

THREE ORCS AND A BABY

A D&D 5E adventure for 5th-7th level characters
by Dale Zawada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ADVENTURE SUMMARY	2
NOTES TO THE DM	2
ADVENTURE HOOK	3
ADVENTURE	5
THE AMBUSH	7
LETTER FROM LORD MORTIS GRIMMELL.....	7
TRICERATOPS HATCHING	7
TRICERATOPS ESCAPE	8
PICNIC INTERRUPTED	8
RETURNING THE PACKAGE.....	10
ENDING THE ADVENTURE.....	11
CONTINUING FROM HERE.....	12
MAPS.....	12
NPC STATISTICS	15

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ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventuring party is hired by a local merchant (Delric Nightbreeze) to ambush a black market wagon being brought in by the Night Masks, a criminal organization from Berdusk who are expanding out this way.

The party is encouraged to disguise themselves as the Zhentarim, the local criminals who aren't too happy about the arrival of the Night Masks.

Starting a war between the two groups and ridding the city of at least one of them is the hope. There's extra gold for the party if they leave one Night Mask alive to spread the story.

Their primary goal however is to acquire an enchanted crate and its contents for the merchant.

Inside the crate is an egg, which of course hatches during the adventure revealing a baby triceratops! The party will need to keep the baby safe but will find out the newborn dino can take care of itself.

In the end, a vampire leader of the Night Masks arrives to claim what the party stole from him. The party wins and learns the merchant didn't want the dinosaur, merely the egg shell, so the baby triceratops is theirs!

NOTES TO THE DM

This is a 4-5 hour adventure that is designed to be completed in one session. There are role-playing scenarios as well as 2+ monster encounters.

The party will be hired for a wagon ambush, rescue a baby triceratops, encounter a couple mages, and fight the vampire they just stole from.

Delric is an elven merchant who hires the party. He is a recurring character in my adventures (Potions 11, Killer Clowns from Waterdeep, and Fifty Shades of Fey) but you should have no problem if this is your first run at him. Delric is simply a charming guy with good intentions and loves to hire the party for local heroic quests.

The baby triceratops the party rescues is intended to become a pet or companion of the party, growing in size as the players level up.

You will need a Monster Manual for the supporting monsters, such as Vampire Spawn, Mages, Hags, Orcs, Orog, and more.

A party of four level 7 players will have a relatively easy go of things while level 5 players will find this to be a bit of a struggle. Adjust accordingly.

Some sections might go longer than others so you might need to cut an encounter (Madrigal & Liara) to keep the pacing.

This adventure ties in seamlessly with my module “Berdusk Till Dawn,” another one shot which pits the adventuring party against a hoard of vampires and undead while they’re trapped in a tavern.

I suggest at least skimming through the entire adventure before running it. Each section has a description of what is to come and what to prepare for.

Sentences in italics are narration or dialogue.

Sentences in red are skill checks.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The Merchant’s Proposal

Delric Nightbreeze, the elven owner of Potions and Lotions, seeks out the adventuring party to hire them for a simple wagon robbery against the evil group known as the Night Masks.

Be careful not to reveal too much about the crate, the egg, and the Triceratops. If players press about the crate contents Delric should be mysterious and admit that “it’s something that shouldn’t exist.”

Delric’s end game is the egg shell, not the dinosaur inside it, but don’t give that info up yet, save that for when they return with their loot at the end of the adventure. Have Delric just want the entire crate and its contents.

OPTIONAL CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

You have all been working together as an adventuring party for about a month. Nobody really knew how it would go or if it would last, but here you are. No one has died yet and you seem to work together very well as a team.

You’ve also started to gain a bit of a reputation here in [Neverwinter], which is where our story begins. It’s a cool sunny morning as you walk to the inn you’re staying at after yet another adventure. The mostly human citizens get a good look at you, a group that features races such as...

Every now and then someone comments on your impressive weaponry. What is your weapon of choice?

You keep chatting about your most recent adventure. What was your most recent adventure?

The question you all return to is: Why did I join this party? So...why did you?

You make it to the inn and the place is already packed. You get a table quickly, your growing reputation paying off. What do you get for breakfast?

INTRO

Delric Nightbreeze is an elven male wearing a robe that's seen better days. He approaches you with a big smile on his wide dopey face.

"Heroes! It's truly an honor to speak with you on this beautiful day! My name is Delric Nightbreeze, owner and operator of Potions and Lotions, the premiere medicinal and recreational apothecary in the city. I have a proposition for you."

