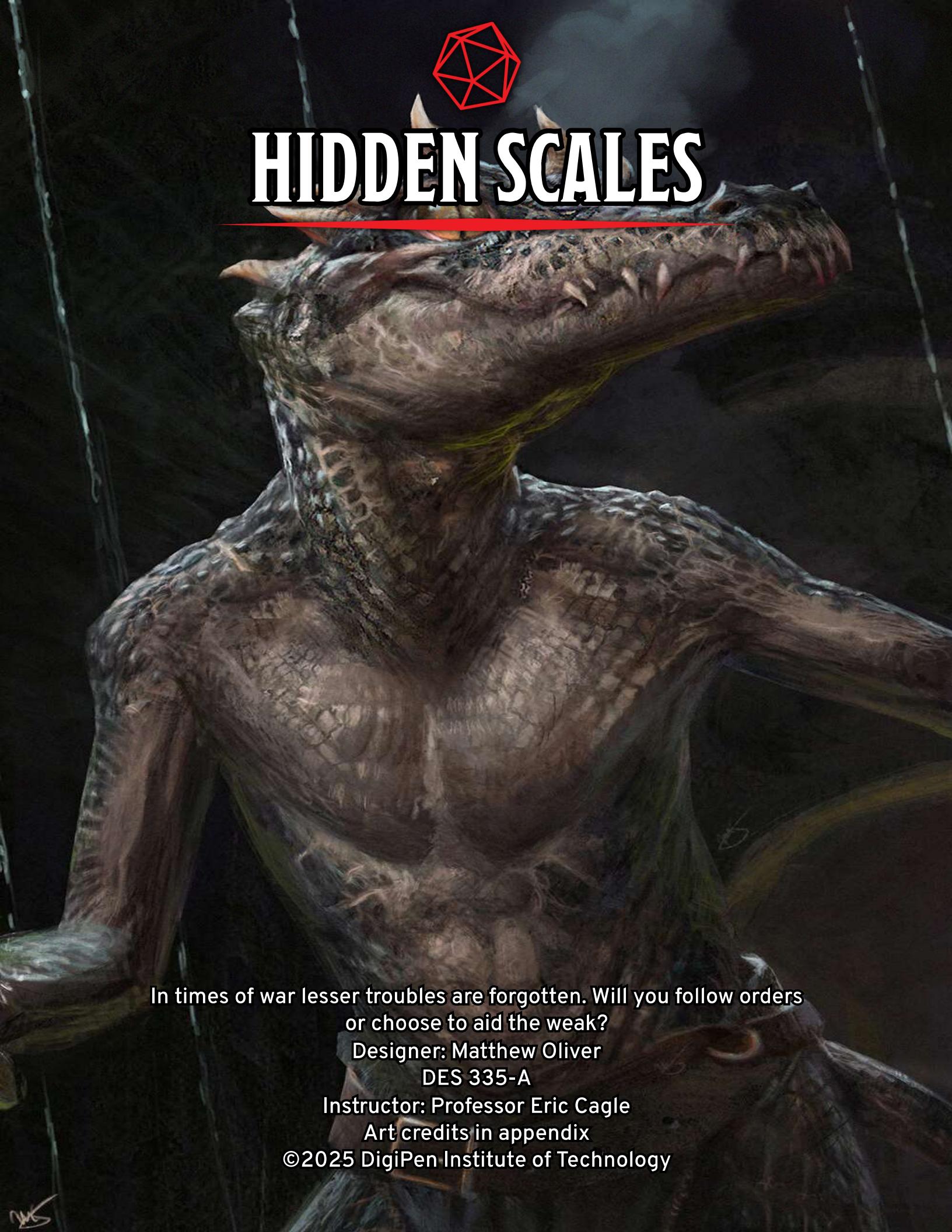




HIDDEN SCALES



In times of war lesser troubles are forgotten. Will you follow orders
or choose to aid the weak?

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Art credits in appendix

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INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in a small village called Pavv. Pavv is located on the outskirts of the Landing Forest, in the Kingdom. Pavv is one of a half a dozen villages that all neighbor this forest, fabled to be the forest where the first human settlers landed on the continent.

Recently several of the villages along the forest have been raided by kobolds. The people have been slaughtered, and the goods stolen. Because of this the people of Pavv have been afraid to enter the forest, for fear of running into the kobolds. This is especially harmful because Pavv is a hunting town, and its people have been unable to make a living for months now.

