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## The Effigy at Arkendale

### 1st Level Characters

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#### *Introduction*

The Effigy at Arkendale is an adventure designed for four characters of first level of experience in the 5th edition of the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game.

The locals talk about an abandoned village, a clan of kobold raiders scouring the ruins, and a bizarre wooden effigy they worship. Is anyone brave enough to explore the ruins of Arkendale and uncover its sinister secret?

The game master should feel free to alter NPC names, region names, monsters, treasures, and the like based on their individual campaign.

#### *Possible Adventure Starts -*

**River Trade is Losing Money** - An elven merchant named Oloni is finding it hard to hire barge crews as kobolds have occupied a ruined town along his river route. This difficulty is affecting his profits. He is willing to pay the characters 150 gp to explore the ruins of Arkendale and exterminate the kobold threat.

**What are They Building?** - The characters overhear a merchant named Arlik complaining in a tavern. It seems the merchant and his crew are terrified. Their trade route along the river brings them near the ruins of Arkendale. The ruins had been vacant for a long time, but the last few times he passed there, he witnessed kobolds digging in the debris and paying homage to a wooden statue. He suggests he might have to alter his route to avoid the ruins.

**A Portent of Evil** - The local magistrate of a river town, a woman named Indaria, summons the characters to her office. She explains the situation with the ruined hamlet and the kobolds spotted there. She will pay the characters 150 gp to scatter the kobolds and squash the rumors of them summoning a great evil with their rituals.

#### *Background*

Arkendale was a hamlet built upon the banks of a fast-moving river. When goblin raiders destroyed the local armies, the village was left unprotected. Arkendale was soon targeted and destroyed. The people living there were chased away, enslaved, or killed. All that remained of the hamlet was a few standing structures, a few exposed basements, a couple of standing walls, and the remnants of a dock.

The raiders did not stay long. As years passed, trade along the river grew, and river barges began to pass by the ruined hamlet. Stories spread about the ruins, the goblin raiders, and lost treasures. Looters and adventurers searched the ruins, but they did not find any treasure.

The rumors of Arkendale slowly died away but were not forgotten. In fact, a cultist named Valadra the Merciless, intent on finding the lost treasures, focused her attention on the ruins of Arkendale. With her influence, she sent kobold raiders to the ruins with instructions to search and dig for treasure. She fashioned a scarecrow to serve as her enforcer and to ensure the kobolds did as she commanded.

For several weeks, the kobolds have been searching the ruins; however, they are lazy and unorganized. Many kobolds want to raid a hamlet to gather slaves to handle the digging, and others want to leave, but all of them are terrified of the cultist and her enforcer.

When the characters arrive, the kobolds will have already searched many buildings and most of the main temple rooms.



## ***Arriving at Arkendale***

The characters can travel by land or river to reach the ruined hamlet. It should only take 2-3 days of travel time, and the game master should allow them to arrive without encounter or detriment. They will arrive at the ruins by late afternoon. When the characters reach Arkendale, the game master can read the following:

***You have reached the ruins of Arkendale. The hamlet is nothing more than a collection of buildings, collapsed rubble, and an odd stone wall standing erect. The main structure is an old temple with a bell tower that rises above its rooftop. Near the riverbank are the remnants of an old dock and a wooden effigy constructed from twigs and tattered cloth.***

There are **17 kobolds** (stats can be found in the Basic Rules on page 142) in Arkendale. The kobolds sleep during the day (as they detest sunlight) and have minimal guards stationed as watchers. At night, they are out in force, digging and exploring the rubble.

## ***During the Day***

During the day, there are five kobolds awake. Three kobolds will be in room 2, and the other two are in room 17. The guards are alert and watch for any signs of trouble while the remainder of the kobolds are asleep in room 3. If the guards spot the characters, they immediately awaken their sleeping comrades by shouting and barking in their guttural tongues. After two combat rounds, the kobolds in room 3 will awake and join the fray.

## ***During the Night***

At night, the 17 kobolds are divided into groups as they dig and scour the area for the hidden treasure. They are currently working in areas 9, 10, and 13.

The kobolds will pay homage to the statue by kneeling before it and worshipping the statue in draconic. If any kobolds spot the characters, they will alert the entire group and cause large-scale combat.

## ***Tactics***

It might prove prudent for the characters to perform raids on the kobold camp, as engaging with all the kobolds could prove overwhelming. If the characters attack and then leave, the kobolds will be on alert. It will be impossible to surprise them. If the number of living kobolds drops below 5, the kobolds will take their food and treasure from room 3, if possible, and flee the area. At such a time, the scarecrow (room 20) becomes active.

