

## DUNGEON DELVE SIDE QUEST #2

# THE LOST CARAVAN

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A FIRST EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4-7 CHARACTERS LEVELS 3-5

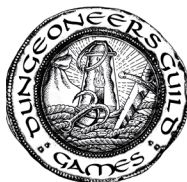


The annual caravan bound for Insarna Castle is weeks overdue. The lords who rule this remote castle fear a grave calamity has befallen the caravan. Resupplying the garrison is vital to the realm, so this is highly alarming. They urgently seek a group of capable adventurers to locate the lost caravan. Time grows short to recover the missing men and vital supplies lost in the wild expanse along the route to Insarna. Can your party of adventurers solve this mystery before it is too late?

*THE LOST CARAVAN* module provides wilderness and cavern locations for a party of low-level characters to explore. It includes detailed maps and encounter locations for the GM, plus one new monster, two new magic items, and special rules for this adventure and your campaign.

DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL adventures by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style modules designed to fit into any campaign for the Advanced 1st edition game. With little effort they can easily be adapted to most fantasy role-playing games, including the Advanced 2nd edition game, the Original game, the B/X and BECMI ("Basic") games, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

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## DUNGEON DELVE SIDE QUEST #2

### THE LOST CARAVAN

The **Lost Caravan** is a **DUNGEON DELVE SIDE QUEST** adventure for 4 to 7 characters at levels 3 to 5 (about 20 levels in total). In the course of this adventure, the **player characters (PCs)** must solve the mystery of what happened to a caravan bound for a remote castle. The trail leads the party through a dangerous stretch of bleak wilderness (**PART 1**). Players must negotiate with the monsters they encounter to uncover the cause of the caravan's disappearance. Ultimately, all clues lead the PCs to a hidden system of caves where the final enemy hides (**PART 2**). A party composed of an even mix of character classes proves best for ultimate success. At least one cleric and one character with tracking skills, such as a ranger, would greatly assist the party in completing the module.

#### Introduction

Insarna Castle shields the civilized lands from the hordes of monsters and humanoids that lurk along the realm's border. Just as importantly, it guards the only pass through the great wall of mountain peaks that leads to the friendly nations on the other side. As such, this stout edifice, perched in a desolate mountain gorge, is of grave importance to the safety and welfare of the realm.

Once a year, a caravan departs from a great city many miles south of the castle. The train of mules, drovers, and men-at-arms makes the long, harrowing journey north, carrying supplies vital to the isolated garrison. These include foodstuffs and finished goods, such as weapons and armor. More importantly for the soldiers and the support staff of servants, laborers, and expert hirelings stationed at Insarna, the caravan also brings their yearly wages. To reach the castle, the caravan must wend its way through miles of semi-arid wilderness fraught with dangers. These include rough terrain, harsh weather, and ferocious monsters. To the caravan's rugged drovers and guards, however, these dangers are taken in stride, as they are part of their trade.

This year's caravan is now weeks overdue. Delays are not uncommon, yet one of this duration is unprecedented. The leaders of the realm worry that some tragedy has befallen the caravan. Failing to resupply Insarna Castle would prove disastrous for the security of the pass and the realm. With utmost haste, they hire a band of brave adventurers to search for the lost caravan.

#### BACKGROUND & NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

Something dire has indeed befallen the caravan on its way to Insarna Castle. Some months before this tragedy, a copper dragon named Orthinax discovered a magic amulet in an abandoned ogre den. Intrigued, the dragon took the amulet back to the lair he shared with his mate, Vorisis. Orthinax studied the strange object to divine its magical secrets. Unbeknownst to him, however, the amulet was cursed—an evil item that draws the attention of demons attuned to its magic. Once the dragon placed it around his neck, his fate was sealed. A quintet of demons—minor ones, but demons nonetheless—gained possession of his mind and body.

Vorisis immediately noticed a change in her partner's demeanor. He behaved strangely and spoke in outlandish tongues, sometimes with multiple guttural voices speaking at once. Much of what Orthinax said was gibberish. The words that made sense were in praise of bloodshed and depravity, the likes of which her mate would never utter. Before she could act, Orthinax fled their home and into the surrounding wilderness.

