

BITTER WATERS

by Andrew Getting

Through acrid mists and bitter waters they march. They are quiet, making no sound as they leave the marshlands. Spears held high, the warriors scan the fog for signs of the attacker.

Every step took them further from their old lands.

Every step brings them closer to the lands of their 'allies,' who had abandoned them when the marsh turned black and foul.

Every step brings one of them down to the befouled earth beneath the water, there to rest forever.

Every step churns up more of the poisoned water as it seeps between their scales and below the skin.

So many had already died on this march, and after the attack, they had so few left...

The mists part in the night. The village's light bathes them in a false welcome. The human guards are unsteady, either from poison or from drink. The town celebrates the end of the trade season, but not a man raises a toast to the creatures that died for it.

So many had died from the first attack of the beast and from the aftermath, but the humans would suffer for such treachery...

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by Andrew Getting



For use with
DRAGONS
d20 Sourcebook
by AEG

Requires the use of the
Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook,
Third Edition, published by
Wizards of the Coast®

Bitter Waters



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HOW TO USE THIS PRODUCT

This adventure is designed to be easily dropped into your existing *Third-Edition D&D* campaign. It can be run in a just a single session and makes for an excellent evening's gaming. To prepare yourself to run the adventure, you should read it completely at least once to familiarize yourself with the material. You may wish to photocopy the map in the center of the book for ease of use as well. The text on the back of the book can be read to your players to introduce them to the adventure. After that, you're ready to begin. Good luck!

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

This module requires the use of the *Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition*, published by Wizards of the Coast.® You won't be able to run this adventure without it.

GAME MASTER BACKGROUND

Bitter Waters is a self-contained adventure (with possible ramifications in the future) which adapts readily to fit into any campaign. This adventure is designed for a party of four to six characters of levels 1-3. Because of the complexity of this adventure, it is recommended that it be read once before playing, making notes where appropriate.

Like many borderland communities, the village of Osell maintains a precarious existence — though taxes are low and few ask questions of the hardworking locals, life is difficult and survival depends on nature's bounty. This is especially difficult in a marsh.

The people of Osell therefore contacted a nearby tribe of lizardfolk, with whom they swore peace and trade. Osell's profits rose with the lizardfolk exotic goods, and the town's growth stymied (per their treaty). Though hardly a paradise, Osell and the lizardfolk community each grew strong and content.

The lizardfolk, however, was not entirely candid with the human settlement. 20 years ago, before the humans came, the lizardfolk champion did combat with a great black dragon, claiming the marsh and its inhabitants as his. The great warrior died in combat, but not before maiming the retreating dragon. The dragon's lair was never found and fear griped the lizardfolk that someday he would return. Once the humans arrived, the lizardfolk struck a pact, certain that the humans would aid them if the dragon returned to claim his land.

On all accounts, they were wrong.

The black dragon, Afael, remained crippled, unable to fly. Without this advantage, Afael could not reap vengeance without exposing himself to greater harm. So, he waited. He drew upon his magic and created a new beast, from his dragonblood. The Drackinn was born.

Though clumsier and less intelligent than a true dragon, the Drackinn's attack was formidable and devastating. This new dragon belched acid — not enough to kill outright, but in time, any who fell victim to it eventually died. Worse still, the creature secreted the acid through its body, tainting the marsh with its presence.

Desperate for aid, the lizardfolk called upon the people of Osell. Lizardfolk ambassadors met with the leader of the Osell council, deep in celebration. The men recently returned from selling their wares in town and a healthy supply of ale and cider was available for all. Few townspeople were sober and the headman refused the lizardfolk request.

The following night, a lizardfolk war party descended upon the village. The only survivor was a drunken tradesman who watched the whole assault. Terrified, he fled to the Banik, where he recounted his tale.

The town of Banik was shocked with the news — less than a day before, Osell's merchants had been alive and rich. Now, all were dead without explanation. Banik's mayor offered a reward for anyone who found the cause for the slaughter and brought those responsible to justice.

"LET'S GO KILL A DRAGON!"

LAST WORDS OF A CHARACTER
WHO REMEMBERS 2ND EDITION
DRAGONS

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THE FALL OF OSELL

Though only one man witnesses the lizardfolk sacking of Osell, the news floods to nearby cities. When the PCs enter Banik (or any nearby city or town), read the following aloud:

There is a fear in this town. The guardsmen, normally relaxed and genial or busy with pickpockets and drunkards, grip their weapons tightly and continually pace their stations. Several shops are closed, while others (even the grocers' and taverns) offer weapons in addition to their normal wares. A child cries out as the men flinch, looking toward the happily playing boy.

