



RAGE OF THE CHAINED

5th LEVEL



Rage of the Chained



Rage of the Chained is intended for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach halfway to 6th-level. Taken captive, the characters are forced to fight in an arena. This campaign takes

place in Arden, although it can be set in your own world. Any party composition should be able to finish the adventure with intelligent play.

Background

The Arena of Azago is known far and wide as the place to go for bloodshed and violent entertainment. Cities all across Arden send their most dangerous prisoners to Azago in the hopes of deterring future offenders. Recently, one convict has risen to the top of the arena. Known only as The Lion, this lone warrior has slain every opponent the arena has sent to face him. Fearing he may rally the people to his cause, the arena's owner has sent out bounty hunters to find new blood to face him. These veteran hunters have begun dragging in anyone with a bounty on them... and some who just look like they could put up a fight. Will the Lion be defeated finally? Or will he continue to reign supreme over the Arena of Azago?

Adventure Hooks

Wanted. The characters are wanted for some crime, and thus, mercenaries are sent to capture them and bring them to the arena.

Mistaken Identity. The characters, mistaken for wanted criminals, are attacked by mercenaries bent on bringing them to the arena.

Wrong Place, Wrong Time. The characters just happen to cross paths with a band of mercenaries seeking out fighters for the arena. Unfortunately, the mercenaries aren't too concerned with who they capture.

Ambushed!

You find yourselves traveling along the king's road at midday. Aside from a handful of passersby, the road has been your own for hours. As you make your way forward, the forest begins to encroach on the dirt road more and the overhanging canopies provide some respite from the bright sun overhead.

Have the characters make a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Those who fail are surprised as three **assassins**, a **mage**, and two **half-red dragon veterans** attack from the tree line. The mercenary group makes non-lethal attacks in an attempt to knock the characters unconscious. It's important that the characters are all knocked out by the end of this encounter or otherwise taken into custody.

Imprisoned

You awaken inside a dark cell. Thick stone walls surround you, and a series of strong iron bars separate you from a lone man in elegant robes flanked by two armored bodyguards. Looking down, you find your weapons, armor, and belongings gone. In their place, you find yourselves wearing simple tunics and odd metal collars inset with gems.

NOTE: The collars are non-attunable magic items that prevent the wearer from casting spells of 6th-level or lower. In addition, Taziz (as an action) can force one or more creatures wearing a collar to make a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, falling unconscious for 1d4 hours on a failure. They can be locked or unlocked using a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check. A creature wearing the collar they are trying to unlock has disadvantage on the check. Additionally, the arena and the holding cells are magically warded to prevent anyone from teleporting in or out. Spells such as *misty step* work fine within the aforementioned areas, but cannot be used to escape them.

The man introduces himself as **Taziz**, a **noble** and owner of the Azago arena. The characters are informed that, due to the outstanding bounty on their heads, they've been released into the custody of the arena in lieu of standard imprisonment. If the characters try to argue that they're innocent, Taziz dismisses the notion and refuses to hear their pleas. He does, however, agree to free them (and pay them a tidy sum) if they can defeat the reigning arena champion, The Lion.

To do so, they'll need to defeat three sets of opponents first (one set each day) to build up their reputation so as to attract the biggest crowd possible for the final match. If the characters put on a great show, they may even gain the favor of one of the nobles watching who will offer them boons to assist them in their battles. To track this, the characters will be awarded points for the following. As the DM, you may also award points for things not listed below that you believe merit recognition:



- **Critical Hits:** The characters will be awarded one point for each critical hit they score during a bout.
- **Feats of Strength & Skill:** The characters will be awarded one point when they successfully grapple an opponent, escape from a grapple, knock an opponent prone, or disarm an opponent.
- **Big Boom!:** The characters will be awarded one point every time they injure one or more people (enemies or allies) with a spell of 3rd-level or higher.

