Starting: Out of the Frying Pan…

# Background

Around a month ago, you all received a letter with the royal stamp on it and you were summoned to form an anti-resistance taskforce. You were to deal with problems his majesty didn’t have the time for dealing with himself. Some of you answered the call on the promise of forgiven debts or crimes, others of you for the hefty reward or the chance to serve your country and protect your homes. Whatever the reason, you all ended up here, fighting your way through a dungeon of resistance scum under the king Asmodeus’s orders.

# Encounter 1: Beast Master

As the last member of the party steps off the sketchy, unlit rope bridge behind you, it disappears into the abyss, cut by an unseen enemy on the other side. There’s no going back. You enter in a 40 x 30ft roughly rectangular room. On the left is a steady black stream of an unknown depth entering under the far wall and draining into the cavern you just exited. On the right, part of the floor caved in, leaving a hole too dark to see into with only the light of the two torches on the far wall. Along the wall runs a 10ft wide and tall ledge: a cage sits beneath it.

A bugbear (33) stands elevated on the ledge on the far wall while a displacer beast (81) stands guard in front of him and a hallway behind him. “So, you’re the ones been causin’ all this ruckus eh? Well, my little friend here’s been getting hungry anyway!” After dialogue: **roll initiative**.

## Stat Blocks

Bugbear – page 33 MM

Displacer Beast – page 81 MM

# Post Encounter 1

## Drops

Bugbear – 1 Gp and a Morningstar

Displacer Beast – Displacer Hide

## On Investigation

Hole – Hidden tunnel leading to a hole too small to fit through but you can see a fairly well-lit dungeon below [this is the nationwide mega-dungeon]. All you can see is a stone wall and a floor.

Torches – Can be taken out of their holders and used with one hand.

\* \* \*

The party heads through the hallway and sees light at the end of the tunnel as you slowly ascend above the surface. At the end of the hallway is a huge room [60 x 400ft] engulfed by darkness except for the area lit by the two torches at the end of the hallway [removable]. All you can see are the walls on your sides and pillars [10 feet from the walls ~every 25 ft] reaching to the unseen ceiling. The new warmth makes you notice the cold of the room behind you and an odd stench fills the air.

When the players produce light and/or move down the room until they can see the dragon [~100 ft]: In the middle of the floor is a hill of broze pieces [dim light: perception 17, bright light: perception 14 – note: ‘It’s a dragon. RUN’].

# Encounter 2: Young Bronze Dragon

“Who is it? I haven’t had a visitor in quite some time”. [Make a deep sigh] part of the bronze hill breaks free of the rest with the deafening sound of hundreds of coins falling to the ground to reveal a young bronze dragon protecting its hoard. “I suppose you’re with the tyrant Asmodeus, then?” If yes: “Why anyone would serve that man is beyond me. It is my duty to fight against such bonds and injustices, so it is my duty to destroy you.” If no: Roll with it, deception check, tell them he’s getting a little bored here and to call for him if they need a favor. If aggro after dialogue: **roll initiative**.

## Stat Blocks

Young Bronze Dragon – page 108 MM

## Combat Notes

Hopefully they run but if they don’t that’s okay, they should be able to take him (only mildly deadly) If they do run they have to go around the coins [30ft] and if they’re smart, they’ll hide behind the pillars. Halfway between the exit gate and the hoard are two doors on opposite walls. Both are heavy metal doors (dragon-proof). The dragon has blindsight for 60ft so the potions of invisibility won’t be very effective if they’re too close to the dungeon. In the hoard is the Stone of Melora that the Dragon found in the sea.

### Left Room

Small room, two chests. One contains 4 potions of invisibility, the other has hundreds of pounds of bloody, raw stakes large enough to encumber.

### Right Room

Mirror of the left room except with one chest containing a **Driftglobe** (DMG 166). There is a hidden door on the side of the room closest to the exit [passive DC: 20 active DC: 13]. This leads out of the dungeon right of the exit.

