

R. Raider Redoubt

Raider Redoubt is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1, 3, 5, or 8**. This document offers a general guideline on scaling the adventure for each level. The orcs of the Desert of Dread have been raiding travelers and caravans that leave the city of Sandara Oasis. The party is sent to stop these raiders.

Background

Once considered outsiders, orcs have gradually found acceptance in Sandara Oasis, where they serve as skilled artisans and formidable defenders. There are still those, however, who hold enmity towards the orcs—none more so than Gark the Knuckle. A rich and influential member of the Circle of Wisdom, Gark is corrupt and known for his ruthless tactics and willingness to use violence to achieve his goals.

Gark has been using his influence to cheat orcish artisans and traders, making himself a fortune while leaving many orcs destitute.

Angry at this mistreatment, Tarkus Bloodclaw leads a group of orcs who raid Gark's caravans. What's more, Zarek Nightwhisper, leader of the Desert Eyes, is sympathetic to the orc's plight and keeps Tarkus informed of Gark's shipments.

Deserts of Dread

These lands are arid, flat, and harsh. By day the sands are baked to scorching temperatures, while the ground becomes so cold at night your breath crystalizes instantly.

To reach the Dread Fort, the characters must follow the Lifeless Way: a route of oases, canyons, and outposts used to cross the desert.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the Deserts of Dread have the following features.

Extreme Heat. A dry and constant heat covers the entire desert. Outsiders will find the heat challenging unless they are acclimated to such extreme temperatures.

A creature exposed to the heat without suitable clothing and access to drinkable water must succeed on a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. The DC is 5 for the first hour and increases by 1 for each additional hour. Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor, or clad in heavy clothing, have disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures naturally adapted to hot climates.

Orc Raiders. The raiders are all orcs. They have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet, can speak Orc, and have the following bonus action option: **Rush.** The orc moves up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Water. Water is scarce. Finding a source of water requires a nearly impossible DC 30 Wisdom (Survival) check to find without magic.

Equipping for Desert Travel

Before leaving Sandara Oasis, the characters can buy supplies. In addition to basic adventuring gear, inform the characters that desert gear is available for purchase.

- Desert clothing is available for 4 gp each. These garments consist of loose layers of light cloth, a wood-and-cloth mask, and a small canister of pitch to rub beneath the eyes to reduce the sun's wicked glare.
- Camels are available for 100 gp each and are acclimated to the desert conditions. Other mounts treat the desert as difficult terrain and aren't acclimated.

- Water is freely available from the oasis, but the characters must carry enough water to each drink at least two gallons per day to be appropriately prepared for the desert conditions.

Crossing the Deserts of Dread

Whether with a caravan or alone, the characters must explore the desert using the Lifeless Way. Along the way, the characters must overcome several obstacles, most notably the scorching conditions. For the party, this journey takes a minimum of 8 hours.

Elemental!

A warm breeze passes through the searing heat, kicking up sand and creating a tornado of searing dust that burns the skin. Spinning and churning, the dust shapes into the vague outline of a biped and surges towards you.

Encounter: Dust Devil. The desert sands are home to elemental creatures with an affinity for extreme heat. These creatures seek to burn and consume everything they touch. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Dust Devil Encounter table.

DUST DEVIL ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	1 dust mephit with 30 hit points
3rd	2 dust mephits
5th	1 air elemental that deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage with its Slam attack
8th	2 air elementals

Sandstorm

A roar of sound shatters across the dunes, and a wall of roiling clouds races toward you. You have only moments to protect yourself from the oncoming sandstorm before it consumes you!

Sandstorms are common in the desert but can be extremely dangerous for the unprepared. The sandstorm moves at a rate of 360 feet per round (roughly 40 miles per hour) and extends approximately 300 feet into the air.

Reward clever thinking over the roll of a die. This skill challenge tests the ingenuity of the characters and their players. If the characters have mounts, they must consider these when planning solutions. Let the players devise creative uses of skills, magic, or tools. Each character has time to take one turn before the storm hits. The characters might do the following things to save themselves, their mounts, or NPCs.

