



THE MYSTERY OF BLUDMIST SWAMP

4TH LEVEL



TALESPIRE EDITION

A HARROWING **FIFTH EDITION**
ADVENTURE

VTT JOURNEY



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The 3D map displayed in this adventure is "Blutmist Forest" created by Heimdahlr with Talespire.

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MYSTERY IN BLUDMIST FOREST

Near the village of Old Garrison is a dark and forbidding wood known as Bludmist Forest.

From its dark and swampy bowels comes a strange call for aid...

The Mystery of Bludmist Forest is an adventure optimized for Fifth Edition. It is intended for a party of four fourth level characters, but includes additional challenges for sturdier heroes.

In this adventure, the party is hired by a benign potion making hag to discover why the trolls of Bludmist Forest have all disappeared. What is so horrible a threat that even trolls succumb or flee? Twists and turns await the party as they discover both unexpected threats and unlikely allies in this dark and dangerous swamp. This adventure is setting agnostic and can be added into nearly any fantasy campaign.

Written by Anthony Hart (Hemdahlr).



BACKGROUND

OLD GARRISON

The town of Old Garrison is a small backwater town whose proximity to the infamous Bludmist Forest fosters a constant need of skilled adventurers. Named for the now defunct troop housing complex the town sprang up around, the Old Garrison is home to a hardy people descended from kingdom troops and their families. Most make their living farming among the rocky hillsides and harvesting fish from the nearby lake and its tributary rivers and streams. The bravest residents of Old Garrison forage inside Bludmist Forest itself and the ruins found far within.

THE SWAMP

The forest is more a bloodthirsty swamp than anyone cares to admit, and the creatures that live within are just as dangerous. The forest is both the boon and the bane of the people of Old Garrison, making the lives of the townsfolk difficult, if also sufficiently prosperous. This relationship makes Old Garrison a destination for aspiring adventurers. The reader board in town square is always festooned with dangerous tasks for adventurers looking to test their mettle and earn some coin.

HELP WANTED

Today the reader board holds a very strange post. It is a request for aid by Meriadel Foulweather, the only known denizen of Bludmist Forest. Locals say she is a strange old woman who makes her living selling healing potions to the apothecary in town. They also say she lives in a hut near the edge of the swamp, keeping mostly to herself.

The post reads:

Seeking accomplished adventurers for a task of some risk within the forest. The novice or inexperienced need not apply. Payment in gold to be negotiated, potions in lieu of gold considered. Only serious parties, inquire directly with myself at my home at the end of the north lane off of the east lake road.

The townsfolk treat the posting with some suspicion, believing the danger to be much greater than implied. The locals have noticed a subtle change in the Forest of late, a quiet darkening that does not bode well for the people of Old Garrison.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Note to DM

Although the characters will not meet him until the end conflict, this adventure can be read as the story of Zarugan the Black Dragon, and his arrival in the Bludmist. Every event that takes place within the adventure does so as a result of Zarugan's efforts to take up residence in the swamp. Zarugan by his very nature immediately disrupts the local ecology and affects every NPC and creature in the adventure, from the town's people to the trolls themselves. The true impact the arrival of even a young dragon has to a region cannot be overstated.

The Mystery Of Bludmist Forest begins with the party discovering and taking interest in the job posting left by Meriadel Foulweather. They will leave the town by the east road which leads to the lake. Before they reach the lake, a path branches off of the road northward into the swamp for the party to follow, as indicated by Meriadel's post.

The northern path soon becomes a series of stepping stones stretching across a small arm of the lake. On the opposite shore, a small thatch hut floats among the cattails on a large matt of woven reeds. Here the party may fight Ochre Jellies or perhaps Meriadel herself.

However, if all goes well, Meriadel asks the party to locate the missing trolls of the forest whose blood she needs to create her high quality potions. Meriadel indicates that the last time she spotted a troll, it was near the ruins deep in the swamp. After negotiation, the party takes the assignment and moves from the hut deeper into the swamp.

