

0-7 Grotto of Discord

Requirements: Summer
Goal: Kill all enemies

Introduction:

You track south along the Imperial pass until you reach the site where one of the caravans you've been told about must have gone missing. There is indeed a trail of deserted wagons standing neatly parked in the middle of the road. From the looks of it, they must've been abandoned quite recently, although something seems amiss: you find no signs of a battle or even struggle. A quick sweep of the area leads to a surprising discovery - several rows of footprints in the snow trail away from the caravan, as if its occupants just packed everything up and wandered off in the same direction. You follow the tracks to a nearby cave that seems to have been opened a short time ago, judging by the shards of shattered ice shards you see scattered around the entrance.

With no other option left you shrug and step into the cave. A long way down awaits you inside. Cautiously, you press on and follow it for what your rational mind knows to be minutes but your feeling keeps insisting must be an eternity and a half. Just as you start thinking it'll never end, you spot a slight turn, and as you pass it, a sudden flash of bright

light blinds you momentarily. An unnatural pressure builds up in your ears and for a brief moment, a sensation of drowning threatens to overwhelm you. The tension subsides with a loud pop, as abruptly as it began.

Your vision returns, greeting you with a most unusual vista: the tunnel opens up into a large grotto with an azure lake shining with a ghostly blue light, its thousandfold reflections weaving breathtaking patterns among crystalline stalactites and stalagmites. Even more surprising, and, in fact, alarming, is the sight of the grotto's occupants. As the sound of a battle finally reaches your ears, you doubt, for a second at least, your sparkle-dazed eyesight. Algox, fighting Unfettered? You've never seen either of these creatures this far south. You watch the scene playing out before you with a mixture of puzzlement and unease at first, but then you spot the supplies from the caravan Frosthaven needs so desperately. It seems as if you'll have to fight them both or wait until one side has annihilated the other and mop up the rest if you want to secure the goods. Still, you can't help but wonder what happened to the caravan.



Special Rules:

All Algox figures are allies to each other and enemies to all other figures. Robotic Boltshooters and Ruined Machines are allies to each other and enemies to all other figures. Remove Self-Destruct from the Ruined Machine ability deck. Randomly place numbered tokens 1 to 3 face down at "a". Randomly place numbered tokens 4 to 6 face down at "b". The face down number tokens represent clues that characters can investigate to find out more about what happened to the caravan. Flip a token face up if you loot the hex containing it by using a loot action or end of turn looting and read the section corresponding to the revealed number.

The first time an Algox Archer or Guard is defeated, read section 7. The first time a Robotic Boltshooter or Ruined Machine is defeated, read section 8. The first time a Robotic Boltshooter or Ruined Machine would be poisoned or wounded, read section 9. At the end of round 4 door "c" opens if it hasn't already been opened. At the end of round 8 door "d" opens if it hasn't already been opened. If all enemies are killed, read conclusion D.

: Gain Traveler's Diary

Sections:

1

You find a shattered decanter of what appears to be wine. It is still wet, meaning it must have been broken recently. Whoever wasted the beverage left plenty of footprints around the area - footprints made by humanoid boots. You almost gasp in surprise as you follow the tracks with your eyes, all the way to the fighting (or defeated) savages and machines. What happened to the humans, orchids and inox though?

Special Rules:

You gain a clue about your enemies. If you have collected 4 clues, read section 10.

2

You find a dead caravan guard, their body mangled by cuts and bruises. You pause to take a closer look. No tufts of fur or broken metal parts litter the scene. From what you can tell, the guard wasn't killed by brute force or a nefarious contraption, but by a very mundane blade. A blade just like the one they're clutching in their cold hand.

Special Rules:

You gain a clue about your enemies. If you have collected 4 clues, read section 10.

3

You find no clues about what happened here, only some smashed up supplies and crates that seem to have been already plundered some time ago. With contempt, you turn away, when you see something gleaming in the corner of your eye. A quick search reveals something the looters must have overlooked.

Special Rules:

The character looting the hex gains a loot card.

4

You come upon several ruined bags of seeds, all of them cut open by a kind of giant scissors. On the wet ground, pounds of drenched, swelling seeds have turned into a thick sludge, and in it, you see a set of tracks. It reminds you of a race of crablike creatures called Lurkers.

Special Rules:

Read section II.