- Use a Strength (Athletics) check to dig themselves into a sand dune.
- Use a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to quickly shelter behind an object.
- Use an Intelligence (Nature) check to discern that putting a water-soaked cloak over their faces enables them to survive the storm.
- Use a Wisdom (Survival) check to find a small wadi for a character to take cover in.

Once they've made their preparations, read or paraphrase the following:

Searing air and stinging sand overwhelm the area: sand whips through the air, tearing and ripping at exposed skin and rending the hems and sleeves of clothes to tatters.

Characters who fail to protect themselves suffer bludgeoning damage and a negative

effect. These effects might kill mounts or cause them to flee into the desert. The DC for the ability checks, damage dealt, and negative effects are detailed in the Sandstorm Hazard table.

SANDSTORM HAZARD

Adventure Level	Save DC	Bludgeoning Damage	Negative Effect
1st	10	3 (1d6)	One level of exhaustion
3rd	13	7 (2d6)	One level of exhaustion
5th	14	14 (4d6)	Buried in sand
8th	15	21 (6d6)	Buried in sand

Buried Alive! A buried creature is restrained, blinded, deafened, and unable to breathe. A creature can use its action to make a Strength check against the DC in the Sandstorm Hazard table, freeing itself or a buried creature within its reach on a success.

Ambush at the Oasis

A small oasis is one of the first stopping points on the Lifeless Way. Aware of this location, the raiders use it to ambush travelers. This location offers the party a chance to fill waterskins and rest.

Encounter: Oasis Ambush. The orcish raiders are hidden beneath the sand near the oasis and have advantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) checks to surprise the party. If the raiders subdue the party, they take the characters to their camp (skip directly to the Dread Fort section). The raiders do not wish to kill anyone and have learned that taking prisoners can be more profitable. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Oasis Ambush table.



OASIS AMBUSH ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	4 orc bandits
3rd	4 orcs
5th	6 orc spies
8th	4 orc berserkers

Drake's Run

Drake's Run is a narrow, fast-flowing river that cuts through the region at the bottom of a gorge.

Gorge. The gorge cuts across the road. To continue their journey, the characters must find a way across it. The gorge is 30 feet deep and ranges from 40–50 feet wide.

Collapsed Bridge. A rope bridge spans the gorge and is the primary path used by travelers to cross it. The heat has dried out the ropes and wood, making the crossing dangerous.

A character attempting to cross the bridge must make a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failure, the character places too much weight on a compromised section of wood, collapsing a 5-foot stretch of planks, which fall into the river below. A Small or smaller creature makes this check with advantage, but if a Large or larger creature or



two Medium creatures attempt to cross the bridge at the same time, the ropes give out, and the entire bridge collapses into the gorge. Climbing either side of the canyon requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.

Encounter: Bridge Raiders. The orcish raiders watch this crossing from seclusion. Hidden beneath the sand, they are impossible to see from the canyon's far side. If the characters step onto the bridge, the raiders spring out from their hiding place and, with their weapons poised to cut the ropes, demand payment for safe passage.

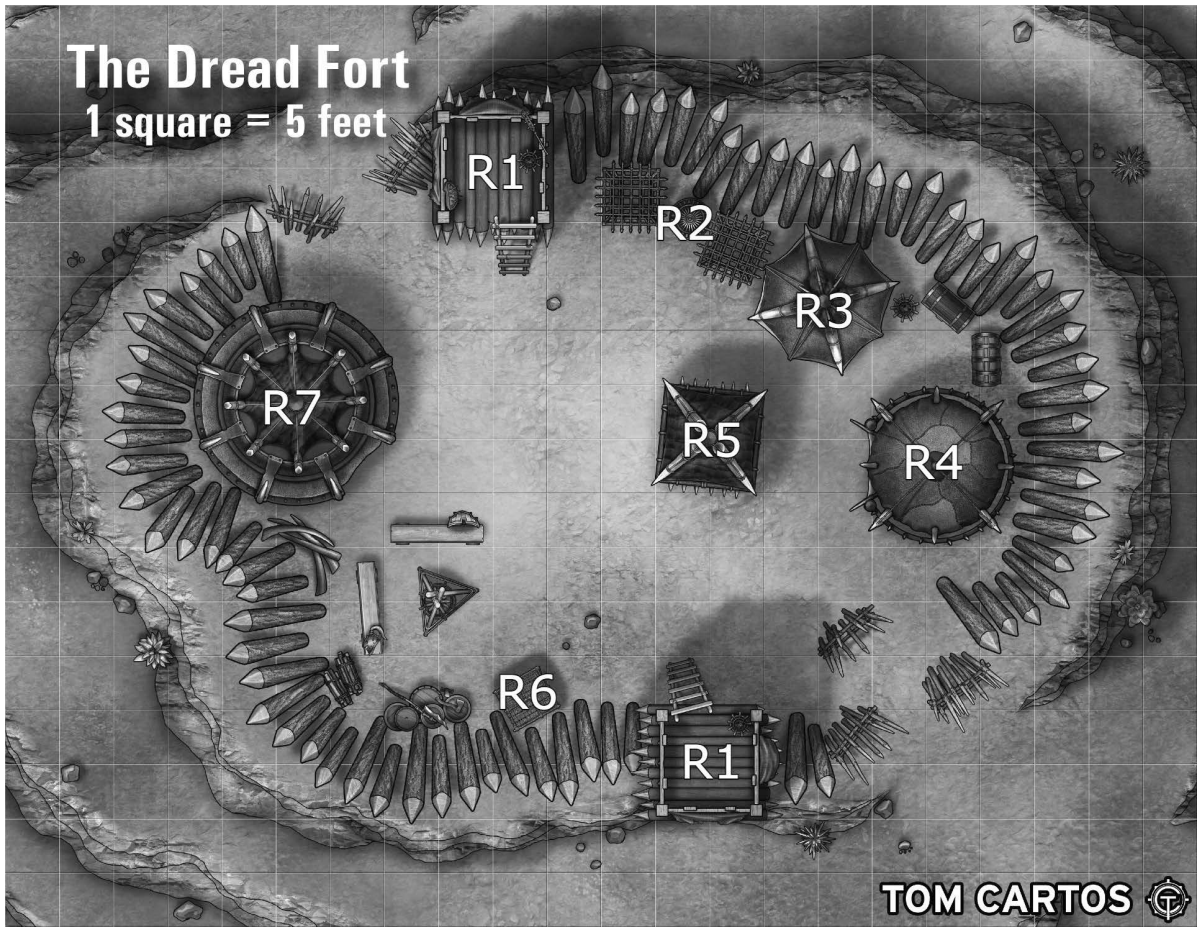
The raiders do not wish to kill anyone and know that a drop into the water is unlikely to be fatal. If the raiders manage to subdue the party, they take them to their camp (skip

directly to the Dread Fort section). The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Bridge Raiders Encounter table.

BRIDGE RAIDERS ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	4 orc bandits
3rd	4 orcs
5th	6 orc spies
8th	4 orc berserkers

Treasure: Crossing Toll. Tucked behind a rocky outcropping is a small chest with the



loot the raiders have taken from previous travelers seeking to cross the bridge. The nature of the treasure depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Bridge Raiders Treasure table.

BRIDGE RAIDERS TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st	28 sp and 378 cp
3rd	78 sp and 878 cp
5th	28 gp and 378 sp
8th	78 gp and 878 sp

The Dread Fort

The orcs have lived in these deserts for generations, making them ideally suited to become members of the Desert Eyes, the scouting arm of the Sandara Sentinels. Tarkus Bloodclaw led these orcs to the Dread Fort.

The Dread Fort is just a short walk from the road and was built by the Desert Eyes. The fort is high on a bluff, offering a clear view of the entire area. A freshwater well makes this the perfect location for the raiders' base.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the Dread Fort has the following features.

Field of View. The raiders keep lookouts posted at all times and have a clear view of all approaches. Without using magic, reaching the camp unnoticed during the daytime is impossible.

General Alarm. If the raiders come under attack, they will sound a general alarm, alerting all of the camp's occupants.

Log Spike Wall. A wall of sharp, irregularly spaced logs surrounds the camp. A Tiny creature can squeeze through the gap between two logs.

Sandstone Bluff. The camp is built atop a sandstone bluff that rises 50 feet above the ground and is approached using two steep paths. Reaching the camp without traversing one of these paths requires a creature to scale the side of the bluff. To climb this cliff face, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

R1 – Lookout Towers

Two wooden towers guard the entrances to the camp. These towers are 20 feet tall and shaded from the sun. A creature on top of a tower has three-quarters cover from ranged attacks made from below. A small brazier is lit at night to keep the tower's occupants warm.

Encounter: Raider Lookouts. The orcs keep a vigilant watch over the approaches to the fort. Each tower has one lookout at all times. If the lookout sees anyone approaching the fort, they call down to the camp. Tarkus Bloodclaw (see area R7) will arrive within two rounds, climbing the tower to decide what to do next. These lookouts only attack if they are ordered to or are attacked first. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area R1 Encounter table.

R2 – Prisoner Pens

The raiders consider themselves outlaws, not murderers, and take prisoners for ransom.

AREA R1 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	1 orc bandit
3rd	1 orc scout with no Multiattack
5th	1 orc scout
8th	1 orc scout

Two prisoners are currently being held, a caravan guard named Drog Stonefist (CG male dwarf) and a **sprite** named Axius.

Each prisoner is being held in a rusted metal cage. If more prisoners arrive, they are squeezed into one of these cages. They are given food and water but cannot protect themselves from the sun. Both prisoners are suffering from two levels of exhaustion.

The key to open these cages is carried by Tarkus Bloodclaw (see area R7). Alternatively, the locks can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made using proficiency with thieves' tools.

If released, Axius will thank the characters and then flee, but Drog Stonefist will seek a little revenge, offering to join the party while they assault the camp. The nature of Drog's stat block depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Drog Stonefist Stat Block table.

DROG STONEFIST STAT BLOCK

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	Guard
3rd	Thug
5th	Duergar
8th	Veteran

R3 – Nightbloom’s Tent

Far from being their prisoner, Lysandria Nightbloom (CG female high elf **druid**) sought out the raiders when she heard their story. Since then, she has been working with the raiders, using her magic to help keep them fed.

Lysandria will not fight unless attacked and only then as a means to escape. If she encounters the characters, Lysandria won’t immediately raise the alarm. Instead, she questions them as to why they’re here. Additionally, she will explain the raiders’ story. If the characters convince her they mean the camp no harm, she will take them to speak with Tarkus Bloodclaw (see area R7).

Treasure: Potions and Medical

Supplies. Lysandria is a gifted potionmaker and has some potions in her tent. Several boxes of medical supplies labeled with the symbol of a local temple are also stacked in the corner of the tent. The nature of the supplies depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Lysandria’s Supplies table.

LYSANDRIA’S SUPPLIES

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st	2 <i>potions of healing</i> and a healer’s kit
3rd	2 <i>potions of healing</i> , a <i>potion of fire resistance</i> , a healer’s kit, and an herbalism kit
5th	2 <i>potions of healing</i> , a <i>potion of heroism</i> , 2 healer’s kits, and an herbalism kit
8th	2 <i>potions of greater healing</i> , a <i>potion of fire giant strength</i> , 3 healer’s kits, and an herbalism kit

R4 – Raider Barracks

Staying in the shade, the majority of the camp’s occupants are here. During the day,

the raiders are resting, playing dice, or sharpening weapons. If a character comes within earshot, they will hear the raiders arguing about Tarkus. Some raiders believe they should be raiding every caravan that passes rather than only those of “the Knuckle.” At night all but one of the raiders sleeps. If an alarm is sounded, they dash out into the camp, ready for action.

If they see a stranger, they raise the general alarm and attack. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area R4 Encounter table.

AREA R4 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	6 orc bandits
3rd	6 orcs
5th	2 orc berserkers and 4 orc spies
8th	2 orc veterans and 4 orc berserkers

R5 – Well Shaft

A small tent covers the entrance to a well shaft that keeps the camp’s inhabitants alive. The shaft descends 60 feet into the ground, reaching the water table. A leather bucket tied to 80 feet of hempen rope sits neatly coiled in the corner.

R6 – Messenger Pigeons

Tarkus and the raiders receive regular messages from another Desert Eye who is sympathetic to their plight. These messages are anonymous but detail the comings and goings of caravans owned by Gark the Knuckle. These are the only caravans the raiders ever attack.

Messenger pigeons that are kept in wicker cages carry these messages to and from the

camp. There are currently three pigeons present (which use the **raven** stat block). If released, a pigeon will fly directly to the home of Zarek Nightwhisper in Sandara Oasis.

R7 – Bloodclaw’s Tent

Tarkus Bloodclaw was once a member of the Desert Eyes and second-in-command to Zarek Nightwhisper. Witnessing the mistreatment of his people, he pleaded with the Circle of Wisdom to step in, but they refused. Believing he had no alternative, Tarkus abandoned his life in Sandara Oasis and brought his troop here.

Aided by Zarek, Tarkus works to cripple the activities of Gark the Knuckle by raiding his shipments. Hungry and desperate, Tarkus struggles to control his warriors, many of whom believe they should raid every caravan.

If he encounters the characters, Tarkus’ first instinct is to speak with them, even asking for their help. He will only attack if he has no other option. If he is forced to fight, Tarkus calls for any remaining raiders and fights to subdue the characters, ransoming them back to their employer.

The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area R7 Encounter table. Creatures marked with an asterisk are new creatures featured in the appendix.

AREA R7 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	Tarkus is an orc thug with 50 hit points.
3rd	Tarkus is an orc bandit captain with 100 hit points.
5th	Tarkus is an orc gladiator with 165 hit points.
8th	Tarkus is an orc warlord .*

Treasure: Raiders’ Hoard. The raided loot is kept in a lockbox, ready to be smuggled back to the orcs of Sandara Oasis. The box is locked, but Tarkus carries a key. Alternatively, the lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made using proficiency with thieves’ tools.

The nature of the treasure depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area R7 Treasure table.

AREA R7 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st	A +1 <i>dagger</i> , two <i>spell scrolls of shield</i> , 291 sp, and 58 gp
3rd	A +1 <i>warhammer</i> , two <i>spell scrolls of misty step</i> , 591 sp, and 148 gp
5th	A <i>wand of wonder</i> , two <i>spell scrolls of beacon of hope</i> , 791 sp, and 208 gp
8th	A <i>wand of fireball</i> , two <i>spell scrolls of raise dead</i> , 991 sp, and 488 gp

Aftermath

If the characters have completed their task, they are rewarded handsomely and will be offered more work by the same patron in the future. If this included arresting or killing Tarkus Bloodclaw, word will spread quickly, and they will have earned the ire of every orc in Sandara Oasis. Additionally, they will have provoked the wrath of Zarek Nightwhisper.

If they chose not to arrest or kill Tarkus, they earn the respect of every orc and Desert Eyes member but earn Gark the Knuckle’s fierce vexation. Ω

Orc Warlord

Medium Humanoid (Orc), Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +7, Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Special Traits

Call To Arms. When the warlord rolls initiative, it commands every ally that can see or hear it to run toward the fray. Each of the warlord's affected allies can immediately use its reaction to move up to its speed toward the warlord or a hostile creature that it can see.

Indomitable (3/Day). The warlord can reroll a saving throw it fails. It must use the new roll.

Stalwart Presence. The warlord has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, stunned, or knocked prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The warlord makes two Battleaxe attacks and one Shield Bash attack.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Bonus Actions

Enrage. Each of the warlord's allies within 30 feet of it gains advantage on the first attack roll it makes on its next turn.

Invigorate. Each of the warlord's allies within 30 feet of it gains 7 (2d6) temporary hit points.

Rush. The warlord moves up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.