Depending on the prevailing alignment, the prices on martial goods such as weapons and armor could be as little as half (in a good community) or as much as three times (in an evil community).

Asking anyone what is going on provokes the same reaction:

Jenkins was returning to Osell from selling his wares, and he saw it all. First, half the bloody town exploded, and then fell over into the swamp. Next thing he knows, the whole place is a mess people screaming and running around, fights on the battlements, and then he sees what caused it all.

Slinking out of the marsh come these things with spears held high lizardfolk. Osell's old allies turned on the town, ransacking it... making it their own. Jenkins ran back here, and he nearly climbed over the city walls just to talk to our mayor. Jenkins packed up and left soon after, saying those lizards 'ill be the death of us all. No telling what they'll do next...

If the PCs take the hint, move on to Speaking with Mayor Gevell. If not, within a day the townsmen have posted signs asking for a scout team to Osell, offering 100 gp per person that signs up. If the PCs take this route, move directly to "Briefing" below.

SPEAKING WITH MAYOR GEVELL

If the PCs express a desire to meet with Mayor Gevell, the city guards happily escort them.

A wave of relief passes over the guards' faces, and they eagerly take you to the mayor. Gevell — an adventurer before his crippling — meets with you in his private offices. He stands with the aid of a crutch.

The mayor smiles at your arrival. "Welcome, good friends. I understand that you are here to aid us. I've discussed the matter with Jenkins, and now keep him as a guest in my home until his nerves settle. Despite what you may have guessed, I am not interested in retaliation; the lizardfolk traded with Osell for nearly twenty years. They attacked for a reason.

Before I commit troops against them, I should like to know the reason. That is, of course, where you come in. I shall pay you men (and ladies) 2,000 gold pieces to investigate this matter, and an additional 500 if you discover the cause of the lizardfolk ire and root it out. The people want justice and those responsible will be held accountable. Osell wasn't the most important trade center in the region, but its people deserve an explanation. Return tomorrow, and my man-at-arms will brief you.

If the PCs take the work, move to Briefing below.

BRIEFING

The PCs arrive at the gates to the mayor's home the following day. Read the following aloud:

Though you are certain that you have arrived at the appointed hour, the manor yard is empty of any save you. No other adventurers or crusaders have arrived, and you quietly wonder whether it is because you are the only ones foolhardy...

Halting you in mid-thought, a man steps out of the mayor's home. Clad in blackened chain mail, and sporting a terrible scar from the cleft of his chin to his left eyebrow, he looks over you each with his one good eye.

"Finally," he spits. "You lot are the best Gevell could do, eh? Fair enough. His honor's money's as good as anybody's, I suppose, so listen up."

"Near as we can tell, Osell's now got two ways in — the front gate, and the great bloody hole the lizards tore in the side of the place. If you people fancy yourselves lucky, you may want to consider the front entrance. I wouldn't. Bloody lizards'll probably jump you the moment they spot ya. The hole's more dangerous, probably unstable and still sinking into the swamp, but the guard's probably lighter, too. You're not going there for heroics, after all just to sniff the place out, and figure what the lizards are up to."

He spits again and then wipes his mouth. "Got it? Good. Now get going."

The man-at-arms is willing to pay the PCs 50 gp in advance, but does not advertise that fact. If they ask for it, he gives it, but he does not trust the heroes or their skill. But he's more concerned that, should the heroes fall, the lizardfolk will attack Banik next.

OSELL

Take as much time as necessary to get the PCs to Osell (it should be just a day to the east on foot, with a few small encounters along the way). When the PCs arrive, they find Osell quiet, but with definite signs of invasion — the southwest wall, overlooking the marsh, has fallen, and lizardfolk warriors scout the perimeter. Unless the PCs attempt to enter by the southwest wall, the lizardfolk wait

for the PCs to come to them. The lizardfolk are fully aware of how the outside world views their actions, and welcome any overture of peace. The lizardfolk assume the PCs to be the precursor to an invasion force should they enter through the wall.

