:

During your journey, you come upon an old cottage near a crossroads. Several people gather outside the cottage as its owner, a wizened old farmer, hammers a sign into the earth at the junction. The sign reads:

GRAND TOURNEY: THE OWLBEAR RUN

DUKE HIGHTOWER SEEKS SKILLED CONTESTANTS FOR THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION. REWARDS OF GOLD, GLORY, AND FAME! INQUIRE AT THE TELVORN TOWN MARKETPLACE, SOUTH.

"This is going to be a good one," the old man says. "Last day to sign up!"

The farmer's name is Griss. He farms a small plot of land by the crossroads where he posts and delivers news. The gathered figures are typically 5–6 commoners—Griss's neighbors—interested in the news (but see the "Meeting the Competition" sidebar). Griss knows the following information about the tournament.

- ◆ Every year, Duke Hightower holds a unique and outlandish competition to test the skills of the most resourceful adventurers in the land and to

MEETING THE COMPETITION

Instead of 5–6 random commoners observing Griss's sign, you might decide to introduce one of the competing teams here and let them size up the characters and reveal the details of the competition rather than having Griss do so (see "Competing Teams"). Introducing one of the competing teams right away gives the adventurers a chance to develop early allies or rivals. Because the characters meet several NPCs when they reach Telvorn, introducing one team early lightens the next section and gives at least one other team a spotlight.

The danger of introducing the competition early is that the characters might fight or kill that team, removing it from the race and increasing the characters' odds of winning. Use this option at your discretion. If you choose to introduce a competing team at the crossroads, either choose one or roll randomly to determine which team is present.

bring commerce and wealth to the small towns of the region.

- ◆ Two wizard brothers named Dirk and Delzar design the tournament over the course of the year. Their contests can be devious and in some cases deadly to less skilled participants. Only the best of the best are encouraged to participate.
- ◆ Griss recalls five previous tournaments, including a magical obstacle course made of illusions, a subterranean race through a labyrinth of abandoned mine shafts, a sea battle between five ships and a kraken, a jaunt into the Feywild to attain a gift from the archfey, and a competition where the contestants fought one another while the wizards polymorphed them into various creatures.

- ◆ Three teams have already signed up for the Owlbear Run: Grembul's Stormhammers, Liniel's Fey Band, and Brandok's Brute Squad. If the characters ask, Griss can tell them what he knows about the leaders of each team (detailed in each "Leader" entry in "Competing Teams").
- ◆ The nobles and ambassadors of the duke's court enjoy betting against one another. In the end, the duke awards wealth, honor, and fame to the winning team.

When the characters have finished speaking to Griss or a competing team at the crossroads, proceed to **Encounter 2: Telvorn**.

Major Quest: Win the Owlbear Run

6th-Level Major Quest (250 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they take first place in the Owlbear Run.

Encounter 2: Telvorn

Roleplaying Encounter

The characters arrive in the town of Telvorn to sign up for the Owlbear Run.

As the characters head for Telvorn, read:

You take the road south to Telvorn, a small town nestled at the base of a low, sloping mountain thick with forest. Today the road to Telvorn is crowded with travelers, and the town's outskirts are lined with the tents and striped pavilions of wayfarers from abroad. In the center of town, an inn, a general store, and a church form the perimeter of a bustling market square packed with merchant stalls where money and goods swiftly change hands and the festival attendees wear garlands of flowers in their hair.

The characters can go straight to the market square or choose to explore the town first.

If they choose to explore the town, they might visit the church, the general store and stalls, the inn, the pavilions on the outskirts of town, or the owlbear pens.

When the adventurers are ready to learn the details and rules of the contest or decide to sign up, they can proceed to the market square.

Church: The church is dedicated to Avandra, goddess of change, luck, trade, and travel. The characters can pay the high priestess, Galea, to cast any ritual they can afford. For a donation of 500 gold pieces (or items of equivalent value), the high priestess gives the characters Avandra's blessing: Once during the race, a character can reroll any die result and gain a +5 modifier to the roll.

General Store and Stalls: At the general store, the characters can purchase standard equipment from the *Player's Handbook*[®]. Certain stalls of traveling merchants might offer special or magic items as you see fit.

Inn: Representatives from each competing team in the Owlbear Run can be found at various times in the Grumpy Gryphon inn and tavern. Here the characters can meet the leaders of each team and form early alliances or rivalries. See the "Competing Teams" section.

Pavilions on the Outskirts: This is where the sponsors can be found. Each sponsor has a stake in an owlbear and holds court under a pavilion in his or her own encampment. See "The Sponsors."

Owlbear Pens: The characters can view the various owlbeats available for the competition in the owlbear pens, a converted horse stable reinforced for the captive owlbeats. The individual owlbeats are detailed in "The Owlbear Pens."

When the characters go to the market square to sign up for the competition, read:

At the center of the market square stands an elevated table beneath a raised pavilion. Two portly, balding middle-aged men lounge in plush chairs behind the table, whimsical smirks on their clean-shaven faces. Upon their black velvet doublets they each wear the silver standard of Duke Hightower. The two appear to be brothers, if not identical twins.

"Last-minute entrants?" says the man on the left.

"All I see is owlbear chow," replies his twin.

The men chuckle together, and after a moment they compose themselves.

"Please state the name of your team," says the first brother as a quill pen materializes between his fingers.

"As well as your specialty," adds the second, plucking a scroll from the empty air and sliding it beneath his brother's pen.

The wizards are Dirkendrick and Delzarian Rumsharkel (known affectionately as "Dirk and Delzar" or less affectionately as the "Ramshackle Twins"), the designers of the contest. They inform the characters about the rules and details of the race. Dirk and Delzar are highly intelligent though somewhat bumbling, and they amuse one another easily. The brothers are essentially indistinguishable and interchangeable unless you want to differentiate them. If the characters ask either of the following questions, roleplay the responses below.

The characters ask what the wizards mean by "specialty." Dirk says, "It's exactly what it sounds like. What's your specialty as a team? What is it that you do?" The characters can come up with any name and specialty they want. Since it's off the cuff, don't be surprised if the players come up with something silly.

The characters ask about the duke. Dirk and Delzar tell them that their esteemed employer is busy organizing the event at the finish line in the town of Milvorn and cannot be consulted prior to the race.



The details of the contest are as follows:

- ◆ Each team must escort a live owlbear from Telvorn over the mountain to the finish line in Milvorn.
- ◆ The teams must run the race using the network of old mining trails on the mountain. No team can teleport, fly over, or circumvent the mountain. Watchers and guards will be posted to ensure that no one cheats.
- ◆ The teams can use any means at their disposal to get ahead on the trails, short of killing another contestant. Murder is grounds for disqualification and a subsequent trial.
- ◆ The entry fee is 5,000 gold pieces per team.
- ◆ The team that wins the contest wins back its entry fee plus half the entry fees of all the other participating teams (an additional 7,500 gp if all three NPC teams participate). The victors also receive bragging rights, fame, and an audience with Duke Hightower. The team that takes second place wins back its entry fee. The team that places third receives half its entry fee. There is no reward for the team that finishes last.
- ◆ Each owlbear is sponsored by a noble or diplomat from Duke Hightower's court. Each team must choose a sponsor/owlbear. The teams can view the owlbear pens or interview nobles in any order. In the past, the sponsors have had the power to overtly impact the contest, so a good sponsor might be a key to victory.
- ◆ To gain a sponsor, a team should impress that individual and prove why the team should represent that sponsor.
- ◆ A sponsor pays the 5,000 gp entry fee for a team he or she supports.
- ◆ If the characters cannot gain or do not desire a sponsor, they can use the owlbear named Rolling Boulder, but they must pay their own entry fee.

- ◆ After each team has selected its owlbear and sponsor, each team receives a map of the mountain trails to plot its intended course.
- ◆ Before the race begins, the teams can purchase any equipment they think they need, or they can visit any of the locations in town, gather information on the other teams, and so forth.

When the characters have made their owlbear and sponsor choices, plotted their route on the map, and made all their preparations, proceed to **Encounter 3: The Race Begins**.

THE SPONSORS

Five nobles are in attendance, each with different motivations and goals. Prior to the race, the characters can interview the nobles at the nobles' pavilions on the outskirts of town and seek their sponsorship for the Owlbear Run. The characters can also ask around town to learn basic information about the sponsors (Streetwise DC 15).

Each sponsor owns a stake in a specific owlbear. A sponsor pays the 5,000 gp entry fee for the team escorting his or her owlbear in the race.

If the characters gain a sponsor, that sponsor gives them each a badge bearing his or her symbol. During the race, the characters will experience one random encounter in which a sponsor tries to influence the race. If this individual turns out to be their own sponsor (25% chance) and the characters display their sponsor's badge, they can bypass the sponsor challenge (see "Encounter Types").

Play the sponsors according to the brief descriptions given here and your imagination. If you require statistics, use an appropriate statistics block of the sponsor's race between levels 5 and 10 from any monster supplement such as the *Monster Manual*[®], *Monster Vault*[™], or the online D&D Compendium.

If the characters need prompting, Sir Tomire sends a page to summon them to his pavilion in hopes they will escort his owlbear, Terrible Tharizdun, in the race.

The characters can interview as many sponsors as they like, but they can gain sponsorship from only one of the nobles.

The noble sponsors participating in the Owlbear Run are described below.

Lady Fazgahrd, Dwarf Diplomat (Good)

Lady Fazgahrd serves her people as a diplomatic envoy to Duke Hightower. She is young for a diplomat, though she is as uncommonly wise as she is extraordinarily beautiful. Her hair is the color of pure gold, and her eyes perfect emerald.

Owlbear: Lady Fazgahrd owns the owlbear called Lucky Lady, an allusion to the dwarves' inborn knack for finding riches and veins of ore.

Sponsorship: Lady Fazgahrd secretly distrusts the humans of Duke Hightower's court with whom she deals on diplomatic terms. She sees through more of their ploys than they are aware. So, she prefers to sponsor a team with a non-evil dwarf who pays respect to her. Otherwise, the characters must impress her with their knowledge of dwarven culture, stonework, and customs. Doing this requires a DC 10 group Dungeoneering or History check in which at least half the characters succeed. Characters who speak Dwarven gain a +1 bonus to their rolls.

If the characters do not gain sponsorship from Lady Fazgahrd, she sponsors Grembul's Stormhammers instead.

Lord Burl, Sheriff (Lawful Good)

Lord Burl is a thin human with slight features and graying golden hair. He is a kind, quiet lord, and he is merciful to the common people, who love him. As the lawful sheriff of Duke Hightower's lands, Lord

Burl wants to sponsor a team that plays fairly and by the rules.

Owlbear: Lord Burl owns the owlbear called Kitten, named by his young daughter.

Sponsorship: If the party has at least two good-aligned characters or one lawful good character, Lord Burl agrees to sponsor them. Otherwise, the characters must assure him of their decency and their strength of moral character. Doing this requires a DC 10 group Diplomacy or Bluff check in which at least half the characters succeed. Evil characters take a -2 penalty to their rolls.

If the party does not gain sponsorship from Lord Burl, he sponsors Liniel's Fey Band instead.

Lord Klavin the Disgraced (Chaotic Evil)

Klavin is a young vassal of Duke Hightower who has recently returned from exile after his father was executed for treason against the duke. Klavin is tall, plain-featured, and unremarkable. He dresses beneath his station and usually passes through a crowd unnoticed (which he prefers).

