

The Scales Tipped at Midnight

Adventure by Jaden Smith-Borne

Overview

The party has just completed a contract and is returning to town with the artifact they were sent to collect, ready to receive their reward. They are forced to rest on the way, but there are many dangers in the night, including a band of kobold thieves who are looking for more treasure to offer their god. The party must retrieve their stolen goods, or they will not get paid for their work. Unfortunately, these kobolds are not only in service of their god, but also in the service of a green wyrmling that has taken up residence in a cave in the forest – distressingly near a developing hamlet. If the dragon is not dealt with, the entire forest may become its domain, and those living here will be driven out.

The hook

In order to get paid for the job, the party needs a certain artifact that they had with them on the road. In the night, two kobolds will attempt to steal from the party, and will not come away empty-handed.

Part 1: Thieves in the Night

The adventure begins as kobold thieves attempt to steal from the resting party.

To begin this portion of the adventure, ask the party members how they are resting. Who keeps watch, if anyone keeps watch at all? When will they change out who keeps watch? Where do they keep the artifact? Any details about their rest will be useful to you. Use a marker to keep track of the artifact during this encounter.

Using this information, make a mental note of where your kobolds will approach from. There should be about 10 in total – 7 stationed around the party, hidden from view, and 3 attempting to infiltrate and steal anything they can. Begin the encounter by having anyone who is awake make a perception check, then roll stealth for two of the kobolds. These two kobolds are the scouts, attempting to locate everything worth anything. If the perception check(s) beat both stealth rolls, reveal both kobolds. If only one is beaten, only reveal one. If the player(s) fail to notice one or more of the

kobolds, then the kobolds will roll sleight of hand for each sleeping member of the party. If the kobolds roll lower than 14, then the person they were checking wakes up and must contest the same stealth rolls you made for the kobolds with their own perception check. Do not roll stealth a second time.

If no one catches the kobolds, they will make off with anything that wasn't in possession of a waking person. The only exception is the artifact. If the artifact is in the possession of someone who is awake, make a slight of hand check to beat the person's perception check.

If one of the kobolds does get caught, begin combat. Roll initiative once for all the kobolds, but do not reveal any kobolds that were not spotted. If one of the infiltrating kobolds is still hidden, then it will continue to search the party for any valuables.

Roleplaying the Kobolds

Kobolds are weak, and they know it. Have them stay out of sight as much as possible, using slings to pelt the party members. Kobolds also hate gnomes, so target any gnomes in the party. The kobolds that have infiltrated the party's camp may recognize that they are screwed and attempt to throw the loot into the woods so that the others can

get it to safety. The party should not have an opportunity to kill all the kobolds.

Now that the party has lost the artifact they need to get paid, give them the area map. Tracking the kobolds will take the party to the kobold lair, continuing down the road will take them to Easthallow.

If the party still has the artifact, have them be stopped at Easthallow and hired to deal with the kobolds.

Part 2: The Hunt

Location 1: Easthallow

Upon arriving at the hamlet of Easthallow, the party is greeted by a scholar named Jonathan, a nervous man who seems very relieved to have found a party of adventurers. Upon hearing that the party was stolen from, Jonathan will become increasingly nervous and tell the party that Easthallow has been suffering a string of thefts recently. If the party tells him specifically that the thieves were kobolds, the following information may be received by talking to Jonathan:

- Kobolds steal things to attempt to free their god.
- Kobolds will serve any evil dragons in the area.

- The air around a cave not far from Easthallow has become stale and hard to breathe.
- The kobolds have been stealing from Easthallow, but never as far away as where the party was.

Alternatively, information about the nature of Kobolds can also be obtained from a nature check.

If the party either does not know they were robbed by kobolds or does not wish to tell Jonathan, he will ask them directly to clear out the kobold lair. Ultimately, the party should either ask to be shown to the kobold lair or have the cave circled on the map.