THE PITCH

"As you know the Zhentarim and their thieving is killing the city from within, however if that wasn't bad enough it seems the Night Masks from Berdusk have made their way here as well. They've already robbed two of my wagons."

"I find myself in a position to help the city and get a little revenge in the process. I'm savvy to the route of an incoming black market wagon the Night Masks are bringing in. I want to hire you to ambush the wagon under the guise of Zhentarim raiders. Leave one survivor so they can spread the word on who was responsible, and if we're lucky the Night Masks and Zhentarim will wipe each other out. At the very least we should be rid of one of them."

"The primary objective however is the recovery of a crate being brought in from Chult. Bring the crate and its contents undamaged to my shop "Potions & Lotions" and you will receive a hefty bonus."

THE REWARD

"Your reward for this job is 300 gold, a health potion each, a 10% discount on future potions at my shop, and a couple of my own personal creations if you execute the mission how I've laid it out."

"As a sign of good faith, here's one of my favorite potions that might help you along the way."
He gives you a jar containing oil of slipperiness.

History Roll: Night Masks Knowledge

DC 15: The Night Masks are led by a council of four vampires in Berdusk.

DC 10: The Night Masks are more brutal than the local riff-raff.

DC 7: The Night Masks are known for using orcs and related races to do their bidding.

DC 5: The Night Masks are a criminal organization that originated in Westgate, they then took over Berdusk, and now seem to be expanding here.

Insight Roll: Zhentarim Clothing

DC 23: There's a box of Zhentarim in the bar's "lost & found" for some reason.

DC 15: Zhentarim are known for roughing people up near the fountain in the market square.

DC 10: A tailor named Jelicko is known for taking on any clothing challenge. He owns the best tailor shop in the city – The Golden Needle.

ADVENTURE

ZHENTARIM OUTFITS

This is an opportunity for the players to free-roam, explore, and roleplay as they decide how they want to go about obtaining the Zhentarim clothing, if they choose to at all!

If the players don't try to find Zhentarim outfits, go right to the ambush portion below, otherwise use the following scenarios & encounters before heading to the wagon ambush.

THE GOLDEN NEEDLE

Jelicko runs The Golden Needle, the best tailor shop in the city. The owner Jelicko is a distinguished elf who runs the shop with his strange twin sons Ferbert and Daniello.

The cost for the Zhentarim outfits is 100gp total. Prepare for price haggling, thieving, and general shenanigans.

If the party decides to fight Jelicko and his sons, the tailor uses animate object on five mannequins to fight off the party.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

As you approach you notice the other buildings show signs of normal wear and tear but somehow The Golden Needle, crammed in the middle, is immaculate.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The first thing you notice when you step inside The Golden Needle are the creepy mannequins. The clothing on the mannequins is top tier craftsmanship but the mannequins themselves are an

abomination. Jumping out from behind two mannequins near you are two well-dressed twin elven boys. They stare.

Quickly joining the two wide-eyed smiling teens is their father, Jelicko. The distinguished man ushers his sharply dressed sons away as he gets a good look at you and your clothes.

“Who wants to go first?”

“I would ask what brings you in but looking at your rags I feel I know why you’re here.”

MARKET SQUARE

The market square features a lot of civilians with a group of Zhentarim thieves loitering near the corner. This group of five pickpocket folks and worse. There’s a good chance the Zhentarim thugs take interest in the adventuring party and confront them.

The market square is bustling with activity. Merchants have carts set up in every direction and seem to struggle with the amount of people interested in their wares. Children play near the fountain in the center of the square, but every now and then you notice an unsavory character, hiding in plain sight.

Perception Roll: Zhentarim Location

DC 20: The group of Zhentarim off in the corner scan for their next victim, and it looks like it might be you. You have their attention but they do their best to not let on that they’re well aware there’s an adventuring party in the square.

DC 10: You see a group of five Zhentarim off in the corner as they scan the crowd looking for their next victim.

Encounter: The Zhentarim

A fight in the market square should be chaotic and exciting. It might even catch the attention of the city guard! The party shouldn’t have too much of a struggle here and will allow them to flex their creative and physical muscles a bit before the ambush. Use the fountain and merchant carts to spice up the environment.

Monsters: 3 Bandit Captains (MM page 344), 2 Thugs (MM page 350)

Loot: Zhentarim outfits, 4gp.