Owlbear: Lord Klavin owns the owlbear called Manslayer. Klavin named the owlbear himself, though it has thus far shown little interest in slaying humans.

Sponsorship: When his father was killed, Klavin lost most of his ancestral lands and titles and is now barely a minor noble. He desires power more than anything, and he will resort to any means to get it. Though Klavin does not state his intentions directly, he implies that he will sponsor a team that is willing to go to any lengths to win. Klavin will agree to sponsor a party that includes at least two members who are evil, who use the shadow power source, or who are of traditionally evil races such as tieflings, half-orcs, goblins, and vampires. If the characters don't meet these qualifications, they need to convince Klavin that they are willing to fight dirty or break the rules without getting caught. Because Klavin is

naturally distrustful, doing this requires a DC 12 group Bluff or Streetwise check (showing that the characters could be useful agents and spies) in which at least half the characters succeed. Evil characters gain a +2 bonus to their rolls.

If the party does not gain sponsorship from Lord Klavin, he sponsors Brandok's Brute Squad instead.

Sir Tomire, Knight (Unaligned)

Sir Tomire is a veteran warrior with wealth, land, and titles. He is a muscular human, his skin tanned from recent campaigns and scarred from a career of combat. Sir Tomire is practical, direct, and blunt. He speaks his mind without concern for what others (except the duke) think.

Owlbear: Sir Tomire owns the owlbear called Terrible Tharizdun, named for the creature's great size and dark feathers.

Sponsorship: Sir Tomire is accustomed to dealing with mercenaries, so he sends a messenger to the characters in hopes of enlisting them. He will agree to sponsor a party that has at least two martial characters. Otherwise, the heroes must impress him with their strength or boldness by making a DC 10 group Athletics or Intimidate check in which at least half the characters succeed.

DIPLOMACY AND ROLEPLAY

You can allow characters who have training in Diplomacy a DC 10 check to grant a +2 bonus to that character's next non-Diplomacy skill check made to enlist a sponsor. Also consider granting bonuses to characters who roleplay their arguments well.

Minor Quest: Gain a Sponsor

5th-Level Major Quest (100 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they convince one of the nobles to sponsor their team in the Owlbear Run.

THE OWLBEARS AND TEAMS

The following section describes the way owlbears are used in this adventure. Think of dealing with the owlbears as an extended skill challenge that spans the course of the adventure. The primary skills for this challenge are those categorized under "Charm" and "Force" below, and the secondary skills for the challenge are grouped under "Wit." Individual owlbears respond to these tactics differently, granting bonuses or penalties to the characters' check results. You can learn more about these options in the following text. Throughout the adventure, whenever the characters need to influence their owlbear using force or charm, refer to the "Dealing with Owlbears" section that begins on the next page.

Minor Quest: Handle Owlbear

5th-Level Minor Quest (40 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward whenever an encounter in this adventure calls for them to influence their owlbear using force or charm. The characters must successfully influence the owlbear, earning 3 successes to handle it, as detailed in the "Dealing with Owlbears" section. Challenges in which the characters receive this quest reward are labeled with the "Owlbear Challenge" subhead. At your discretion, the characters can earn this quest reward outside an "Owlbear Challenge" encounter whenever their interaction with the owlbear meaningfully impacts the adventure.

Dealing with Owlbears

“Owlbear Run” is an adventure that adds a new member to the party in the form of an owlbear. Think of the owlbear as an NPC with its own basic goals and desires as outlined by the individual owlbear descriptions in “The Owlbear Pens” section on the next page.

By default, the party’s owlbear is surly and irritable; it doesn’t want to be trapped in a harness and dragged across the mountain trails. During encounters, the characters can use various tactics (“force” or “charm”) to influence the owlbear to act in accordance with their will. These tactics are associated with key skills. For instance, a character who pulls on the owlbear’s harness or tries to frighten it is using force; a character who attempts to communicate with the owlbear, lure it, or trick it is using charm. Characters can use “wit” skills as secondary skills to help the group’s chances of influencing the owlbear.

To influence the owlbear with a force or charm tactic, the character making the skill check must be adjacent to the owlbear.

Charm

When the characters try to bait, charm, empathize with, lure, tempt, or otherwise influence their owlbear without applying force or violence, they must succeed on three DC 15 skill checks to influence or motivate the owlbear. The characters can attempt only one check per round, although multiple characters can aid the primary character’s check. After the first skill check, every time the characters try a different charm-related skill during an owlbear challenge, they gain a +2 bonus to the result.

- ◆ **Bluff:** Bait, lure, or trick the owlbear.
- ◆ **Diplomacy:** Calm or influence the owlbear (the owlbear can’t understand speech, but it might respond to body language and tone).

- ◆ **Nature:** Calm, empathize with, or influence the owlbear using basic understanding of beasts.

Failure: Whenever a skill check to charm the owlbear fails by 5 or more, the characters take a cumulative -2 penalty to the use of any charm tactics on the owlbear for the rest of the encounter. If the characters accrue 3 failures before they earn 3 successes, the owlbear refuses to cooperate. The party can no longer attempt to charm the owlbear for the remainder of the encounter and must instead resort to force tactics to influence the beast.*

**The individual encounters include details for how to proceed when both charm and force tactics fail.*

Force

To force an owlbear into obedience, the characters must succeed on three opposed skill checks against the owlbear’s Strength check, using the following primary skills (or other forceful tactics). The characters can attempt only one check per round, although multiple characters can aid the primary character’s check. After the first skill check, every time the characters try a different force tactic during an owlbear challenge, they gain a +2 bonus to the result.

- ◆ **Athletics:** Physically move the owlbear.
- ◆ **Intimidate:** Frighten the owlbear into action.

Failure: If the characters fail three times or if any force tactic fails by 5 or more, the owlbear fights back, attacking the nearest character for 1 round. Thereafter, the characters can no longer use force tactics to influence the owlbear for the rest of the encounter.*

**The individual encounters include details for how to proceed when both charm and force tactics fail.*

Wit

The characters can also use their wits to help influence an owlbear. The secondary skills outlined below give the characters clues as to how to handle the owlbear in the current situation. Each can be used only once during an encounter—the characters either have the knowledge or they don’t—and each success gains a +2 bonus to a single force- or charm-related skill check. Wit skill checks are typically standard actions against a DC of 15. Multiple characters can attempt wit-related checks in the same round.

OWLBEARS IN COMBAT

When the characters are in combat, the owlbear defends itself, making a basic attack against any creature that deals damage to it (including other owlbears) and then moving away. A character adjacent to an owlbear can direct the owlbear to attack a designated target by using a standard action to attempt a force or charm tactic (DC 15 for either). If the character succeeds, the owlbear attacks the designated target until the target drops to 0 hit points; the owlbear does not move on to a new target unless another check is made. If the character fails the check by 5 or more, the owlbear makes 1 round of attacks against that character instead. The owlbear Manslayer is the exception; Manslayer cannot defend himself or be commanded to attack. He can only retreat.

If the party’s owlbear dies, the characters must intercept another team’s owlbear, or the party will lose the race. To intercept another team, the characters must be in the same encounter location on the trail map and fight the team. Ignore all owlbear-related challenges until the party acquires a new owlbear.

- ◆ **Arcana:** Lore of owlbear behavior/physiology.
- ◆ **Insight:** Understand/predict the owlbear's actions.
- ◆ **Perception:** Observe the nuances of the owlbear's current physical/mental state.

Failure: There is no penalty for failure on a check involving a wit tactic.

Alternative Tactics

The characters might think of other skills they can use to influence the owlbear. For instance, a character might try a History check to recall the story of a trained owlbear (wit) or a Heal check to tend an owlbear's wound and gain its favor (charm). Reward creative thinking and allow the players to try any skill or strategy that seems feasible or makes sense within the story.

The Owlbear Pens

Prior to the race, the characters can view the owlbears by visiting the converted stable that holds the owlbear pens.

Each of the noble sponsors owns a stake in a particular owlbear. The characters can choose their sponsor first, or they can choose their owlbear first. Like most NPCs, the owlbears have different temperaments, personalities, and problems, which the characters might attempt to discern before making their choice.

The following table lists the default team/sponsor/owlbear combinations. By choosing a different sponsor/owlbear pairing instead of Sir Tomire, the characters change the defaults. You can either assign the NPC team displaced by the characters to Sir Tomire and his owlbear Terrible Tharizdun, or you can randomly determine each team's new sponsor/owlbear pairing.

Default Team	Sponsor	Owlbear
Grembul's Stormhammers	Lady Fazgahrd	Lucky Lady
Liniel's Fey Band	Lord Burl	Kitten
Brandok's Brute Squad	Lord Klavin	Manslayer
The characters	Sir Tomire	Terrible Tharizdun
Any	None	Rolling Boulder

Each owlbear entry contains a brief description of the owlbear, and a hard skill check allows exceptionally lucky or trained characters to glean a little extra insight into the owlbear—a look ahead at the nature of the challenges they will face with this beast.

When the characters visit the owlbear pens, read the description of the owlbear aloud and let the characters interact with or observe the owlbear. Provide appropriate hints about the owlbear's disposition when the characters ask the right questions and make the right observations.

The owlbears are differentiated by their personalities, quests, and the bonuses or penalties assigned to NPC teams or character tactics. Otherwise, the owlbears' statistics are the same as those in *Monster Vault*. The following sections comprise each owlbear entry.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties: Add or subtract this modifier from the NPC team's Owlbear Challenge modifier (see "Competing Teams").

Character Tactics: This is the bonus or penalty you apply to a character's skill check depending on whether the character is using a force tactic or a charm tactic to influence that particular owlbear.

Minor Quest: This is a quest specific to the owlbear the characters choose. Each owlbear is tied to an Owlbear Encounter later in the adventure, in which the characters can fulfill this quest. The characters should not explicitly know the object of the quest. It's up to the characters to understand their owlbear over

time, and it's up to you to provide hints to the nature of the owlbear throughout the adventure.

Owlbear	Level 8 Elite Brute
Large fey beast	XP 700
HP 212; Bloodied 106	Initiative +6
AC 20, Fortitude 22, Reflex 18, Will 20	Perception +12
Speed 7	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Claw ◆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage.	
Double Attack ◆ At-Will	
Effect: The owlbear uses <i>claw</i> twice. If both attacks hit the same creature, the owlbear grabs it (escape DC 16) if the owlbear has fewer than two creatures grabbed.	
Beak Snap ◆ At-Will	
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the owlbear). The target takes 4d8 + 22 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Stunning Screech ◆ Encounter	
Trigger: The owlbear is first bloodied.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +11 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is stunned (save ends).	
Str 20 (+9)	Dex 14 (+6) Wis 16 (+7)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 2 (+0) Cha 10 (+4)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —

Lucky Lady

This female owlbear crouches in its pen and glares up at you with unblinking golden eyes, every muscle in her feathered body taut and ready to fight.

Lucky Lady is the fiercest and most aggressive of the owlbears. She was captured in the forested mountains between Telvorn and Milvorn while hunting with her lifelong mate. She has not adapted well to the separation. Lucky Lady leaps up and lunges at any creature that touches the bars of her pen.

