



# WOLF CREATURE GUIDE

This document contains a collection of resources to help you run adventures heavily featuring wolves. These resources are divided into an Encounter Guide, a Loot Guide, and Example Encounters. Encounter Guides will help you understand the mindset, motivations, and tactics of the creatures, so you have a better idea of how to play them. Loot Guides provide alternate ways to provide treasure found after defeating these enemies. Example Encounters will provide encounter scenarios involving these creatures and instructions on how to run them.

## ENCOUNTER GUIDES

These guides explore the motivations and tactics of specific creatures to help provide richer roleplaying experiences when using them. Motivations determine the priorities the creature has and what goals it is likely to form based on them. Tactics determine the means through which the creature is most likely to achieve those goals. Motivations and tactics apply when roleplaying wild beasts looking for their next meal, as well as major characters serving as antagonists for an entire campaign.

## MOTIVATIONS

Understanding a creature's motivations will help you give it goals that may put it into direct conflict with the players. If players can discern that a creature has goals that aren't just "be an enemy for the players to defeat," it will breathe more life into the world and give the players a chance to make more informed decisions as to how to deal with the creature.

This section of the guide will provide examples of common motivations for these types of creatures in general and specialized motivations for more unique creatures.

## TACTICS

Understanding a creature's preferred tactics will help you form a strategy for how the creature will attempt to achieve its goals and guide you in making the most of the creature's abilities. Players who can recognize a creature's tactics will then have a chance to make note of them and attempt to adjust their own tactics accordingly.

This section of the guide will provide examples of how the creatures prefer to initiate combat, what tactics they use during combat, and what they will do if they are losing.

## LOOT GUIDES

The DMG contains Individual Treasure tables listing the number of coins that can be dropped by creatures of different CRs. However, many creatures have no reason to carry coins or even have them within their vicinity. Other creatures may carry wealth in the form of items whose value isn't apparent at first glance.



And sometimes, items are hidden away in nearby areas that are difficult to spot. How different CRs are split among the tables also results in creatures of wildly different power levels dropping the same amounts of wealth.

You can use these loot guides if you wish to provide your players with alternate sources of wealth when they slay monsters that don't carry money, let players use their skills to collect wealth, or just provide treasure that scales more closely with creature CR.

The guides provide rules for allowing players to loot valuable goods from their foes' corpses or the surrounding area after an encounter. This looting can be done using a skill check made by one of the players, with the type of check required dependent on the type of item the player wishes to collect and how the item is being collected. The more successful the check, the more goods the player is able to collect.

### WHAT'S ALTERNATE LOOT GOOD FOR?

Treasure other than coins, gems, and art objects can be used to provide forms of wealth that better fit the context of the current environment. Players with the right skill sets might also be able to use valuables they find this way to craft useful items. These could be handy mundane items or even magic items. Hide and bone could be crafted into weapons and armor, while potent plants or liquids could form the base for a potion.

# WOLF ENCOUNTER GUIDE

Wolves are a classic, low-level enemy for fledgling adventurers to face in the wild. Dire wolves are larger and provide a greater challenge but operate in the same manner. Like most predatory beasts, players are likely to encounter wolves when they wander into a pack's territory, a desperately hungry pack is hunting them, or the wolves are being used as war beasts by other humanoids.

Regardless of the encounter's circumstances, wolves rely on their numbers and pack tactics to overwhelm their foes. Wolves aren't likely to attack humanoids unless they outnumber them or are starving. Dire wolves may be more brazen about attacking in smaller numbers due to their size advantage over humanoids. Still, even they aren't likely to attack if their prey outnumbers them and appears in good condition.

## WOLF MOTIVATIONS

Being beasts, wolves usually have straightforward motivations driving their goals. A wolf pack lead by an ascendant packleader may have a more complex agenda.