At the end of the bout (except the one against The Lion), roll a d20, add the number of points scored to the result, and consult the table below. The results **The Physician**, **The Alchemist**, **The Collector** and **Encore! Encore!** can only happen once. If you roll one of those an additional time, go with the next worst result on the table:

Result Effect

5 or Less	Off With Their Heads!: The crowd is infuriated by the terrible display. They call for the deaths of the characters. One of the characters must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the arena guards not to kill them. Failure means two veterans enter the arena and attack them. If the characters manage to kill them and survive, the crowd's bloodlust is sated and they are free to return to their cells.
6-10	Boo! Boo!: The crowd boos and hurls junk at the characters. Have them each make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw taking 1d4+1 bludgeoning damage on a failure or half as much on a success.
11-15	A Decent Showing: Smatterings of applause can be heard from the crowd, but otherwise, nothing happens.
16-20	The Physician: The characters' performance intrigued a healer of some renown in the crowd. Interested to see how they'll fare against their next opponent, he gifts them each a potion of greater healing .
21-25	The Alchemist: The characters' performance caught the attention of a well-known alchemist. Seeing a chance for free advertising, he gifts the characters a potion of heroism , a potion of growth , a potion of hill giant strength , and a potion of slashing resistance .
26-30	The Collector: The characters' performance entertained a mysterious collector of exotic goods who frequents the arena. As thanks for the incredible show, he gifts them several pieces of fine jewelry including a brooch of shielding , a circlet of blasting , a ring of protection , and a ring of free action .
31+	Encore! Encore!: The crowd goes wild! Never has such a spectacle been seen before! The characters are given the chance to fight a young blue dragon as a follow up after a short one hour rest. If they agree and are victorious, they are immediately granted their freedom. If they want to continue fighting, Taziz offers to pay them 1,000 gp each for every win they have in the arena, plus a 2,500 gp bonus each if they can defeat the Lion.

The holding area of the arena consists of six relatively comfortable cells, a small chamber for prayer and preparation prior to a bout, and a walkway flanked on the sides by thick iron bars. On the other side of the bars are comfortable couches where Taziz and the above nobles can observe the contenders as they head into the arena prior to placing their bets.

The characters will be given their items, armor, and other confiscated equipment at the start of each bout, but only for the duration of the bout.

The Arena

The arena itself is a large rectangular pit with 15 ft. high walls all around it. The pit also has a permanent *wall of force* spell encasing it that goes up to a height of 60 feet and prevents anything from inside the pit from reaching those in the stands or beyond (although this does not stop onlookers from throwing things at those IN the pit). To spice up the fights, Taziz has installed the following features:

- **4x Spiked Pits:** These are ten feet deep and contain jagged spikes jutting up from the ground. Any creature that falls in the pit takes fall damage as normal, but they also take 2d10 piercing damage.
- **4x Whirling Blades:** 5 foot tall posts with razor sharp blades attached to them poke out of the pit's floor. The blades spin around slashing anything (or anyone) who gets too close. Any creature that enters the 15' x 15' cube around a post must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d10 slashing.
- **1x Acid Pool:** The centerpiece of the arena is a 15 ft. deep pit filled with acid. Two small, rickety wooden bridges cross the pit, but they're only wide enough for one creature to pass at a time. If a creature begins its turn in the acid, it takes 6d6 acid damage.
- **3x Surprise Chests:** On the northern, eastern, and southern edges of the arena are small wooden chests. Prior to each bout, two of the chests are filled with boons while one is trapped. Randomly determine which chest is which at the start of each bout and use the tables below to determine the nature of the boon or the trap.



d6 Boon

1 The creature who opens the chest gains 2d10 temporary hit points.

2 The creature who opens the chest gains the benefits of a **bless** spell until the end of the bout.

3 The creature who opens the chest gains the benefits of a **shield of faith** spell until the end of the bout.

4 The creature who opens the chest gains the benefits of an **enlarge** spell until the end of the bout.

5 The creature who opens the chest gains the benefits of a **haste** spell until the end of the bout.

6 The creature who opens the chest regains all their hit points and expended spell slots.

d6 Trap

1 A 3rd-level **fireball** spell (save DC 15) detonates with the chest as its epicenter.

2 The creature who opens the chest must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or suffer the effects of a **bane** spell until the end of the bout.

3 Each creature within 10 ft of the chest when it is opened must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer the effects of a **faerie fire** spell until the end of the bout.

4 The creature who opens the chest must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer the effects of a **reduce** spell until the end of the bout.

5 Each creature within 10 ft of the chest when it is opened must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of a **slow** spell until the end of the bout.

6 The chest is a **mimic** and it immediately makes an attack with advantage against whoever tried to open it.

The First Bout: Snakes and Stingers

The lights dim as you enter the arena, the crowd speaking in hushed whispers. They seem to know something you do not. As you take up your positions, a great voice booms out all around you.