Arcana or Insight DC 22: Studies on owlbear behavior suggest that this aggressive creature has

recently suffered the loss of a mate, clan, or brood. Looking into its eyes, you can almost feel its pain.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: -2

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: -3

Character Tactics

Force: -2

Charm: +1

Minor Quest: Reunite Lucky Lady with Her Mate

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they successfully reunite Lucky Lady with her mate in the owlbear encounter “Lucky Lady Is Reunited.”

Kitten

This female owlbear lies curled on the straw-covered floor of a pen that can barely contain the beast's great girth. As you approach, she opens her beak and trills softly.

Of all the owlbeats in the race, Kitten is second only to Terrible Tharizdun in size. She has a huge appetite and will eat any food the characters offer her. The reason for this behavior is that Kitten is pregnant; it would take an owlbear expert, however, to know this.

Nature or Perception DC 22: Despite its size, the owlbear does not seem lazy, and despite its soft trilling, it doesn't appear to be hurt. It has woven the straw in its pen into a kind of nest around it.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: -1

Fey Band: +2

Brute Squad: -3

Character Tactics

Force: -1

Charm: +2

Minor Quest: Save the Children

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they save the human children and the owlbear eggs in the owlbear encounter “Kitten's Eggs.”

Manslayer

This male owlbear bears the scars of many battles. Deep scratches mark its head in long lines where feathers refuse to grow back. The owlbear backs into the corner of its pen as you arrive, hissing through its terrible beak.

Manslayer is actually a great coward. The scars on his body are the marks of other male owlbeats that competed against him during mating season. Manslayer has always lost such competitions and fled the fight. He has relied almost entirely on fish for his diet because larger creatures (such as the characters) frighten him.

Unlike the other owlbeats, Manslayer does not defend himself in combat and uses his action to flee; he cannot be commanded to attack (see “Owlbeats in Combat”).

Intimidate or Perception DC 22: With every move you make, the owlbear retreats farther into its pen, jumping at sudden movements, growling, and hissing all the more.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: +2

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: +3

Character Tactics

Force: +2

Charm: -2

Minor Quest: Help Manslayer Find Courage

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they teach Manslayer to defend himself in the owlbear encounter “Manslayer Is Cornered.”

Terrible Tharizdun

This male owlbear is so large that two pens have been combined to make up his living area. Covered in black feathers, he sprawls on a thin bed of straw, snoring contentedly. One of his blood-red eyes remains slightly open as he sleeps.

Despite his fearsome size, Tharizdun is extremely lazy. A hibernating owlbear from a faraway mountain region, he devours as much food as possible and then goes to sleep. Tharizdun can sleep through anything short of a physical attack. He is a capable hunter but prefers the fresh kills of other predators.

Arcana or Nature DC 22: Some black-feathered owlbeats come from a mountain stock. These owlbeats eat anything they can find until they grow to enormous size; they then hibernate for an extended time.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: -1

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: -1

Character Tactics

Force: -1

Charm: +1

Minor Quest: Motivate Terrible Tharizdun

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they motivate Terrible Tharizdun to stay awake and finish the race in the owlbear encounter “Terrible Tharizdun Is Asleep.”

Rolling Boulder

This owlbear is covered with dun-colored feathers speckled with black dots. It stands upright in its pen, ripping meat from the haunch of an old horse. The owlbear glances in your direction as you approach but otherwise ignores you, focusing on its meal.

Rolling Boulder is largely indifferent to the characters. As long as it is fed, Rolling Boulder remains content, though this does not mean that it cooperates. Rolling Boulder does not have a hostile disposition but rather a contrary one. The owlbear does not understand what the humanoids want from it, but it enjoys eating the food they provide. In its owlbear mind, Rolling Boulder sees the humanoids that have captured it as its servants. Boulder is therefore stubborn, contrary, and difficult to motivate.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: +0

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: +0

Character Tactics

Force: -1

Charm: -1

Minor Quest: DM's Choice

Because Rolling Boulder is an option for characters who don't choose a sponsor or fail to attain one, Rolling Boulder's quest is up to you. Choose one of the owlbear quests detailed in this section and assign it to Rolling Boulder. You will decide whether Rolling Boulder's apathy is due to him (or her) being separated from a mate, pregnant, cowardly, or lazy. You can make Rolling Boulder male or female, depending on the quest you decide to assign to it.

COMPETING TEAMS

Before the race begins, the leaders of each team can be found at the Grumpy Gryphon inn and tavern in Telvorn. Here the characters can get to know the various teams, form temporary alliances or rivalries, or gain insight into the routes the teams plan to take in the Owlbear Run.

If the characters fight and defeat a rival team, award the party the XP for each foe defeated (see the statistics blocks).

Each of the team entries is made up of the following sections.

Leader: The person in charge. Under most circumstances, you should represent each team by the way you characterize and roleplay its leader.

Attitude toward the Party: How the team typically reacts to the characters.

Path Taken: The team's plan for the race. Prior to the race, if the characters engage a team's leader in conversation and make a good impression on that leader (Diplomacy DC 15), he or she might hint at or even reveal the team's intended route. This information can also be gleaned by asking around the market square and the tavern (Streetwise DC 22).

Crossing Paths: What happens when two teams occupy the same encounter location.

Challenge Modifiers: During each advancement round in the race, add the appropriate modifier to the team's advancement roll. The physical, mental, and owlbear modifiers correspond to the three types of challenges an NPC team will face during the race (see "Running the Race").

Grembul's Stormhammers

Leader: Grembul is a spirited dwarf adventurer who never backs down from a challenge (in fact, the marks of many challenges show upon his face). He's missing an ear, an eye, and several teeth, but this fact has not dampened his spirit. He respects bravery and courage and will bear an insult with a laugh if it's delivered with confidence. He has no respect for the cowardly, and he will taunt and mock them. His Stormhammers are composed of dwarves and a few humans.

Attitude toward the Party: Grembul thrives on competition. He treats the party as his esteemed foes. He is confident his team will win, but without another team to beat, his victory would be meaningless. In Grembul's mind, the characters are volunteering to lose to him as a favor simply by participating; he is thus grateful for their presence.

Path Taken: Undaunted by a challenge, Grembul leads his team up and down the mountain slopes toward Milvorn. Grembul's dwarven constitution and familiarity with mountainous terrain makes this path his preferred choice.

Crossing Paths: If Grembul and the party cross paths (and don't fight), Grembul's competitive spirit drives his team even harder; grant the Stormhammers a +2 bonus to their next advancement roll.

Challenge Modifiers

Physical: +6

Mental: +5

Owlbear: +4

For Grembul's Stormhammers, use the statistics for 5 dwarf hammerers and 3 human rabble.

5 Dwarf Hammerers	Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200 each
HP 64; Bloodied 32	Initiative +4
AC 23, Fortitude 18, Reflex 15, Will 17	Perception +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Stand the Ground	
The hammerer can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, push, or slide.	
Steady-Footed	
The hammerer can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Warhammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 3 damage.	
↘ Throwing Hammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Shield Bash ♦ Recharge ☼ ☼	
Requirement: The hammerer must be wielding a shield.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the hammerer either knocks the target prone or pushes it 1 square.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Stubborn ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy tries to push the hammerer or knock it prone.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The hammerer makes a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 10 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 11 (+2)
	Wis 14 (+4)
	Cha 12 (+3)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Dwarven	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, warhammer, 3 throwing hammers	

3 Human Rabble	Level 2 Minion Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 31 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +1	AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 13
Speed 6	Perception +1
TRAITS	
Mob Rule	
The rabble gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while adjacent to two or more allies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Club (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 9 (+0)
	Wis 10 (+1)
	Cha 9 (+0)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common	
Equipment club	

Liniel's Fey Band

Leader: Liniel is an eladrin noble visiting the world from Astrazalian in the Feywild. In this tournament, she represents the fey people whose borders lie in the woods and hills near Telvorn and Milvorn. Considering that owlbears are fey beasts familiar to her kind, the haughty Liniel believes she will have no trouble winning the challenge.

Attitude toward the Party: Liniel knows her team to be the wisest and swiftest of all those competing. She views the competition as a silly mortal undertaking of little importance, which her team will easily win. She views the other teams with an almost patronizing sympathy.

Path Taken: Liniel's Fey Band travels swiftly through the woods. Liniel chooses the longest path around the mountain, guessing that the other competing teams will all try shorter routes and will then clash with one another. By choosing the more circuitous route, she hopes to run the race unimpeded by other teams. She relies upon her team's natural speed and familiarity with fey beasts (including owlbears) to carry them through.

Eladrin Fey Knight	Level 7 Soldier
Medium fey humanoid	XP 300
HP 77; Bloodied 38	Initiative +11
AC 23, Fortitude 19, Reflex 21, Will 17	Perception +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects	
TRAITS	
☼ Feywild Tactics ♦ Aura 5	
Fey allies can score critical hits on rolls of 19–20 while in the aura.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.	
⚡ Stab of the Wild (weapon) ♦ Recharge ☼ ☼	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 8 damage, and the target is restrained until the end of the eladrin's next turn.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Fey Step (teleportation) ♦ Encounter	
Effect: The eladrin teleports up to 5 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Feywild Challenge (radiant) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst). The eladrin marks the target until the end of the encounter or until the eladrin uses this power again. While the enemy is marked by the eladrin, it takes 4 radiant damage whenever it ends its turn without attacking the eladrin.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
↩ Harvest's Sorrow ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An attack damages an ally.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 5 (the triggering ally in the burst). The target takes half damage from the triggering attack, and the eladrin takes an equal amount of damage.	
Skills Athletics +12, Nature +9	
Str 18 (+7)	Dex 22 (+9)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 14 (+5)
	Wis 13 (+4)
	Cha 16 (+6)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Elven	
Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword	

Crossing Paths: Liniel's team is unlikely to cross paths with the characters unless they also choose the long way around the mountain. If they meet (and do not fight), Liniel secretly whispers a charm upon

the characters' owlbear. The next time the characters attempt to influence their owlbear, they take a -2 penalty to the first force- or charm-related check they make.

Challenge Modifiers

Physical: +3
Mental: +6
Owlbear: +6

For Liniel's Fey Band, use the statistics for 1 eladrin fey knight (Liniel) and 7 eladrin bow mages.

7 Eladrin Bow Mages	Level 7 Minion Artillery
Medium fey humanoid	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +7	
AC 21, Fortitude 18, Reflex 21, Will 19	Perception +10
Speed 6	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Force Arrow (force) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 force damage, and the eladrin can push the target 1 square.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Fey Step (teleportation) ♦ Encounter	
Effect: The eladrin teleports up to 5 squares.	
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 18 (+7) Wis 14 (+5)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 14 (+5) Cha 11 (+3)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Elven	

Brandok's Brute Squad

Leader: Brandok is a ruthless human mercenary who hires half-orcs, brutes, and thugs for the dirty work that no one else will do. They've been "officially" exiled from three cities. They mean to get the money from the competition and sell themselves to any high-paying sponsor they can. They also intend to incapacitate and rob the other teams along the way. In other words, the competition is an excuse for them to get rich and misbehave. Brandok himself is seven feet tall, towering over even the half-orcs in his band.

