

BOXROCK HOLE

Boxrock Hole is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for **four characters of 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 8th level**. This document notes how to scale the adventure according to the average party level. The characters discover Boxrock Hole. For decades, travelers avoided Boxrock Hole, fearing the legendary Beast of Boxrock Hole that lives within the caverns.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. You can access a free basic ruleset from the official source if you don't have a copy.

Read aloud or paraphrase text that appears in a box like this when the characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

The core manual for players describes *spells* and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure. The core manual for gamemasters describes *magic items*. The text notes any items created for this adventure, pointing you to the appropriate appendix or sidebar.

LEVEL SELECTION

Before play, know the level you wish to run the adventure. Overall, the adventure's locations and descriptions remain unchanged throughout the levels. However, most encounters, hazards, traps, and treasures scale with each level of the adventure. The keyed locations will present the differences between each level.

Also, the adventure works for more than just the listed levels. If you wish to run this adventure for levels other than the 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 8th level, the chart below shows you which version of the adventure you should select for each level. We don't recommend running this adventure for characters with an average party level of more than 10, as it may not pose much of a challenge.

CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

Design and Writing. DMDave

Editing and Layout. Tony Casper

Cartography. DMDave with Forgotten Adventures

Scaling the Adventure

| Average Party Level | Recommended Adventure Version | Relative Difficulty |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 1st-level | Hard |
| 2 | 1st-level | Medium |
| 3 | 3rd-level | Hard |
| 4 | 3rd-level | Medium |
| 5 | 5th-level | Hard |
| 6 | 5th-level | Medium |
| 7 | 5th-level | Easy |
| 8 | 8th-level | Hard |
| 9 | 8th-level | Medium |
| 10 | 8th-level | Easy |

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The table on the following page offers some ideas if you don't have a reason for the characters to investigate the caverns. Roll a d8 or choose the one you like best. If you need to motivate the party with a monetary reward, their patrons offer 500 gp per level of the adventure.

BOXROCK HOLE

High atop a windy mountain hides the gaping entrance to Boxrock Hole. Once believed to be the home to early humanoids in the area, the Hole hasn't hosted humanoids of any type in quite some time. More recently, the mouth of the cave has become home to a pack of wild cats. But the wild cats are the least of explorers' woes. Rumors persist that a great, aberrant horror known as the Beast of Boxrock Hole resides within the caverns. No one has ever laid eyes on the creature and lived to tell the tale.

Boxrock Hole Adventure Hooks

| d8 | Patron | Adventure Hook |
|----|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Academy | The academy believes that an ancient aberration dwells within the caverns. They want the characters to reach out to the being and learn from it. What they don't realize, however, is that aberration—the Beast of Boxrock Hole—doesn't want to talk. |
| 2 | Ancient Being | A close friend of the characters' patron disappeared while exploring Boxrock Hole. The characters are sent into the caverns to investigate. The missing friend's skeleton is in area 5 . |
| 3 | Aristocrat | The child of a noble got lost in the cavern. They managed to survive the dangers of the first few tunnels but now wait alone in the darkness in area 9 . The child is a noncombatant. |
| 4 | Criminal Syndicate | Three parties have entered Boxrock Hole and failed to return. The characters will earn a hefty reward if they enter the caverns and discover what keeps killing the syndicate's hirelings. |
| 5 | Guild | Locals spotted vicious wild cats stalking the grounds near Boxrock Hole. A group of hunters tried to clear the tigers out but heard something monstrous groaning within the dark caverns and fled in terror. |
| 6 | Military Force | The lone survivor from a scouting party discovered the Beast of Boxrock Hole. Terrified of the damage such a creature might cause, the characters' patron sends the party into the Hole to destroy the creature. |
| 7 | Religious Order | An order member explored the cavern a few years ago and lost their cloak near a hot spot within the caverns. The religious order wants the characters to retrieve the lost cloak; the characters will find the cloak in area 7 . |

FINDING BOXROCK HOLE

The caverns have two egresses—a corridor at the north end and a tunnel that descends into darkness near the south end. These exits let you combine the caverns with another dungeon adventure (or *Dungeon of the Week* adventure, as it were), or you may let it stand on its own. If you choose the latter, the party must discover the hole's entrance (**area 1**).

Have the characters perform a skill challenge. A skill challenge simulates a task requiring more time and effort than a single ability check. In its simplest form, the characters make a series of ability checks to earn a required number of successes before accumulating a maximum number of failed checks—similar to how death saving throws work. This skill challenge consists of the following elements:

- ▶ **Goal and Context.** Learn the location of Boxrock Hole.
- ▶ **Difficulty.** Primary skill checks related to this skill challenge are made against DC 10. Secondary and repeat checks are made against DC 15.
- ▶ **Complexity.** Complexity is the total number of successes needed versus the number of failures to succeed on the check. To succeed in this skill challenge, the characters must gain four successes before they suffer three failures.
- ▶ **Primary Checks.** When the characters partake in a skill challenge, they may commit any ability check they like to the skill challenge. Certain ability checks, however, lend themselves better to a successful outcome than others. These ability checks

are primary checks and usually have a lower DC than their secondary checks. The primary checks for this skill challenge are: Intelligence (History) to recall information about Boxrock Hole and Charisma (Persuasion) to speak with locals about its location.

- ▶ **Secondary Checks.** Secondary checks represent all the skills the characters may use to participate in a skill challenge that aren't considered primary checks. The main reason for the disparity between primary and secondary is that primary checks are a little more "obvious" in their function.
- ▶ **Other Conditions.** If the characters make a successful Intelligence (History) or Charisma (Persuasion) check related to this skill challenge, they learn that the caverns are home to the Beast of Boxrock Hole, a colossal roper-like creature. Wisdom (Survival) becomes a primary skill challenge (DC 10). The characters may repeat any primary ability checks without penalty.
- ▶ **Consequences.** If the characters suffer three failures before achieving four successes, they fail the skill challenge and must spend another week looking for the caverns. Otherwise, they find the entrance to the caverns (**area 1**).

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, Boxrock Hole's areas have the following features in common.

Architecture. The caverns are made from natural granite. The heat pouring from **area 6** makes it humid,

giving the stone walls a slick residue. Ceilings in chambers and corridors are as high as the room is wide.

Illumination. There is no light throughout the caverns except by the front entrance (assuming it is the actual entrance and not connected to another dungeon). The boxed text descriptions assume the characters have their light sources or darkvision.

Random Encounters. All manner of creepy and awful things lurk within Boxrock Hole, many of which crawled up from the lower levels (areas 10, 14, or 15) or surface (area 1). Every 30 minutes while the characters aren't in combat, roll a d20. On a result of 17 or higher, an encounter occurs. Roll a d6 and reference the level of the adventure on the Boxrock Hole Random Encounters table below, or choose the one you like.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The map shows the location of the following areas.

1 - Entrance

The bones of animals and humanoids riddle the floors of this chamber, victims of the beasts that reside here (see below). Multiple 10-foot drops divide the area into three sections before connecting to area 2.

Encounter: Cave Dwellers. Beasts live and guard this entrance to Boxrock Hole. The nature of these beasts depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. If you choose to connect this location to the outside world, there is a 50 percent chance that the characters encounter one of these creatures outside the cavern system.

Area 1 Encounters

| Adventure Level | Encounter |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1st | 3 panthers |
| 3rd | 3 tigers |
| 5th | 4 saber-toothed tigers |
| 8th | 4 owlbears |

Treasure: Discarded Goods. Many travelers perished in the claws and maws of the cavern dwellers. Characters who search the bones quickly discover forgotten treasures, as shown in the table below.

Area 1 Treasure

| Adventure Level | Treasure |
|-----------------|---|
| 1st | A gold bracelet worth 25 gp |
| 3rd | A gold bracelet worth 25 gp and a jeweled dagger worth 100 gp |
| 5th | Two gold bracelets worth 25 gp each and a jeweled dagger worth 250 gp |
| 8th | Two gold bracelets worth 25 gp each, a jeweled dagger worth 500 gp, and a pouch containing 200 gp |

2 - Rubble Passage

Thick piles of rubble create an area of difficult terrain throughout this chamber.

Encounter: Hidden Trouble. A dangerous ooze hides among the detritus in this room. The ooze's nature depends on the adventure's level, as shown in the table below. Regardless of the creature's type, it is unaffected by the difficult terrain in this chamber.

Area 2 Encounters

| Adventure Level | Encounter |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1st | 1 gray ooze |
| 3rd | 1 ochre jelly |
| 5th | 1 black pudding |
| 8th | 2 black puddings |

Treasure: Dead Hero's Goodies. At some point in the cavern's history, a traveler made it past the creatures in area 1 only to meet their fate here. Although the creature detailed above dissolved the hero's bones, their prized magic warpick remains. The characters may find this trinket with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Use the table below to determine the warpick's bonus.

Area 2 Treasure

| Adventure Level | Treasure |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1st | +1 warpick |
| 3rd | +1 warpick |
| 5th | +2 warpick |
| 8th | +3 warpick |

3 - Grick Chambers

This cavern appears empty except for a small pile of glittering jewels in the middle of the chamber.

Encounter: Gricks. Hungry gricks hide among the stones in this cavern, the quantity of which depends on the adventure's level, as shown in the table below.

Area 3 Encounter

| Adventure Level | Encounter |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1st | 1 grick |
| 3rd | 2 gricks |
| 5th | 3 gricks |
| 8th | 4 gricks |

Treasure: Gems. The gricks don't care for the gems but recognize that they occasionally draw the attention of explorers. The gems' total value is 100 gp times the level of the adventure.

4 - Lair of the Beast

Loose sand covers the floor of this large chamber. At regular intervals, the floor drops 10 feet towards

the center of the room, terminating in an even softer patch of sand.

Encounter: The Beast of Boxrock Hole. The legendary Beast of Boxrock Hole lurks at the bottom of this great pit. The creature remains hidden (using False Appearance or burrow) until living things enter the area. It then attacks, hoping to drag at least one creature into its gaping maw. The beast's stat block depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. The statistics for the Beast of Boxrock Hole are in the appendix.

Area 4 Encounter

| Adventure Level | Encounter |
|-----------------|---|
| 1st | Roper, except it can't use its Bite attack as part of its Multi-attack |
| 3rd | Roper |
| 5th | Beast of Boxrock Hole, except it can't use its Bite attack as part of its Multiattack |
| 8th | Beast of Boxrock Hole |

5 - Mud Hole

Boiling mud consumes the majority of this chamber. A large boulder protrudes from the surface of the mud; a bleached skeleton lies atop the rock.

Hazard: Boiling Mud. The mud is difficult terrain. A creature that enters the boiling mud or starts its turn in the mud takes 18 (4d8) fire damage.

6 - Hot Pockets

Extreme heat radiates from this chamber. Three smoking craters in the center of the room are the source of this heat.

Hazard: Hot Pockets and Smoke. The craters exude extreme heat, rising from a magma chamber deep below this cavern. Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of a crater takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Hazard: Thick Smoke. The smoke rising from the craters lightly obscures the entire chamber. A creature that starts its turn in this chamber must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. Creatures immune or resistant to fire damage automatically succeed on their saving throws. On a failed saving throw, the target is poisoned until the start of its next turn.

Encounter: Fire Elementals. Unless the characters enter this room stealthily, creatures of elemental fire rise from the craters. The nature of this encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. The creatures are neutral towards the characters; however, they won't allow the characters to pass into their treasure pool (area 7).