Location 2: The Kobold Lair

Traditionally, kobolds will fill their underground lairs with traps. However, this is a relatively new lair that is still under construction, so the traps aren't quite as deadly. The traps are also designed so that the kobolds will not be hindered by the traps, so anything similar in size and/or weight to a kobold would be safe. Use the Kobold Map (Layout) to track combat and use Kobold Map (Traps) privately to track the traps, which work as follows:

- The stationed kobold will attempt to lure the party over a rickety bridge that will collapse under a creature larger than a kobold. Make a DC 16 dexterity saving throw to not fall into the ravine. Falling into the ravine deals 2d4 bludgeoning damage as the victim falls 25ft and lands in a somewhat deep river. There is a hidden passage leading from the bottom of the ravine to the lair. Getting out of the river requires a DC 14 athletics check, and the passage is 60 ft long.
- The pots of spiders spawn an insect swarm when opened. Make a dc 14 investigation check to determine their purpose.
- Beams require a dc 15 acrobatics check to pass.
- There are caltrops in the mud that require a dc 15 perception check to spot. Use caltrop stats for this trap.
- Bell tripwires require dc 12 perception check to notice, dc 13 dexterity check to avoid. Alerts all kobolds that there are intruders.
- Slits in the floor allow kobolds to attack between two overlapping tunnels, but only if they have a round to prepare. DC 12 perception to notice them.

There should be around 15 kobolds spread across the lair to begin with. The first

time the party is spotted, 3 kobolds will gather the eggs from the sleeping chambers and attempt to leave with them. Remaining kobolds will attempt to chip at the party's health by sneaking around through the tunnels to get behind the party and deal damage before running away. Most of the kobolds will flee this encounter.

The tunnel that leads to the dragon's lair goes farther down. A DC 12 perception check will reveal that the air in the tunnel is wrong somehow, and makes the players feel almost sick. A DC 20 nature check reveals that the air is contaminated by a green dragon. The other tunnels that lead off the map go upwards.

If the party loots the treasure room, they will find a wand with three charges of cure wounds, three antitoxins, a magical cloak which is revealed by a dc 13 arcana check to give +2 to stealth, three nuggets of gold worth 20 gp, and a diamond worth 50 gp.

Part 3: The True Threat Revealed

The characters have located a path to what seems to be the lair of a young dragon, which the kobolds have already begun to worship.

Location 3: The Dragon's Lair

The dragon's lair is a somewhat large cave, almost entirely dark except for the entrance, with a relatively small pile of treasure in the center, upon which rests the green wyrmling. Before the encounter, have the players roll a dc 12 perception check to notice the artifact they need to retrieve in the wyrmling's horde.

There are a few things that can affect the difficulty of this fight. First, if the party comes straight to the cave from the first encounter, they will see any kobolds that survived the first encounter giving the stolen items to the dragon. If they notice the party, they will attempt to defend the wyrmling. If the party came to the cave through the passage from the kobold lair and any kobolds survived, they will notice three kobolds alerting the wyrmling about the party's attack. The two kobolds will attempt to defend the wyrmling. If the party comes overland from the kobold lair and any kobolds survived, the party will not have an opportunity to sneak up on the wyrmling, and half (or all, for extra difficulty) of the surviving kobolds from the lair will attempt to defend it. Finally, if the party comes straight from Easthallow or if all the kobolds are dead, the wyrmling will be alone in its lair, and the party will have the best chance at sneaking up on it. Once the wyrmling or

most of the kobolds have died, the remaining kobolds will flee through a hidden passage.

In the case that someone in the party spoke draconic or otherwise demonstrated proficiency in draconic near a kobold, the kobolds will tell the wyrmling about this, and the wyrmling will begin the encounter

by attempting to negotiate. For example, because green dragons value power over wealth, the wyrmling may offer to return what the kobolds stole from the party and more, and in return, the party would negotiate a deal on its behalf with the people of Easthallow to put the hamlet under its control in exchange for protection from raids and other threats.

APPENDIX: MONSTER STATISTICS

GREEN DRAGON WYRMLING

MM p95

Medium dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class	Hit Points	Speed	Challenge Rating
17 (natural armor)	38 (7d8 + 7)	30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.	2 (450 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +3, Wis +2, Cha +3

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Damage Imm. poison

Condition Imm. poisoned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Poison Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales poisonous gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

KOBOLD

MM p195

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class	Hit Points	Speed	Challenge Rating
12	5 (2d6 - 2)	30 ft.	1/8 (25 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the kobold has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

RAT

MM p335

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class	Hit Points	Speed	Challenge Rating
10	1 (1d4 - 1)	20 ft.	0 (0 or 10 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