THE AMBUSH

The ambush is an opportunity to allow the players to create a plan to succeed. There will likely be some outside the box thinking so be prepared! If the crate\egg becomes damaged or at risk, it will trigger the hatching of the egg, otherwise it hatches at the end of the encounter when the party is investigating the wagon\looting. Be prepared to read the letter when they loot it at the end.

The location of the ambush is perfect. This spot on the road is quiet and contains a convenient bend and narrow ravine with steep sides that provide plenty of options. The wagon should be shortly. What do you do?

Approaching from down the road is the Night Masks wagon. It's a transport wagon used to move money and valuables and features thick reinforced wood and steel. Whatever is within is unknown and all you can notice are the two armed Orog drivers, their tusks shining in the light. You also notice the two huge mercenaries being very liberal with their horse whips as they drive the horses towards their destination.

Encounter: 3 Orcs

This encounter should favor the adventuring party as they'll take the Night Masks by surprise. Inside the wagon is an orc war chief who might get a surprise shot in an adventurer.

Put the crate\egg at risk as much as possible.

The two drivers are Orog and within the wagon is a fully armed Orc War Chief to protect the contents of the wagon – One average sized wooden crate.

Monsters: 2 Orog (MM page 247), **1 Orc War Chief** (MM page 246)

Loot: 40 gp, blood soaked letter.

LETTER FROM LORD MORTIS GRIMMELL

A closer look at the letter reveals it was written in blood.

"The others in the council scoff at my use of orcs and orogs. Prove them wrong and show them your worth by returning the cargo undamaged or be forced to look me in the eye to tell me you failed.

-Lord Mortis Grimmell"

TRICERATOPS HATCHING

After (or during) the wagon encounter, the egg hatches revealing a baby triceratops. The baby

will bond with those who show affection to it upon its birth. The baby is an adorable bit of trouble. It runs away, spits up on adventurers, nibbles on their belongings, and more. The baby's big moment comes in the final encounter when it helps (or attempts to help) the party against the vampire there to kill them all. But first, the hatching and its escape attempt!

INSIDE THE CRATE

Inside the crate are expensive fabrics and materials, but those are only used to keep the true contents safe. Nestled safely within the packaging is an egg. The egg is the size of an ogre fist and has markings unlike anything you've ever seen.

THE HATCHING

Suddenly the egg twitches and a small crack appears. The creature inside has decided it is time to make her big debut. More and more cracks form, then a hole, a slimy green snout sticking out. The baby uses its two tiny horns to break the rest, chucking the top half of the shell aside, and there you see in front of you a newborn baby triceratops.

The baby struggles to walk out of its shell but finally manages. It looks up and notices you for the first time. The baby coos, looking at you as if you're her mother.

TRICERATOPS ESCAPE

After the wagon ambush, the baby triceratops scurries off leading the party to an unseen danger. If the party is successful at stopping the baby before it gets away, the danger comes to the party (loud baby). In general the baby triceratops should be chaotically active – eating, destroying, exploring, defecating, etc. Be prepared to counter any easy fixes the party comes up with to contain the baby, such as a bag of holding, although that would definitely kill the creature so maybe let them do it to teach them about repercussions. That got dark pretty fast. Anyway, here's the escape narration:

None of you really predicted a baby triceratops was the mysterious cargo, but here we are. With the wagon ambush a success, you talk amongst yourselves on what route to take back to town, how to bring this up to Delric, and other bits of business. As you have this conversation you don't notice the triceratops scurrying to the side of the road. Once she's into the knee high forest grass you can barely make anything out. She's on the run. What do you do?

PICNIC INTERRUPTED

Madrigal and Liara are a dangerous magical couple on the run for blowing up a church (use a religion that's important to your campaign or to one of your religious PCs). They're wanted by

law enforcement and are currently hiding out in the forest as they make their way across the continent.

The dangerous couple are as polite as they are dangerous, kindly asking to purchase the dinosaur from the party. They want to use it for ingredients in spells and potions. If the party doesn't sell, the couple attacks! Any rolls from the party to sense danger from this couple will probably yield helpful results. If things get violent (which they will) have the couple admit to wanting the triceratops to use its various body parts for different powerful potions. This will be a red herring tease that maybe Delric the potions merchant might want the triceratops for the same reasons (he doesn't).

The baby triceratops scurries through the bushes and as you follow to catch her you enter a clearing and see quite a surprising sight: A human couple enjoying a nice picnic. The baby triceratops runs over to their laid out food and begins helping herself.