Area 6 Encounter

| Adventure Level | Encounter |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1st | 2 magmin |

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 3rd | 6 magmin |
| 5th | 9 magmin |
| 8th | 1 fire elemental and 9 magmin |

7 - Treasure Pool

Goodies collected by the creatures of elemental fire in area 6 litter the bottom of the hot water pool at the south end of this chamber. Although the water is hot, it is not hot enough to deal damage.

Treasure: Elemental Goodies. The type of treasures the characters discover in the hot water pool depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Area 7 Treasure

| Adventure Level | Treasure |
|-----------------|---|
| 1st | A wad of melted gold coins worth 300 gp and a <i>cloak of elvenkind</i> |
| 3rd | A wad of melted platinum and gold coins worth 1,200 gp and a <i>cloak of elvenkind</i> |
| 5th | A wad of melted platinum and gold coins worth 3,000 gp and a <i>cloak of displacement</i> |
| 8th | A wad of melted platinum and gold coins worth 5,500 gp and a <i>cloak of displacement</i> |

8 - Watering Hole

A pool of hot water consumes the majority of this chamber.

Encounter: Thirsty Ankhegs. The first time the characters enter this chamber, one or more ankhegs drink from the water. The ankhegs are neutral towards the characters, content only to drink water. If the characters approach the ankhegs or act hostile, the ankhegs defend themselves and flee to the Beast of Boxrock Hole's lair (area 4). The number of ankhegs here depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Area 8 Encounter

| Adventure Level | Encounter |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1st | 1 ankheg |
| 3rd | 2 ankhegs |
| 5th | 3 ankhegs |
| 8th | 3 ankhegs |

9 - Down into Darkness

This empty chamber offers a natural ramp that descends deeper into darkness.

WHERE TO NEXT?

The path in area 9 leads down into the darkness below the Boxrock Hole. What lies below is ultimate-

ly up to you. If you wish to continue the adventure, place another level or two below this one. You may use an adventure of your own creation or another one of *DMDave's Dungeon of the Week*. If you don't wish to continue this dungeon, have the ramp end abruptly in a rock slide or another dead-end. Ω

APPENDIX

| | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Beast of Boxrock Hole <i>Huge aberration, chaotic evil</i> | | | | | |
| Armor Class 17 (natural armor) | | | | | |
| Hit Points 241 (23d12 + 92) | | | | | |
| Speed 10 ft., burrow 5 ft., climb 10 ft. | | | | | |
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| 24 (+7) | 5 (-3) | 18 (+4) | 5 (-3) | 8 (-1) | 4 (-3) |
| Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +3 | | | | | |
| Skills Stealth +1 | | | | | |
| Senses blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 9 | | | | | |
| Languages Deep Speech | | | | | |
| Challenge 10 (5,900 XP) | | | | | |
| Stone Camouflage. The beast has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain | | | | | |
| Grasping Tendrils. The beast can have up to six tendrils at a time. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 17, 10 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the beast, which can extrude a replacement tendril on its next turn. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check against it. | | | | | |
| ACTIONS | | | | | |
| Multiattack. The beast makes four attacks with its tendrils, uses its Reel, and makes one attack with its bite. | | | | | |
| Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 34 (6d8 + 7) piercing damage. | | | | | |
| Tendril. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> The target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and the beast can't use the same tendril on another target. | | | | | |
| Reel. The beast pulls each creature grappled by it up to 25 feet straight toward it. | | | | | |
| Swallow. The beast makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the beast, and it takes 36 (8d8) acid damage at the start of each of the beast's turns. | | | | | |
| If the beast takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the beast must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the beast. If the beast dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone. | | | | | |

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- ▶ Dungeons & Lairs #32: Oni Palace
- ▶ Dungeons & Lairs #33: Rust Monster Mine
- ▶ Dungeons & Lairs #34: Revenant Ghost Ship
- ▶ Dungeons & Lairs #35: Sphinx Pyramid
- ▶ Dungeons & Lairs #36: Shadow Hotel
- ▶ Dungeons & Lairs #37: Salamander Forge
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