While tracking the trolls, the party may run across a small band of Lizardfolk, a flock of ravenous Harpies, or the occasional light of a Will o' Wisp.

Diplomatic interactions with the Lizardfolk can give the party some insight into the force that now lurks in the swamp. Sharp eyed explorers may notice the swamp crisscrossed with the muddy paths of a large swamp creature. Eventually those paths converge on a section of swamp near an old ruin in which the mud has been excavated, creating a pond. The pond contains the drowned bodies of the ever-regenerating Trolls as well as the lair of their captor, Zarugan The Creeping Night.

This young black dragon has secretly claimed this area as his domain and has begun cultivating the swamp to his liking. Zarugan started by transforming the Trolls, his greatest competition for dominance of the swamp, into a perpetually regenerating food pantry. The party may choose to fight Zarugan, to attempt to stealthily rescue the trolls, or to simply abandon the quest altogether.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are two potential adventure hooks.

MYSTERIOUS POST

There is a new task posted to the town work board! Meriadel Foulweather, a potion maker living in the nearby forest, asks specifically for a skilled group of adventurers to aid her with a task in Bludmist Forest. She offers a successful party their pick of her healing potions and payment in gold, to be negotiated.

OUT OF STOCK

While traveling through communities on the fringes of wildlands, the party is running low on potions. When they arrive in Old Garrison they discover the area's lone apothecary is out of stock. The shop keeper will tell the party that their supplier, Meriadel Foulweather, is looking for some help and will encourage the party to take up the job. She directs the party to look for her home north of the lake road or simply directs them to the posted note on the board in the town square.

BLUDMIST FOREST

Bludmist Forest covers a large area stretching from the lake and rivers in the east to the rocky mountains in the north and west. Once, some long fallen society had an outpost in these woods and the ruins of it can still be found today by those brave or desperate enough to venture deeply into the dark wood. The eastern edge of the forest is a swamp where the waters of the lake seep into the soil making movement difficult and creating habitat for many deadly creatures.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless changed by the DM, The map has the following features:

LAKE ROAD (AREA A1)

The Eastern road out of town, known locally as Lake Road, leads to the small wharf along the Southern end of the lake, beyond the reach of the swamp. On the way to the wharf, a path branches from the road, leading north into the swamp and toward Meriadel's hut. The party is generally safe on Lake Road, having far visibility and unimpeded movement. The bussing of insects and shrieks of strange birds as well as less identifiable sounds can be heard coming from deep within the swamp. This is a reasonable place for an easier, lower level, encounter with the harpy attack as the party benefits from freedom of movement on the road. The aggressive swamp denizens would also emphasize the overall danger within the swamp.

LAKE EDGE (AREA A2)

The path leads to an arm of the lake reaching deeply into the woods from the main body of the eastern lake. The woods near the shore are impassably dense and the path transitions to a series of stepping stones leading out into the lake. The narrow path is single file and surrounded on both sides by deep, murky water lush with plant life.

MERIADEL'S HUT (AREA A3)

From the stones in the lake the hut is visible. It floats on a woven reed matt on the northern lake shore nestled among the trees. It is a small, single story thatched roof affair of 40 by 50 feet. The roof has a single window allowing light inside and a wispy white smoke wafts from the chimney. While the characters are inside, Meriadel maintains an illusion of a brightly lit, dry, and homey little cottage with a neat little kitchen and a finely made bed in the corner. Meriadel drops this illusion if attacked or her identity discovered.

Without the illusion, the hut has a woven reed matt floor and contains workbenches, wooden chairs, a fireplace with cauldron, as well as vats and shelves of other apothecary equipment.

When the players get in sight of the hut, read:

"Nestled among the trees and floating among the rushes you all see a small thatch roof house. Its front door closed and its windows all shuttered, the only sign of life is a small wisp of smoke rising straight up into the sky on this still and windless day."