3 Raven Roost Outlaw Veterans	Level 6 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250 each
HP 86; Bloodied 43	Initiative +4
AC 18, Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 16	Perception +3
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Bastard Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage.	
↓ Mighty Blow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the veteran can push the target 1 square and then shift 1 square to a square the target vacated.	
↓ Swath of Death ♦ Recharge if either attack misses	
Effect: The veteran uses <i>mighty blow</i> twice.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
↓ Forceful Shove ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The veteran pushes the target 1 square.	
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +9	
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 13 (+4) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 7 (+1) Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment evil Languages Common	
Equipment studded leather, bastard sword	

Path Taken: Brandok leads his team along the shortest possible route around the mountain. He expects others will choose the same path and has prepared his team to fight and disable all competitors.

Attitude toward the Party: Brandok expects to have to fight and defeat the characters. In conversation, Brandok is defiant, confident, and rude.

Crossing Paths: Whenever the characters encounter Brandok's Brute Squad, give them the option to fight or avoid them. Avoiding Brandok's Brute Squad means the characters take a slight detour and grant Brandok's Brute Squad a +2 bonus to its next advancement roll. If they choose to fight, Brandok orders his team to kill the characters' owlbear. If Brandok loses (and lives), the Brute Squad takes a -4 penalty to its next advancement roll. In a fight, Brandok's Brute Squad is the toughest of all

the teams, and a combat encounter with them might necessitate a short rest that costs the characters time.

Challenge Modifiers

Physical: +7
Mental: +3
Owlbear: +5

For Brandok's Brute Squad, use the statistics for 3 Raven Roost outlaw veterans and 3 half-orc hunters.

3 Half-Orc Hunters	Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc	XP 200 each
HP 62; Bloodied 31	Initiative +7
AC 19, Fortitude 18, Reflex 18, Will 16	Perception +8
Speed 6 (8 when charging)	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Draw First Blood	
The hunter's melee attacks deal 1d10 extra damage against any target that has not yet taken damage during the encounter.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Battleaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
⊕ Longbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
↓ Evasive Chop (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Before and after the attack, the hunter shifts 1 square.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Furious Assault ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The hunter deals damage with an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The triggering attack deals 1d10 extra damage.	
Skills Endurance +9, Nature +8	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 17 (+5) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 8 (+1)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Giant	
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, longbow, 20 arrows	

Encounter 3: The Race Begins

Owlbear Challenge

Equipped with their route map, sponsor, and owlbear, the characters prepare to race.

When the characters are ready to start the race, read:

On the morning of the race, the owlbears are harnessed and transported in great wooden wagons from their pens to the fields outside of town. The teams take their places beside the owlbear wagons—which are spaced 100 yards apart—while a massive crowd gathers outside the stockade wall of Telvorn, cheering champions and heckling rivals. In scattered knots, rejected teams that lacked the entry fee or failed to gain sponsorship look on in envy. Atop Telvorn’s wall, the noble sponsors stand beneath their banners and await the sheriff’s signal that will begin the race. Lord Burl looks from team to team to ensure that each one is ready to begin. Satisfied, he motions the attendants to unlock the wagons.

“Let the Owlbear Run begin!” Lord Burl proclaims.

The door to the wagon drops open, and your owlbear glares at you defiantly, strapped into a leather collar and harness, its leash dangling from the cart.

The leash attached to the owlbear’s harness is 10 feet long and extends 2 squares. The characters must force or charm their owlbear to leave the cart and begin the race. As discussed in “Dealing with Owlbears,” this requires either three successful opposed Athletics or Intimidate checks (using force as a tactic) or three successful Bluff, Diplomacy, or Nature checks (using charm). Remember that no more than one success can be attained in a single round. Grant the characters bonuses to their checks if they come up with clever ideas.

Success: The characters motivate their owlbear and begin the race in the lead. Having established

an early rapport with their owlbear, the characters gain a special reward: Once during the adventure, the characters can reroll a die roll associated with handling their owlbear.

Failure: The stubborn owlbear is difficult to motivate and takes a dislike to the characters. During the next owlbear challenge or the next time the characters try to influence their owlbear, the characters take a -1 penalty to all force- or charm-related skill checks made to handle the owlbear.

Completing the Encounter: When the characters have completed this encounter, they advance to the first encounter location on the route they have plotted (see “Encounter Types”). See “Running the Race” below for more on that topic.

RUNNING THE RACE

This section describes how to run the race in Owlbear Run.

1. Plot the Course: Before the race begins, the players consult their trail map handout and draw the path that they intend to follow (the NPC teams follow the routes marked for them on the DM’s version of the map, shown on the next page).

2. Determine Encounters: Each X mark on the map indicates a random encounter location. Unless a team goes out of its way to take a longer route, each will experience six to seven random encounters. For the characters, determine four basic encounters, one sponsor encounter, and one owlbear encounter from the tables in this section. If the characters experience more than six encounters, determine the additional encounters from the Basic Encounter table.

You don’t need to determine encounters for the NPC teams, since these are resolved abstractly (see #4, Advancement Round).

3. Race: When the race begins, each team advances to the first encounter location on its course. The characters deal with the encounter normally, playing through the encounter as written.

4. Advancement Round: When the characters complete their encounter, they advance to the next encounter location along their chosen route (or they choose a new path). The characters advance regardless of whether they succeed or fail. Success gives them a higher chance of outdistancing their adversaries, however, and failure gives the NPC teams a greater chance of surpassing the characters. The results of success and failure are detailed in each encounter.

When the characters advance, you determine the success or failure of the NPC teams’ encounters.

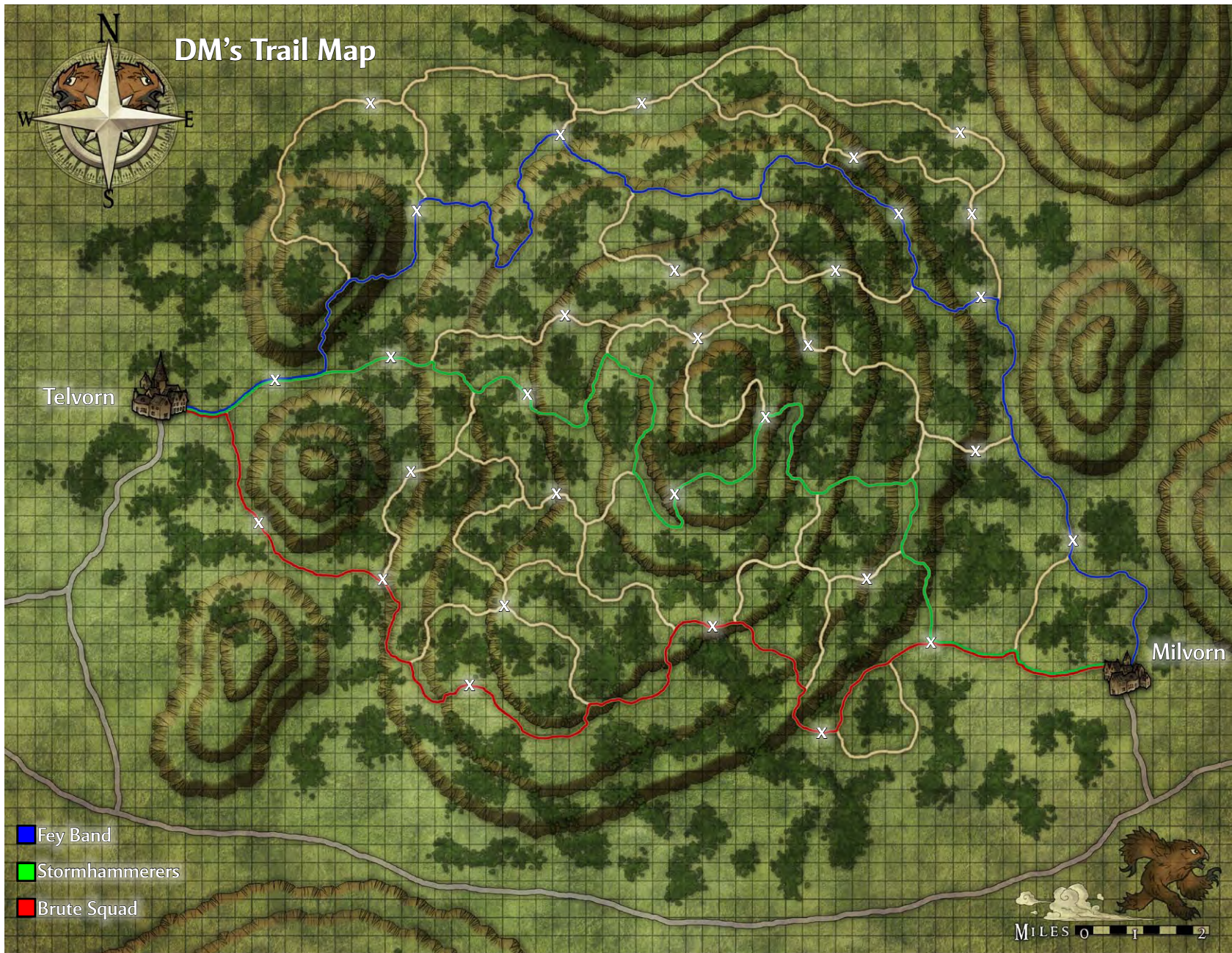
The NPC teams face their own encounters, but since these encounters occur “offstage,” you don’t need to flesh them out. By default, each NPC team faces six encounters along its chosen path. To determine the nature of the challenge an NPC team faces at an encounter location, roll a d8 and consult the following table.

NPC TEAM CHALLENGE

d8	Result
1-3	Physical challenge
4-5	Mental challenge
6-8	Owlbear challenge

Each NPC team has a physical, mental, or owlbear challenge modifier that summarizes its basic proficiency in physical or mental tasks or its relationship with its owlbear (see “Competing Teams”). To see how far an NPC team advances during an advancement round, roll a d20 and add the appropriate bonus that matches the corresponding challenge to the team’s die roll.

For example, when an NPC team rolls to overcome a physical challenge, add the team’s physical bonus to the d20 result, add or subtract any modifiers resulting from the encounter, and consult the following table.



ADVANCEMENT

d20*	Result
1-9	No progress. The NPC team remains at its current encounter location and repeats the challenge with a +5 bonus to its roll during the next advancement round.
10-21	The NPC team advances 1 encounter location.
22+	The NPC team advances 2 encounter locations.

*At the end of any encounter where the characters take a short rest, each NPC team gains a +2 bonus to its advancement roll. If the characters take an extended rest, they automatically lose the race.

5. Team Clashes: At various points in the race, two or more teams might occupy the same encounter location on the trail map. Assume that NPC teams fight or flee one another but continue their progress. When an NPC team clashes with the characters' team, however, each NPC team entry includes instructions on how it reacts to the characters when they cross paths (see "Competing Teams"). Some teams will attack the characters, while others might try to hinder them or try harder to outdistance them. The characters might also roleplay or share information with a rival team if they established a rapport with it at the beginning of the adventure.

6. Finishing the Race: The first team to advance past its last encounter location to reach the town of Milvorn wins the race. If more than one team advances to Milvorn at the same time, the teams must roll a final owlbear challenge (the characters make the standard three force- or charm-related skill checks). If the characters succeed, they win. Otherwise, the NPC team that rolls the highest owlbear challenge result wins the race. A team without an owlbear cannot win the race. See "Conclusion: The Finish Line."

ENCOUNTER TYPES

There are three types of encounters in Owlbear Run: basic encounters, sponsor encounters, and owlbear encounters.