### GENERAL WOLF MOTIVATIONS

- Hunt for food
- Protect territory
- Act in service or protection of those it perceives as packmates

### ASCENDANT PACKLEADER MOTIVATIONS

- Serve the sacred purpose it was created for

## WOLF TACTICS

While wolves may be beasts with simple motivations, they excel at hunting in packs and are capable of coordinated group tactics in combat. They utilize the same tactics when hunting in the wild or with humanoid masters.

### ENGAGEMENT

With their Keen Sense, wolves are likely to detect potential prey before they themselves are noticed. The wolves will then attempt to stalk and stealthily approach their prey, closing in as close as possible before being seen. Once spotted, the wolves try to drive their prey into fleeing. They may use intimidation or run at a target in an attempt to spook it, but they prefer to stay out of striking distance of creatures standing their ground.

### COMBAT

If one or more creatures run, the wolves will chase after them unless isolated targets are left behind for the wolves to surround. If multiple creatures scatter, the wolves will close in on one target. Wolves will chase prey long distances, exhausting their victims before closing in for the kill. If a wolf can close the distance, it will attempt to use its trip attack, hampering the target's ability to flee and giving other wolves a chance to close in from all sides.

If all the creatures stand their ground, they make themselves much less appealing prey to the wolves. The pack may attempt to isolate and surround one target if it looks like they can get a quick kill. If their prey poses a formidable threat to the wolves, they are unlikely to attack unless starving or under some supernatural influence.

### COMBAT: ASCENDANT PACKLEADER

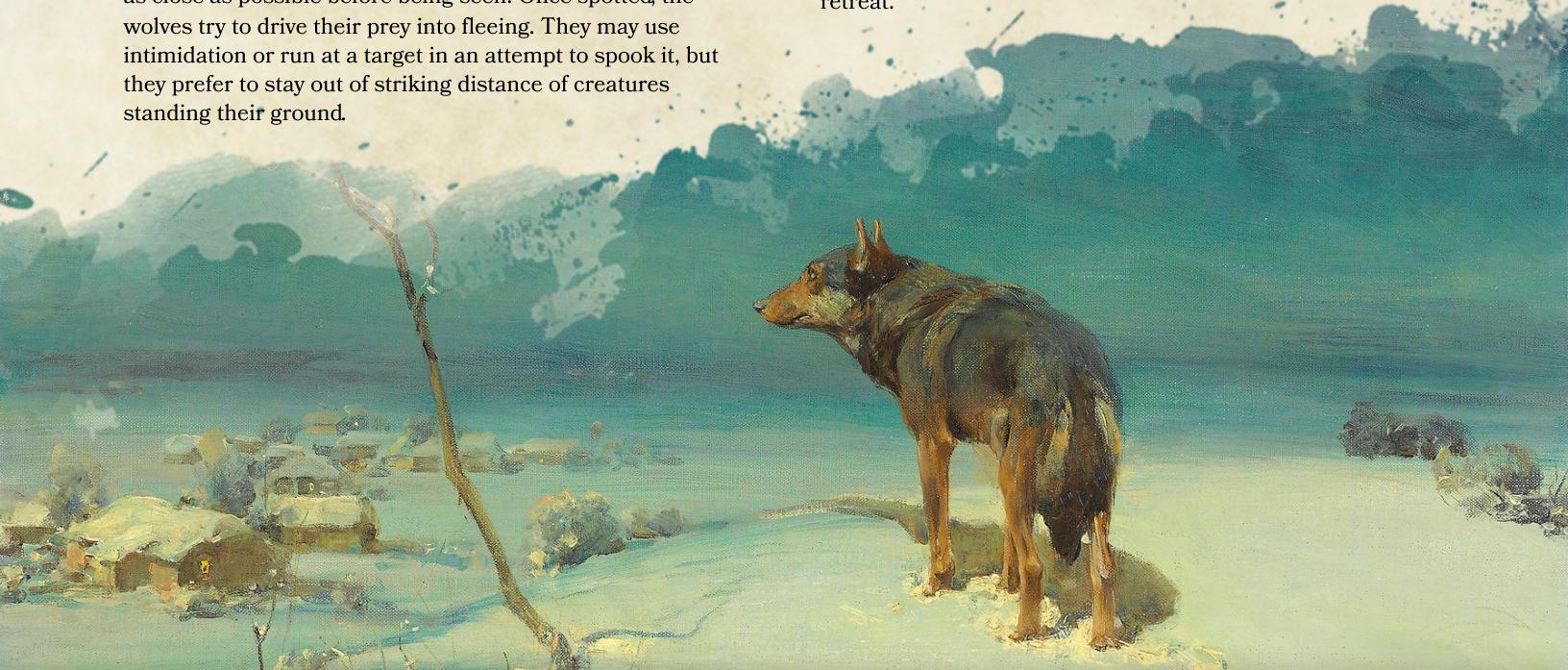
If an ascendant packleader leads the wolf pack, they will operate with a higher level of tactical complexity. They typically initiate combat with their Hunter's Howl, which not only helps their allies close distance on prey but frightens the prey into running, setting up the chase scenario wolves prefer. They can then use their Bark Orders bonus action during combat to keep their pack mates in the action and focusing on high-priority targets.