THE SWAMP (AREA C)

Beyond the hut to the north the party will find only more swamp. Here every step is considered difficult terrain and no dry ground can be found to rest or camp. The swamp is a dark and dank region of the forest, its trees and muddy ground covered in a thick brown moss wherever they are not submerged in equally brown water. A thin fog lingers over the waters and among the tree limbs, trapping and concentrating the smell of rotting vegetation and stagnant water.

When the party enters the swamp, read:

"Birds chirrup and sing to each other in a maddening chorus at one moment only to drop silent as stone the next. The drone of insects and the wine of their wings is a constant assault on the ears. Sudden guttural calls or sharp screams can sometimes be heard in the distance."

After some time within the swamp, the person with the highest passive perception recognizes a large muddy track cutting through the water and will realize that this is not the first they had seen. A DC15 Survival check by any character investigating the track will inform them it is the path of a large belly-dragging reptile such as a crocodile. If the players decide to follow any of these paths, they will all lead into the ruins.

RUINS (AREA B)

Deep into the forest the outpost ruins can be found. These stones are very old and are succumbing to the forest's efforts to reclaim them, with trees growing up between large and heavy paving stones. The party can move more freely here despite the water level.

When they arrive at the ruins, read:

"Before you, hidden among the trees you see the remains of several stone structures rising from the water's surface. These crumbling and moss covered rock edifices appear for all the world as broken and rotted teeth jutting up among the trees. However the ground among them appears to be more solid."

ROCKY HILLSIDE

The far northwest end of the map sees the forest rise from the waters of the swamp to grow from solid ground and rocky hills.



1. MERIADEL'S REQUEST

STEPPING STONES & GUARD JELLIES (AREA A2)

If the characters arrive at the hut via jumping on the stepping stones, the last character in line will have a stone shift under their feet. Looking down the player will see an Ochre Jelly attempting to push its way onto the stone the character stands on. The character must succeed a DC 10 Athletics or Acrobatics check to keep their footing, or jump to the previous stone. If the check fails, they fall bodily into the water. If the jelly is attacked, another appears from the water nearest the Hut. Together they will attack the party either until Meriadel answers the door and commands them back into the water, or they are slain. The jellies also attack if she commands them to do so. If the Jellies are slain, Meriadel will congratulate the party and give them the job, claiming they passed her test. Secretly, she is supremely irritated about having to replace her trained jellies. If Meriadel dismisses the Jellies after the party has taken damage, she will chide her guardian jellies like a doting old woman to a pet, and give any injured party member a potion of healing to "heal that right up."

MERIADEL FOULWEATHER

Appearing as a stout old woman with bright green eyes, deep wrinkles, and a crooked, hooked nose, Meriadel is hardy and capable. She has survived for a generation making her potions at the edge of the swamp. This has led many to suspect she is a druid or some other powerful mage under an assumed identity, but this is also not the case. Meriadel is in actuality a towering green hag who has always lived in the swamp. Meriadel is more benign than many of her race, having dedicated her life to the perfection of her potion making and she is enough to have the gold the town's people pay for her potions.

Using her illusion magic, she appears as a stout old woman with bright green eyes, deep wrinkles, and a hooked nose that appears to have once been broken.

Her potions of healing and regeneration are her most sought after and for them she must harvest blood from the local trolls. To create a usable substrate, she mixes the blood with the acid of her Ochre Jellies in a secret arcane process. Along with potions of healing, she sells a large assortment of dangerous and tricky potions that she knows will be used for mayhem and misery throughout the land. Meriadel prefers her solitude and if the circumstances were not so dire she would never have invited any mortal to her abode.