Choose or roll four basic encounters, one sponsor encounter, and then select the owlbear encounter corresponding to the owlbear the characters selected.

Basic Encounters

Basic encounters usually involve tricks by the wizards Dirk and Delzar, or they present opportunities for the characters to work as a team with their owlbear.

Choose one basic encounter from each map or roll randomly to select a total of four encounters. If the party experiences more than six encounters, choose additional basic encounters to fill in the extra encounters.

BASIC ENCOUNTERS

d8	Result
1	Map A (Trail)—T1: Lost Trail
2	Map A (Trail)—T2: Lord of Death
3	Map B (Cottage)—C1: Owlbear War Wagon
4	Map B (Cottage)—C2: Walking Cottage
5	Map C (Ridge)—R1: New Contestants
6	Map C (Ridge)—R2: Owlbear Stew
7	Map D (Bridge/Stream)—B1: Rough Crossing
8	Map D (Bridge/Stream)—B2: Riddle Bridge

Sponsor Encounters

Sponsor encounters are obstacles involving or created by one of the noble sponsors who has a stake in the race. Choose or roll one sponsor encounter from the following table. A team that rolls its own sponsor has a good chance of easily surpassing a sponsor encounter.

SPONSOR ENCOUNTERS

d4	Result
1	Map A (Trail)—1 ST: Obstacle Course (Sir Tomire)
2	Map B (Cottage)—2 SC: Brigands (Lord Klavin)
3	Map C (Ridge)—SR: Dead End Ridge (Lady Fazzahrd)
4	Map D (Bridge/Stream)—SB: Inspection Point (Lord Burl)

Owlbear Encounters

Owlbear encounters challenge the characters to resolve their owlbear's minor quest. Choose the owlbear encounter that corresponds to the characters' owlbear.

- ◆ Map A—OE1: Terrible Tharizdun Is Asleep
- ◆ Map B—OE2: Kitten's Eggs
- ◆ Map C—OE3: Manslayer Is Cornered
- ◆ Map D—OE4: Lucky Lady Is Reunited

ENCOUNTER ORDER

The encounters can occur in any order you want. You can play out the basic encounters first, followed by the sponsor encounter, and finish with the encounter in which the characters try to achieve their owlbear's minor quest. You can also mix the encounters up; the owlbear encounter should occur only after the characters have journeyed some distance with their owlbear. To randomly determine the timing of the owlbear encounter, roll 1d4 + 2. The result places it third, fourth, fifth, or sixth in the order of encounters on your adventure.



Map Features

Owlbear Run uses four maps for encounters, labeled A-D.

- ◆ **Map A** is the trail map.
- ◆ **Map B** is the cottage map.
- ◆ **Map C** is the ridge map.
- ◆ **Map D** is the bridge/stream map.

The standard features of all the maps are as follows.

Bridge (Map D): The wooden bridge is 10 feet wide and spans the steep embankment where the stream flows below. The bridge is of solid construction, but it can be disabled by a team that takes 5 minutes to sabotage it (grant competing NPC teams a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round). Mark the encounter location with the disabled bridge on the route map. NPC teams passing through this encounter location along their route take a -4 penalty to their first advancement attempt.

Cottage (Map B): The beds, chairs, and table in the cottage are difficult terrain. The cottage has two doors and two windows with shutters that can be locked (Thievery DC 20 to open; Strength DC 16 to break; 20 hit points). The cottage is made of wood, and its roof (8 feet high) is tiled with slate shingles. The floor is covered with old dry rushes. A small stone hearth stands in one corner.

Embankment (Map D): The embankment is 5 feet high and requires a DC 10 Athletics check to climb out of the stream.

Logs (Maps A, B, and C): The fallen logs are difficult terrain.

Ridge (Map C): The ridge is steep and 15 feet high. A creature forced off the top of the ridge falls to the bottom and takes 2d10 falling damage; a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check results in half damage. The ridge requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Stream (Map D): The stream is 2 feet deep and flows rapidly. Creatures in the stream move at half

speed. A prone creature in the stream moves with the stream at 3 squares per round.

Trees (Maps A, B, C, and D): These short trees provide cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 15 Athletics check. A creature climbing a tree can reach a height 10-15 feet above the ground.

BASIC ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters form the bulk of the events that take place during the Owlbear Run.

T1: Lost Trail

Puzzle or Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)
Owlbear Challenge

Some wizardly work turns the characters around. Use **Map A** (trail map).

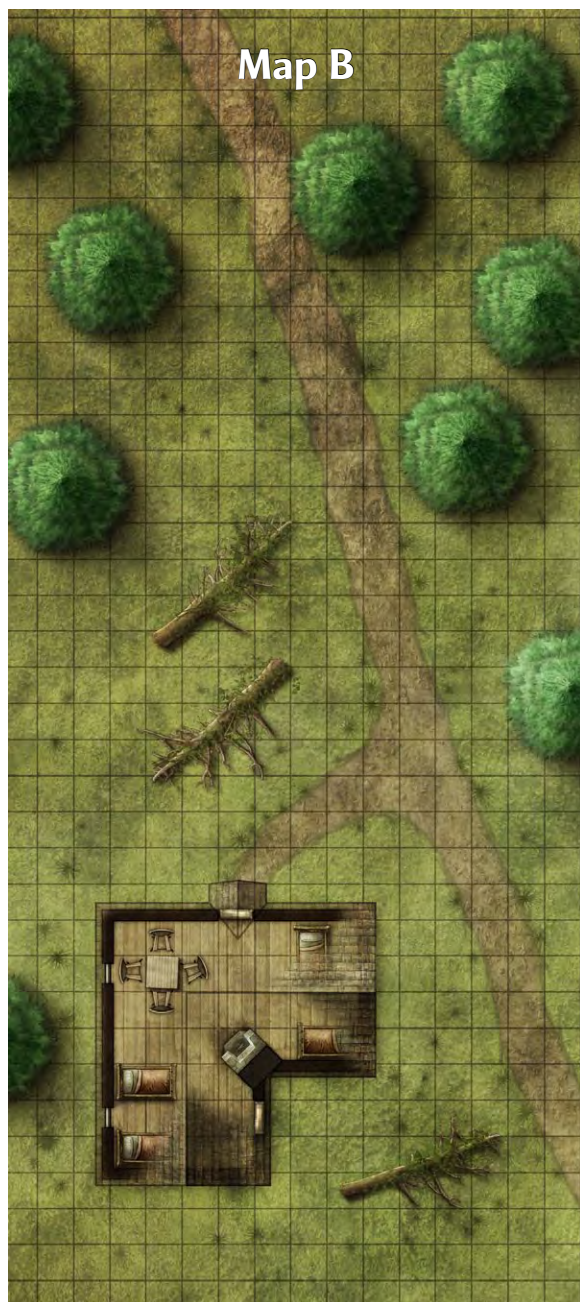
When the characters enter the area, read:

As you travel this stretch of trail, your hungry owlbear meanders toward the sparse berry thickets that grow alongside the trail. As you steer the creature back on course, a wave of dizziness passes over you, and the trail ahead dissolves before your eyes into thick natural forest. Your trail spontaneously materializes a hundred feet away, but now it turns in a different direction than the one you were originally traveling.

The trail has been hidden by a powerful illusion—one of the obstacles designed by the wizards.

Searching for the Trail: If the characters want to spend time searching for the old trail, have each character make a DC 22 Arcana, Nature, Perception, or Search check (each character should use his or her highest skill). If at least three characters succeed, they see through the illusion and discover the old trail.

Following the New Trail: If the characters follow the new illusory trail, it leads them around in circles before putting them back on the right path. The



characters advance to the next encounter location, but each other team gains a +2 bonus to its advancement roll this round.

Using the Owlbear: Any character who thinks to observe the party's owlbear notices the owlbear doesn't appear to see the illusion. It continues to eat the (now invisible) berries from bushes beside the original trail. If the characters try to take the owlbear onto the new trail away from the berries, the owlbear resists and the characters must use force or charm tactics to sway it (see "Dealing with Owlbears"). If the characters allow or encourage the owlbear to seek out the berries, the owlbear leads them past the illusion to the true path without losing any significant time in the race.

T2: Lord of Death

Roleplaying Challenge or Combat Encounter Level 1 (200 XP)

The characters encounter a mad "wizard" with a secret. Use **Map A** (trail map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The morning fog still lingers on this stretch of the path, obscuring the surrounding woods in a ghostly white gloom. Ahead of you on the trail you can barely distinguish the silhouette of a mighty helmed figure standing in the middle of the path, leaning on an old, rusty axe.

"You are fools to travel this way," a voice rumbles through the fog. "Down this path lie the Gates of Death."

The fog rolls back to reveal the bleached skull and ribs of a deer, half-buried in the embankment to the side of the trail. The voice says, "Lay down your sacrifice to the Lord of Death, lest your foggy trail lead you to his gate."

This figure is no wizard but a madman named Khaz who wanders the hills and abandoned mines between Telvorn and Milvorn, obsessed with places of death. He wears a knight's battered great helm, which covers his

dirty, bearded face, and he wears a black robe with red trim and carries a large, rusted hunting axe. Where he found these items is anyone's guess. Dirk and Delzar, the wizard brothers who created the Owlbear Run, are aware of his presence in the area and they take advantage of Khaz's madness by using him as a challenge in the race. They have protected him with a special *stone-skin* spell that grants Khaz resist 10 to all damage for the duration of the race—in case he runs afoul of one of the teams or their owlbears.

Khaz was a miner in the days before the mines on this mountain dried up. Losing his wife and children to disease quickly drove Khaz mad, inspiring his fevered mind to create the persona of "Khazan the Terrible," a powerful necromancer with a booming voice who believes himself to be the herald of death (use the appropriate Death figure for your setting) and that he can bring his family back by commanding the spirits of the dead. Khaz used to live in the ruined cottage now occupied by the brigands (encounter SC) who forced him out.

If the characters ask what kind of sacrifice he wants, Khaz tells them, "*That which was alive but lives no longer.*" He accepts the remains of any creature as well as food or items that clearly originated from a once-living creature. Khaz rejects other offerings, saying, "*The Lord of Death does not know this soul. Speak of what it was that we may sing an elegy to its passing.*"

The characters can try to justify any object they give Khaz, from a piece of cloth to a common stone found on the trail. Characters who create interesting or elaborate explanations for their sacrifices should automatically succeed. Characters who can't think of anything can still try, and they succeed with a DC 10 Bluff check.

If each of the characters appeases Khaz, he shows them a shortcut through the "Gates of Death," which is in fact a dark, abandoned mine passage; if the characters take this shortcut, each other team takes a -2 penalty to advancement rolls this round.

C1: Owlbear War Wagon

Roleplaying Encounter Owlbear Challenge

An old cartwright offers a piece of advice. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

A small cottage lies along the trail. In front of the cottage, several wooden wagons used for carting coal down the mountainside stand in various states of repair. An old man in commoner's clothes and a straw hat leans back in a chair and watches your procession as he smokes his pipe.