1. THE WEST GATE

The gate, curiously, lies open. Beyond it, two towers are manned with unblinking lizardfolk. Though their eyes never leave you, they make no move to approach. Behind the towers, a rough assemblage of tents and banners stand before a large hut.

2. WESTERN GUARD TOWERS

Both towers have five **lizardfolk (10 hp)** apiece in them, the bulk of the tribe's remaining force. Ssa'all'iss has told both units to watch for outsiders, but not to make a move unless the newcomers threaten either them or their charges at location #6. If approached, they respond in Draconic that the chieftain, Ssa'all'iss (*room #11*), wishes to speak to them. Only one speaks common and he only speaks if none of the PCs understand Draconic. Unless a lizardfolk dies, these warriors use their lassos to subdue opponents, rather than slay anyone outright.

Lizardfolk Warriors: CR 1; SZ M (humanoid, aquatic, reptilian); HD 2d8+1; hp 10; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 Dex, +5 natural); Atks 2 Claws +2 melee (1d4+1), bite +0 melee (1d4+1), or lasso +1 ranged (special), or javelin +1 ranged (1d4+1); SQ Poisoned (-1 to all physical attributes); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10; AL N. Skills: Balance +4, Jump +7, Swim +9. Feats: Multiattack, Track.

3. GUEST HOUSE

The guesthouse is empty, save for the remains of a foreign merchant. Travelling papers identify the corpse as Jesmund Jenkins; his brother was the sole survivor.

4. STOREHOUSE

This long, thin building was a storehouse until it caught fire. Now its southwest corner is blackened and few fish remain likely the doings of hungry lizardfolk.

Anyone studying the burns may make an Alchemy skill check (DC 15) to notice that this is a chemical burn — a sign of explosives, in this case, fireworks.

5. THE SOUTHWEST ENTRANCE

Here the town's remains tilt absurdly into the marsh. Burnt logs float in the muck and within the town itself the swamp slowly reclaims the town. Just north of the charred, broken wall are two buildings in similar conditions. One is long and thin, and the other is all but destroyed. Behind this latter building is a large bonfire.

Hiding in the ruins of location #13 and amid the muck and water are five lizardfolk. Unlike the ones at location #2, these warriors are rather bloodthirsty — they blame the humans for the destruction of the tribe. If the PCs make any loud noise, five lizardfolk from location #12 investigate and attempt to lasso both groups. This second group arrives in two rounds.

If any great weight is placed solidly upon the ground here, such as a body falling sharply from combat, a hidden sinkhole triggers. All involved PCs must swim to safety (Swim check, DC 19) or risk sinking in five rounds, at which time they begin drowning. Worse still, a bombardier lives beneath the soil and disturbing it awakens two other sleeping beetles. These beetles attack anything other than each other. They are immune to the poison of the Drackinn. Fortunately, however, the bog still mires them, and they take two full rounds to fight free of its embrace.

If the PCs help the lizardfolk fight off the bombardiers, they aid the PCs out of the sinkhole.

Giant Beetles, Bombardiers: CR 2; SZ M (vermin); HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+6 natural); Atks Bite +2 melee (1d4+1); SA Acid Spray (10 ft. cone, Fort Save (DC 13), 1d4+2); SQ Vermin; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 9; AL N. Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5.

If the PCs have access to the appropriate magic or skills, allow PCs to tame or control the beetles. The lizardfolk, even the bloodthirsty ones, respect such an act, and the beetles themselves make decent transport for a single rider. They attack the Drackinn, but flee unless magically dominated.

Anyone who sets foot in the marsh, or who falls into its sinkhole, must make a Fort save (DC 15) or fall prey to the poison of the Drackinn, losing one point each in Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. These points are lost permanently until cured and repeated exposures have cumulative effects.

6. LIZARDFOLK CAMP

Here the lizardfolk have built their camp. In jarring contrast to the words of the townspeople, these creatures are lethargic, and many cough sickly or already dead. The vermin of the swamp swarm their bodies before some of the stronger ones drag the corpses behind the hut to the east. The medics' eyes offer neither conversation nor hope.

These lizardfolk are the sickest of the lot; two dozen barely hang on to life. Ssa'all'iss (the chieftain) was the apprentice to the previous druid, who died in the Drackinn's assault. He lacks the power to heal more than one or two of his people a day and so the death toll rises.

None of these lizardfolk speak Common. But, even if spoken to in Draconic, they are too weak and can only answer in a feebly nod or shake of the head.