The husband and wife laugh before turning to you. "That's adorable! How much?"

Insight Roll: Mysterious Couple

DC 20: There's a slight fear in their eyes, but not due to the dangerous adventurers in front of them, or even an aggressive dinosaur. They're afraid because someone has finally found them.

DC 7: Her wedding ring features engravings and runes and is magical.

DC 5: You spot a few spices and ingredients on the picnic blanket that you'd likely only find in a mage's pantry. These folks are definitely magical.

History\Religion Roll – Mysterious Couple

DC 20: You know this wanted couple has a bounty on their head, 350 gold to bring them in alive. Nothing if they're dead.

DC 15: You know who these people are. It's Madrigal and Liara, the two mages responsible for using their magic to blow up a church.

Encounter: Madrigal & Liara

This encounter could probably be resolved via roleplaying but if things get physical, one of the enemies could drink the potion of growth, doubling in size! That'll help the enemy when the party gangs up on them. The triceratops should try to attack the enemies and be put at risk as often as possible.

Monsters: 1 Mage (MM page 347), 1 Green Hag (MM page 177)

Loot: 1 red ruby worth 20gp, ring of warmth (Basic Rules page 193), potion of growth (Basic Rules page 187)

RETURNING THE PACKAGE

The party will head to Delric's shop "Potions & Lotions" where they wrap up their transaction.

The party learns Delric wants the shell, not the dinosaur. They can keep the baby triceratops.

This sweet moment is interrupted by Lord Mortis Grimmell, the vampire lord who was awaiting this package. He wants his property and his revenge! The vampire will use his "Warm Welcome" ability to enter the residence uninvited.

If the party left a Night Mask alive during the ambush as Delric requested, Lord Mortis Grimmell will have disadvantage on his first attack due to being slightly intimidated.

POTIONS AND LOTIONS

You return to town and head to Potions & Lotions where an excited Delric Nightbreeze greets you, asking if everything went as planned.

"Did you obtain the item I needed?"

"What I needed from that crate wasn't the creature, but her shell. The shell will allow me to brew very power and expensive potions for my shop."

LORD MORTIS GRIMMELL

The sweet moment is interrupted as the room begins to shake. Suddenly all of the potions in the shop burst, causing a few explosions in the Alchemist's Fire corner. Emerging from the smoke is a tall imposing figure. Lord Mortis Grimmell holds his cape to cover most of his face from you. He wants you focusing on his hypnotizing red eyes.

Optional Wisdom Saving Roll: Hypnotic Eyes

DC 12: You manage to look away and avoid his hypnotic stare.

Failure = Lord Mortis Grimmell mind controls character but only teases his power, no serious damage done.

Lord Mortis Grimmell looks down upon you and the vampire does not look impressed.

"You dare steal from The Night Masks and think you'll survive the day? You will all suffer for this inconvenience."

Encounter: Lord Mortis Grimmell

The vampire council member will summon three ghouls upon his arrival. They will attack the party with the vampire taunting them for thinking they could get away with stealing from The Night Masks. Lord Grimmell targets Delric first and foremost, then the most dangerous party member. If the party left a Night Mask alive during the ambush as Delric requested, Lord Mortis Grimmell will be a bit intimidated and have disadvantage on his first attack. Upon Lord Grimmell's defeat, the party will recover loot that suggests this enemy might not have been a true vampire and that an actual vampire will be a much bigger threat.

Monsters: Lord Mortis Grimmell, 3 Ghouls (MM page 148)

Loot: Cape of +2 stealth (2 uses per day), Ring of No Reflection.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

It is the dungeon master's discretion on how to use the baby triceratops. Odds are at least one member of the party will show interest in utilizing it.

The baby triceratops should grow over time as the players level up. Here are some loose guidelines to use if your characters keep the baby:

Levels 5-7: Baby, 350 lbs

Levels 7-10: Juvenile, 2,000 lbs

Levels 10-13: Young Adult, 10,000 lbs

Levels 13-20: Adult, 22,000 lbs

Levels 18-20: Elderly, 13,000 lbs

CONTINUING FROM HERE

The Night Masks have 4 council members and we've only met Lord Mortis Grimmell. Use that threat to your advantage, including my adventure [“Berdusk Till Dawn”](#) which features the players trapped in a tavern surrounded by the undead. Could the Night Masks be responsible?

My adventure [“Potions 11”](#) also featured Delric the elf if your party wants more of the charming character.