Several of the remaining villages have sent letters to the Capital, begging the army to do something about the situation. However, due to the ongoing war with the Empire, the military hasn't sent anyone to even look at the problem. Until now.

After months of begging the military finally sent one sergeant to assess the situation. The villagers rejoiced, hoping that maybe something would finally be done. Alas, the sergeant decided that the problem wasn't worth the military's time and instead of sending for some troops simply advised her superiors to post a contract with the adventurer's guild.

This is how the players ended up in Pavv, waiting in the tavern for the sergeant to come and explain the job to them.

READ-ALOUD

You all find yourselves seated at a corner booth in a disturbingly quiet tavern. The mood is dark, and not just because of all the unlit sconces and boarded up windows. The people in the tavern also feel dark, they're quiet, withdrawn. You've been waiting for the Sergeant to show for about 15 minutes now and there's no sign that she'll get there any time soon.

THE SERGEANT ENTERS

After about another 15 minutes of waiting, the sergeant enters the tavern. If the players have left their table then the sergeant will shut down whatever situation they've found themselves in and tell them to get back to the table. If they players stayed then the sergeant simply walks over and sits down. The sergeant gives the players her version of events. Telling them what their job is and omitting any "unnecessary" details. The adventurers are to stay in the village and watch for kobold scouts until they spot them, or a month has gone by. If the players spot kobold scouts they are to immediately send word to the sergeant in the capital, at which point their contract

is over. If the players stay in the village for a month with nothing happening, then at that point their contract is also over. The players are paid 1 gold per day spent in the village, plus 1 extra gold a piece upon spotting kobold scouts and sending word. They are not being paid for room and board.



FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

The players can choose to ask follow up questions, in which case the sergeant will answer any that she feels are relevant, and refuse to answer any she doesn't. The players can choose to ask for more payment. The sergeant is averse to this and a DC 15 Persuasion check is required to convince her to either pay them 1 gold EACH per day, or to pay them room and board on top, she will not do both. After the players are done asking questions or have irritated the sergeant enough, she leaves, leaving the players to their own devices.

SILENCE SPEAKS

After the sergeant has left, should the players not choose to immediately leave, one of the locals at the bar will stand up and walk over to them.

READ-ALOUD

"So y'all are the adventurers they brought in to 'protect us' huh?" The man spits in disdain. "We haven't been able to hunt for months, our kids are going hungry, and what does the army do!" The man has now raised his voice and is gesturing wildly. "They send in this bunch of mooks to WATCH while we starve! Hell, I bet-

"Enough Clint." Another man, an older man, has just entered the tavern and speaks to the aggravated man calmly but firmly. Clint stops immediately, without a word of complaint and steps aside.

"These folks are not to blame for our troubles." The older man says with conviction. "They're just the poor sods that took the contract, I doubt they know anything about what's going on here, other than what the sergeant told them. I understand your anger Clint, but right now it's misplaced."

Clint seems much calmer now and looks back over at your table. "Mayor is right." He sighs. "I apologize for causing you all trouble." Clint moves back to the bar and goes back to nursing his drink.

"Sorry for that y'all, people are pretty tense at the moment, I'm sure you understand." Mayor walks over and sits down at the table. "But it isn't your fault that things are bad, and it's not fair to blame you. Only people to blame are the military and the kobolds." Mayor nods after speaking, as if to signal that he's done and it's your turn.



QUESTIONS

The floor is now open for the players to ask any questions or make any comments that they want. When asked Mayor will tell the players about the real situation in the village, that the military has left them to perish. If the players seem genuinely concerned about the situation and express interest in helping then Mayor will react with relief. He expresses that he was planning on asking them for their help all along, and is even willing to pay them. Mayor tells the players that should they take care of the kobold problem he will pay them 10 gold a piece. There are some protests from village people, but Mayor will hear none of it and ultimately the villagers will relent and follow his judgement. Once the conversation has reached its natural end, Mayor will leave and tell the players to enjoy their stay in the village.

FREE

The players are now free to do whatever they wish, it is the afternoon and many of the villagers are getting ready to head home for the night. The tavern has rooms that the players can rent. They are priced by bed at 2 silver, per bed, per night. Just before the players choose to head to bed, or as they're leaving to go patrol, Clint will burst back into the tavern.

SPOTTED

"I saw them!" Clint bursts into the tavern, shouting and gasping. "I saw them! I saw the kobolds!"