OCHRE JELLY

Large Ooze

Armor Class 8 (Unarmored)

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws

Damage Resistances Acid

Damage Immunities Lightning, Slashing

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses Blindsight 60ft, passive Perception 8

Languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amorphous The jelly can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

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

ACTIONS

Pseudopod *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage

REACTIONS

Split When a jelly that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new jellies if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new jelly has hit points equal to half the original jelly's, rounded down. New jellies are one size smaller than the original jelly

Note to DM:

Play Meriadel as an eccentric and long isolated old woman, often asking herself questions and sweetly answering them back. She may slip from niceties into insults but quickly cover them up. She is shrewd and no-nonsense if her secret is discovered, shifting into a business-like demeanor that can quickly become malicious if she suspects that the characters are wasting her time or offering her anything other than respect.

FIGHTING MERIADEL

If characters attack Meriadel, she will drop her disguise and cry out for her Ochre Jellies. She leaps at the party while casting spells and swinging her long claws. If she falls below half hit points, she will turn invisible and flee through the hidden back door. Once outside, she will hold an action to cast a parting spell on the party (or individual) who is foolish enough to follow, after which she flees into the swamp, unhindered by the terrain. The Ochre Jellies will fight to the death.

STORY OF THE MISSING TROLLS

Meriadel reveals to the party that her livelihood is in jeopardy because the trolls of the swamp, who's flesh and blood she harvests to brew into her outstanding healing potions, have all disappeared in the last several weeks. Without them she will certainly go out of business and the region will lose its best source of potions. Meriadel asks the party to discover what has become of the trolls and to attempt to return them. She does not want to move from her home in the swamp to find a better source of troll blood because finding a viable new location that doesn't infringe on another potion maker in the guild would be a great ordeal.



Meriadel's illusory appearance.

MERIADEL FOULWEATHER

Medium Fey (Green Hag), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses Darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious The hag can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components: At will: dancing lights, minor illusion, vicious mockery

Mimicry The hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Claws *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage

Illusory Appearance The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies. The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.

Invisible Passage The hag magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.



DM Note:

If asked about dangers lurking in the swamps, Meridel will advise the group to avoid the dangerous Will O' the Wisps.

NEGOTIATION WITH MERIADEL

The standard reward is 700 gold pieces and their choice of a single, half price potion. If negotiations are moderately successful (Persuasion check DC 10), she will offer each character a potion as a down payment, with the half-price cost reduced from the reward. If negotiations are very successful (Persuasion DC15), she will go as high as offering 1200 gold and either one free potion per character or a writ of good standing with all guild potion maker locations, giving the party access to heavily discounted prices.

RETURNING TO MERIADEL

If the party returns with only information she will give them 100gp.

If the dragon lives when the party returns having successfully rescued the trolls, Meriadel will offer to double the agreed upon price to help her slay or drive him off. Another round of successful negotiations can result in double the pay, the writ, and a potion per person. This will not make Meriadel happy and she will look to save money by allowing as many characters to die in the fight as she can.

If the party does not complete the mission and fails to return to speak with her, Meriadel will black list the party with the potion maker's guild until they complete a favor for her. No reputable potion maker will do business with them except secretly at ten times the price. Meriadel may also hunt and torment the party.



2. THROUGH THE SWAMP

THE LIZARDFOLK REFUGEES (AREA C)

An Options for Area C

The characters can hear the sounds of many individuals moving through the swamp. Creeping closer the party finds a varied troop of Lizardfolk making their way through the swamp. This band is composed of four adults and two juveniles. If they notice the party, they will take defensive positions, attacking any who draw near. The large ones will fight to the death if attacked to give the smaller two a chance to escape.

If anyone in the party speaks Draconic, the characters will discover the largest of the lizard folk willing to talk. The leader will not reveal her name but will tell the party that she speaks for her band and that none of the others will speak to them. If asked, she will relate that the small band is relocating. If the characters offer to trade food for information on a successful DC 10 persuasion check, she will tell them that the whole tribe has divided into these small travel bands and are leaving this region of the swamp. They leave because of a terrible threat that comes in the dark to slay their people and eat their beasts. They call it the Creeping Night and it began terrorizing the tribe no more than three weeks prior. Of this she will speak no more.