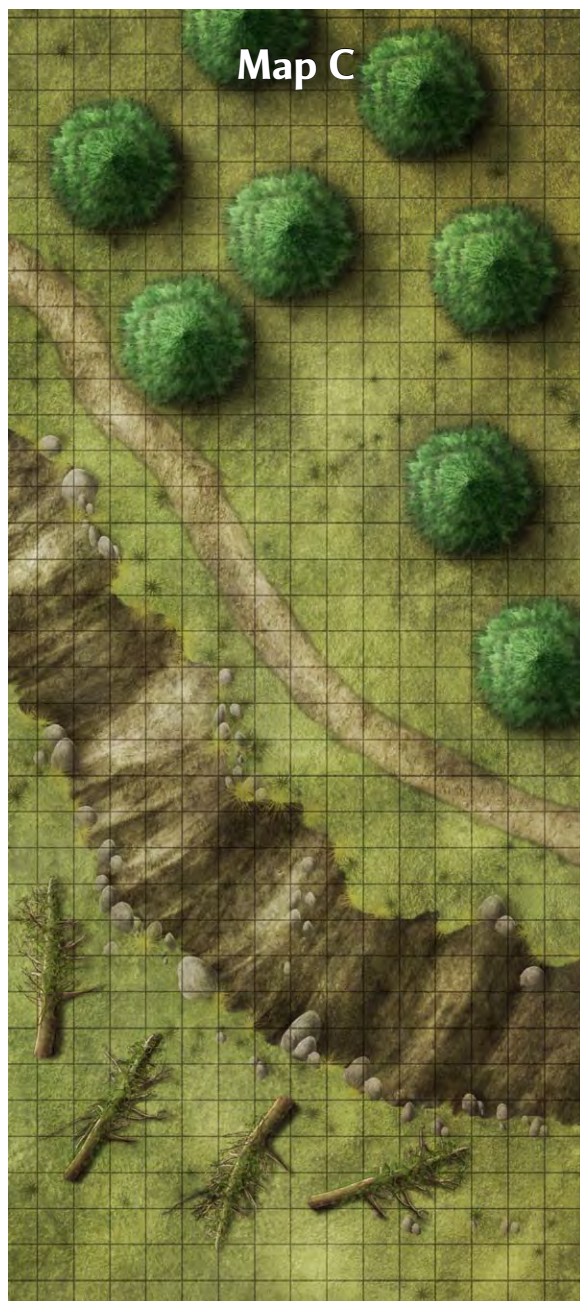
"Now I've seen everything," he says, eyeing the owlbear. "Beast of burden or draft animal? I can harness either."

The old man is a cartwright named Jarom. He is unaware of the Owlbear Run, since he seldom receives news from Telvorn or Milvorn. He assumes the characters are here to buy a cart for the owlbear to pull. If they are interested, Jarom shows them his carts for sale. They cost 20 gp each.

Harnessing the owlbear to the cart is another matter, since the characters must force or charm the owlbear to sit still and let them attach its harness to the cart. If the characters successfully force or charm the owlbear into the harness, they must then convince it—with a second force or charm attempt—to pull the cart. Each task requires a separate set of three checks, for a total of six checks to succeed.

Success: The characters harness the owlbear to the cart and convince it to pull them. As long as the owlbear pulls the characters in this way, each other team takes a -1 penalty to advancement rolls for the rest of the race.

Failure: The characters cannot convince the owlbear to cooperate. Jarom gives them their money back, but the characters lose valuable time. Each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.



If the characters refuse or fail, Khaz attacks them with his axe, shouting nonsense magic words and proclaiming himself the Lord of Death. If the battle continues longer than 3 rounds, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Khaz, Human Berserker	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
HP 66; Bloodied 33	Initiative +3
AC 16, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 15	Perception +2
Speed 7	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Greataxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 9 damage.	
⚔ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage.	
Stoneskin ♦ Encounter	
Effect: Khaz gains resist 10 to all damage until the end of the encounter.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚔ Battle Fury ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: Khaz is first bloodied.	
Effect: Khaz makes a melee basic attack with a +4 power bonus to the attack roll. He deals 1d6 extra damage if the attack hits.	
Skills Athletics +11, Stealth +8	
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 7 (+0)
	Wis 10 (+2)
	Cha 10 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common	
Equipment leather armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes	



C2: Charming Cottage

Trap Encounter Level 5 (200 XP)
Owlbear Challenge

An enchanted cottage stops by for a bite to eat. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

You are moving along the trail when, from the opposite direction, a cottage approaches. It looks like an ordinary cottage—its timbers are of pine, its roof of slate shingle, its chimney of gray stones. It is altogether commonplace, in fact, except for the twenty or so odd horse legs that carry it down the trail in your direction.

“Hallo!” a friendly voice calls from the front door.

“Might you be interested in a fine meal at a respectful residence? Don’t be shy—come on inside.”

The cottage settles itself on the ground and the door swings open. From inside the door waft the aromas of spices, fresh-baked bread, and roasted meat.

This enchanted cottage is a construct of the wizards Dirk and Delzar, created as a challenge for this contest. The cottage wanders the trails searching for teams (and their owlbears) to capture. When it finds a team, it opens its front door and invites them inside to a full meal, and then it holds them captive until they can escape.

The cottage has all the statistics of the cottage detailed in Map B, except that its front door is a trap created to charm and capture the characters and their owlbear. The horse legs disappear when the cottage sits down at the start of the encounter.

Charming Door Object	Level 5 Trap XP 200
Detect see Countermeasures	Initiative – HP 20
AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex –, Will –	Immune cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, ongoing damage, forced movement, all conditions
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
↖ Attack (charm) ↗ At-Will	
<i>Trigger:</i> A creature moves within 5 squares of the cottage door	
<i>Attack:</i> Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> On its turn, the target moves its speed toward the cottage and attempts to enter. When the target enters the cottage, it sits at the table and eats the feast upon the table (save ends).	
COUNTERMEASURES	
◆ Detect Arcana DC 15 to detect the cottage door as the source of the entrancing hospitality effect.	
◆ Delay/Disable: Arcana DC 17 (minor action). <i>Success:</i> When the cottage door is closed, the <i>entrancing hospitality</i> effect cannot be cast. Its effects persist.	
◆ Destroy: Strength DC 16 or 20 hit points/damage to door (standard action). <i>Success:</i> The door breaks, and the <i>entrancing hospitality</i> effect can no longer be cast.	

The primary goal of the cottage is to capture the team’s owlbear. After the owlbear is captured inside the cottage, the doors and shutters close and must be broken or picked normally.

A captured owlbear will not leave the cottage on its own. Instead, it contentedly devours the meal before it, and the characters must use force or charm tactics to get it to leave. For each round the owlbear spends trapped in the cottage, each other team gains a +1 bonus to advancement rolls this round. When the characters destroy the cottage door and regain their owlbear (or abandon it to search of another), the encounter ends and the characters move to the next encounter location.

R1: New Contestants

Combat Encounter Level 1 (440-660 XP)

The characters encounter a new group of contestants. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The trail leads along the side of a ridge. Fallen timbers lie at the bottom of the decline, overgrown with moss and briars. Suddenly a spear cuts through the air and thumps into the trunk of the tree behind you.

“We want be famous owlbear-runner team!” a voice shouts from below. “We take owlbear now!”

Ten orcs camouflaged by mud and leaves ready their spears, grunting challenges from the brush at the base of the slope.

These orcs tried to enter the Owlbear Run but were unable to find a sponsor. They have taken it upon themselves to steal an owlbear from one of the teams and win the race.

In the first 2 rounds of combat, the orcs throw handaxes at the characters from below, using cover as much as possible. The orcs concentrate on one character at a time in an attempt to pick them off one by one; if an orc reduces a character to 0 hit points, the orc knocks the character out rather than landing a killing blow.

If there is a third round of combat, five new orcs enter the fray on top of the ridge. These orcs attempt to bull-rush the characters off the ridge. Since they know they're not supposed to kill any contestants, the orcs simply try to push the characters down the decline. If at any point the orcs are alone with the owlbear at the top of the ridge, they capture it and hustle it away. The characters will then need to find a new owlbear with which to compete.

If the orcs steal the owlbear, they join the race at a different encounter location, the same distance as the characters from the end of the race. Use the

challenge modifiers for Brandok's Brute Squad for the new orc team.

10 Orc Savages		Level 4 Minion Brute
Medium natural humanoid		XP 44 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +3		Perception +1
AC 16, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 12		Low-light vision
Speed 6		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚔ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 8 damage, or 12 with a charge attack.		
☞ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 6 damage.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Savage Demise ♦ Encounter		
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.		
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 13 (+3)	Wis 9 (+1)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 8 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant		
Equipment hide armor, 4 handaxes		

R2: Owlbear Stew

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,100 XP) Owlbear Challenge (if the owlbear is bloodied)

A bugbear hunting party and a troll decide to try owlbear for dinner. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

A pall settles over the mountain woods the farther you walk down this trail. Soon the bird songs cease and the forest falls silent. Among the trees, several pairs of eyes watch you from a distance on either side of the trail: A bugbear hunting party accompanied by a gigantic troll emerges.

The troll sniffs in the direction of the owlbear and smacks its lips.

“Owlbear stew?” it grunts to its grinning companions.

The troll and the bugbears attack from both sides of the trail. To gauge the owlbear's reaction, refer to “Owlbears in Combat” in the “Dealing with Owlbears” section.

If the owlbear is bloodied in this encounter, it might try to flee. Tell the characters that the owlbear is panicked and will attempt to escape if they cannot calm or restrain it. If the bloodied owlbear starts its turn with no character adjacent to it, it flees. The characters can take standard actions to use force- or charm-related skills to stop the owlbear (DC 15). Every round the characters score a success, the owlbear does not flee. After three successes, the owlbear regains its composure and no further checks are necessary.

If the owlbear flees the map, it escapes into the woods, and the characters must search for it after the

Troll	Level 9 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 400
HP 120; Bloodied 60	Initiative +8
AC 21, Fortitude 22, Reflex 18, Will 18	Perception +6
Speed 8	
TRAITS	
Regeneration	
The troll regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the troll takes fire or acid damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.	
Troll Healing (healing)	
Whenever an attack that doesn't deal acid or fire damage reduces the troll to 0 hit points, the troll does not die and instead falls unconscious until the start of its next turn, when it returns to life with 15 hit points. If an attack hits the troll and deals any acid or fire damage while the troll is unconscious, it does not return to life in this way.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Claw ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage. If the attack bloodies the target, the troll uses claw against it again.	
Str 22 (+10)	Dex 18 (+8)
Con 20 (+9)	Int 5 (+1)
Wis 14 (+6)	Cha 9 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant	

battle. If this happens, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

4 Bugbear Thugs	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175 each
HP 65; Bloodied 32	Initiative +7
AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 15, Will 11	Perception +8
Speed 6	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Bushwhack	
The bugbear gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against a creature that has no allies adjacent to it.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Morningstar (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, or 3d8 + 6 if the bugbear has combat advantage against the target.	
✂ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 20 (+7)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 8 (+1)
Wis 13 (+3)	Cha 10 (+2)
Alignment evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Equipment leather armor, morningstar, 2 handaxes	

B1: Rough Crossing

Owlbear Challenge

A bridge over a stream becomes a roadblock when the owlbear refuses to cross. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The trail crosses a small bridge that spans a steep embankment above a rapidly flowing stream. As you approach the bridge, your owlbear halts and peers over the bank at the flowing water below. Then it settles back on its haunches and plants itself stubbornly on the ground.

The owlbear does not want to cross the stream, but it can be persuaded or browbeaten into crossing the

bridge. The characters can encourage the owlbear using force or charm tactics.