7. FISHERMENS' HUTS

In contrast to the rest of the village, the huts remain sturdy, even inhabitable. Why wouldn't the lizardfolk attack here?

Fireworks Trap: CR 3; Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 10) — fireworks, 1d4 damage a round for 1d10 rounds (Ref save, DC 17 for half). One trip causes all of the traps in this area to go off, leveling the buildings. The lizardfolk discovered the traps and hence do not enter here.

These huts are home to the single surviving villager, **Jenis (hp 4)**. Jenis is only thirteen, and quite cautious about displaying her skills (her father beat her the last time she plied her thieving trade), but is also fully aware that she is outnumbered and has little chance of surviving on her own. While she knows the location of each and every firework trap, she has no qualms about dying here. She has silently witnessed the whole of the lizardfolk invasion, and is looking for her chance for revenge. She instantly trusts any PCs, however.

Jenis intends to kill Ssa'all'iss as soon as she can. Though not truly evil, Jenis will never forgive the lizardfolk for what they have done here. If necessary she befriends the right people to get to Ssa'all'iss. Jenis has not yet contracted the poison.

Read the following aloud if the PCs successfully disarm or navigate around three traps:

As you carefully step through the huts, you notice a flash of clothing. From around a corner, a girl's face peers at you. After a moment, she almost sobs with relief. "Thank the tide. You're not one of them."

Jenis refuses to answer any questions about her past (she is ashamed of her thievery), nor does she engage in idle chatter:

"Look, I'm grateful that you're here and all, but those snakes killed everyone! Either get me out, help me destroy them, or bugger off!"

If asked about either the town or the lizardfolk, she responds:

She blinks away tears, but responds with a cold, clear voice: "The snakes killed 'em all. The fishers and guards first, but they didn't stop there. They came after all of us... I set off some of the fireworks as a warning and then strung up these huts. They don't dare come near me now."

Jenis disarms each of the traps, readying the fireworks for use as more controlled weapons. Depending on the circumstance, she either uses them to destroy the rest of the camp (Jenis is unaware that the lizardfolk are dying, or she would have already done this), or turn them upon the Drackinn. PCs may make a Disable Device check (DC 20) to create such weapons once Jenis has showed them.

These are grenade-like weapons with a throwing range of 20 feet and a burst radius of 5 feet. They do 1d4 damage a round, for 1d10 rounds, to all targets in the radius. If the fireworks come into contact with water, even if bursting, the fireworks are ruined.

Jenis, Human Rog1: CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 Leather, +1 Dex); Atks Dagger +1 melee (1d4); SA Fireworks (see above) sneak attack +1d6; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10; AL CG. Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +2, Climb +2, Disable Device +4, Escape Artist +2, Hide +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +2, Search +4, Spot +2, Swim +4. Feats: Alertness, Run.

8. VILLAGE HEADSMAN'S HOUSE

North of the bonfire, this house is a true house, rather than the simple huts of the villagers. Like the bonfire, however, the house emits a terrible stench. Peering within the windows, you can see why — the bodies of most of the villagers are within.

If the PCs search only the building (not the bodies), have them make Search checks (DC 20). Success means that a note is found in the headsman's desk. It reads:

Today, the lizards came early. The old druid's apprentice led them, and spoke of a dragon in these waters. Though I would never admit it to such as they, I never trusted the lizardfolk. Still, if it proves a problem I can always send for help from home.

"Bah. What would a dragon possibly want with this place?"