## Outside & More Background

At the far end of the room is a gate 30ft wide and 80ft tall. Once they’re out is a good time to explain the background of the world: It’s dark as it always is, the only light being from the town down the hill but it’s of no use to light the world around you. The people of this world have evolved and developed darksight, so the darkness is something you get used to. Centuries ago, the humanoids fell into chaos and war, exterminating all but a small portion of those who once were. Seeing what their creations had become, the gods abandoned this world and only one remained. Asmodeus saved the people of the earth, creating Anaros, a safe-haven and protection from the foul beasts no longer contained by the divine beings that abandoned their dependents. None who leaves the borders of Anaros survive to tell the tale and nor do any that attempt to enter. As the old gods left, they took the sun with them, leaving the world in darkness. Asmodeus now rules the last of civilization from his tower in the north, protecting us and lending his power in the form of light where he can.

Now back to the main event. The dragon can fit through the gate, so the players must hide. The dragon will sit perched on top of the hill on top of the dungeon they just escaped from and search for the members of the party. Here you might want to use a group stealth check, if they forget to put out the light, the dragon will see them. Have him mention his name: **Zyrret**. After searching from above, he goes back to check the layer. Time to escape.

# Maps

Bronze Dragon Background

Most of this can be found in the Monster Manual(MM) but a portion will be specific to this campaign. For info and stats on bronze dragons in general check pages 107 - 109 of the MM.

# Background

## Habitat

Sitting perched on the hills of the coast, Bronze dragons are predisposed to live near the ocean, as they enjoy surveying and watching the boats peacefully sail by. Their hoards consist of colorful coral rocks and treasures they obtain from looting sunken ships and really anything they might find of value around the ocean. This is where they are at peace.

To a degree, the habitat of the bronze dragon is manipulated by the dragon itself. Within 6 miles of its layer, sea plants develop with unique and intriguing coloration. In the same 6-mile radius, the dragon can manipulate the weather as if it were casting the *control weather* spell, except it does not need to be outside for this to take effect as it does with a PC.

Bronze Dragons are amphibious so they may dwell under water in a sunken ship or cave. In water, they are in their elements so it’s better not to mess with them.

# Alignment

Bronze dragons tend to be lawful good. They actively oppose tyranny and any great evil and will lend help to those who oppose the same things and hold the same ideals. They do not wish to be shackled. Payment may be necessary but not always because of their predisposition to fight the same things and some knowledge or an item of the enemy’s they think would be safer in their hands may be enough.

Because of these traits, the bronze dragons actively oppose Asmodeus and those old enough to remember what it was like before the blocking of the sun hold a grudge against him as they want more than anything to be able to watch the ocean again in peace and can be a useful ally or dangerous enemy.

Home Base: Erathis

Small town in coastal Pelor(humans).

# First Arrival

After the party heads down the path leading to the village, they find all the lights have been put out and they’re left in darkness except what they provide for themselves. The street they enter on is a residential one. At the end of the street is the town square, at the center a large, multi-purpose building. The town hall, the church, and a clock tower. The street is completely empty and the lights put out. When the party is halfway down the street, **Beauregard the Vagabond** gets their attention.

He sits in an alley between two homes [describe him], informing the party everyone’s hiding from the dragon, then questioning their involvement in the incident, all the while insulting their intelligence. After about 2 hours, the rest of the village starts to emerge from their homes and turn on their lights. Before this, all the shops in town are closed and all the doors locked. The players can provoke the people to come out earlier than that, but it would require some convincing and yelling. If they try this, **Ghusse**, the town sheriff answers them.

After the street lights are on, they can see the time and it’s around 6pm so it might be about time to find a place to stay the night in town. Pretty much the only option will be *Erath-Inn*, where they will meet the owner and main bar tender: **Name**. Even if they don’t get to the inn, they need to be approached somehow by **Alissa** looking for her daughter in Loun (**Jessica**) and **Iron** the barber. The barber will drop them a letter with the royal seal and the URGENT on the front, doing his best to go unnoticed.

## Letter

Travelers,

You are needed in Vecna. Here, you will collect your payment and our thanks after completing this last objective. Failure to comply will be treated as an act of treason. This task is very urgent, so time of arrival must not be later than next Wednesday at noon. There will be a carriage waiting for you on the east road, but you should set out about a week early to get there in time. Tell the guards you’re looking for me, they’ll be expecting you. We look forward to working with you more.

Signed,

General Garris

The letter is dated at the top about a week ago, as the last dungeon wasn’t expected to be as big as it was. They were clearly meant to get this letter earlier.

## Travel to Vecna / Loun

Fastest road directly to Vecna on a carriage at a fast speed would take 2 days, 3 hours traveling 24 hours a day or 6.5 days traveling 8 hours a day. The horses would have to take an hour a day to eat and rest but they could survive it.

Stopping at Loun along the way full speed would put them at 225 miles to get there then another 75 miles to Vecna. This means it would take them 2 days, 8 hours traveling 24 hours a day. This means if they set out right away, they could possibly have a couple hours to save the girl.

For reference, it would take about 11.5 days to travel this distance on a normal pace on foot.

# Beauregard the Vagabond

## Weakness

Rude, can’t hold a job, friends, or receive because of it.

## Need

Kindness, needs to learn if he wants to not be homeless.

## Desire

Become mayor, finally make a friend and is quick to judge you as one.

## Enemy

Mayor, most of the town whom he holds a grudge against for not helping him.

## Voice

High for a male, lots of offensive language.

## Appearance

Short, light skinned human, rat like face scruffy black hair. He looks like he hasn’t changed or showered in a couple weeks. He smells like it too.

# Ghusse: Town Sheriff

## Weakness

New to the Job and lacking self-confidence / approval from subordinates. Cracked under the pressure of the new job.

## Need

Confidence in his decisions. Not to over think things and doubt himself which would earn himself respect. Basically, be less of a pushover.

## Desire

Approval from his subordinates. To please everyone and always make the right decisions. Be the best sheriff he can.

## Enemy

The old retired sheriff was more well liked than Ghusse and is therefore the source of a lot of resentment.

## Voice

Quiet, kind of tiered/depressed sounding. Mundane and indifferent. Kind words and mannerisms.

## Appearance

Tall, tan human man, brown sheriff’s uniform with the classic star.

# Name: Erath-Inn Owner

Bar tends and manages the register.

## Weakness

Can’t take things seriously, really loves puns.

## Need

To be more professional. Some people hate puns and that he’s always making them and other jokes, makes human interaction and business a little harder.

## Desire

To be the funniest person around and ultimately to make people laugh at every one of his jokes.

## Enemy

Owner of The Bronze Dragon, Marisha. She’s a serious person and hates his jokes and therefore him. He hates her back for the same reason.

## Voice

Relatively confident and charismatic. An accent somewhat like Molly’s from Critical Role.

## Appearance

Skinnier blonde guy, about 5’ 5”, so a little short. Wears casual clothes.

Loun, Capital of Gruumsh

For the most part, this kingdom is segregated, the different races keeping to their own countries: the humans of Pelor, the little people of Bahamut, the orcs and goblins of Gruumsh, and the dwarves of Kord. Loun is the exception. Although technically in Gruumsh, it’s right between Pelor, Bahamut, and Gruumsh, so it’s become the most diverse city in Anaros, home to those from each of the 4 nations.

Approaching the city, there is one main way to get to the city over the river, that being to cross the ford on the north side of the city, leading to the western gate. The ford is illuminated by a flickering orange glow coming from hanging lanterns on either side of the ford and every couple feet after it. With various siege engines and guards stationed along the tall, thick wall spanning the border of the city, it appears fairly defendable. The gate is guarded usually by two of different races. Being only about 30 feet from the river, the rush of the water means you have to talk louder than usual.