Success: The characters gain the owlbear's respect or trust. The owlbear crosses the bridge, and the characters gain a +1 bonus to all future force or charm tactics with that owlbear, depending on which tactic they used.

Failure: The owlbear refuses to cross the bridge, and the characters must lead it the long way around the stream. All other teams gain a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

B2: Riddle Bridge

Puzzle Challenge (100 XP/character)

An illusory wizard presents the characters with a riddle to help or hinder them. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

Ahead, a small wooden bridge crosses one of the many streams that winds its way down the mountainside. Before the bridge stands a transparent image of the wizard Delzar. When you approach, the illusion speaks.

"Should this riddle confound you, I'll be astounded. Guess it wrong, and your path's confounded.

*"A bother to its mother,
Who would abandon it if she could,
Her waif-like, worthless only child
That grows up plump and fat lying abed,
On the verge of a sea change.
'Such a pretty thing,' the men say one day.
They knife the mother, seize the daughter,
Bind her to the others, continue their slaughter,
Sell them at market in chains and strings
To adorn the courts of queens and kings."*

The illusion is a trick devised by the wizards to test the party's cleverness. A DC 22 Arcana check reveals strong teleportation magic in and around the bridge.

The characters earn the XP reward only if they answer the riddle correctly.

Correct Answer: The correct answer to the riddle is "a pearl." If the characters answer correctly, they cross the bridge and advance to the next encounter location.

Incorrect Answer: If the party answers incorrectly, the illusion of Delzar vanishes. When the characters cross the bridge, they experience a dizzying sensation and find themselves elsewhere. Place the characters at a different encounter location of the same distance to the finish line. The characters reorient themselves and plot their new course, and each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Avoiding the Bridge: If the characters try to go around the bridge, they experience the same dizzying sensation as if they had answered the riddle incorrectly, but they are teleported off the trails. Each other team gains a +4 bonus to advancement rolls this round as the characters trudge through the woods to find the trails again.

Intelligence Check Option: If the players can't guess the riddle and insist that their characters would know, you can allow an Intelligence check against a DC you feel appropriate. If you do this, make sure the players put forth a strong effort before resorting to the die roll.

SPONSOR ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters are created by the sponsors to help their teams gain an advantage.

ST: Obstacle Course

Trap Encounter Level 5 (200 XP)

The trail hides a dangerous obstacle course used by Sir Tomire's troops for training. Use **Map A** (trail map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

Ahead on the trail, you spot a dozen heavily armed warriors flying the banners of Sir Tomire from their tents. Some sit around a small campfire while others hone weapons or don armor. A sentry hails you as you approach.

"Well met," he says. "Welcome to the company of Sir Tomire."

This trail leads through a part of the mountain that Sir Tomire uses to train his forces. The sentry explains to the characters that the path ahead and the woods around it are full of hazards and traps. Normally the sentry would guide travelers around the area, but since Sir Tomire has a stake in the Owlbear Run, he can give no aid to a competing team.

If the characters proceed through the area, they risk setting off a number of whirling blades traps hidden beneath the ground. There are five traps buried in various places on and around the trail. You should choose the locations of these hidden contraptions and the location of the single control panel that the captain of the guards has access to. If they ask nicely (Diplomacy DC 12), the captain shows the characters the panel but says he cannot disable the traps for them, since doing this would aid Sir Tomire's competitors. He advises the characters to try a different path.

Whirling Blades	Level 5 Trap
Object	XP 200
Detect Perception DC 22	Initiative + 7
HP 55	
AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, Will –	
Resist 5 all; Immune cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage.	
Speed 4	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
← Attack ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	

Assuming they don't turn around, the characters can attempt to disarm the traps by using the control panel or pass through the area and risk setting off the traps.

If the characters choose to risk the traps, have them roll initiative. On each character's turn, ask the player to move the character across the map. When a character (or owlbear) crosses a square with a hidden contraption, the whirling blades activate. If the owlbear is damaged by a whirling blades trap, it attacks that contraption until the contraption is destroyed. If another trap damages the owlbear, it abandons the first trap and attacks the second until it is destroyed.

The obstacle course extends throughout this part of the mountain, and the characters cannot avoid it if they proceed along their chosen route. If they try to go around the traps, select a different map and choose five squares for the hidden contraptions and a place for the control panel on that map.

If the characters try to deactivate the control panel and fail, they must proceed through the traps anyway (or turn around); in either case, if the characters fail to overcome the obstacle, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

If the characters fight Sir Tomire's men, use the statistics for 12 town guards (*Monster Vault*, page 171).

If Sir Tomire has sponsored the characters and they show his badge to the captain of the company, the captain escorts the characters through the obstacle course so that they avoid it completely.

SC: Brigands

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

Lord Klavin's lackeys spring an ambush. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The trail passes a tumbledown cottage with a dilapidated roof and shutters that hang askew from the windows. A rusty pick and shovel jut from a small trash heap of old timbers, broken boards, moldy bed sheets, and other refuse. As you near the cottage, the owlbear stops, paws the earth, and grunts.

Perception DC 22: *There are several humans hiding in various places on both sides of the road. Some peek from the trees, camouflaged in the leaves. Someone moves about inside the cottage, peering through chinks in the wood. It is difficult to say how many are hiding, but you are certain they surround the party.*

These humans are brigands who secretly work for Lord Klavin. Their task is to kill any team that passes this way with an owlbear unless that team wears Lord Klavin's badge. Two brigands hide behind the cottage, one brigand with a crossbow hides inside the (locked) cottage, and three brigands hide in the trees beside or behind the characters. The brigands near the cottage attack with ranged weapons, and the brigands in the trees drop down to attack with melee weapons.

The brigands have been expecting an owlbear team to pass along this route and have taken good care to hide themselves. If the characters fail to notice the brigands at the start of the encounter, the brigands attack in a surprise round. They fight until only two or fewer of their number remain, and then the survivors try to run.

The cottage doors are closed and locked (see cottage map description), but the shutters are open. The archer inside the cottage fires from cover but can be

attacked only through the window or the roof, or if a character finds a way through the door. The archer opens the door only for another brigand if he's certain that none of the characters (or owlbear) can follow that brigand through the door.

If Lord Klavin has sponsored the characters and they wear his badge, the brigands do not attack. If the characters spot them, the brigands assure them that they are Lord Klavin's people and are waiting to ambush one of the other teams.

4 Raven Roost Cutthroats	Level 5 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 200 each
HP 49; Bloodied 24	Initiative +11
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 19, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d4 + 6 damage.	
⚔ Garrote (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Requirement: The cutthroat must not be grabbing a creature.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is grabbed (escape DC 22) until the end of the cutthroat's next turn. Until the grab ends, the cutthroat has superior cover, and neither it nor the target can be pulled, pushed, or slid.	
⚔ Arterial Cut (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the cutthroat). The target takes 2d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). The grab then ends.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚔ Quick Cut ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy escapes the cutthroat's grab.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The cutthroat uses <i>dagger</i> against the triggering enemy.	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 20 (+7)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)
	Wis 14 (+4)
	Cha 6 (+0)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common	
Equipment studded leather, dagger, garrote	

Raven Roost Sharpshooter	Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250
HP 55; Bloodied 27	Initiative +7
AC 20, Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 17	Perception +10
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage.	
⚔ Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
🎯 Careful Aim ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The sharpshooter chooses an enemy it can see. If it can still see that enemy at the start of its next turn, its crossbow attack power targets the enemy's Reflex, instead of AC, and deals 5 extra damage against it. These benefits last until the end of that turn.	
FREE ACTIONS	
🎯 Archer's Decoy ♦ Recharge when first bloodied	
Effect: The sharpshooter gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex until the start of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 19 (+7)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 10 (+3)
	Wis 15 (+5)
	Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common	
Equipment studded leather, short sword, crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts	

SR: Dead End Ridge

Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)

The mountain trail leads to an unexpected dead end. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

You follow the trail deeper into the mountain wilderness, but the farther you travel, the more the forest reclaims the old path; weeds and briars and small trees overgrow the trail until the trail fades away completely, coming to a dead end at the bottom of a ridge. Fifteen or twenty feet above

you, another trail skirts the ridge's edge and continues on course through the mountain woods.

The characters might attempt to climb the ridge, backtrack to the last branch of the trail, or search the ridge face.

Climbing the Ridge: The challenge in climbing the ridge lies in motivating the owlbear to undertake the climb. Any character can climb the ridge by succeeding on a DC 10 Athletics check. The characters can attempt to force or charm the owlbear into climbing the ridge.

Success: The characters move to the next encounter location.

Failure: The characters must turn around or try something else.

Searching the Ridge: The characters can take 5 minutes to search the ridge. Ask each searching character to make a DC 22 Perception check. Any character who succeeds discovers a dwarven rune etched into the rock behind some thick ivy. Pressing the rune causes the stone to slide away, revealing a secret passage into the mines that tunnel through the mountain. If the characters take this shortcut through the mines, they advance to the next encounter and each other team takes a -2 penalty to advancement rolls this round.

If the characters fail the search check, they eventually discover the rune, but each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Turning Around: If the characters are forced to backtrack and find another route, they advance to the next encounter, but they fall behind; each other team gains a +4 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

If Lady Fazgahrd has sponsored the characters and they carry the badge she gave them, the rune glows as they approach the ridge, and the characters discover it automatically.

SB: Inspection Point

**Roleplaying Challenge or
Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)**

The sheriff's people hold an inspection point at a bridge. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters approach the inspection point, read:

On the bridge ahead stands a small band of armed humans wearing the colors of Lord Burl. A black-bearded man in chainmail and helm waves you forward.

"Just a routine inspection," he says. "Please cross the bridge in single file, and keep your weapons sheathed unless we ask you to unbind them."

The sheriff's people are patrolling the mountain paths searching for evidence of the dangerous "black naga" drug smuggled through this region. They are conducting a legitimate (albeit time-consuming and thorough) investigation and have legal grounds to hold up any group trying to cross the bridge.

If the characters let the sheriff's people complete their investigation, or if they turn around or take an alternate route, each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Talking through the Checkpoint: It's difficult to convince the sheriff's people to disobey a direct order from their boss, but if the characters offer a compelling argument or a lie, each character can attempt a DC 10 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince the sheriff's people to let them pass. The sheriff's crew will look to each of the characters to verify the story, so each character must succeed on this check or the sheriff's crew continues to conduct its inspection.

Fight: The characters can fight the sheriff's people. If any of the sheriff's people are slain in the fight, however, the characters lose any treasure they would be rewarded at the end of the race (see "Conclusion: The Finish Line"). If the characters win the

fight or cross the bridge and leave the map, they proceed unhindered. If the characters fight Lord Burl's people, use the statistics for 6 town guards (*Monster Vault*, page 171).

If Lord Burl has sponsored the characters and they openly display his badge, the sheriff's people let them pass to the next encounter location without conducting their investigation. Each other team takes a -1 penalty to advancement rolls this round.

OWLBEAR ENCOUNTERS

In "Owlbear Run," the characters experience one owlbear encounter associated with the owlbear they chose. Each owlbear entry includes a minor quest. This is the part of the adventure where the characters get to interact with their owlbear and help it resolve its quest. This event can come in the middle or at the end of the adventure but seldom appears at the beginning unless you want it to (see the "Encounter Order" sidebar at the beginning of the "Encounter Types" section).