Once on his own, Orthinax embarked on an orgy of destruction. The demons, now in control of a powerful dragon, mindlessly slew any creature they encountered. They reveled in the chaos and desolation they wrought on the plane of mortals they now inhabited. Eventually, the demons found a lair large enough to accommodate their enormous host in a series of caves beneath a high mesa. A few weeks ago, while roaming the area south of the lair, the dragon spotted the unfortunate caravan heading north. Compelled by satanic forces beyond his control, Orthinax unleashed a merciless storm of violence on the caravan of men and animals. In mere minutes, the caravan was shattered, leaving scores of butchered corpses behind. Orthinax then scooped up the caravan's treasure of gold coins and deposited them in his lair.

Since Orthinax left his home, Vorisis has monitored her mate's movements, albeit from a distance, for fear he might become violent and attack. Now she desperately seeks a solution to free Orthinax from his demonic madness.



#### Getting the Player Characters Involved

This work offers no specific hook to involve the players in the adventure. Instead, the **Game Master (GM)** should devise a hook tailored to their campaign's needs. The most obvious approach is for the lords who oversee Insarna Castle to hire the party in the city where the caravan departed, 120 miles south of the fortress. They offer each player character in the party 100 gp per level of experience for the mission. Additionally, the lords give the party 300 gp to purchase any supplies, arms, and armor they require for the mission.

Alternatively, the castellan of Insarna could recruit the party during their visit to the castle. This would require the PCs to travel south from the castle to search for the caravan. Finally, the GM might forgo hiring the PCs altogether. Instead, the party, with no prior knowledge of the caravan, stumbles upon its remains while traveling to another destination.

#### Getting Started

The best approach for the PCs to enter the territory where the adventure occurs is from the south of **MAP 1** along the **CARAVAN WILDERNESS ROUTE** (see inside cover). This assumes they

are moving north from the realm's civilized areas toward Insarna. However, the GM is free to alter this route (and anything else in the module) in any way that suits their needs or preferences. Thus, the party can enter the map area from any direction.

**Overland Travel:** The most expedient route for the party to travel across **MAP 1. CARAVAN WILDERNESS ROUTE** is via the trails that cut through the area. Travel on these crude dirt tracks proceeds at two miles per hour for those with a Movement Rate of 12". A party always travels at a Movement Rate equal to its slowest member. Thus, any Movement Rate less than 12" must be scaled downward, slowing the party's rate. Movement off the trails is half the trail rate. For every four hours of travel, there is a 30% chance the party becomes lost. See **DMG**, p. 49, for additional information about becoming lost in the wilderness.

**Dragons' Location:** The GM needs to track the locations of both copper dragons, Orthinax and Vorisis, throughout the module. Unless noted otherwise, each dragon will be in their lair (50%) or roaming the wilderness 1d20 miles from their lair (50%). When not in their lair, the GM should choose a location based on each dragon's actions and the preceding events of the adventure. It is best to delay any encounters between Orthinax and the party until **EVENT 2** (pp. 5–6) and the module's climax in AREA 18 (pp. 12–14). Before **EVENT 2** occurs, treat any random encounter with Orthinax as a distant sighting only, or reroll the encounter. Also see "**Orthinax's Location**", p. 9, for additional details.

**Rules for Possession:** The GM should familiarize themselves with the rules for possession provided in this work before play begins. See "**APPENDIX: RULES FOR POSSESSION**" on p. 15 for further information.

## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear throughout this module:

**AC** = Armor Class; **MV** = Move; **MC** = Maneuverability Class; **HD** = Hit Dice; **hp** = hit points; **#AT** = Number of Attacks; **Dmg** = Damage; **SA** = special attack; **SD** = special defense; **MR** = magic resistance; **INT** = monster's intelligence rating; **AL** = alignment; **L** = large size; **M** = medium size; **S** = small size; **xp** = experience point value; **THACO** = the number to hit AC 0; **PsA** = Psionic ability; **C** = Chaotic; **L** = Lawful; **E** = Evil; **G** = Good; **N** = Neutral; **F** = Fighter; **MU** = Magic-User; **C** = Cleric; **T** = Thief; **S** = Strength, **I** = Intelligence, **W** = Wisdom, **D** = Dexterity, **C** = Constitution, **CH** = Charisma; **d** = type of die; **rd/** **rds** = round/rounds; **cp** = copper piece; **sp** = silver piece; **ep** = electrum piece; **gp** = gold piece; **pp** = platinum piece

## PART 1: INTO THE WILDERNESS

This adventure takes place in a semi-arid wilderness. The nearest human settlement of note lies 60 miles south of **MAP 1. CARAVAN WILDERNESS ROUTE**, while Insarna Castle is 40 miles to the north. The rugged landscape consists of uneven plains broken by barren hills and high mesas. Scrubby brown grass, low brush, and jagged rock outcroppings cover most of the terrain. Scattered clusters of larger shrubs and forlorn trees collect in depressions, such as gullies and ravines that cut through the land.

