

Randy writes: I was buying some dog food the other day when I noticed a display of Sigourney-Weaverflavored alien chow. I immediately thought, There's an idea. While this module may not be to everyone's taste, the little frontier fort and its NPCs can be used in toto for an adventure of the DMs own design. After all, adventures serve several functions besides just being adventures. They generate ideas, provide NPCs, and supply locales and treasures. And the good ones are just plain fun to read!

Jacobs Well is an OSR adventure for one Game Master and one player. The PC may be of any class or alignment, but should be of levels 2–4. A 2nd-level PC should have above-average ability scores, especially Constitution and Strength. The adventure can be located in any cold, forested Wilderness. DMs using the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting will find the Burnel, southern Hraak, or northern Fellreev forests excellent locations for the module. DMs using the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign can locate the adventure in Lurkwood east of Mirabar, the Moonwood north of Silverymoon, or the Coldwood due north of Sundabar. Those DMs not wishing to use the adventure verbatim may still find the trading post called Jacobs Well a convenient safe haven to drop into any Wilderness area.

This adventure uses a Sequence of Events rather than set encounters. The DM should become thoroughly familiar with the layout of the trading post, the many NPCs, the creature used in the scenario, and the Sequence of Events before running the module.

JACOB'S WELL

Adventure Background

Before play begins, decide Why the PC is traveling alone. Perhaps he is the forward scout or trailblazer of his party, marking a path for the others to follow. The PC may have become separated from his group and is lost. He may be on a quest or returning from a one. Whatever the case, the PC is far from any known shelter and fleeing before an oncoming winter storm. It doesn't take a ranger to figure out that the boiling black clouds and howling north wind mean trouble. Struggling desperately through the trees, the PC stumbles into an open glade. The welcome smell of wood smoke drifts on the wind, and the traveler can see the comfort of a light ahead.

FOR THE GAME MASTER

The PC has stumbled onto a small fortified trading post named Jacobs Well. No one remembers who originally dug the well, but the site has been (at various times over the past 100 years) a logging camp, a fur trappers camp, and an orc encampment. For the past several years it has been a trading post in the hands of a half-orc named Jacob and has come to be called Jacobs Well. It is used primarily by fur trappers and occasionally by adventuring parties, as it is the only sign of civilization for many miles.

The comfort and welcome of Jacobs Well will soon turn very cold indeed. The PC's fate has led him to the little fort just in time to be involved in the horrors about to unfold there. One of the other guests is the unwitting host of a baby red slaad. If the PC stays at the trading post, he may witness the terrible aftermath of the birth of a red slaad and may have to choose between risking death by winter storm or the creature's hunger. While the winter storm keeps the patrons trapped in the trading post, the newborn slaad stalks the compound and survival becomes a hard-won and precious commodity. During the course of this adventure, the DM is free to move the NPCs anywhere he wishes, so long as they are where they are supposed to be when the boxed text is read. The primary location for any NPC will be either the main hall (area 8) or one of the inn bedrooms. The DM may find it easier to keep track of the location of the many NPCs if he uses miniatures, tokens, or small pieces of paper marked with the NPCs' initials. However, the PC should not be privy to this information.

The sudden removal of an NPC from the map may give away information before the DM wishes. Ideas for defense or hunting the creature should come primarily from the PC, who should be encouraged to actively search out the slaad. If the PC waits for the slaad to come to him, he will have a long wait and will then be faced with a powerful creature. However, several of the NPCs can recommend common-sense tactics, such as always moving about in pairs, everyone sleeping in the main hall, etc. The alignment of the NPC offering suggestions is important, as most of the NPCs are interested in their own survival rather than the groups. An NPC (especially the orc chief Tonazk and Jacob) may wish to use someone else as monsterbait and will not be overly concerned with the party's survival. It is important to remember and use the thief-like abilities of the slaad. Any survivors of a slaad attack will stress how the thing came up silently and suddenly lunged out of the shadows. To create a mood of paranoia and fear, the DM need only use a few rat or snow slide encounters (see Jacobs Well Encounters). A giant rat can suddenly jump on the PC while an NPC screams, Its on your back! Its on your back! A large amount of snow suddenly sliding off the roof

can momentarily pin the PC face down on the ground. While pinned under the heavy snow, the PC lies helpless as he hears something approach. Luckily, it is only an NPC come to help him (this time). Such minor incidents can be effective in creating the proper atmosphere. As the adventure progresses, a rat scuttling through a shadowy corner may illicit a major over-reaction from the PC. The slaads hiding places include the main house chimney (baby slaad only), latrine, stable, smithy, the barracks (after they have burned), and any other place the DM deems an adequate hiding place (such as the guard posts after the guards abandon the fort; see Day Two, Morning). It is unlikely the slaad will attempt to hide in the courtyard well. Unlike the chimney, there is no escape for the slaad should it be discovered there. Also, the slaad will not leave the fort because it needs the population of Jacobs Well for food. As the hunt for the slaad continues, it may be discovered in one of these hiding places. It is up to the DM to move the slaad once it is discovered, and the DM should plan the slaads next move should its current hiding place be rendered untenable.

As you approach this template you get a sense that the blood and tears of many generations went into its making. A warm feeling welcomes you as you type your first words.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The action of this adventure takes place over a period of three days, divided into rough time periods of morning, evening, and night. These time periods are approximately eight hours each but are kept deliberately vague to allow the DM as much latitude as possible in the timing of a particular event. Thus, two events can happen in a short space of time, one late at night and the second early in the morning, or the same events can be separated by several hours. In this way, the DM can create the proper atmosphere of anticipation and suspense. The events taking place at Jacobs Well revolve around a particular creature, a red slaad (see sidebar). If the slaad is caught or killed, no further events take place. After the evening of Day One, the DM is free to rearrange events as he pleases, but care should be taken not to reveal too much too soon. Otherwise, the sense of mystery, menace, and imminent danger is greatly diminished.

Encounters (2D6)	Roll 2D6
2	Slaad
3-4	Common Rats
5-9	Guard, NPC, No-Encounter
10-11	Giant Rats
12	Snow Slide

Table head	Table head
Some value	Some value
Some value	Some value
Some value	Some value

Do the Players need direction?

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MONSTER FOO

Small metasyntactic variable (golbinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 50 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses -

Languages Common Lisp, Erlang

Challenge 0

Monster-super-powers. This Monster has some serious superpowers!

ACTIONS

Generate text. This one can generate tremendous amounts of text! Though only when it wants to.

More actions. See, here he goes again! Yet more text.