The players can ask Clint questions. He will tell them that he was walking back to his home on the edge of the forest, when he saw something moving in the trees, heading away from him. Clint was able to grab his bow and decided to follow it, hoping that it might be a deer that had strayed near his house. He followed it for a few minutes before getting close enough to see that it was actually multiple creatures, bipedal creatures with long snouts. If the players rush out they will find the kobolds sneaking around the North side of the village.

THE KOBOLDS

If the players go out to where Clint said the kobolds were and search for them, then they must pass a DC 10 perception check in order to spot them. Upon spotting the kobolds the players can choose to either sneakily follow them, or attack them. If the players decide to follow them, then a DC 10 stealth check is necessary to avoid detection, otherwise the kobolds spot them and initiate combat. In the case that the players decided not to attempt to find the kobolds, or simply didn't spot them, then that night the kobolds do their scouting and then head back to their nest. The following night there will be a massive attack, see **Disaster**.

COMBAT

Should the players enter combat with the kobold scouts then combat will occur as follows. One kobold, the second combat starts and it gets a turn, will run into the woods, leaving three for the players to face. The three remaining kobolds will do everything in their power to prevent you from following the other. The players enter combat with three kobolds, use the Forest Combat Map found later to run the battle.

KOBOLD

Small Humanoid (Kobold), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 5 (2d6 - 2)

Speed 30ft.

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

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

TRAITS

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

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.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., 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.

TRACKING

If the players decide to track all four kobolds, then a DC 5 survival check is required in order to follow them. If they are tracking only one, then a DC 10 survival check is required instead. If the players are able to successfully track the kobolds, then read the following passage.

DM NOTE

The following read aloud passage has several instances of text in (parentheses). The reason for this is that the situation may change depending on previous player actions.

In this case if the players chose to follow all four kobolds then there will only be two cultists outside and the DM should use kobolds plural instead of kobold singular.

If the players fought the three other kobolds and then followed the remaining one then there will instead be three cultists outside.

This will occur in other read-aloud texts later so be sure to look out for that.

READ ALOUD

As you follow the tracks, you find yourself going deeper and deeper into the forest, until the sun starts to set, and darkness overtakes you. You might lose your way without light, but luckily it looks as though there is torch light up ahead. You continue forward, all too aware of the eerie silence that tells every instinct you have that something is wrong in these woods.

After another minute of walking you find yourselves looking into a small clearing with a hill in the center.

Standing at the base of the hill, in front of a cave entrance, stands your kobold(s). But they're not alone. Standing with them are what look to be 3(2) taller humanoids in dark-green scale patterned cloaks. The torches in front of the cave flicker unnaturally bright, casting deep shadows upon these figures. You hear the humanoids and kobold(s) speaking to each other in a guttural, hissing speech. It is clear that whatever is going with the kobold attacks, these people have something to do with it.

CHOICES

The players can now either choose to continue watching the exchange, or attack immediately. If they choose to attack immediately then they enter combat with either one kobold and three cultists, or four kobolds and two cultists. If the players decide to wait and watch, then after another minute or two of talking one of the cultists will gesture emphatically towards the hill and the kobold(s) will trot off around the side of the hill, leaving the players sight.

The players can now choose to attack the cultists, in which case they will face either two or three. Alternatively they can choose to follow the kobold(s), moving through the trees around the hill. If the players let the kobolds leave their sight then a DC 15 perception check is necessary in order to spot them again. If the players do find them then they also discover the hidden entrance that the kobolds are now guarding. If the players choose to attack the kobolds then they fight either one or four of them. Choose one of the combats laid out below using either the **Cave Entrance** map or the **Hidden Entrance** map.

CULTIST FIGHT

The players fight either two or three cultists on the **Cave Entrance** Map. These cultists will fight the players to the death, throwing themselves against their foes in desperation. Doing everything they can to keep the players from entering the cave. The cultist stat block is laid out below.

DRAGON CULTIST

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9(2d8)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

TRAITS

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target.

Hit 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

KOBOLD FIGHT

The players fight either one or four kobolds, depending on their previous decisions. The kobolds are guarding a hidden entrance to the cave, one which the players would not likely have spotted without the kobolds there to give it away. The kobold(s) will fight the players to the death, doing everything in their power to stop them from entering the cave. Overall this fight is meant to be fairly easy. This encounter uses the **Hidden Entrance** Map.