### RETREAT

If the wolves do engage in combat, they will usually be quick to flee if it appears the tide is turning against them. Any individual wolf is likely to flee once it loses 10 percent of its health unless it is desperately hungry, in which case it may fight until it has lost 50 to 60 percent of its health. If half or more of a wolf pack has fled and their opponents still appear to be in fighting condition, the remaining wolves will typically retreat.

### RETREAT: ASCENDANT PACKLEADER

Wolves being led by an ascendant packleader will often fight to the death so long as their leader commands them. The packleader will usually call for a retreat if the pack is losing the fight unless doing so would violate their sacred duty. If the packleader is slain, the wolves may go mad and attempt to avenge its death or revert to acting like normal wolves and retreat.



# WOLF LOOT GUIDE

Wolves generally won't carry items, so most of their loot will take the form of whatever can be harvested from their bodies.

## LOOTABLE WOLF ITEMS

The following table lists the types of materials likely to be harvested from wolves and the suggested skills your players can use to attempt their harvest. If the player has proficiency in more than one skill that can be used for gathering the type of item they're looting, you can give them advantage on the check.

### WOLF LOOTING CHECKS

Type of Item	Skill Used to Loot Item
Hide	Dexterity (Leatherworker's Tools) or Wisdom (Survival)
Flesh	Dexterity (Cook's Utensils) or Wisdom (Survival)
Blood or Bone	Intelligence (Medicine) or Wisdom (Survival)

The number of items harvested and the value of those items will depend on how well the players do on their harvesting check. You can give the different types of items unique names based on their material and value to help differentiate them from one another. The following table provides some example names.



## EXAMPLE ITEM NAMES

Value	Hide	Flesh	Blood	Bones
5sp	Tattered Wolf Pelt	Stringy Wolf Meat	Clotted Wolf Blood	Fractured Wolf Bones
1gp	Wolf Pelt	Wolf Meat	Wolf Blood	Wolf Bones
5gp	Pristine Wolf Pelt	Wolf Heart	Pristine Wolf Blood	Pristine Wolf Bones
10gp	Runic Wolf Pelt	Primeval Wolf Heart	Primeval Wolf Blood	Runic Wolf Bones

## WOLF LOOT TABLES

The following tables describe the number of items and value of those items the players are able to harvest depending on the result of their check. You can have them make a separate check for each creature they're harvesting or use one check for multiple creatures at once to save time.

If you don't want to require a check on the part of the players, you can instead roll a d20 with the modifier determined by the table to determine what the players find randomly.

