

Keep in the Wildlands

A Short Adventure

Introduction

Keep in the Wildlands is a short introductory adventure. The Referee should read over this material to prepare and make any notes they feel appropriate. The Referee can also read or paraphrase the italicized text included with each numbered location on the map to give the Players a sense of their surroundings.

They can begin the adventure simply by reading the italicized text of Location 1: Entrance. The Players will encounter traps, combat, and non-player characters during their exploration of the keep with the Referee using the notes for each location as guidance. The statistics for all monsters can be found in this book. Don't hesitate to expand, modify, or completely change anything in this adventure - it's your game.

At the bidding of a local lord, the Player characters have tracked a band of orcs to an abandoned keep in the wilderness. They're tasked with defeating the orcs and putting an end to the raids these foul monsters have been making against nearby farmers.

Adventure Map



Location 1: Entrance

You and your companions have spent several days tracking a band of orc raiders to their lair in hopes of putting a stop to the terror they've been inflicting on the nearby farming village of Westmoor. After following the winding waters of the Stoneheart River, you've finally found their lair – a battered and worn stone keep. A massive pair of wooden doors marks the entrance of this foreboding keep and a stone tower to the east is marked with several arrow slits.

The door to the keep is locked, but can be opened by a thief who successfully picks the lock. The door can also be battered down by battering it with a weapon and inflicting 20 points of damage.

If the characters make too much noise on their approach, the orc inside Location 9: Armory Tower fires his bow through the arrow slits and puts the other orcs on alert with a warning yet. Characters attempting to shoot back through the arrow slit suffer a -8 penalty to their attack roll.

Location 2: Courtyard

This large courtyard is overgrown with with ivy and debris. A moss covered well is set on the northern wall. A wooden door leads into the western tower, while a larger double-door is set into the northwestern wall. A single orc with a scimitar starts as your arrival. You see him reaching for a blasting horn at his belt.

The orc sentry blasts the horn on his first action, altering the entire keep to intruders. He then draws his sword and attacks. Characters who search the area for secret doors discover an emerald worth 100 gp hidden behind a loose stone in the well.

Location 3: Western Tower

This squat, square tower has arrow slits on its southern wall and wooden doors leading both north and east. It is dark long, thick webs crisscross the ceiling overhead.

A giant spider has made its nest in the webbing and will surprise the Player characters on a 1-4 on 1d6. It fights until slain. The corpse of a long-dead orc can be found in the webbing. Its stiff hand still clutches a Potion of Healing and a short sword is sheathed at its hip.

Location 4: Main Hall

A long wooden table fills the middle of this chamber. Several orcs are standing around it, looking over crude maps. They start at your arrival and ready their blades.

The four orcs in this room attack as soon as the player characters enter. Their maps detail the local farming villages they have been raiding. One orc is carrying a key to Location 8: Northeastern Tower and has a pouch with 54 gold pieces.

Location 5: Corridor

This large chamber runs turns northeast before narrowing into an eastern hall. A heavy wooden door is set into each wall, with two such portals in the northwestern stone. Torn tapestries and other deprecated decorations recall the keep's former glory.

There are no monsters in this room, but the door to Location Location 7: Jail is trapped. Anyone who attempts to open it or pick the lock triggers a poison needle, which shoots from the keyhole. The target must make a saving throw or suffer 2d6 points of damage. If the key from Location 4: Main Hall is used to open the door, the trap is automatically disabled. The tapestries and decoration are ruined beyond recovery and worthless.

Location 6: Barracks

Several crude pallets of fur and straw, are cast about the floor of this room. A stinking chamber pot, filled with offal sits in one corner.

Players who disturb the pallets are attacked by a pair of giant rats sleeping in a concealed hole. After defeating the rats, they find a half-rotted sack in the hollow containing a gold and ruby ring worth 75 gold pieces, and three polished rocks which are actually sling stones+1.

Location 7: Jail

You open the door to find a small halfling cowering in the corner. He looks at you with pleading eyes.

The halfling is a local farmer named Maltho. He is a 1st level Swordsman (AC 8 [11], HP 7) and will aid the party if they agree to set him free, but they will need to provide him with arms and equipment.

Location 8: Northeast Tower

This tower has been decorated with trophies of war: human skulls and other grim trinkets. A massive bugbear, flanked by a pair of orc warriors, looks at you with bloodlust in his eyes and orders his soldiers to attack.

The bugbear is the leader of the orc raiders and he is no fool. He fights savagely, but if the battle goes poorly, he will flee, escaping out the northern door and untying the worg hidden at Location 10: Worg Pen to cover his escape. If the bugbear and orcs are slain, the players find a chest of treasures he has taken from the villagers: a long sword+1, Potion of Heroism, scroll of Charm Person, and 325 gold pieces. The chest is locked and must be either broken open or picked.

Location 9: Armory Tower

The walls of this tower are lined with crude orcish weapons. Short swords, spears, and short bows are stacked here and a single orc archer acts as a sentry.

This is the same orc which may have attacked the player characters at Location 1: Entrance. If he did, he is aware of their intrusion and surprises them on 1-5 on 1d6, allowing him to attack before initiative is rolled. The room contains ten short swords, twelve spears, four short bows, and 60 arrows.

Location 10: Worg Pen

In the brush you see a vicious wolf-like beast tethered to a rotting tree. He snarls and snaps at you and your companions, pulling on the weakening chain.

The worg will break the chain in three rounds if the characters remain, attacking them savagely. Alternately, if the bugbear leader fled combat, he sets the worg free during his escape. In this case, the worg will lay in ambush, attacking as soon as the player characters arrive and surprising them on 1-4 on 1d6.

Conclusion

If the player characters defeat the bugbear, the mayor of Westmoor awards them with 100 gold pieces and tells them to keep any treasure they found. In addition, if any of the player characters have a Charisma of 15 or higher they can convince the mayor to grant them ownership of the keep – provided they repair and maintain it. If the bugbear escaped, the referee should feel free to develop new adventures wherein the player characters can pursue him. Perhaps his raiders are part of a larger force just scouting the area, or the bugbear has ties to an evil cult hoping to fallow the farmland – the possibilities are endless.