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KING DRETCH

By Aeryn “Blackdirge” Rudel

INTRODUCTION

King Dretch is a short adventure designed for five characters of 1st level. While characters can be of any basic character class, a strong melee-oriented group will have an easier time with the encounters in this adventure. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventurers are hired to investigate the ruins of a wizard’s tower, or they simply stumble across it in the course of their adventures. Beneath the tower, in a dormitory set up for the wizard’s apprentices, dwell a uniquely powerful dretch, his fiendish allies and servitors, and other deadly creatures. Further, the tower hides a terrible secret, a tiny Abyssal gate called a planar fissure. Fell energies have been leaking steadily through the planar fissure for several years, giving additional foul beings the opportunity to invade the world.

The dretch has been encouraging fiendish creatures to attack travelers on a nearby road, robbing and killing at his whim. It is up to the heroes to put an end to the dretch’s predations. They will need to investigate the tower ruins and find the entrance to the dormitory beneath it. In the dormitory the heroes will battle the dretch’s evil allies and eventually face the demon itself.

If the adventurers can manage to defeat the dretch, they will still need to close the planar fissure, a task that requires the recovery of a number of rare reagents and the casting of a powerful ritual. From the remains of the deceased wizard’s notes, the heroes will be able to compile a list of these reagents; however, the recovery of these bizarre materials may entail a quest even more dangerous than facing a hundred dretches. At the very least, the heroes will need to find a way to seal off the area around the fissure to prevent other demons from emerging to wreak havoc.



GAME MASTER'S INFORMATION

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To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. *Loc* – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. *Pg* – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. *Type* – this indicates if the encounter is a combat (C), disease (D), hazard (H), puzzle (P), or trap (T). *Encounter* – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. *EL* – the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE				
Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	El
1-1	7	C	Three abattoir wolves	1
1-2	8	C	Verrekrieth, Five dire rats	2
2-1	9	C	Two elite needlefang drake swarms Spitting drake	2
2-2	11	T	Stone bludgeon trap Deafening blast trap	1
2-3	12	C	<i>Senna</i> , advanced ghoul warlock	2
2-5	14	C	Two demonfang crocodiles	1
2-6	15	C	Four shadowfiend spiders	1
2-7	16	C	<i>Kuzgug</i> , advanced demonic acolyte dretch wizard solo	5

SCALING INFORMATION

King Dretch is designed for five characters of 1st level, but may be adjusted to suit parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting the module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): Remove one un-named creature from each encounter. Remove Kuzgug's advanced nature, making him a Level 3 solo.

Stronger Parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 1st level): Add one additional un-named creature to each encounter. Add two shadowfiend spiders to aid Kuzgug in area 2-7.



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GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

King Dretch occurs in a nondescript, forested setting that can be dropped into nearly any campaign world. There should be an established road or trade route nearby, or even a small town or village – something upon which Kuzgug and his allies can prey.

The adventure begins with the heroes emerging from the forest into the clearing that holds the ruined tower and the dormitory beneath it. How they get to this point is largely up to you, but here are a couple of hooks that can get the PCs moving in the right direction.

- If one of the adventurers is a wizard, he may be seeking an apprenticeship with Numeshay, and has brought his companions along as protection or simply for moral support.
- The heroes are hired by one of the small towns that exist on either end of the road Kuzgug has been preying on, and are asked to investigate the disappearance of merchants and other travelers.
- A wizard in the party's town or village hires them to deliver a batch of arcane ingredients to Numeshay at his tower.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The great elven wizard Numeshay Odeken was an eccentric archmage whose passion was the study of extraplanar creatures. From his secluded tower, he would cast rituals to view and communicate with demons, devils, angels, and elementals, all in an attempt to learn more about the native fauna of alternate dimensions. However, Numeshay quickly tired of the limited durations offered by the established rituals, and he had no desire to open a planar portal, which could allow powerful entities from other planes to pass through. Instead, he turned his energies to the creation of a quasi-gate, a tiny crack between dimensional barriers, which he called a planar fissure.

The creation of the planar fissures aided Numeshay in his research immensely. Each rift allowed the fundamental energies of a plan to leak through, yet it was too tiny to permit any creatures to freely pass in either direction – or so Numeshay believed.