

# The Broken Bridge

## Setup

This little side trek/delve is designed for a group of characters levels 4-5. It could easily be added to any campaign.

It is assumed that the party is traveling along a mountainous road along which they must cross a deep chasm. Unfortunately, as the party approaches the chasm they see the following.

*As you approach the chasm, you see that the bridge is no longer there. Only the very base of it is left on either side, and from the charred remains, it would seem the bridge was set on fire. Across the 60' wide chasm, you can make out evidence of fighting. You can make out an overturned cart, some scattered debris and the bloated carcass of a dead mule. On your side of the chasm is a small cottage belonging to the bridge caretaker. The cottage looks dark and empty.*

Two weeks earlier, Krughr - a particularly wicked troll - and his nefarious traveling companions came upon the bridge and found it a perfect place to set up a trap. They killed the caretaker, burned down the bridge and set up camp in a nearby cave.

There are three encounters and one skill challenge attached to this little side trek.

## Quest Rewards

There are potentially three minor quest rewards to be had here.

If the party leaves a temporary structure behind, strong enough to hold a medium sized creature, they are rewarded **50 XP each** at the end of the last encounter. Double that, if the structure is strong enough to hold a mounted traveler.

If they gather any personal belongings left in the scattered debris, and search for relatives in the next town, they get an additional **50 XP each**.

A third reward (again, **50 XP each**) is given if they kill Krughr the troll, thus ensuring that others won't fall victim to his evil ways.

### 1. The Caretaker's Cottage

The cottage still stands, but the caretaker is gone. The front door is open and it looks like someone rummaged through what few belongings were left behind.

Behind the cottage is a small shed where the caretaker kept his tools and materials for working on the



bridge. This was ignored when Krughr burned down the bridge itself and can be used in the skill challenge later.

Materials include a dozen 10' long wooden 2" x 4" planks, 25 nails, 100' of rope and 20' of chain. Tools include a hammer, a crow bar and a hand saw.

If the party searches the cottage, they will get a nasty surprise as they enter. A group of dire stirges are using the cottage as a place to nest (and prey on anyone who wanders inside).

**Encounter (level 6; 1200 XP)**

- ✦ 4 Dire Stirges [S, 300 XP, [DDI](#)]

**Tactics:** The stirges hide when resting, but will have likely heard the heroes approaching. On the 1st round as the heroes enter the cottage, each must roll a Perception vs. DC 13 or be surprised during the first combat round.

Add another Dire Stirge for a 6-man group.

## 2. Crossing the Chasm

The chasm is 60' wide, too far for a horse to jump. The players must come up with their own solution to the problem, using materials found, magic and whatever else they can think of.

To succeed they must complete a complexity 2 skill challenge, **6 successes before 3 failures**, for which each character will receive **50 XP**.

♦ **Primary skills:**

Dungeoneering (DC 14)

Endurance (DC 14)

Acrobatics (DC 14)

♦ **Secondary skills:**

Athletics (DC 20)

Nature (DC 20)

When a fall is stopped, assume that the rest of the party can help the character up without further ado.

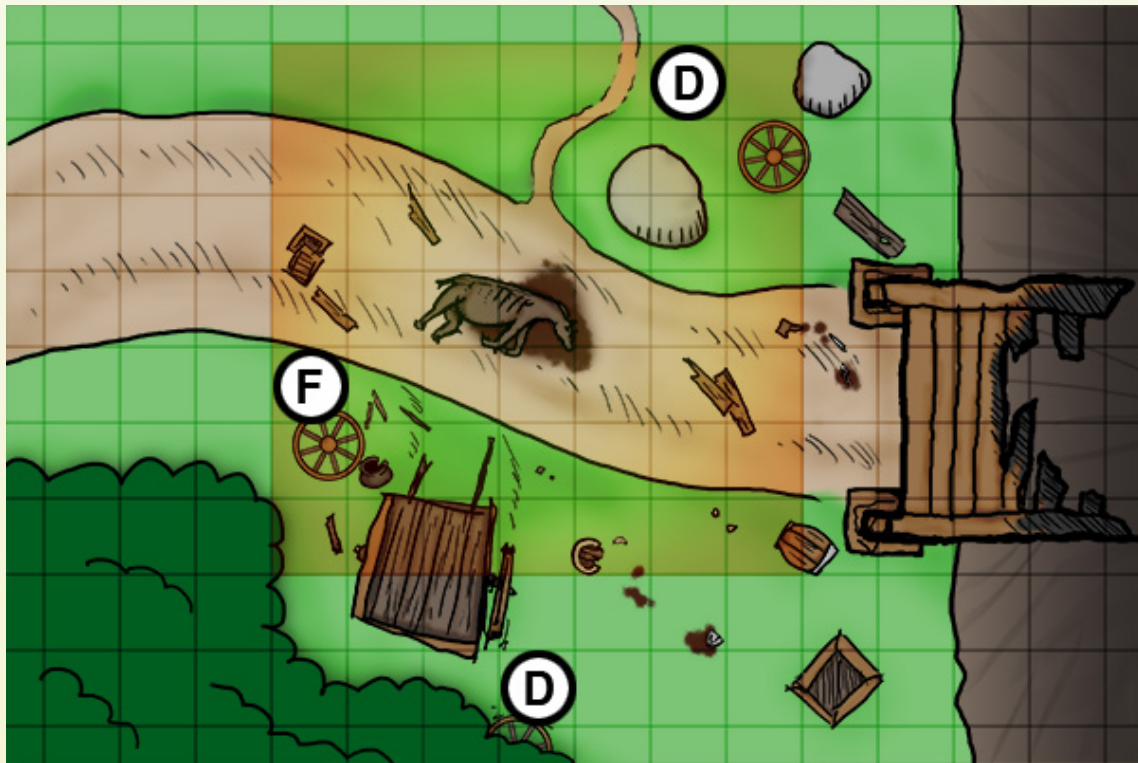
For every failure, let the implicated PCs (whomever rolled the die, plus others involved in the action) almost fall or take small drops - they lose a healing surge or take minor falling damage. Alternatively, the PC might drop something into the chasm, like a tool or building materials.