OE1: Terrible Tharizdun Is Asleep

Owlbear Challenge

A stag's carcass on the road lures the voracious, hibernating owlbear away from the trail. Use **Map A** (trail map).

When the characters start this encounter, read:

As you move along the trail, Terrible Tharizdun suddenly halts and raises his head. Just beyond the tree line, the bloody carcass of a stag lies sprawled on the forest floor. Tharizdun coos and pulls against his harness to get at the feast.

If he is able, the hungry owlbear proceeds to the deer and begins to eat. The characters can prevent Terrible Tharizdun from stopping to eat the deer by using charm tactics at a -5 penalty, by baiting him with any part of the deer carcass, or by offering him all their rations (automatic success). The characters can also use force tactics to pull Terrible Tharizdun away from the carcass; the determined owlbear, however, gains a +2 bonus to his opposed rolls (see "Dealing with Owlbears"). If Terrible Tharizdun reaches the stag's carcass, he will feast.

Though he is hungry, Terrible Tharizdun takes his time eating the stag. (*Nature DC 12*: The carcass is fresh, and the characters can see recent wolf prints in the soft ground. The wolves that killed the stag were likely frightened by the characters' approach.)

If the characters wait for Tharizdun to finish, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round. Once Terrible Tharizdun has finished, the owlbear wanders a few yards away and settles down to sleep; the characters can use force or charm tactics to prevent this. If the owlbear falls asleep, each other team gains an additional +2 bonus to advancement rolls (+4 total) this round.

The characters might think of another solution to the problem. Remember that Terrible Tharizdun is strong and stubborn, and forcing or convincing him to move should be difficult (DC 22) and require more than one check. The root of the problem is the owlbear's hunger, however, and solutions that promise to sate the owlbear's appetite should automatically succeed (in other words, if he eats a character).

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters get Terrible Tharizdun to continue the race without stopping to eat the stag or falling asleep, they earn the "Motivate Terrible Tharizdun" quest reward.

OE2: Kitten's Eggs

Owlbear Challenge

Kitten, the pregnant owlbear, needs a nest to lay her eggs. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters start this encounter, read:

A small thatched cottage stands at a bend in the trail. The chopped wood stacked alongside the cottage and the smoke streaming from the chimney indicate that it is occupied. Through the open shutters come the voices of human children at play. Kitten coos, then growls, then coos again, pulling with all her strength toward the cottage.

The cottage is occupied by a human woman named Lora and her three small children. The children play with wooden toys on the floor while the woman prepares a chicken at the table.

The owlbear senses it is time to lay her eggs. She wants to lay them in this cottage, where they will be hidden from forest predators, but first she must drive the humans from their lair. If the characters study Kitten now, a DC 16 Arcana, Insight, Nature, or Perception check reveals that Kitten is pregnant, and the characters gain a +2 bonus to charm tactics used to influence Kitten for the rest of the encounter.

Use the statistics for the human rabble minion in the “Competing Teams” section for the woman Lora, if necessary. Her children have the same AC and hit points as the rabble, but their attacks deal only 1 point of damage.

Restraining Kitten: The characters can use force or charm tactics to restrain the owlbear.

Success: The characters restrain the owlbear. Kitten moans and growls and lies down on the ground, refusing to move.

Failure: Kitten bursts into the house and attacks the woman and children. (If the characters failed a force tactic by 5 or more, the owlbear might attack the characters instead.) Once the woman and her

children have fled the cottage or been slain, Kitten lays her eggs near the hearth.

The Eggs: Regardless of whether Kitten breaks into the cottage, she lays her eggs here, sits on her makeshift nest, and refuses to budge. If the characters use force tactics to move her, the owlbear gains a +5 to her opposed rolls. Alternatively, the characters can use charm tactics to convince the owlbear to let them approach and handle her eggs.

Success: The characters force Kitten to move from her nest or charm the owlbear into allowing them to handle her eggs. Kitten will not leave the eggs behind (she will fight to the death before leaving them), but if the characters take the eggs along, Kitten follows.

Failure: Kitten takes extra time to make a nest from the materials she can find—thatch from the roof, wattle from the walls, rushes from the floor. She does not stir until she becomes hungry, and then she leaves the cottage to hunt. The race proceeds, but each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters prevent Kitten from slaying the cottage occupants and they take her eggs along in the race, they earn the “Save the Children” quest reward.

OE3: Manslayer Is Cornered

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,000 XP)

Owlbear Challenge

Cornered against a ridge, the cowardly owlbear must face his fears. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the party starts this encounter, read:

As you race through the woods, shaggy gray shapes keep pace with your party; a pack of hungry dire wolves has caught the scent of your owlbear. As your trail rounds the top of a ridge, the wolves spring their trap, cornering you against the edge of the steep decline. Terrified, the owlbear shrieks and struggles against his harness.

5 Dire Wolves	Level 5 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount)	XP 200 each
HP 67; Bloodied 33	Initiative +7
AC 19, Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 8	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Pack Harrier	
The wolf has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to two or more of the wolf's allies.	
Pack Hunter (mount)	
The wolf's rider has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to one of the rider's allies other than the wolf.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Bite ◆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 3d8 + 4 against a prone target.	
The target falls prone if the wolf has combat advantage against it.	
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 16 (+5)
Con 19 (+6)	Int 5 (-1)
	Wis 14 (+4)
	Cha 11 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

The dire wolves attack the owlbear; they attack only characters who stand in their way, attack, or hinder them. Manslayer cowers as the wolves attack, but it should be clear to the players that an owlbear could easily kill a dire wolf if it fought back.

The characters can use force or charm tactics to motivate Manslayer to fight back.

First Success: Manslayer stops cowering and stands up, though he remains intimidated by the wolves.

Second Success: Manslayer assumes a threatening appearance, screeching and growling at the wolves.

Third Success: Manslayer fights back against the wolves.

Failure: If the characters fail, Manslayer leaps from the ridge in an attempt to escape and takes 2d10 falling damage. He then flees the map at the first opportunity. If he is not killed by dire wolves and escapes the battle, the characters must search for him in the woods; each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

If Manslayer survives the encounter, he finds his courage. For the remainder of the race, he defends himself from attackers. He can also be convinced to fight the characters' enemies (see "Owlbears in Combat").

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters get Manslayer to fight the dire wolves, they earn the "Help Manslayer Find His Courage" quest reward.

OE4: Lucky Lady Is Reunited

Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)
Owlbear Challenge

Lucky Lady encounters her mate, from which she has been separated since her capture. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters start this encounter, read:

As you near a bridge that spans a small stream, Lucky Lady's tufted ears prick up and the owlbear rises on its haunches, owl eyes wide, focused on something beyond the bridge. Then you see it: a huge male owlbear on the edge of the forest, crashing through the bracken. When he spots your owlbear, it rises up on its haunches and screeches. Lucky Lady mirrors the male's movement—she rises up and screeches back.

This male owlbear is Lucky Lady's mate. When Lucky Lady and the male owlbear spot one another, Lucky Lady strains against her harness. The characters can try to restrain her using force or charm tactics, attempt to communicate or empathize with the male owlbear, scare him away, or watch and wait. (Feel free to improvise other solutions the characters devise.)

An Arcana, Nature, or Perception check (DC 15) reveals that the male owlbear is alternately calling to his mate and issuing a challenge to the characters, whom it perceives to be a threat to his mate.

The characters can prove they are not a threat in one of the following ways.

- ◆ **Communicate/Empathize (Nature DC 22):** A character can calm the male owlbear by touching him and speaking to him gently.
- ◆ **Calm Lucky Lady (charm or force tactics):** The characters calm Lucky Lady. The male owlbear crosses the bridge. If the characters allow him to do so, the male owlbear approaches Lucky Lady, stops in front of her, and sniffs.
- ◆ **Release Lucky Lady (DC 10 group Nature check in which at least half the characters succeed):** If the characters release Lucky Lady, she meets her mate on the bridge. The male assesses the characters to see if they still pose a threat.
- ◆ **Scare Away (DC 15 group Intimidate check in which at least half the characters succeed):** The characters can spook the male owlbear by growling, beating their weapons, discharging spells, and so forth. If the characters fail, the male owlbear attacks.

Success: If the characters successfully convince the male owlbear that they are not a threat to his mate, the male owlbear calms. It nuzzles Lucky Lady and grunts at the characters before returning to the forest. If any check fails by 5 or more, the male owlbear attacks.

Failure: If the characters fail to convince the male owlbear that they does not pose a threat to his mate, the male owlbear attacks (but Lucky Lady does not attack unless the characters have treated her cruelly). Each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters successfully convince the male owlbear they do not pose a threat to his mate and they allow the owlbears a moment together, they earn the "Reunite Lucky Lady with Her Mate" quest reward.

CONCLUSION: THE FINISH LINE

At the end of the race, the spoils go to the victor.

If the characters win the race, read:

You have brought your owlbear through many trials, and now the town of Milvorn sprawls before you beneath the eastern slopes of the mountain. You pick up speed in your descent, barreling down the mountain like a mob of drunken gods.

And gods you are, at least in Milvorn. The crowd cheers as you reach the town gate. Your triumphant owlbear echoes the cry, screeching victoriously over the applause as gold coins fall at your feet like enormous glittering raindrops.

If the characters lose the race, read:

Despite your best efforts, due to an uncooperative owlbear, the wizards' tricks, and the sponsors' schemes, your crafty opponents have carried the day. You arrive in Milvorn to discover another team standing at the gates with its owlbear, basking in the adoration of the crowd.

As you consider what to do next, a messenger arrives with a summons from the duke and a proposition for lucrative employment. It seems that your greatness has not gone unnoticed after all.

If the characters finish the race first, they gain the quest reward, "Win the Owlbear Run." If the characters paid 5,000 gp to participate in the race, they gain it back. The winner of the race gains 2,500 gp for each other team that participated in the race (7,500 gp total if all three NPC teams participated). In addition, the characters' sponsor grants each character a magic item of the character's level +2 (player's choice).

If the characters finish the race second, they gain back their entire entry fee. **If they finish third,** they gain back half their entry fee. If the characters had a sponsor who fronted their entry fee, they gain nothing.

Regardless of how they placed, the characters gain an audience with Duke Hightower and establish a relationship with the sponsor they chose. Impressed by their performance, the duke or sponsor can give the characters a lead to future adventures.

The Owlbear's Fate: When the race is finished, the characters learn that the owlbears are to be released into the wild. Depending on the characters' relationship with their owlbear, you might consider bringing it into the campaign as a recurring character or at higher levels as a companion character or a trained mount.

About the Authors

Christopher Perkins is the D&D senior producer at Wizards of the Coast and has been contributing to *Dungeon* magazine for two-thirds of his life. He liked *The Cannonball Run* when he was a kid, and is afraid to watch it as an adult for fear he might still like it.

Steve Townshend is an award-winning freelance D&D designer whose recent credits include *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale*, *Madness at Gardmore Abbey™*, and *Heroes of the Feywild™*. The banderhobbs and Oublivae, Demon Queen of Desolation, are two of his favorite creations for D&D.

**FREE
ONLINE
PLAY!**

**DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS
ONLINE**

**Customize and Play a Unique Hero from
100s of Race and Class Combos**

www.ddo.com