HARPY ATTACK! (AREA C)

An Options for Area C

As the characters approach the ruins or the rocky hills, a piercing cry goes up and the party is descended upon by a group of fearsome harpies. A knowledge nature check of DC 10 will reveal that harpies are not often to be found this far south and that they act as if starving. They find themselves outcompeted for food by Zarugan.

These harpies launch themselves from the cover of the trees or rocks, attacking one party member in an attempt to carry them away. They fly into a rage if they meet resistance, and will only flee if one is killed and no other Harpy has a foe grappled. The harpies will attempt to carry away any character that falls unconscious, it takes two harpies working together to lift a medium size character. A single harpy can carry away a small size character. Note that a creature moves at half movement when carrying a grappled foe.

LIZARDFOLK

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack

The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

Bite

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

Heavy Club

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

Javelin

Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target **Hit:** 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage

Spiked Shield

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



HARPY

Medium Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 11 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack The harpy makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its club.

Claws **Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, range 5 ft., one target **Hit:** 6 (2d4+1) slashing damage

Club **Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, range 5 ft., one target **Hit:** 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage

Luring Song The harpy sings a magical melody. Every humanoid and giant within 300 feet of the harpy that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. The harpy must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the harpy is incapacitated. While charmed by the harpy, a target is incapacitated and ignores the songs of other harpies. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the harpy, the target must move on its turn toward the harpy by the most direct route, trying to get within 5 feet. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but before moving into damaging terrain, such as lava or a pit, and whenever it takes damage from a source other than the harpy, the target can repeat the saving throw. A charmed target can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to this harpy's song for the next 24 hours.

3. THE RUINS (AREA B)

A forgotten outpost from a long dead empire sits in ruinous decay below the forest canopy on the Western edge of the swamp. It once sat on the lake edge but the forest expanded eastward to claim it, creating the swamp that now dominates the region. Enormous carved stones appear between the roots of trees in this complex of building foundations. The area here is no longer submerged but is still mostly covered by the familiar brown moss. Spectral lights can be seen flaring here and there at night among the ruins, perhaps the spirits of those that once called this place home.

WILL O' WISP (AREA B OR C)

Floating gently among the ruins are several Will o' wisps (2 or 3 depending on character levels). They will not interact with the party unless provoked or if they sense a member of the party is critically injured. If they sense someone is near death they will be drawn to that character and attempt to snuff out their life. The will o' wisps are extremely difficult to hit or damage and it is better to avoid interaction. The wisps can be identified with an arcana, religion, or nature check, DC 15. If the characters inquired with any townspeople or with Meriadel herself about the dangers lurking within the wood, reduce the DC to 10.



WILL-O'-WISP

Tiny Undead, Any Alignment

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 22 (9d4 + 0)
Speed fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	28 (+9)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws

Damage Resistances Acid, Cold, Fire, Necrotic, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Lightning, Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision, passive Perception 12

Languages The language it knew in life

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Ephemeral The will-o'-wisp can't wear or carry anything.

Incorporeal Movement The will-o'-wisp can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Shock Melee Spell Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one creature **Hit:** 9 (2d8) lightning damage

Invisibility The will-o'-wisp and its light magically become invisible until it attacks or uses its Consume Life, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

BONUS ACTIONS

Consume Life As a bonus action, the will-o'-wisp can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that has 0 hit points and is still alive. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against this magic or die. If the target dies, the will-o'-wisp regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Variable Illumination The will-o'-wisp sheds bright light in a 5-to 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The will-o'-wisp can alter the radius as a bonus action.

ZARUGAN'S LAIR (AREA B1)

On the easternmost edge of the ruins, the remains of a large building extends out into the swamp. Beyond it, the characters can see a large pool of muddy water stretching off into the swamp. To the north and south of the pool are hills of mud that rise from the swamp (a product of Zarugan's excavation of the river). (area B2)

Investigating the area shows that the muddy paths the party had previously discovered all end in the murky waters of the pond, and that the mud hills are all fresh and new. The characters can surmise from these details that the pond and the channel leading into the swamp are newly dug. Further investigation will tell the characters that whatever created the pond has also excavated the area under the ruin.



THE MISSING TROLLS (AREA B3)

If the characters stand near the water's edge they will see violent disturbances occur from under the water, disrupting the water's surface and creating an especially muddy patch within the murky pond. A thorough investigation will reveal trolls thrashing under the water, causing the disturbances. The trolls are suspended under the surface, weighted down by heavy chunks of rock, to which they are chained. The chains bind their arms and are threaded through various body parts, the entrance wounds continually healing. The disturbances occur as a troll regenerates and awakens, only to thrash violently as they drown again and once more slip into unconsciousness.

If any troll is removed from the water or given a source of air, or given the ability to breathe water will gain 10 hp at the beginning of each turn. If the troll(s) can be made to understand that the party rescued them, they will leave the party in peace, or may lend aid in a fight.

TROLL

Large Giant, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws

Skills Perception +2

Senses Darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12

Languages Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Keen Smell The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage

4. ZARUGAN - THE CREEPING NIGHT

Zarugan the Creeping Night is a Young Black Dragon who has recently claimed this swamp as his domain. To take control of the area and stake his claim he has devised a cruel and clever scheme, he first excavated the mud to create for himself a lair beneath the ruins. Then he dug out the mud to create a pond in front of his new lair. He then systematically hunted each of the trolls in this area of the swamp, taking their unconscious and ever regenerating bodies and chaining them to the bottom of the pond where he can feed on them at his leisure. He feels grotesque pleasure in the cruelty inherent in his stratagem.

If the characters provoke a fight, Zarugan will hide in the muddy water, attacking the characters with acid breath and strikes before dropping down beneath the water for safety. Strategic or tactical characters may have the idea to hold their actions and attack Zarugan when he appears.

If he takes significant damage, Zarugan will attempt to grapple the nearest character and drag them into the water. While submerged, assuming they do not have means of free movement, characters will act at disadvantage (and be drowning!) and the dragon will have advantage.

If wounded to below half hit points, Zarugan will take to the air and flee, returning to his old lair to heal (the location of which is up to the DM). He will never forgive the party and will plot his revenge for the injury and new domain lost. Unfortunately, there is no dragon hard in the ruins for the characters to discover as Zarugan has not yet moved his hoard. The player's only reward will be what Meriadel offered.



ZARUGAN THE CREEPING NIGHT

Large Dragon (Young Black Dragon), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities Acid

Senses Blindsight 30ft, Darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 10 ft., one target **Hit:** 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage

Claw Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target **Hit:** 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6) The dragon exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ZARUGAN'S ARRIVAL

Depending on the roll of the dice, Zarugan may be in any of several locations. What he does and how he reacts depends greatly on this outcome.

If Zarugan has become aware of the party and wants to do them harm. He will hide beneath the water's surface and strike as soon as the party makes themselves vulnerable. This will surprise the party and leave them unable to act.

If Zarugan is asleep, the party will awaken him if any fail a DC 16 Stealth Check. If they fail any time they are near the lair, Zarugan will rouse and confront the party.

If Zarugan returns in 1d10 minutes, he will do so quietly, attempting to surprise the party by swimming carefully up the channel.

If Zarugan is alerted to the party while nearby, he will become enraged, noisily roaring and flying swiftly to engage with the trespassers.

If the party is successful in their sneaking, or accomplishes their goals before Zarugan return and he finds the trolls he captured missing, he will become enraged and hunt down the party for vengeance. If, however, Zarugan returns to find the trolls fully revived and standing by the party, he will not attempt to fight beyond spraying acid on the group before flying away to plan his revenge for a later date.

ZARUGAN'S LOCATION

The table below indicates where Zarugan is located when the party arrives at his lair:

Percentile	Location
1 to 20	Zarugan is waiting underwater to ambush the party
21 to 50	Zarugan is asleep in his den beneath the water
51 to 70	Zarugan is nearby and will return in 1d10 minutes
71 to 90	Zarugan is nearby and alerted to the party's arrival. He will arrive in 1d4 rounds
91 to 100	Zarugan will return in 1d4 hours



CONCLUSION

The Mystery of Bludmist Forest can come to many different conclusions.

The party returns to Meriadel with Information about the Trolls.

Meriadel pays 100gp and the party goes about their business, wanting nothing to do with a dragon.. Zarugan established himself in the swamp and this is the beginning of the end for the town of Old Garrison.

The party frees the trolls but does not kill the dragon.

Meriadel pays the agreed upon terms but then offers double to help her slay the dragon. The players can accept, (See Negotiation with Meriadel) or decline and move on.

The party frees the trolls and kills Zarugan.

Meriadel pays the agreed upon reward and offers her thanks. Returning to town, the people of Old Garrison will not believe the outlandish story the characters tell, believing only if they produce trophies as proof. If the party is able to convince the town they drove off a dragon, the town will throw a celebration for the party's achievements. If they are not, the town will regard their story as a tall tale only, but happy enough to have Meriadel's supply of potions restored.

The party drives off Meriadel and sacks her house.

If this happens, the party can find 5 potions of healing and a chest full of 2k gold. The chests can only be found in a secret compartment under the hearth on a dc 20 investigation check. This roll is to be made at disadvantage as the house burns down, limiting time and obscuring vision within the hut. Meriadel will swear vengeance on the party, black list them with the guild, and hunt them until they are dead or worse. Zarugan will go on unchallenged and become ruler of the swamp and eventually the entire region.

The party slays Meriadel

If this occurs and the party can search the house at their leisure, they will find all it has to offer. The people of Old Garrison will run the party out of town for killing their potion maker unless they can prove that she was in fact a hag, in which case the people of old Garrison will not be hostile, though they will be none too happy with the party either. Again, Zarugan will remain undetected and will soon reign supreme in the swamp.

APPENDIX

ENCOUNTERS

All encounters contained within this adventure are at the discretion of both the DM and the characters. The DM must decide the location, number, and disposition of each monster during the encounters and each encounter can be bypassed if the characters are careful enough.

ENCOUNTER DETAILS

Creatures	Details	Talespire Tokens
5 Weakened Trolls	Impossible Encounter 4500XP. DO NOT FIGHT all at once at full health. Each troll is worth 900 xp in their weakened state or a flat 100xp if killed while incapacitated. They are worth full XP if allowed to heal before slain. (again DO NOT DO THIS.)	Import
1 Meriadel Foulweather, Green Hag	Easy Encounter 700XP or half if Meriadel escapes.	Old Woman Import Green Hag Import
2(3) Ochre Jellies	Medium Encounter 900XP (1350XP) made more difficult due to terrain limitations.	Import
1 Young Black Dragon	Zarugan the Creeping Night. Very Deadly Encounter 2900XP. Award full XP if the dragon flees combat to survive combat.	Import
6 Lizardfolk	600XP Medium encounter, half on their escape, award full upon peaceful negotiation or interaction.	Import
2(3) Will o' Wisp	Float through the ruins and attack only if the characters are very weak or attack, otherwise they mind their own wispy business. 900 xp Medium encounter (or 1350XP)	Import
4(5) Enraged Harpies	Harpies attack the party as they near the forest. They launch themselves from the trees attacking one party member in an attempt to carry them away. They fly into a rage if they meet resistance, and will only flee if one is killed and no Harpy has a foe grappled. Hard Encounter 1600XP (1800XP). Award full XP for Harpies slain and half for any driven off.	Import

Talespire Resources

The Bludmist Adventure board can be imported from Talestavern [here](#).

For additional challenges, the Talespire 5e Creature Blueprint Database is available [here](#).

Credits

Author Anthony Hart (Heimdahlr)

Co-Author, Editor John Fuller(Demongund)

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