MAPS

Here are some “rough” reference maps to help your own grid map making at home!

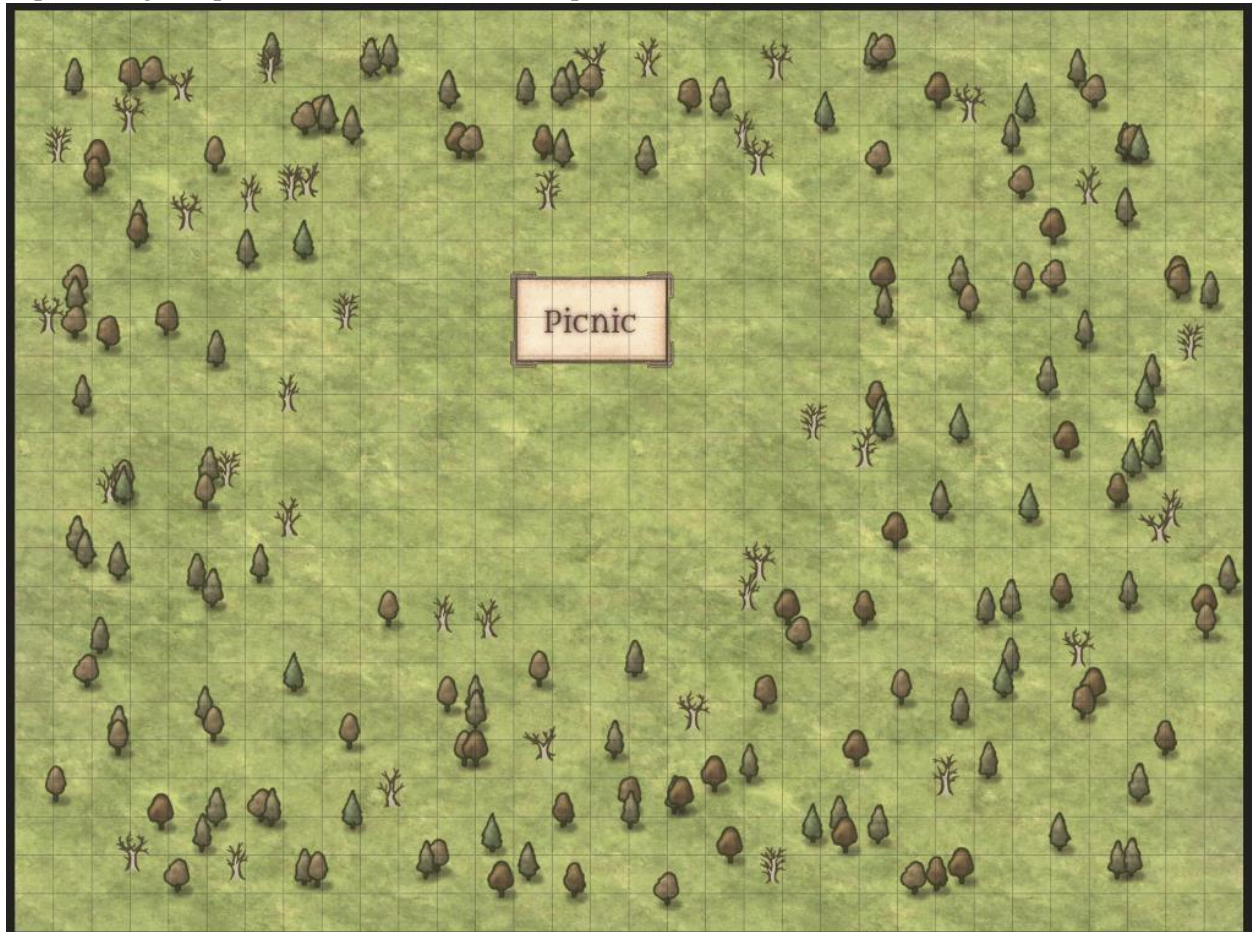
WAGON AMBUSH

A winding road with a narrow ravine perfect for an ambush.



PICNIC INTERRUPTED

A peaceful green piece of forest ideal for a nice picnic.