### WOLF & DIRE WOLF LOOT TABLE

Looting Check Result or $1d20 + 3$	Wolf Loot	Dire Wolf Loot
1-5	Nothing	Nothing
6-12	1 5sp Item	1d4(2) 5sp Items
13-16	2d6(7) 5sp Items	1d6(3) 1gp Items
17-20	2d6(7) 1gp Items	2d6(7) 1gp Items
21+	1d6(3) 5gp Items	2d4(5) 5gp Items

### ASCENDANT PACKLEADER LOOT TABLE

Looting Check Result or $1d20 + 5$	Loot
1-9	Nothing
10-12	2d4(5) 5sp Items
13-14	2d4(5) 1gp Items
15-19	1d4(2) 5gp Items
20-24	2d4(5) 5gp Items
25+	1d6(3) 10gp Items

# EXAMPLE WOLF ENCOUNTERS

## THE HOUNDED WAGON (PLAYER LEVEL: 3-5)

In this encounter, the players find themselves protecting a broken-down wagon under attack by desperate and opportunistic wolves.

### ENCOUNTER CONTEXT

The wagon is being pulled by a **draft horse** and piloted by a pair of traveling merchants (**nobles**) who are taking a seldom-used trade route through a dangerous frontier. They have likely brought the players along for added protection, but you may instead have the players stumble upon the wagon if they are traveling separately on foot. The region consists of snowy, forested foothills, and the wagon has lost a wheel, forcing the merchants to stop and unload it as they attempt repairs while the sun sets.

### LEAD UP

It's been an unusually harsh winter, and the food-deprived **wolves** in the area are becoming more aggressive in their hunt for food. The wolves spot the wagon, and attempt to sneak up on it from all sides. If one of the players spots them, their characters will have a moment to ready themselves. Otherwise, the wolves will sneak up until they appear at the locations shown on the encounter map, at which point they will rush in at the surprised travelers.

When this occurs, you can read the following description:

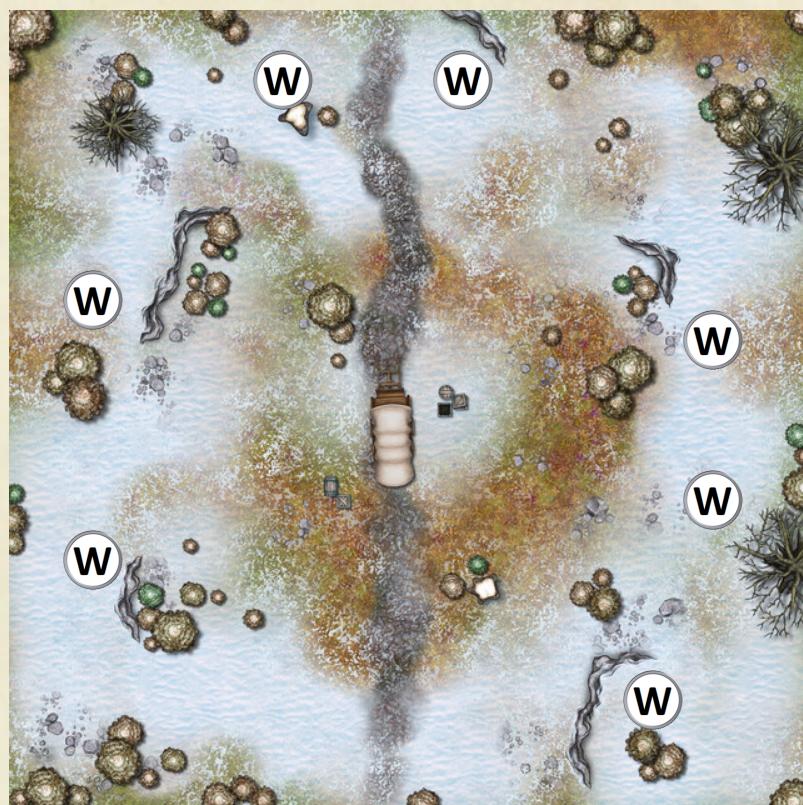
#### ENCOUNTER START DESCRIPTION

You see glowing eyes in the dark everywhere you look. Soon gleaming fangs and snarling faces appear as wolves close in around you from all sides. The merchants gasp and make for their wagon, shouting: "Drive them off! Protect our goods, and we'll pay ya! Promise!" The horse lets out a panicked neigh as the wolves move in, looking for a vulnerable target.

### MAP DESCRIPTION

- Lighting.** The wagon has several torches about it. Everything within 20 feet of the wagon is brightly lit, and dim light stretches out another 20 feet.
- The Ground.** The clearing with the wagon is mostly open terrain, and the snowy areas are not deep enough to impede movement. The area with the wagon is on a lower elevation than the surrounding edges of the map, which slopes down towards the center.
- Trees.** The smaller or isolated trees provide half cover to any creatures behind them. The larger groups of trees provide three-quarters cover.
- Ledges.** The rocky ledges provide about a 10-foot drop from the outside towards the center.

### ENCOUNTER MAP: SNOWY WAGON TRAIL



### MAP LEGEND

- W:** Wolf Arrival Area
- Wagon.** The wagon blocks line of sight to creatures in it and provides three-quarters cover against creatures attacking from the outside in. It provides total cover for creatures on opposite sides of it.

### RUNNING COMBAT

The wolves will charge the wagon in an attempt to spook their newfound prey into running. If nobody runs, they will attempt to gang up on any player who is apart from the rest of the group. If the players all stay grouped up in or around the wagon, a pair of wolves will close in on the panicking horse in an attempt to score an easy kill. If a player exits the wagon to intervene, other wolves will surround that player and attempt to bring them down with trip attacks and pack tactics.

Any wolf that is reduced to half its hit points or less will attempt to flee for its life. Once half the pack is dead or fleeing, the remainder will flee as well.

### THE MERCHANTS

The two merchants are each armed with daggers but will hide inside the wagon while they wait for the players to drive off the wolves. They will only attack wolves who threaten the wagon. If they see their horse come under attack, they will shout at the players to intervene.

If you wish to add a complication to combat, you can have one of the merchants hop onto the horse and release it from the wagon so he can make a break for safety. If he manages to ride off, the wolf pack will begin pursuing him and eventually catch up and kill him and his horse if the players don't intervene.

## THE HORSE

The horse is latched to the cart, which currently can't be pulled. This leaves the horse unable to move from its location, so it will do nothing but use hoof attacks at any wolf that comes near. If the horse is released from the wagon, it will make a run for it, and the entire pack will chase after it, eventually catching and killing it.

## AFTERMATH

If the merchants and their horse survive the encounter, the grateful merchants will gift each player 10 gold pieces or 10gp worth of supplies from their wagon. If one of the merchants dies, the remaining merchant will be badly shaken and not offer the players any reward. If both merchants die, but the players manage to bring the wagon to its destination, their business partner will demand the wagon's contents as compensation for the inconvenience of his associates' deaths. If the horse dies, the players will receive no reward from the merchants, and they will likely have to abandon the wagon to walk the rest of the journey.

### XP AWARD: 1,000XP

The degree of success they had in defending the caravan can affect the XP the players receive. You can use the following potential outcomes as guidelines to modify how much XP you award your players.

- **150% XP:** Wolves driven off and everyone survives mostly unscathed
- **100% XP:** Wolves driven off but the horse or one of the merchants fled or was badly wounded
- **50% XP:** Wolves driven off but the horse or one or more of the merchants was killed
- **10% XP:** The horse and both merchants were killed

## ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

The encounter assumes you are playing with 4 players in the suggested level range. If the players' levels are outside the suggested level range, or you have a different group size, you can adjust the encounter's difficult accordingly.

**Easier Encounter.** Change the encounter to 4 wolves.

Change the XP Award to 450.

**Harder Encounter.** Replace the wolves with dire wolves.

Change the XP Award to 2,300.

## ADVENTURE FOLLOW UPS

If you wish to connect this encounter to a larger adventure, the following hooks can help provide some inspiration:

d4

### Adventure Hook

1 The attack was orchestrated by a spiteful druid who wishes the end all use of the trade route through her lands.

2 The players find an abandoned wagon further along on their journey. Near the wagon are hoof and bootprints leading into the heart of the wolves' territory.

3 A hag has cursed the lands, starving off most of the wolves' typical prey, which has resulted in them aggressively hunting humanoids.

4 When the players arrive at the trading post they were traveling to, they find it ransacked and abandoned. Further investigation reveals wolf paw prints all about the structure.



# HOWLING MADNESS (PLAYER LEVEL: 6-8)

In this encounter, the players find themselves being hunted by an ascendant packleader who has been corrupted by an eldritch artifact hidden in the woods.

## ENCOUNTER CONTEXT

The encounter focuses on an eldritch artifact hidden away deep in the woods, which has driven the ascendant packleader who dwells there mad. The packleader now leads its pack of wolves through these twisted wilds, hunting and killing everything in sight. The players will know something is corrupting the wilds and may have heard tales of a monstrous wolf leading its pack on a murderous rampage. They should not know that the corruption is being caused by the artifact.

If you wish this to be part of a larger adventure, you could have the players face more kinds of twisted woodland monsters as they try to find the source of the corruption. The packleader may even be hunting them as they travel, and the artifact revives it at its location each time it is defeated.

## LEAD UP

As the players approach the artifact's location, the packleader will close in to protect the source of the corruption. The artifact will sense when the player's approach, regardless of how stealthy they are, and will summon the packleader to its defense.

When the players approach from the bottom edge of the battle map, the packleader will close in with its pack and attempt to stealthily encircle the players. This will include a pair of wolves attempting to sneak around and move in from behind. The tokens on the map show the general areas they will attempt to approach from. Once one or more are spotted or are within striking distance, they will all attack.

When this occurs, you can read the following description:

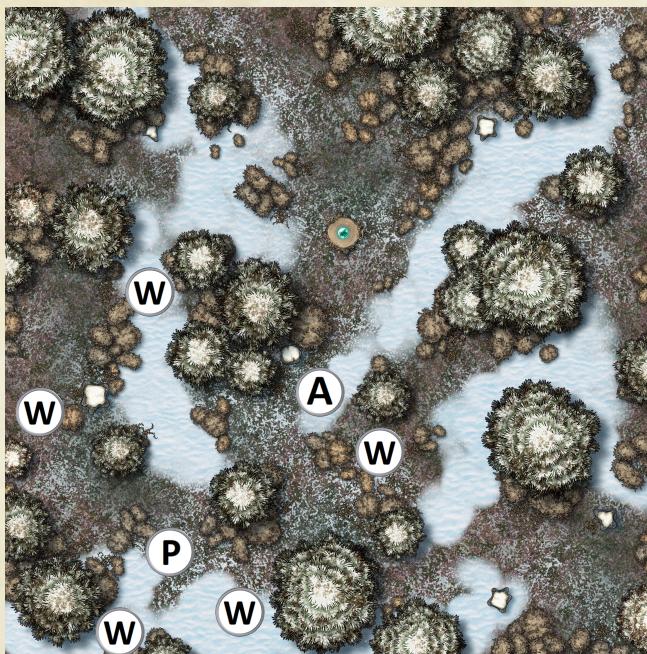
### ENCOUNTER START DESCRIPTION

Emerging from the forest around you, multiple wolves close in from all directions. Leading the pack is an unnaturally large wolf that seems to be made of writhing shadows with a pair of eyes giving off a maddening green glow. Through the trees, you can see something else is also giving off a faint green glow.

## MAP DESCRIPTION

- Lighting.** The artifact sheds dim light out to 10 feet. Everything else is obscured by darkness.
- The Ground.** The ground between trees is mostly clear terrain. The snowy areas are not deep enough to impede movement, and there are no significant slopes.
- Trees and Bushes.** The bushes are very dense, and moving 5 feet through them costs 15 feet of movement. The lone trees provide three-quarters cover, and the tree clusters provide full cover.