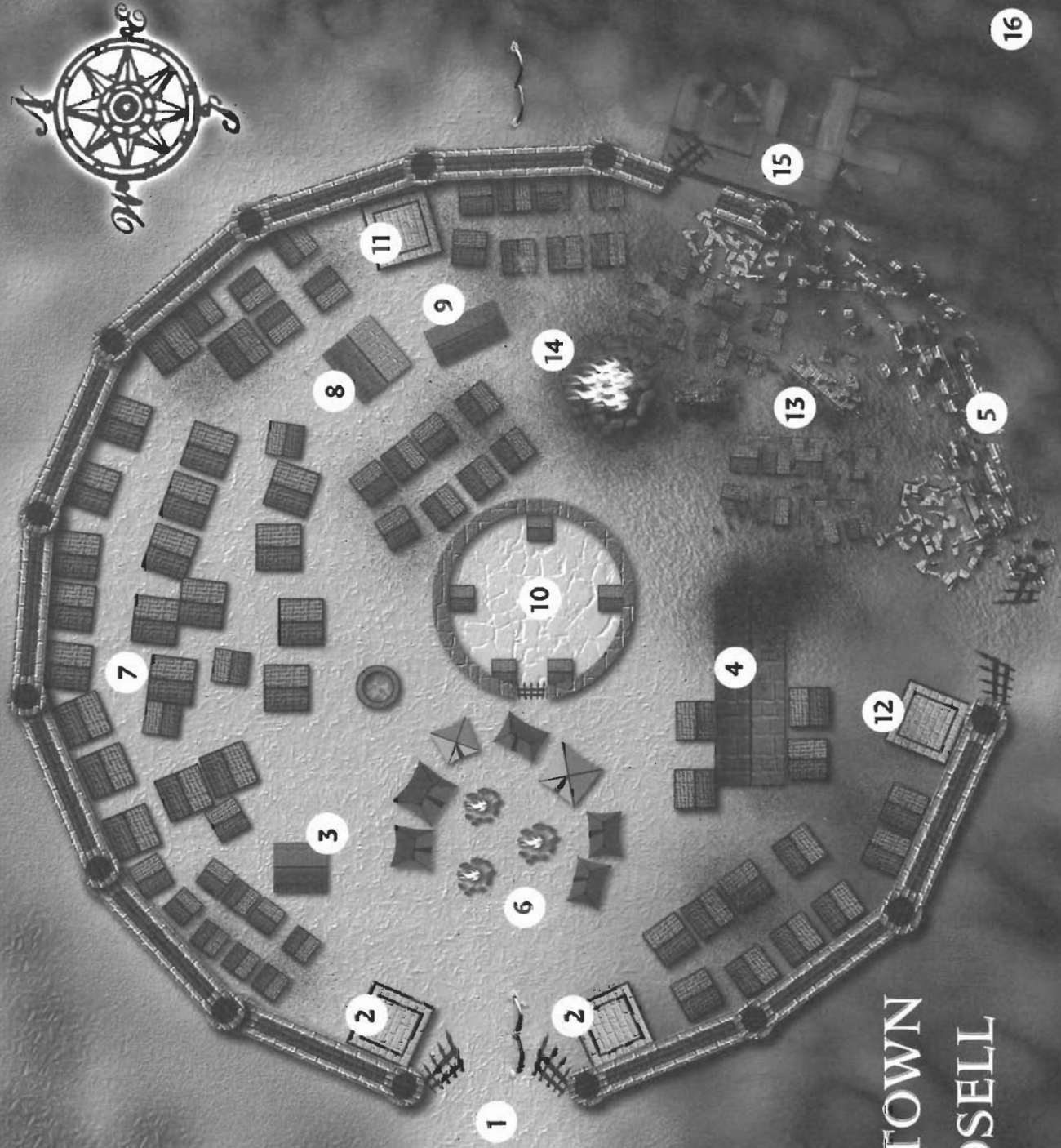
If the PCs search the bodies (Will save, DC 18 to choke down the nausea), they find 300 gp in random coins and minor jewelry.

9. SHOP

The smaller building next to the house and closer to the foul bonfire is, as its sign proclaims in both Common and Draconic, a general store. The door lays on the ground broken, ripped from the frame.

The shop's contents remain intact, though only a dozen shortwords and halvespears are directly useful to adventurers. Other contents include fishing nets and several long poles. The coinbox remains untouched (15 sp).





THE TOWN
OF OSELL

10. DUELING GROUNDS

Ssithiss and his remaining warriors seal this gate from within. It is used as the last stand against the outsiders if necessary. If the PCs agreed to Ssa'all'iss' request, or if the lizardfolk captured them, this serves as an arena to test the PCs in combat.

The remaining warriors crowd you, poking and prodding as they lead you within the inner walls of the village. Then, suddenly, the walls of fighters part, and standing before you is a hulking white brute of a lizardfolk — as wide as he is tall, and covered in scars.

The lizardman touches his breast. "Ssithiss the Grey. One you fight now."

The lizardfolk do not allow the PCs to leave until after a fight is over. When the fight begins, they shout and throw pebbles at the PC — this is their traditional ritual combat, and the PCs are welcome to treat Ssithiss likewise. No true warrior should fall to such a simple distraction. Ssithiss accepts surrender, just as he surrenders if reduced to below half his hit points.