SWARM OF SPIDERS

MM p338

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class	Hit Points	Speed	Challenge Rating
12 (natural armor)	22 (5d8)	20 ft., climb 20 ft.	1/2 (100 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Res. bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Imm. charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Spider Climb. The swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

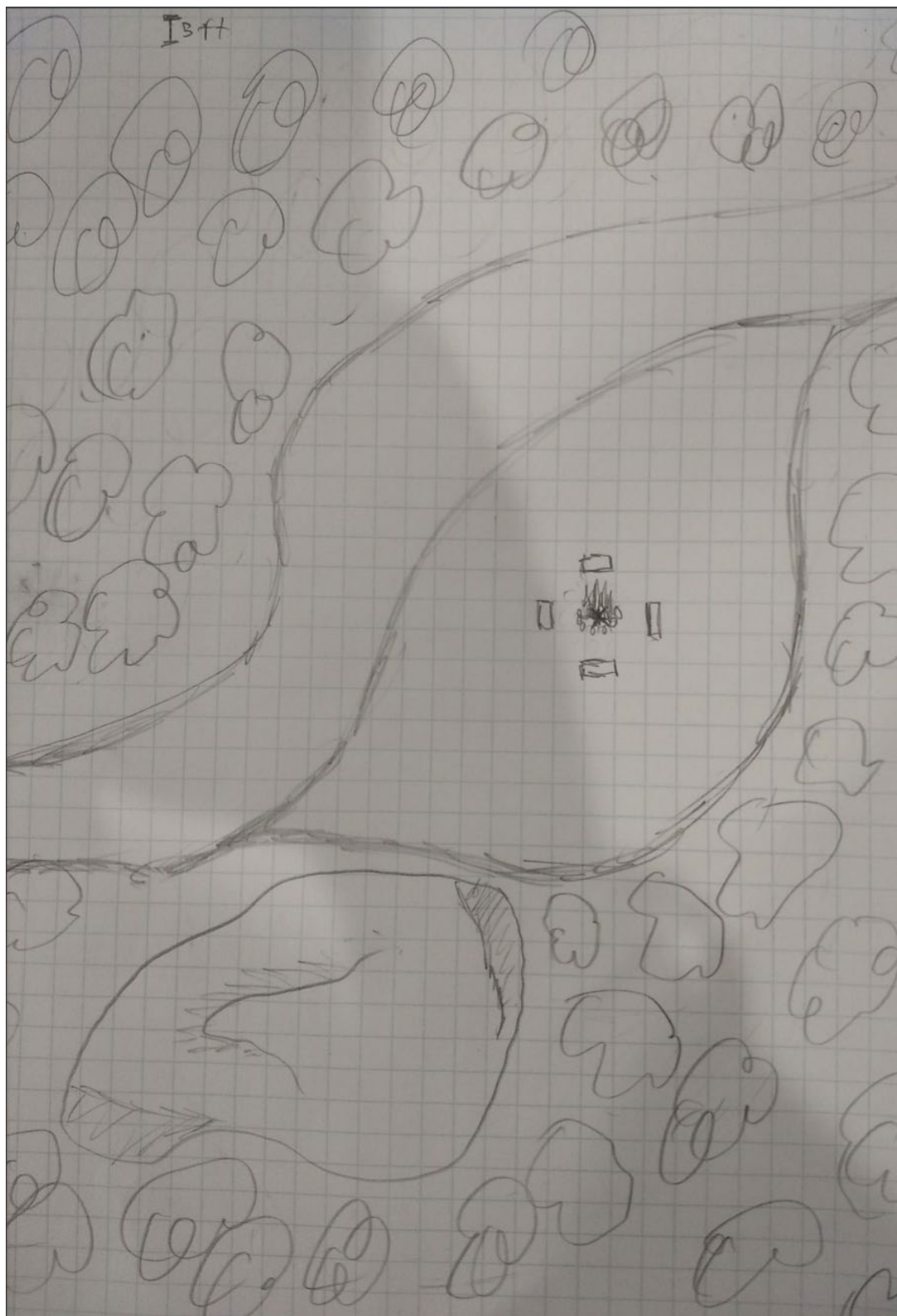
Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the swarm knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The swarm ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

MAP: CAMP



MAP: KOBOLD LAIR (LAYOUT)



MAP: KOBOLD LAIR (TRAPS)



MAP: DRAGON'S LAIR



AREA MAP