"People of Azago! Today, we have for you some new blood, ready to test their mettle in the greatest arena the world has ever known! For their opponents, we've brought out a crowd favorite. That's right! Introducing... Zulaevia and her pets Minos and Corpsos!

Suddenly, in a flash of light, you see three creatures appear at the far end of the arena: two giant scorpions with a humanoid figure, their face hidden beneath a hood.

Zulaevia is a **medusa**, and Minos and Corpsos are her pet **giant scorpions**. Both have been blinded purposefully, but luckily they possess blindsight so they're still quite capable combatants. Zulaevia will let her pets charge in while she follows behind, making a few longbow attacks on the way. Once she gets within 30 ft. of one or more of the characters, she reveals her face in the hopes of petrifying them. At this point, she switches to making attacks with her shortsword and snake hair.

The Second Bout: Sinister Skies

The roof of the arena appears to open up as you enter, allowing in fresh air and pure sunlight. Those in the crowd appear to be searching the skies for something. As you ready yourself for the next fight, a great voice booms out all around you.

"People of Azago! New blood is back again! Was yesterday a fluke? Or do they have what it takes to be true contenders? Well, we're about to find out in today's monster-focused match! From parts unknown we give you... Lag'Grex the Vicious!

Above you, a flash of light reveals six creatures: Your eyes are immediately drawn to the large, three-headed monstrosity descending down to the arena's floor. It has the heads of a lion, a ram, and a red dragon, with a sleek body one would attribute only to an apex predator. Fluttering around it are three humanoid women. They lack arms, however, and instead possess leathery bat-like wings. Lastly, what appear to be two of the meanest looking chickens to ever live plop down in the mix.

Lag'Grex is a **chimera**. He's supported by three **harpies** and two **cockatrices**. The chimera engages directly with the characters, lacking any sense of fear or trepidation. The harpies are opportunistic fighters. They all start the combat by singing (in the hopes of drawing in a potential meal). If the characters manage to resist, their songs, they become angry, and begin swarming individual characters hoping to overwhelm them. Lastly, the cockatrices flap about biting at whatever characters get close.



The Third Bout: The Dead Rise

The arena is pitch black as you enter it. Were it not for a handful of torches being held aloft among the crowd goes, you would have no idea where you were. The air is oddly cold, and there's an unease to it.

"People of Azago! Our latest fighters have been on quite the streak so far, but tonight will be their true test! Countless warriors have shed their blood on this very floor, some for the final time, but tonight, we give those who lost a second chance! From the depths of the underworld itself, I give you... the Spirits of the Damned!"

A glowing purplish haze fills the arena. As your eyes scan the pit for your opponents, you swear you catch sight of the shadows moving. The voice booms again.

"We've left a special boon for our characters in one of the surprise chests, but in turn, we've left something rather nasty in the others. Good luck!"

Hidden about the arena are a **wraith**, two **specters**, and three **shadows**. These are the souls of those who've fallen in past bouts, and their anger towards the living knows no bounds. The wraith reveals itself by rising up from the floor near the characters flanked on either side by the specters. The shadows are opportunistic, attacking those who get separated. Two of the chests contain the following trap, while one (chosen at random) has the following boon.

Boon

The chest contains a **suntorch**. This functions just like a regular torch, except it can shed light for up to 1 hour a day, and the light it produces is considered sunlight.

Trap

A roiling cloud of darkness spreads out in a 40 ft. radius from the chest. Any living creature who begins its turn in the cloud must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 4d6 necrotic damage on a failure or half as much on a success. The area within the cloud is heavily obscured and no sound can penetrate it (as per the **silence** spell).

The Final Bout: The Lion's Den

With their first three bouts won, the characters are returned to their cells as usual. That night, servants are sent to clean their clothes, bathe them, and feed them a rather delicious buffet of assorted culinary delicacies. At some point, while the characters are eating, Taziz arrives with his guards in tow. He tells the characters that tomorrow they will face The Lion in the arena. He advises them that The Lion leads a small band of other criminals, so they should expect a varied and ever-evolving combat. Their main goal, however, is to slay The Lion. This is what matters most. Taziz will then leave the characters to enjoy their meal as he leaves to prepare things for the following day. In the morning, the characters are led into the arena as usual. The meal has been prepared with magical ingredients. As such, roll a d6 the next morning to see which temporary boon each character will bring into the final fight. These benefits last until the characters take a short or long rest.

d6 Temporary Boon

- 1 The character gains 2d8 temporary hit points.
- 2 The character gains a +1 bonus to their Armor Class.
- 3 The character adds 1d4 to all saving throws.
- 4 The character adds 1d4 to all ability checks.
- 5 The character adds 1d4 to all attack rolls.
- 6 Roll twice more, re-rolling any 6's.