Debris thrown at either combatant risks distracting the warrior. If peppered by debris, the combatant must make a Concentration check (DC 10) or suffer a –3 penalty to hit until the end of the round. In addition, the PCs may freely use any abilities they have which does not directly damage either participant.

If the PCs inquire about the fight, Ssa'all'iss responds:

This is not simple sport for us. The founder of Osell had to endure such a match, too. He later said our ways were... foreign? He did not understand that though both our peoples could have a champion, the others still mattered. Strange customs, humans.

Jenis is still with the PCs and attempts to kill Ssa'all'iss while the fight is going on. The PCs may notice her movements by using the appropriate skill (Spot or Listen) against her Hide or Move Silently checks. Simply making eye contact may get her to back down (Intimidation check), as she does not wish to incur the PCs' wrath.

If they fail to stop Jenis, she runs a blade into Ssa'all'iss the first round, dealing maximum critical damage (20 points). Ssa'all'iss has only twelve and the PCs have two rounds to save his life, as Jenis runs for safety but is quickly cut down by a lizardfolk warrior. The PCs are in a tough bind now and the adventure to open to many possibilities if the PCs do not save the tribe chieftain.

Ssithiss the Grey Lizardfolk Bar3; CR 3; SZ M (humanoid, aquatic, reptilian), HD 3d12+3; hp 25; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+5 natural); Atks Punch 1d3+2, tailslap 1d6+2, claw 1d4+2, bite 1d4; SA Rage 1/day; SQ Uncanny Dodge; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 10; AL N. Skills: Balance +4, Jump +7, Swim +9. Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Ssithiss does not use his Rage ability unless his opponent refuses his surrender, or unless he faces the Drackinn. He prefers subdual damage against the PCs.

Regardless of the battle's outcome, if the PCs merely accept Ssithiss' challenge, he joins them in the assault on the Drackinn. If the PCs attacked the lizardfolk, they are dragged into the fight with the Drackinn; the lizardfolk know attackers are on the way, and use every resource they can to bear against the dragon. Ssithiss explains the Drackinn in the most rudimentary way. While he has so far escaped the poison choking his kind, his fights have left him barely aware of the outside world. All he knows is that the Drackinn is an enemy sent by a black dragon.

11. SSA'ALL'ISS

As the PCs approach this tower, Ssa'all'iss greets them hurriedly.

Almost before the tower comes into view through the charnel smoke, a voice calls out. A single figure clammers down from the eastern tower, clad only in the vines of his native swamp.

The young lizardman approaches. "Friends!" he speaks in almost perfect common. "You've no idea how I've awaited your arrival. Please, please, sit and listen."

"I am newly chief over my tribe. My father fell against an agent of our tribe's ancient enemy, Afael, a foul, black dragon whom we had banished decades ago. Though the dragon is too weak to face us directly yet, he has sent forward a spawn to attack us, a dire lizard twisted with potent sorcery and dragon blood. A week ago, this creature attacked us, and fouled the swamp with its presence. Many of our finest warriors died. My father died. Now I am chief, and the Drackinn's influence spreads. Soon, he shall have returned control of the marsh to his hidden master."

"Please, good friends, will you not help us and yourselves in ridding us of this plague?"

If the PCs agree, Ssa'all'iss sends them to recruit Ssithiss, who still views Ssa'all'iss as unworthy to lead. If the PCs asks about the attack on Osell, Ssa'all'iss responds:

"We were allies with Osell for many years. When they refused to help us, they cast us out of the village. With the Drackinn at our back, we had no choice but to move forward into Osell. They rained fire upon us, and killed many more of my tribe. I regret that their deaths were necessary."

A successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals that Ssa'all'iss is lying, but he does not acknowledge it — he was more than willing to turn on Osell after they rebuked his request. Ssa'all'iss does not recognize Jenis, but if she is present, she has her own take on the events:

Jenis shakes with fury at Ssa'all'iss' comments. "You lying snake! You attacked us in the night, and cut our people down without shame! We did nothing to you! Nothing!"