If the challenge completely fails, the heroes' solution fails too and the last PC to cross takes a plunge. If the party is bound together, the rope snaps. If they used a spell or ritual to cross, something went awry during the process. Either way, the last to cross falls.

The falling character must succeed in a **DEX vs. DC 15 check every round** to grab onto something and stop the fall.

If the party members were bound together, the fall is somewhat slowed and the player gets a +2 to the first DEX check.

For every failed check, the character falls 15' and takes 1d10+3 points of damage. If the character loses consciousness, he or she is lost forever.



### 3. Ambush Debris

Once safely on the opposite side of the chasm, the scene becomes clear. Someone or something destroyed the bridge to make anyone traveling from the west stop - and easy targets for an attack.

*Large, dark stains on the ground show where blood was spilled. Swarms of flies hang thick over rotting clumps of guts and other unrecognizable body parts. There is splintered wood and torn cloth everywhere, from at least three different carts or wagons by your count. The dead mule looks like it might explode at any moment. The stink of death is so strong, it makes your eyes sting and your stomachs churn.*

Anything of value seems to have been taken from the site. The nearby troll and its companions have been eating the flesh of their victims, but have stashed away enough food and loot now, that they did not bother with the old, tough mule.

There is an obvious trail leaving off the road and up a hill.

Scattered among the debris is a total of 60 gold pieces. There is also a broken necklace with a single pearl on it (100 gp value). Besides the treasure, the party finds a number of personal items, including a rag-doll, a pretty Elven comb and an iron ring with some sort of emblem or seal. These are personal belongings of the victims that, if returned to surviving relatives, will trigger a quest reward (see above).

If the party disturbs the site in any way (like searching for treasure), it will trigger the following encounter.

#### **Encounter (level 5, 1000 XP)**

- ♦ 2 Deathrattle Vipers [D, 200 XP, [DDI](#)]
- ♦ 1 Flame Snake [F, 400 XP, [DDI](#)]
- ♦ Bloated Mule Hazard [see below]

**Tactics:** The Flame Snake stays in the area around the mule, spitting fire as the two vipers engage. Once the mule explodes or one of the vipers is dead, the Flame Snake will engage the strongest looking character.

For a larger party, upgrade the Mule to elite and/or add a Deathrattle Viper..

#### **The Bloated Mule**

*Hazard, Level 5, 200 XP*

**Hazard:** The dead mule explodes and rains guts, rotten meat and juices all over everyone within 5 squares.

**Perception:** None. It is obvious to anyone that the mule is ready to go. And it already smells bad on the outside.

**Trigger:** When the body is punctured, it explodes. Any adjacent characters in melee combat will accidentally set it off on a fumble (natural 1). Any ranged attack that misses its intended target with the mule in the line of fire will also set it off. Finally, it is possible to set it off on purpose (AC 12 to hit).

**Target:** Close burst 3

**Attack:** +10 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** Instant sickness makes all affected by this Immobilized for 1 turn and dazed (save ends).

**Upgrade to Elite:** Target is close burst 5; attack is +12 vs. Fortitude; 400 XP.

#### **4. The Troll Lair**

This natural cave was once the home of a bear. That ended when Krughr the troll came along and turned the bear into a blanket. The cave itself has a small opening, but rises quickly inside, where the ceiling is easily 40' tall.