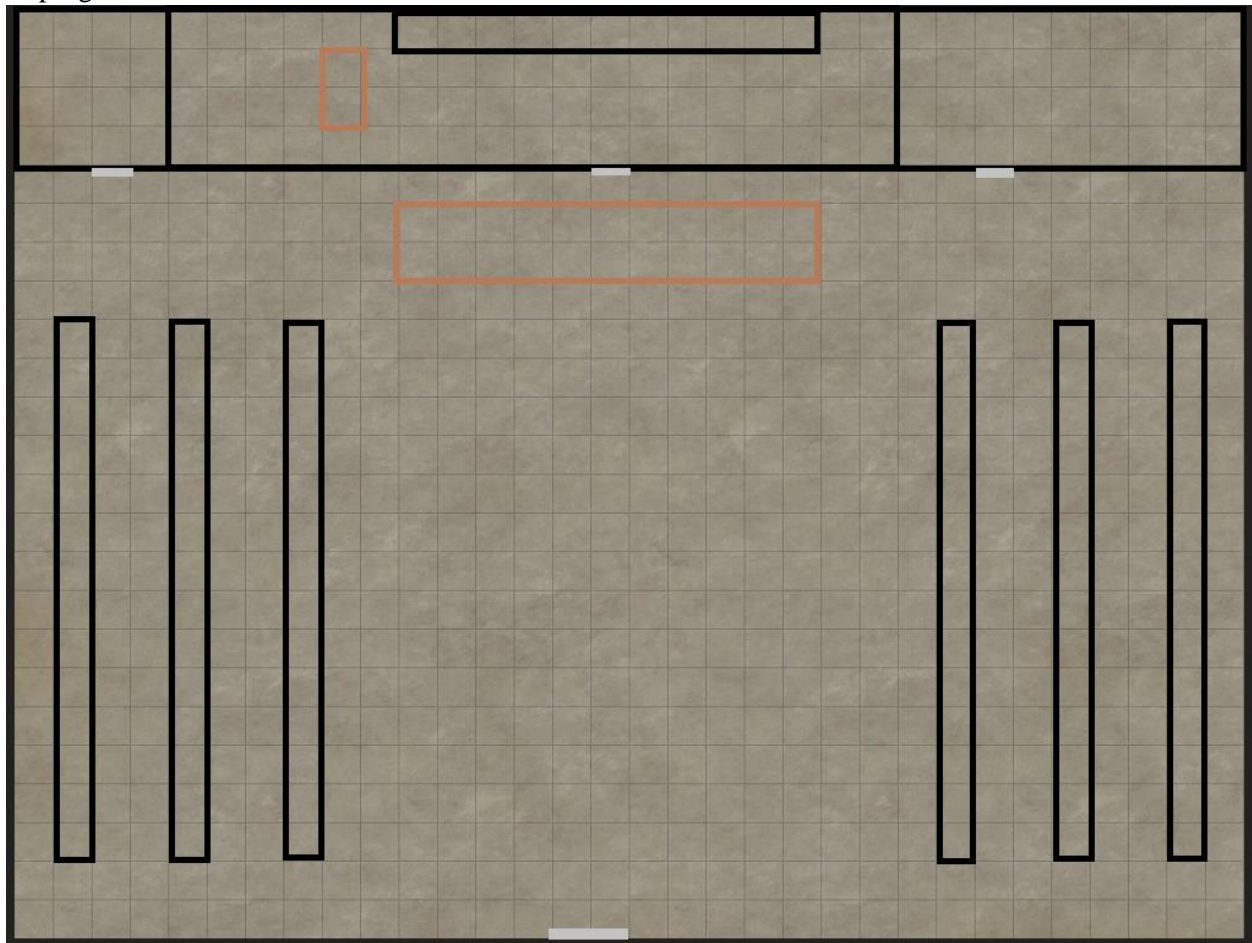
POTIONS & LOTIONS

The center of the store features the 3 shelves on each side of the room and the checkout counter

Top left = Delric's office.

Top middle = Storage room & workshop.

Top right = Bathroom!



NPC STATISTICS

LORD MORTIS GRIMMELL

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. The vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

Hypnotic Stare. 1 Charge (resets after long rest)

Range: 60 feet

Duration: Up to 1 minute

Your eyes enchant a creature of your choice. They must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed for the duration. While charmed by this spell, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0.

The spell ends for an affected creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor.

Spider Climb. The vampire can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Warm Welcome. The vampire can enter a residence without an invitation once a day, otherwise they suffer the "Forbiddance" flaw.

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. The vampire takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. The vampire is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

BABY TRICERATOPS

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (3d12 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the triceratops moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the triceratops can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Baby Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Baby Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage