

## DUNGEON DELVE SIDE QUEST #2

# THE LOST CARAVAN

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

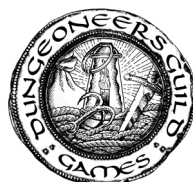


The annual caravan bound for Insarna Castle is weeks overdue. The lords who rule over this remote castle are worried that some grave calamity has befallen it. Since resupplying the garrison is of vital importance to the realm, this is highly alarming. They urgently seek a group of capable adventurers to locate the lost caravan. Time grows short for the missing men and supplies lost in the wild expanse on the way to Insarna. Can your party of adventurers solve this mystery before it is too late?

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

DUNGEON DELVE SIDE QUESTS by Dungeoneers Guild Games are short, 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 of 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 some monsters they encounter to uncover the cause of the missing caravan. Ultimately, all clues direct 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 their 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 on the realm's border. Just as importantly, it defends the only pass that pierces the great wall of mountain peaks that leads to the friendly nations that lie 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 a great city located many miles south of the castle. The train of mules, drovers, and men-at-arms makes the long and harrowing journey north, carrying supplies vital to the isolated garrison. This includes foodstuffs and finished goods, such as weapons and armor. More important to the soldiers and support staff of servants, laborers, and expert hirelings stationed at Insarna, the caravan also brings their yearly wages. To get to the castle, the caravan must wend its way through miles of semi-arid wilderness fraught with many 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 since they are part of their trade.

This year's caravan is now weeks overdue. Delays are not uncommon, yet one of this length of time is unprecedented. The leaders of the realm are worried that some tragedy has struck the caravan. Failing to resupply Insarna Castle would prove disastrous to the security of the pass and to the realm. With utmost haste, they hire a band of brave adventurers willing 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 tragic event occurred, a copper dragon named Orthinax discovered a magic amulet in an abandoned ogre den. Intrigued, the dragon took the charm back to the lair he shared with his mate, Vorisis. Orthinax closely studied the strange object so that he might divine its magical secrets. Unbeknownst to him, however, this amulet was cursed — an item of evil that attracts 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 languages, sometimes with multiple guttural voices all speaking at once. Much of what Orthinax said was meaningless gibberish. Those words that made sense were in praise of bloodshed and depravity, the likes of which her mate would never utter. Before she

could act, however, Orthinax fled their home 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 located a lair large enough to accommodate their enormous host in a series of caves that lay below a high mesa. A few weeks ago, whilst 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 train of men and animals. In mere minutes, only their butchered corpses remained. Orthinax then scooped up the caravan's treasure of gold coins and deposited them into his lair.

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



#### Getting the Player Characters Involved

This work offers no specific hook for involving the players in the adventure. Instead, the **Game Master (GM)** should conceive a hook specific based on their campaign's needs. The most obvious method is for the lords who oversee Insarna Castle to hire the party in the city the caravan departed from, located 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 while they visit the castle. This would require the PCs to travel south from the castle to search for the caravan. Finally, the GM might forgo the hiring of the PCs altogether. Instead, the party, with no prior knowledge of the caravan, stumbles across its remains whilst traveling to another destination.

### Getting Started

The best direction for the PCs to enter the territory where the adventure occurs is from the south of **MAP 1. CARAVAN WILDERNESS ROUTE** (p. 16). This assumes that they are moving from the civilized areas of the realm north to Insarna. However, the GM is free to alter this route (and anything else in the module) in any way that suits their needs or preference. Thus, the party can enter the map area from any desired 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 is at a rate of two miles an 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 of the trail rate. For every four hours of travel, there is a 30% chance that the party becomes lost. See **DMG**, p. 49, for additional information about becoming lost in the wilderness.

**Dragons' Location:** It is important for the GM to note the locations of both copper dragons, Orthinax and Vorisis, throughout the course of the module. Unless noted otherwise, each dragon will be in their respective lairs (50%), or out roaming through 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 that occur during the adventure. Keep in mind that it is best to delay any encounters between Orthinax and the party until **EVENT 2** (pp. 5-6) and the climax of the module in AREA 18 (pp. 12-14). 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**", 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; **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 to the south of **MAP 1. CARAVAN WILDERNESS ROUTE**, while Insarna Castle is 40 miles to

the north. The rugged landscape here 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 they travel, and once every eight hours while they rest. Encounters occur on a roll of a "1" on a d6. Roll a d10 and consult the table below to determine the encounter type.

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

#### 1. HIPPOGRIFF

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

**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 M; xp 128 each; THACO 16; MM 52.

#### 2. CLUBNECK

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

**Clubneck:** AC 8; MV 12" (24" for 1 rd.); 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. POISONOUS SNAKE

While lurking amongst brush or rocks (80% chance), the snakes strike at a victim's legs as they pass close by. 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; MM III 111.

#### 4. FIRENEWT

These wicked lizard folk ruthlessly attack all who cross their paths. Each salamander (as they are also known) is armed with a pike and 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 of 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); SA +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); SA immune to fire, intense heat heals damage, takes 1d6+1 extra damage from cold-based spells; INT animal (1); AL NE; Size L (6' to 7' at shoulder); xp 93 each; THACO 16; FF 42.

## 5. HYENA

Hyenas only attack groups with fewer members than their own. They always target the smallest party member, such as a halfling or gnome, en masse. The hyenas drag away victims taken 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.

## 6. GIANT OWL

With their high intelligence, giant owls will not openly attack a formidable group. Instead, they wait until nightfall to surprise by plummeting from the sky unseen. They attempt to snatch any PC weighing 100 lbs. or fewer, who are then carried back to their nest to become a meal. They drop any prey who struggles from a height of 50' to 100' (1d6+4 x 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.

## 7. BLINK DOG

Ever wary of strangers, the pack of blink dogs trail 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 some means to converse with them, such as a *tongues* spell (q.v.). The blink dogs say that the dragon's name is Orthinax, and until recently, he has been friendly with their kind. 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.

## 8. LION

Lions attack anyone who approaches within 60' feet. Otherwise, there is a 40% chance they stalk the party and attack them 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. 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% of their number also carry composite longbows. Twenty percent (20%) of groups also have 1d2 hyenas accompanying them. Each gnoll carries 2d6 gp and 2d4 gp of personal treasure.

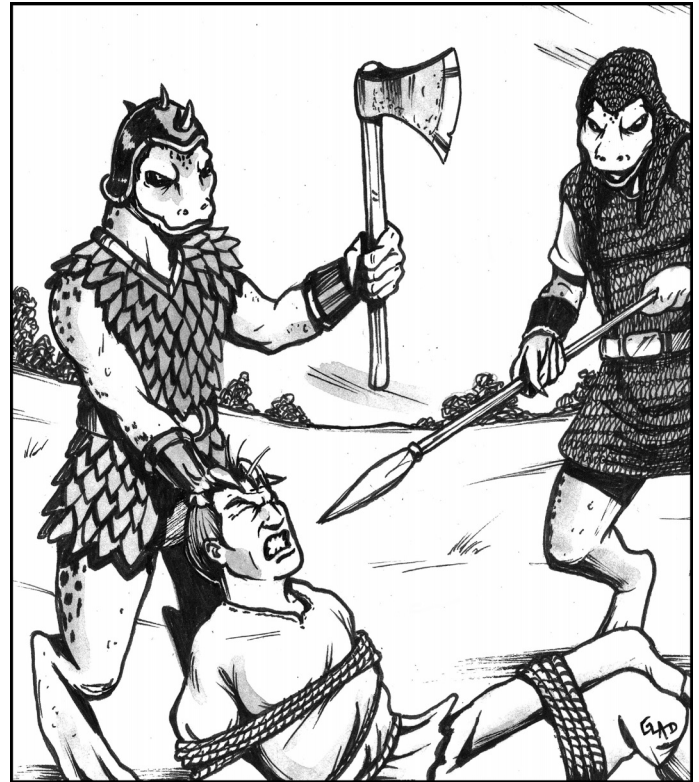
**Gnoll:** AC 5; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 battle axe, 2d4 morning star, or 1d6/1d6 composite longbow; INT low to average (5-10); AL CE; Size L (7'+ tall); xp 48 each; THACO 16; MM 46.

## 10. COPPER DRAGON

The party encounters either Orthinax (60%) or Vorisis (40%). See **EVENTS 1** and **2** below for the dragons' statistics and details concerning their actions. Typically, Orthinax attacks the party (50%), or simply observes them while flying for 1d2 turns before leaving (50%). Vorisis always just 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 of the events detailed below serve to draw the party further into the mystery of the lost caravan. They should occur in consecutive order before the PCs arrive at the **Caverns of the Dragon** (p. 9) that houses Orthinax's lair. The GM should determine the exact timing and location of each event based on how the module unfolds over the course of play.



### EVENT 1. DRAGON SIGHTING

**GMs Note:** This event should occur not long after the party has discovered 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 stays 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