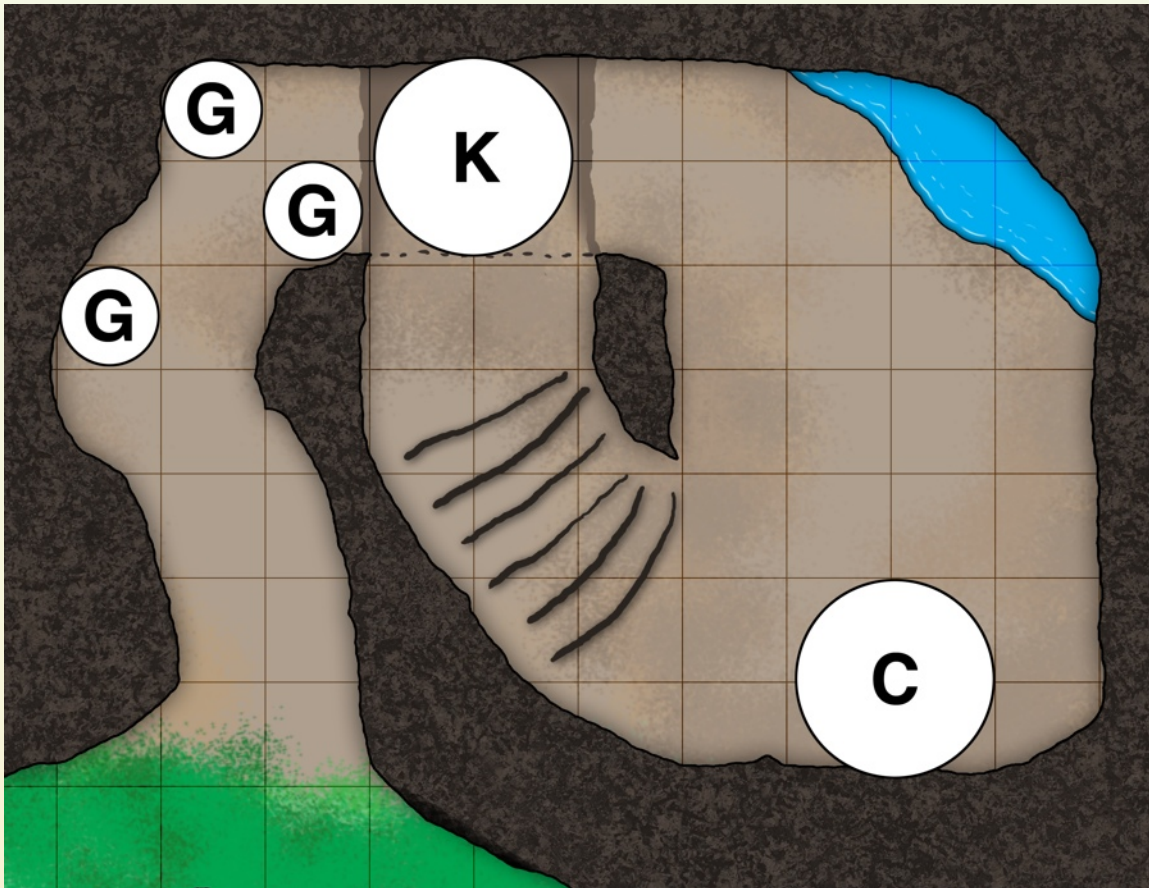
**Krughr** is smart for a troll and figures he has made a good lair for himself. Not only does he have a few of cronies who serve him (and would double as a nice meal in lean times), but he has more food and riches than he has ever seen before. And he is not about to let go of any of it.

His personal little nest is at the top of an elevated part of the cave, from where he can look down at the main chamber as well as the corridor. To spot him up there, characters roll a Perception vs. DC 19 upon entering the corridor.

#### **Encounter (level 6, 1300 XP)**

- ♦ 1 Krughr the Troll [K, 400 XP, [DDI](#)]
- ♦ 1 Cave Troll [C, 300 XP, [DDI](#)]
- ♦ 3 Gnoll Huntmasters [G, 200 XP, [DDI](#)]

**Tactics:** If the heroes just left the ambush site after fighting the snakes, Krughr will already be aware that they are on their way. His plan is to set a trap. The gnolls will fire off a few arrows (1st combat round only), then try to make the heroes chase them into the cave. Once inside, Krughr will jump down from his nest and block



the passage behind the heroes. If only part of the party is trapped inside, the 2 trolls will concentrate on the trapped party members, while the gnolls go for anyone not caught in the cave's main chamber.

If the party were quiet and went straight for the cave, there is a chance they might surprise Krughr and his minions in the cave. In that case, place the gnolls inside the main cave, rather than in the corridor.

For 6-player groups, add 1 Gnoll Huntmaster. For a 4-player group, take 1 out.

Inside the cave, the heroes find 300 gold pieces, 400 silver pieces and an

Elven Cloak [DDI], or a level 7 magic item from the heroes' wishlist.

### Expanding the Delve

Here are a couple suggestions for expanding these 3 encounters, should you wish to do so.

- ✦ The iron ring found in the debris, belongs to a merchant who survived the ambush. Upon its return, he may well have more work for the heroes.
- ✦ The bridge must be rebuilt and the team of dwarves repairing it will need protection during the work. The heroes have already proven that they are skilled enough for the task.