## ***The Lost Treasure***

The evil cleric heard stories of a lost treasure, as did many looters and adventurers. Although most people believe the rumors are false, there is, in fact, a hidden treasure in Arkendale. It is not money, gems, or jewels. The hidden treasure is the iron bell in the bell tower.

Although it appears as an ordinary bell, the bell has been enchanted by the worshippers of the sun goddess with a form of Channel Divinity (Turn the Faithless) magic that causes damage to undead. This power affects a one-quarter-mile radius and is unleashed whenever the bell is rung; if the bell is rung continuously, its powers are unleashed every other round.

Because it seems like an ordinary bell and because its magical nature only affects undead, no one ever made the connection to its value. However, the bell cannot leave the town without ruining its magic.

## ***Room 1***

***You are standing in the ruins of a building. Only a few segments of stone walls remain standing, while the remainder of the structure has collapsed.***

***Although much of the debris is overgrown with weeds and thickets, several piles of visible rubble stand in the area.***

There is a **giant poisonous snake** (stats can be found in the Basic Rules on page 134) living here. It will attack anyone who moves through the area but avoids large groups of five or more. This area contains nothing of interest or value.



## **Room 2**

***You gaze into the remains of an old shop. Although much of the roof has collapsed, there are still sections that remain intact. Some broken kegs and an old wooden chest stand in the room.***

This room has been searched now and again by looters. There is nothing of interest or value here.

During the day there will be 3 kobolds here serving as guards. They will be alert and vigilant.

## **Room 3**

***You have found an old temple. The structure remains almost perfectly intact, with very little damage to its walls and rooftops. Peering inside, you see several wooden pews in the central area and a stone altar in the eastern alcove. Several pouches and leather bags lay along the northern wall.***

One of the double doors is locked. The key is missing. The other door is open. If a character wishes to unlock or lock one of the doors, the action requires a successful DC 14 Dexterity roll with thieves' tools.

The altar, if inspected, is etched with the images of the sun goddess. The goddess is of good alignment and controls the powers of the sun. She is the enemy of all evil creatures that hate the sun and its blessings (e.g., undead).

If a good cleric wants to worship the sun goddess, the goddess will grant the request.

Any neutral cleric who wants to worship the sun goddess must complete a quest, knowing that at the end of the mission, the cleric must become of good alignment. A possible quest could be to sanctify a fallen temple of the sun goddess (i.e., the Spirit of the Fallen King adventure) or to destroy a number of minor undead creatures (skeletons or zombies) in the name of the sun goddess.

The sun goddess will ignore the requests of any evil cleric.

Lastly, the kobolds keep a cache of food in leather satchels near the northern wall. Along with the food are several leather bags containing their treasure of 1,023 sp. There is also a parchment that has information.

**Parchment** - Dig up every basement. Scour the rooms. Find that hidden treasure. When you do, send word to me. I will come to collect it. If you fail or steal from me, you will suffer my wrath.

## **Room 4**

***Adjoining the temple is a chamber containing a copper holy water font and basin, which stands in the center of the western wall. The room is dusty but otherwise appears in solid condition.***

The font remains blessed. A cleric of the sun goddess can use it to create holy water. If the font leaves the temple, it loses its properties and no longer functions as a font. Also, the bell will lose its powers, as the deity will turn her back on the area.

## **Room 5**

***You have found a bedchamber with a wooden bed, dresser, and a footlocker. One wall is painted with the image of the sun shining brightly over a shadowy landscape. You also see a human skeleton lying on the floor.***

This room belonged to one of the old clerics. The goblins killed him when they invaded the hamlet. The skeleton wears old ceremonial robes and a silver holy symbol (a sun emblem). A mace lies upon the floor nearby.

The mace is a magical +1 weapon. When used against undead, the mace inflicts double damage.

## **Room 6**

***You discover a storeroom filled with the remnants of empty wooden kegs and barrels.***

The room is the lair of **2 giant centipedes** (stats can be found in the Basic Rules on page 131) that made their lair in the barrels. They will attack anyone who searches the room.

## **Room 7**

***You have found a communal bedchamber. Four wooden cots stand within the room, as does a wooden cabinet.***



This room was where the clerics tended to the sick or wounded villagers. The wooden cabinet once contained healing supplies, but there is nothing of use or value remaining.