At this point, Jenis reaches for her dagger. If the PCs do not restrain her, she attacks Ssa'all'iss, catching him flat footed and dealing 1d4 + 1d6 damage. Despite this, Ssa'all'iss makes every attempt to let Jenis live. If the PCs make no attempt to restrain her, however, Ssithiss refuses to accompany the PCs against the Drackinn, and Ssa'all'iss closes off ties to the humans after the Drackinn dies.

Once subdued or restrained, Jenis calms down, and Ssa'all'iss responds to her accusation:

"We had a treaty, your kind and mine. We upheld our bargains to the last. When we needed your people's aid, they refused us. Your people broke the treaty, not mine. I regret that they had to die, but for the survival of my people, yours still had to die. Be glad we still need you, girl, or else we would have killed you and your friends already."

Ssa'all'iss differentiates between Jenis and the PCs if they restrained her; otherwise, his future comments take on a cool, distant overtone.

Ssa'all'iss Lizardfolk Dru3: CR 3; SZ M (humanoid, aquatic, reptilian); HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+5 natural); Atks 2 Claws +4 melee (1d4+1), bite +2 melee (1d4); SQ: Nature Sense, woodland stride, trackless step; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10; AL TN. Skills: Balance +4, Jump +7, Swim +9. Feats: Combat Casting, Multiattack, Track. Spells: (0) *cleanse the blighted earth*, *detect poison*, *purify food and drink* x2; (1st) *cure light wounds* x2, *shillelagh*; (2nd) *delay poison*, *summon swarm*.

While Ssa'all'iss may join the PCs, he only engages in combat if cornered. He is the marsh's only hope for survival, and he knows it.

12. SOUTHERN TOWER

This tower contains five more lizardfolk warriors. They join the PCs against the Drackinn, and defend the PCs from their fellows at location 5. Keep track of their hit points for the final battle.

13. RUINED BUILDING

If the PCs entered from the western gate, the militant lizardfolk are waiting here. They do not attack, but glower at the PCs as they pass.

14. BONFIRE

Read the following aloud as the bonfire enters view (after the PCs pass any of locations 8, 9, 10, or 13):

The source of the fire is now plain: the blaze is a pyre of the bodies of the lizardfolk's fallen, and stands three men high. The stench is overwhelming, stinging your eyes.

15. DOCKS

The docks, though ruined, still have several small boats afloat. The boats have no steering mechanism. Within the waters themselves, you can see several small fish floating while flies nibble at the carcasses. Though nothing compared to the ghastly odor of the bonfire, the marsh itself has an unclean quality. Even the waters have a kind of rainbow sheen to them.

If the PCs use the poles from location #9 to steer the boats, they can avoid the poisons of the marsh up to the final battle.

16. THE MARSH AND THE DRACKINN

See location #5 for information on the dangers of traveling through the marsh. PC movement is limited to half base movement on foot, and PCs may not run or sprint in the marsh. Every hour spent trudging through the marsh, make another saving throw to resist the poisons. Characters with open wounds make the saves at -5.

After four hours of game travel, read the following aloud:

Suddenly, a howl erupts from the surrounding dark lands. A gout of foul, black liquid strikes a tree and caustic smoke emits from the bark. A large lizard, with bony brow and mischievous glint, rises from the water and shakes the fluids from its impossibly large, black wings.

If Ssithiss is with the PCs, he immediately Rages. Combatants in boats must make a Reflex save (DC 16) each round in the boat or fall into the water, risking poison. Two lizardfolk warriors guard Ssa'all'iss, while the rest attack in earnest. Characters near open flames risk igniting pockets of swamp gas. Roll 1d10 every round a there is an open flame. On a 1, the fire ignites the swamp gas dealing 1d6 points of damage in a 5 foot radius. A successful Reflex save (DC 12) cuts this damage in half. Remember, only certain magical fires burn.

The Drackinn fights until slain.

RAMIFICATIONS

If Jenis survives, she leaves Osell to the lizardfolk for now. She visits neighboring communities, drumming up support for a battle against Ssa'all'iss.

The lizardfolk choose to remain in Osell until the marsh heals itself. If Ssa'all'iss dies, this marsh cannot heal and Ssithiss takes charge, although he is a poor leader. The lizardfolk remain poisoned, and the tribe dies within the month without outside aid. If both Ssa'all'iss and

Ssithiss die, the lizardfolk are at the mercy of the PCs, Jenis, and Afael — a poor state, indeed.