### RANDOM WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

While the party roams the wilderness, check for random encounters once every four hours while traveling and once every eight hours while resting. Encounters occur on a roll of 1 on a d6. Roll a d10 and consult the table below to determine the encounter type.

| 1d10 | Encounter       | # Appearing |
|------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1    | Blink dog       | 1d6+4       |
| 2    | Clubnek         | 1d6+1       |
| 3    | Firenewt        | 1d6+1       |
| 4    | Giant owl       | 1d3         |
| 5    | Gnoll           | 2d4         |
| 6    | Hippogriff      | 1d4         |
| 7    | Hyena           | 2d4         |
| 8    | Lion            | 1d4         |
| 9    | Poisonous snake | 1d4         |
| 10   | Copper dragon   | See below   |

### 1. BLINK DOG

Ever wary of strangers, the pack of blink dogs trails the party for 1d3 turns to determine their intentions. These canines offer friendly PCs information concerning the rogue copper dragon. However, the PCs must have a means to converse with them, such as a *tongues* spell (q.v.). The blink dogs say that the dragon's name is Orthinax and that, until recently, he has been friendly with their kind. They believe he lairs somewhere in the hilly area to the northwest (see AREA W7, pp. 7–9) with his mate, Vorisis.

**Blink dog:** AC 5; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 16 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 bite; SA 75% to attack from rear; SD **blink** at will; INT average (8-10); AL LG; Size M (3' at shoulder); xp 250 each; THACO 15; MM 10-11.

### 2. CLUBNEK

These aggressive flightless birds attack any creature they encounter 50% of the time. Otherwise, they ignore the party but remain wary and will defend themselves if threatened. Clubneks' intelligence allows them to concentrate their attacks on a single opponent.

**Clubnek:** AC 8; MV 12" (24" for 1 rd. every 5 rds.); HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6 claw, 1d8 beak; INT low (5-7); AL N; Size M; xp 40 each; THACO 16; FF 19.

### 3. FIRENEWT

These wicked lizard folk ruthlessly attack all who cross their paths. Each salaman (as they are also known) is armed with a pike and a broad sword. Thirty percent (30%) of the time, each member of the group is mounted on a giant strider steed. Each firenewt carries 3d8 sp and 2d4 gp in personal treasure.

**Firenewt:** AC 4 (chain mail, shield); MV 9"; HD 2 + 2; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 pike or 2d4 broad sword; SA breath a 5' long **flame jet** (1/turn; 1d6 damage, save vs. Breath Weapon for ½ damage); SD +3 to saves and –1 each die of damage vs. fire-based attacks, –3 and +1 vs. cold-based attacks; INT low (5-7); AL NE; Size M (7' + tall); xp 126 each; THACO 16; FF 36.

**Giant strider:** AC 4; MV 15"; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 bite or 1d10 kick; SA launch a **fireball** (2/hour) (+4 "to hit"; 50' range; 10' radius burst; 1d6 damage); SD immune to fire, intense heat heals as *cure light wounds* once every 3 rds., takes 1d6+1 extra damage from cold-based spells, drinking water is poisonous, +2 bonus on saving rolls; INT animal (1); AL NE; Size L (6' to 7' at shoulder); xp 93 each; THACO 16; FF 42.

### 4. GIANT OWL

With their high intelligence, giant owls will not openly attack a formidable group. Instead, they wait until nightfall to surprise their prey by plummeting from the sky unseen. They attempt to snatch any PC weighing 100 lbs. or less, who is then carried back

to their nest to be eaten. They drop any struggling prey from a height of 50' to 100' (1d6+4 × 10'). If the party uses ranged weapons or spells, the giant owls concentrate their attacks on those PCs.

**Giant owl:** AC 6; MV 3"/18" (MC: E); HD 4; hp 20 each; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4 claws, 1d4+1 bite; SA surprise on a 1–5 on a d6; INT very (11-12); AL N; Size M; xp 230 each; THACO 15; MM 77.

## 5. GNOLL

These dog-headed humanoids roam the wilderness, searching for victims to slay and loot. Most are armed with battle axes or morning stars, but 30% also carry composite longbows. Twenty percent (20%) of groups are accompanied by 1d2 hyenas. Each gnoll carries 2d6 ep and 2d4 gp in personal treasure.