5

A grisly sight awaits you - a hapless human being, torn to shreds by the claws or pincers of some bizarre monster. Your stomach churns for a moment, but being a battle-hardened mercenary, you have seen far worse. As you examine the remains closer, you notice that the body and its garments are soaking wet, not only with blood but with water as well. The dead person's face is a grimace of terror.

Special Rules:

Read section II.

6

Curiously, you find some open crates that haven't been looted. Judging by the layer of dust on them, they must've been left behind a long time ago, their contents being apparently of no interest to whoever opened them. A quick sift through said contents proves disappointing - it's just books, scrolls and more books, all of them waterlogged and ruined. With stubborn determination, you dig deeper and are finally rewarded for your impeccable instinct. There's indeed something else hidden beneath all the useless paper and parchment, a contraband consisting of an inconspicuous package and a potion that you recognize as being banned a long time ago.

Special Rules:

The character looting the hex gains two loot cards and collects the numbered token. During their turn, they may consume the token once to recover up to three of their discarded cards.

7

Succumbing to his grievous wounds, the massive Algox stumbles and collapses on the ground. You expect a heavy, loud thud - instead, the sound is far softer, as if caused by a much lighter frame. It's certainly odd, but you have no time to think about it in the heat of the battle. You gain a clue about your enemies.

Special Rules:

You gain a clue about your enemies. If you have collected 4 clues, read section 10.

8

The battered machine falls, its surface covered with dents and holes. However, it does neither explode nor break apart. Instead, it simply collapses on the ground in some form of slumber. This seems peculiar to say the least, but the battle's still raging on and you need those supplies for Frosthaven. You gain a clue about your enemies.

Special Rules:

You gain a clue about your enemies. If you have collected 4 clues, read section 10.

9

Machines made of cold steel aren't supposed to be weakened by poison or bleed like a living being, but this is exactly what you're witnessing. While it does make dispatching them much easier for you, an anomaly like this is more than conspicuous. A suspicion crawls into your mind - maybe not everything is as it seems.

Special Rules:

All Robotic Boltshooters and Ruined Machines lose their immunity to Poison and Wound for the rest of the scenario. You gain a clue about your enemies. If you have collected 4 clues, read section 10.

10

You are sure that whatever it is you are fighting it's neither Algox nor Unfettered, but something else that for some reason looks like them. Still, your senses are trying to convince you that they are exactly that. Maybe you shouldn't trust your senses fully, and maybe these creatures are also perceiving something else than you are. What if they are just victims of something - or somebody - else? There are probably more clues to be found deeper in the cave.

Special Rules:

If desired, all character abilities that can affect allies can now affect enemies as well, and characters may have their summons treat enemies as allies for focusing purposes.

11

The clues you've gathered point to the subterranean lake. Maybe the culprit responsible for this whole mess is hiding there. Unfortunately, the shimmering light reflected by the crystals inside the cave makes it impossible to see beneath the lake's surface. The crystals don't look very sturdy, though - barely a challenge for experts at smashing things such as yourselves! Maybe if you destroy the biggest ones the light will stop blinding you and you can finally strike true.

Special Rules:

The crystalline structures "e" can now be attacked and have $(1+L/2) \times C$ hit points each. If both of them are destroyed, read section 12.

12

With the reflecting crystals gone you can finally see through the surface of the small lake. You've never seen anything like this before - a lurker with multiple arms, a shimmering purple carapace and an enlarged cranium. You feel malicious intent radiating from it as a slight buzz builds up inside your skull. Whatever that lurker is, you are sure it is responsible for fooling your senses and mind. If you manage to bring it down, maybe this nightmare can end before more innocents must die.

Special Rules:

Spawn an Elite Lurker Mindsniper at "f". This is the Discord Sower. The Discord Sower has $C \times M$ hit points where M is the normal amount an Elite Lurker Mindsniper would have. All enemies are now allies to each other. If the Discord Sower has been killed and there are at least $2+(2 \times C)$ enemies alive, read conclusion D. If it has been killed and less than $2+(2 \times C)$ enemies, but at least one, are alive, read conclusion C. If all enemies have been killed, read conclusion B.

Conclusion A:

You triumph over your enemies, and the spoils are now yours for the taking. Even though you could not find anybody to save, at least the supplies will be put to good use. For a brief moment, you wonder again what happened to the caravaneers, when the grotto blurs before your eyes and nausea sets in. The feeling lasts only for a fraction of a second, but as soon as your vision clears, a dreadful realization sets in: all the Algox and Unfettered you've slain have turned into an assortment of Humans, Inox, Quatryls and Orchids. Their blood is on your hands now - you have been fooled. Fuming with fury, you search the rest of the cave, but there is no sign of any other enemy. You let out an exasperated sigh. It seems there is nothing left to do for you here than to scavenge what you can and make sure nobody stumbles upon this cursed place ever again.