### **Room 8**

***You have climbed into the bell tower. Windows provide a view of the land to the north and east. An old, rusted iron chain hangs from the bell loft 15 feet overhead. The large bell still rests within its framework, but the joists and wooden supports appear rotted and unsafe.***

This bell tower contains an old iron bell that weighs the equivalent of 15,000 gp in encumbrance. The bell radiates a slight magical aura (see The Lost Treasure section for more information). Any attempt to remove the bell from the tower and transport it will prove to be a very difficult feat. The bell can be sold for 450 gp.

### **Room 9**

***The building that had once stood here is nothing but rubble. Only a few segments of stone walls remain standing.***

If the characters thoroughly search this area, they will discover the skeletal remains of more than seven humans buried beneath the rubble. These were the victims of humanoid invaders. There is nothing of interest or value on the bodies.

It should be noted that at night there are 5 kobolds here searching and digging.

### **Room 10**

***You are looking down into a cellar about eight feet below the ground. Rubble and debris cover the area.***

If the characters thoroughly search this cellar, they will find a small leather-bound journal.

It should be noted that at night there are 5 kobolds here searching and digging.

**Journal** - The journal contains information concerning the fall of the lord's keep and the goblin raiders. The writer suggests that the sun goddess will protect them.

### **Room 11**

***The cellar below you contains dark, muddy water. Rubble and wooden debris are abundant here.***

This cellar is the lair of **4 giant rats** (stats can be found in the Basic Rules on page 135). The animals will attack anyone who climbs down into the cellar. They are excellent swimmers. The muddy water in the basement is only a foot deep, and several holes near the waterline lead into a warren of rat tunnels. There is nothing of interest or value here.

### **Room 12**

***You have found another cellar area that contains wooden timbers and broken stones. In the debris at the bottom of the cellar, you can see the skeletal remains of several humanoids.***

There are six total bodies: four humans and two goblins. It will take the characters several turns to dig them all out. The humans have nothing of value, but the goblins carry 97 sp and 101 cp.

### **Room 13**

***This area is a cellar that descends roughly eight feet. Stone debris and broken timbers lay about the area.***

There is nothing of interest or value here.

It should be noted that at night there are 7 kobolds here searching and digging.

### **Room 14**

***This building has collapsed. Only a few pieces of standing stone remain. The area is overgrown with weeds and thickets.***

There is nothing of interest or value here.

### **Room 15**

***You have found a collapsed building. As you poke around the debris, you see only a few standing walls and a pile of rubble and debris.***

If the characters make a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) roll they uncover a silver bracelet (100 gp) from the rubble.



## **Room 16**

***This area is the ruin of another building.***

There is nothing of value here.

## **Room 17**

***You have entered a building that is on the verge of collapse. The area appears to have been a storefront of some sort. Broken stones, splintered timber, dried leaves, and other debris cover the floor.***

This room contains nothing of interest or value.

During the day there will be 2 kobolds here serving as guards. They will be alert and vigilant.

## **Room 18**

***This room was once a bedroom. Debris covers several pieces of broken furniture.***

There is nothing of interest or value here.

## **Room 19**

***You descend the steps and find yourself in a large room. The ceiling above has remained intact. The bare stone floor is damp and mildewed. The remnants of wooden barrels and kegs stand in the southern portion of the room. There is a foul odor in the air.***

This room was a supply area for the store above. There is nothing of interest or value here. Searching the kegs and barrels will reveal that they are empty. Looters have been here before.

## **Room 20**

***You are looking at the remains of a stone and wooden pier. Most of the stone pylons are intact, though grime covers them. Many of the wooden slats are missing or broken, making the pier unusable. An 8-foot tall wooden effigy made from bundled twigs and sticks with a cross piece about six feet off the ground stands near the dock. On the cross is a scarecrow made from moldy hay, tattered cloth, and old leather sacks. The scarecrow appears quite grisly and menacing.***

The docks are no longer usable; however, repairing them would not be hard as the pylons are still intact and serviceable. The characters will notice the frames of two long boats submerged in the muddy riverbank. One long boat contains a plain copper necklace (3 gp).

The effigy is an actual **scarecrow** (stats can be found in the Monster Manual on page 268), a monster fashioned by the evil cleric as an enforcer and overseer. It will remain motionless until the kobolds are slain or flee. Once the kobolds are gone, the scarecrow will come to life and try to kill the characters.



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