

Crown of the Orc King

The adventuring party has stopped to explore the remains of the Temple of the Darkened Moon on their return home from their latest adventure. They had heard rumors of it being haunted in the last town they stopped in and decided to investigate, thinking to make camp a little bit away..

The shattered, black remains of walls and towers tell quite the tale of the destruction and violence that took place here. Every so often you encounter the skeletal remains of a fallen soldier; the marking of whichever side they belonged to has long since fallen away.

Picking your way through the rubble you suddenly hear the thudding of footsteps mixed with the occasional grunts that sound like someone, or something, is being chased in your direction. Seconds later that assumption is confirmed as a gnome wearing a tattered brown cloak stumbles into the middle of the group.

"Someone help! I'm being chased by mad orcs!"

ROLEPLAYING GOBAL FENDERBASH

Gobal is a gnome from the northern lands (which is all he will say about his homeland) and practically incapable of telling the truth. He will use every trick at his disposal, and invent a few as he goes along, to avoid admitting that he stole a golden crown from the Orc King Nosk Spine-Puller.

The Chase

Give the players a few moments to question Gobal if they wish. After it becomes clear that they aren't going to get an honest answer out of him have the three Orcs chasing Gobal make an appearance.

The lead orc is named Craw. Upon seeing Gobal he will begin accusing him of stealing the 'golden hat' and will become increasingly aggressive toward the gnome. If the players haven't yet managed to learn the reason why Gobal is being chased they can see that he does react to the accusation. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that he is in fact insulted at being accused of being a thief. He instead refers to it as a 'liberator of goods', thief being such an ugly word.

Craw insists that Gobal be handed over so they can return him to King Nosk Spine-Puller for trial and punishment. (The trial being only a formality).

The orcs will not abandon their cause (being more afraid of King Nosk than the party before them) and will fight to the death.

If the players specifically look up and succeed at a DC 10

Wisdom (Perception) check they will notice the Manticore flying over head.

Charge!

After a few moments of discussion, if the adventurers haven't attacked Craw will become frustrated with things and will charge the party. If anyone in the party has a passive Wisdom (Insight) of 13 or higher has been paying attention and not surprised by Craw's attack.

There are also two skeletons that will animate and make their way towards the sound of combat, arriving at the end of the second round.

The Manticore will attack after the first round if things are not going well for the Orcs. If no character discovered it flying over head it will get one free attack on the character that appears the most heavily armored before landing just out of reach.

- If there is a Dragonborn in the party the Manticore will maintain its distance and attack from afar. It will flee if the Dragonborn manages to inflict 20 points of damage in total.
- Players may attempt to treat with the Manticore, offering it tribute or sacrifice to leave them be. They may also pledge themselves to the service of the Manticore.
- With a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check roll a d6. On 1-3 the Manticore will demand a sacrifice, regardless of what was offered. On 4-6 it will demand tribute (gold is acceptable). Failure to follow its demands will cause it to attack.
- On a failed DC 13 Charisma (Deception) check the Manticore will become insulted and attack the character making the attempt, focusing on that character until they go down.
- If at any point Gobal returns the crown the Manticore and any remaining Orcs will cease attacking and leave.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are the recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** remove manticore.
- **Weak party:** remove skeletons.
- **Strong Party:** add two skeletons.
- **Very strong party:** skeletons become shadows and Craw becomes orc war chief