# Searching for Jessica

[Time this mission]

When **Alissa** tells the party about the kidnapping, she mentions that all the police could find out is that the man was named **Lannister Dane** and he was heading back to Loun. One or multiple of the party members from the city recognize the family name. Have them make a history check and go from there in terms of how much they know and need to ask around.

The Dane family lives in the southern part of town and if someone recognizes the name, it’s because they lived there too. If nobody recognizes the name, they’ll have to as around until they find someone who knows where he lives or works. If they go straight to the local government looking for him, they’ll find he works as a researcher there for the higher government. This is all they can say, but they can point the party towards his office. *If they go to the house first, just do this part backwards!*

## The Office

It’s a small, cramped room with no light on initially. On the left is a chair and a desk with papers scattered and stacked all over it. On the right is a filing cabinet and not much else. Both the filing cabinet and the desk have unlit lamps resting on them. If the players investigate, they’ll find the notes are mostly about alchemy and its many uses, the rest about other miscellaneous magic arts and paperwork. They will also find an **Amulet of the Planes** (DMG 150). If one hasn’t already been found.

In the back, right corner of the room is a hidden door with passive perception DC 13 and active DC 10. Behind the door is a stairway leading down to his research lab.

## Research Laboratory

A push on the wooden wall and it gives way to reveal a dark, stone staircase leading down into the darkness. After going down a few flights of stairs, there’s an entrance to a torch-lit room similar to the office upstairs, except with more files and cabinets to hold them. *If the Imp came this way, he is here in rat form.* Upon inspection, these notes are still mostly about alchemy, but this time, they’re mostly about human transmutation and Chimeras.

The room is cold and a little larger, with a hallway and a door on the far wall. Through the door is the kitchen, and through the hallway is the transmutation room.

### The Kitchen

Behind the door in the secret research room, there’s a standard kitchen with counters and a center table. On this central table, there are some markings carved in the table. The players can loot 12 days rations and 5 raw steaks. If for whatever reasons the weirdos want to, they can loot the silverware and plates n stuff.

### Transmutation Room (3)

After walking a hundred feet or so through the dark hallway, they come to a 20ft diameter circular room with two doors ahead [Chimera Room] and to the left [Animal Holding Cell] and a hallway to the right. In the center of the room sits a giant transmutation circle with a 20ft diameter, in the middle of which is a sleeping, three-headed **Chimera**. *If the Imp came this way, it’s not asleep.* It has the heads of a red dragon, a lion, and a ram with the wings and tail of a dragon, front half of a lion, and the hind quarters of a ram. They must make a DC 15 stealth roll to try to sneak past, if they don’t try, they fail.

### TR Chimera (3)

After it gets up, they can see it’s face better and they notice the lion’s face is somehow flatter than most. Instead of a fluffy mane that sticks up all around, it has thinner hair that falls flat and hangs down like a woman’s hair. This all combined with the thinner fur revealing the skin below gives it somehow a more human look than you’d expect [it’s intelligence is 10].

As the beast gets up, a strained “Papa?” forces its way through vocal chords clearly not meant to speak, “Who’re you? Kill me. Free me please”. **Roll initiative** (MM39).

### Chimera Room (4)

The door in the front is locked, but it can be picked or knocked down. In the room, there are 2 more chimeras, the bodies of two others lay on the floor, pools of blood surrounding them. There is a door on the opposite side of the room. Both of the chimeras look like they’ve recently been in some fight. One of the chimeras has gashes on its back and looks fairly injured; it’s at half health (57). The other has a broken wing and can’t fly. Both of the creatures have an AC of 12 and a strength and attack bonus of +2 but the rest of the stats are the same as the ones on page 39 of the Monster Manual.

There are two feeding troughs placed horizontally in the room, one of the bodies of the chimeras blocking a gap between the trough and the wall.

### Holding Cell (5)

The door on the far side of the Chimera Room is also locked. Behind it is a completely unlit room, roughly half of it being blocked off by the bars of a holding cell. Behind the bars is a beast curled around a little girl [this is Jessica] with dark hair, both of them sleeping. As light is produced / let in, the chimera raises its head and growls at the intruders, waking the girl. The monster refuses to let the party take the girl. She calls it puppy. The only way out of the room is the way they came. Each party member gets 2000 XP for freeing Jessica

### Animal Holding Cell (6)

Through the door on the left (TR) there a room with 4 cells lining the walls, two on each side, a chest at the end of the room on the opposite wall [contains3 **Potions of Animal Friendship** (187 DMG), intelligence < 4 so it won’t work against the Wyrmling or Phase Spiders]. In the cells on the right are two lions (MM 331) contained separately and on the left closest to the door is a cell containing a goat (MM 330) and a giant goat (MM 326). The last one on the left contains a Bronze Dragon Wyrmling that only speaks draconic, she has no name and was taken from her father soon after hatching. She’ll tag along if they promise to take her back to her father in Lolth Forest.

## The Cavern/Hallway (7)

The other hallway is unlit and doesn’t appear to have any end or visible ceiling. The walls are jagged and much less cleanly cut, giving it the appearance of a cavern more than a hallway. Over an hour of fast paced travel (1h 15 min normal) the hallway widens into what could only be described as a cavern or ravine, there’s finally some dim light in the distance. There are 3 figures huddled together against a wall in the shadows 50 feet away.

“Hey, there are people over there!” There is a Spined Devil (78 MM) and 2 Imps (76 MM), one of which, on his second turn, will use his action to turn into a raven and try to fly [60ft speed] away and alert people of their presence. If they talked to the front desk lady and the imp gets away, they will be found out within a fortnight, if they told her names, within the week. The imp will fly in the opposite direction than the party came in. The only affect it has if it goes back to the transmutation room is waking up the chimera there and hanging out in the research lab as a rat. If they let him live, he will tell people what happened and speed up the investigation.

The party moves forward into an area where the ceiling is finally visible and there is torchlight coming from above cliffs now 30ft high on their and right. There is a wall ahead marking the end of the cavern, but a large crack sits in the middle, too dark to see into. A ladder leads up to the cliff on the right and another ladder is visible going from the ledge back up to civilization.

## The Nest

If the players opt to go into the crack in the wall, they will find themselves here. It’s a natural, L-shaped cave covered in spider webs. Two Phase Spiders (MM 334) appear and attack with surprise. After they move to where they can see the part of the L that curves right, there is a web-covered door at the end of it. This will lead to a staircase, out of a hidden door, then to a long hallway of the nation-wide dungeon.

### Combat Notes

As a bonus action, the spiders can phase into or out of the Ethereal plane, giving it the appearance of teleporting. The walls are lined with spider webs (DMG 105) [DC 12 dex save to avoid entrapment, DC12 athletics or acrobatics to escape] as well as some in the middle of the room, so it’s best if they don’t touch those. The whole room’s weakness is fire, so if they have any form of fire, lit, the spiders will back off and not attack. The spider webs will also burn down when exposed to fire.

## Mega-Dungeon

If the dinguses decide they’re going to go into the mega-dungeon, they’re going to have to turn left to go south and get to Vecna, otherwise, they’ll be heading north and find a sign pointing to the exit back into Loun. If they go out this way, they’ll find themselves in another part of the capital building. If they ignore this, they’ll find themselves in Bane or Avandra, but either way, they’ll find themselves in big trouble.

Assuming they’ve turned left, they’ll come across another Spined Devil standing guard in the hallway, which they’ll have to kill or talk their way out of. Then they’ll have the option to turn right to go to Torog but there will be a sign, so they’ll know that’s not the right way, and at this point there will also be a sign pointing towards Vecna so they’ll know they’re going the right way.

When they get to Vecna, General Garris will be sitting outside the exit, surprised they came this way but not worried about it unless they’re late, in which case they’ll run into them on the way without much consequence. He will be mildly annoyed though. Jump to **The Siege of Loun**.

## The Dane Household (8)

On the ledge, there is nothing but another ladder. The players will probably investigate, but they won’t find anything.

At the top of the ladder is a trap door leading into a broom closet of the Dane household. If the Imp alerted the household, the trap door is open but the door in front of it is wedged shut by a chair. This requires a DC 12 athletics check to open. If the imp didn’t get away, the whole household is asleep, the trap door shut, and the door unrestrained. Beyond the door is a dining room with a dining table and glass-front cabinet full of china for display. There is not enough room for more than one person to stand between the trap door and the door to the dining room.

In the event the household has been alerted, there are two guards (MM 347) with attacks of opportunity and surprise, two more waiting outside of the dining room. Lannister Dane and his wife, Laura hide in their rooms atop the stairs.

# Lannister & Laura Dane

Alchemic researcher for the Higher Government based in the local government of Loun, tasked to create a superior race of chimeras capable of following orders and speaking the common language. He breeds war machines. Around a year ago, his daughter, Samantha, disappeared, this was because he used her to create the first speaking chimera, keeping him and the rest of his family afloat. This is what he kidnapped Jessica for and the party hopefully saved her from. He fears failure more than anything.

He’s a slightly chubby, blonde man of an average height with a couple inches of beard and light blue eyes. His voice is a little lower with an accent more typical of Loun and similar to our own northern American ones. His wife, Laura has dark, short hair and a pointy nose and she’s slightly shorter than Lannister. She trusts him with every fiber of her being beyond reason.

Vecna, Gruumsh

# General Information

Although much smaller, the population of Vecna rivals that of Loun. Vecna is very urban and much more compact than the sparse layout of Loun, much like the downtown areas you’d envision today. Thousands of shops and homes lined up next to each other in unorganized chaos with no space in between; the only way to tell where the bar ends and the general store begins is the change in wood. No space is left unused. Where there’s no shop or home, there’s a bustling street. The second stories of buildings take every opportunity to go beyond the reach of the bottom floor, being built jutting out over the road, threatening to collapse on one of the many pedestrians. Buildings tower more than a couple stories.

Crime rates are high here, as the city is almost exclusively made up of goblins and orcs. Others are welcome enough, but they must be careful to keep track of their belongings. The city’s proximity to both The Veil and the Salt Water Marshes make a popular location.

# First Arrival

When they first arrive, it’s probably a good idea to describe what’s written under general information and it’s likely to be on **The Siege of Loun** mission. If this is the case, describe the city as they are walking through it, and if they are not late they’ll be being escorted by a guard, just jump to the mission. If this is not the case, then they are probably wanted and if so, wanted signs with their faces on it hang at the entrance. They’ll have to be stealthy to avoid the many town guards patrolling the streets.

The Siege of Loun

Assuming the party didn’t take the mega-dungeon route, when they arrive at the northern entrance to the city, two goblin guards stand blocking the road. Two lanterns hang on posts on each side of the road. They’ll inquire about what they’re business is in the town and tell them to find The Teal Toad if they’re late. If they’re on time, one of the guards runs to get someone and returns with a royal knight who leads them there.

If they’re 20 min late or less, they can catch up to the group in the Dungeon before they go back up into Loun, but if not, they won’t know where they were going and be at a loss. If they end up within a few miles of Loun, they’ll be able to see the smoke from the pillaging and enter the fight through one of the main gates.

When and if they meet up with General Garris, he fills them in on the situation: The national gov of Gruumsh and the local of Loun have stopped being cooperative, the mayor and president caught sending letters about growing corruption in the Greater Gov. General disapproval throughout the city is growing and Asmodeus can’t afford to chance a revolution or spread hate throughout the races. The city must be eliminated, the government especially. The main target is Belegan, Lord of Gruumsh and Loun.