**Gnoll:** AC 5; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 battle axe, 2d4 morning star, or 1d6/1d6 composite longbow; INT low to average (5-10); AL CE; Size L (7'+ tall); xp 48 each; THACO 16; MM 46.

## 6. HIPPOGRIFF

Always searching for a meal, the flying hippogriffs dive to attack the PCs and their mounts. They make a few passes, slashing with their claws before landing to engage in melee. Hippogriffs carry any slain victims to their nest, located 2d20 miles away, to feed on them. These creatures flee if reduced to half their hit points or fewer.

**Hippogriff:** AC 5; MV 18"/36" (MC: C); HD 3 + 3; hp 17 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6 claw, 1d10 beak; INT semi- (2-4); AL N; Size L; xp 128 each; THACO 16; MM 52.

## 7. HYENA

Hyenas attack only groups with fewer members than their own. They always target the smallest party member, such as a halfling or a gnome, en masse. The hyenas drag away victims reduced to 0 or fewer hit points to feed on their prize at a later time.

**Hyena:** AC 7; MV 12"; HD 3; hp 14 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 bite; INT animal (1); AL N; Size M; xp 77 each; THACO 16; MM 54.



## 8. LION

Lions attack anyone who approaches within 60'. Otherwise, there is a 40% chance they stalk the party and attack by ambush, if possible.

**Lion:** AC 5 (forequarters), 6 (hindquarters); MV 12"; HD 5 + 2; hp 25 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 claws, 1d10 bite; SA rear claws rake for 1d6+1/1d6+1 each if both paws hit; SD surprised on a 1 on a d6; INT semi- (2-4); AL N; Size L; xp 450 each; THACO 15; MM 61.

## 9. POISONOUS SNAKE

While lurking among brush or rocks (80% chance), the snakes strike at a victim's legs as the victim passes nearby. When encountered at night, they slither into the party's campsite to attack sleeping PCs, even crawling into their bedrolls.

**Poisonous snake:** AC 6; MV 15"; HD 2 + 1; hp 11 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1 bite + **poison**; SA when bitten save vs. Poison with a –1 penalty, or become sickened and incapacitated for 1d4 days; INT animal (1); AL N; Size S (5' long); xp 288 each; THACO 16; MMIII 111.

## 10. COPPER DRAGON

The party encounters either Orthinax (60%) or Vorisis (40%). See **EVENTS 1 and 2** below for the dragons' statistics and details on their actions. Typically, Orthinax either attacks the party (50%) or observes them while flying for 1d2 turns before leaving (50%). Vorisis always observes the party from a distance for 1d4 turns. How this encounter unfolds largely depends on what events occurred previously; see **WILDERNESS EVENTS** below for additional information.

## WILDERNESS EVENTS

Both events below draw the party deeper into the mystery of the lost caravan. They should occur in the order presented before the PCs arrive at the **Caverns of the Dragon** (p. 9), which houses Orthinax's lair. The GM should determine the exact timing and location of each event based on how the module unfolds during play.

### EVENT 1. DRAGON SIGHTING

**GM's Note:** This event should occur shortly after the party discovers the destroyed caravan (AREA W2, p. 6).

Orthinax's mate, Vorisis, appears in the sky and shadows the party for 2d6 turns. The copper dragon remains aloft at least one mile away and 1,000' high, well out of range of most missiles and spells. She monitors the party to prevent her mate from committing further evil acts should he appear (see **EVENT 2** below for additional details). Vorisis also attempts to gauge the PCs' motivations and, if possible, their moral and ethical bent. While naturally suspicious of outsiders, the dragon is always looking for others who might assist her with her dilemma.

**Vorisis**, adult copper dragon: AC 1; MV 9"/24" (MC: E); HD 8; hp 40; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 claws, 5d4 bite; SA breathe a **stream of acid** (7" long, ½" wide; inflicts 40 hp of damage) or a **cloud of slow gas** (3" long, 2" wide, 2" deep) 3/day, **fear aura**; SD **detect hidden & invisible creatures** (6" range), save as a 10th-level fighter; INT high (14); AL CG; Size L (36' long); xp 1850; THACO 12; MM 32. Vorisis speaks copper dragon, gnome, lammasu, and Common. She currently has the following spells memorized:

Level 1: **charm person**, **light**, **spider climb**

Level 2: **know alignment**, **mirror image**