You leave the cave and vent your frustration by sealing the entrance with some good old-fashioned brute force before you head back to Frosthaven, silent and sullen. When you arrive you are welcomed, but the faces soon turn sour as you break the news that the caravaneers are all dead and nobody will be coming. Although you don't go into detail about what happened, some people seem to notice that there must be something more to your story, and for several days, a gloomy, somber mood spreads over the outpost like a bleak cloud.

Rewards:

- Lose 2 morale.
- Gain 4 loot cards each.

Conclusion B:

The strange creature falls under your relentless assault. As soon as it drops dead, you feel as if a veil has been lifted from your eyes and minds. The feeling of triumph doesn't last long as you quickly confirm your suspicions: instead of monstrous foes, dead bodies of the caravaneers litter the ground of the grotto, struck down in self-defense by your party. You sigh at the sight, but at least you can rest easy knowing that nobody will fall prey to this strange lurker with powers you have never witnessed before again. Still, there's nothing left to do for you than to scavenge what you can and head back to Frosthaven. You are welcomed upon your arrival, and even though you shock the people as you break the news of the caravaneer's grim fate, they find solace in the knowledge that you've put an end to the horror. A glimmer of hope that from now on, caravans will reach their destination blooms in the outpost. Only time will tell if it is more than wishful thinking.

Rewards:

- Gain 4 loot cards each.

Conclusion C:

The strange creature falls under your relentless assault. As soon as it drops dead, you feel as if a veil has been lifted from your eyes and minds. To your relief, it appears that it has been lifted from your foes as well: as you turn towards them, you no longer see any Algox or Unfettered. Instead - just as you suspected - the missing caravaneers stand around you, staring in confusion and horror at the bodies at their feet. You hurry to their side to steady whoever needs it and explain to them what really happened. The survivors are relieved and shaken at the same time. Before morale can fall any lower you offer to escort them to their original destination, Frosthaven. There's little time to mourn as the outpost is in dire need of supplies, so you lend a hand with packing up the scattered crates and barrels. While doing so you realize that the caravaneers have lost so many people that you see no harm in taking some of the provisions for yourselves. Together, you embark on the long journey to Frosthaven.

When the citizens of Frosthaven spot you at the head of a small caravan, they look relieved. As soon as you trot through the gate you are swarmed by curious people eager to hear every single detail about what happened at the pass, while the new members of the community get help from the older citizens. You have done Frosthaven a great service and restored hope - the supplies will help the outpost prosper, and so will the survivors - in time, as they are barely able to fight in their current shape.

Rewards:

- Gain 1 morale.
- Gain 1 prosperity.
- Gain 1 loot card each.

Add Summer City Event 42 to the deck.

Conclusion D:

The strange creature falls under your relentless assault. As soon as it drops dead, you feel as if a veil has been lifted from your eyes and minds. To your relief, it appears that it has been lifted from your foes as well before they could overwhelm you. Instead of Algox and Unfettered, you are now surrounded by a large group of Humans, Inox, Quatryls and Orchids. Most of them look confused, and some pale in horror as they spot the bodies of their fallen companions. You hurry to their side to steady whoever needs it and explain to them what really happened. The caravaneers are grateful beyond words for your intervention and the risks you took to prevent further bloodshed. None of them object as you offer to escort them to Frosthaven. It doesn't take long to pack everything up and dig a few provisional graves to offer the dead a modicum of peace before you move out.

The caravan moves slowly but at least you are spared any further trouble on your way back. When the citizens of Frosthaven spot you at the head of the

train, they look relieved and cheerful. As soon as you trot through the gate you are swarmed by curious people eager to hear every single detail about what happened at the pass, while the new members of the community get help from the older citizens. You have done Frosthaven a great service and restored hope - the supplies will help the outpost prosper, and so will the survivors, some of whom are well capable of standing their ground in a fight. As sure as the winter, the next attack is going to test the settlement's resolve - thanks to your help, a dozen more sword arms will bolster its chances considerably. For now, hope is high in Frosthaven.

Rewards:

- Gain 1 defense rating.
- Gain 2 morale.
- Gain 1 prosperity.

Add Summer City Event 42 to the deck.