

THE HUNTER AND THE HUNTED



© Hunters in the Snow, Pieter Bruegel the Elder

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THE WORLD

Our world was never just our own. The boundaries to other worlds were just too thin and could break. Through these tears in the fabric between the worlds, all kinds of evil and monsters could pass. No one has spotted a tear for over two hundred years and their existence has fallen into myths and legends. The monsters that passed through on the other hand, are still among us and anything but a problem of the past. Throughout the main continent, several kingdoms could rise to power, granting its inhabitants security from outside threats and monsters. Unfortunately, their reach is usually much smaller than they proclaim and villages at the edge of kingdoms live in constant fear of the next attack.

The constant threat of attacks turned out to be a lucrative business for adventurers, heroes and monster slayers. They roam the lands from village to village in the search for work and hopefully good pay. Most bundle together in small parties. Even though the pay is good, the danger is not to be neglected. It is quite common for careless, boisterous, young adventurers to overestimate their capabilities. Often, there is nothing left to mourn after the monster has gotten their hold on them.

THE PARTY

This module was created for 4 players at level 3. Alternatively, it can be played with 3 players at level 4 or 6 players at level 2. It is recommended to have at least 1 frontline class since both fights are melee heavy.

A NEW VILLAGE

The party is a group of adventurers roaming around in search for work. Most of the time said work is slaying Monsters but any other job that has the air of danger is usually good pay as well. Their recent travel has brought them to a small village called Windfall in the kingdom of Alzea.

In the tavern, the party finds two parents, Sam and Jain. Sam is comforting Jain who seems to be distraught. If approached by the party, they tell them that their son James together with two other kids joined the village hunter Henry on a hunt this morning but they have not returned. The parents fear the worst and ask the party to investigate the disappearance. The villagers already checked the hunting grounds but could not find anything. They tell them that they suspect foul play by a hermit who recently moved in an hour walk outside the village. The hermit is generally hated in the village and blamed for the increase in monster sightings and bad harvest of this season. She very seldomly

visits the village to trade goods. The villagers describe her as a small, limping figure who always wears long coats. When they went to her house to ask her about the disappearance, she threatened them and chased them away. The parents describe the location of the hunting spot and where to find the house of the hermit. Other people in the village mostly echo the same information if asked.

The hermit's house is an hour walk to the north-west of the village. The hunting spot is an hour north of the village. It takes roughly half an hour to get from the hermit to the hunting spot. If the party does not enter the tavern or does not engage conversation with Sam, he will do so and beg the party to help.

MARIL

Small monstrosity, true neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 7d6

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +4, Performance +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Speak with Beasts and Plants. Maril can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language.

ACTIONS

Kick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Musical Charm (Recharge 6): Maril targets one humanoid, beast, or plant that can hear within 30 feet of them. If the target can see Maril, it must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards Maril as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Maril's control, it takes the dryad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. If Maril or their allies do anything harmful to the target, 1 hour passes, Maril dies, Maril is on a different plane of existence from the target, or Maril ends the effect as a bonus action, this effect ends.

FINDING TROUBLE

The hermit lives in a small clearing in the middle of the forest. Her cabin is small but well built. She is a faun, which are technically harmless and intelligent creatures, but every monster has the reputation of being dangerous. That is why she conceals herself with long coats and the limping are her attempts to walk humanoid. The hermit hides in the cabin and

only reluctantly interacts with the party as she fears danger. If at any point the party attack or harm the hermit, she will flee and, if necessary to do so, fight the party.

If the party can convince her that they mean her no harm, she reveals herself, otherwise she stays hidden in her cabin and talks through the door. She reveals that she spotted the hunting party at the hunting grounds. They injured a deer which fled up the mountains. The hermit followed them in the hope for left overs of the hunt. She saw them entering a cave but no one left it. Out of fear of what might be in the cave, she did not walk near it. She gives the party precise directions to the cave, mostly because she does not want to be blamed for what ever happened there.

Alternatively, or afterwards, the party can visit the hunting grounds. There are faint traces of a deer who was shot with an arrow but ran away. The party can follow the traces further up the mountains. On a clearing, they see more blood which was caused by a second successful shot, but the deer continued running. The blood attracted two Dire Wolves (MM. p. 321) which will attack the party.

The remaining traces lead up the mountain to the same cave as described by the hermit. Further up, it is cold and snowy. Inside the cave, the party finds a strange tear in the fabric of reality. The party can't see through but it is safe to walk through.

A NEW DIMENSION

Once the party passed through the tear, they

find themselves in a small valley in the middle of a desert. It is hot and dry. In the middle of the valley, there are blood traces which indicate that something was killed and eaten here. On the opposite side of the valley, there is a small mine shaft. If the party goes down and investigate the blood traces, they will see into the mine shaft where they can spot 3 people inside. All look terrified and at least one is injured. At this moment the monster attacks. The goal of the party is to bring the hunters to safety. If they don't kill the beast and don't close of the portal, it will follow to their home world and continue to attack them there.

The hunters will tell the party that James shot a deer and enthusiastically tracked it all the way up the mountain and followed it without hesitation into the tear. The rest of the hunters followed. They reached the new world, but before James could be happy about his kill, the monster attacked, killed James and ate him and the deer. The rest of the hunters could save them into the mine but one broke her leg.

Back in the village, the villagers are happy to have the hunter and two of the kids to return safely but are devastated to learn about James death. They pay the party what was promised and thank them for their help.

THE MONSTER

Large aberration, Chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Monster makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage. The target must succeed a DC 15 strength saving throw or be knocked prone..

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Monster can take 1 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Monster regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Charming Gaze. One creature within 500 ft. that is able to see the Monster must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is charmed by the Monster, can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and must use the next turn to get as close to the Monster as possible. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the umber hulk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the umber hulk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.