## ENCOUNTER MAP: FOREST ARTIFACT



### MAP LEGEND

- P: Player Arrival Location
- W: Wolf Arrival Location
- L: Pack Leader

## RUNNING COMBAT

The packleader and its wolves will make preventing the players from reaching the artifact their priority. Any player that approaches it will be swarmed by as many available wolves as possible.

The packleader can use its Bark Order to facilitate moving wolves out of losing fights and help them surround and neutralize fragile or troublesome players. But, most of all, it uses it to help wolves catch up and close in on any creature approaching the artifact. If the entire party is closing in on the artifact, it will use its Hunter's Howl to attempt to drive them away and have its wolves give chase.

## THE ARTIFACT

The item causing the madness looks like a crystal ball radiating unnatural greenish light. Any creature, other than the packmaster or its wolves, that comes within 10 feet of it for the first time on its turn or starts its turn within 10 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be subjected to the *confusion* spell until the end of its next turn.

The artifact has 50 HP, an AC 15, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If it is destroyed, the green glow will vanish from the eyes of the packleader, who will then cease attacking the players and attempt to flee, taking its wolves with it.

## RETREAT

So long as the artifact remains intact, the packleader will fight to the death. The wolves will fight on as long as the packleader remains in the fight. If it flees, the wolves will flee with it. If it dies, any wolf that doesn't outnumber its immediate foes or is below half its hit points will flee.

## AFTERMATH

If the players destroy the artifact, the curse of madness on the woods will end. The golden stand on which the artifact was sitting is carved with intricate and disturbing eldritch patterns but is not magical and will fetch about 100gp on the open market.

If the packleader is cleared of corruption and survives, it will leave a parting gift in the players' path as they leave the woods. The players will find a wooded flute with a wolf's head carved at the end. A player that picks it up will instantly know how it works. Anyone who uses an action to play it will cause it to emit a wolf's howl, which summons 4 wolves as though summoned by the *conjure animals* spell. Once the flute is used this way, it loses all its magical properties, which the players should be aware of when they receive it.

### XP AWARD: 3,000XP

The degree of success they had in ending the source of the madness can affect the XP the players receive. You can use the following potential outcomes as guidelines to modify how much XP you award your players.

- **150% XP:** The artifact was destroyed, and the packleader survived
- **100% XP:** The artifact and the packleader were both destroyed
- **50% XP:** The packleader was destroyed, but the players failed to locate or destroy the artifact
- **10% XP:** The players didn't destroy the packleader or the artifact

## ART CREDIT

- Mowgli and The Lone Wolf - Maurice and Edward Detmold
- The Lone Wolf - Alfred von Wierusz-Kowalski
- Akela, The Lone Wolf - Maurice and Edward Detmold
- Snow in The Valley of Eastern Sierras - William Keith
- Sunset in The Woods - George Inness

## ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

The encounter assumes you are playing with 4 players in the suggested level range. If the players' levels are outside the suggested level range, or you have a different group size, you can adjust the encounter's difficult accordingly.

**Easier Encounter.** Remove the two wolves circling around from behind. Change the XP Award to 2,500.

**Harder Encounter.** Change the wolves to dire wolves and add 2 more. Change the XP Award to 4,800.

## ADVENTURE FOLLOW UPS

If you wish to connect this encounter to a larger adventure, the following hooks can help provide some inspiration:

d4

### Adventure Hook

The artifact was left behind by a now insane witch who

- 1 wanders the woods, twisting everything in her path with her magical madness.

The artifact was left by a group of mad warlocks hoping to subtly spread the influence of the Far Realm.

- 2 With their plan foiled, they take a less subtle approach and begin summoning aberrations to despoil the woods.

The orb was placed in the woods by a delusional prince who believed it contained a gateway to a divine

- 3 being he came to see as his beloved. He seeks to rebuild the orb and exact vengeance on the players for interfering with his beloved's wishes.

Within twenty-four hours of being destroyed, the artifact reforms itself and continues to exude its aura

- 4 of madness. The players must find a way to destroy it permanently.



## CHANGE LOG

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### 1.0.0

- Public release