The arena is awash in colorful banners and flags denoting the presence of visitors from across the world. Taziz can be seen moving from box to box, engaging various dignitaries and nobles. The stands are packed to the brim, and the sound of applause and cheers is nearly deafening. A great voice booms out silencing the crowd.

"Everyone! Today is the day! The match you have all been waiting for! After three incredible bouts against all manner of opponents, our new blood is finally ready to face the true champion of the arena. Blood-soaked and overflowing with an anger so powerful it could rock the pillars of this great arena, I give you... The Lion!"

A bolt of lightning erupts from the ceiling above and strikes the ground on the far side of the arena. As the flash of light dissipates, you see a man clad in armor from the waist down. A long red cape flows behind him, and his face is partially obscured by a warrior's helm. On his shoulder, a pauldron bearing the motif of a lion roaring. Flanking him is a rag tag group of humanoids.

The Lion is a **gladiator** with the legendary actions below.

- **Tactical Maneuver (1 Action):** The Lion or one of his allies that can hear him moves up to half their speed without provoking attacks of opportunity.
- **Show of Strength (1 Action):** The Lion can force a target within 5 ft. to succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw. If they fail, The Lion can choose to either knock them prone, push them back 10 ft. or force them off balance granting advantage on the next attack made against them.
- **Lion's Roar (2 Actions, Recharges on 5-6):** The Lion lets out a defiant roar. The Lion and each of his allies within 30 ft. gain 3d6 temporary hit points. Each enemy within 30 ft. must then succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of The Lion for 1 minute. A creature that fails its saving throw can attempt it again at the end of each of its subsequent turns. Once a creature saves against this effect, they are immune to it for the next 24 hours.

Flanking him are an **acolyte**, a **druid**, a **bandit captain**, and a **spy**. The group fights intelligently, leveraging their collective strength to overcome their individual weaknesses. The Lion will try to engage the strongest opponent, while the bandit captain and the spy keep others from interfering. The druid and the acolyte try to support their teammates by using their spells to hinder their opponents and keep their allies up and fighting.

Victorious at Last!

When The Lion and his allies fall, the crowd goes absolutely wild. The cheers and sounds of trumpets are overwhelming. Flowers, wreaths, pennants, etc. fill the arena as the onlookers throw them to show their adoration for the characters' performances. As the characters bask in their newfound fame, Taziz appears on an elevated platform and addresses the crowd.

"Friends! What we have witnessed today is nothing short of an upset! A miracle in the sand and blood! After reigning supreme for many seasons, The Lion has finally been bested! Now, these fine warriors hold the rank of champion here in these hallowed halls, but I fear it would be selfish for me to force them to defend such a title. Talent such as theirs is destined for greatness! As such, I hereby grant them their freedom. Though they will always be welcome in the arena of Azago, let fate guide their blades from here on out!"

The crowd leaps to their feet with grandiose applause. As servants clear away the bodies of the fallen, performers come to take their place, offering the crowd music and acrobatics to entertain them before the next bout. The characters are led out of the arena and into a building above it. There, the collars they've been wearing are removed and they are paid the gold Taziz promised them (500 gp each for each bout won). If the characters managed the "Encore! Encore!" result on the performance table, they are instead paid according to that agreement.

Aftermath

With coin in their pockets and a reputation to their names, the characters are free to continue fighting in the arena, or they can seek adventure and further riches elsewhere. Many nobles will seek to employ them, so job opportunities should be plentiful. They should be wary, however, as The Lion was beloved by some, and it's possible that someone or a group might try to get revenge for his slaying. Additionally, Azago might not be close to where the characters were captured, meaning it could be an adventure all on its own just getting back home.



Art: Shutterstock

Writing: Benjamin Palmer

www.adventuresawaitstudios.com

Open Gaming License The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other forms in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphics, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.
2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.
3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.
4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.
5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License
6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.
7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or coadaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title, and interest in and to that Product Identity.
8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.
9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.
10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.
11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.
12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.
13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.



14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.
15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a
Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc. System Reference Document 5.0 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. Copyright 2021 Adventures Await Studios