INTO THE DRAGON'S DEN



After winning the combat against either the cultists or the kobold(s), the players can choose to enter the cave. The structure of the cave is shown in the Dragon's Den Map, but no matter which entrance they use they will end up in the central chamber. Read the following passage:

READ-ALOUD

Before you lies a large, round, cavernous chamber. The only light comes from the few torches that surround a central mound. Like the ones outside they are unnaturally bright and the edges of the chamber are pitch black, with long, dark shadows flickering among the rocks. But that's not what catches your eye. No, what catches your eye is the large, glittering pile of gold and other goods and trinkets. It's not the sort of pile you imagine from the stories, filled with gems and goblets and such. Instead this pile is made up of old jewelry, well-kept tools, and hunting trophies. It's a strange parody of a hoard, one consisting of objects that look like they could come from backwater villages, where such things might be considered valuable. Atop this pile lies a giant lizard, one whose scales are such a deep, dark, glimmering green that you would think it itself was made of gemstones. Standing a respectful distance away from the pile is one of the robed figures. They stand with their arms raised towards the lizard, chanting in that strange, rumbling snake tongue. All of a sudden, before your very eyes you see flowing green lights circle the lizard, and then, without warning, the lizard grows slightly.

THE FINALE

The players have just entered the central chamber of the Dragon Cult. This chamber exists as a rudimentary lair for the Green Dragon Hatchling that the cultists are aiding. If the players try to discover the nature of the spell being cast then a DC 15 Arcana check is required, unless the character speaks Draconic, in which case it only requires a DC 10 check. If they players succeed they learn that this is a growth acceleration spell, and that if they don't act fast the cultists will succeed in growing the Dragon to a point where it will be much harder to deal with. At the moment the Dragon looks very small and listless, missing much of the fabled intellect that its kind is famous for. It is expected that the players will initiate combat at this point, if they do so then use the **Central Chamber** Combat Map, along with the Green Dragon Hatchling stat block.

GREEN DRAGON HATCHLING

Small Dragon, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 38(7d8 + 7)

Speed 30ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws DEX +3, CON +3

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages –

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

TRAITS

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

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

DM NOTE

The cultist that is in the central chamber with the dragon will not attempt to attack the players. The cultist's only priority is to keep casting the growth spell, he will spend every turn doing this no matter what. If the cultist successfully casts the growth spell five times, then the Hatchling will instead become a Green Dragon Wyrmling, keeping its current health points but otherwise using new stats.

THE END

After the combat is over this module is done, the players have won, they've beaten the dragon and protected the village. They can now choose to do whatever they want. If they return to the village with proof of their conquest the Mayor will reward them as promised and the villagers will thank them profusely. If they send word to the sergeant then in a few days time the agreed upon amount will arrive for them to collect, a whopping 1 gold a piece since they didn't even spend a full day in the village.

DISASTER

If for whatever reason the players don't end up finding the Green Dragon then the next night all of the remaining Cultists, Kobolds, and the Green Dragon will attack the village. If this happens then the players will be joined by several hunters and commoners from the village, use the Commoner and Scout stat blocks. This combat will take place on the **Pavv Attacked** Map.

DM Note

It is recommended that you do everything in your power to avoid this situation as not only does it mean that you have to control many NPCs for this combat, but you also have to find things for the players to do during the day. If this does come to pass then as mentioned above all of the remaining members of the cult will attack. There are a total of four kobolds, four cultists, and the dragon, which will use the Green Dragon Wyrmling stat block instead of the Hatchling one. The players will be joined by four commoners and four hunters, using the Commoner and Scout stat blocks respectively.



APPENDIX

ARTWORK CREDITS

GREEN DRAGON HATCHLING

<https://www.dndbeyond.com/avatars-thumbnails/30782/393/1000/1000/638061960809474996.png>

DRAGON CULTIST

<https://www.dndbeyond.com/avatars-thumbnails/14/481/1000/1000/636364323106021375.png>

MAYOR

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/04/09/57/040957a398007eb7042ca726f42e392b.jpg>

THE SERGEANT

<https://i0.wp.com/lolailo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NPC-Sergeant-Delphine-Angua-von-Uberwald-Female.jpg?ssl=1>

KOBOLD

<https://cdnb.artstation.com/p/assets/images/images/041/897/849/large/matheus-graef-kobolddetail.jpg?1633007311>

MAPS

All maps were custom made in inkarnate

PAVV



PAVV ATTACKED



FOREST COMBAT



FOREST CLEARING



CAVE ENTRANCE



SECRET ENTRANCE



CENTRAL CHAMBER