Afael, for his part, is briefly inconvenienced, regardless of the outcome. He has watched the whole occurrence from afar, and may eventually offer aid to Jenis, Ssithiss, or any PC member who has shown an especially treacherous streak over the course of the adventure. He considers the entirety of the conflict to be in his best interests: driving a wedge between the lizardfolk and the nearby human communities, destroying the more powerful members of the tribe, and revealing the strategies of all who could conceivably oppose his return. Unless the whole of the adventure was a disaster, however (Ssa'all'iss and Ssithiss die, and the swamp remains poisoned), Afael does not return just yet. The dragon is perfectly willing to rule a poisoned stretch of swamp, but still wants subjects to bow to his despotic ways. He ultimately desires the conquest of this and the neighboring regions, and will twist the ambitions of Jenis, Ssithiss, or the PCs toward this end. He uses messengers (other lieutenants, the same fell creatures who guarded him in his sleep), or magic to contact these new servants, offering power and revenge in exchange for loyalty. If Ssithiss or Jenis fall prey to these tricks, they eventually become Chaotic Neutral and than Chaotic Evil.

NEW SPELL

CLEANSE THE BLIGHTED EARTH

Alteration

Level: Druid 0, Earth 1, Healing 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Area of Effect: 1 acre/spell caster level

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: None

By chanting and kneeling before a portion of nature befouled in such a manner, the spellcaster may beg forgiveness for the shortsightedness of mortals that would blight the earth, asking that the earth not suffer for the mistakes of others. This magic is not instantaneous; rather, it slows the current decay (if any), and allows nature to heal itself. This spell is only effective for a week; depending on the extent of the damage, it may take months or even years of repeated castings before the earth is healthy again. Failure to continually renew the wounded land leaves it partially barren, but the damage takes hold and no further uses of this spell has any effect.

This spell only reverses artificial damage to the land — it does not turn a desert into fertile plain. Further, this does not magically create more of a substance torn from the land; if cast upon a spent gold mine, for instance, the land does not refill with normal rocks and clay, or gold.

NEW MONSTER

THE DRACKINN

Medium-Size Dragon (Aquatic)

The Drackinn is a rarity, a successful crossbreeding between lesser species and a dragon. Like its more powerful forebears, it has wings and a breath weapon. Afael claims he is the creator of this species, but others exist.

Drackinns lair in murky swamps, where they feed primarily on decaying matter. They do not collect treasure, except for utility, and their territories are fetid with the corpses of weaker creatures. Though normally solitary, they are often found in the employ of black dragons as disposable shock troops and guardians.

A Drackinn resembles a monitor lizard of six feet in length (not including the tail, which can reach half that in size), and has a similar wingspan. Its brow bears a bone crest. Drackinns' coloration varies depending upon their progenitors' race, but is most often black.

COMBAT

Though less powerful than true dragons, a Drackinn is not a beast to interfere with lightly. It enjoys using both its breath weapon and its claws, often plunging headlong into battle. Once battle is joined, they rarely flee — Drackinn prefer to hide their presence from superior creatures, but fight to the death once combat is joined.

SPECIAL ATTACKS:

Breath Weapon (Su): Drackinns spit a stream of venom, 60 feet in length. Those caught in this line (Ref Save, DC 15 to avoid) must make a Fort save (DC 15) or lose one point each from Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution, permanently. Multiple strikes are cumulative.

SPECIAL QUALITIES:

Darkvision (Ex): Drackinns have darkvision at 60 feet.

Immunities (Ex): Drackinns are immune to *sleep* and *paralysis* effects.

Low-light vision (Ex): Drackinn possess low-light vision.

Feats: Drackinns have the multi-attack feat.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit Dice: 4d12 + 2 (32 hp) | Will +3 |
| Initiative: +1 (Dex) | Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10 |
| Speed: 30ft., 20 ft. flying (clumsy), 50 ft. swimming | Skills: Hide +6, Move Silently +6 |
| AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 Natural) | Feats: Multiattack |
| Attacks: Bite +3 melee, 2 claws +2 melee | Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm marsh |
| Damage: bite 1d8, claws 1d6 | Organization: Solitary |
| Special Attacks: Breath Weapon | Challenge Rating: 3 |
| Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunities, low-light vision | Treasure: 25% magic |
| Saving Throws: Fort +5, Ref +4, | Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil |
| | Advancement: 5-6 HD (Medium Size), 7-8 HD (Large) |

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